

A-VORT-A-WEEK

פרשת ויגש

176

Watch your step!

"ויעלו ממצרים ויבאו ארץ כנען אל יעקב אביהם"
(מה: כה)

פסוק sends off his brothers back to יעקב, their father. The פסוק relates to us that they left מצרים and came to ארץ כנען, to יעקב their father. These details seem superfluous. Isn't it obvious that they had to first leave מצרים and then enter ארץ כנען, in order to get back to יעקב?

The מהרי"ל דיסקין explains that יוסף had commanded his brothers "אל תרגזו בדרך", which רש"י¹ explains to mean "don't take big steps". Some explain that יוסף told them not to take big steps, since the says that when someone takes big steps, he loses a גמ'² 500th of his eyesight. יוסף was worried that they would race back to יעקב to relay the good news to him, as soon as possible. He therefore urged them not to go too fast, which would result in ruining their eyesight.

The brothers however, still felt that it was a matter of the מצוה of אב כיבוד for them to tell יעקב the news as soon as possible, as it would help him overcome his sorrow over the initial loss of יוסף. They therefore wanted to run to יעקב. When יוסף told them not to run, they were faced with a dilemma: on the one hand, they had the מצוה of אב כיבוד to take into account, while on the other hand, יוסף had the status of a king and the הלכה says דינא דמלכותא דינא, the law of the kingship becomes the law. They therefore had to listen to יוסף.

This point would only remain true, so long as they were in מצרים. Since יוסף was the king in מצרים, his command would only be treated as the הלכה, while they were in the land that he ruled. Once they had left מצרים, they would be allowed to run.

This says the מהרי"ל דיסקין, is what our פסוק is coming to tell us. "ויעלו ממצרים ויבאו ארץ כנען" - "They left מצרים, the place where they were not allowed to run, and they came to ארץ כנען, where they could now run. "אל יעקב אביהם", they came to him very soon, as they were now permitted to run!



¹ In his second explanation

² תענית (י)

A-HALOCHA-A-WEEK

52

הלכות שבת:

Covering a bowl with a cloth

One may not cover a bowl of water with a cloth on Shabbos since the cloth might fall in and this could lead to one squeezing it, unless:

- » The cloth is designated specifically for this purpose.
- » There is no water in the bowl (even if there are other coloured liquids.)

Running through heavy rain without a raincoat

It is Ossur to walk through a puddle of water which would cause one's clothes to get wet. The reason for this is that it may lead one to squeezing out his wet clothing. The exception to this rule is if one needs to walk through a puddle to go do a Mitzvah. In this case one would be allowed to cross the puddle provided he walk with his hands inside his clothing to serve as a reminder not to squeeze. One may even walk through water that is up to his neck. Similarly, it is permitted to return home after having done the Mitzvah. From here the Poskim learn to walking through a rain when one's clothes will for sure become wet. The same Halocha would be true. That is that to go through the rain for a non-Mitzvah purpose would be forbidden. For a Mitzvah however, would be permitted.

Complete and pure כוונה

"ויאמר ישראל אל יוסף אמותה הפעם אחרי ראותי את פניך וכו'" (מו: ל)

When יעקב meets יוסף after all these years, he says "אמותה הפעם" - "now I can die". Now that I have seen you, I can die.

The מדרשים are bothered by what יעקב meant when he said this. Another question that is asked by the מהרי"ל דיסקין is: the גמ' says "אל תפתח פה לשטן", one should not entice the שטן. In this instance, when יעקב was speaking about his death, it seems as though he was clearly enticing the שטן.

The מהרי"ל דיסקין brings a whole new explanation. Chazal tell us that at that point in time, when יעקב met יוסף, יעקב was reciting שמע. In שמע, one says the words "ובכל נפשך". The correct כוונה for these words, is that one should be prepared to give up his life for the sake of ה'.

יעקב knew through רוח הקודש that he would establish 12 tribes. Throughout the many years of יוסף being gone, he only had 11 sons, and hence there were only 11 שבטים. This bothered him to no end, עד כדי כך that he had a very difficult time having כוונה while reciting the words "ובכל נפשך". How could he give up his life if he hadn't fulfilled his תפקיד, his purpose, which was to establish 12 קה?

When יעקב now met יוסף, for the first time in 22 years, he was able to have complete and pure כוונה for the words "ובכל נפשך", now he would be able to sacrifice his life for ה'. With this in mind, we can now understand our פסוק. יעקב wasn't saying that now he can die, rather he was saying that at that point, he had the full ability to have כוונה in giving up his life, for the sake of ה'. (YK)

Be on guard - ALWAYS!

"וישב ישראל בארץ מצרים בארץ גשן ויאחזו בה ויפרו וירבו מאד" (מז:כז)

explains that our פסוק says that בני ישראל were in both ארץ מצרים and in ארץ גשן to tell us that they are not two separate lands rather גשן is in מצרים.

ר' משה פיינשטיין זצ"ל has a question on this as follows: A few פסוקים earlier³, the תורה already mentions ארץ גשן and ארץ מצרים in the same פסוק. From there one can gain that גשן was in מצרים. Why then does the תורה see the need for our פסוק to have to tell us again that גשן was in מצרים?

ר' משה פיינשטיין זצ"ל explains that people nowadays think that there are places that one can live in במנוחה-גלות. They think and believe that there is no need to put in too much effort or make boundaries for their children's חינוך, or their own רוחניות. They feel that this is because of their surroundings. There are very חשובה רבנים around, good neighbours, lots of kollelim, significant institutions and so on...

To such a mindset the תורה answers that even though בני ישראל were in ארץ גשן which was an oasis of תורה in a country filled with עבודה זרה, and one might think that one could give up all their guards and efforts in רוחניות because of one's surroundings. There was nothing else in ארץ גשן other than תורה. Yet, the תורה still reiterates and tells us, NO! It is still in ארץ מצרים and the full level of שמירה needs to be employed! (GDS)

HAVE A GREAT SHABBOS!!

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