



פרשת בא

Parshas Bo details the final three Makkos that finally convince Pharaoh of his mistake. As we were always told, the Gimatria of בא is three, which helps us memorize how many Makkos there are in each Parsha. We look back at the Makkos as a unit of Nissim that Hashem did to teach us, and the world, that He is the creator and can manipulate His creations at will. The Mitzvah that Kadosh Baruch Hu commands us to do is to pass on our Emunah to the next generation - והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר - (Shemos 13:8) - teach them all of the Nissim, Makkah after Makkah, of miraculous incidents with laser-like accuracy targeting only what was needed. The Ohr Hachaim wonders, being that the Mitzvah of הגדה is ONLY AT NIGHT in the presence of Matzah and Marror, why does the Pasuk assign the moment of transmitting the Mesorah to ביום ההוא, to the daytime? He suggests, ואולי, to include that the night of יציאת מצרים was as bright as daylight ולילה כיום יאיר - (Tehilim 139:12) - as EVEN that נס is to be included in the Mitzvah of סיפור.

We also need to include, based on my thinking, a Nes that leapt off the pages of the Chumash at me this year. We all know how masters treat their servants, from the history of the world in general. The Pesukim and Chazal teach us how the Mitzriyim treated us in our servitude in מצרים. Back breaking work, bathing in our blood, physically and psychologically and then taking our newborn babies and throwing them, undoubtedly mercilessly, into the sea. Even without too much imagination, we can visualize the animosity and the revolting, beastlike nature of "something" that could do that. We have, sadly, seen pictures and heard stories in our time of such ferocious savagery.

All this makes us marvel at what, if I had a vote, would count it as the eleventh "Nes". Hashem promises that we would find חן in the eyes of Mitzrayim - (3:21), (11:3), (12:36), and obviously we did. The kind of חן that when we asked to "borrow" their silver and gold - it worked - we cleaned them out (in the words of Chazal). These same slave masters somehow developed a soft hearted approach to their oppressed slaves. The image that I imagine is, the same low-life who would throw a beer bottle at you while riding by on his camel, would now happily lend you his championship soccer jersey. Astonishing! It is also amazing that the Pasuk (11:2) calls them "our friends" - וישאלו איש מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה כלי כסף וכלי זהב. Mefarshim wonder how the Mitzriyim earned the title of רעהו, a description that is usually reserved only for Yidden.

Rabeinu Bachya explains this with a Chidush. Before מתן תורה, EVERYONE was a רעהו (still had a chance to enlist as Hashem's servants) but after they refused to accept the Torah, the title of אחי ורעי (Tehilim 122:8) was reserved "בעם ישראל בלבד". Rav S.R. Hirsh takes another approach. These are his words (11:12): "The people had just proven their moral worth in a most brilliant manner...for three days all the possessions of the Egyptians had lain unprotected in their homes. But no Jew took advantage of this opportunity for revenge; no Jew touched an Egyptian or even the least of his possessions...that G-d caused the Egyptians to comprehend the moral greatness of this people...at last overcame the antipathy they had felt for the Hebrews." Our behavior during חוּשך, being honest and Ehrlich when we could have had an encyclopedia of excuses, earned respect, earned us a

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dimension of רעהו coming from the side of מצרים.

The Netziv (Ha'amek Davar 11:2) follows a similar approach, but says an astounding חידוש. The Mitzriyim felt a level of brotherhood to the Yiden because during the first three days of חושך, they could not budge; not up or down, certainly not in any direction. How did they fast for three days? THE YIDEN FED THEM - הושיטו להם מזון וכל ההכרחי - and that is how we found favor in their eyes. הפלא ופלא!

What a lesson! By being honest and upstanding, by showing Mentchlichkeit can turn even small people, who Chazal refer to as חמורים, to recognize greatness and maybe even change their pre-existing animosity. The words of the Netziv should resonate with us now more than ever. Some of us probably heard one of the מכשפות, one of "our cousins", who was elected by mental midgets to a government position, complaining that Israel does not give vaccines to West Bank inhabitants because they are an apartheid State etc.. How are they supposed to have the strength to send balloons to set fires? She also seemed to have forgotten that the "religious leaders" Paskened that its forbidden to use anything from the U.S or Israel. How many people will believe her propaganda instead of believing the steady influx - secretly - of "cousin" patients being treated in our racist hospitals? Our entire country needs to become more aware of the insidious power of SHEKER.

B'H we've learned three ways to understand the Pesukim - all of which accept that the bond of רעהו existed between us and Mitzrayim. The Vilna Gaon (Kol Eliyahu, פנינים משולחן הגר"א based on Rashi (12:35) takes a different approach. ובני ישראל עשו כדבר. Rashi explains - משה וישאלו ממצרים כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלות

to mean as he said to them in Mitzrayim, "man shall ask from his neighbor etc.," which seems superfluous since those are the very next words in the Pasuk. Explains the Gaon that in order for that חן to exist, we Yiden had to do חסד WITH EACH OTHER to create an environment of עולם חסד יבנה, which then would even spill over to our captors the Mitzriyim. Indeed, they felt the חן, which allowed them to "lend" all their wealth to us. The Gaon learns that NEVER MEANT the Egyptians, but it meant us - אחי ורעי.

So what can we take from this? Especially those who think you're back in Yeshiva/school in a Chumash class? The thing that makes us all brothers is the Torah - even those estranged and factually distant from Sinai - were still taught the Torah by a Malach and despite where they are, are still taught לעשותו. I always tell Talmidim as they are about to enter "the Parsha" that they have to COMMAND respect and not DEMAND it, and every relationship needs respect at its core (said with the hope that it will keep them in line). Be honest, be Ehrlich to others - and to yourself. Don't forget who your brothers and sisters are and treat them with kindness.

May Hashem again end the darkness of this Galus like the one that ended in daylight כיום יאיר and we should be Zocheh to see it במהרה.

Among those who are מצפים לישועה.

אמני דאפקרה
חיים טובים איתן

