

PARSHAS KI SAVO: BRINGING MEANING TO OUR LIVES

by Rabbi Yaakov Horowitz

"Baruch ata bivoacha, uvaruch ata bitzeisecha - blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out" (Devarim 28:6)

In a parsha that contains the largest portion of 'rebuke of the B'nei Yisroel and the dire consequences that will happen to the Jews should they reject the values of the Torah - this pasuk inspires hope and confidence. Hashem promises us that when we keep His eternal mitzvos, we will be showered with His blessings; when we are "coming and going."

Rashi, quoting a gemarah (Bava Metziah 107a), does not make use of the pshat (simple translation) of this pasuk in his commentary on chumash. He seems to bypass the notion that this blessing refers to the success of the mundane trips of our daily life. He explains that these words refer to the spiritual journey of our neshama (soul) in this transitory world. According to this view, Hashem blessing us that we remain as pure and sin-free when we leave this world [at the time of our death] as they were when we arrived [when we were born].

Why Not Use the Simple Translation?

As a general rule, Rashi's commentary follows the simple translation of the Torah's words. Why, then, did Rashi not mention the straightforward translation - that these words refer to one's physical travels?

The Sifsei Chachamim offers an interesting insight into the thinking of Rashi. They maintain that a trip usually begins with 'leaving' one's home and ends when that person returns to his or her house. Therefore, if the pasuk, in fact, was referring to a physical trip, the order of the words should have been reversed - Blessed are you when you go out (bitzeisecha) ... and when you come in (bivoacha). The fact that 'come in' is mentioned first indicates that one's spiritual journey is the subject of the blessing, where one is blessed that his or her arrival in this world should immediately be blessed.

Bringing Meaning to our Lives

The Ksav Sofer offers a profound insight into this pasuk. The gemarah (Eruvin 13b) relates how the talmidim of the great sages Hillel and Shamai debated whether or not it was advantageous for a person's pure soul to be brought to this challenging world. The gemarah notes that after much discussion, they agreed that it would have been better for a person to not be created, "but now that he was [brought to this world], he must examine his actions carefully [to see to it that he lives a

meaningful life].

With this conclusion in mind, asks the Ksav Sofer, how can the Torah say, "Blessed shall you be when you come in [to this world]" if it would have been better not to have been created?

To resolve this question, the Ksav Sofer notes the comment of Tosfos on the above-mentioned gemorah. Tosfos maintains that the talmidim of Hillel and Shamai would certainly agree that tzadikim (righteous people) bring meaning to their lives and enrich the world. Therefore, it would certainly be beneficial for the soul of a tzadik to arrive in this world.

The Ksav Sofer says that the Torah is informing us that to bring blessing to our actions, we need to live meaningful Torah lives. "Baruch ata bevoacha" - your arrival in this world will be worthwhile, when you leave this world with your neshama pure and intact. When that occurs, it will be evident that you are among those whose arrival in this world was advantageous - and a source of blessing to all.

Best wishes for a Gutten Shabbos

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