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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Mikeitz ✍️ Rabbi Yisroel Langer

Complete Trust

"Praiseworthy is the man who has placed his trust in Hashem" (Tehillim 40:5)

The Midrash on this week's parsha states that this posuk refers to Yosef HaTzaddik. The posuk continues, "and did not turn to the arrogant." The Midrash says that this too refers to Yosef HaTzaddik. Specifically, because he did not have sufficient faith in Hashem's salvation, but rather requested from the *Sar Hamashkim* to intercede on his behalf, Yosef was forced to remain in prison for an extra two years.

This Midrash requires explanation. First, the Midrash describes Yosef as the individual who most personified a *ba'al bitachon*, one who places his complete trust in Hashem. Then the Midrash tells us that Yosef was punished for not having sufficient *bitachon*. Furthermore, in what way did Yosef display a lack of *bitachon*? He simply performed his minimal level of *hishtadlus*, effort, in soliciting the influence of one of Pharaoh's officers. Certainly, if the opportunity presents itself, one should not sit by idly, but rather should perform the requisite *hishtadlus*.

The *Beis HaLevi* explains as follows. Ideally, one should rely completely on Hashem and limit his own

efforts. However, most people have not realistically reached such a lofty level of *bitachon* as to fully believe that no personal effort is required. We are thus permitted to perform some *hishtadlus* - commensurate with our level of *bitachon*. The greater the level of *bitachon* one has reached, the more he must minimize his *hishtadlus*, and vice-versa.

From the fact that Yosef was severely punished for performing even a minimal amount of *hishtadlus*, the Midrash derives that Yosef must have already attained an extremely high level of *bitachon*. Hence, Yosef indeed personifies the trait of *bitachon*.

By raising our level of *bitachon* we can minimize our required effort and eventually merit Hashem's salvation.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

TEFILAS HADERECH

Rabbi David Greenberg

Ya'akov Avinu was afraid to send Binyomin down to Mitzrayim lest an accident occur on the way. Rashi quotes the *Yerushalmi* (*Berachos* 7:3) which explains that when one places one's self in a dangerous situation, one may lack the extra merits needed for protection against one's sins, and is thus more likely to come to harm. Hence, the Gemara in *Berachos* (29b) states that before embarking on a trip, one should recite *Tefilas HaDerech*, a special request from Hashem for protection. This prayer is recited in the plural form, because a request on behalf of the community is more readily accepted than one made solely for the benefit of an individual; one can assume that there are Jews elsewhere who are traveling at that time as well.

WHEN TO RECITE

The Gemara (*Berachos* 30a) says that one should recite *Tefilas HaDerech* if one plans on traveling at least a *parsa* (approximately 2.5 miles) out of the city (according to the BeHaG's interpretation). The Rosh explains that normally within closer proximity to a city one is not in danger of an attack by wild animals or bandits. However, if there is a known danger within the aforementioned area one may recite the prayer even on a shorter trip. The *Sefer Tehila L'David* (110:3) notes that if the road on which one plans to travel is situated entirely within a *parsa* of a city, one cannot recite the *beracha*. This *halacha* would render many road trips ineligible for *Tefilas HaDerech*. HaRav Nissim Karelitz (*Chut Shani Ribbis- Kovetz Inyonim* 147) quotes the Chazon Ish who maintains that traffic accidents render every road trip "a known danger," so the *beracha* should be said. However, he writes, one should not say the *tefila* when traveling **within** a city, since the *beracha* was instituted for journeys "on the way" ("*derech*"), which implies leaving the city. HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l argued that Chazal instituted this *tefila* only for dangers common in their era. We do not have the power to establish a *beracha* for contemporary dangers such as collisions with a Big Mac. He therefore suggests that one should recite the *tefila* without the *beracha* at the end, or insert it into the *beracha* of *Shema Koleinu* during *davening* prior to the trip (*Halichos Shlomo Tefila* 21:31).

Many contemporary *poskim* follow the view of the Chazon Ish. Rav Ya'akov Kaminetsky zt"l was quoted as saying that *Tefilas HaDerech* is not like a regular *beracha* which follows the rules of "*Safek Brochos L'Hakel* (when in doubt-don't recite). Rather, it is a *tefila*, a request, with less rigid rules, and therefore may be recited even if the obligation to recite is in doubt.

One should only recite the *tefila* after leaving the city, which is defined as traveling about 70 *amos* (110 feet) beyond the last house of the city. The reasoning behind this specification is that before reaching this point, we fear that the person might change his mind and return home, causing the *beracha* to be said in vain. If one recited the *beracha* before that point, one need not repeat it as long as it was said with intent to travel.

One should attempt to recite the *tefila* within the first *parsa* after leaving the city. If the *tefila* was not said prior to entering within a *parsa* of that day's destination, it cannot be recited with a *beracha* anymore, because danger is not present so close to the city. (According to the Chazon Ish, one may still recite the *tefila* with a *beracha*).

If one is traveling for more than a day and stops overnight to sleep, one should recite the *tefila* the next day, even before dawn, as soon as one continues the journey. If the stay was an extended one, it is better to wait until leaving that city before reciting the *tefila*. When one travels throughout the night, one should say the *tefila* in the morning without a *beracha* or preferably during *Shema koleinu* (even if one took a few catnaps), as the travel was continuous. Similarly, if one is traveling on a ship, even a cruise line with comfortable accommodations, the *tefila* should be said without a *beracha* after the first day, as the traveling is continuous. (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 110:8)

AIRPLANES

Rav Yosef Rosen zt"l, the Rogatchover Gaon, brought a proof from the Gemara in *Chulin* (139b) that traveling through the air is not called a "*derech*"; he therefore ruled that the *tefila* should not be recited on air travel. Rav Ya'akov Kaminetsky zt"l, in deference to the Rogatchover's opinion, ruled that one should recite the *tefila* while taxiing on the runway right before takeoff (*Emes L'Ya'akov* O.C. 110). His decision was also based on the assumption that if *Tefilas HaDerech* is recited while airborne, it will probably not be completed within the first *parsa* of travel. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l rejected the Rogatchover's premise and *paskened* that one should say the *tefila* immediately after takeoff when the danger presents itself (*Halichos Shlomo Tefila* 21:4).

PROPER PROCEDURE

One should preferably stop traveling and recite the *tefila* while standing. If one is riding an animal or driving a car, one is not required to stand. If stopping would be dangerous or difficult, the *tefila* may be recited en route. If possible, one should attempt to say the *tefila* by himself; otherwise one may be *yotzei* with another's recital.

The *tefila* was instituted without a *beracha* in the beginning. Many *poskim* state that it is preferable to recite a *beracha* beforehand in order to connect a *beracha* to the opening of the *tefila*, using a concept called "Beracha HaSemucha LaChaverta." Per this principle, only a long *beracha* may be used (one that begins and ends with a *beracha* like *Bircas Asher Yotzar*) and not a short *beracha* (i.e. *Shehakol*). For this purpose, the *beracha* of *Borei Nefashos* is considered a long *beracha* (O.C. 110: 4,6).

OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR TRAVEL

One should always take his *tefillin* with him on any trip involving a possible overnight stay. Relying on borrowing someone else's *tefillin* can lead to a host of complications (*M.B.* 110:20).

Before travel, one should try to receive a *beracha* from a *tzaddik* and ask him to *daven* for one's safety (ibid. 110:28). Before leaving the house, one should place one's hand on the *mezuzah* and recite "Hashem Yishmor Tzeisi..." (*Rema Y.D.* 285:2).

One should attempt to become a *Shaliach Mitzva*, a messenger sent to fulfill a *mitzva*, or pledge to give *tzedaka* upon reaching one's destination. These acts will add Heavenly protection based on the principle of "*Shiluchei Mitzva Einan Nizakin*" ("No harm will befall messengers sent to do *mitzvos*.") (*Kaf HaChayim* 110:27).

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