

INSIGHTS FROM OUR CHABUROS

The special stones of the special land

רבי חנינא מתקן מתקליה

Rashi explains that Rabbi Chanina used to "fix the obstacles" he found along the roads of Eretz Yisroel. Due to his love for the land he was motivated to anticipate any problems that other people might confront due to the land itself, and he tried to correct them to prevent any mishaps. Therefore, he was alert to see if there were any stones or obstacles along the road, upon which people might trip, and he used to clear the road to prevent or at least minimize anyone's possible frustration.

Tosafos explains this episode with a sharply different approach. On his way to travel to Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Chanina used to lift up stones to weigh them. He wanted to know when he crossed the border and entered the holy land. As long as the stones weighed their normal weight, he knew that he was still outside the land. However, when he picked up a stone and it weighed much more than normal stones, he knew that he had crossed into the Land. Tosafos notes that this episode is found in the Tanchuma (Parashas Shelach), where the Midrash tells us that as soon as Rabbi Chanina realized that he was in Eretz Yisroel, he kissed the stones as he proclaimed (Tehillim 102:15): "For your servants have cherished her stones, and favored her dust."

Maharal writes that the fact that the stones of Eretz Yisroel are heavier than the stones of חוץ לארץ is a function of the greatness of the land. Even mundane objects such as stones are more spiritual in their essence than those found outside the land. As a result, the stones are not as readily affected by external physical forces, and they remain firm and stable, unchanged and unmoved when they are lifted. This results in their seeming more heavy.

Others say that the stones are heavier than those outside the land because they are rich with metals, in fulfillment of the verse (Devarim 8:9): "A land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you will mine copper."

PARSHA CONNECTION

In this week's daf the גמרא lists the sons of חם with the fourth named כנען, who is mentioned in this week's פרשה when we read that נח cursed כנען and declared that he will be עבד עבדים. Why did he curse כנען and not his father חם, and why curse him with being a slave? The חזקוני explains that חם saw נח in an embarrassing state, but didn't do anything to him, he went out of the tent and told his brothers as well as his son, כנען, what he saw. It was כנען who then went into the tent and castrated נח. This is why he cursed כנען. He cursed him to be a slave because slaves have no honor or self respect and he embarrassed (בחי"י) Noach with his actions. Another interesting reason is based on the רש"י, who says, that חם/כנען did not want to have to share the world with a fourth brother. This greed was cursed with slavery because a slave cannot own anything. So instead of having more because there will only be 3 brothers, he will now have nothing. (Heard from רובין רוזנבלום שליט"א).

STORIES OF THE DAF

Love of the Land...

מתקן מתקליה

The Alter of Slobodka, zt"l, moved to Eretz Yisrael when he was already over seventy-five years of age. He purposely waited until after Yom Kippur to leave so that he would arrive in a state of spiritual purity. Despite his advanced age, he began again in Eretz Yisrael with renewed energy and delivered very powerful shmuesen. One seminal parable which he would often repeat was that those who live in Eretz Yisrael are likened to people living in a giant Aron Hakodesh. This is because of its tremendous holiness, as we find in the Gemara in Kesuvos and which the Rambam asserts as the halachah, that even walking four amos in Eretz Yisrael makes one a ben olam haba. The Alter would exhort his listeners, "We see how important it is for us to work to improve, so that we will truly be worthy of this distinction. At the same time we must work to judge others, even those far from Torah, meritoriously. If we can see the good in those who only go to shul on Yom Kippur, we should surely see the good of those who are not only in shul every day, but who dwell in an Aron Hakodesh!"

Once, shortly after he arrived, the Alter took a walk before davening. Whenever he saw a stone on the path, he would move it aside. Those escorting him were certain that this was in order to remove any possibility of damage from the path.

When they asked him if this was what he was thinking, he looked at them incredulously, "What I am doing is a clear Gemara in Kesuvos 112. There, the Gemara recounts that Rav Chanina would level places where people were liable to stumble. Rashi explains that he did this because Eretz Yisrael was dear to him and he cleared the paths so that people shouldn't speak against the land.

"I do this out of my great love for Eretz Yisrael!" concluded the Alter.

HALACHA HIGHLIGHT

Receiving support from people outside of Eretz Yisroel

דוכתא דמשה ואהרן לא זכו לה אנא מי ימר דזכינא לה

The place that Moshe and Aharon did not merit [to enter], who says I will merit it?

The Avnei Nezer¹ questioned the value of a person living in Eretz Yisroel if he can not support himself financially without the funds he receives from people living outside of Eretz Yisroel. The reason for his uncertainty is that if the money is coming from outside of Eretz Yisroel, the person is still under the influence of the Angels that oversee what happens outside of Eretz Yisroel, rather than under the direct Divine Providence of Hashem. This fear is, perhaps, the reason that great leaders of previous generations did not move to Eretz Yisroel. Therefore, concludes Avnei Nezer, those who live in Eretz Yisroel and receive support from those living outside of Eretz Yisroel certainly diminish their mitzvah and may possibly not even fulfill any mitzvah whatsoever.

He later² qualifies this thought and writes that perhaps it applies only if the residents in Eretz Yisroel receive their support from those outside of Eretz Yisroel as a tzedaka donation. Under such conditions it is possible that the resident of Eretz Yisroel is under the influence of the forces the emanate from outside of Eretz Yisroel. However, if the money is received as an honorarium, similar to the way one might send a monetary gift to a Torah scholar, this issue will not apply. Accordingly, the mitzvah of those living in Eretz Yisroel is not diminished and another reason³ will have to be found to explain why great leaders of previous generations did not move to Eretz Yisroel. He concludes, however, that the primary mitzvah is for those living in Eretz Yisroel to derive their support from Eretz Yisroel.

The Satmar Rov⁴ cited this opinion of Avnei Nezer and wrote that leaders for generations took the opposite approach. They strongly encouraged people to donate generously to the residents in Eretz Yisroel and by doing so the benefactors would have a share in their Torah study as well as their mitzvah of dwelling in Eretz Yisroel. After citing additional authorities who emphasize the importance of supporting the residents of Eretz Yisroel he reiterates that those in Eretz Yisroel who are supported by funds that come from outside Eretz Yisroel do not in any way diminish the mitzvah, in contrast with the position of Avnei Nezer.

1. שו"ת אבני נזר י"ד סי' תנ"ד אות י"ח.
2. שם אות ב'.
3. ע"ש מש"כ לתרץ זה בא"א.
4. ויאל משה מאמר ישוב א"י אות ק"ז.

MUSSAR FROM THE DAF

Meriting Teshuvah Hameisim

רבי אבא מנשק כפי דעכו. רבי חנינא מתקן מתקליה...רבי חייא בר גמא מיגדר בעפרה, שנאמר: "כי רצו עבדיך את אבניה ואת עפרה יחוננו"

Rabbi Abba would kiss the rocks of Akko, Rabbi Hanina would repair its stumbling blocks Rabbi Chiyah bar Gamda would roll in the dust of the land, as it is stated: "For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and love her dust" (Psalms 102:15).

The Gemora describes to us how the Amorim would display such love towards Eretz Yisroel through kissing the rocks, rolling in the dust etc) The Rambam brings this down in Hilchos Melachim how the Gadoli Chachamim would do this. גדולי החכמים היו מנשקין ארץ ישראל ומשנקין אבניה ומתגלגלין על עפרה, וכן הוא אומר כי רצו עבדיך את אבניה ואת עפרה יחוננו, עכ"ל (ברמב"ם בהל' מלכים פ"ה ה"ו וז"ל)

In the Sefer Rabbot Aפרים it is brought down that when the Brisker Rav came to Eretz Yisroel he didn't kiss the land. When he was asked why he didn't, he responded that the Rambam writes that the Gadoli Chachamim would do that so therefore this is only an inyan for select individuals. However, he was asked why he gives tzedakah before tefilah, as the Rambam says in מתנות עניים that in that case it's only for Gadolai Chachamim? He answered that there is no mitvah to kiss the ground, while there is a mitzvah to give tzedakah.

What does the Brisker Rav mean? Why is the difference if there is a mitzvah? Doesn't one want to emulate the Gadoli Chachamim in everything they do. Perhaps the Brisker Rav meant that, we have a concept that the heart follows one's actions (as per Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 16). However this klal is only applicable when one is doing a mitzvah. It isn't simply a psychological yesod, rather there is a spiritual hashpah on the person's lev when one performs a mitzvah. However, If a person performs an action that is reserved for people on a very high level, it won't have an impact on that person as this is not where the person is holding, and it can actually be detrimental to this person as well.

Oftentimes we see actions that we want to emulate from great people we are around. And we don't know if that is something we should be doing for ourselves. We can see from here that it depends on the action. If it is a mitzvah, then we should try to resemble the way that we observe they are performing the mitzvah. However if it is a certain hanghaga, it is possible that it is not appropriate for us as it may be above our current madrega.

POINT TO PONDER

רש"י ד"ה לשנה translates it to mean לסוף שנה, meaning at the end of a year. What is רש"י adding with these words? We all know that "in a year" means at the end of a year?

Response to last week's Point to Ponder:

The Gemara says that לעתיד לבוא the earth will produce ready to eat pastries. It then says that a wheat kernel will be tall like a tree. Why would we need wheat, if the earth is producing ready to eat pastries?

The Rishonim writes that they needed wheat flour for cooking. Meaning recipes of meat or similar foods that need some flour.

For more points to ponder by Rabbi Yechiel Grunhaus, or insights by Rabbi Yitzchok Gutterman, please visit our website, dafaweek.org, or download the app

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