

Be A Yid

The Haftora¹ for parshas Toldos is the beginning of the book of Malachi. It is a prophecy of rebuke to the Jewish people, however, when you take a closer look, you find the deep love and connection we have with Hashem.

The connection to our parsha is that the parsha speaks of the differences and struggles between Yaakov and Eisav, yet we can see that Yaakov is Hashem's chosen one. This is alluded to in our Haftora.

The Haftora begins with Hashem's words to the Jewish people. "I have loved you, says Hashem, and if you ask, 'How have You shown Your love for us?' This is Hashem's response: 'Was not Eisav a brother to Yaakov? Yet I loved Yaakov. And I hated Eisav...'"²

What is the meaning of these verses? What is this love Hashem is referring to? Would we truly be brazen enough to ask, "How have You shown Your love for us?" First Hashem says that we are equals, "Was not Eisav a brother to Yaakov?" Then He says that He loves us and hates them. What is the deeper meaning in these words? If He loves us so much, why is He rebuking us? And finally, what is Hashem's wish for us?

Malachi prophesied at the beginning of the second Temple era, which for most part, we were under the rule of a foreign power. It is also the last book of the Tanach. So it seems to reason that Malachi is talking to us in exile.

When Hashem says, "I have loved you," it is referring to a time when His love to us was clearly visible. The exodus from Egypt, giving us the Torah, giving us the beautiful and bountiful Holy Land, and the First Temple era, when we were privy to open miracles. But now in the darkness of the exile, we ask Hashem, "How have You shown Your love for us?" Because we don't see it openly.

This is also a message to us, that we have to ask, if not demand, Hashem's open and revealed love, that He send Moshiach and put an end to this dark exile. It is not out of brazenness, but rather because it is mitzvah to ask Hashem for our needs, and what greater need do we have? Even The Men of The Great Assembly, who also lived at the beginning of the Second Temple era, saw it this way. As we see in the way they set up the Amida prayer, which is full of requests for Moshiach and the Moshiach era.³

Now Hashem says, "Was not Eisav a brother to Yaakov? Yet I loved Yaakov. And I hated Eisav..." Hashem is saying that I chose to love you from the beginning.⁴ Like we say in the holiday prayers, "You have chosen us from all the nations, You loved us and You wanted us."⁵

There are two ways to understand choice.

When two things are similar but one has something about it that you like more, you choose the one that you like more. This is not a true choice, because it is not your will that moves you to choose one over the other, but rather, it is an intellectual decision, as one is more appealing.

Then there is a true choice. When two things are exactly the same, and you choose one over the other, it is your will, your essence, that is choosing, which is beyond your intellect.

Hashem is telling us how he chose us. From Hashem's essential perspective, Eisav and Yaakov are brothers, they are the same, everything is equal. But He chose to love us, meaning, His will, His Essence chose us and therefore, we are one with His Essence, one with Hashem.⁶

Now the rebuke begins to make sense. You only rebuke someone who you care about, because

³ Hisvadyos 5742c pp. 1652-1653.

⁴ Lekutei Sichos vol 1 p. 160, volume 4 p. 1309, volume 7 p. 25 volume 17 p. 90.

⁵ Holiday Amida and Mussaf.

⁶ Sichos Kodesh 5721 p. 184, 5729b p. 142.

¹ Malachi 1:1-2:7.

² Malachi 1:2.

when you care about someone, how they act matters to you.

In our case, Hashem is saying, I chose you over Eisav, therefore you are special, you are one with me. How then could you act like Eisav, unabashed, callous and deceptive?

Hashem loves us and expects more from us because we are His Essence.

Which brings us to the end of the Haftora, where Hashem tells us how he wants us to be. Speaking to the Kohanim, which we are, "A kingdom of Kohanim."⁷ Hashem says, "For the lips of the Kohen must guard knowledge, they will seek instruction from his mouth, because he is an angel of the Lord of Hosts."⁸

Hashem wants us to be like angels. But if we never met an angel, how should we know how to act like one? Rather this refers to the attributes of a Jew. A Jew is bashful, has compassion and does kindness. Hashem is saying, "Be a Yid!"

May Hashem fulfill our deepest desire and show us His open love once again, with the coming of Moshiach. The time has come.

⁷ Exodus 19:6.

⁸ Malachi 2:7.