Points to Ponder

Beshalach 5783

**פֶּן־יִנָּחֵ֥ם הָעָ֛ם בִּרְאֹתָ֥ם מִלְחָמָ֖ה Lest the nation regret their departure when they see war (13:17)** – **The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Segal** learned an important lesson from Hashem’s comment here. He explained that the generation that left Mitzrayim was a tested generation, time and again, and still Hashem did not want to over-test them with a test that they couldn’t pass by sending them into a war. The Manchester opined that we see how Hashem only tests someone with tests that s/he can pass. So even in the moments when someone declares that “I am weak” s/he can take strength from the fact that Hashem sees him/her as strong and able to rise to the occasion of the test – and be successful.

**וַיַּֽעֲשׂוּ־כֵֽן And they did so (14:4)- Rashi** notes the praise of Bnei Yisrael that they listened to Moshe to counter their inclination of running from their enemy choosing to stick to his words and return to Pi HaCheeros instead. In essence, they declared that they only listen to the words of Amram’s son. **Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl** explained that this praise was more significant here than in other instances. For in this instance the Anan – the protective cloud did not move back behind them to lead them back (that only happened later). Thus, the fact that they followed through came only with the trust in the son of Amram and without direct, observable support from the Anan. They still followed and it is a major credit to them.

**אָ֣ז יָשִֽׁיר־משֶׁה֩ Then Moshe sang (15:1) – Rashi** explains that when Moshe saw the miracle he decided to sing. Why did he sing at that point but did not sing at the time of Yetzias Mitzrayim? **Rav Soloveitchik** explained that Moshe did not sing Shirah being saved. It was Yisro who was the first who sang about being saved. Moshe’s whole Shirah was about the power and glory of Hashem. He felt that Shirah was not about thanking Hashem for being saved but in recognition of the Divine revelation which took place. Moshe was not amazed by Hashem’s saving Bnei Yisrael. He knew it was going to happen. But when he witnessed the tremendous Kiddush Hashem, then he was inspired to sing Shirah.

**אֱלֹקי אָבִ֖י וַֽאֲרֹֽמְמֶֽנְהוּ The God of my forefathers and I will exault Him (15:2) – Rashi** notes that Moshe was highlighting the fact that he was not the beginning of the Kedusha but that it began a lot earlier than he. Why did he need to highlight that NOW? **Rav Moshe Rosenstein, Menahel of the Lomza Yeshiva** explained that when one is experiencing supernatural events, it is crucial to highlight that these events are not the first wakeup to faith. Rather, the foundations of faith had been in the world for many generations going back to the time of Avraham who was willing to fight the world for it.

**וַיֹּ֨אמְר֜וּ אִ֤ישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו֙ מָ֣ן ה֔וּא They said one to another it is Manna (16:15)** – Why is there a stress on the fact that each person said “it is Manna” to his friend? **Rav Gedaliah Eiseman** noted that the power of this heavenly food was that it changed the person consuming it to the point where neighbors didn’t recognize each other due to the Manna effects. He adds that the same is true for the power of prayer. Through Tefillah we can literally change who we are into a man of Tefillah.

**כַּֽאֲשֶׁ֨ר יָרִ֥ים משֶׁ֛ה יָד֖וֹ וְגָבַ֣ר יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל When Moshe raised his hands, the nation won and when he let them drop, Amalek looked like it was winning (17:11) - Rav Dessler** explained the use of the hands here differently than the classic style employed by the Mishna in Rosh Hashana. Rav Dessler noted that one needs to employ symbolism at times in order to focus on the spiritual lessons learned. By lifting his hands, Moshe was highlighting to the people to consider the power of Amalek. (He did the same with the copper snake.) When we consider the power of Amalek which is a sneak attack, we are not startled and are prepared for it. However when the hands came down, we were open to forgetting.

**כִּי־יָד֙ עַל־כֵּ֣ס קהּ For there is a hand on the throne of the Eternal (17:16) – Rashi** cites the Tanchuma that notes that the name of Hashem is not going to be complete until the destruction of Amalek. Hence, the name used here is the Yud and the Heh. **Rav Schachter would often quote Rav Moshe Soloveitchik** who explained that the issue is not the standard assumption that while there is evil in the world Hashem cannot rule over it. That would be heretical. Rather, while the fact that Hashem will always run the world is clear (as seen from the letter “Yud” at the beginning of a word that is the prefix to some thing in the future) and always HAS run the world (as the name ending with a Heh implies the past). When we see evil like Amalek of every generation, we have a hard time seeing the supremacy of the name of Hashem even though it is there. Hence we note that it is Kes Kah (with the Yud from the beginning and the Heh from the end and need to fill in the vav and the Heh) in every generation.

**Haftarah**

**תְּבֹרַךְ֙ מִנָּשִׁ֔ים יָעֵ֕ל Yael the wife of Chever HaKeini should be blessed (Shoftim 5:24)** – The Gemara (Nazir 23b) notes that an Avairah L’Shma (an Avaira done for the glory of Hashem) is greater than a Mitzva done without L’Shma (intent). The proof is from Yael. But the concept of Avaira L’Shma is an odd one – it literally means an Avaira with the intent to sin, not to do a mitzva. How can that be praiseworthy? **The Chasam Sofer** explained that Yael thought she was losing her Olam Haba – that there was no ancillary benefit to her at all. That is an Avaira L’Shma and is of more sacrifice and indicative of belief than an Avaira done for the purpose of a Mitzva or a Mitzva that is not done L’Shma.