

## **VaYakheil- Pekudei**

### **By Rabbi Aharon Ziegler**

“For the cloud of HaShem would be on the Mishkan by day, and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all of the House of Israel throughout their journey” [40:38]

The pasuk clearly implies that the cloud did not rest upon the Mishkan while they were traveling but only while they camped. The Maharal explains that since the Mishkan was dismantled when they traveled the cloud could not rest upon the Mishkan. Therefore, Rashi adds, that any stage of the journey that they would travel, the cloud would rest at the place at which they were to encamp. The place of their encampment is also referred to as a “journey”.

The entire point of traveling was to get to the next point. Therefore, each stopping point is an integral part of “the journey.” As long as the Jewish people were in exile, every place they stopped and lived was only considered “an encampment.” Home is only Eretz Yisrael and Yerushalayim. A good part of our Shemoneh Esrei is based on davening for Yerushalayim, the House of David, The Sanhedrin, and the building of the Beit HaMikdash. The focus of a Jew is Eretz Yisrael, and everything in Galut [Diaspora] is temporary encampment.

When seen in that perspective, then all our historic “journeys” from Babylonia to Persia, to North Africa, Spain, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, England, Canada and the United States, are all regarded as temporary encampments, with the ultimate goal of reaching our permanent destination – Eretz Yisrael. Jews living in “Chutz LaAretz” in any part of the world, no matter how comfortable they may be are considered “temporary dwellers”.

The Halacha makes note of this, when it states that a Jew residing in Eretz Yisrael must affix a Mezuzah immediately upon buying or renting a home. But a Jew who resides in Chutz LaAretz has up to thirty days to fulfill this obligation, because his residency is regarded as transient and not permanent [Y.D. Hilchot Mezuzah 286:22]. Only in Eretz Yisrael is residency considered as permanent. When a Jew leaves Eretz Yisrael, for whatever reason, his focus should always be to come back home. Everywhere else is but an encampment.

It may take hundreds of centuries but eventually, all Jews will join that glorious journey of coming home. We thank HaShem every day when we beseech Him to please show us a sign that we are on that Journey home, as we say in Tachanun: “*HAR'EINU OHT LE'TOVAH VE'KABEITZ NEFUTZOTEINU MEI'ARBA KA'NEFOT HA'ARETZ.*” And HaShem replies, “Yes, MY Children, You Ask For A Sign, And I Have Given You That Sign, Just Look Around In Eretz Yisrael and You Will See With You Own Eyes The Ingathering Of Jews From All Over The World” .