

Leadership - The Secret To Our Survival

פרשת מקץ

The Gemara in Megillah (11A) quotes a Baraisa that explains Hashem's promise of the survival of the Jewish people in exile. The Pasuk says (Vayikra 26:44), "And even then when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not despise them and be disgusted by them to destroy them. I will not break my covenant with them, because I am Hashem their G-d." The Baraisa comments, "I will not despise them' refers to the days of Kasdim, in which I sent them Daniel, Chananya, Mishoel, and Azaria. 'I will not be disgusted by them' refers to the days of Chanukah, where the Greeks tried to destroy the Klal Yisroel. During those days I sent you Shimon Hatzadik, the Chashmonaim and his children, and Matisyahu Kohen Gadol. 'To destroy them' is referring to the days of Haman in which I sent you Mordechai and Esther to save you. 'To break my covenant' refers to the days of the Parsaim in which I sent you the house of Rabbi and the Sages of the generation. I am Hashem their G-d for all of time, and no nation will be able to overcome them."

From this Baraisa we can derive a powerful lesson in regards to the importance of leadership. In this Pasuk, Hashem is making a promise that throughout history the Jewish people will survive. It therefore seems strange that each statement in the Pasuk is a reference to leadership. We would have

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expected it to refer to Hashem's orchestration of miracles and Hashgacha Pratis in helping us defeat our enemies, and ensuring we would not be destroyed. Yet the Baraisa says each statement refers to positioning leaders in place who will ensure the survival of Klal Yisroel. We see from here that the survival of Klal Yisroel in the Galus, is dependent on the leadership.

This idea that the survival of Torah and the Klal Yisroel is dependent on our leaders is echoed by the Seforno in describing how the angel of Eisav was able to injure Yaakov's thigh. The Seforno says that the angel showed Yaakov the flaws of the leaders in future generations, and that caused Yaakov such pain that the angel was momentarily able to overcome him. The Rosh Yeshiva of Chofetz Chaim, Harav Alter Chanoch Henoch Lebowitz Zt"l, pointed out that the angel could have showed Yaakov the blood soaked

history of his children. The pogroms, the crusades and the Holocaust to name a few. Yet it seems the most devastating and painful experience in our history is a lack of strong and appropriate leadership.

We see from the above how critical leadership is to the survival of Klal Yisroel. The Ramban says, "If not for the Chashmonaim the Torah would have been lost from Klal Yisroel." Yet the Ramban also points out that the entire house of the Chashmonaim were wiped out, because they took the kingship and violated the will of Hashem. As it says "לא יסור שבט מיהודה", the kingship should not be removed from the tribe of Yehuda. Surely, the Chashmonaim took the kingship with pure intentions to ensure the survival of Klal Yisroel. Yet their passion and responsibility to the future of Klal Yisroel, caused them to make an ever so slight miscalculation that was not based on דעת תורה.

We can glean a few powerful insights. Firstly, the survival of Klal Yisroel in Galus is dependent on supplying strong leadership. This perspective can help us increase our appreciation for our leaders, and galvanize us to ensure strong future leaders, through teaching and supporting our Yeshivos that play a critical role in producing these leaders. Secondly, leadership is very delicate. Although a leader must feel the weight of the future destiny of Klal Yisroel on his shoulders, he must also remember it is Hashem's world, and must be guided by דעת תורה at all times. Otherwise he and the Klal Yisroel can face devastating consequences. Harav Alter Chanoch Henoch Lebowitz Zt"l used to say, "A leader in Klal Yisroel is one who lets Hashem lead."

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

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לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר
לעילוי נשמת רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה
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