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## פרשת ויגש

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פרק מה פסוק ט

מִהָרֹם וְעָלוּ אֶל-אָבִי וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף שְׁמֵנִי אֶל-לֵהָיִם לְכָל-מִצְרָיִם  
רָדָה אֵלַי אֶל-תַּעֲמֹד:

רש"י – מושג

אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל גְּבוּהָהּ מִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת

### Translation:

Eretz Yisroel is higher than all other lands.

### Explanation:

Eretz Yisroel is not geographically higher than other lands<sup>1</sup>, rather it is higher spiritually than other lands. But then why not just say ‘Eretz Yisroel is holier than all other lands’? Chazal convey this point in terms of being physically higher to teach that the spiritual greatness of Eretz Yisroel is not the result of our sanctifying the land, but its holiness is natural, an integral part of the land itself<sup>2</sup>. The Kedusha of Eretz Yisroel is a physical attribute of the land, and therefore can never be removed.

### Looking in the Pasuk:

Rashi mentions the Chazal which tells us that Eretz Yisroel is higher than all other lands in order to explain the words וְעָלוּ אֶל אָבִי, to go up to my father, as well as the words רָדָה אֵלַי, come down to me, which appear at the end of the Pasuk. However, the term עלה is used many times in Chumash and Rashi does not make the same comment<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps Rashi understands that Yosef, with the words וְעָלוּ אֶל אָבִי, was trying to communicate to his brothers that the Kedusha of אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל is not dependent on Yaakov and his family being there. Do not worry, he is telling them, that by leaving to Mitzrayim אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל will lose its Kedusha, for אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל is naturally Kadosh, higher than all other lands.

### Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Kedusha of Eretz Yisroel is a physical trait of the land itself.

Understand: Why the Kedusha of E”Y differs from that of other lands and the nature of the different types and levels of Kedusha found in E”Y itself.

Think: Compare and contrast Rashi’s comments here to similar Pesukim.

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1 See note #1

2 See note #2

3 See note #3

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## NOTES

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1. A way to explain the Musag in physical terms is provided by the מהרש"א. The Gemoroh in מסכת תענית (:) tells us *Eretz Yisroel was created first and the remainder of the world afterwards*. Therefore if we look at the world as a sphere created from the top down, Eretz Yisroel would be at the top of the sphere, higher than all other lands.

2. The Rambam<sup>4</sup> writes in (פ"ו ה"טז) that there is a fundamental difference between the Kedusha of the Beis Hamikdash and Yerushalayim and the Kedusha of Eretz Yisroel (as pertains to Shmitta and Maasros). The Kedusha of the former is the result of the Shechina, and the Shechina is always present, while the Kedusha of the rest of Eretz Yisroel regarding Shmitta and Maasros was dependent on the conquering of the land, and once the people left, the Kedusha was voided<sup>5</sup>. That said, the whole land of Israel, at least in comparison to other lands, also contains some inherent Kedusha (however not on the level of Yerushalayim<sup>6</sup>) given the fact that like the Beis Hamikdash and Yerushalayim, Hashem's Shechina is always present as the Pasuk says,

אַרְצֵי אֲשֶׁר-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ דָּרַשׁ אֹתָהּ תָּמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּהּ מִרְשֵׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרֵית שָׁנָה: (דברים יא:יב)

The Rambam (הלכות בית הבחירה פרק ז הלכה יב) talks of this Kedusha of ארץ ישראל and writes:

כל ארץ ישראל מקודשת מכל הארצות, ומה היא קדושתה שמביאין ממנה העומר ושתי הלחם והביכורים מה שאין מביאין כן משאר ארצות.

To summarize, we find 3 levels of holiness:

The Kedusha of ירושלים and בית המקדש which allows for the bringing of קרבנות and the eating of שני מעשר שני. This Kedusha is due to the intensified Shechina which resides there<sup>7</sup>.

The Kedusha of ארץ ישראל in that one may bring only from ביכורים, העומר ושתי הלחם (these levels of holiness are inherent, eternal, and not the result of human sanctification)

The Kedusha of ארץ ישראל as regards Shmitta and Maasros which is dependent on the sanctification of the land first by Yehoshua and then after גלות בבל by Ezra.

3. The Rashi here is actually quite puzzling. The Chazal that Rashi quotes is not written in the context of our Pasuk. It is quite unusual for Rashi to quote Chazal out of context. In fact the Gemoroh in קידושין which teaches us this Musag actually asks from where do we know that ארץ ישראל is higher, and it quotes a Pasuk in (כג:ח)<sup>8</sup>, but does not mention our Pasuk or any other Pasuk in Chumash. The obvious reason not to quote our Pasuk is that you could only prove that ארץ ישראל is higher than Mitzrayim, but it does not prove that it is higher than all other lands. Also problematic is that when Avrohom Avinu leaves Mitzrayim it also uses the term ויעל<sup>9</sup> and Rashi does not mention this Chazal. In fact, יהודה himself used the term איך אעלה אל אבי a few Pesukim earlier and Rashi did not quote the Chazal. We therefore propose that Rashi is coming to present a novel interpretation of Yosef's words to his brothers.

4. Questions for further thought:

a. Could Yosef's assurances regarding the Kedusha of א"י have anything to do with the last time Yaakov left Eretz Yisroel in פרשת ויצא?

b. We have learned about Kedusha found in places and the differences between them. Do the same differences apply to Kedusha found in objects (שופר, חומש, שופר, ציצית וכו')?

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4 ולמה אני אומר במקדש וירושלים קדושה ראשונה קדשה לעתיד לבוא, ובקדושת שאר א"י לענין שביעית ומעשרות וכיוצא בהן לא קדשה לעתיד לבוא, לפי שקדושת המקדש וירושלים מפני השכינה ושכינה אינה בטלה, והרי הוא אומר והשמותי את מקדשיכם ואמרו חכמים אע"פ ששמומין בקדושתן הן עומדים אבל חיוב הארץ בשביעית ובמעשרות אינו אלא מפני שהוא כבוש רבים וכיון שנלקחה הארץ מידיהם בטל הכבוש ונפטרה מן התורה ממעשרות ומשביעית שהרי אינה מן ארץ ישראל, וכיון שעלה עזרא וקדשה לא קדשה בכיבוש אלא בחזקה שהחזיקו בה ולפיכך כל מקום שהחזיקו בה עולי בבל ונתקדש בקדושת עזרא השנייה הוא מקודש היום ואע"פ שנלקח הארץ ממנו וחייב בשביעית ובמעשרות על הדרך שביארנו בהלכות תרומה.

5 This is only regarding the first conquering of the land by Yehoshua. However the second conquering, of Ezra, was different, as the Rambam explains, and afterwards the land retained this Kedusha.

6 Accordingly, the Gemoroh (קידושין טז) tells us that ארץ ישראל גבוה מכל הארצות.

7 It is important to note that even within ירושלים and בית המקדש the levels of קדושה are not similar. The Rambam we have quoted above details (פרק ז הלכות יב-כב) the 10 different levels of Kedusha.

8 כי אם-חיה' אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה וְאֲשֶׁר הֵבִיא אֶת-נֹרַע בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ צְפוֹנָה וּמִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדְחִיתִים שָׁם וַיִּשְׁבּוּעַל-אֲדָמָתָם: 8

9 וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְהוּא וְאֵשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לּוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הִגְבְּהָ: בראשית יג: 9