

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah insights translated and revised by Duvid Pinchas Rose, based on the Yiddish יהודה פארשױס by Yehuda Zvulun Klitnick

פרשת בא
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Parshas
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לעילוי נשמת אביו מרדכי בן ראובן ואמו שרה לאה בת אביגדור ע"ה

The Yidden had good grounds for worrying

וַיְהִי כִשְׁלַח פְּרַעֲהוֹ אֶת הָעָם: (י"ג י"ז)

It came to pass when Pharaoh let the people go... (13:17)

There is a general understanding that when the Torah uses VAYEHI in a narrative it typically connotes distress, anguish or tragedy -- in other words, TZA'AR. At first blush we discern only the triumph of the Liberation. But there was a real element of anguish on both sides of the epic struggle, and latent numerical equivalencies (gematriyo'os) hold the key to understanding. Wicked Paroh was surely distraught at the devastation of his slavery-based economy. But his tza'ar pales in comparison with that of Klal Yisroel, who confronted three elements of tza'ar. 1. The Yidden worried that they ultimately would have to pay the debt of unsatisfied years of servitude which had been ordained for them at the Bris bein Hametzorim/Covenant between the Parts (Bereishis 15:13). 2. They were worried about the forced conversions (שמד) they would face; and 3. they feared gruesome persecutions driven by the sword. The sojourn in Mitzrayim was decreed to -- and did -- last 430 years (Four hundred years since the birth of Yitzchak, plus the previous thirty years from the Bris Bein HeMesarim, with Rashi's proof at 12:40), from which there were 86 years of actual servitude. The "balance" of 344 years has the numerical value of SHMAD. Their total stay in Egypt of 220 years (430 minus 210, the years after Yitzchak's birth) matches the gematriya of "my sword." The triple combination of shmad, sword and repayment years was ample grounds for deep discomfiture.

(עפ"י ס' כסף צרוף)

Didn't the Egyptians absorb enough punishment?

וַיֵּצֵא לְמַלְאָכָה מִצְרַיִם כִּי בָרַח הָעָם וַיִּהְיֶה לָבָב פְּרַעֲהוֹ וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶל-הָעֵם וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִה-זֹּאת (עֲשִׂינוּ כִּי-שִׁלַּחְנוּ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם: (יד ה

It was reported to Pharaoh that the people had fled; and Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, What is this that we have done, that we have released Israel from serving us?(14:5)

Hadn't the Egyptians absorbed enough punishment for their obstinacy that they seem to be looking squarely at another round? What is more, we have clear evidence that the people themselves took direct action to expel the Yidden, so why did they ask their hypocritical question?: So the Egyptians took hold of the people to hasten to send them out of the land. (12:33) Also, the reporting to Paroh seems strange; our Parshah opens with Paroh's dispatching Kal Yisroel, so what were his servants "reporting" to him: "news" that he knew only too well? And yet again, the officials could as well have bewailed bluntly that "we sent out Yisroel" (כִּי-שִׁלַּחְנוּ); at this point, ruled by desperation, what was the need to mention "from serving us"? There is an answer. Paroh's astrologers "reported" to him that Yisroel departed prematurely, having dwelled in Egypt only 210 of their 400-year "sentence, with a 190-year "balance" mandated to be in a different place of exile. "have fled" -- gematriya 210 -- hints that the evil Egyptians' claim was: "since the Jews are destined to be enslaved -- somewhere -- for another 190 years; they may as well be מַעֲבָדֵנוּ -- servants -- for us Egyptians!"

(צמח דוד דינוב)

Leaving over manna until Sunday?

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֲקַלְהוּ הַיּוֹם כִּי-שִׁבְתָּ הַיּוֹם לַה', הַיּוֹם לֹא תִמְצָאֵהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה: (טז כה)

Moshe said, Eat it today, for today is a Shabbos to Hashem; today you will not find it in the field. (16:25)

The word "today" seems extraneous, and we seek to understand why. The words 'כִּי-שִׁבְתָּ הַיּוֹם לַה' are even in the same posuk as the first הַיּוֹם. In the שו"ת הדות יעקב (Rav Hersh Meisels of Lask) we find a question of the Sfas Emes of Gur: what is the halachic status of Manna which fell Friday, Erev Shabbos, in honour of Shabbos: may one try to preserve it for Sunday, or does it share the restriction of all other batches of Manna, that *Let no one leave over [any] of it until morning* --? -- The reason we would speculate that it may be kept for Sunday is the Talmudic axiom (e.g. Yerushalmi 5:2) that דָּבָר שֶׁהוֹתֵר מִקְלָלוֹ הוֹתֵר, The Friday portion of Manna is exempted from the prohibition of overnight storage -- since it is needed for Shabbos -- so why not keep any "shirayim"/leftovers for Sunday use? אֲקַלְהוּ הַיּוֹם is the key: eat today that which you need today; you need Manna for Shabbos, and it is only that measure which can be held over -- and nothing that remains from it. Hence, no Manna from that batch will be on the Sunday menu. (מקרא מפורש. הגאון ר' יצחק יהודה טרונק)

Pesach and Tisha B'Av -- links in a chain

(הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב: (יג ד

Today you are going out, in the month of the spring season. (13:4)

There are some sobering, yet deeply concealed linkages between Pesach and Tisha B'Av lurking here, but we must delve a bit to discover them. There is a standard method of exegesis based on correspondences between the letters in Lashon HaKodesh, known as "A-T Ba-Sh". The first letter is linked to the last letter (Aleph-->Tov), the second to the next-to-last (Beis-->Shin) and so on. This formula indicates these calendrical facts: The first day of Pesach occurs on the same day as the next Tisha B'Av; the second day is the day of the following Shavuot; -- and so on. The acronym formed from the first letters of the second-through-fifth words of our Pesach posuk is אי"ב"ה, which in turn mirrors the mournful opening posuk of Tisha B'Av's Eichah *O how has the city that was once so populous remained lonely!* This fateful acronym also evokes the fiasco scouting mission of the Meraglim, which, as the Gemara (Taanis 29a) teaches, was the first link in the chain leading to the Destruction of the Mikdash -- on Tisha B'Av. Where is the pointer? The posuk *But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this desert* was the direct outcome of the mission. And its first-letter acronym? The same fateful אי"ב"ה. So far, the chain connecting Pesach and Tisha B'Av has two links.

. ספר כסא רחמים, חכמ כהן אב"ד ג'רבא)

Going beyond its allusions, the acronym we have been studying forms an independent word in its own right: "אי"ב"ה means "שנאה", hatred", which, in the guise of הנום -- causeless hatred -- was a principal cause of the Destruction, and which has been blocking Redemption ever since. A loving unity among Jews -- the antidote to causeless hatred, marked by אחד בלב אחד -- would hold the key to Redemption -- but only if the hatred embodied in our acronym will be no more. We end with a chain of three links, hoping that it will be rent asunder with Bias HaMoshiach (שמח וכולון תשע"ז)

Rav Moshe Leib miSassov, while once in a deep Torah dialogue with Rav Yisroel miPikov, son of the Holy Tzaddik Rav Levi Yitzchok of Barditschev, made a request. "Several of my chassidim, all of them pious and worthy Jews, are in the *kretschma*/country inn business and I would very much like for you to meet with them, to offer some spiritual and practical guidance." The two leaders set out in an uncovered wagon to visit one of the innkeepers. It started raining cats and dogs during their journey and both became soaked to the skin. Fortunately for them, they were passing the house of a chossid not on their list, but who ran to the Rabbonim and insisted they come under his roof, at least until the rains let up.

Their host was far from wealthy, and eked out a living by working in a whisky factory. Their dwelling was modest in the extreme -- ramshackle and poor -- with basically one large room. It had space for the man, his wife and children -- and, believe it or not, their cow in one corner. The host casually took the cow outside and cleaned up the area so that the two distinguished guests could lay down their heads comfortably. Rav Moshe Leib surveyed the situation and uttered a prayer to the Oibershter: "*Ribbono shel Olam*, may the simcha here not be disturbed in any way!" Rav Yisroel had not the foggiest idea what Rav Moshe Leib meant by his unexplained comment, but respectfully held his silence. What was the simcha? After davening Mincha and Maariv, and a modest evening supper, the host laid down some clean and dry straw in the corner for the guests to sleep on. But the hard and cold rains picked up again and the man thought it best not to leave the cow outside, so in she came and all spent the night together in the one-room dwelling. Reb Moshe Leib rose even before dawn so that he could daven at the halachically earliest moment ("*vasikin*"). He saw the lady of the house already scurrying about, obviously very happy, preparing breakfast for the guests. "What are you fixing to serve for breakfast, Missus?" he asked, just to be polite. "You just wait and see after davening," she replied, with eager anticipation of serving a fine, "*bakovodik*" meal, even if it were only to be a weekday breakfast. Reb Moshe Leib woke up his travelling companion, and the two commenced a lengthy and heartfelt davening. Brimming bowls of fresh rice cereal with milk greeted the two hungry travelers at the table. Reb Moshe Leib praised the food lavishly: "This is far and away the best rice cereal I have ever tasted

-- so good, in fact, that I sense a taste of Gan Eden in it! *Zehr geshmak!* But tell me where you obtained such a fine dish. There is something very unusual about it that I have to know about." "Well, my next-door neighbour is a decent and upright gentile woman with whom I get along well. I borrowed her last bit of rice cereal to prepare for you gentlemen." "Does she have a decent man for a husband?" was

Rav Moshe Leib's next question. "Just the contrary, Rabbi. He's a brute and a terror. He flies into drunken rages which send the wife running here for refuge until he sleeps off the drink and things calm down." "But you say she loaned you the last bit or rice she had; what will the man say when he finds out?" "I have

a feeling he will be enraged, and then all bets are off, *rachmana litzlan!*" "Listen to me, my good woman. The goy next door will be uncontrollable when he finds out that his wife has given away (loaned, actually, but he won't know the difference) his favourite rice cereal -- and her very life will be in danger. But I detect her basic human kindness, and in that merit she will manage to escape from him. She will turn to you for shelter and will confide in you that she wants to convert to Judaism! Take her in lovingly, hide her well and get to me together with her as fast as you can!" He departed after showering her with brochos for the hospitality he and Reb Yisroel had enjoyed.

That night, an ugly episode ensued exactly along the lines Rav Moshe Leib Sassover had foreseen. The husband had a drunken, raving fit and the wife sought refuge at the neighbours -- and announced to the woman of the house that she wanted to become a Jew! The two woman hurried to Rav Moshe Leib in the dead of that very night. The Rav received the potential convert with warmth and grace. He wrote out a letter to the Rav of the town, explaining the hardship the woman was suffering. But that in and of itself would not be a factor in a conversion. But Rav Moshe Leib added the *makeh bepatish*/final hammerblow to the argument. He was certain that the woman stemmed from a holy soul which in an earlier generation, because of inter-marriage, had passed through a gentile woman but now was seeking to return to its Jewish source. The local rav convened a beis din and the woman fully accepted the yoke of Torah and Mitzvos. What is more, she agreed to a shidduch with a worthy man and brought Jewish souls into the world, who grew to be distinguished rabbonim. The sparks of kedusha which Rav Moshe Leib Sassover sensed in the coarse rice cereal triggered a wayward neshama returning to its wellspring of eternal life. Now the simcha he had been guarding all along was revealed for all to see.

STORY OF THE WEEK:

Rice cereal reveals a holy lost soul to Rav Moshe Leib Sassover

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