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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת בהעלתך

וַיִּסְעוּ מִהַר ה' דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְכוּ'. ז וַיְהִי בִּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה וְכוּ'. ז וַיְהִי הָעָם כְּמִתְאַנְנִים רַע בְּאָזְנֵי ה' וְכוּ'. (במדבר י, לג – יא, א)

They journeyed from the Mountain of Hashem a three-day distance... When the Aron would journey, Moshe said... The people took to seeking complaints; it was evil in the ears of Hashem... (Bamidbar 10:33-11:1)

In this week's *Sidrah*, the Torah mentions Klal Yisroel's departure from Har Sinai, followed by the episode of the complainers. It interrupts this narrative with the paragraph of וַיְהִי בִּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֶן, which discusses the way they journeyed through the desert.

Rashi cites the Gemara (*Shabbos* 115b), which explains that this *parshah* of וַיְהִי בִּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֶן is out of place and should actually appear in the *parshah* of Bamidbar, which details the layout of Klal Yisroel's encampments in the desert. The question arises: why are they written here? The Gemara answers that this passage was positioned here to serve as a separation between two accounts of the misdeeds of Klal Yisroel. To highlight that these *pessukim* are not in their expected location, there is an inverted "נ" in the Sefer Torah, at the beginning and end of this portion, to act as brackets.

The Gemara clarifies which פורענות - wrongdoings deserving of punishment- are being discussed. The following *parshah*, concerning the מתאננים - those who were constantly looking for reasons to complain - represents the second instance of פורענות. But what is the first instance of wrongdoing? It is found in the previous *parshah*, וַיִּסְעוּ מִהַר ה', which describes their journey from Har Sinai. The Midrash comments on this phrase, explaining that "they fled from the mountain of Hashem like a child running away from school." The people were eager to leave that holy place because they feared that Hashem might give them more commandments. This eagerness reflects their lack of dedication to the Torah.

Additionally, Chazal infer from the spelling of the word וַיִּסְעוּ that Klal Yisroel were not completely connected to the Torah at the level expected of them. If they had been fully engaged in the Torah, they would have been reluctant to leave, similar to how they were hesitant to depart from the Yam Suf, as they were preoccupied with collecting spoils and treasures from the Egyptians. When Klal Yisroel departed from the Yam Suf, the word "וַיִּסְעוּ" is used, which Rashi explains indicates that their departure was against their will. In contrast, the use of the word "וַיִּסְעוּ" to describe their journey from Har Sinai suggests that they left willingly, highlighting their lack of true longing for the Torah.

Tosfos asks the following question: After the episode of the מתאננים, *the complainers*, the Torah presents the *parshah* of the מתאווים, *the cravers*. The *possuk* (11:4) states, וְהָאִסְפָּסְפָּ אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבוֹ הַתָּאוּ, וַתְּאֹהוּ, *the rabble that was among them cultivated a craving* – they desired meat. This desire resulted in great wrath from Hashem and in the tragic deaths of many in Klal Yisroel. Tosfos questions why the Torah did not insert any interruption between the accounts of the מתאננים and the מתאווים, especially since these two incidents are serious and arguably warrant a separation. If the Torah generally avoids placing two accounts of wrongdoings in proximity, why was this case treated differently?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* suggests an answer based on an insight from the Dubno Maggid. He explains that the Gemara (*Kesubos* 59b) teaches a fundamental concept: הַבְּטָלָה מְבִיאָה לִידֵי שִׁיעֲמוּם, *boredom leads to insanity*. When people feel unoccupied and bored, they start inventing complaints and seek pretexts to grumble. Klal Yisroel in the *midbar* were in this exact situation. They were on “vacation” - free from work, without a care in the world, with the מַן providing them meals according to any tastes they desired, delivered straight from Heaven. This created a situation that was a recipe for disaster. The people in the *midbar* began inventing complaints and imaginary worries simply due to their boredom and lack of occupation.

However, the Gemara (*Berachos* 32a) explains that all sin is caused by the *yetzer horah* which Hashem instilled in man. Accordingly, there should be some degree of excuse for any sin committed, as it was Hashem who created within each person the *yetzer horah*, which entices them to sin. However, Chazal (*Kiddushin* 30b) teach that Hashem stated, בְּרֵאתִי יְצֵר הָרַע, בְּרֵאתִי תּוֹרָה תְּבַלֵּין, *I created the yetzer horah, and I created the Torah as its antidote*. We have the ability to learn Torah, which helps us protect ourselves from the influence of the *yetzer horah*. Therefore, every individual is responsible for overcoming their evil inclination.

Accordingly, if the Torah had presented the account of the complainers in direct proximity with the report of how Klal Yisroel left Har Sinai, their sin would have been extremely severe. Had they been fully attached to the Torah - filling their minds and days with learning and observing its teachings, they would never have experienced boredom and would not have fallen so low as to seek excuses to grumble and criticise. It was solely because Klal Yisroel abandoned the Torah they had just received, that their minds became empty, leading them to sin.

Thus, the separation achieved with the *parshah* of הָאָרְן בְּנִסְעֵהוּ serves to minimise the accusation against Klal Yisroel for complaining. Hashem was revealing His great kindness by creating this separation. Strictly speaking, they were at fault for the sin of the מִתְאַנְנִים since they abandoned the antidote for boredom and the *yetzer horah* – Torah. However, Hashem minimised the *kitrug* by making a separation between the two *parshiyos*, as if to say that they were not connected.

Now that we have clarified that this *parshah* was not simply intended to separate two instances of misconduct, but rather to somewhat absolve Klal Yisroel from the accusation against them, we can resolve the question of Tosfos. The only instance that necessitated a separation in the Torah was the juxtaposition of Klal Yisroel fleeing from the Torah and the resulting spiritual decline. However, regarding other wrongdoings, such as the מִתְאַנְנִים and the מִתְאַוִּים, the fact that the Torah wrote them together does not present any issue.

We see how crucial the Torah is in safeguarding us from the traps of the *yetzer horah*. Klal Yisroel, on their elevated level, became vulnerable to complaints and sin when they lowered their commitment to the Torah. May we strive to connect ourselves to the Torah, which protects us from spiritual harm and enables us to continuously reach new heights in our Avodas Hashem.

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