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## A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

### מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

### פרשת תולדות

וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ וְכוּ'. וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה', וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל תֵּרַד מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר אָשֶׁר אֶמַר אֵלֶיךָ. גֹּר בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְאֶבְרַכְךָ. (בראשית כו, א-ג)

*There was a famine in the land ... Hashem appeared to Yitzchok and said, "Do not descend to Mitzrayim. Dwell in the land that I shall indicate to you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you ..."*

(Bereishis 26:1-3)

This week's *Sidrah* recounts how, when Eretz Yisroel was struck with famine, Yitzchok Avinu considered following in his father's footsteps and going to Mitzrayim. While he was in the land of the Pelishtim, en route to Mitzrayim, Hashem appeared to him and commanded him not to leave Eretz Yisroel. Hashem instructed him: *שָׁכֵן בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶמַר אֵלֶיךָ, Dwell in the land that I shall indicate to you.* Furthermore, He ordered him: *גֹּר בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת, Sojourn in this land.*

The Ramban clarifies these two directives from Hashem. First, Hashem instructs, "As a general rule, you should only establish your residence in the places that I will indicate to you from time to time." Second, Hashem advises Yitzchok on how to act in the current situation: "For now, before I direct you to a different place of residence, dwell in this land."

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* poses two questions regarding the terminology used in this context. First, why does the *possuk* use the word *שָׁכֵן* to denote "dwelling" in the directive of *אֶמַר אֵלֶיךָ*, while it shifts to the term *גֹּר* in the second directive? The term *שָׁכֵן* typically implies a permanent residence, whereas *גֹּר* refers to sojourning, indicating a temporary dwelling. How does this distinction align with the Ramban's interpretation? Why isn't the first directive – regarding Yitzchok's future travels being dictated entirely by Hashem - described as *גֹּר*, which would suggest the transience of his dwelling places? Furthermore, wouldn't the command to live among the Pelishtim be more accurately captured by the term of *שָׁכֵן*, since that would imply a more permanent settlement for the foreseeable future?

R' Naftoli Trop *zatzal* provides a beautiful insight that explains a Gemara, which could also shed light on the Ramban. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 31b) states a rule regarding the *melachah* of destruction on Shabbos: *סוֹתֵר עַל מְנַת לְבָנוֹת בְּמִקְוֵמוֹ הֵי סוֹתֵר, עַל מְנַת לְבָנוֹת שְׁלֵא בְּמִקְוֵמוֹ לֹא הֵי סוֹתֵר.* Only dismantling an item to reconstruct it in the same location constitutes the *melachah* of *סוֹתֵר*. The Gemara raises a question regarding this, noting that all the *melachos* are derived from the work done by the Mishkan. In the case of *סוֹתֵר*, the Mishkan was dismantled in one location before being transported to another. Accordingly, should this not be termed as *ע"מ לְבָנוֹת שְׁלֵא בְּמִקְוֵמוֹ*?

The Gemara explains that the situation with the Mishkan was different. Because the travels of Klal Yisroel were guided 'על פי ה', it was as if they were dismantling the structure to rebuild it in the identical place - *סוֹתֵר עַל מְנַת לְבָנוֹת בְּמִקְוָמוֹ*. R' Naftoli illustrated this concept by analogy: a baby in its mother's arms. A child held by its mother does not have a designated place. Not only is the child's location dependent on where the mother is, but even more so, it has no defined place at all since its sole whereabouts is in the mother's embrace.

Klal Yisroel's existence in the Midbar was, as if, being cradled in the embrace of Hashem. As the *possuk* (*Bamidbar* 9:20) states: *עַל פִּי ה' יִחַנּוּ, וְעַל פִּי ה' יִסְעוּ*, *according to the word of Hashem would they encamp and according to the word of Hashem would they journey*. Klal Yisroel had no place to call their own; their true home was in the arms of Hashem, much like a child who has no place of its own, purely being in its mother's arms. Thus, it was *סוֹתֵר עַל מְנַת לְבָנוֹת בְּמִקְוָמוֹ* as they continually rebuilt the Mishkan in the same location, always within Hashem's loving embrace.

With this concept, the Rosh Yeshiva explains the message that Hashem was conveying to Yitzchok. Hashem was telling him, "Your *fixed* place, your *permanent* dwelling, shall not be confined to any specific location! Instead, your residence is the place which I shall indicate to you." Hashem informed Yitzchok that in every place where He would reveal His will for him to dwell, Yitzchok would find himself in close proximity to Hashem. Regardless of his physical location, wherever Yitzchok was situated according to the will of Hashem, would be considered his true *fixed* place – a place of deep closeness and connection to Hashem. The specific land where he might find himself would merely be a temporary sojourn, as his true place was to be "close to Hashem." Consequently, the *possuk* referred to his dwelling among the Pelishtim as a "sojourn," highlighting that this was not his true, established location.

Indeed, the Ramban, when explaining the directive as a general rule regarding all of Yitzchok's future places to settle, refers to his journeying being *עַל פִּי ה'* which corresponds with the above explanation.

We should take to heart the message from Hashem to Yitzchok, which teaches us that we can transcend our physical surroundings and draw closer to Hashem. By living as per the *ratzon* of Hashem, we can experience the "embrace of Hashem" no matter where we are. May we be *zoche* to attain this profound level of closeness and connection to Hashem.

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