

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת בשלח

ויקח משה את עצמות יוסף עמו כי השבע השביע את בני ישראל לאמר פקד יפקד אלקים אתכם והעליתם את עצמתי מזה אתכם
“Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him, for he had made the Children of Israel swear, saying: God will surely remember you, and you shall bring my bones up from here with you” (13:19)

Why does the Torah use the repetitive expression "hashbei'a hishbia" rather than just say it once. Rashi says that Yosef made his brothers swear that they would make their descendants swear to bring his bones back to Egypt. The Sifsei Chachamim explains that he knew that his brothers would not be the ones returning to Eretz Yisrael and so he did not make them swear to do this. Instead, he made them swear that they would administer this oath to their children. Hence the double language of "he made them swear to make other swear." Even though at the time of the time that the oath was originally taken in Parshas Vayechi the posuk only says one that he made them swear, only saying it once, there the posuk says the word "laimor," meaning that he was telling them so that they should tell others. This indicates that it was for future generations as well.

Why does the posuk use the repetitive expression of "pakod yifkod?" The word "pakod" is in present tense and the word "yifkod" is in future tense. This reminded the people that while Hashem was remembering them at that moment and redeeming them from the exile in Egypt, He would also remember them in future exiles and save them. It alludes to the future redemption which we hope to see very soon. We also find this idea in the words "Az Yashir," which is future tense, literally "then he will sing." The Gemara in Sanhedrin 91b cites this as a proof of Techiyas Hameisim. Hashem has promised that he will remember us and bring about our salvation from this long exile. We should always look forward to the ultimate redemption and view it as a certainty. It is not a matter of if, rather a question of when.

ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה מלך מצרים וירדף אחרי בני ישראל ובני ישראל יצאים ביד רמה
“Hashem strengthened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the Children of Israel - and the Children of Israel were going out with an upraised arm” (14:8)

What is the connection between these two statements, that Pharaoh pursued the Bnei Yisrael and that the Jews left with an upraised arm? Rashbam says that they were not worried about Pharaoh. Even though he was chasing them, they had no fear of him coming. They were on the level of bitachon that they had no fear of Egypt as long as they did not see them. Once they saw them, however, fear overtook them.

Seforno says that they wanted to fight Pharaoh. They knew that they were a very large group and that they outnumbered Pharaoh's forces. However, they were untrained in battle and certainly a smaller force of well-trained soldiers and defeat a larger number of untrained fighters. They should have been afraid. Sure enough, when they saw the

Egyptian army and recognized how efficient they were, they panicked because they realized that they could not overcome them.

**אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת לה' ויאמרו לאמר אשירה לה' כי
גאה גאה סוס ורכבו רמה בים**

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel chose to sing this song to Hashem, and they said the following: I shall sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant, having hurled horse with its rider into the sea” (15:1)

The Shira, which lends its name to this Shabbos, is a very special prayer. There is a custom to stand while this part of the parsha is being read in shul. The Geonim instituted that we should say it every morning in davening. The Zohar writes that if one says the Shira every day with kavana, he will merit to sing this song of praise to Hashem in the world to come. This song is so joyous that some Sefardim omit it from their davening on Tisha B'Av. The Leviyim sang it as part of the service of the afternoon Korban Tamid on Shabbos. The Mishna Berura (53:17) says in the name of the Zohar that when one says the Shira, he should picture in his mind as if he himself has just crossed the sea and has been saved by Hashem and he should recite the Shira with joy as if he were there. If says the Shira joyfully in this manner, all of his sins will be forgiven. These are some notable points about the Shira. One should be sure to say it each day joyfully and concentrate on what he is saying.

**כי בא סוס פרעה ברכבו ובפרשיו בים וישב ה' עליהם את מי הים ובני ישראל
הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים**

“When Pharaoh's cavalry came with his chariots and horsemen into the sea and Hashem turned back the waters of the sea upon them, the Children of Israel walked on the dry land amid the sea” (15:19)

What is the connection between the previous posuk, the final posuk of the Shira, which states that "Hashem shall rule forever" and this posuk which describes how Pharaoh and the Egyptians were drowned in the sea? The Kli Yakar explains that Pharaoh denied Hashem's existence when he asked Moshe "Who is Hashem that I should listen to him?" However, through Hashem's miraculous punishment of the Egyptians, everyone will recognize for eternity that Hashem is the true Ruler of the world. Despite the fact that Pharaoh attempted to deny Hashem and destroy his people, it is because of Pharaoh and his army and their death at the sea that everyone acknowledged Hashem and His greatness. For all of time, Yetzias Mitzrayim stands as a proof of Hashem and that He controls the world.

**ויסעו כל עדת בני ישראל ממדבר סין למסעיהם על פי ה' ויחנו ברפידים ואין
מים לשתת העם**

“The entire assembly of the Children of Israel journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin to their journeys, according to the word of Hashem; they encamped in Refidim and there was no water for the people to drink” (17:1)

The Or HaChaim cites the statement of Chazal related that translates the name Refidim as "weak" and explains that it was named this because Bnei Yisrael became weak

in Torah there. Since Chazal often allegorically compare Torah to water, it makes sense that they were unable to find water to drink at Refidim. Hashem punished them middah keneged middah. Because they did not remain committed to the Torah which is compared to water, they had no water to drink. There is a cause and effect for everything that happens to us. Hashem operates in this way so that people can figure out why they are having problems. Chazal advise that one who has difficulties in life should examine his deeds to discover what he has done wrong and how he can correct it. If a person finds a specific area where he is having trouble, he should try and understand if there might be a connection between the difficulty and what he is doing wrong. When Hashem punishes a person in such a way, it becomes easier to uncover the root of the problem and to repent from those mistakes.

Tu B'Shevat

The halachic implication of Tu B'Shevat is that it demarcates the beginning of the year for maaser, the tithe that was given to the Leviyim. Any produce from before Tu B'Shevat was considered to belong to the previous year and any produce from after this cutoff date would belong to the coming year. Since one must tithe produce in its appropriate year and not wait for the following year, one must note the year to which his produce belongs. Why does that make this day so special?

R' Moshe Feinstein says that if one were allowed to hold on to his maaser for a few years, people would procrastinate. They would hold crops from one year to the next in case the following year's crops would not come out as good and not give the maaser that was due until they had a good crop and had enough to give away. The reason why one might do this is because he may believe that maaser is a charitable gift since no Levi can demand maaser. One can give it to any Levi that he wants and so one may think that it is a gift since there is nobody claiming it. This makes a person lazy about giving. He will either not give at all or give late after waiting to see if he thinks he can afford it. Therefore, the halacha dictates that one cannot give for one year in another. This makes it clear that maaser is an obligation. Until Tu B'Shevat, his harvest is like a home with a mortgage. Once he finishes giving his obligation, it is as if he paid off his mortgage and his produce is truly his. On Tu B'Shevat the harvest truly becomes his. This is the joy of Tu B'Shevat.

Hashem gives each person material possessions in this world, but on the condition that he give share with those in need. When the condition is fulfilled, then a person truly deserves and earns what has been given to him. People procrastinate when it comes to giving tzedaka because nobody claims it. A person should learn from maaser that one should not delay tzedaka from one year to the next. The faster he accounts for it is more praiseworthy. Then the portion that remains truly becomes his. This one of the lessons that we can draw from Tu B'Shevat.

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