

"These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael when they left the land of Egypt." (33:1)

The *Midrash* which *Rashi* quotes employs a parable to explain the reason that Hashem chose to recount *Bnei Yisrael's* travels. A king once took his ill son abroad to seek a cure for his illness. When they joyously returned home, the father reviewed their stopovers and in retrospect said, "Here you had a fever, at this inn you head hurt, etc." Similarly, in this *parsha* Hashem enumerates for *Bnei Yisrael* the various places where they had angered Him.

Although it is easy enough to understand, the parable does not seem consistent with the "maladies" to which the stopovers allude. The incidents recorded in this *parsha* are not simply illnesses which were cured. They are transgressions and incursions against the Almighty for which *Bnei Yisrael* were punished. Would a father look on passively at the thanklessness and insolence displayed to him by his son ?

In responding to this question, *Horav A.H. Leibowitz, Shlita*, makes a remarkable observation. Hashem's relationship with us is closer even than that of a father to a son. In fact, the metaphors we find in the Torah describing our relationship with Hashem, such as father and son, bridegroom and bride, do not accurately characterize the love Hashem has for us. Their goal is to give us but a glimpse of the unparalleled bond of love that exists between Hashem and His Chosen People. Hashem does not view our sins as transgressions. He regards them as temporary illnesses. Imagine! Although we rebel, Hashem still looks at us lovingly, as the most merciful Father, and with utmost compassion He brings out the "good" from the bad.

This perspective explains why Hashem has so much "patience" with us. Just as a loving parent welcomes his child back when he displays remorse, so, too, Hashem wants us to perform *teshuvah* and return to Him. Upon returning from this trip which had been fraught with "illness," Hashem, the loving father, recounts all the places where we sinned. To Him, these sins are merely temporary illnesses from which we have been cured.