
פרשת מקץ

פרק מד פסוק ג

הַבֶּקֶר אֹר וְהָאֲנָשִׁים שִׁלְחוּ הַמָּה וְחַמְרֵיהֶם:
חז"ל

דאמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לעולם יצא אדם בכי טוב ויכנס בכי טוב, שנאמר הבקר אור
והאנשים שלחו. (תענית י:)

מושג

לעולם יצא אדם בכי טוב ויכנס בכי טוב.

Translation:

One must always be careful to leave (a city) when there is light and enter when there is light.

Explanation:

One who travels is placing himself in danger; the special Tefilah instituted for travelers, תפילת הדרך, reflects this fact. Our Musag comes to offer advice to the traveler by teaching him two lessons in personal safety. The first advises him when to travel and the second how to travel. Firstly, he should only travel when it is light outside, significantly reducing the danger of robbers and of falling into ditches. Secondly, the use of the words בכי טוב instead of ביום teaches us an additional lesson; that during his travels he should remain surrounded by Torah and Mitzvos. The merit of his remaining in a state of כי טוב, a reference to the acts of Tzadikim, will surely earn him protection from Above.

Looking in the Pasuk:

Yosef's brothers do not leave Mitzrayim on their own accord, they are sent out, שולחו. The Midrash teaches that Yosef intentionally delayed their departure so that they would not leave at night which would have made their capture almost impossible. The brothers did not suspect anything since in general people did not travel at night due to the danger on the roads.

The word אור in the Pasuk, which seems unnecessary, led חז"ל to read the message of טוב בכי טוב into the intent of the Chumash. The Torah wishes for us to connect the word אור here to the Pasuk כי טוב האור, a reference to מעשה צדיקים, to teach us the important lesson of traveling in a state of כי טוב, surrounded by acts of righteousness.

NOTES

The Musag teaches us that one should both leave and enter the city בכי טוב, when it is still light outside. The term בכי טוב taken to mean light refers to the Pasuk in בראשית (א:ד) which teaches וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב. Thus, "בכי טוב" is understood to mean when the sun is shining.

This seems to be a rather obvious lesson, a lesson that I should not need a Pasuk to teach. It is clearly safer to travel during the daylight hours, why does the גמרא have to teach me this? Additionally, why did the Torah wait until this Pasuk to teach me this lesson? Were the brothers of Yosef the first people ever to leave or enter a city? Actually, this wasn't even the first time the brothers had left Mitzrayim! Why did the Pasuk not teach us this lesson the first time the brothers left?

There is one further point of interest in the Pasuk. The Pasuk does not tell us that the brothers left but rather that they were sent, והאנשים שולחו. The previous time they had left (מב:כו) they were not sent, they simply left. Why now are they sent?

The מדרש תנחומא provides an interesting explanation:

הבקר אור והאנשים שולחו אמר יוסף אם אני משלח אותם בלילה אין כל בריה יכולה להגן לפי שנמשלו כחיות שגא (בראשית מט) גור אריה יהודה, ולכן אמר דן גור אריה (דברים לג) יהי דן נחש עלי דרך (בראשית מט) נפתלי אילה שלוחה (שם) (מדרש תנחומא י)

Yosef had to ensure that his brothers would not leave at night. He knew, teaches the מדרש, that if they left at night he would never be able to catch them and bring them back. Therefore, he delayed their departure and only in the morning were they sent. Thus, he was able to send his troops to capture them and return them to Mitzrayim, where he could confront them.

However, if so, how do we prove that one should only travel during the day? They left in the morning not for reasons of safety but simply because they were not given permission to leave until morning!

Perhaps we might answer that the Torah is not actually coming to teach that a person should travel only during the day, for that is fairly obvious. For this reason the Torah had never previously mentioned this lesson. The brothers left in the morning because they were not permitted to leave earlier for the reasons the Midrash explains. What the גמרא is coming to explain, with the lesson of our Musag, is why the brothers did not suspect foul play. After being denied exit by the Egyptians, why did they not think that something was up? After being fooled once, why did they not check their sacks? The answer is that almost no one travelled during the night because it was too dangerous. Therefore the brothers did not pay attention to the fact that they were not permitted to leave until the morning. In short, our Musag does not come to explain why they waited until the morning to leave but rather why first being allowed to leave in the morning did not arouse their suspicion.

However, we must now explain what lesson our Musag comes to teach. Yes, it explains why Yosef's brothers were not suspicious of his actions, but why is this relevant to us? In addition, there is a problem with the wording of the Musag itself. It is difficult to understand why the גמרא did not simply say לעולם יכנס אדם באור יום, which would echo the words in the Pasuk והבוקר אור, why the need to speak in riddles, and to reference the Pasuk in בראשית?

To answer, I believe we need to understand why daylight is referred to as בכי טוב in the first place. True, the Pasuk in בראשית does say בכי טוב, but that itself begs the question, why was the light called good? The Midrash Rabbah¹ explains that the אור in the Pasuk refers to מעשיהם של צדיקים. This is easily understandable because daylight is the time of action and human endeavor,

¹ רבי אבהו ור' חייא רבה, רבי אבהו אמר מתחלת ברייתו של עולם צפה הקדוש ברוך הוא במעשיהן של צדיקים, ומעשיהן של רשעים, הדא הוא דכתיב (תהלים א:ו) פִּי יוֹדֵעַ ה' דְּרֹךְ צַדִּיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים תֵּאבֹד: "והארץ היתה תהו ובהו", אלו מעשיהן של רשעים, "ויאמר אלקים יהי אור" אלו מעשיהן של צדיקים, אבל איני יודע באיזה מהם חפץ אם במעשה אלו ואם במעשה אלו, כיון דכתיב "וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב", הוי במעשיהן של צדיקים חפץ ואינו חפץ במעשיהן של רשעים (בראשית רבה פרשה ב סימן ה)

the time when acts of righteousness are usually done. Indeed, many מצות can only be done during the day. Additionally, their acts bring light to the world and illuminate our lives. וירא את האור כי טוב, says the Midrash, means that Hashem saw the actions of the Tzadikim as being praiseworthy.

Perhaps this is the message of our Musag as well. A traveler on the road needs special protection. Our Musag comes to teach that in order to merit that protection from Above, from the time the traveler leaves to begin his journey until the time he returns, he should be in a state of טוב כי טוב, a state of מעשה צדיקים. A similar lesson was taught in the same גמרא immediately preceding our Musag:

שני תלמידי חכמים שמהלכים בדרך ואין ביניהם דברי תורה ראויין לישרף,

and again in the גמרא in (נד.) where we learn:

המהלך בדרך ואין עמו לוייה יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר (משלי א') כי לוית חן הם.

Perhaps the word אור in the Pasuk, which seems to be unnecessary, led חז"ל to learn this lesson from our Pasuk. For it is rather obvious that in the morning it is light, why does the Pasuk tell me הבוקר הבוקר? To this חז"ל answer that the Pasuk wished to create a connection to the word אור found in the Pasuk טוב כי טוב, וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב, and to teach us not only *when* to travel, but more importantly *how* to travel as well!

Questions for further Thought:

- a. Where else do we find the word טוב כי טוב used in Chumash, referring to light? Is there a connection to the use of the word אור here?
- b. Can you think of another reason why the Torah chose to teach us this lesson in the context of Yosef's brothers?