

"These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael." (33:1)

Rashi cites the *Midrash* which compares the recounting of *Bnei Yisrael's* encampments to the following parable: A king once took his very ill son abroad, searching for a cure for his disease. He travelled with him to various doctors and medical centers throughout the world. Gradually, the son recovered and was able to return home. On their return trip, the father recounted the stopovers along the way where they had sought treatment for his malady. "Remember," the father reminded the son, "here you slept, ubbah; here you had the chills, ubreuv; here you were plagued by a headache, lhatr ,t ,aaj/" Similarly, Hashem instructed Moshe to enumerate all of the places in which *Bnei Yisrael* angered/tested Hashem.

Why do *Chazal* choose to focus on these specific occurrences: "here you slept, here you were chilled, here you had a headache"? Obviously, they are communicating a message by the apparent emphasis on these events. In responding to this question, *Horav Shimon Schwab, z.l.*, first wonders why the *Torah* chooses to ignore such famous miracles as the splitting of the Red Sea, the *manna*, the giving of the *Torah*, the building of the *Mishkan*, and other more notable events. Instead, the *Torah* recounts occurrences which are abstract and have seemingly no major impact on the development of *Klal Yisrael*, such as "And Egypt was burying their dead," and "and Hashem punished their idols."

The *Torah* also mentions that *Bnei Yisrael* camped opposite *Baal Tzfon*. What matter of great importance is derived from this fact? The fact that *Bnei Yisrael* travelled for three days prior to their arrival at *Marah* does not seem critical. That they found twelve wells and seven palm trees upon their arrival at *Eilim* seemingly has nothing to do with their journey. Similarly, the lack of water in *Refidim* does not seem to be of great consequence. Why is Aharon's passing mentioned in regard to *Har HaHar*? The mention of all these varied places indicates that the *Torah* is sending us a different message in its review of *Klal Yisrael's* journeys.

Horav Schwab suggests that the *Torah* does not want to merely enumerate the various things that occurred along their journey. The *Torah's* intention is to impart to us the many places where *Bnei Yisrael* should have learned a lesson. He tells them, "Here you slept" and did not wake up from your spiritual slumber to recognize the remarkable miracles and wonders which Hashem wrought for you. "Here you were chilled." This refers to *Klal Yisrael's* spiritual unresponsiveness, their dispassionate attitude towards Hashem. "Here you were plagued by a headache" refers to the loss of our "heads." This describes the death of our leaders, the spiritual shepherds of our nation.

Therefore, the reference of "here you slept" refers to the instance that "Egypt was burying their dead," which was atypical of Egyptian culture. The Egyptians embalmed their dead as part of their pagan observance. They began to bury their dead because "Hashem had destroyed their idols," demonstrating their worthlessness. *Klal Yisrael*, however, "slept" right through without taking note of this phenomenon. *Klal Yisrael* arrived in *Eilim* and were greeted by an abundance of wells and palm trees. Was this to be taken for granted, or should they have awakened from their slumber to

realize the miracles they were witnessing?

"Here you had the chills" refers to those instances in which our faith and conviction suddenly lost its warmth and feeling. When we "camped opposite *Baal Tzfon*," one of the gods of Egypt, our perception of Hashem destroying Egypt's gods became distant. Once again when we found no water in *Refidim* we complained, despite the fact that we had just received the *manna* from Heaven. The *Torah* points out the spiritual inconsistency which was apparent in these places.

"Here you were plagued by a headache" is an allusion to the death of Aharon *Ha'Kohen*. Their camping in the area of *Har Nevo*, on the other hand, alludes to Moshe *Rabbeinu's* death. Their deaths evoked a feeling of loss and despair among the people, as the leaders of the nation were taken from them. Hence, the lesson of the encampments is simple: We must place emphasis on the insignificant and the seemingly unimportant, for nothing which Hashem performs for us is needless or trivial.