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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



THE STORY BEHIND THE THREE DAYS!

Finally Am Yisrael are on their way. It's been a long 210 years in exile and they are headed towards receiving the Torah and on to the promised land of Israel.

Yet the commentators are puzzled. How come when G-d revealed His plan for the Jewish people, He immediately told Moshe of their destiny in Israel, but at the same time instructed Moshe to ask Pharaoh only for permission to leave for three days?

Interestingly at no stage does Moshe say explicitly that he is proposing that the people should be allowed to leave permanently, never to return. He talks of a three day journey. There is an argument between him and Pharaoh as to who is to go. Only the adult males? Only the people? Not the cattle? Moshe consistently asks for permission to worship G-d at some place that is not Egypt, but he does not speak about freedom or the Promised Land.

Was G-d deceiving Pharaoh? Surely if we are not allowed to lie, how come in this instance it seems that a lie was told to Pharaoh?

Many answers have been proposed to this question.

The Ktav Vehakabala (R. Yaakov Mecklenburg) says that technically Moshe did not tell a lie. He did indeed mean that he wanted the people to be free to make a journey to worship G-d, and he never said explicitly that they would return.

The Abrabanel says that G-d told Moshe deliberately to make a small request, to demonstrate Pharaoh's cruelty and indifference to his slaves. All they were asking was for

a brief respite from their labours to offer sacrifices to G-d. If he refused this, he was indeed a tyrant.

We shall offer yet another answer based on one of the unique aspects of matzah.

Matzah, the bread of slavery, is at once the symbol of our slavery and the symbol of freedom.

In the Pesach Haggadah it is both poor bread" and the symbol of how G-d redeemed us in an instant. Have you ever thought why a richer, tastier cake was not chosen as a symbol of our redemption from the bitter slavery of Egypt?

The answer is that we did not cease to be slaves with our redemption. As the Gemara (Megillah 14a) says, commenting on the verse in Tehillim, "Praise G-d, give praise, you servants of G-d"

"Originally we were slaves to Pharaoh; now we are slaves to G-d."

We did not emerge from slavery to freedom; we remained slaves with a new master.

The Jew is the model slave, accepting the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, and unequivocally yielding to his master, the Master of the Universe, Who we serve with unswerving dedication.

The Gemara in Berachot (9b) says that we must link the blessing of Geula (redemption) to the blessings of the Shemoneh Esrei (service of the heart).

The Talmidei Rabbeinu Yonah explain the reason for this juxtaposition is that the Jew should have no free moment between redemption and acceptance of G-d's yoke.

After our redemption, we continued to dine on the bread of slavery to emphasize that our status as slaves had not changed. Even the good Land that we were given is a land suited to slaves, whether they be slaves to human masters or slaves to the King of kings. It was first given to Canaan, who himself bears the curse of eternal servitude.

Our freedom is the freedom to be G-d's slaves. And it is this servitude which is the ultimate freedom. On the Tablets was engraved our freedom "Do not read 'engraved on the Tablets' but 'freedom on the Tablets.' " Freedom is

SHEVAT 12th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:45 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:51 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The secret of being happy, is accepting where you are in life and making the most out of everyday"

> MAZAL TOV

Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Rebbetzin Mordechai Cohen for the forthcoming wedding of their dear son Yonathan to Rivka Benarroch

Mazal Tov to Ariel and Sasha Levy on the birth of their new baby girl

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 9th Feb Children Tu Bishvat Event
- ▶ 28th February Friday Night Dinner
- ▶ 25th March Busy in Brooklyn

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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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total immersion in Torah, total dedication and obedience to G-d Himself. Only when the Jew is able to express his deepest inner will, the thirst to do G-d's Will, is he truly free.

The time had come and the Jewish people needed to show that they were worthy of freedom by displaying an understanding of the implications of freedom from outside forces, a desire for the opportunity to subject ourselves to G-d.

The Ruler of the World did not need permission from Pharaoh to take us out of Egypt. Therefore Moshe did not approach Pharaoh with a request to leave Egypt to settle in Israel. But, the Jewish people, then under Pharaoh's rule, had to show that they deserved redemption. That is why they petitioned Pharaoh for three days in the desert

to sacrifice to G-d. The nature of these sacrifices was not clearly defined even to Moshe. As he told Pharaoh, "For we do not know how we are to serve Him until we get there" (Shemot 10 26).

Three days after leaving Egypt, G-d told the newly freed Bnei Yisrael to return towards Egypt. The implication was great, it meant giving up the newly acquired freedom, cease running towards safety and putting themselves in the clutches of their oppressors.

Why should they do this?

Because G-d willed it.

That was the "sacrifice" after three days in the desert - not animal sacrifices, but rather the giving up of the thing

most cherished to them, their new freedom. That was the test of their worthiness for redemption.

The internet age is upon us, and society busies itself serving various gadgets in the pursuit of freedom, happiness and fame. Technology should improve our life, not become our life.

We stand today on the brink of redemption and are being tested to see if we merit G-d's redemption. We can safely leave bringing Mashiach to G-d, but we must merit his coming.

Only by intensifying our commitment to Torah and mitzvot, dedicating ourselves to serving G-d in all areas of life, will we successfully discharge our three days in the desert.

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI MORDECHAI FHIMA - ANSHEI SHALOM BETH HAMIDRASH



THE SECOND OPENING OF THE SEA

Two weeks ago, I heard a beautiful shiur from Rabbi YY Jacobson, the likes of which I have never heard before, when he was in London for the Aleinu conference.

The opening of our portion relates how Pharaoh reconsidered immediately after he let the Jewish people go. "He said to the Children of Israel: They are lost in the land, the desert has closed in on them." Rashi raises the following difficulty with this verse: Pharaoh did not speak to the children of Israel, for they had already left Egypt.

How can the **תורה** imply that he was talking to them?

The Targum Yonasan ben Uziel gives an astonishing explanation. There were two Jews, named Datan and Aviram, who refused to leave and remained in Egypt. Pharaoh spoke to them, reassuring them that the Jews were lost, stranded, and stuck in the desert. Their choice to flee the country was an ill-conceived one.

Here is where the story becomes mind staggering. If they chose to stay in Egypt, how do we discover them journeying with the Jews in the desert - complaining about the manna and revolting alongside Korach? The seeming answer is plain if absurd. They must have tagged along with Pharaoh when he went to pursue the Jews by the sea. In addition, when the sea split, they too were spared. They too crossed along with the Jews, and got to the other side safe.

This is absurd. These two fellows who were absolute atheists, it seems, fighting Moses and G-d at every step of the way, choosing to remain in Egypt, are saved with their brethren. They linked their fate and destiny to Egypt, not to the Hebrews. Why were they spared at the Red Sea while all of the Egyptians drowned?

Additionally, the Midrash teaches that many Jews did not want to leave Egypt and died during the three days of darkness. Despite this, Dathan and Aviram who also did not want to leave survived. Why?

We always say that in Parashat Bechalach there was kariat Yam Suf the tearing the sea for the Jewish people and there is many saying by Chazal like

קָשִׁין מְזוֹנוֹתָיו כְּקָרִיעַת יַם־סוּף

וְקָשָׁה זְוִגּוֹ כְּקָרִיעַת יַם סוּף

Our Sages taught: Providing with his livelihood is as difficult as tearing the Red Sea (Pesachim 118a) Providing a person with his marriage partner is as difficult as tearing the Red Sea (Sotah 2a).

Is it difficult for Hashem, to do anything?

What is the meaning of this expression "difficult"?

Another issue is the choice of phrase in the Gemara, because when we look in the Pesoukim, in the Torah we see the word **וּבִקְעוּ, וַיִּבְקְעוּ, הַיָּם**

אֲתָהּ הָרַם אֶת־מִטְרָךְ וּנְטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ

עַל־הַיָּם וּבִקְעָהּ וַיִּבְאֹוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּתּוֹךְ הַיָּם בִּיבֻשָּׁה:

And you lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it, so that the Israelites may march into the sea on dry ground.

וַיֹּטֶן מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּזְלַף יָדוֹ

אֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֹנָה כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּשָּׁם אֶת־הַיָּם לַחֲרָבָה וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַיָּם:

Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters split.

The Torah describes the "opening of the sea" and not the "tearing of the sea." Where is the source for Kariat Yam Suf if not in the Torah?

Furthermore we see in the Parasha

וַיִּבְאֹוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּתּוֹךְ הַיָּם בִּיבֻשָּׁה וְהַיָּם לָהֶם חוֹמָה that the water were a Homa that mean a fence of protection and later on in the Parasha pasouk 29

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בִּיבֻשָּׁה בַּתּוֹךְ הַיָּם וְהַיָּם לָהֶם חֲמָה the Pasouk says Hema without a Waw and the resultant word - Hema, means anger. The question is clear, namely, was there a protection in the form of a fence or anger?

Many more point out a difficulty in the Pesoukim, which follow. The first Pasouk says that the Bnei Yisrael were going in the sea dry and the Pasouk later says that they were in the dry (land) inside the sea. A further question to ask is, Why does the Torah repeat that the Bnei Yisrael went in the sea at the end of this last Pasouk?

The Torah teaches us that there were really two separate openings of the sea. The first one was a **בִּקְיעָה**, an opening of the sea and the water was a real fence to secure and protect the Bnei Yisrael. However, after this, there was a new tearing of the sea, not a **בִּקְיעָה**, but a **קָרִיעָה**, a tearing of the Red Sea. The first one was

the pre-condition with the sea, planned since the creation of the world, as implied by the Pasouk saying **לֹאִיתַנּוּ בְּקֶרֶב הַיָּם**, the sea returned towards morning to its course. The Midrash expands on this, saying l'etano harishon, to the condition made during the creation that the sea should open for Am Yisrael. After the Jewish people crossed the sea, Pharaoh came charging together with Datan and Aviram to bring the Bnei Yisrael back to Egypt. The question is asked: Why should the sea open for these two, who will cause Moshe Rabenou so much trouble throughout the desert, with the Mana and siding with Korach? Hashem did not want to open the sea, but he was forced to do a new Kariat yam souf, not part of the condition made at creation. The sea was no longer a fence of protection, but a wall of anger - it was very difficult to open the sea for these two men who never wanted to leave Mitsrayim. Why should the sea open a second time, never mind for such troublesome people?

Our rabbis tell us that back in Mitsrayim, it was these two men, Datan and Aviram, who were the taskmasters. When Pharaoh made the work harder for Bnei Yisrael, they were willing to be beaten to release pressure from the Bnei Yisrael and were saved in this merit. Such is the merit of people that are willing to suffer for another Jew, to the extent that even though Hashem knew that they would cause trouble throughout the dessert, they were nonetheless saved. For the sole merit of suffering for another Jew, Hashem did Kariat Yam Suf for them.

Now we understand the aforementioned phrases 1) Finding a wife is as difficult as Kariat Yam Suf and 2) Parnasa is as difficult like yam souf. We refer to the second tearing of the sea, in the same way as it was difficult for Datan and Aviram to open the sea, so too, sometimes a person doesn't deserve a certain Shiduch or to have Parnasa, but Hashem gives for a specific reason, even though it may seem undeserved.

We know nothing is difficult for Hashem; rather the action of a person may push away the blessing that they deserve. Let us learn to care about another Jew, as we need to know Hashem has a great pleasure in showering us with all the blessings of the world, but sometimes our actions create a difficulty preventing us from receiving the blessings from above.

■ Shabbat shalom

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The Mishna relates 4 New Years

The 1st of Nissan: The new year of Kings and Festivals,
The 1st of Elul: The new year for the tithing of cattle / The 1st of Tishri: Rosh Hashana
The 15th of Shevat: Rosh Hashanah Lailanot (The new year for trees).
This is when the sap of the trees begins to rise symbolising a fresh start and growth.

There is a custom to have 15 fruits. There is a special order in saying the blessings for the fruit and we start by emphasising the Seder with the seven fruits (Sheva Minim) which the Torah praises the Land of Israel for. "Eretz Chitah, Useorah, Vegefen Uteanah, Verimon, Eretz Zayit Shemen Udevash - a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey [dates]" (Deuteronomy 8:8).



1 WHEAT

We start with cakes made with wheat flower.

Wheat appears 30 times in the Torah. Wheat has always been the main food for Human beings.

Before eating we say:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני מזונות

Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Minei Mezonot



2 WINE

This blessing can be made on grape juice or wine.

Wine features at every Jewish Simcha, be it a wedding, Brit Mila, Yom Tov or Shabbat Kidush.

Wine represents wisdom, the older the wine the more valuable. We become wise over time due to the Torah and experiences we have accumulated in our lives.

Before drinking wine or grape juice, we recite:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן

Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Peri Hagefen



3 OLIVE

Olives were crushed to extract the olive oil that was used to light the Menorah (in the Temple) and consecration of Kings and High Priests. It is the purest of oils and burns brightest. Mix oil with another substance and it will float to the top. The Jewish nation is connected to the other nations of the world, yet we are separate and when we follow G-d's command, we can reach the top.

Before saying the blessing over the olives have in mind all other fruit that grow on trees. This insures no further Ha'etz need be said.

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Borei Peri Ha'etz



4 DATE

Dates are special in that sweet honey can be made from them. The honey in the Biblical reference of "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Shemot 3:8) is date honey, not bees honey!



5 GRAPES

Grapes were used mainly for the production of wine, although they were also eaten fresh and dried. Grapes represent fertility. Invei Hagefen Velinvei Hagefen.



6 FIG

The Midrash says figs leaves were used to cover the nakedness of Adam and Chava after their sin.



7 POMEGRANATE

At the bottom of the Kohen Gadols robe were intermittent decorative "Pomegranates" with golden bells placed in between. "Its sound shall be heard when he enters into the Holy area before G-d". The Song of Songs twice uses pomegranate imagery (4:3, 6:7). Pomegranates represent Torah & (613) Mitzvot.



8 BARLEY

Eating barley products would normally come after Wheat above.

Since it may not feature as part of your 15 fruits, some have the custom to drink beer produced from fermented barley. If the blessing over wine (Hagefen) has not been recited then we would recite the following:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שחבל נהיה בדברו

Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Shehakol Nihyah Bidvaro



9 FOR A NEW FRUIT

If a new fruit of the harvest of the year is to be tasted, we recite the blessing: She'Hecheyanu

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- She-heche-yanu, Ve-ki-y'manu, Ve-higi-yanu La-z'man Ha-zeh.



10 SMELLING FRAGRANT FRUITS

When taking a fruit (e.g. Etrog not on Sukkot) in order to benefit from its smell and not to eat, then if it's edible and gives off a strong smell (from the fruit and not from the peel) we recite the blessing:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם הנותן ריח טוב בפירות

Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-h-enu Melech Ha'Olam- Hanoten Reich Tov Baperot

*TAL wishes you
Chag Tu Bishvat Sameach*

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TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 Why did the Egyptians want to pursue the Jewish People?
- 2 Where did the Egyptians get animals to pull their chariots?
- 3 What does it mean that the Jewish people "took hold of their fathers' profession" (tafsu umnut avotam)?
- 4 How did Hashem cause the wheels of the Egyptian chariots to fall off?
- 5 Why were the dead Egyptians cast out of the sea?

1 To regain their wealth. 2 From those Egyptians who feared the word of Hashem and kept their animals inside during the plagues. 3 They cried out to Hashem. 4 He melted them with fire. 5 So that the Jewish People would see the destruction of the Egyptians and be assured of no further pursuit.

Answer

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