

BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' IN ENGLISH

PARSHAS BESHALACH – 13 SHVAT 5783

Bostoner Rebbe shlit" a – Yerushalayim

Secretariat Email: bostonrebbe@gmail.com



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It would seem that Bnei Yisroel followed the instructions of Moshe before they recognized that they found favor in the eyes of the people of Mitzrayim. One could imagine it would be hard for Bnei Yisroel to ask 'to borrow' vessels and garments from the Egyptians, since they had no intention of returning to Mitzrayim, however, they overcame their inclinations and followed Moshe's instructions. Similarly, it was a request that Moshe made of them, not a command

The Sifsi Tzaddik, citing his brother-in-law, the Sfas Emes, asks why Shiras HaYam – the song of Az Yashir – was written in the Torah in this unique manner, known as Ariach Al Gabey Levayna, 'like brickwork', where the lines are built upon each other like a brick wall, with gaps of space between each segment of the Pasuk. He explains that the Parsha of Vayechi is written Stumah, without a break between the end of one Parsha and the beginning of the next Parsha, is to indicate that the eyes and hearts of Bnei Yisroel would be Satum 'closed tightly shut' due to the death of Yaakov and the impending servitude and fulfillment of Bris Bein HaBetarim. In contrast, the song of Az Yashir was written with a lot of spacing as the song opened their eyes and their hearts. One reason for the space between Parshiyos is to give one pause and delve deeply in thought about that specific Parsha. The verses of the Shirat HaYam are so powerful that they require reflection after every few words.

Additionally, the Sifsei Tzaddik asked why the Egyptians did not buy light from the Jewish People during the plague of darkness, the way they bought drinking water from Bnei Yisroel during the plague of blood. We are not suggesting that the Mitzrayim should travel to Goshen to purchase light. Rather, when Bnei Yisroel were looking around the homes of the Egyptians, they brought light with them and the Egyptians could have offered them money. One possibility is that at this point where they knew they were going to take large wealth out of Mitzrayim they had no interest in selling the light, the way they did with the water in the very beginning of the Ten Makkos. Another possibility is that it was appropriate to sell water to the Egyptians, since it is a necessity to live, it also did not cancel the meaning behind the plague of Blood, which was primarily to smite the Nile River, which the Egyptians viewed as a deity. However, the Egyptians could survive without light and the Jews did not want to nullify the plague of Darkness which the Egyptians were supposed to be punished with measure for measure. to sell water which is a necessity. A third reason could be that as the Kotzker Rebbe explains, this darkness was a physical darkness not just the absence of light and it was only using the Ohr HaGanuz that it was revealed to Bnei Yisroel where all the possessions of the Egyptians were hidden. This Hidden Light was taken away during the days of Creations, as Hashem did not want the wicked Reshaim to use this light for improper purposes. Now that the Egyptians were paralyzed by the darkness and the Reshaim of Bnei Yisroel died during the plague of darkness (see Rashi to Shemos 13:18) that the rest of Bnei Yisroel could utilize this Ohr HaGanuz. Thus, they most certainly were not permitted to sell this light to the Egyptians. One simple final approach is that they did not control the miraculous light and therefore they were unable to sell it even if they tried.

Last week in Parshas Bo it says, "Bnei Yisroel carried out the instructions of Moshe and requested from the Egyptians silver and gold vessels and garments. Hashem gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they granted their requests. And so they emptied out Mitzrayim" (Shemos 12:35-36). Therefore, one might ask that if they 'emptied out Mitzrayim' in last week's Parsha when they left, where did all the wealth of Bizas HaYam come from, as the Midrash tells us that the booty that Bnei Yisroel collected at Yam Suf was greater than that which they took out of Mitzrayim (See Rashi to Shemos 15:22).

I would like to suggest that every Jew of Bnei Yisroel would ask their 'neighbor', meaning their counterpart in social status, such as their slaveowner. This would require Moshe Rabbeinu to be the one to request gold, silver, and clothing from Paro himself. Since Moshe was not permitted to see Paro's face again, both by Paro's command and by Moshe's agreement to Paro's words, he was not able to ask Paro for his wealth and subsequently was free to perform the Mitzvah of acquiring Yosef's bones and taking them out of Mitzrayim. Back in Parshas Vayigash, we learned how Yosef had purchased practically all of the possessions of the Egyptian on behalf of Paro. In addition, there was a 20% flat tax instituted on everything the Egyptian produced. It was all this wealth that belonged to Paro, which was more than the rest of the nation combined that came with the Egyptian army to the Yam Suf.

May it be Hashem's will that we should merit to see wonders and miracles, similar to those we experienced when coming out of Mitzrayim, speedily in our days, with the coming of the Go'el Tzedek.