

You'll See

PARSHA INSIGHTS - NITZAVIM VAYAILECH (5759)

SHOW, DON'T TELL

“Hashem said to Moshe, ‘Behold, your days are drawing near to die. Summon Yehoshua, and both of you shall stand in the Tent of Meeting, and I shall instruct him.’ So Moshe and Yehoshua went and stood in the Tent of Meeting. Hashem appeared in the Tent in a pillar of cloud, AND THE PILLAR OF CLOUD STOOD BY THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT” (31:14-15).

Where exactly did Moshe and Yehoshua stand? Based on the simple meaning of the text, they positioned themselves inside the tent, as they had been commanded. Where did Hashem manifest His Presence? The *pasuk* [verse] clearly states that He appeared “in the tent, in a pillar of cloud”. **If so, why did the pillar of cloud stand at the OPENING of the tent afterward?** This is a major issue; we will see the approach suggested by Rav Zalman Sorotzkin.

One purpose of this conference was to predict that when *Bnai Yisroel* [the Children of Israel] would sin, they would suffer for their deeds. Hashem told Moshe that “this nation will rise up and stray after the gods of the foreigners of the land... and annul My covenant... My anger will flare against it (the nation) on that day and I will forsake them; and I will conceal My face from them...” (31:16-17). This grim news was delivered while Moshe and Yehoshua stood at attention in the *Ohel Moed* [Tent of Meeting]. Hashem wanted to demonstrate this, not merely foretell it. How so?

The pillar of cloud, the visible display of Hashem’s Presence, first appeared inside the tent, as stated above. After this initial appearance, it moved to the door of the tent, away from Moshe and Yehoshua. This accurately foreshadowed the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdosh* [Temple], as explained in the *Gemara Rosh Hashana* 31A, toward the bottom of the page. The sages relate that the *Shechina* [Divine Presence] departed from *Bnai Yisroel* little by little when they transgressed enough to bring about the destruction of the Temple. One stage of “travels of Hashem’s Presence” was “from the *Keruv* [angelic figure] to the threshold”. Shlomo *Hamelech* [King Solomon] had constructed two *Keruvim* [angelic figures] next to the *Aron* [Holy Ark]. An early step in Hashem’s removal of His Presence was to depart from the *Keruv* to the threshold, the doorway of the chamber, which housed the *Aron* and *Keruvim*. This idea is found in the verse in *Yechezkel* [Ezekiel] 9:3: “Then the glory of the G-d of Israel ascended from atop the *Keruv* on which it had been, going to the threshold of the Temple.”

It is known that a prophecy accompanied by a demonstration or visible, tangible signs is sure to come true. For this reason, Hashem’s pillar of cloud moved away from Moshe and Yehoshua and stood at the doorway. It brought the message to them in a much more powerful fashion.

The King of Kings is also the Educator of Educators. Teachers know that the effectiveness of telling does not even come close to that of showing. It is essential to MODEL proper behavior. Furthermore, hands-on presentations of various forms are crucial. This is an additional lesson conveyed to us by today’s *parsha* [Torah portion].

May we witness the return of the *Shechina* to the *Bais Hamikdosh*, the reverse of what was predicted in *Parshas Vayailech*.

By Rabbi Moshe Heigh

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