
פרשת ויצא

פרק כח פסוק י

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה:

רש"י

וַיֵּצֵא: לא הָיָה צָרִיךְ לְכַתּוּב אֶלָּא 'וַיֵּלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב חֲרָנָה', וְלָמָּה הַזְכִּיר יִצְיָאָתּוּ, אֶלָּא מְגִיד שֶׁיִצְיָאָת צַדִּיק מִן הַמָּקוֹם עוֹשֶׂה רוּשָׁם, שֶׁבְּזִמְנֵי שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק בָּעִיר הוּא הוֹדָה הוּא זִינָה הוּא הַדְרָה, יָצָא מִשָּׁם, פָּנָה הוֹדָה פָּנָה זִינָה פָּנָה הַדְרָה, וְכֵן "וַיֵּצֵא מִן הַמָּקוֹם" הָאֵמֹר בְּנִעְמֵי וְרוּת¹.

מושג

שֶׁיִצְיָאָת צַדִּיק מִן הַמָּקוֹם עוֹשֶׂה רוּשָׁם.

Translation:

When a Tzadik leaves a place it makes an impact.

Explanation:

The presence of a Tzadik in a city is a source of spiritual glory, light and beauty for the city. When he leaves, the glory, light and beauty are emptied², leaving a spiritual emptiness³. This is true even if the Tzadik does not interact with those around him. However, he did not interact and change the people, when he leaves the city his influence leaves with him.

Looking in the Pasuk:

The Midrash Rashi quotes is bothered by the fact that in פסוק ה' it says וישלח יצחק את יעקב וילך פדנה ארם, why here does it change the verb from יעקב physically leaving while here the Pasuk is telling us of the spiritual effect his leaving had on the place.

Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Impact of Tzadik on place in which he lives.

Understand: Essence of Tzadik's influence. Physical presence compared to influence.

Think: Analyze text of Pasuk and use of ויצא instead of וילך.

1 See note #1

2 See note #2

3 See note #3

NOTES

1. ונתקם היא וכלתיה ותשב משגי מואב כי שמעה בשנה מואב כיפקדוה' את-עמו לתת להם להם: ז ותצא מרהמקום אשר היתה-שמה ושתה כלתיה עמה ותלכנה בדרך לשוב אל-ארץ יהודה:

2. There are a number of difficulties with understanding this Midrash. The most problematic is why do we not find the same comment when Avrohom or Yitzchak left a place? Surely their leaving also had an impact! Also, why does the Torah have to state the obvious? Isn't it clear that the leaving of a Tzadik will have an impact on the city? And finally, why did the Midrash see a need to bring a proof from Naomi and Rus leaving מואב שדה? A possible answer is that a Tzadik who has been active in his city spreading Torah and יראת שמים will clearly be missed and his absence will be profoundly felt. However, if a Tzaddik only sat and learned Torah but had nothing to do with all those around him, one might think such a Tzadik has no effect on his surroundings and his leaving will have no impact. This Musag is coming to dispel this perception.

Avrohom and Yitzchak had numerous interactions with those around them. They clearly left a strong impression on all those they came in contact with. The Torah does not have to tell me that their leaving made an impact. However, Yaakov was an איש תם יושב אהלים. We find no interaction between Yaakov and any of those living near him. One, therefore, might have thought that his leaving would go unnoticed as he made no real impact. The Torah is teaching us that the mere presence of a Tzadik gives a city glory, light and beauty. The Midrash did not say the Tzadik changes the way people act or think, rather that his presence itself alters the city for the better. Even when such a Tzadik leaves, the loss is felt. The same idea is found by Naomi and Rus who leave מואב שדה. We find no interaction between them and the people of מואב and yet when they left, the loss was felt.

3. The wording of the Midrash פנה הדרה וכו' needs explanation. Firstly, it should have continued with the verb of יצא which would have stressed the main idea of the Pasuk, that of ויצא. The Midrash should have read יצא הדרה, יצא ציוה וכו'. Secondly, the shoresh of פנה seems to connote an idea of emptying not just leaving. This seems to be a bit strange as I would have imagined that even though the Tzadik leaves the city, and the effect of his leaving is felt, a bit of his קדושה should remain. Based on what we wrote above, perhaps one could argue that since Yaakov did not interact with his environment therefore his impact was only his presence. When he left, nothing remained. This would also provide an answer to the question we asked above regarding why this idea does not appear by the other Avos. It would apply only by Yaakov as the איש תם יושב אהלים.

4. Question for further thought:

Why do we find that at times a place retains its holiness even when the קדושה leaves (such as מתן תורה הר סיני) and yet at times it does not (such as חורבן הבית הר הבית)?