

פרשת מטות מסעי

ואלה מסעי בני ישראל [לג,א] The תורה lists all the places that בני ישראל encamped during the forty years in the מדבר. The מפרשים ask why did the תורה mention all these places? What is the purpose of this? The Rambam (quoted by the Ramban) answers, that the forty year tenure in the מדבר was a very extraordinary one. Their entire existence was למעלה מדרך הטבע, and full of נסים. Their food came from שמים in the form of מן, and their water was from a traveling באר. The תורה was concerned that perhaps in later generations, people will not believe this and will think that they survived by living near civilization. Therefore the תורה mentions the places where they camped, to demonstrate that they were not near civilization. However, this still seems to require explanation. The תורה constantly relates that the בני ישראל lived off the מן and the באר, and this is an accepted fact. Only somebody lacking such basic beliefs would not believe it. Why would the תורה bother to repeat itself for such a person?

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein זצ"ל, Mashgiach of Mir and Ponovezh, explains in אור יחזקאל חלק ג' that there are many levels of אמונה. One can have אמונה in Hashem with the ידיעה, the knowledge that this is a reality, based on his מסורה that was transmitted from the previous generation. But there can be an even greater level of אמונה, where one can feel it בחוש, with his senses. If he himself experienced it, it would relate to him on a personal level. Our אמונה should be tangible as if it happened to us. This is why the תורה lists all their travels. The תורה is not listing it for somebody lacking basic belief in the words of the תורה, rather the תורה is teaching us how strong our אמונה needs to be. Our אמונה in the תורה should be so real, that if we would go to the מדבר ourselves, we would see how בני ישראל traveled, and it will relate to us personally.

Rav Chatzkel adds, that this level of אמונה חושית, tangible faith, is attainable to us as well through תפילה and making ברכות. When we daven, we need to recognize that we can only gain our needs and requests if Hashem wills it. Similarly, when we make a ברכה before eating, it is strengthening our אמונה that everything we have comes to us solely from Hashem. This will help us attain אמונה חושית, a tangible emunah that relates to us personally, and will bring us closer to Hashem.

Have good Shabbos.

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