

Insights from the Meshech Chochma

רב מאיר שמחה הכהן מדווינסק זצ"ל פְּרָשַׁת לֶךְ לָךְ תִּשְׁפֹּה

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וַתִּקְרָא שֵׁם ה' הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אֶתְהָ קָל רָאִי כִי אֶמְרָה הַגֵּם הַלֵּם רָאִיתִי אַחֲרַי רָאִי. עַל כֵּן קָרָא לַבְּאֵר בְּאֵר לַחַי רָאִי הַנֶּה בֵּין קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין בְּרֵד. (פרק טז' יג-יד)

And (Hagar) called the Name of Hashem Who spoke to her, "You are the G-d of Vision" for she said, "Could I have seen even here after having seen?" Therefore, the well was called "The Well of the Living One appearing to me." It is between Kadesh and Bered.

Hagar acts brazenly towards Sarai and Sarai makes her pay for it. To avoid her well-deserved castigation, Hagar flees to the desert. Our pasukim's sentence structure is difficult to follow and as usual, we turn to Rashi for help: "הַגֵּם הַלֵּם רָאִיתִי" is an expression of astonishment. (Hagar was saying,) 'Did I ever imagine that even here, in the deserts, I would see the messenger of Hashem after my having seen them in the house of Avram? For there I was accustomed to see angels.'" And according to Rashi, she referred to Hashem as קָל רָאִי, because she realized now that Hashem "saw" the contempt she suffered at the hands of Sarai and that He was truly a G-d of Vision.

Interestingly, Rav Meir Simcha proposes that the key to understanding פסוק יג is by thoroughly analyzing פסוק יד and specifically, trying to understand why the Torah felt it was important for us to know that Hagar was near a well when she declared קָל רָאִי, why we need to know that it was בֵּין קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין בְּרֵד and finally, where are these places?

He begins his explanation with Targum Onkelos who translates בֵּין קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין בְּרֵד as בֵּין רְקָם וּבֵין חֲגָרָא. בֵּין חֲגָרָא and רְקָם are known to us from the opening Mishna in גיטין, where we are told that an agent of a husband who brings a *get* to his wife from overseas i.e., from a place outside of *Eretz Yisrael* to within *Eretz Yisrael*, must state the following when he hands it over: "The *get* was written in my presence and it was signed in my presence." Rabban Gamliel says: Even one who brings a *get* from רְקָם or from חֲגָרָא must make this declaration." Rashi tells us that רְקָם and חֲגָרָא are our בְּרֵד וּבֵין קְדֵשׁ and Tosafos adds that these cities were just outside the eastern border of *Eretz Yisrael*, so that they were in *Chutz La'Aretz*. Rabban Gamliel was therefore adding that although these places are very close to *Eretz Yisrael*, the messenger is still required to say בְּרַפְנֵי נִכְתָּב וּבְרַפְנֵי נִחְתָּם.

Having established that our pasukim took place outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, Rav Meir Simcha continues with a fascinating exchange which occurred at the funeral of R' Huna, as relayed in שְׂבִיבָה. "R' Abba opened his eulogy for him, 'Our Rebbi was worthy that the

should rest upon him, except that *Bavel* caused it not to i.e., it was only because he lived in *Bavel* and not in *Eretz Yisrael* that it did not rest upon him.' R' Nachman bar Chisda raised an objection against this (and some say that it was R' Chanan bar Chisda.) 'Is it not stated in *ג' יחזקאל א' /The word of Hashem came to Yechezkiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Kevar*, thereby implying that a prophet *can* receive prophesy *outside* of *Eretz Yisrael*?' His father tapped him with his sandal on his foot, hinting to him that he should be quiet. He said to him: 'Have I not told you not to trouble everyone with questions in the middle of a eulogy?' The Gemara answers his question: 'What is the meaning of the doubling of the word *הָיָה הָיָה*? It implies that it had already come before i.e., that Yechezkiel had already begun to prophesy in *Eretz Yisrael*, and his prophecy in *Bavel* was merely a continuation of that prophecy.'" In Midrash Mechilta D'Rebbi Yishmael an additional requirement for *הַשְּׂרָאָת הַשְּׂכִינָה* in *Chutz La'Aretz* is raised: it occurs only *בְּמָקוֹם טְהוֹרָה* *שְׁלָמִים*, near a body of water, and that is why the pasuk in Yechezkiel tells us that he received the *דְּבַר ה'* when he was *עַל נְהַר כְּבָר*.

Rav Meir Simcha now returns to our pasukim: Hagar saying *הֲלֹם רָאִיתִי /Could I have seen here* is a statement of amazement-how is it possible for me to speak with an angel *outside* of *Eretz Yisrael* (*בְּרֵד*)? She realizes that it is only *רָאִי* i.e., it is because I have experienced *הַשְּׂרָאָת הַשְּׂכִינָה* in Avram and Sarei's house and this is the merit by which it continues even in *Chutz La'Aretz*. But she requires another ingredient-she needs a *מָקוֹם טְהוֹרָה שְׁלָמִים*. That is why the Torah tells us that she acknowledged the well that was near her and called it *לְחַי רָא*, for it played a significant role in her being able to have this encounter with the angel of Hashem. And so, knowing where *וּבְרֵד* *וּבְרֵד* are essential to appreciate these pasukim! Amazing how with the help of a remark from Tosafos in *גיטין*, our author can develop a refreshingly new *שְׁלָמִים מְקָרָא* of pasukim with extremely difficult-to-understand syntax!

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ר' ישראל מנחם בן ר' שלום ז"ל
לזכר נשמת אמי מורתי רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדר הכ"מ
לזכר נשמת חמי מורי ר' יעקב נתן בן ר' ישראל שלמה ז"ל
ולזכר נשמת הרב יהודה בן ר' אברהם שמחה (קופרמן) זצ"ל
מחבר הגהות על ספר משך חכמה