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זבארוב זאלאזיץ

K'HAL B'NEI YISRAEL

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Ohr Pinchas Parsha Sheet

In loving memory of Reb Pinchas Mandel, Z.L. H.K.M.

Masei

Commentaries

Have a great and joyous Shabbos!

PARSHA COMMENTARIES

PARSHA MASEI 5767

1) Why did the Torah enumerate all the journeys that the Jewish Children traveled?

- a. Rashi quotes Reb Moshe Hadarshaw: He proves that through Hashem decreed that they should 'wander for 40 years' in the wilderness [Bamidbar 14:33], still, they traveled only to 22 different areas over these years—all this show His loving kindness to the Children of Israel even while He was punishing them.
- b. Rashi quotes Midrash Rebbi Tanchuma: A parable can be given comparing the traveling to the Jewish Children to a King whose son was ill and he took him to a far-off place to find him a cure. After he was cured, on the way back home, the king enumerated all the different places that they had previously passed through—'here we slept', 'here we were cold', etc. All this was to remind the son of the love that his father had for him and to return to awaken and make him realize how right it would be for the son to reciprocate love and respect to his father [see Gur Aryeh].
- c. Ramban quotes the Rambam in More N'vuchim (3:50): The purpose of mentioning the places they journeyed through is because years will pass and it will be easy for one to deny the wondrous miracles that all saw with their own eyes—those who want to deny Hashem's love for the Jewish Children will say perhaps they were in the desert, but not far from a civilized city where they were able to buy food and water or find shelter; therefore, the Torah enumerates these places which were far from any natural resources, food, drink or shelter, and later on, describes the miracles that occurred during these times, "...though you hadn't eaten bread nor did you drink wine..." [Devarim 29:5]. And we see that they were only able to survive through Hashem's miracles.
- d. Rambam says perhaps the reason that these journeys are mentioned is only secretive between Moshe and Hashem; therefore, the verse should be read, "From the mouth of Hashem..." Moshe wrote, "this secret was not revealed to us."
- e. Sforno says that Hashem's enumerating these journeys was purely to highlight the merits of the Jewish Children—how they toiled to do whatever Hashem's will was, no matter how difficult it was: the land was completely desolate, without agriculture at all, some of the places they journeyed from were of better quality and livable than the places they went to, and sometimes it was just the

opposite. Also, they traveled as soon as Hashem commanded them to, without prior warning; it is very difficult for one to just 'pick up' and move at a moment's notice, this happened each and every time. In verse 40, "and the Cananee the king of Arad heard... when the Jewish Children came." This shows how meritorious the Jewish Children were—they didn't fear and complain by saying, "let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt," like their ancestors, even though a war was erupting; on the contrary, they were ready to carry out their vow to adhere and follow Hashem.

f. Ohr HaChaim says that the Torah specifically enumerates these journeys to show how precious and holy they were; "These are the journeys," which are like no others because they took with them a) the Shechinah; b) Moshe our teacher; c) 600,000 Jewish Souls that are the basic souls thorough all of Jewish history (i.e. though the people change through every generation, every generation has 600,000 Jewish Souls); and d) the Torah—this way, they were able to 'raise the lost holy sparks' wherever they traveled. This was the reason that they stayed a different amount of time in each place—so they may raise the sparks in that place. The number 600,000 is the number of the 'wholeness' of Israel; it is for this reason, the Patriarchs weren't able to receive the Torah, because as great as they were, their number didn't add up to 600,000.

2) "And Moshe wrote their goings out along the way, of their journeys according to Hashem's command, and these are their journeys according to their going out." 33:2

Kli Yakar asks why does this verse start with 'their goings out along the way, of their journeys' and then the verse says it in the opposite order 'journeys according to their goings out'? Kli Yakar answers this question and explains the whole verse in three ways:

a. Most of their journeys were forward and in a positive, ascending way in the right direction. However, some of their journeys were backwards and in a self-destructive way, as we see in Shemos 14², the Torah says 'and they returned and rested in front of PiHashiros'. Rashi there says that they turned back towards Egypt. Another example is "And they turned and traveled towards the desert" says Rashi, because they sinned, they turned around towards the desert (D'varim 2:1)—the same can be found in D'varim 10:6 where they went backwards eight stops—so the journeys that were forward were "according to Hashem's command" and these are described in theist verse as "goings out along the way of their journeys." However, the journeys that were backwards as a

result of their sins are referred to as “journeys according to their going out,” because they were unaccomplished and destructive as a result of their sins and brought them back in the direction of Egypt.

- b. Why do we find in the next verse it says, “and they journeyed from Ramsais,” and doesn’t say ‘and the Jewish Children journeyed’? Then it says, “and the Jewish Children journeyed from Ramsais.” Also, why does it say, “Hashem took you out of Egypt at night.” (Shemos 16) and here it says, “the day after Pesach, the Jewish Children went out...”

The answer is that the Erev Rav (sinners among the Jews who were converts but not earnest in accepting Judaism and caused many problems for the Jews – Moshe accepted them but Hashem wasn’t happy with them) escaped from Egypt at night—and about them the verse says, “and it was told to the king of Egypt that the people escaped.” (Shemos 14:5) ‘The people’ [*ha’am*, Heb.] in many places, refers to the Erev Rav and the verse says they ‘ran away’ (past tense)—not ‘they are presently running away. The reason for this is that they were afraid and escaped at night, hoping the Egyptians won’t catch them. However, the Jewish Children went out during the broad daylight, “with an outstretched arm,” with pride and faith in Hashem—without any fear. This is what the verse here refers to the Jewish Exodus during the daytime, “the day after Pesach.” Now back to our verse here, their ‘goings out along the way of their journeys’ refers to the Jews’ Exodus that was towards the Land of their ancestors. However, ‘journeys according to their going out’ refers to the evil Erev Rav whom were heading back toward Egypt where they belonged, and where their ancestors came from.

- c. Kli Yakar’s last interpretation is: Hashem’s original plan was to take them out of Egypt straight to the receiving of their Land; however, because of their sins, the plan had to be changed and they went through exile, which prolonged their receiving the Land. So when the verse says first ‘their goings out along the way of their journeys’, this refers to Hashem’s original plan—and this was ‘according to Hashem’s command’ and His longing to immediately bring His people to their Land. However, their sins caused them to go astray on other journeys according to their going out.