

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Beshalach

15 Shevat, 5777 – February 11, 2017

Compiled from the works of

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by

Rabbi Shmuel Mendelsohn
North Miami Beach, FL

A Project of

Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos

Copyright 2017©

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Beshalach

Likkutei Sichos Volume 21, Pages 77 – 83

Rashi in His Own Words

שמות ט"ו - כ"ב: ויסע משה את ישראל מים סוף ויצאו אל מדבר שור וילכו שלשת ימים במדבר ולא מצאו מים:
רש"י ד"ה ויסע משה: הסיען בעל כרחם שעטרו מצרים סוסיהם בתכשיטי זהב וכסף ואבנים טובות, והיו ישראל מוצאין אותם בים, וגדולה היתה ביזת הים מביזת מצרים, שנאמר (שיר השירים א', י"א) תורי זהב נעשה לך עם נקודות הכסף, לפיכך הוצרך להסיען בעל כרחם:

Shemos 15:22: Moshe led the Jews away from the Red Sea, and they went out into the desert of Shur. They went in the desert for three days, but did not find water.

Rashi Heading - Moshe led the Jews away: (The literal meaning of the Hebrew words for “led the Jews away” is that he *caused* them to travel). He led them away against their will, for the Egyptians had adorned their steeds with ornaments of gold, silver, and precious stones, and the Jews were finding them in the sea. The plunder at the sea was greater than the plunder in Egypt, as it says¹, “We will make you rows of gold with studs of silver.” Therefore, he had to lead them against their will².

A Brief Synopsis

Our Torah portion, Beshalach, tells us of the tremendous miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea. After the sea split and the Jewish Nation was saved, the Torah says that Moshe caused the Jews to leave the Red Sea. Why did Moshe need to cause them Jews to leave against their will? Rashi explains that at the sea the Jews were able to plunder even more gold, silver and precious stones than they had taken when leaving Egypt. They were so busy taking the loot of the Egyptians that had been drowned in the sea that they were not anxious to leave.

However, this is difficult to understand. Every single one of the Jews attained an extremely great level of prophecy at the sea. That is the reason that all Jews were all able to declare that³ “*This* is my G-d.” The word “this” can only be used in reference to something at which one can actually see. At the time of experiencing such a sublime revelation of Hashem, how was it possible to be concerned about acquiring more physical wealth?

1. Shir Hashirim 1:11.

2. Rashi's source is from various Midrashim. See the Midrash Tanchuma (Buber edition) 16, Yalkut Shimoni quoting the Tanchuma and Midrash Lekach Tov on this verse.

3. Shemos 15:2.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

The explanation is that Moshe had told us earlier that we were each commanded to⁴ “borrow from the Egyptians gold and silver vessels.” This was partially in order to fulfill the prophecy that the Jews would leave Egypt with great wealth⁵. However, this commandment was also in order for us to completely empty out Egypt⁶ of all of its wealth. When we saw at the Red Sea that we had not fulfilled our mission, and the Egyptians still had great wealth, we felt obligated to complete the job which we had begun. That is why we did not wish to leave the Red Sea.

The Jews were not commanded to receive the Torah immediately. However, we were commanded to empty Egypt of all of its treasures. This was truly a case of, in the words of the Sages⁷, “if not now, when?” There would not be another opportunity to fulfill this commandment.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, we are told of the splitting of the Red Sea which took place during our exodus from Egypt. This miraculously saved us from the Egyptians who were chasing after us. After we were saved, the Torah uses an unusual expression to let us know that Moshe urged us to leave the Red Sea. It says that⁸ “Moshe led the Jews away from the Red Sea.” The Hebrew words translated as “Moshe led the Jews away,” literally mean that Moshe *caused us* to travel away from the Red Sea. Why was it necessary for Moshe to cause us to travel? Rashi cites the words “Moshe led the Jews away,” and explains that “he led them away against their will. The Egyptians had adorned their steeds with ornaments of gold, silver, and precious stones, and the Jews were finding them in the sea. The plunder at the sea was greater than the plunder in Egypt, as it is written⁹, ‘We will make you rows of gold with studs of silver.’ Therefore, he had to lead them against their will.”

It seems quite clear from Rashi that had Moshe not led us away, we would not have left all that quickly on our own. There was so much loot to be taken that the Jews wished to remain in order to get all of the gold, silver and precious stones which were there.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

We need to understand why the Jews were so consumed with the plunder of the sea. Why did they desire material wealth? At the Red Sea all of the Jews sang out¹⁰ “This is my G-d.” Rashi explains that¹¹ “He revealed

4. Shemos 11:2.

5. Bereishis 15:14.

6. Shemos 3:22.

7. See Pirkei Avos Chapter 1, Mishnah 14.

8. Shemos 15:22.

9. See footnote 1.

10. Shemos 15:2.

11. See Rashi's comments *ibid*.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Himself in His glory to the Jews, and they pointed at Him with their finger (as denoted by the words “*this* is my G-d;” the word *this* can only apply to that which one can see). At the sea, even a maidservant perceived what prophets did not perceive.” Having attained such a depth and clarity of prophecy, how could they have been so concerned about gold and silver¹²?

Here this is especially true. The Jewish Nation knew that Hashem said that¹³ “When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain.” This means to say, that upon leaving Egypt, and the sea, we would merit to receive the Torah. We were so excited about receiving the Torah, that we began counting the days until Hashem would give us the Torah from the time that we left Egypt¹⁴. How is it that our interest in collecting material wealth could interfere with the yearning we had to receive the Torah?

The Explanation

Based on the above, we must say that the Jew’s reluctance to leave the sea was not based on their desire to attain even more wealth than they already possessed from “the plunder in Egypt.” Rather, they believed that gathering the gold, silver and precious stones from the sea was G-d’s Will. This is the real reason that Moshe had to get them to leave the sea against their will. They did not wish to leave the splendor of the revelation of Hashem’s presence at the Red Sea. It was this revelation which moved them to take the spoils from the sea.

At the time of our redemption from Egypt, we were *commanded* to¹⁵ “Please, speak into the ears of the people, and let them borrow, each man from his friend and each woman from her friend, silver vessels and golden vessels.”

Part of the reason for this command was in order to assure that the prophecy given to our forefather Avrohom would be fulfilled¹⁶. G-d told him that his descendants would be strangers in a strange land where they would be enslaved. However, He promised Avrohom that ultimately they would be redeemed and leave with great wealth. Rashi explains that the reason for each man and woman borrowing gold and silver vessels was “in order that Avrohom will not say that Hashem fulfilled His promise that ‘they will enslave them and oppress them,’ but did not fulfill his promise that ‘afterwards they will go forth with great possessions.’”

However, there was also a deeper reason. The Torah says that¹⁷ we “shall empty out Egypt” of all of their gold and silver when we leave. In the words of our Sages¹⁸, that we left Egypt like a trap with no corn¹⁹,

12. This is certainly so based on what the Rambam writes in the Laws of the Fundamental Principles of Torah at the beginning of Chapter Seven. He lists one of the conditions necessary in order to attain prophecy, that “one’s Evil Inclination never overpowers him.” Here, all of the Jews reached the level of the greatest prophets.

13. Shemos 3:12.

14. See the commentary of the Ran at the end of Tractate Pesochim. This is one of the reasons for the Mitzvah of counting of the Omer.

15. Shemos 11:2.

16. Bereishis 15:14.

17. Shemos 3:22.

18. See Tractate Berochos 9, b.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

and like the depths of the sea without fish²⁰. In other words we were commanded to take all of Egypt's wealth. However, when we came to the sea and saw how much gold and silver still remained with the Egyptians, we realized that we had not fully "emptied them out." We understood that we were obligated to remain there until we completed the Torah's commandment.

The fact that it would delay the fulfillment of "you will serve G-d on this mountain," i.e. receiving the Torah, was not relevant. That was not a command. Hashem was merely telling us that after leaving Egypt we would receive the Torah. It did not say when this would take place. Here, however, we were faced with the obligation of emptying Egypt. That was the overriding consideration which could not wait.

The opportunity of performing the Mitzvah of removing all of the wealth of Egypt would be lost if the Jews would not do it now. No one else would be able to perform that Mitzvah. The Halachah is that a Mitzvah which cannot be performed by another supersedes the Mitzvah of Torah study²¹. In this case, the meaning of Torah study was the Jew's progress to Mount Sinai in order to receive the Torah. Granted, Moshe was urging them on to receive the Torah, to learn Torah. However, based on their understanding of Jewish law, they were obligated to continue the Mitzvah with which they were occupied. Otherwise, it would be lost forever. No one else would ever be able to perform this Mitzvah. Therefore it took precedence. Their inspiration to carry out what they understood to be the Torah's ruling came from their great spiritual experience at the splitting of the sea. That was why Moshe needed to urge them to continue on their way against their will.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

We need to understand just why it was so important for the Jews to plunder all of the wealth of Egypt. This can be understood according to a deeper explanation of Torah. Hashem created the world because²² "He desired to have a dwelling place *below*." The meaning of this is that it should be His dwelling place. In one's dwelling place, in his home, his complete essence is revealed. However, He wanted that His essence should be revealed specifically *below*, i.e. in a physical world. It should be a world where His presence is not obvious. Despite that, His existence should be revealed throughout this entire world.

Egypt was a place of evil. Its Hebrew name is Mitzrayim, which connotes limitations, as contrasted to the totally unlimited G-d. Egypt was also called "the abomination of the earth," being the center of hedonism in the world. The idea of "emptying Egypt" was to take away their wealth, and to give it to the Jews. It was to be

19. Rashi explains there that those who trap birds place corn in the traps in order to attract the birds.

20. Rashi explains there that fish do not live in the greatest depths of the sea.

21. See Tractate Moed Kattan, Page 9, at the beginning of Side b. See also the Talmud Yerushalmi Tractate Berochos, Chapter 1, at the end of Halachah 2. See Rambam, Laws of Torah Study Chapter 3, Paragraph 4. See Tur Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah Chapter 246, Paragraph 18. See the Laws of Torah Study from the Alter Rebbe, Chapter 4, Paragraph 3. See also the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim Chapter 444, Paragraph 18.

22. See the Midrash Tanchuma Parshas Naso Chapter 16. See also Tanya at the beginning of Chapter 36.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

transferred to the Jews, who were on the verge of receiving the Torah and building the Tabernacle, a sanctuary where Hashem would be revealed in this world. In this manner, the wealth which was originally used for immoral purposes would be used in order to create a world in which the Almighty can be “at home.”

The lesson to be learned from this is clear. There comes a time when Hashem draws us close. We feel the importance of fulfilling His commandments. We can become so involved in the performance of one of His commandments that we will not stop for anything; even for the performance of a different commandment. We must learn from here that when the Shulchan Aruch, or Moshe Rabbeinu (or his extension in each and every generation²³) tells us to change gears, we must listen. We must always be occupied with that which He wants at any and every point in time. This is true even if it means going “against our will.” This is the way for us to reach the complete and true redemption.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Shemini, 5734)

To dedicate a week, a month or a year of

The Rashi of the Week, visit

<http://www.rebbeteachesrashi.org/contact-us-dedicate-an-issue>

You can find us on the web at www.RebbeTeachesRashi.org.

23. See Tikkunei Zohar Chapter 469 (Pages 112, a and 114, a).

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Chaim and Aiden Oded שׂיחיו Morris

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka** שׂיחיו Morris

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Mr. **Yoel ben Reb Sholom Dovid** Hacoheh ע"ה **Mankes**

Passed away on 28 Nissan, 5776

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

IN HONOR OF

Shimshon ben Chassibah שׂי'

Yosef Yitzchok ben Sarah שׂי'

and **Shoshana Devorah Hodya** bas **Tovah Sarah** שׂת'

For a complete and speedy recovery

*

DEDICATED BY

Mr. and Mrs. **Yonatan Itsik** Hacoheh and **Shaindel Miriam** שׂיחיו **Mankes**

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Dr. **Chaim Yitzchok** ben Reb **Yechiel Moshe** ע"ה **Handwerger**

Passed away on 25 Adar II, 5776

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN

Mr. and Mrs. **Yoav** and **Devorah Leah** שׂיחיו **Handwerger**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Yisroel Hacoheh ben Berocho שׂי' **Cohen**

For a complete and speedy recovery

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Berocho bas **Soroh** שׂת' **Cohen**

For a complete and speedy recovery

* * *

DEDICATED BY

Hatomim **Moshe Shlomoh Zohar** שׂי' **Mars**

*

MAY HE MERIT TO BE A CHOSSID, A YEREI SHOMAYIM AND A LAMDON

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

*

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

לעילוי נשמת

ר' יואל בן ר' שלום דוד הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום כ"ה ניסן ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

לזכות

ר' שמשון בן חסיבה שי'

ר' יוסף יצחק בן שרה שי'

ושושנה דבורה הודי' בת טובה שרה שתחי'

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

*

נדפס ע"י משפחתם

ר' יונתן איציק הכהן

וזוגתו מרת שיינדל מרים שיחיו מנקס

לעילוי נשמת

ר' חיים יצחק בן ר' יחיאל משה ע"ה האנטווערקער

נפטר ביום כ"ה אדר שני, ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בנו וכלתו

ר' יואב וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו האנטווערקער

נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

*

יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן