

English

בסייעתא דשמיא

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"o, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



תשפ"א B'shalach

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

איין 122

אמרות שמשון

Why the Jews May Have Willingly Returned to Be Enslaved to Pharaoh

וַיְהִי בְשַׁלַּח פְּרַעֲה אֶת הָעָם וְלֹא נָחַם אֱלֹקִים דְּרַךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא כִּי אָמַר אֱלֹקִים פֶּן יִנָּחַם הָעָם בְּרֵאֲתָם מִלְחָמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרַיִמָּה: (שמות יג ז)

It happened when Pharaoh sent the people, that Hashem did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, because it was close, because Hashem said, "Perhaps the people will reconsider when they see a war, and they will return to Egypt".

We need to understand why the Passuk associates the Jews' redemption to Pharaoh, and says 'when **Pharaoh** sent the people', instead of associating it to Hashem, by saying 'when **Hashem** redeemed the people', when in truth it was Hashem who redeemed the Jews and not Pharaoh. Furthermore, what is the meaning of the two distinct reasons that the Passuk gives; 'Hashem did not lead the Jews by way of the land of the Philistines, **because it was close, and because perhaps the people will reconsider when they see a war, and will return to Egypt?**



The Torah (ו ב-ט) relates what occurred when Moshe had first informed the Jews that their prayers had been accepted, and that they were to be redeemed from their bitter exile, and says as follows. 'And Hashem spoke to Moshe... I have heard the wail of the Children of Israel... Therefore, say to the Children of Israel: "I am Hashem, and I shall take you out from under the burden of Egypt, and I shall rescue you from their service, and I shall redeem you... and I shall take you to Me for a people..." Moshe spoke accordingly to the Children of Israel; but they did not listen to Moshe, because of shortness of wind and hard work'.

This phenomenon is nothing short of astounding. The Jews had suffered so terribly and bitterly over the many years that they were enslaved to the Egyptians, that it would have been expected that when they were finally notified that Hashem would redeem them shortly, they would jump from great joy and happiness. Instead, the Torah clearly says, 'the Jews did not listen to Moshe, because of shortness of wind and hard work'. What is the meaning and rationale behind this apathetic reaction of theirs?!

We can explain it as follows. Hashem told Avraham Avinu (בראשית טו ז) at the Covenant of the Pieces, תדע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם, "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be

sojourners in a land that's not their own, and they will enslave and oppress them for four hundred years". Nevertheless, because the Egyptians treated the Jews ever so bitterly and brought upon them much misery, Hashem resolved that He would redeem them early, after only two hundred and ten years. But this early redemption came with a stipulation, that the Jewish Nation would need to go into exile some time further down in history, to make up for those one hundred and ninety years that was decreed upon them but never carried out.

When Hashem notified the Jews that He would redeem them from their bitter exile, He used four expressions of deliverance to tell them of their upcoming redemption. וְהוֹצֵאתִי, וְהַצַּלְתִּי, וְגֹאֲלִתִּי, וְלִקַּחְתִּי - and I shall take you out, and I shall rescue you, and I shall redeem you, and I shall take you to Me. These four expressions of deliverance were inferring to the four exiles which their descendants would need to go through in order to make up for those one hundred and ninety years that their ancestors had left early from Egypt. Hence the four expressions of redemption, which corresponds to the four exiles from which the Jewish Nation would in the future need to be redeemed from.

We can now understand the hesitancy and lack of excitement on the part of the Jews upon hearing the news of their redemption. For when they heard that they would be redeemed early, but instead would go back into exile many years later, they weren't the utmost excited, and therefore didn't react at all to Moshe's words, but rather just continued on sadly with their hard work.



When the Passuk says 'when **Pharaoh** sent the people', and not 'when **Hashem** redeemed the people', it is alluding to the fact that Pharaoh had, so to speak, some hand in the matter of their redemption. For had the four-hundred-years passed as decreed, the redemption would have been an automatic and inevitable consequence, as Pharaoh only had rights over their enslavement for four hundred years, and when those years would be over the redemption would come on its own accord. But because the four hundred years did not pass, Hashem had to, so to speak, pull the redemption out of Pharaoh's rights, and thus it is as if Pharaoh had some involvement in the Jews' redemption, hence 'when **Pharaoh** sent the people'.

Accordingly, when the Passuk says that 'Hashem did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, because it was close', we can

explain it to be referring to that fact that Hashem brought the redemption closer than originally decreed. And consequently, because the Jews were not very excited about the early redemption, for it carried a heavy price of their descendants going back into exile, therefore 'Hashem did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines because perhaps the people will reconsider and will return to Egypt'. זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות א

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The Reward Bestowed Upon Those Who Led the Jewish People into The Red Sea

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מַה תִּצְעַק אֵלַי דְּבַר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִסְעוּ: (שמות יד ט)

Hashem said to Moshe: Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Jewish people and let them journey!

After the Jews left Egypt, the Egyptians pursued them until they came upon the Red Sea, at which point they were unable to continue. Hashem then told Moshe that the Jews need to do nothing but go forward, and the Sea will not stand in their way.

The Gemara in Sotah (ל"ו ע"ג) discusses the Jewish People's reaction when being commanded to walk into the Sea's raging waters. R' Meir said: *When the Jewish People stood upon the edge of the sea, the tribes competed with one another; each one exclaiming "I will descend first into the sea". Thereupon, the Tribe of Binyamin sprang forward and descended first into the sea... In reward, Binyamin the righteous merited to host the Holy Shechinah [i.e. the Holy of Holies of the Bais Hamikdash, wherein the Ark was set, was situated in the territory of Binyamin]. R' Yehudah said to R' Meir: The incident was not as you described it; rather each tribe exclaimed "I will not be the first to descend into the sea". At that point, Nachshon ben Aminodov, the Nasi of the Tribe of Yehudah, leaped forward and descended into the sea first... In reward for Nachshon's willingness to sacrifice himself, the Tribe of Yehudah merited to establish dominion over the Jewish People.*

We need to understand, firstly, from where stems the dispute between R' Meir and R' Yehudah regarding whether the Tribes were prepared to leap into the Sea? Secondly, what was the particular measure for measure in the reward that was bestowed upon trailblazer, and why did the measure for measure differ in that according to R' Meir the Tribe of Binyamin merited hosting the Holy Shechinah, whereas according to R' Yehudah the Tribe of Yehudah merited to establish dominion over the Jewish People?



After commanding the Jews to journey into the water, Hashem told Moshe as follows. *"And you, lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the Sea and split it".* The Midrash records a conversation that followed between Hashem and Moshe regarding this commandment to split the Sea. *Moshe said to Hashem: You say to me that I should split the Sea and make it into dry land, but it is written, 'For I have set sand as a boundary against the Sea as a permanent law that cannot be broken'. Behold, You have sworn that you will never split the Sea. Hashem replied to him: I am the One who stipulated that the Sea should flow for all time, so did I also stipulate originally that one day in the future I will split it before the Jews when they will leave Egypt. Immediately, Moshe listened to Hashem and went to split the Sea. But when Moshe went to split the Sea, the Sea did not accept upon itself to be split... When Moshe heard this, he went to Hashem and said, "The Sea does not want to split". What did Hashem do? He, so to speak, put His right hand upon Moshe's right Hand... Immediately, the Sea saw Hashem and fled...*

The Yefei To'ar asks; how was the Sea able to refuse at first to split, being that, as the Midrash clearly says, Hashem had originally stipulated that the Sea would need to do so at the time of the exodus from Egypt? He answers that although it was indeed stipulated that the Sea would split for the Jews, nevertheless, the Sea's ministering angels argued that the stipulation was only that the Sea would do so only if the Jews would be deserving of this great miracle, and because, upon leaving Egypt, the Jews were not very righteous and deserving, the Sea was not obligated to split before them.



In light of the Sea's contention to refrain from splitting, we can understand the opinions of R' Meir and R' Yehudah, according to their respective opinions in another matter, as recorded in the Gemara Kiddushin (א"ט ל"ו) as follows. *The Passuk states: You are children to Hashem [i.e. the Jewish People enjoy the special favored status of being 'Hashem's children']. This means that at a time when you act in the manner of children [i.e. with devotion to Hashem and the Torah], you are called 'children of Hashem'; but when you do not act in the manner of children, you are not called 'children of Hashem'. These are the words of R' Yehudah. R' Meir disagrees and says: In either event you are called 'children of Hashem'.*

Consequently, because, when leaving Egypt, the Jews were not on too great a level, therefore according to R' Yehudah they did not carry the special status of being 'Hashem's children', and thus indeed, as the Sea claimed, they were not worthy of having the Sea split before them. We can therefore understand why no one vied for the privilege of walking into the waters of the Sea; for they did not feel that the sea would split for them. Hence - *each tribe exclaimed "I will not be the first to descend into the sea"*. Whereas according to R' Meir, the Jewish People nonetheless did carry the status of 'Hashem's children', and thus were worthy of the Sea splitting for them. Hence - *the tribes all competed with one another; each one exclaiming "I will descend first into the sea"*.

Correspondingly, according to R' Yehudah, when Nachshon ben Aminodov demonstrated his faith in Hashem by leaping into the water - while all the Tribes refrained from doing so, as they weren't prepared to ignore their lack of merit and simply put their trust in Hashem - he sanctified Hashem's Kingship and Dominion by showing that Hashem is the true King Who reigns over nature. In merit of sanctifying Hashem's kingship and reign, Nachshon appropriately merited the kingship over the Jewish Nation. However, according to R' Meir, all the Jewish People were prepared to leap into the water, and all that the Tribe of Binyamin essentially had over their brethren was the trait of alacrity in his service to Hashem. The reward for this trait is, as the Gemara in Brachos (מ"ד ע"ג) tells us, that the one who is swift and enters to pray first, merits to *'take reward corresponding to all who come after him'*, which means that he will be the conduit to transmit and allocate the reward to all who come after him. The Tribe of Binyamin, as well, merited as reward for their alacrity to be the host of the Holy Shechinah, which is the channel through where the flow of blessings comes to the Jewish People.

זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות ז

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Translated and written by Rabbi Moshe Spira - yomospira@gmail.com

To receive the Seforim of the Zera Shimshon or for sponsorships and donations please contact:

USA - Rabbi Menachem Binyomin Paskesz 347-496-5657 mbpaskesz@gmail.com
Zera Shimshon c/o Rabbi B Paskesz 1645 48th Street, Brooklyn NY 11204

Eretz Yisroel - Rabbi Yisroel Silberberg
052-716-6450 zera277@gmail.com



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