

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

Tuesday, February 09, 2010

Reflections on a deep snow

On February 5, 2010 a snow storm was predicted that would bring 30 inches of snow. Anticipating that we might lose power, I turned on the gas burners so that there would be warmth in the house should we lose power. At 9 PM, we lost power and had no electricity or heat. The snow fell through Shabbos evening. To protect our indoor pipes, we turned the water off and only turned it on when we needed it and let the water run out each time so as not to damage the pipes. We had food, even warm food, but had to keep warm with blankets. We rested most of the time, watching the snow accumulate, wondering when the electricity would come back on.

We spent Motzei Shabbos shoveling a small walkway from our front door to the street, in case we had any emergency we had a path at least to the street. This was far from the entire driveway, just a small path.

Sunday morning came and there was still no electricity. Our home without electricity, without heat, and with inconvenient plumbing, was barely meeting our needs. We managed with the help of some paid snow shovelers to shovel our driveway to the street, but the street was not plowed and we still could not go anywhere.. We live about two lots from a street that was plowed and which did have power. Our own efforts were not enough. We were dependent on others to get to a warm place So near and yet so far away!

Luckily, a private truck came to plow out our neighbors closer to the plowed street! He had a truck with a plow on it, and even he got stuck in the street! But he did plow to the corner. From my driveway, the distance of street that needed to be plowed so we could get out was just my driveway to the next! We ventured to shovel the snow in the street.

And we made it, with some help. I took the car and tested it...I got to the corner before I started spinning, so I put the car back and took my shovel and began digging at the corner so that we would be assured to be able to go back and forth to our home if we relocated until the electricity and heat were restored.

As I dug, families and children, each with a bag, were walking off the street. No car could manage 30 inches of snow and the hills of the street. We needed to be plowed out. Yet here it was, Sunday, and no plow had comedown the street except for our neighbor's son. No electricity was restored. People's faces were sad, gloomy, and full of frustration and despair as they left, not wanting to go but not being able to stay at home in such unlivable cold.

We went to a nearby hotel and came back that evening to see if there was a change. None.

On Monday I returned again to the house, threw out all the food in the refrigerators and freezers. A plow had now come through and moved snow in front of my driveway so I had to dig out again. And, it blocked the mailbox too. I spent several hours at home on these tasks, and as I did, neighbors who had not yet been plowed were out walking around. Everyone felt the same – “When will those who can get me back into my home get to my situation? How long will I have to wait to get back into my house? What are their priorities and how can I persuade or encourage them to respond more quickly to my situation?”

Back to the hotel. Yet we came back in the evening on hearing that the electricity had been restored. We walked into our house, with heat and electricity and felt so joyous! But it was not without worry because the next day's forecast was for another 10 to 20 inches of snow on top of what had already fallen. There was still much to do to make ready.

But it was that moment of joy of being back in my house that some subtle feelings that I had been having all during these circumstances took root. It was as if, in one second, the entire experience had become a metaphor – Hashem could not stay in His House, first because of our aveiras and then because Klal Yisrael ceased to exist due to sinas chinum. We were no longer one and the Shechina had nothing to attach to, and we went into exile. His House was just not livable.

How long will we be in exile? When will those who can restore the matter make that choice? WE are the ones who can restore Hashem to His House. He has waited patiently for us – understanding our priorities, we have to make our choices and decisions because life is complex. Hashem has been waiting very very patiently, but He is near! He is checking in on us – are we Klal Yisrael again? Will He be able to return home?

Hashem has been waiting 2000 years. Is it time for us to shift our priorities, to make ourselves more conscious of Hashem's Will, to set aside disputes, hatred, anger, fighting, power struggles, bitterness and more so that the Shechina, when checking, can see that conditions are different and Klal Yisrael is restored and that Hashem can return to His Bais?

WE are the ones making the decisions here. Let us make wise choices, choices that include G-d-consciousness and love for Hashem! Passover is coming in about a month. Please – let's do what we can in every way to correct what needs to so that Hashem can return to His Bais. We will be so glad that we did!! One way can be found at www.ayproject.com