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## פרשת מקץ

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### פרק מב פסוק לה

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא-יֵרֵד בְּנֵי עַמְכֶם כִּי-אֶחָיו מֵת וְהוּא לְבָדוֹ נִשְׁאָר וּקְרָאָהוּ אֶסּוֹן בְּדֶרֶךְ  
אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכוּ-בָהּ וְהוֹרְדֶתֶם אֶת-שִׁיבֹתַי בְּיָגוֹן שְׂאוּלָה:

רש"י

"בדרך אשר תלכו בה": הא בבית לא? אמר רבי אליעזר בן יעקב מיכן שאין  
השטן מקטרג אלא בשעת הסכנה.

מושג

שאין השטן מקטרג אלא בשעת הסכנה.

### Translation:

The שטן does not prosecute only in times of danger.

### Explanation:

When a person is in a dangerous situation he or she needs special assistance from Hashem. Hashem must therefore judge his or her actions to see whether he or she is deserving of such assistance. Therefore, by putting themselves in a dangerous situation the person is bringing a judgement on themselves<sup>1</sup> and giving the prosecutor, the שטן, the opportunity to call attention to their sins.

This applies to all risky behaviors<sup>2</sup> and for this reason the Torah commands us (דברים ד:טו)<sup>3</sup>, ונשמרתם מאוד לנפשותיכם to be very careful at all times with our lives.

### Looking in the Pasuk:

The Midrash quoted by Rashi<sup>4</sup> comes to explain why it is that Yaakov thought a calamity would befall Binyomin. What makes this particularly difficult is the fact that Yaakov does not say *maybe* a calamity will occur, אולי יקראהו אסון, but rather וקראהו אסון, a calamity *will* happen. Also problematic is the fact that Yaakov thought that this calamity would only befall בה אשר תלכו בה, on the road. To this the Midrash answers that the שטן prosecutes at times of danger, such as traveling, and that this almost ensures<sup>5</sup> that a tragedy will follow.

### Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Yaakov hesitates to send Binyomin with his brothers, realizing that the danger of travel will bring to an examination of his actions.

Understand: How the situations people place themselves in, affect Hashem's judgement of them.

Think: Close reading of text reveals Yaakov's fears.

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1 See note #1

2 See note #2

3 See note #3

4 See note #4

5 See note #5

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## NOTES

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1. The Gemoroh in : ראש השנה טז tells us:

ואמר רבי יצחק : שלשה דברים מזכירין עוונותיו של אדם, אלו הן : קיר נטוי, ועיון תפלה, ומוסר דין על חבירו

Three things call attention to the sins of man, and these are them: A falling wall, etc.

Rashi explains why a falling wall would call attention to one's sins:

קיר נטוי - ועובר תחתיו מזכיר עוונותיו, שאומר: כלום ראוי זה ליעשות לו נס, ומתוך כך הוא נבדק

*When a person walks under a falling wall he calls attention to his sins because Hashem asks if the person is deserving of a miracle (after all, the laws of nature would have the wall collapse on him, therefore, saving him would call for a change to the laws of nature, i.e. a miracle). Because of this, his actions are examined.* In effect, there could be a situation in which Hashem does not deem it necessary to punish a person, however, that person put himself in a situation in which he was at odds with the forces of nature and requires a miracle to save him. In such a case his מצוות ועבירות will be examined to see whether or not he merits being saved.

2. One must be careful even when fulfilling a Mitzvah. Even though we are taught that those who do Mitzvos are not harmed, שלוחי מצוה אינם ניוזקים (פסחים ח:), when there is a clear and present danger the protection of the Mitzvah is not necessarily forthcoming (שכיחא היוזקא שאני). The reason is as explained above; when a person puts themselves in a situation in which the forces of nature would harm them, a miracle (change of the laws of nature) is needed to save them, and they may not warrant such a miracle. The greater the danger, the more obvious the miracle (נס גלה), and only great Tzaddikim warrant open miracles to save them.

3. The Gemoroh in .שבת לב applies this rule to issues of health and sickness as well. It tells us:

לעולם יבקש אדם רחמים שלא יחלה שאם יחלה אומרים לו הבא זכות והפטר

*One should ask for mercy to not become ill, for should he become sick they tell him bring a merit to deserve to be healed.*

4. Rashi quotes this Midrash, however, Rashi is not found here but rather on the Pasuk in Parshas Vayigash (מד: כט) when Yehudah tells Yosef of his father's reluctance to send Binyomin:

וּלְקַחְתֶּם גַּם אֶת־זֶה מֵעַם פְּנֵי וְקָרְהוּ אֶסּוֹן וְהוֹרְדְתֶם אֶת־שִׁבְתִּי בְרָעָה שְׂאֵלָה :

Rashi's wording in Vayigash is without the double negative אין...אלא, but rather:

מיכן שהשטן מקטרג בשעת הסכנה.

Rashi is coming to explain that the Midrash does not mean that the שטן only prosecutes at times of danger but that it will prosecute at times of danger as explained above.

5. Perhaps the fact that the שטן will prosecute is in itself the אסון that Yaakov feared.

6. Additional questions:

a. Why did Rashi first mention this Midrash on the Pasuk in Vayigash, and not here?

b. How does this Musag apply to the question of why we are allowed to go to doctors and not required to only daven to Hashem?