בס״ד

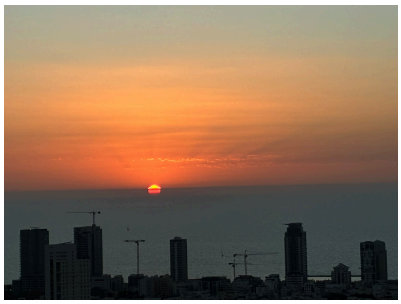
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Parshat Haazinu

ז׳ בתשרי ה׳תשפ״ז

It’s Not For You

This past Thursday evening, I was sitting on my balcony watching the sunset after a long day of touring Caesarea thinking of ideas for my Dvar Torah this week. My friend Noah was standing next to me and pointed out that there was only one cloud in the sky. Just one, floating there by itself. Two minutes later, I looked closely again and that lone cloud wasn’t alone anymore, it was part of a whole flock of clouds filling the sky. Nothing had really happened. I just wasn’t watching closely enough to see it build.

That image set into motion my idea for my Dvar Torah this week. Earlier this week, I’d also watched the movie *Up* for the first time, an animated film about an elderly widower named Carl and his late wife, Ellie. Ellie spends her entire life dreaming of Paradise Falls; she’s got a scrapbook, an adventure book, a whole vision. But she dies without ever getting there. When Carl, her husband, finally makes it there, flying his house across continents to that exact spot, he opens her book and finds a message: she wasn’t disappointed that she never made the trip there herself. Her adventure was the life she actually lived with Carl, their home, their marriage. The dream mattered, but it was never about her personally standing at Paradise Falls herself. It was about her setting in motion something that had meaning, even if she didn’t get to see the end result herself. One dream filled a whole life without her ever seeing where it landed.

Parshat Haazinu ends with the same idea, except with Moshe Rabbeinu. Hashem tells him to climb Har Nevo, where he'll see the vast expanse of Eretz Yisrael spread in front of him, and then die there without ever setting foot in the land. The man who dedicated his entire life for forty years to Am Yisrael and Hashem's mission. He led the nation through the desert, dealt with their kvetching, advocated for them when Hashem wanted to punish them, and taught them Torah. But he made one mistake: he hit the rock instead of talking to it, one moment of not having full bitachon (trust) in Hashem in front of Am Yisrael. Because of that, he lost out on his ultimate dream of entering Eretz Yisrael.

But the thing is that Moshe never stops. Even after knowing he won't be getting in he keeps teaching Am Yisrael, leading them through the desert, he keeps carrying out Hashem's mission. He works just as hard for a future he will never personally see.

There is a similar idea by David HaMelekh. He wants with all his heart to build the Beit HaMikdash, but Hashem tells him no, because too much blood was shed at his hands, even in wars he was right to fight. David doesn't fight it. He accepts it and starts to gather the materials and draw up plans that he hands down to his son, Shlomo. He does the work to help create something he will never be able to personally see completed. Unlike Moshe, David isn't paying for a mistake he made. He's accepting that some things simply aren't his to finish, no matter how much good he did to get to that point.

Moshe on Har Nevo, David with his plans, Ellie's adventure book from *Up*: none of them got the ending they wanted. But none of them used that as an excuse to stop working and building a meaningful life and a future. They understood that what they were building was greater than themselves. The mission was to help those around them, and the future generations.

And there's something so unbelievable about that. What Moshe only got to dream of, and look at from a mountaintop, we get to just do. It's the easiest it's ever been in history for a Jew to get to Eretz Yisrael, whether that be for a trip or to make Aliyah. It's just one plane ticket

away. We even have lone soldiers from all around the globe, giving up so much, leaving their families and the comfort of their lives abroad to come fight for something greater than themselves. That same idea shows up: in parents raising kids whose futures they won't completely see, in people building shuls, yeshivas, and companies meant to outlast them, in teachers who put everything into shaping the next generation. That's what I saw on my balcony: one dream, held by a man on a mountain thousands of years ago, that was quietly gathered and realized generation after generation until it filled the whole sky. We're standing under a sky Moshe Rabbeinu never got to see, built from a cloud he planted thousands of years ago.

So what the ending of Parshat Haazinu leaves us with isn't "did you get exactly what you wanted." It's whether we can work in our lives like Moshe Rabbeinu and David HaMelekh did; faithfully working for something bigger than our own ending, trusting that the sky will fill with what we set in motion, even when we don't get to watch it ourselves.

Shabbat Shalom!

P.S. Thank you to my Rav, Rav Shlomo Chayen, for helping to review this Dvar Torah before I sent it out this week. And thank you to my friend Evan Urbach, who got up and talked about kung fu panda for ten minutes then connected it to his commitment on Rosh Hashana. He's who inspired me to include a bit about movies, something I love, in each of my Dvars. And thank you to all of you for reading, I hope you enjoyed the message about doing things greater than yourself, whether you get to see the end result or not.