



PARSHAS VAYECHI – YAAKOV CHAIM HEPNER

Most Parshiyos are written in the Sefer Torah beginning with a small gap after the end of the previous Sedra. In this respect Parshas Vayechi is unique, as there is no space between the end of Vayigash and the start of Vayechi. Rashi, in one interpretation, explains the significance of this. In this week's Sedra, Yaakov had intended to reveal the end of Golus to his children. However, Divine intervention prevented him from achieving this, and the opportunity was 'closed' off from him. Symbolic of this is the beginning of this week's Parsha, which is written 'closed' – with no gap - in a Sefer Torah.

This is reflected in the pesukim just prior to Yaakov's brochos to his children.

“And Yaakov called to his children, and he said, ‘Gather near and I will tell you what will happen to you in the end of days. Gather together and listen, sons of Yaakov, and listen to Yisroel your father. Reuven you are my firstborn...’” (Bereishis 49, 1-3)

Rashi clarifies that Yaakov indeed wished to disclose the coming of Moshiach, but when he was not permitted by Hashem, he changed the subject, and blessed the Shevatim instead.

What exactly did Yaakov wish to reveal to his sons, and why did Heavenly interference not allow it?

In his sefer, Sabbath Shiurim, Rav Mordechai Miller prefaces his explanation by quoting two similar Gemoros about the emunoh of our greatest Tano'im.

The Gemora (Ta'anis 21a) recalls a man by the name of Nachum Ish Gamzu, whose unusual name reflected his ability to believe that everything was for the best, no matter how calamitous it appeared. “Gam zu l'tovah” – “This too, is for the good” - was his constant refrain.

A similar account is told in Gemora Brochos (60b) about his disciple, the famous Rabbi Akivo. When faced with misfortune, Rabbi Akivo used to say “Kol d'avid Rachmono l'tav ovid” – “Whatever Hashem does is for the good”.

The Baal Shem Tov pointed out that in actual fact these Gemoros are describing two different levels. Rabbi Akivo understood that everything comes from Hashem, but he still felt the pain of the particular hardship he was suffering. Nachum Ish Gamzu lived on a higher plain of emunoh. His strong belief in Hashem's ultimate goodness allowed him to proclaim “Gam zu l'tovah”. Nachum Ish Gamzu was able to feel the sweetness even while enduring the tribulation, enabling him to declare that even this – his current experience – was also for the good.

Yaakov Ovinu lived for the last seventeen years of his life in the knowledge that his children were soon to undergo a long and bitter golus. Nevertheless, according to the Medrash, these years were his happiest and most tranquil. This could only have been because his tremendous bitachon allowed all potential crises to disappear.

When Rashi tells us that Yaakov Ovinu wanted to reveal the end of Golus to his children, this means that Yaakov wished to imbue them with the higher sense of bitachon, similar to that of Nachum Ish Gamzu. This midoh would enable them to end their Golus in a private sense, by recognising the veiled kindness behind every difficulty; thereby penetrating the dense screen of Divine concealment. The Shevatim however, were destined to suffer the tribulations of Golus Miztraim and could have this secret revealed to them. The Shevatim remained with the lower degree of bitachon, akin to that of Rabbi Akivo.