

Bais HaVaad on the Parsha, Parshas Va'es'chanan

Text Message

Excerpted and adapted from a shiur by Rav Moshe Zev Granek

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https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DEV82_002_Vaeschanan.mp3

Honor your father and mother as Hashem your G-d commanded you, in order that your days will be lengthened and it will be good (yitav) for you...

Devarim 5:16

The Gemara (Bava Kama 54b) says that R' Chanina ben Agil asked R' Chiya bar Aba why the word "*tov*" (i.e., *yitav*) appears in the second *aseres hadibros* but not in the first. R' Chiya responded that before he asks *why* the word *tov* is used, he should ask *whether* it is used.

Tosafos (Bava Basra 113a, s.v. *tarvaihu*) explains that the *Amora'im* were not always expert in the *psukim*. How is this possible? Similarly, Tosafos asks (Megillah 22a) how the maftir for Pesach (beginning on Chol Hamo'ed) starts with "*vehikravtem*" (Bemidbar 28:19), as this *pasuk* is the third in the paragraph, which the Gemara says is not allowed. But the Maharil (159) points out that "*vehikravtem*" is actually the fourth *pasuk*, and even if the *Amora'im* did not always know the order of the *psukim*, how could *Rishonim* not know them? The Maharil's question, too, is difficult, because why would *Rishonim* be expected to know more than *Amora'im*?

Perhaps we can answer these questions based upon the Gemara (Gittin 60b) that it is forbidden to recite *psukim* by heart. Since the *Amora'im* were forced to look up every *pasuk*, they did not commit *psukim* to memory. As for the Maharil, we can answer that according to Tosafos (Bava Kama 3a), the *issur* to say *psukim* by heart was lifted before his time (due to *eis la'asos laHashem*).[1]

[1] The concept of *eis la'asos laHashem* is that in specific cases, Chazal may rescind a prohibition in order to preserve knowledge of Torah among the Jewish people. However, Tosafos here is applying the concept in a slightly more expanded manner than the Gemara in Gittin. For other opinions, see Tur and Bais Yosef (O.C. 49).