

So God turned the people toward the way of the wilderness. (13:18)

The *Midrash* teaches that this *pasuk*, which relates that Hashem caused the people to journey in a circuitous (*va'yaseiv*) manner, is the source for the *halachah* that requires each Jew – even one who is poverty-stricken – to sit at the *Seder* table, *b'haseibah*, reclining. Apparently, the only connection between the *halachah* and the *pasuk* is the word *va'yaseiv*; they are related by the root, *sov*. The question before us is obvious: What is the relationship between reclining on *Pesach* and the manner in which the Jewish People traveled from Egypt?

Horav Zaidel Epstein, zl, suggests a significant principle to be derived from this *pasuk*. Why did Hashem guide the Jews in a circuitous manner? If the problem was that their fear of the Egyptians would catalyze their desire to return to Egypt, Hashem could simply have removed the fear. After all, they had witnessed the most amazing miracles as Hashem devastated Egypt. They really had nothing to fear but fear itself.

We realize that obviously Hashem had other options. Hashem, however, sought to teach *Klal Yisrael* an important lesson: what is straight and easy is not always what it seems to be. Hashem was in the process of educating the nation. Every challenge which He presented to them was to elevate them, to increase and enhance their spiritual powers. What they thought was impeding them was actually a promising opportunity that would sustain them throughout their national lives.

This, explains the *Mashgiach*, is the lesson of *Afilu ani she'b'Yisrael*, “Even the poor man of *Yisrael*” must recline and celebrate the *Seder* as a king. Specifically during the Festival of Faith, which is another name for *Pesach*-- when we delve into the miracles that Hashem wrought for us, the plagues which overturned Egypt, the Splitting of the Red Sea with its accompanying miracles -- we are able to perceive the reality that even the most abjectly poor person should sit back and recline at the *Seder* table like a king. He understands that his function in this world is to carry out the *ratzon*, will, of Hashem. If Hashem has created him to be poor, then he believes that this state is best for him. After all, it is the will of G-d.