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Beshalach

בשלח

ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם ולא נחם אלקים דרך ארץ פלשתים כי קרוב הוא כי אמר אלקים פן-ינחם העם בראתם מלחמה ושבו מצרימה

And it was at the time that Pharaoh drove out the people (from Mitzrayim), and Hashem didn't take them through the land of the Pelishtim because Hashem said to Himself ... and they will return to Mitzrayim. (13:17) Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani (1706-1779 in Modena and Mantua Italy) asks why does the Torah refer to the time of the Exodus as "the time that Pharaoh drove the people out". This implies that Pharaoh was responsible for the Exodus. It would seem more appropriate to refer to the time of the Exodus as "at the time that Hashem took the people out..." which states that Hashem was responsible for our leaving. (Which is the way that Balak refers to the Exodus, "Hashem (Kail) took them out of Mitzrayim...") He answers by first asking and answering a different question: How could Bnei Yisroel cry out and pray to Hashem that He take us out of Mitzrayim? At Bris Bein HaBesarrim, Hashem decreed that we would be in bondage for 400 years. Since the time didn't yet come (we left Mitzrayim after only 210 years), how could we pray for the time to be shortened? The answer to this second question is, explains Zera Shimshon, that Hashem doesn't rule the world only with the Attribute of Justice. If He would the world would cease to exist. Hashem also rules the world with the Attribute of Mercy. Therefore, true, according to the strict letter of the decree Bein HaBessarim bondage would be 400 years; 365 days times 400. However,

Bnei Yisroel davvened to Hashem that Hashem should judge us with His Attribute of Mercy and that the 210 years of tremendous harshness and severity that we suffered should be considered like we were enslaved for 400 full years. By the fact that we left Mitzrayim after only 210 years it would seem that Hashem answers our prayers and He judged us with the Attribute of Mercy. However, this isn't true, Hashem judged us at that time with His Attribute of Justice. However, since the enslavement was so brutal and draconian, to a much greater degree than decreed at Bein HaBessarim, even the Attribute of Justice agreed that we could leave Mitzrayim. The remaining 190 years of bondage, though, was suspended for a later time. The obvious difference between if our suffering fulfilled the decree of 400 years or we still have to make it up is if future generation will have to suffer more exiles. Zera Shimshon, though, proposes two other differences even for the generation of the Exodus. Firstly, if all the years were fulfilled then we would have just gotten up and left. Pharaoh would not have had to sent us out. Secondly, if all the years of bondage were finished then there would no worry or concern that we would return to Mitzrayim.

Oh my..!?!?

"ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם" - משל למה הדבר דומה? לאדם שהיה לו פרדס. אמר לו חברו: מכור לי את הפרדס הזה. ולא היה יודע בעל הפרדס מה בתוכו, ומכרו לו במנה (מאה שקלים). אמרו לו: בכמה מכרת את הפרדס? אמר להם: במנה. אמרו לו: בפרדס הזה יש בו זיתים במאה מנה, גפנים במאה מנה, רמונים במאה מנה, כל מיני בשמים במאה מנה, וכן כל מין ומין במאה מנה - ולא היית יודע מה אתה מוכר ומה יש בפרדס הזה? התחיל המוכר תוהא וצועק וי הי... כך היה פרעה כששלח את ישראל, לא היו לפניו כלום. אמרו לו גדולי המלכות: מה עשית? אילו לא היה בידם אלא הבזה לבדה - דיים. ולא עוד, אלא שכמה עשירים היו בהם, כמה חכמים וכמה בעלי אומניות כמה אנשים ונשים וטף - באותה שעה התחיל פרעה קורא וי וי, הי הי, וזה שנאמר "ויהי בשלח"...

(שמות רבה כ', ב')

According to this Zera Shimshon now explains the original question why the Torah refers to the time of the Exodus as when "Pharaoh drove out the people..." and not when Hashem took us out. This possuk continues that Hashem took us out a winding way because He was concerned that if we left on a straight route and saw

לכבוד האי גברא וב'ב' הרוצים בעילום שמם על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב מיט יידישע נחת בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות בזה ובבא עבגצב"ב

a war we would want to return to Mitzrayim. This concern is ONLY because we left before the end of the decree. Therefore if the Torah wrote "at the time that Hashem took the people out..." (which implies that Hashem answered our prayers and judged us with the Attribute of Mercy) we would not understand why Hashem didn't take us directly into Eretz Yisroel; we already fulfilled the decree of 400 years. The Torah therefore writes that Pharaoh send us out, which implies that we still "owe" 190 years, therefore we were taken a round about way so we wouldn't want to return to Mitzrayim. (Gooddvartorah.com)

ופרעה הקריב וישאו בני-ישראל את-עיניהם והנה מצרים נסע אחריהם וייראו מאד ויצעקו בני-ישראל אל ה'

Our Parashah relates that, after the Exodus, the Egyptians pursued Bnei Yisrael to the Yam Suf. We read (14:10), "Pharaoh approached, and Bnei Yisrael raised their eyes and behold! — Egypt was journeying after them, and they were very frightened; and Bnei Yisrael cried out to Hashem." The Midrash Mechilta records that Bnei Yisrael were divided into four groups, and for each of them Moshe had a different message. One group said, "All is lost; let's throw ourselves into the sea." To them, Moshe said (14:13), "Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem." A second wanted to return to Egypt, but Moshe told them: "As you have seen Egypt today, you shall never see them again." A third wanted to fight, but Moshe said (14:14), "Hashem shall do battle for you." The last group wanted to cry out. To them Moshe said, "You shall remain silent." R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z"l (Yerushalayim; 1910-2012) observes that in every generation, whatever the challenge facing the Jewish People, there are multiple groups of well-meaning people suggesting different approaches to addressing the issues of the day. But, what is usually missing from the discussion, as was

the case at the Yam Suf, is a Torah perspective. One group says (verse 11), "Are there no graves in Egypt?" That group does not have faith in the eternity of the Jewish People. Another group says, "Let us return to Egypt." That group mistakenly thinks that there would be no anti-Semitism if we would only integrate with our neighbors. And so on. Moshe Rabbeinu—i.e., the Torah—has an answer for each of them, as the Midrash describes. (Mishnat Ha'Grish: Pesach)

Choose your destiny

“ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם” (שם) - להלן וגם את ישראל לא אשלח” וכאן “הוא אומר הוא משלח! תנא ר' ישמעאל: משל למה הדבר דומה? למלך שאמר לעבדו: צא והבא לי דג מן השוק. הלך והביא לו דג מבאיש. אמר לו המלך: חייך, איך אתה ניצל מאחת משלש אלה: או הדג הזה אתה אוכל, או דמיו אתה נותן, או אתה לוקה מאה מגלבין (מלקות). אמר לו: אני אוכלו. לא הספיק לאכול ממנו קמעא עד שנקטה נפשו עליו, אמר אני לוקה מאה מגלבין. לא הספיק ללקות חמשים עד שנסתכן למות, אמר: אני נותן דמיו. נמצא אותו עבד אוכל דג מבאיש, ולוקה, ונותן את דמיו. כך פרעה ששעבד את ישראל במצרים יותר מדאי, ואמר לו הקב"ה: "שלח את עמי", אמר: "לא ידעתי את ד'". הביא עליו הקב"ה עשר מכות ולא שלחם. אמר לו הקב"ה: חייך, יש לך ליתן שכרם, שנאמר "וד' נתן את חן העם בעיני מצרים וישאלום". משנטל פרעה את המכות ונתן את שכרם, אחר כך שלחם... (ילקוט שמעוני עפ"י תנחומא).

עזי וזמרת קה ויהי-לי לישועה זה קלי ואנוהו אלקי אבי וארממנהו

"This is my Kel – 'v'anvaihu' / and I will build Him a Sanctuary." (15:2)

The Gemara (Shabbat 133b) interprets the word "V'anvaihu" as being related to the word "Na'eh" / "beautiful," and derives from here the concept of "Hiddur Mitzvah" / beautifying a mitzvah. Says the Gemara: "Beautify yourself before Him with Mitzvot — make a beautiful Sukkah, a beautiful Lulav, a beautiful Shofar, beautiful Tzitzit, a beautiful Sefer Torah . . ." [Until here from the Gemara] **R' Yoel Sirkes z"l** (Poland; 1561-1640; author of the important Halachic work, Bayit Chadash) asks: Why did the Torah say, "V'anvaihu" / "And I will beautify Him," rather than saying only, "V'anveh" / "And I will beautify"? He explains: Some people make beautiful Sukkot, buy beautiful Lulavim, etc. for their own egos. That, however, is not beautifying the Mitzvah. Rather, "Anvaihu" / "I will beautify [for] Him!" (Meishiv Nefesh Al Megilat Ruth 2:8)

ויאמר ה' אל-משה הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן-השמים ויצא העם ולקטו דבר-יום ביומו למען אנסנו הילך בתורת אס-לא

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold! I shall rain down for you food from heaven; let the people go out and pick each day's portion on its day, so that I can test them, whether they will follow My Torah or not'."

(16:4) **R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l** (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania) writes: It is well-known that the entire Exodus was meant to repair the sin of Adam. If Adam had not eaten from the Etz Ha'da'at and contaminated his soul, he would have lived forever. Man is a combination of a spiritual, supernatural soul and a material, natural body; as long as man did not sin, his existence was not dependent on nature. The fruit of the Tree, though, was purely natural, with no spiritual content; accordingly, G-d directed Adam not to eat it. When Adam disregarded G-d's command, he subjected himself to the forces of nature, one of which is death. "Achilah" / "eating" has several meanings in Tanach. Prophecy is called eating, as in the verse (Shmot 24:11), "They gazed at God; they ate and drank." In Mishlei (9:5), Torah study and mitzvah performance are referred to as "bread." This is because, just as physical food--bread, in particular--sustains the body, so Torah and mitzvot sustain the soul. The food Bnei Yisrael ate in the desert was called "mahn" (spelled "mem-nun"). "Mem" equals 40, the number of days Moshe was on Har Sinai, and "nun" equals 50, the number of days between the Exodus and Giving of the Torah. This hints that mahn nourished the soul, enabling it to receive the Torah, which was the purpose of the Exodus. And, mahn had to be eaten fresh every day to teach that the Torah should be accepted anew, with freshness, every day. All of this was to repair Adam's sin of eating "natural" food. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim)

Hashem said to Moshe, "Behold I shall rain down for you (plural) bread from heaven, and the nation shall go out and gather each day's portion on its day." (16:4) Why does the pasuk begin in second person ("for you") and then change to third person ("the nation shall")? **R' Yosef Karo z"l** (1488-1575; author of

the Shulchan Aruch and other works) offers two answers: Hashem may maintain the entire world for the sake of one or two tzaddikim, i.e., this means that the world may give its produce for the sake of those tzaddikim, and the rest of the world will benefit incidentally. Therefore Hashem, said, "Behold I shall rain down for you - Moshe and Aharon - bread from heaven, and, incidentally, the nation shall go out and gather." Alternatively (R' Karo preferred this second explanation): "I shall rain down for you, Moshe and Aharon, straight to your doorsteps, but the rest of the nation shall go out to the fields and gather." (Chiddushei Maran Ha'Beit Yosef Al Ha'Torah)

ויאמר משה ואהרן אל כל בני ישראל ערב וידעתם כי ה' הוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים

"Moshe and Aharon said to all of Bnei Yisrael, 'In the evening, you shall know that Hashem took you out of the land of Egypt. And, in the morning you will see the glory of Hashem, that He has heard your complaints against Hashem—for what are we that you should incite complaints against us?' And, Moshe said, 'When, in the evening, Hashem gives you meat to eat, and bread to satiate yourselves in the morning; as Hashem hears your complaints that you complain against Him — for what are we? — your complaints are not against us, but against Hashem!'" (16:6-8) The Gemara (Chullin 89a) teaches: What is said about Moshe and Aharon is greater than what was said about Avraham. Avraham said (Bereishit 18:27), "I am but dust and ash," whereas Moshe and Aharon said, "What are we?" [Until here from the Gemara.] Avraham's words, "I am but dust and ash," imply that Avraham felt he was "something," whereas Moshe felt that he and Aharon were "nothing." **R' Mordechai Yehuda Krause** (Chief Rabbi of Yerucham, Israel) asks: Why is Moshe's statement here praiseworthy? Wasn't he simply saying, "Don't blame us. This is Hashem's problem!?" R' Krause answers: That statement itself is the essence of humility. Humility means recognizing that "I have nothing to contribute to resolving the issue before me. Only Hashem can do that." Haughtiness, on the other hand, indicates that one has

forgotten Hashem, and that is why it is so deplorable. (Netiv B'mayim Azim)

ויראו בני ישראל ויאמרו איש אל-אחיו מן הוא כי לא ידעו מה-הוא ויאמר משה אלהם הוא הלחם אשר נתן ה' לכם לאכלה

"Bnei Yisrael saw and said to one another, 'It is mahn!'--for they did not know what it was. Moshe said to them, 'This is the bread that Hashem has given you for eating'." (16:14)

Rashi explains: "Mahn" means "food," but they did not know its proper name.

R' Chaim Yosef David Azulai z"l (Chida; 1724-1806; Chevron and Livorno, Italy) writes: The Gemara (Ta'anit 24b) teaches that one should not benefit from an item that is the product of a miracle. This is what our verse means: "It is mahn (מַחֵן) -- an acronym for "ma'aseh nissim" / "the product of a miracle" -- "for they did not know what it was" -- i.e., they did not know if it was permitted to benefit from it. Moshe answered them, "This is the bread that Hashem has given you for eating." "The bread" -- i.e., it is a reward for another bread, namely the bread that Avraham Avinu fed to his guests. (Chida writes: "This much I have heard from others.") **He**

continues: Certainly, one can benefit from a miracle if it is a matter of life or death. This is why the Torah emphasizes (Devarim 8:3), "He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you the mahn that you did not know." Because you were starving, you were permitted to eat the mahn. **Also**, Chida writes, if the item already exists and it miraculously changes its nature as a result of prayer, one is permitted to use it. Thus, for example, the sage Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa was permitted to light Shabbat candles with vinegar (see Ta'anit 25b). (Quoted in Torat Ha'Chida) **R' Zvi Pesach Frank z"l** (1873-1960; Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim) quotes Chida as writing that only an individual may not benefit from a miracle, because the miracle might have been at the expense of his reward in Olam Haba. However, a tzibbur / multitude does not have to worry about that. [Their collective merit is presumed to be sufficient to justify a miracle.] Therefore, the mahn which fell for everyone could be eaten. This would explain, as well, why the Jewish People were allowed to benefit from the one jug of oil that miraculously lasted eight days (i.e., the Chanukah miracle). (Mikra'ei Kodesh: Chanukah p.15) **"Bnei Yisrael saw and said to one another, 'It is mahn!'--for they did not know what it was. Moshe**

said to them, 'This is the bread that Hashem has given you for eating'."

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ויאמר ה' אל-משה עד-אנה מאנתם לשמר מצותי ותורתי

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'How long will you refuse lishmor / to observe My commandments and My teachings?'"(16:28) **R' Chaim Aryeh Leib of Yedvobna z"l** (19th century; Russia) asks: How could Hashem level this seemingly untrue accusation against Moshe? Moshe certainly observed Shabbat! He answers: Proper mitzvah observance requires

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preparation and anticipation. This is how one demonstrates that he values the mitzvah, and how one sets the tone for the mitzvah's observance. This is why we are commanded to remember Shabbat every day. However, our parashah indicates that Moshe did not tell Bnei Yisrael until Friday that there would be no mahn on Shabbat. Since Moshe deprived Bnei Yisrael of the chance to anticipate Shabbat and prepare mentally for the day, he is held accountable for their desecration of Shabbat. [Ed. note: Based on this interpretation, the word "lishmor" in our verse can have a double meaning and can also be translated as "anticipated" (see Rashi to Bereishit 37:11).] (Sha'ar Bat Rabim)

ויאמר ה' אל משה עבר לפני העם וקח אתך מזקני ישראל ומטך אשר הכית בו את היאר קח בידך והלכת

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Pass before the people . . .'" (17:5) Rashi z"l explains: In the previous verse Moshe Rabbeinu said, "Soon they will stone me." Therefore Hashem said, "'Pass before the people.' See if they will in fact stone you." **R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l** (1914-2005) comments: Surely Moshe was not exaggerating;

he must have had a genuine fear that he would be stoned. Nevertheless, Hashem was displeased with his choice of words. The midrash Bereishit Rabbah states: "Better the anger of the Patriarchs than the humility of the children." Regarding Yaakov Avinu we read (Bereishit 31:36), "Then Yaakov became angered and he took up his grievance with Lavan; Yaakov spoke up and said to Lavan, 'What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?'" When our Patriarch Yaakov became angry, he spoke humbly, "What is my sin?" In contrast, when Moshe felt threatened, he spoke accusingly, "Soon they will stone me." Similarly, King David is criticized for saying to Yehonatan (Shmuel I 20:1), "What have I done? What is my transgression and what is my sin before your father [King Shaul] *that he seeks my life*?" David did not have to express openly the fact that King Shaul wanted to kill him. Hashem doesn't want to hear criticisms of His people even when they are true. (Shiurei Chumash) **R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l** (1865-1935; Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) writes: The great love that we love our nation does not blind us or prevent us from inspecting its faults. Even so, even after the most independent examination, we find its essence to be free of any blemish. "You are completely beautiful, My beloved, and there is no blemish in you" [Shir Ha'shirim 4:7]. R' Kook continues: Any statement in the Written Torah or Oral Torah that could weaken a Jew's love for the Jewish People, even for the completely wicked, is a test--a challenge to a person to increase his love of Hashem until he finds a path through the seeming contradictions, so that his love for the Jewish People and for all of G-d's creations will be alive and sustained in his heart with no doubts. (Orot Yisrael 4:3-4) **R' Zvi Yisrael Tau** (rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Hamor) explains: R' Kook is describing a love for the Jewish People that is not based on specific good deeds, but rather on an appreciation of the Jewish People's essence. Such love is not blind to the Jewish People's sins; rather, it is pained sevenfold by every spiritual blemish precisely because such blemishes are foreign to the Jewish People. (L'emunat Eetainu V p.10) **R' Nachman of Breslov z"l** (1772-1810) writes: The saddest thing is when the holy Jewish Nation falls into sin, G-d forbid. The worst suffering in the world

is nothing compared to the heavy burden of sin. Anyone who appreciates the holiness of the Jewish People, who knows where their souls come from, understands that the Jewish People are inherently distant from sin. Therefore, there is no heavier burden for a Jew to carry than the burden of sin. (Likutei Moharan)

Rabbi Abraham Abele Gombiner (5395-5443; 1635-1683) The author of the famed work Mogen Avrohom ("Shield of Abraham"), Rabbi Avrohom Abele, the son of **Rabbi Chayirn Halevi**, was born in the Polish town Gombin (Gombinnen), then belonging to East Prussia, Germany. His family-name Gornbiner, or Gombinner, refers to his birth place. He is also known by the family-name Kalisch, after the Polish town Kalisz, where he spent the greater part of his adult life as Dayan and Rosh Yeshiva of the town. Abraham Abele was only a Bar Mitzva bocher when the terrible calamity, known in Jewish history as "Gzeros TaCh vTaT (the Massacres of the year 5408-5409) struck the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. In those years (1648-9), the Cossacks, under the leadership of Bogdan Chmielnicki, revolted against the Polish nobility and landlords who had been oppressing the enslaved Cossack peasants. The Cossacks, however, found it easier to kill and plunder the defenseless Jews. They put to the sword and flame countless Jewish communities, and butchered untold thousands of Jews (some historians estimate as many as 300,000) during their bloody march through the Ukraine, Volhynia, Podolia, Poland proper, and Lithuania. Although the revolt of the Cossacks was temporarily halted by peace negotiations, the Cossack attacks continued with undiminished savagery for more than ten years. In the year 1655 (24 Tammuz, 5415), the great city of Vilna fell into the hands of the bloodthirsty Cossacks. They ravaged the city and carried out a mass slaughter of the Jewish inhabitants, giving them the choice of conversion to christianity or death. A number of Jews managed to flee from Vilna and surrounding towns and villages. Among the Jews who escaped was the famed **Rabbi Shabse Cohen**, author of the monumental commentary on the

Shulchan Aruch Yoreh-Deah, named Sifsei Cohen, popularly known by its Hebrew initials "ShaCh," which are also the initials of the author. He was about thirteen years older than Rabbi Abraham Abele. In the same year the Cossacks also destroyed the Jewish community of Gonibin. Rabbi Abraham's father, Rabbi Chayim, was one of the martyred victims who died at Kiddush HaShem. Rabbi Abraham, then 20 years old, managed to escape. Soon thereafter, Rabbi Abraham was appointed Rosh Yeshiva and Dayan in the town of Kalisz, where the Rosh-Av-Beth-Din was the Gaon **Rabbi Yisroel Schapiro**. (Rabbi Yisroel, author of Beth Yisroel, a commentary on Yoreh-Deah, was the son of the famous **Gaon Rabbi Noson Schapiro of Cracow**, author of the renowned work, Megaleh Aittkos). That Rabbi Abraham was appointed to the above-mentioned important posts while comparatively still quite young shows that he was already recognized at that age as an outstanding authority on the Talmud and the Halachah. Indeed, he was blessed with a brilliant mind and was a most diligent and educated student who spent all his time studying the Talmud and Jewish law, day and night. Soon he was recognized as one of the greatest Geonim of his generation. [Nissan Mindel Chabad.Org] *To be continued IYH....*

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