



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

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פרשת מטות - מסעי

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְצַבְאָתָם בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן. וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל פִּי ה', וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם. (במדבר לג, א-ב)

These are the journeys of the Bnei Yisroel, who went forth from the land of Mitzrayim according to their legions, under the hand of Moshe and Aharon. Moshe wrote their goings forth according to their journeys at the bidding of Hashem, and these were their journeys according to their goings forth. (Bamidbar 33:1-2)

In this week's *Sidrah*, the Torah summarises the entire journey of Klal Yisroel from their departure from Mitzryaim until they were ready to cross the Yarden and enter Eretz Yisroel. The *pessukim* list the forty-two encampments, and the Meforshim offer various reasons for this enumeration and the message it conveys.

The Targum Onkelos explains the word מוֹצְאֵיהֶם to mean "their goings forth." Accordingly, the *possuk* states that Moshe wrote מוֹצְאֵיהֶם, *their goings forth (from their place of encampments)*, לְמַסְעֵיהֶם, *to their journeys (to a new place)*. However, the phrasing at the end of this *possuk* is puzzling because it is presented in the reverse order, saying מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם, *their journeying to a new place according to their goings forth*.

Additionally, the Ohr HaChaim raises a question about why the Torah emphasises that Moshe wrote their journeys. After all, did he not write the entire Torah? Furthermore, why does the *possuk* highlight that Moshe documented the encampments עַל פִּי ה', *at the bidding of Hashem*? Surely, the entire Torah was written at Hashem's bidding.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* references the Kesav veHakabalah, which interprets the word מוֹצְאֵיהֶם in an alternative manner based on the Midrash, cited by Rashi. The Midrash brings an analogy of a king who travelled a great distance to find a cure for his ill son. Once the son was cured and they were returning home, the king pointed out various events from their outbound journey. At one location, he recalled, "Here you were very tired," and at another place he noted, "Here you cooled off from your fever," and so on. Similarly, the Midrash explains that Hashem recaps the events of Klal Yisroel's forty-year sojourn in the *midbar*. The Kesav veHakabalah derives from this Midrash that the word מוֹצְאֵיהֶם does not refer to their "goings out" (מִלְשׁוֹן יְצִיאָה); rather, it signifies "their happenings." This usage can be found elsewhere (see *Shemos* 18:8, *Yehoshua* 2:23) where this word is used in such a context. Hashem was recounting all the occurrences that transpired during Klal Yisroel's lengthy and tumultuous journey from Mitzrayim until they were on the verge of entering Eretz Yisroel.

With this new understanding of the meaning of the word מוֹצְאֵיהֶם, R' Leib *zatzal* clarifies the puzzling wording in the *possuk* and addresses the questions above. Initially, the Torah mentions the מוֹצְאוֹת, *happenings*, before the מַסְעוֹת, *journeys*, and later reverses the order. The underlying message is that even though it might seem that the events in the *midbar* occurred as a result of Klal Yisroel finding themselves in various locations, this is not the case. Rather, Hashem led them to different places to enable certain events to come about.

This is the meaning of the *possuk*, וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל פִּי ה' . At Hashem's command, Moshe wrote of the happenings as if they were the result of Klal Yisroel's journeys through different places. This is so because the Torah is written in a way that reflects people's speech - דְּבַר תּוֹרָה כְּלָשׁוֹן - בְּנֵי אָדָם. However, the truth is that אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם - these are their journeys according to the occurrences. Their travels were Divinely orchestrated to allow them to experience what Hashem wanted to happen.

With the above insight, the Rosh Yeshiva offers a deeper understanding of the parable presented in the Midrash. The Midrash tells us of a king who was travelling with his ill child to a distant place to cure him. It would seem that at this distant destination, there was an expert physician or a specific remedy that could cure the child. However, the absence of this central detail in the story implies that the journey itself was integral to the child's recovery. The experiences and events along the way were essential in providing healing. Thus, upon their return, the father emphasises recounting all the events experienced during the journey, as they were the means to facilitate healing.

This concept is similarly reflected in Klal Yisroel's journey through the *midbar*. Living for many years among the lowly Mitzriyim resulted in a prolonged exposure to the spiritual impurities of Mitzrayim. Consequently, Klal Yisroel needed significant cleansing and purification to prepare for living in Eretz Yisroel. Their travels through the desert served as this vital spiritual healing. Although the difficulties they faced along the way may have seemed unnecessary, they should be understood in retrospect as part of the Divine therapeutic process that enabled Klal Yisroel to enter Eretz Yisroel in a pure state.

In a similar vein, the Malbim draws an analogy between the transition from corrupt Mitzrayim to holy Eretz Yisroel and an individual who wishes to move from a country with a scorching hot climate to the Arctic. If he were to make this transition abruptly, moving from one extreme to the other, he could become ill or even die. Instead, doctors would advise a gradual transition. Depending on the individual's health, he would be instructed to make stops along the way to acclimate slowly to the changes in temperature and climate. The doctor would provide guidance at each stage, indicating where to go and how long to stay in each place before the individual is ready to move on. The Malbim explains that the stops along Klal Yisroel's journey through the desert served this purpose. This is the meaning behind the *possuk* that states: וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, *These are the journeys of the Bnei Yisroel, who went forth from the land of Mitzrayim*. Because they were leaving the tainted Mitzrayim, Klal Yisroel needed to undergo various encampments along the way.

The lesson here is relevant to everything that happens in our lives. Many events may seem coincidental, and sad or tragic occurrences often appear to result from unfortunate circumstances. However, every experience - whether good or bad - serves a purpose and follows a plan. Everything we go through contributes to our spiritual growth and development. May we be *zoche* to live with this understanding, trusting in Hashem that all events are ultimately for our good, leading to a blessed life in both this world and the next.