

1 – Topic – A Thought as I head out to Eretz Yisrael

As we prepare for Shabbos Nachamu - Parshas Va'eschanan. B'chasdei Hashem I am on my way to the airport B'ezras Hashem to go and be in Eretz Yisrael. This is a time that we have an extra appreciation of the ability to be in Eretz Yisrael. Let me share with you a quick thought that I have as we head out.

By Yetzias Mitzrayim sometimes the Torah refers to Yetzias Mitzrayim as (יום צאתה מארץ מצרים) Yom Tzeischa Mimitrayim. In Parshas Re'eh it says as is found in 16:3 (יום צאתה מארץ מצרים) Yom Tzeischa Mimitrayim the day you went out of Mitzrayim implying that it was daytime.

Also in Parshas Re'eh it says as is found in 16:1 (כי בחדש האביב, הוציאך יְרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים מִמִּצְרַיִם--לְלֵילָה). It says also that Klal Yisrael went out at night. There are Pesukim that imply it was by day and those that imply that it was by night.

As a matter of fact, if you go back to Parshas Bo regarding Yetzias Mitzrayim in Perek Yud Beis and you read from Posuk Lamed Gimmel through Lamed Vav, you would have the understanding that they went out at night. The Pesukim seem to say that they went out at night. Later in Posuk Mem Aleph (וַיְהִי בַעֲצָם יוֹם הַיּוֹם הַהוּא, יָצְאוּ כָל-צְבָאוֹת יְרֵךְ, מִמִּצְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם). Rashi explains that HKB"Y told them to physically leave at night. But there appears to be somewhat of a contradiction in places where the Torah refers to it as the day you left Mitzrayim and those that refer to it as the night you left Mitzrayim.

Rav Schwab in Parshas Re'eh (on page 417 and this topic was expanded upon in the Divrei Torah to Parshas Re'eh 5776 – Ayin Sham) gives the following explanation. He says that when Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim to head to Eretz Yisrael there were two things that happened. One was the physical change of location, they were physically in Mitzrayim and they traveled through the Midbar and they were then physically in Eretz Yisrael. But there was something else. There was also a change that was mental, that was intellectual, that was a change in the thinking process of a person. It was one thing to physically leave Mitzrayim but it is another thing to divorce yourself and separate yourself from the mentality of Mitzrayim. That is why it says that when Klal Yisrael went out by day, it says (יום צאתה מארץ מצרים). It refers to the day you left the land of Mitzrayim. The land of Mitzrayim meaning the land is a physical spot on the globe. They physically left Mitzrayim by day.

However, they actually left Mitzrayim mentally at night when HKB"Y freed them from the yoke of Mitzrayim with Makkas Bechoros and then it says (כי בחדש האביב, הוציאך יְרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים מִמִּצְרַיִם--לְלֵילָה). There is leaving Mitzrayim meaning leaving the mentality of Mitzrayim. So there is the (ארץ מצרים), the physical leaving which was by day but the mental change, the change in considering themselves the Am Hanivchar are no longer part of Mitzrayim, that took place by night.

Which is the main aspect of leaving Mitzrayim? (וְזָכַרְתָּ, כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם) not (מִמִּצְרַיִם). You were Avadim, you were subjugated to the Mitzrim not only as slaves but also as people who had been influenced by the culture of Mitzrayim, by the people of Mitzrayim and the things that they did. So that, there are two aspects to leaving Mitzrayim, two aspects to the Geulah, the physical Geulah and of course the Geulah Hanefesh, the Geulas Haruach of leaving Mitzrayim.

Today, it is a much smaller scale we are not at the Geulah, but when we are Zoche to leave America and go to Eretz Yisrael and we are Zoche to go to a land where Boruch Hashem the Yeshiva world is extremely connected to Torah, has a different view of Torah, has a different mentality of Torah. They don't have the American influence that many of us have. We have to know that it is one thing to leave Eretz America, it is one thing to physically leave and to go to the place on the globe that we love that is called Eretz Yisrael. It is important. But more importantly we need to leave from America. We have to take the America out of us, we have to have the sense that we are going to a place where there is a different mentality about Yiddishkeit. They have a different way of looking at Yiddishkeit.

It is incredible. You walk on Motzoei Shabbos down the streets in the neighborhoods in Yerushalayim and you hear singing at Melave Malka from the windows of the apartments. It is just a Yiddishe Platz. It is a place where people are thriving in being Yidden and being divorced, separated from all of the Ritzonos, all of the desires, all of the pursuits that we have unfortunately become so used to in the United States here in NY. Even in our community, even where we are, we are very connected to the American culture, the culture of needing, wanting, having to have, it is just incredible the difference.

I was in Eretz Yisrael, I was learning and somebody who I know came to say hello to me, an Eretz Yisrael'dika Yid. Then he whispers to me, is it true that in America there are some Rabbanim who have smartphones? I looked at him and I said no, who told you that? To him it was incredulous it was impossible and here it is just something that became normal because we are Americans.

2 – Topic – A Thought on Parshas Va'eschanan

As you know, we have in this week's Parsha between Shlishi and Revii the Parsha of the Arei Miklat which really appeared already in Sefer Bamidbar, however, it is repeated here because as it says in 4:41 (אָז יִבְדִּיל מִשָּׁה) now Moshe Rabbeinu had to separate three other cities. We know that a Parsha that is repeated contains a Chiddush. Here in 4:42 it says (וְנָס, אֶל-אַחַת מִן-הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּ--וְהָיָה). It says that the Rotzeiach runs to one of these cities (וְהָיָה) and there he is able to live.

From that, the Gemara Darshuns in Maseches Makkos 10a (28 lines from the top) (תלמיד שגלה מגלין רבו) (עמו). That a Talmid who goes to Galus his Rebbe should go with him. (שנאמר וחי). It says that when he goes to the Arei Miklat he has to live (עביד ליה מידי דתהוי ליה חיותא). Make sure he could live properly, to live properly he needs his Rebbe. So a Talmid goes to Galus and imagine that, it is not such a short trip. He goes there the entire lifetime of the Kohen Gadol. His Rebbe has to go there and be available to teach.

The Rambam when he brings this down in Hilchos Rotzeiach (Sefer Nezikin) in the beginning of Perek Zayin he brings the Halacha (תלמיד שגלה לעיר מקלט מגלין רבו עמו שנאמר וחי) and the Rambam adds the words (וחיי בעלי חכמה ומבקשיה) the life of people who are intelligent also look for wisdom, (בלא תלמוד) (כמיתה חשובין), that is not living that is like Misah. That is the Drasha we have from these Pesukim.

Now this needs some explanation. It is a beautiful that everybody needs a Rebbe and a Rebbe is teaching, it is all true. However, we are not talking about a child that is going to Galus we are talking about an adult, we are talking about somebody who is going to Galus and it could be that he is middle age, it could be that he is passed middle age and he is going to Galus and he is a Talmid Chochom already. He knows how to learn. What is the importance that you are not alive if your Rebbe doesn't go with you?

I saw that Rav Berel Povarsky in his Sefer Badei Kodesh Al Hatorah, he says on the contrary. That is the point. The point is that even if a person is already a Talmid Chochom, he is already somebody who knows how to learn, he is already somebody who is a Baal Madreiga, but to go from one level to the next level in Torah and Avodah is itself (יָדָוּ) is itself living. That itself is Chiyus. To be able to step from one level to another and it doesn't have to be from the lowest level to the next level, even from a high level to the next level (יָדָוּ) is somebody who achieves.

Sometimes we say it is good enough. He is learning it is good enough. Good enough is not good. Good enough is for Gashmios'dika things. As long as a person can improve in Ruchnios a person has to look to improve in Ruchnios. That the Chiyus Shelo Mamash that is Mamash his Chiyus. By Gashmios you say it is good enough. By Ruchnios it is never good enough. A person always has to try to achieve to inch his way upward.

Having spoken earlier about the difference between the psyche, the psychology of the American mentality and the mentality of Boruch Hashem the Tzibbur that is learning in Yeshiva is learning in Kollel that spend so many years growing, it is a basic difference between the American mentality and the Eretz Yisrael'dika mentality. In America Boruch Hashem we have beautiful Yeshivos and Kollelim, we grow. When it comes to middle age it is good enough. Learn an hour in the morning, learn an hour at night, do the Parsha in the spare time. It is good enough. It is NOT good enough. Don't compare yourself to everyone around you. Compare yourself to yourself yesterday. Try always to achieve. (יָדָוּ) that is the Ikkur Chiyusa. The Ikkur Chiyusa of a person is to always be a growing person. The Gashmios that is good enough, it is fine, it is adequate. That is where the sense of adequacy of good enough belongs.

With this thought I am overjoyed to be heading to Eretz Yisrael to Artzeinu Hakedosha with a Tefilla that it should be a trip of growth in Ruchnios, a growth in Yir'as Shamayim, a growth in Avodas Hashem and it is my goal B'ezras Hashem to come back so that I should be able to take some of it with me IY"H.

You all should be Zoche, we all should be Zoche to go with the Geulah Sh'leima and if it happens that we go before the moment of the Geulah Sh'leima and it is not yet and it is within the Galus. we have to go there and absorb what we have to absorb in Eretz Yisrael and bring it back.

We should be Zoche to appreciate our visits to Eretz Yisrael. Last time I went it was after almost two years. I went to Eretz Yisrael four weeks ago and I had a new Tallis that I made a Shehecheyanu at the Kosel because I was just overjoyed to be there. It is a mixture of feelings the Kosel because you rip Kriya, it is sad to be there. But it is also a joy to have the Zechus to be there and the potential for growth. Shehecheyanu V'kiyimanu V'higiyanu Laz'man Hazeh. I am going back again within 30 days, what an absolute Zechus. IY"H we should all come Al Kanfei Nesharim Bim'haira B'yamainu. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!