

Parshas V'Eschanan

There are a few instances in the Torah where the directions are listed to elucidate the grandeur of something. There are two instances in Bereishis and our Parsha. The posuk says in our Parsha 3:27, "Go up to the top of Pisgah and gaze to the west, north, south, and east," as it relates to Moshe being told to view the land of Israel from the outside.

In Bereishis, the posuk in 28:14 says, "Your children (Yakov) will be abundant like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west, and to the east, to the north and the south, all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you, and your descendants."

As well, earlier in Bereishis, 13:14 as it relates to the battle of the four and five kings, Hashem said to Avram, after Lot parted ways, "Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north, south and the east and west, and for this I will give to your offspring forever. That blessing ends on posuk 13:17, where Hashem says Up and walk the land through its length and breadth, for I give it to you.

What is the difference between these expressions of the directions?

In our Parsha, a simple answer is that, based on where the Pisgah is, the actual directions Moshe was looking in were West first, then North, etc. Whereas in Bereishis, when Hashem said to Yakov (and Avram earlier), the expression was more figurative, and therefore, to describe width, you say the east and west. To

describe breadth, you say north and south, which are the opposite extremes from one another, to delineate just how large the width and breadth are.

Ein Yakov Shabbos 16:9 compares the two blessings from Bereishis, the first to Avram and the second to Yaakov.

Rabbi Jochanan, in the name of R. Jose, said: "To him who observes the Sabbath, with enjoyments, will be given boundless inheritance, as it is written (Is. 58, 14.) Then Shalt thou find delight in the Lord, etc., And I will cause thee to enjoy the inheritance of Jacob, thy father. Not such inheritance as was promised to Abraham (Gen. 13. 14). Arise and walk through the land to its length and breadth, and not as it was promised to Isaac (Ib. 26, 3.) I will give thee all this land contains, but as promised to Jacob (Ib. 28, 14.) And thou shalt spread abroad, to the West, and the East, to the North, and to the South." R. Nachman b. Isaac said: "He will be saved from the subjugation of exile; for it is written (Is. 58, 14.) And I will cause thee to tread upon the high places of the earth; it is also written there (Deu. 33, 39.) And thou shalt tread upon their high places." R. Juda said in the name of Rab: "To him who observes the Sabbath, with enjoyment, will be granted his heart's desires..."

R. Juda, in the name of Rab, said: "If Israel had strictly observed the first Sabbath, no nation or race would have been able to dominate over them..."

At the time of Avram and Yakov, when they were given their Brachos, there were no laws of Shabbos yet; furthermore, in Sanhedrin about Bereishis 13:17, the

Gemara relates that the Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov didn't question Hashem, and for this Hashem blessed them with the width and breadth of the land. As we see from the above, Ein Yakov from Shabbos, that Keeping Shabbos is Paramount to our success and ability not to be conquered.

Sforno 28:14, והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ, ופרצת after your descendants will have multiplied so that they are as the dust of the earth, numerically speaking, you will spread out. The expression is to be understood as similar to Isaiah 51,23: ותשימי כארץ גוך וכחוץ לעוברים, "so that you made your back like the ground, like a street for passers-by." When the Jewish people reach a seemingly low point in their collective experience (downtrodden by the Egyptian taskmasters or in later exiles), they expand and become powerful in a measure never before seen on earth. ימה וקדמה צפונה ונגבה, when that time arrives Bileam's prophecy in Numbers 24,17 שת כל בני שן, "it will smash the foundation of all mankind." The final redemption of the Jewish people will come after they have suffered a low point in their history. (Compare Sanhedrin 95: "if you see a generation experiencing so many persecutions and setbacks that it appears a raging river is inundating them, wait for the ending for the prophet Isaiah in his description of the redemption writes of it immediately after having described the very opposite in chapter 59, 19-20")

What Moshe was saying when he looked at the land was that Moshe was telling them the physical lines that he observed from afar, and he continued in the Parsha about the importance of observing all the Mitzvos and remaining dedicated to

Hashem. Moshe's message was based on an actual path, almost like a strategic annunciation of the directions.

Meanwhile, before any laws and machlokes, the forefathers stated the full extent of the lines, for example. Moshe knew the path for the Jews would be multidirectional, now that they had been redeemed from Golus, and that the path forward must include living with Hashem to travel a path that has directions but is ultimately for Hashem and the exact directions that Hashem promised our forefathers.

This promise will be kept and is relevant today. Now that we've travelled Moshe's directions, we are more than ready to receive Mashiach and the fulfillment of Hashem's blessings on Yaakov and Avraham.

Good Shabbos