

# Pardes Yehuda

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שבת מברכין שבט

פרשת וארא תשע"ט

## Hashem takes all merits into account

וידבר אלהים אל משה ויאמר... וגם אני שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם ואזכר את בריתי (ו: ב-ה)

Hashem spoke to Moshe... And also, I heard the moans of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians are holding in bondage, and I remembered My covenant. (6:2,5) We have three questions here. 1. The word וגם, is superfluous, the posuk could have said ואני שמעתי I heard? 2: There is also the matter of Hashem's speaking to Moshe with דבר, the verb, which usually carries a harsh tone; why here is Hashem speaking in a harsh tone to Moshe? 3: And then again, what does "remembering the Covenant [made in the past]" have to do with hearing the outcries of the Yidden now? The Gemara (Brochos 5b) presents a possible understanding, which can answer all of our questions: אין אָין "A prisoner cannot liberate himself from his own prison." The holy Chid'a, discussing Megilas Esther (6:1) בלילה ההוא נדרה שנת המלך On that night, the king's sleep was disturbed: cites Rav Yonoson Eibenschutz's question: why did Hashem arrange a "continuous" disturbance of the king's sleep in order to trigger a miraculous string of events leading to Mordechai's salvation? Should not Mordechai HaTzaddik's merits have sufficed to save the Yidden of Achashveirosh's kingdom? The Ya'aros Dvash, Rav Eybeschutz, answers, in light of our Gemara above, that Mordechai was also included as a target for Haman's evil decree, so his prayers would probably have been ineffective. The king's insomnia ultimately released Mordechai from Haman's decree, which now he could proceed to beseech and beg Hashem, with expectations of being answered favourably. So too, were the Yidden in Egypt. They were captive in an escape-proof prison, so their prayers could not be so effective. But since Hashem, remembered the covenant of mila that they had undergone, and the merit it brought along: ואזכר את בריתי. It is also with it, He accepted their prayers. This is וגם of our posuk, "I have also heard their appeal, as I did earlier with their circumcision. And why Hashem's sharp tone to Moshe? It was to express His displeasure that the Leviyim, who were not enslaved, and thus not really in the "prison", failed to daven for the rest of Klal Yisroel, even though their prayers would have been accepted. Therefore, says Hashem, as it were, I must remember their bris-covenant and I must also give ear to their outcry." (תנופה חיים - ר' חיים פאלאז'ני)

## Purpose of the Miracle of the staff turning to a serpent?

ואמרתי אלי אהרן קח את מטעך והשליך לפני פרעה יתי לתניין: (ו: ט)

"You shall say to Aharon, 'Take your staff, [and] cast [it]

before Pharaoh; it will become a serpent.' Why did Hashem command that the miracle of a staff turning into a serpent be performed for Pharaoh, something that the Egyptians were able to perform as well? The Medrash tells us that sorcery was so commonplace in Mitzrayim, that even the four and five year olds were able to change a staff into a serpent. The Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 6:5 says: that before the Mitzriyim enslaved Klal Yisroel, it was decreed that Klal Yisroel would be enslaved. If so, why were the Mitzriyim punished for enslaving Klal Yisroel, that which was supposed to happen to Klal Yisroel? The Ra'aved answers that while it is true that it was decreed that Klal Yisroel was to be enslaved, but the Mitzriyim went way beyond that. They gave Klal Yisroel work which killed them, and decreed to have them drowned in the river. The Mitzriyim were seeking to obliterate Klal Yisroel. This was not the decree against Klal Yisroel. Therefore, the Mitzriyim were punished. Hashem was sending a message as to why they were going to be punished. They were supposed to be a staff – just following the will of Hashem of Klal Yisroel being enslaved. Instead they were a serpent, they did not fulfill the will of Hashem, rather they were sadistic and embittered Klal Yisroel's lives. This was the reason they were punished. (באר יוסף - סאלאנט)

## Great miracles by the staff

וַיִּבְלַע מִטֵּה אֶהָרֹן אֶת מִטֵּהם: (ז יב)

Aharon's staff swallowed their staffs. (7:12) The Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 9:7) states: a great miracle was done with Aharon's staff. The staff swallowed all of the staffs that the sorcerers of Mitzrayim threw down which were sufficiently numerous to make ten Omer's -a weight-. When Aharon's staff swallowed all of the Mitzriyim's staffs, it should have caused Aharon's staff to expand, yet Aharon's staff was no thicker than it was originally. Everyone who saw Aharon's staff said, "This is Aharon's staff." Yet it was not noticeable that his staff had swallowed in it many staff's. The mefarshim note, this was a sign of the humility of Aharon. All his achievements were done in a descreet manor and he never showed arrogance. The Netziv, Hagaon Reb Naftali Tzvi Berlin, comments: that the general way in which sorcery works: after the sorcery is complete, everything reverts back to its original state. What happened with Aharon's staff was not sorcery. Even after his staff reverted back from a serpent to a staff, the serpents / staffs of the Mitzriyim remained inside Aharon's staff. All this was to soften the heart of Pharaoh. Yet the Torah relates that in retrospect, his heart was hardened and would not allow the Yidden to leave Egypt. (compiled by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

\*\*\* HaRav Moshe of Lelov saves a Jewish youth from destruction -- \*\*\*

The Tzaddik Rav Moshe of Lelov, son of the Holy Rav Dovid ascended to Eretz Yisroel in Tishrei, 5611 תר"א, 1850. He held that if he were only able to daven at the Kosel Hama'aravi, he could have brought Moshiach. Alas, Shomayim had other plans. Hostile Arabs would pelt anyone who tried to pray at the Kosel with stones, preventing any Yid from getting close. Rav Moshe passed from This World in Teves טבת י"ג of the same year.

There was a Yid Reb Chaim who lived near Lelov, who had not been blessed with children. He turned to the local Rav for a *get*, citing the Mishna (Yevamos 64a) that after ten childless years, a *get* would be in order. The Rav retorted with a Gemara (Bava Basra 116a) that if there is illness in a house, one should turn to a tzaddik to beg mercy for him in his prayers. The Rav gave Chaim clear advice to ask the tzaddik Rav Moshe of Lelov for help, and he did so. He shared his anguish and the pain of childlessness, and the Rebbe, Rav Moshe, declared that a son would be born to Chaim during the course of that same year. Chaim was deeply moved, to his very core, as he watched the Rebbe bring a small pouch from the adjoining room. It contained three coins. The Rebbe directed Chaim strictly that the new-born child was to wear the pouch around his neck -- never to be removed!

Through Hashem's mercy, a healthy son was born to Chaim, who named him Shmuel. Chaim followed the Rebbe's advice to a tee (for who knew the connection between the birth and that mysterious pouch?) and hung the pouch around the child's neck with a chain. As Shmuel grew older, admonitions from his father never to remove the pouch came as a steady littany. At one time, wearing it became unbearably uncomfortable for the boy, and he secretly loosened the chain and peeked inside the pouch. He beheld three silver coins but was immediately seized with fear and hastily restored the pouch to its place on the chain.

Sadly, Reb Chaim passed away suddenly and his widow could not cope well with raising the boy alone. He quickly abandoned the *Yiddishe derech* to the point where he no longer even davened. A friend took him into a shoemaking business, which, to his mother's relief, at least provided sustenance, so that he was not totally shiftless.

But before long, Shmuel's path took a dark turn when he learned how to play card games for money, which earned him some quite large sums. He even gained an unseemly reputation as the slickest card shark in the whole region. This did not sit well with a goy named Ivan, who held on to that designation, and decided to teach the upstart young "Jew" not to muscle in on his gambling turf. Ivan came to the place

in the seedy quarter of Shmuel's town where the card players gathered and saw that he was actually rather skilled. But he began to taunt Shmuel, who responded in kind until the two sat down to a grudge game of three rounds. Alas, Shmuel had indeed met his match in Ivan, losing all three rounds and his entire purse in the process. But so low had Shmuel fallen that he was not nearly as bothered by his actual gambling losses, as by the steep decline in his reputation in front of his corrupt friends. Unable to bear the loss of face, he forged ahead to another round with Ivan, as compulsive gamblers are known to do, throwing all pride to the winds. Of course, he had squandered all his money and in desperation remembered the neck pouch with the three silver coins. But the coins were missing! He commenced frantically searching high and low for them, all to Ivan's making fun of him. Unable to bear the shame, he ran out through the streets until he reached his home, where he cried throughout the night. At daybreak, he felt very unwell. His ever-loyal mother summoned a doctor, who delivered an unpleasant diagnosis:

Shmuel had an illness for which there was no cure.

The distraught mother realized that only storming the heavens with prayer could help her son. She had a brother in Yerushalayim. She telegraphed him to pray on Shmuel's behalf at the kever of Rav Moshe Lelover, (who had been niftar some years previously) near the grave of the Prophet Zecharia, since the boy was born through his brocho. The loyal brother did as he was asked and prostrated himself on Rav Moshe Lelover's grave, where he shed an abundance of prayerful tears. He fell asleep and had a vision of Rav Moshe in a dream, who stated clearly that if Shmuel would return in Teshuva to the proper Yiddishe path in life, then he would regain his health, but if not, *cholila*, he would soon perish. Upon awakening, the loyal uncle promised Rav Moshe, on his own good name, that the boy would become a true baal teshuva. The uncle wrote a letter describing all these events, down to the time frame for everything. The day he took pen to paper saw a change for the better in Shmuel's health. But when the letter arrived, mother and son realized that the real change began exactly at the time when the uncle was at Moshe Lelover's kever! This shook Shmuel to the core, since it touched his very existence. He resolved to do teshuva completely and returned to the path he once knew so well. His physical health recovered in full as did his spiritual health. One day he was astonished to discover the three silver coins again in his neck pouch, and realized that in a way he only faintly understood, they were the vehicle for his salvation, in returning to the path of serving the Eternal One, his Father in Heaven.

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