Points to Ponder

Beshalach 5782

**וַיְהִ֗י בְּשַׁלַּ֣ח פַּרְעֹה֘ אֶת־הָעָם֒ It was when Pharaoh sent the nation (13:17)** - Pharaoh didn’t SEND the people, they left because Hashem took them out, no? The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 20:3) notes that Pharaoh accompanied them out of Egypt. But why is that relevant? In the end, he was stubborn and received Maakos until he had no choice but to let the Jews go**? Rav Leib Chasman ztl** explains that Hashem does not let the smallest of credits to go to waste. Even the smallest signs of respect – that were later undone – deserved recognition and this is the intent of the Possuk here.

**וְאַתֶּ֖ם תַּֽחֲרִשֽׁוּן Hashem will fight for you and you shall be silent (14:14)** - When the Jews were challenged by the Egyptians they were told to stand down and let Hashem take care of the situation. At the end of the Parsha Moshe tells Yehoshua to fight Amalek, Why the change? **Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl.** explained that while the Egyptians threatened our physical lives, Amalek presented a spiritual challenge. The spiritual challenges cannot be met with a passive stance. We need to be assertive and aggressive in repelling any and all threats to his Jewishness.

**מַה־תִּצְעַ֖ק אֵלָ֑י Why do you cry out to me (14:15) - Rashi** notes that Hashem told them that now is not the time for lengthy prayers. **Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita** notes that there are times in life and in Chinuch when we need to offer long spiritual messages and mussar schmoozin but at other times, the shorter messages have better impact. There is a Chochma to knowing which time the different styles need to be used.

**וְהַמַּ֤יִם לָהֶם֙ חֹמָ֔ה מִֽימִינָ֖ם וּמִשְּׂמֹאלָֽם The waters were a wall for them (14:29)** – There is a Minhag to have a different trup used for the Shira. There is also a minhag to extend that trup to include the words “V’HaMayim Lahem Choma” as well. The thing is, those words appear twice. Which phrase is the proper one for the minhag of switching the Trup? The generally accepted practice is to apply the custom to the second repetition, the right before Az Yashir. **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** noted that the practice he grew up with was to switch the trup for the first, not the second one**. Rav Schachter Shlita** suggested that the second time the word Chomah is spelled Cheima or anger, since Hashem was angry that the Jews had taken the Pesel Micha with them from Mitzrayim.

**שָֽׁמְע֥וּ עַמִּ֖ים יִרְגָּז֑וּן The nations heard and trembled (15:14)** - The Mechilta notes that when the other nations heard that Pharaoh and his people died and the judgement affected their Avoda Zara, they trembled. But elsewhere we find that even the nations of the world said Mi Kamocha and denied their own Avoda Zara. How does this fit with the idea of trembling mentioned here? **Rav Yechezkel Sarna ztl** explained that in the mind of a non-Jew, it is possible to recognize Hashem supreme nature and at the same time, keeping their Avoda Zara beliefs intact.

**וְנַ֣חְנוּ מָ֔ה And what are we (16:8)** – The Gemara (Chullin 9a) notes that what was written about Moshe is even greater than what is said about Avraham. Avraham said that he was dust and ash. Moshe didn’t even consider himself worth that much. But in the end, aren’t they both highlighting their smallness in face of Hashem’s greatness? **Rav Meir Shapiro ztl.** explained that to be in front of Hashem everyone is Ash and dust but to see oneself that way in front of others – that is a trait that was more praiseworthy when made by Moshe.

**וַיֹּ֨אמֶר משֶׁ֤ה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁ֨עַ֙ בְּחַר־לָ֣נוּ אֲנָשִׁ֔ים He told Yehoshua to go battle Amalek (17:9)** – Why did Moshe send Yehoshua on this mission? **Rav Dovid Cohen (Gevul Yaavetz) Shlita** referred to Abarbanel’s Peshat that Moshe did not want to dignify Amalek’s tactics with the respect of his going out himself to fight the battle. Rav Dovid added that the symbol of Amalek is Leitzanus and by sending Yehoshua instead of going, Moshe was not accepting the dignity of responding to Leitzanus.

**Haftara**

**כִּ֣י בְֽיַד־אִשָּׁ֔ה יִמְכֹּ֥ר Because by the hand of a woman Hashem will sell Sisra (Shoftim 4:9)** – Which woman is referred to here? **Redak** assumes it is Yael who killed Sisra when he came to her tent. **Ralbag** assumes it was a reference to Devorah as it is she who is credited with the miracle even if the end was performed by Yael. The **Meshech Chochma** asks what the reference to “Selling” here is. He notes that it refers to a cost or a price to pay. Yael was the one who had a price to pay for her victory for she became forbidden to Chever as a result of the activity that happened with Sisra. For the sake of the Jewish people, she sacrificed and the victory is a credit to her.