

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vaeschanan 5783

D. Mordechai Schlachter

Moshe continues to recount the wanderings.

וַאֲתַחֲנֶן אֵלֶיָּהּ בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר:

“And I showed my grace toward Hashem, at that time, saying.” (Devarim 3:23).

Why is this word used as opposed to one better suited for prayer? When Moshe davened to Hashem the Torah simply says “said” or “called.” It could have said “asked.” What is special about this term “acting with grace?” Also, Moshe seems to say he asked Hashem before he was told he would not enter the land and after appointing Yehoshua. What is the correct sequence of events?

The word Vaeschanun has several meanings. Colloquially, it means to beseech or pray. However, that term derives its meaning from here, based in the Midrash that the Torah is using this word for Moshe’s prayers. That term is also taken from other sources. Esther requests that the king nullify the evil plot. (Esther 8:3). Further, “I call to you, Hashem, and to my Master I make an appeal.” (Tehillim 30:9).

The word חֵן chen literally means favor as in “Hashem made Bnei Yisroel appear favorable in the eyes of the Egyptians.” (Shmos 12:35). Similarly, Hashem made Yoseph appear favorable to the prison guard. (Bereishis 39:21) Noach found favor with Hashem. (Ibid 6:8). חֵן means grace as in Hashem showing grace to Moshe. (Shmos 33:19).

Even when used to denote praying, it is used in a manner when one gives to Hashem a reason. It is not a request for favor or grace from Hashem or a gratuitous request. When Esther pleads it says, וַתִּבְרַךְ וַתִּתְחַנֶּן-לּוֹ “And she cried and showed him grace.” (Esther 8:3). Esther was asking the king but also showing her grace to the king, reminding the king of his lover for her, and making the king want to favor her. Similarly, in Tehillim, the pasuk that follows is, “What can be gained from my death...Can dust extoll You?” (Tehillim 30:10). The writer is saying that he is asking by using his favor and grace. He can still extoll Hashem and, therefore, his life is better than his death.

Moshe was doing the same thing here. He was asking to go to Eretz Canaan but he was doing it in a way that he was showing his usefulness to Hashem. The reason for this is understood from how and when Moshe asked Hashem.

In Moshe’s recounting of the journey of Bnei Yisroel he begins at the point when Bnei Yisroel did not have water, bickered, and Hashem told him to appoint leaders over the nation. (Bamidbar 11:16 and Devarim 1:13). Then the nation set out from Har Sinai. (Devarim 1:19). However, Moshe does not mention the great Revelation. Instead, he moves on to the sin of the scouts (ibid 1:22), the wandering (1:36), and ultimately the division of the lands on the Transjordan (3:12). Moshe leaves out the Revelation of Har Sinai, the crossing of the Yam Suf, and the entire Exodus. The reason is that Moshe is not

retelling their history but giving them mussar on their shortfalls. It is chizuk before entering Eretz Yisroel.

Moshe uses this sequence. He mentions that he passed the torch to Yehoshua. (Ibid 3:21). And only after did Moshe then beseech Hashem. (Ibid 3:23). However, Moshe does not mention the reason for this yet, and not until ibid 3:26. This appears to be out of sequence. The correct order of events appears to be that he was first told he would not cross then he beseeched Hashem then he appointed Yehoshua. (Bamidbar 27:18).

When did Hashem decree that Moshe will not enter the Land? It appears to have been when he hit the rock in year forty. (Ibid 20:12). If so, why did Moshe switch the chronology here? He did not. The events are as written and the pesukim state this.

Moshe knew from year two in the midbar that he was not going to Eretz Yisroel. Hashem decreed that that the entire generation from twenty and older should die out over the next forty years. (Ibid 14:29). The exception was Calev and Yehoshua. (Ibid 14:30). Moshe mentions that here, too, that the entire generation will die (Devarim 1:35), except for Calev (ibid 1:26) and Yehoshua (ibid 1:38). Therefore, since Hashem said no one – not a single person – from that generation will enter Eretz Canaan, not even Moshe, Moshe knew from then.

Calev and Yehoshua also knew it from then. ויהושע בן-נון וְכָלֵב בֶּן-יִפְנֵה מִן-הַתְּרִים אֶת-הָאָרֶץ. קָרְעוּ בְּגָדֵיהֶם: “And Yehoshua bin Nun and Calev son of Yefuna from the scouts of the Land, tore their clothing.” (Bamidbar 14:6). They tore their clothing because they mourned the bad news that Moshe learned as a result of the nation’s sin. As Moshe says, גַּם-כִּי הִתְאַגַּר, יְהוָה בְּגַלְלַכֶּם לֹא-מֵר גַּם-אַתֶּה לֹא-תָבֹא שָׁמָּה: “Also [not only were the scouts and the entire generation punished for the sins of the scouts and Korach] but Hashem was furious with me, because of you, saying, ‘Also you will not enter there.’” (Devarim 1:37). If so, why did the Torah say it was because of the incident with the waters of strife? (Bamidbar 20:12). Also, why does Moshe keep saying it was because of Bnei Yisroel that he was punished when it was his own failing?

The sequence of events is that first Moshe, unknowingly, appointed Yehoshua as his successor. He not only assigned him as leader of Ephraim but he also changed his name. He had also appointed him leader of the armies. (Shmos 17:9). The Scouts and Korach rebellion took place and everyone lost out on Eretz Yisroel, including their leader, except Yehoshua and Calev. Moshe gave Yehoshua “instructions of strength and courage.” (Devarim 1:38). He would ultimately be the one to cross with the people. Finally, Moshe asked Hashem to reconsider. He had thirty-eight years to do so, and he tried. He showed his grace and favor to Hashem, showing how important he was as a leader to Bnei Yisroel. In a sense, *I am the best leader. I am needed in Eretz Yisroel. The people will do so much better under me.* However, when he failed to make the Kiddush Hashem with the rock, hitting it instead of using a mere command, Moshe failed to instill the power of prayer in Bnei Yisroel. They missed the lesson that Hashem can solve their problems with them only using tefilos. That is why Hashem said it was now because of the waters of strife that He would ultimately not reconsider.

May our cries over Tisha B’Av be heard and may the words alone be enough for Hashem to show us grace and favor and bring us Redemption, speedily.