
פרשת ויצא

פרק כח פסוק יא

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם בַּיָּלֵן שָׁם כִּי-בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשָּׂם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם
הַהוּא:

רש"י

וַיִּפְגַּע. וַרְבוּתוֹנוּ פָּרְשׁוּ לְשׁוֹן תְּפִלָּה, כְּמוֹ "וְאֵל תִּפְגַּע בִּי", וְלִמְדָנוּ שֶׁתִּקְוָה תְּפִלַּת עֲרֵבִית. וְשָׁנָה
הַפְּתוּב וְלֹא כָּתוּב 'וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל', לְלַמְּדָה שֶׁקִּפְצָה לּוֹ הָאֲרֶץ כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְפֹרֵשׁ בְּפֶרֶק 'גִּיד הַנְּשֵׂה' (חולין
צא:)

מושג

יְעַקֵּב תִּקְוָה תְּפִלַּת עֲרֵבִית (ברכות כו:)

Translation:

Yaakov established the ערבית prayer.

Explanation:

Yaakov is forced to flee his home and begins his journey to the house of Lavan. This גלות is to become a model for future גלויות. It is at this time that Yaakov stops to pray as darkness, which itself is a metaphor for גלות, descends. He thus establishes the nighttime prayer: תפילת ערבית. The Torah describes this Tefilah, which is established outside of the holy land of Israel as ויפגע, which means to cause to come together. This is because even though Yaakov had reached חרן, a miracle occurred which contracted the land and had the place where Yaakov stood 'meet' with הר המוריה. This was to become a lesson to all Jews who would be scattered around the world that they had the ability, and even the obligation, to connect to הר המוריה no matter where they stood. It also taught Yaakov and his descendants how a Jew must find the holiness in every place and in every thing, and that even in the darkest and most desperate times G-d is with every Jew.

Looking in the Pasuk:

The Midrash which Rashi quotes is bothered by two problems in the wording of the Pasuk. The first is the very unique word ויפגע, which does not seem appropriate to describe simply reaching a destination. Second is the word בַּמָּקוֹם which, when spelled with a פתח as it is here, refers to a special, known place, specifically to הר המוריה. If, however, Yaakov had reached חרן, as the Torah says: וילך חרנה, how does he daven on הר המוריה?

NOTES

The גמרא, from which our Musag is taken, teaches that each of the Avos established one of our three daily Tefilos¹:

אברהם תקן תפלת שחרית - שנאמר וישכם אברהם בבקר אל המקום אשר עמד שם, ואין עמידה אלא תפלה, שנאמר (תהלים ק"ו) ויעמד פינחס ויפלל. יצחק תקן תפלת מנחה - שנאמר (בראשית כ"ד) ויצא יצחק לשוה בשדה לפנות ערב, ואין שיחה אלא תפלה, שנאמר (תהלים ק"ב) תפלה לעני כי יעטף ולפני ה' ישפך שיחו. יעקב תקן תפלת ערבית - שנאמר (בראשית כ"ח) ויפגע במקום וילן שם, ואין פגיעה אלא תפלה, שנאמר (ירמיהו ז') ואתה אל תתפלל בעד העם הזה ואל תשא בעדם רנה ותפלה ואל תפגע בי.

It is quite appropriate to claim that אברהם, being the first of the Avos, would establish the first of the daily Tefilos, יצחק the second Tefilah, and יעקב the third. However, that would assume that אברהם did not pray three times a day, which is unlikely. Rather, what our Musag means is that since the Torah tells us that אברהם davened in the morning, יצחק in the afternoon and יעקב in the evening, we thus know that there are three Tefilos each day. That said, the fact that the Torah chose to tell us about אברהם davening שחרית יצחק, Mincha and Arvis יעקב, teaches us that there is a special connection between each one of the Avos and that particular Tefilah.

The following questions therefore arise:

- What special connection is there between יעקב and תפילת ערבית?
- Why does Yaakov first establish this Tefilah now?
- The Torah used different wording to describe each of the Tefilos. By Yaakov and תפילת ערבית the Torah uses the word ויפגע. Why is this word used to describe this Tefilah?

Rashi explains our Pasuk according to the גמרא in מסכת חולין which explains why the term ויפגע was used instead of the word ויתפלל:

כתיב ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה, וכתיב ויפגע במקום, כי מטא (הגיע) לחרן אמר: אפשר עברתי על מקום שהתפללו אבותי, ואני לא התפללתי? כד יהיב דעתיה למיהדר (כשחשב לחזור) קפצה ליה ארעא (התקמץ לו הארץ), מיד - ויפגע במקום. (חולין צא:)

The גמרא is bothered by the fact that on the one hand the Pasuk seems to tell us that Yaakov had reached חרן, and yet it then says that he davened במקום. The fact that it says במקום, with a פתח, refers to a special place, a place that is well known, as in בְּהַמְקוֹם. This special place is² הר המוריה, where his ancestors had davened. But, asks the גמרא, if he had already reached חרן how can he now daven at הר המוריה? The גמרא explains that Yaakov had already reached חרן, however he was pained by the fact that he had passed the place in which his ancestors had davened. Hashem fashioned a נס by which the land contracted and brought him to הר המוריה. This miracle is described by the word ויפגע. Rashi in חולין explains the word thus: ויפגע במקום - כאדם הפוגע בחבירו שבא כנגד. The word פגע seems to be thus a combination of the word פגש and נגע. It refers to a 'coming together' of two people or things to close proximity³. While it is therefore an appropriate description of Tefilah, it is used here to describe not only Man 'meeting' G-d⁴, but also a 'coming together' of the land; Yaakov, although standing in חרן, immediately found himself on הר המוריה, as if חרן and הר המוריה had connected.

This is the common theme found in Yaakov at this point in his life, תפילת ערבית and the word ויפגע. Yaakov in his entire life has never felt so alone as at this moment, when he is forced from his

¹ I have written this introduction previously in פרשת וירא on the Musag תפלת שחרית. See additional footnotes there.

² As we read by Avrohom Avinu when he reached Har Haomoriah:

ביום השלישי וישא אברהם את-עיניו וירא את-המקום מרחוק: (כח:ד)

³ Thus the גמרא in (לג.) teaches בבא מציעא ממש אי פגיעה יכול פגיעה ממש, taking the word to mean coming to very close proximity.

⁴ For which the Pasuk could have simply written ויתפלל.

home, carrying nothing but the clothes on his back and the stick in his hand. The קדושה of his home and his parents' presence is lost. He truly has no one and nothing. As night falls and this terrible darkness envelopes him, he stands to daven. But how? How can he stand in Tefilah and reach out to G-d when so far removed from the sanctified environment in which he had grown, the only environment he had ever known?

The answer is ויפגע – קפצה לו הארץ. There was a very good reason he had passed the place that his ancestors had davened and had somehow missed the opportunity to daven there⁵. This was because Hashem was thus informing him that he had to learn to daven in חרן as if he was davening in ירושלים and in the המקדש בית המקדש. Yaakov was to come to realize that indeed the קדושה was present in חרן as well, as he will soon exclaim, אךן יש ה' במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי, Hashem is present everywhere⁶; however, in חרן לארץ His holiness is hidden. Yaakov's mission was to take the Kedusha he had gained in his father's home and to infuse this holiness into the home of Lavan. This was the ויפגע, the 'coming together' that his new Tefilah represented.

But it was not only a geographic 'coming together' that Yaakov achieved. For he did not only teach us how to keep our focus on ירושלים even when we are scattered over the four corners of the earth. Yaakov, as the אב הגלות, also taught us how to daven even during the darkest periods of history, how to see the יד השם even during the blackest חושך of גלות. Thus, his Tefilah of 'coming together' is davened at night, which represents גלות. This Tefilah bridges not only ארץ ישראל and ארץ לארץ, חול, but also חול, חושך, but also חושך אור. It represents the ability to find קודש in the חול and אור in the חושך. We can therefore understand how תפילת ערבית can, in some ways, be considered the last Tefilah of the day, established only after ומנחה, but at the same time can be considered the first Tefilah of the new day! Just as we are to find ירושלים in גלות, so too are we to find the light of a new day even in the darkness of night.

Questions for Further Thought:

- a. The גמרא in (ד:) teaches us that תפילת ערבית רשות. According to our description of this Tefilah can you explain why it is only a רשות (non-mandatory)?
- b. In פסוק יז Yaakov calls the spot where he dreamed 'בית אלקים'. The גמרא (פסחים פה.) teaches: ואמר רבי אלעזר: מאי דכתיב (ישעיהו ב) והלכו עמים רבים ואמרו לכו ונעלה אל הר ה' אל בית א-להי יעקב וגו', א-להי יעקב ולא א-להי אברהם ויצחק? אלא: לא כאברהם שכתוב בו הר, שנאמר (בראשית כב) אשר יאמר היום בהר ה' יראה, ולא כיצחק שכתוב בו שדה, שנאמר (בראשית כד) ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה. אלא כיעקב שקראו בית, שנאמר (בראשית כח) ויקרא את שם המקום ההוא בית אל.

According to our understanding of Yaakov's mission can you explain why Yaakov uses the term בית?

⁵ In fact, we might ask, why did Hashem have to make a miracle for the land to contract, why not just remind Yaakov to daven when he was near הר המוריה?

⁶ Interestingly, the word במקום appears both in ויפגע במקום and in יש ה' במקום. One of the names of Hashem is המקום, describing G-d's omnipresence, הוא מקומו של עולם.

⁷ How thus incredibly appropriate is the term ערבית, which comes from the Shoresh ע.ר.ב, which means to mix.