

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klimick
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פרשת בשלח תשע"ו

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ כִּי הִשְׁבַּע הַשְּׁבִיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹקִים אֶתְכֶם וְהֶעֱלִיתֶם אֶת־עַצְמוֹתַי מִזֶּה אֲתִכְבֶּם: (י"ג י"ט)

Moses took Yosef's bones with him, for he [Yosef] had adjured the sons of Israel, saying, God will surely remember you, and you shall bring up my bones from here with you (13:19) One might well have expected this posuk to co-occur with the posuk in Parshas Bo (12:37), which is the first to describe the Bnei

Yisroel's actual departure from Mitzrayim מִצְרַיִם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַיִם (וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַיִם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַיִם, סְכָתָה, ...) They were lead by Moshe, and that departure apparently should have also mentioned that Moshe took Yosef's bones along with him. -? - Why does the Torah postpone the mention of Yosef's corporeal remains to our later posuk in Beshalach? In a similar context, Rashi also poses the question as to why Yosef did not direct that he be brought immediately to Eretz Yisroel upon his death, as had Yaakov Avinu before him. This decision of Yosef's actually provides the key to the entire events of the Exodus. Yosef saw with the gift of prophecy (Ruach HaKodesh) that the route to redemption needed to lie through the divided Yam Suf (Red Sea), and the Medrash informs us that it was only in the merit of Yosef's casket that Krias Yam

Suf occurred! הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּנּוֹם, מַה רָאָה? רָאָה אֲרוֹנוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף, "The sea saw it and fled." (Tehillim 114) What did it see? Yosef's casket." (בראשית רבה פ"ז)

Leaving Mitzrayim via the Pelishtim's land would have avoided Yam Suf and made Krias Yam Suf unnecessary, and hence the merit of Yosef's bones would have played no role. But our Parshah states plainly, right from the start, that Hashem specifically prescribed a roundabout route to Eretz Yisroel which necessarily entailed a Yam Suf passage, where the merit of Yosef's bones would be crucial to the splitting. Therefore it is here that Moshe's transporting the all-important casket is described. (בית ישראל השלם – מאטטערסדארף).

כִּי הִשְׁבַּע הַשְּׁבִיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר: (יג יט)

for Yosef had adjured the sons of Israel, saying... The Gemara frequently mentions instances where the Torah gives an adjacent pair of verbs sharing a certain root, but with a variation in their inflection. The Gemara's explication is that the first word of the pair indicates that the action should be performed as often as warranted, even a hundred times, with the second instance teaching some other detail of the mitzvah. A good example is הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ (delivering rebuke) (ב"מ לא א), with הוֹכַח teaching "rebuke even a hundred times" and

הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ teaching that a student can sometimes rebuke his teacher. Another example would be שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח (sending away the mother bird,) : שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח meaning "send away even a hundred times" and שְׁלַח teaching "take the mother bird even to use for a different mitzvah." But there are exceptions to this pattern which have to be interpreted purely homiletically, and we have two of them in our parsha. In accounting for the doubled terminology of "adjuring", Rashi explains, הַשְּׁבִיעִים שִׁישְׁבְּעוּ בְּנֵיהֶם, "each of Yosef's brothers adjured his own children [to take his remains when they left Egypt]." With the

שורש/root of "swearing", הַשְּׁבִיעַ הַשְּׁבִיעַ, we cannot suppose that Yosef adjured the brothers a hundred times. Swearing is swearing; there is no "re-swearing"!

The solemn obligation has been undertaken and vowing repeatedly serves no purpose. So we need a different interpretation, which Rashi provides. Likewise, the Mechilta on the Maftir portion of our parsha points to מָחָה אִמְלָךְ as another example of an exception to the frequent exegetical pattern. (כִּי־מָחָה) "I will surely wipe out the seed of Amalek (17:14) There must be a meaning different than physically annihilating a hundred times. An actual person, like Amalek or even his camp, can only be destroyed one time, so the context must be on a higher plane: the first expression מָחָה refers to wiping out Amalek in This World (Oilam hazeh), while אִמְלָךְ points to continuing the campaign into the Next World (Oilam haboh). [We assume Amalek's destruction must be complete. If not, that could be another way to account for the verbal duplication -- that the Torah is mandating an ongoing, continuing process until total destruction is achieved. [DPR]] (הדרש והעיון אב"ד ריישא)

הַתִּיַּצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת ה' אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם: (י"ד י"ג)

Stand firm and see Hashem's salvation that He will wreak for you today (14:13) The verbal tenses -- future and present -- need harmonisation here. "which He will perform" is future tense. "see" is imperative, but since it connotes "you will see", we would expect a future tense as well, such as וְהִרְאוּ. Moshe Rabbeinu shared a measure of Ruach HaKodesh with Klal Yisroel, enabling them to glimpse what Hashem's later intentions were for them; hence we understand וּרְאוּ: "See (now) what Hashem will do later." There is confirmation at Krias Yam Suf of the element of this Ruach HaKodesh, in the garb of prophecy, resting on the Yidden: רֵאתָה שֹׁפְחָה עַל הַיָּם מַה שֶׁלֹּא רֵאתָה יְחֻזְקָל, The lowly maidservant attained a level of prophecy at the Sea more than that of Yechezkel HaNavi. (מכילתא וַיִּרְאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה, ד.שירה ג, ד"ה זה אלי) The Israelites saw the great Hand... "Hand" means prophecy, as evidenced in turn by הַיָּתָה עָלַי יְד ה' (יחזקאל לו א), a clear pointer to prophecy in the words of Yechezkel. (שפת אמת תרמ"א)

ה' יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תִּחְרְשׁוּן: (יד יד)

Hashem will fight for you, but you shall remain silent (14:14)

[Our readers could scarcely have dodged the passionate exhortations in our Jewish public media about the dire consequences of halachically-unlawful secular speech during davening in shul. The current "Stop the Talking in Shul" campaign is but one example. [DPR]] The Rebbe of Gur, the Bais Yisroel took up his cudgel for the cause of the sanctity of the beis medrash decades ago, based on this posuk. He interpreted it in his characteristically pithy way: If you expect Hashem to fight your battles against the heavenly accusers and help you emerge unscathed from the fray, then you have to do your part. And that is: וְאַתֶּם תִּחְרְשׁוּן. Keep silent -- and don't talk --when you're not allowed to.

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STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick and translated by Dovid Pinchas Rose)
The Tzaddik Rav Nachum Kaplan's dilemma: who came first on his list of donors?

The Holy Tzaddik Rav Nochum Kaplan from Horodno, the Rebbe of the Holy Chafetz Chaim, [niftar zxl"h] was a Torah giant as well as a Gaon in character traits. His tireless pursuit of chessed/kindness opportunities knew no bounds. For example, any widow that lacked funds to marry off a child was a favourite beneficiary. He never failed to assemble the needed funds and present them in an honourable, non-embarrassing way. Everyone in town responded generously to his appeals -- until one did not. Reb Nachum needed an unusually large sum for one of his causes and turned to a prominent lawyer in town. The lawyer's reception amounted to a rude and crude "Get lost and don't darken my door again!", followed by a jolting slam in Nochum's face. Nochum took this affront in stride and expressed no exasperation or annoyance, but the good citizens brooded over the shameful chutzpah which the lawyer hurled at the Rav.

This miserly "man of laws" himself fell afoul of the law when the government indicted him for a white-collar crime carrying a lengthy jail sentence, which he was unlikely to avoid, even with his fancy connections. He had a close friend high in the government in St. Petersburg, and he lost no time in showing up at his office. He did not count on the untoward reception he got. "His honor is totally tied up now, and cannot meet with you," said the doorkeeper gruffly. The lawyer was deeply dismayed. He had always been welcome at his friend's office and never had any problem being admitted. Yet here was this stubborn guard who did not budge even with the few rubles the lawyer pushed into his hand. Thinking to outsmart him by waiting for the officer to emerge from the office, he sat down on the settee in the waiting room -- to no avail. His erstwhile "friend" dashed out of the office, and paid him absolutely no mind or recognition. Out of utter desperation, the lawyer determined, on their next chance encounter, to literally throw himself at the officer's feet and beg outright for his intercession with the police, if only for old times' sake. And this he did, soiling all his clothes in the mud. Imagine his chagrin when the officer shot back: "Out of my way, you rogue! Some nerve! Anybody who slams the door in Rav Nachum's face deserves to have the door slammed in *his* face!" The lawyer continued to beseech his friend with hot tears and wails, until the officer found a spark of pity in his breast. He vowed repentance, promising never to repeat his foul deed. "Look, my wayward friend. This is what you have to do. Instead of throwing yourself at my feet, it is with Rav Nochum that you have to make amends. Hurry back to Horodno and beg forgiveness from Rav Nochum any way you have to. Bring me a letter from him that all is well between you. Then and only then will I try to help you with the authorities."

The lawyer, now duly chastened, saw that his only hope was to follow the officer's directions to a "T." He hurried back to Horodno and sought out Rav Nochum. The encounter was over in a trice. The lawyer described his precarious legal situation and then poured out his heart in sincere remorse and shed bitter tears before Rav Nochum, who stopped him in his tracks. "As far as I'm concerned, you did nothing bad to me that needs mechila. If anything, I should ask *you* to forgive *me* for causing you all this aggravation! You need a letter, you say? I can write one in a jiffy. I will say that you had no bad intentions, did not insult me in any way and that I am moychel you from the

bottom of my heart with no reservations. Go back to the officer in Peterburg *gezunterheit*."

The tzaddik Rav Nachum was a living textbook of noble character traits, and the lawyer learned a lesson for life from him. He told the tzaddik to put him on the top of his list of the most dependable donors for future appeals. He traveled back to Peterburg with a brocho for success in his legal plight. This time, the reception he got from his highly-placed friend was as different as night and day from the previous stormy encounter. They embraced warmly and Rav Nachum's letter had its desired effect. In fact, the officer, with his *protektziya* at the Imperial Ministry of Justice (where judicial integrity was not the prevailing corporate culture) had already arranged for the indictment to be quashed and the case against the lawyer was closed. The friendship was renewed and the penitent lawyer came to recognize Rav Nachum Kaplan as the tzaddik that he was.

Another episode of Rav Nachum's: He once needed a large donation and turned to a prominent civil judge in his district who had a reputation for stinginess. Not only did this scoundrel rebuff the appeal, but even accused Rav Nachum of wanting to keep the money for himself! True to character, Rav Nachum kept his composure in the face of this outrageous accusation and calmly left the premises. It so happened that this judge was implicated in a corruption scheme and despite laying out large sums for his own legal defense team, was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison, and hauled away. Hearing this, Rav Nahum's first act was to rush to the man's wife to see how he could help her financially, with her husband out of the picture. He found her quite desperate, for they had expended all their savings on legal bills and she had nothing left to live on. Rav Nachum asked how much she needed every week to make ends meet. "Twenty rubles" was the amount she reckoned. He took twenty rubles out of his pocket, told her not to worry about money, and that her husband could repay him when he got back on his feet after prison. And so, an envelope with twenty rubles found its way under the woman's doormat every Wednesday. The months dragged on. Upon his release, the ex-con judge naturally asked his wife how she had managed financially during his time away. "The Rav whom you insulted gave me twenty rubles every week," was her muffled reply. The judge could not believe his ears, and in fact barely caught himself from fainting. "Greatness and righteousness like that you just don't find in this world. Rav Nachum is a *malach*, nothing less. I embarrassed and accused him unjustly, and here he repays me by helping my wife survive!" He ran over to Rav Nachum and fell at his feet, seeking forgiveness. "Rebbe, you have taught me a totally new pathway in life. How can I ever repay you? Please, please, whenever there is a needy person, put me at the head of your list of donors."

In the light of both of our episodes, Rav Nachum had two claimants for position Number One on his list of donors. How he decided who emerged on top for each individual cause has not come down to us. How many gabboei tzedakka (charity managers) would be happy to have a problem like that! *[Perhaps the fact that both protagonists in this story were participants in earthly jurisprudence -- and both lacked integrity -- can remind us that authentic and untainted justice can flow exclusively from the Beis Din shel Ma'alah. [DPR]]*

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