

NHS Sedra Sheet

Shabbos Chol Hamoed (Reprint)

שבת חול המועד פסח – י"ט ניסן תשע"ז

As people often take outings on Chol HaMoed, I thought it would be an opportune time to explore Tefillas Haderech and review a fascinating teshuva I saw on this subject (which has a connection to Pesach).

There are 3 main criteria which determine whether a journey warrants Tefillas Haderech:

☑ **Distance to travel** – minimum of a *Parsah* (2.3 – 2.9 miles) outside the city limits (according to most opinions). (SH"A Orach Chayim 110:7)

☑ **Danger** – is the journey considered dangerous (bandits, highwaymen or other forms of danger) (MB 110:30)

☑ **Time of journey** – many opinions require the journey to be of a minimum length of 72 minutes to warrant *Tefillas Haderech*. This is because a *Parsah* = 4 mil and each mil take an average person 18 minutes to walk.

The Gemara in Brochos 30a (and the Shulchan Oruch) only mention the distance of a *Parsah* and don't mention anything about time being a requirement.

We know that in the time of the Gemara, people travelled by animal, as well as by foot, so where does this 72 minutes criteria come from?

There's a fascinating Teshuva by Rabbi Yehudah Greenwald ZT"L (Shv"t Zichron Yehuda:42) where he discusses whether a train journey, covering more than a *Parsah* in distance outside the city limits, but taking less than 72 minutes requires one to say Tefillas Haderech.

He first quotes a Gemara in Pesachim 94a which teaches that someone who is further away from Yerushalayim than Modi'in (15 Mil) on Erev Pesach is exempt from the Korban Pesach, even if they have fast transport available (*Susim U'Perodim*). Anyone who is in Modi'in or nearer on Erev Pesach is obligated to bring the Korban Pesach and liable to Kares if he does not. The Gemara learns this from Bamidbar 9:10, which states that people who were Tamei or "far away" from Yerushalayim on Erev Pesach can offer the Korban Pesach on Pesach Sheni (as they were exempted on Pesach itself) – indicating that physical distance alone is the criterion for the chiyuv of Korban Pesach. From the fact that we need a posuk to tell us this about Korban Pesach, Rabbi Greenwald infers that distance in all other areas of halacha is relative to the mode of transport used, rather than based on physical distance.

However, there is no posuk which discusses the laws of Tefillas Haderech – so how do we know that chazal used the criteria of relative distance (requiring us to travel the time it takes to walk a *Parsah*), rather than the Pesach criteria of physical distance (requiring us to journey the physical distance of a *Parsah*)?

For this, he refers us back to the story of Yosef and his brothers in Egypt where the brothers leave Yosef's house to return home after feasting with him and return the money he had placed in their sacks. Yosef sends his servant to run after them and accost them for taking his silver goblet. The pasuk says (Bereishis 44:4) "They had just left the city, but not gone far and Yosef instructed the person in charge of his house to run after the men..." Rabbi Greenwald asks – we know the Torah doesn't waste words, so why was it necessary to give us details as to how far they had gone before they were brought back? He suggests that the Torah tells us this to teach us that Yosef specifically sent his servant at this point, because he knew that had he left it any longer – they would have recited Tefillas Haderech (which they couldn't recite whilst they were within the city limits). He would then be causing them a *bracha levatala* by bringing them back without them having travelled the required distance. From the fact that this pasuk uses the expression of "not gone far" (*lo hirschiku*) we can see that the Torah's criteria of distance is relevant to Tefillas Haderech – ie distance is relative to the mode of transport, rather than based on physical distance.

He therefore suggests that if someone takes a train journey, it needs to travel the amount of time it will take to walk a *Parsah*, rather than just the physical distance of a *Parsah*, in order to obligate the traveller in Tefillas Haderech.

Wishing the community a Good Shabbos and enjoyable and safe rest of Pesach!