



פרשת וזאת הברכה - שמיני עצרת - שמחת תורה / Parshas V'zos HaBracha - Shemini Atzeres - Simchas Torah

”והם תכו לרגלך ישא מדברתיך” דברים לג:

“They have embedded themselves underneath Your feet, bearing the yoke of Your words” Devarim 33:3

Parshas V'zos HaBracha begins with Moshe Rabbeinu's farewell blessing to the Bnei Yisroel. Moshe lauds the Bnei Yisroel by declaring “והם תכו לרגלך”. Rashi explains that Moshe was telling Hashem that the Bnei Yisroel are worthy of extra love and blessing because they entered underneath Har Sinai in order to be “ישא מדברתיך”, and accept upon themselves the yoke of Torah. Rashi brings another explanation for this pasuk, which is that even through times when Hashem allows the nations of the world to rise up and rule over Am Yisroel, the Tzaddikim and righteous members of the Jewish nation remain steadfast in their faith in Hashem and do not relinquish their belief in Him. They are “תכו לרגלך” - they enter under the “shade” of the Divine Presence and accept the decree of Hashem with שמחה and joy, and declare “-תורה צוה לנו משה מרשה קהילת יעקב” - “This is the Torah that Moshe has commanded us, it is an inheritance to the gathering of Yaakov-we will grab hold of it and never let go!”

This Shabbos we will experience the reading of V'zos HaBracha combined with the power of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. Perhaps we can explain the two different explanations in Rashi to be alluding to these special days. The Chidushei HaRim explains Targum Onkelos on our pasuk – “ואנון מדברין תחות ענן נטלין על מימרך” as a hint that Simchas Torah must immediately follow the Chag of Sukkos. For after we have dwelled “תחות ענן” – “under the clouds of Hashem”, in our Sukkah which is a remembrance of the ענני הכבוד - the Clouds of Glory with which Hashem provided us while we traversed the wilderness, we must immediately “נטלין על מימרך”, grab hold of the Torah and rejoice.

In the second understanding in Rashi, the point is that the righteous will always cling to Hashem no matter what travails may befall them. We can say that this may be alluding to Shemini Atzeres, a day designated for us to strengthen our personal bond with Hashem. The Gemara in Maseches Sukkah states that the 70 bull-offerings brought over the course of the first seven days of the Chag are representative of the 70 nations. However on Shemini Atzeres only one bull offering is sacrificed. This solitary sacrifice brought on the 8th day represents Yisrael. The Gemara goes on to explain that this single sacrifice is more special to Hashem than all of the previous sacrificial offerings of the last seven days. Even though it may seem that the other nations wield overwhelming power over us, Moshe Rabbeinu testified that we shall remain staunch in our devotion to Hashem.

We are entering the final day of Sukkos. Our learning and introspection while sitting in the Sukkah over the course of Chol Hamoed has surely helped us develop a burning desire to get closer to Hashem and toil for a deeper understanding of the Torah. We are ready to reaffirm our loyalty to Him and reaccept the yoke of Torah and Mitzvos upon our backs.