

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



תשפ"ד Vayaishev

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

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אמרות שמשון

How Yosef's Master Succeeded to Tap into Yosef's Blessings

וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיֵּרָא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי ה' אִתּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה' מְצַלִּיחַ בְּיָדוֹ: וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חָן בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּשְׂרֹת אֹתוֹ וַיִּפְקְדֵהוּ עַל בֵּיתוֹ וְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵי לֶחֶם נָתַן בְּיָדוֹ: וַיְהִי מֵאִזְ הַפְקִיד אֹתוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ וַיְבָרֶךְ ה' אֶת בֵּית הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּגִלְלַת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי בְרַכְתּוֹ ה' בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ בְּבֵית וּבְשָׂדֵהוּ: (לט, ב-ה)

And Hashem was with Yosef, and he was [i.e. became] a successful man, and he was [i.e. remained] in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that Hashem is with him, and all that he does Hashem makes successful in his hand. Yosef found favor in his master's eyes, and attended to him, and the master appointed him over his household, and all the master had, he placed in Yosef's custody. And it happened, that from the time the master appointed Yosef in his house and over all that he had, Hashem blessed the Egyptian's house on Yosef's account, and Hashem's blessing was in all that he had, in the house and in the field.

The wording in this Passuk seems to need some explanation. First, why the need for three citations of the expression 'was' in this one Passuk; 'And Hashem was with Yosef, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his Egyptian master'? Secondly, the Passuk says, 'Yosef found favor in his master's eyes, and attended to him'; it would seem to have been more appropriate had it been written in a reverse order, 'Yosef attended to his master, and found favor in his eyes', for in which regards did he find favor in his master's eyes, if not regarding the quality of his servitude to him? Lastly, when the Passuk says, 'and the master appointed him over his household... And it happened, that from the time the master appointed Yosef in his house... Hashem blessed the Egyptian's house on Yosef's account', there seems to be some repetition, as it should have sufficed to simply say, 'and the master appointed him over his household... and Hashem blessed the Egyptian's house on Yosef's account'.

The Midrash (א פו) expounds our verse as follows. כל העבדים חשודין על הגזל. כל העבדים חשודין על הערובה אבל זה ולא שמע אבל זה 'ויברך ה' את בית המצרי בגלל יוסף'. כל העבדים חשודין על הערובה אבל זה ולא שמע אליה. All other slaves are suspected of thievery, but regarding Yosef the Torah states, 'Hashem blessed the Egyptian's house on Yosef's account'. All

other slaves are suspected of adultery, but regarding Yosef the Torah states, 'and he would not listen to her'.

Accordingly, we can understand the need for the Torah to emphasize three distinct elements. 'And Hashem was with Yosef', is cited to teach us that Yosef was not guilty of adultery, for if Hashem was with him, he definitely was not guilty of that sin. 'And he was a successful man', is cited to teach us that Yosef was not guilty of stealing, for a thief is never successful. And finally, 'And he was in the house of his Egyptian master', is cited in order to accentuate that which the Torah goes on to say, that 'Hashem was with him, and all that he did Hashem made successful in his hand', as if to say that although he was in the house of an Egyptian who wasn't worthy of blessing, nevertheless in merit of his own righteousness, Yosef was indeed successful.

The Passuk then proceeds to say that when his master saw this astounding success which was in all that Yosef did, it caused Yosef to find favor in his eyes and consequently brought him to want Yosef to be personally involved with all the matters of his home and business, in order to channel Yosef's success to his own benefit; into 'his home and all that he had'. Thus, it was indeed, that initially 'Yosef found favor in his master's eyes', and only afterwards did he 'attend to the master'.

The Torah goes on to tell us that, truly, just as the master had anticipated, as soon as Yosef got involved in all his personal matters, Yosef's blessing of success seeped its way into all his matters, as well. Thus, the repetition; [after the master saw all the success that Yosef had] 'he appointed him over his household... [in order that he himself should benefit from that blessing of success as well]. And it indeed happened, that from the time the master appointed Yosef in his house... Hashem blessed the Egyptian's house on Yosef's account'.

(ורע שמשון פרשתנו אות יב)

Chanukah

In Commemoration of Which Miracle Do We Light the Menorah?

אמר רב כהנא דרש רבי נתן בר מניומי משמיה דרב תנחום נר של חנוכה שהניחה למעלה מכ' אמה פסולה וכו' וארב כהנא דרש רבי נתן בר מניומי משמיה דרב תנחום מאי דכתיב (בראשית לו כד) והבור רק אין בו מים, ממשמע שנאמר והבור רק איני יודע שאין בו מים, אלא מה ת"ל אין בו מים, מים אין בו אבל נחשים ועקרבים יש בו. (שבת כב ע"א)

A Chanukah light that one placed above twenty amos from the ground is invalid... What is the meaning of that which is written regarding the pit

into which the brothers threw Yosef; 'And the pit was empty, no water was in it'? Do I not know that no water was in it, from what is stated in the beginning of the Passuk 'And the pit was empty'? Rather, it is teaching that water was not in the pit, but snakes and scorpions were in it.

Anyone learning this Gemara, which deals exclusively with the Halochos concerning Chanukah, will naturally ask right away; what does the pit, which Yosef was thrown into, have anything to do with Chanukah?

וישמע ראובן ויצלהו מידם ויאמר לא נכנו נפש: ויאמר אליהם וכו' השליכו אתו אל הבור הזה וכו' והבור רק אין בו מים: (וישב ל"ז כ"א-כ"ד)

Reuvain heard, and rescued him from their hand, and said; "Let us not strike him mortally: And he said to them... throw him into this pit"... and the pit was empty, no water was in it:

It's difficult to understand how the Torah can write about Reuvain ויצלהו מידם - *he rescued Yosef from their hand*, when the Gemara clearly says that although the pit was empty of water, it was in fact full of snakes and scorpions, and Yosef was definitely not out of any danger while sitting in that pit?



In the Tefillah of Al HaNissim that Chazal composed to say on Chanukah, they stressed first and foremost the miracle of Hashem saving the Jews from the Greek, and only mention the miracle of the oil in just a few words at the very end. This would clearly imply that the miracle in which the weak and pious Jews defeated the strong and evil warriors of the Greek army, was much greater than the miracle of the oil which lasted for eight nights instead of for only one. The reason can be because we have already found miracles similar to this, carried out by Elisha and Ovadya haNavi's wife.

So why do we find the Halacha of '*publicizing the miracle*' by the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah, as the Gemara says that one who lights the Menorah above twenty amos does not fulfill the Mitzvah, and Rashi explains the reason to be because *the miracle won't be publicized*, when this Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah on Chanukah is presumably only in commemoration of the miracle of finding the oil and being able to light the Menorah in the Bais Hamikdash. Yet, we don't find the Halacha of '*publicizing the miracle*' to publicize the much greater feat of the downfall of the Greek forces by the Jews?

It would seem to say, that the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah on Chanukah is not exclusively in commemoration of the light that shone forth from the Menorah, which was lit with the miracle-oil. Rather, it is also in commemoration of the great light that shone forth with the defeat of the Greek, who are represented by darkness, as it says in the Passuk *with darkness upon the surface of the deep*; and Chazal teach us that it is alluding

to the darkness of the Greek 'who darkened the eyes of Israel with their evil decrees'.



The Mishna in Sanhedrin (ע"ז ע"ב) teaches us; כבש עליו לתוך המים או לתוך האור - *If he held someone down in water or fire and he could not escape, and he died, the murderer is liable*. When Hashem put us in the hands of the Greek, he was essentially '*holding us under the water*', and if so, he was, so to speak, liable and obligated to save us. So why are we so indebted to Hashem, to the extent that we need to publicize the miracle of Him saving us, when He was 'obligated' to do so?

We must say that Hashem putting us in the hand of the Greek, is not comparable to the Halacha of holding someone down under the water, in which that act in itself caused the death, rather it's comparable to the second Halacha that we learn in that Mishnah; יהודה מחייב וחכמים - *if he directly caused the snake to bite someone, R' Yehudah rules that he is liable while the Sages rule that he is not*. The reason for this dispute is because the act in itself, of bringing the snake onto the person, would not cause any death without the snake doing his part of going ahead and biting. So to, when Hashem placed us in the Hands of the Greek, that in itself would not have caused our demise without the Greek doing their part of going ahead and authorizing their evil decrees. Because we follow the ruling of the Sages, Hashem was therefore not 'obligated' to save us, and when He did we became completely indebted to him.



We can now understand the connection between the pit of Yosef and the Halacha that one must light the Menorah under twenty amos in order to publicize the miracles which the Menorah is coming to commemorate; the flask of oil and the defeat of the Greek.

This is because that Halacha raises the question; 'Why the need to publicize the miracle of being saved from the Greek when Hashem was 'obligated' to do so'? To which the answer is, as we said earlier, that the Greek were

similar to a snake, in which case the Sages who argue on R' Yehudah maintain that the one who sent the snake is not liable. As proof that we follow the ruling of the Sages, the Gemara brings the statement regarding the pit of Yosef, how it was empty of water but full of snakes, and yet the Torah writes that Reuvain saved Yosef from the hands of his brother. This clearly insinuates the opinion of the Sages, that when one puts a snake on someone, he is not liable for the outcome. For that is why, when Reuvain bailed Yosef out of the hands of his brothers who were intending to kill him and arranged that he rather be placed in a pit, although the pit was full of snakes and scorpions, it was still not an act of definite murder, and it was indeed a rescue on behalf of Yosef.

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