3D Parsha: A Multidimensional Approach to the Topics You Thought You Knew

Why the Backwards "Nuns"?

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במדבר י׳:ל״ה-ל״ו

(לה) ז וַיְּהֶי בִּנְסִעַ הָאָרָן וַיִּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה ו יְהֹּוָה וְיָפֻּצוּ אִיְּבֶּׁיךְ וְיָנָסוּ מִשַּׁנְאֶיךְ מִפָּנֶייךְ: (לו) וּבְנַחָה יֹאמֵר שׁוּבָה יְהֹּוָה רְבְבָוֹת אַלְפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ז {e}

(35) ε When the Ark was to set out, Moses would say: Advance, O LORD! May Your enemies be scattered, And may Your foes flee before You! (36) And when it halted, he would say: Return, O LORD, You who are Israel's myriads of thousands! ε

<u>שבת קט"ז א</u>

ُשֶׁאֵין זֶה מְקּוֹמֶהּ. רַבִּי אוֹמֵר: לֹא מִן הַשֶּׁם הוּא זֶה, אֶלָּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁסֵפֶר חָשׁוּב הוּא בִּפְנֵי עַצְמוֹ. כְּמַאן אָזְלָא הָא דְּאָמֵר רַבִּי שְׁמָהְ הָפְּרֵי תוֹּרָה? — כְּמַאן כְּרַבִּי. מַאן תַּנָּא דְּפְלִיג עֲלֵיהּ דְּמָהְאֵל בַּר נַחְמָן אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן: ״חָצְבָה עַמּוּדֶיהָ שָׁבְעָה״, אֵלוּ שִׁבְעָה סִפְּרֵי תוֹרָה? — כְּמַאן כְּרַבִּי. מַאן תַּנָּא דְּפְלִיג עֲלֵיהּ דְּרַבִּי — רַבָּן שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הוּא. דְּתַנְיָא: רַבָּן שָׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר: עֲתִידָה פָּרָשָׁה זוֹ שֶׁתֵּיעָקֵר מִכָּאן וְתִכָּתֵב בְּמְקוֹמָהּ. וְלָמָה כְּתָבָהּ כָּאן — כְּדֵי לְהַפְּסִיק בִּין פּוּרְעָנוּת רְאשׁוֹנָה לְפוּרְעָנוּת שְׁנִיִּיה. פּוּרְעָנוּת שְׁנִיִּיה מַאי הִיא — ״וַיִּהִי הְבָּא בְּמְקוֹמָהּ? הָבָי חָנִינָא: שֶׁסָּרוּ מֵאַחָרֵי ה׳. וְהֵיכָן מְקוֹמָהּ? הָעָם כְּמִתְאוֹנְנִים״. פּוּרְעָנוּת רָאשׁוֹנָה — ״וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהַר ה״, וְאָמֵר רַבִּי חָמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: שֶׁסָּרוּ מֵאַחֲרֵי ה׳. וְהֵיכָן מְקוֹמָהּ? אָמִיי: בַּדְּגָלִים.

that this is not its place, as the previous portion does not discuss the nation's travels. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: It is not for that reason that signs were inserted. Rather, the signs are there because this portion is considered a book unto itself. The Gemara asks: According to whose opinion is that which Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥman said that Rabbi Yonatan said, that with regard to the verse: "With wisdom she built her house, she carved its seven pillars" (Proverbs 9:1), these are the seven books of the Torah? According to whose opinion? It is according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, as by his count there are seven books of the Torah: Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers until: "And when the Ark traveled"; the portion: "And when the Ark traveled," which is considered its own book; the remainder of Numbers; and Deuteronomy. Who is the tanna who disagrees with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? It is Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. As it was taught in a baraita that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: In the future, this portion will be uprooted from here, where it appears, and will be written in its proper place. And why was it written here, even though it discusses the travels of the children of Israel, and the portion before it does not? It is in order to demarcate between the first punishment and the second punishment. What is the second punishment that appears

immediately afterward? It is the verse: "And the people complained wickedly in God's ears, and God heard and became angry, and the fire of God burned in them and it consumed the edge of the camp" (Numbers 11:1). What is the first punishment? It is the verse: "And they traveled from the mountain of God [mehar Hashem] for three days" (Numbers 10:33), and Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, said: That they turned from after God [me'aḥarei Hashem] and hurriedly fled Mount Sinai. The Gemara asks: And if so, where is the proper place for this paragraph? Rav Ashi said: In the portion of the flags, where there is a description of the manner in which the Jewish people traveled through the desert.

<u>רש"י על משלי ט׳:א׳:ב׳</u>

(ב) **חצבה עמודיה שבעה.** שבעת ימי בראשית, ד"א ז' ספרים שיש בתורה ויהי בנסוע הארון ספר לעצמו במסכת שבת:

[These are] the seven days of Creation; alternatively, they are the 7 books of the Torah. "When the Ark ws sent out..." - this is its own book...

<u>ספרי במדבר פ"ד:א"</u>

(א) ויהי בנסוע הארון. נקוד עליו מלמעלה ומלמטה, מפני שלא היה זה ממקומו. רבי אומר: מפני שהוא ספר בעצמו. מכאן אמרו "ספר שנמחק ונשתייר בו פ"ה אותיות כפרשת ויהי בנסוע הארון מטמא את הידים". ר' שמעון אומר: נקוד עליו מלמעלה ומלמטה, מפני שלא היה זה מקומו. ומה היה ראוי לכתוב? – "ויהי העם כמתאוננים". משל למה הדבר דומה? לבני אדם שאמרו למלך: הנראה שתגיע עמנו, אצל מושל עכו! הגיע לעכו – הלך לו לצור. הגיע לצור – הלך לו לצידון. הגיע לצידון – הלך לו לאנטוכיה. הגיע לאנטוכיה – התחילו בני אדם מתרעמים על המלך, שנתלבטו על דרך זו. המלך צריך להתרעם עליהם, שבשבילם נתלבט על דרך זו! כך הלכה שכינה בו ביום ל"ו מיל, כדי שיכנסו ישראל לארץ; התחילו ישראל מתרעמים לפני המקום שנתלבטו על דרך זו. המקום צריך להתרעם עליהם, שבשבילם הלכה שכינה ל"ו מיל, כדי שיכנסו ישראל לארץ!

(1) (Bamidbar 10:35) "And it was, when the ark traveled": There are signs (inverted nuns) before (this verse) and after (the next verse). Rebbi says: Because it is a book in itself — whence they ruled: A (Torah) scroll which was erased, and there remained eighty-five letters, as in the section "And it was, when the ark traveled" (imparts tumah to the hands [a Rabbinical enactment, viz. Shabbath 14a]). R. Shimon says: There are signs before and after because this is not its place. What should have been written? (Bamidbar 10:33) "And they traveled from the mountain of the L-rd, a journey of three days. (And the ark of the covenant of the L-rd preceded them a distance of three days"). (Bamidbar 11:1) "And the people were as seekers of a pretext." An analogy: Some men say to the king: Would you please accompany us to the governor of Acco? They arrive at Acco — he has gone to Tyre. They arrive at

Tyre — he has gone to Tziddon. They arrive at Tziddon — he has gone to Antochia. They arrive at Antochia — some of them start complaining against the king for having put them to all of this trouble! It is the king who should complain, for having been put to all of this trouble for their sakes! Similarly, on that day the Shechinah traveled a three-days journey, so that they could (immediately) enter Eretz Yisrael — and they began to complain before Him for having been put to all of that trouble! It is He (if anyone) who should have complained! For it was for their sakes that the Shechinah was thus constrained!

<u>ספר הזהר, בהעלותך י״ט</u>

ָתָּא חֲזֵי, אֲרוֹנָא הֲוָה נָטַל קַמַּיְיהוּ אֹרֵחַ תְּלָתָא יוֹמִין, נ לָא הֲוָה מִתְפְּרֵשׁ מִנֵּיהּ, וְנָטִיל עָמֵיהּ. וּמִגּוֹ רְחִימוּ דִּלְהוֹן דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, אַהְדָּר אַנְפוֹי וְאָסְתְּחַר מִלְּגַבֵּי אֲרוֹנָא, כְּהַאי אַיָּילָא דְּעָזַלְתָּא, כַּד אִיהוּ אָזִיל, אַהְדָּר אַפּוֹי לַאָתָר דְּנָפִיק. וְעַל דָּא בִּנְסוֹעַ הָאָרוֹן, נוּ"ן אַסְחַר אַנְפִין לָקֵבְלִיִיהוּ דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, וְכַתְפֵי גּוּפָא לְגַבֵּי אֲרוֹנָא.

Go and see, the Ark would travel with a distance of three days in front of them: the Shechinah (symbolized by the nun) would not separate herself from it, and would travel with it. And because of his love for Israel the nun turns its face and turns back to the Ark, similar to a young deer that keeps turning her face back to the place she left when she goes forth. Therefore when the Ark set forth, the nun turned her face towards the children of Israel and the shoulders of her body towards the Ark.