

Parshas Vayeilich

This week's Parsha Vayeilech, after the opening word of the Parsha, that Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Israel (these are part of the final speeches of Moshe to the Jews, ahead of Yehoshua taking over, and the Jews arriving at the land of Israel).

As mentioned in last week's D'var Torah, these words apply to us without our own imminent arrival of Mashiach. Moshe's words ring true to us, "Hashem your G-d who is crossing before you, He will destroy these nations from before you, and you will take them over..." (Devarim 31:3). There is an interesting word in posuk 6, "Lo Yarpecha" that Hashem will not let us slip, which Rashi explains means, that Hashem will not allow us to be so weak that we would leave him. This is critically important because we are promised that Hashem will not abandon us as a nation, even in the face of external threats. This is a guarantee that, in our times, where it feels like our enemies are getting stronger, we know Hashem will not forsake us, or, instead, we will succeed. Thematically, this is in line with the theme of Rosh Hashana, where we re-crown Hashem as our king, and by doing so, we reinstate our king over us, as Chassidus explains. Without us, there is no King, so we are critical to being the nation that Hashem calls His. If we are His people, then we are guaranteed, as Moshe said, to be protected, but more so to succeed.

Although in the fifth Aliya, the pesukim are harsh about what will happen if we stray, that warning comes at the heels of appointing leaders who will enforce the laws (31:7 see Rashi). But theoretically, this warning contradicts the earlier point that Hashem won't allow us to be weakened to the point of leaving Him.

At a time when the Jews are at war in the physical land, we are fighting an ominous and growing enemy in the diaspora, who aims to blame the Jews for everything¹. This is not a drill; this is the real test of our faith, not in how we are going to do less in the growing darkness, but instead how we are going to accomplish more, and do more Mitzvos, and hold the Torah dear to us. In 31:26, Moshe tells us to take the Torah and place it in the Ark of the Covenant, which, according to Rashi, means an active "taking", i.e. continuously taking the Torah toward us and keeping it close to us. That is the antidote.

We are at the High Holidays, where in addition to our job of asking for forgiveness, in the past, we have a chance to renew our bond for what amazing things we will do in the future. This commitment and reestablishing Hashem as our King and with it the Torah is our task, and with that we will surely be successful, and welcome Mashiach, when we "enter into the land of Israel which I have sworn to your forefathers, and you will settle there" (31:7).

Good Shabbos

¹ There was a news article from September 26, 2025, in the National Post that 28% of Canadians believe

that Jews are responsible for "acts of prejudice they face". This is a staggering number