

קנינת פסל קורימא



פרשת בשלה תשע"ב

"ויקה משה את עצמות יוסף עמו כי השבע השביע את בני ישראל לאמר פקוד יפקוד אלקים אתכם והעליתם את עצמותי מזה אתכם" (פרק י"ג פסוק י"ט)

"And Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him as he swore to Yosef that he would bring up his bones from Egypt."

Why is it that the posuk only mentions the bones of Yosef? Yosef as we know was embalmed by the Egyptians and therefor his body was preserved as well. In addition the Mishna L'Melech writes that since Yosef was immune from *Eyin Hara* his body remained complete. If so why does the posuk only make mention of the bones of Yosef?

The simple answer here is that the wording of the oath that Yosef made his brother take was that they would take his bones out of Mitzrayim. Even if Yosef knew that his body would remain intact, he wouldn't tell this to his brothers rather he made them swear to take out his bones just like the remains of a normal man many years after his passing. Therefore the posuk tells us that Moshe respected the shevuah the brothers made to Yosef and took out the bones of Yosef even though he really took out Yosef in his complete state.

However the *Aruch L'ner* asks another question. Chazal tell us that the Egyptians placed Yosef's body in a heavy metal coffin and sank it to the bottom of the Nile River. When Moshe came to retrieve the casket he wrote Hashem's name on a piece of clay and threw it into the Nile, immediately the casket rose and Moshe was able to take Yosef's bones out of Mitzrayim.

The Gemorah in Sukkah tells us of a similar episode that occurred when Dovid Hamelech was digging the foundation for the Bais Hamikdosh. As the workers were digging they removed a piece of clay that in essence was the plug of the waters of the depths. When they pulled this clay plug the water swelled up and threatened to flood the entire world. Dovid contemplated writing Hashem's name on a piece of clay and throwing into the water thereby plugging the hole. Dovid Hamelech was concerned that this would cause for Hashem's name to be erased and was unsure if this would be permitted. Achatofal, Dovid's advisor stood up and made a Kal V'chomer, we find by the Sotah that the Kohain would write the parsha of Sotah (which contains Hashem's name) on parchment and erase it into the cup of water that the Sotah would then drink. Achatofal taught that if to make peace between a husband and a wife the Torah allowed for Hashem's name to be erased, certainly to make peace in the world, to calm the waters from destroying the world it would be permitted to erase Hashem's name. Dovid then wrote Hashem's name on a piece of clay, threw it into the raging waters and the water receded to its previous state.

If one is only permitted to erase Hashem's name for the sake of Shalom, how is it that Moshe was allowed to throw Hashem's name into the water? There was no peace being achieved here, how could Moshe cause for Hashem's name to be erased?

The Aruch L'ner brings that there are those that answer that since Moshe swore to bring up Yosef's bones he was obligated to fulfill the

promise at all costs. This is problematic as one who swears not to respect a mitzvah in the Torah is not obligated to uphold his oath. Some say that since the Torah was not yet given this rule does not apply.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky offers another answer; the Medresh tells us that Moshe wrote on a plate of gold not clay. Writing that is engraved on gold lasts much longer than writing on clay. Therefore Moshe was able to throw the gold plate in the water. However the Yalkut that brings that in this episode with Moshe, Moshe also wrote it on clay.

However, even if it was written on clay we can still answer that there was difference between Moshe and Dovid throwing the clay in the water. When Dovid threw the clay in the water he needed it to remain indefinitely, to keep the lower waters in their place. Something that remains under water for a long period will certainly get erased. Moshe however threw it in and it came right back up with the casket of Yosef, even more so, Rashi by the Chet Ha'egel tells us that this same piece of clay with Hashem's name in it was used to create the Calf. Evidently it did not get erased in the water. Therefore there was no issue with Moshe throwing Hashem's name into the water.



"ויבאו בני ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה, והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם" (פרק י"ד פסוק כ"ב)

"ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים והמים להם חמה מימינם ומשמאלם" (פרק י"ד פסוק כ"ט)

"And the Bnai Yisroel came within the sea on dry land, and the water became a wall on their right and on their left"

"The Bnai Yisroel went on dry land in middle of the sea, and the water was a wall for them on their right and on their left."

There are two differences between these pesukim that need to be addressed. Why does the posuk first say they came in the sea on dry land, and in the second posuk the order is reversed, they went on dry land in middle of the sea. Also the word "choma" is spelled in the first posuk with a vav and in the second posuk the vav is absent. What are these differences here coming to teach us?

The Vilna Goan brings a Medresh that the Idol of Micha crossed through the Yam Suf with the Bnai Yisroel. Obviously this can't mean the actual *Pesel Micha* as that Idol was not created until the days of the Judges. Rather explains the Goan the Medresh is telling us that there were those amongst the Bnai Yisroel that had thoughts of idol worship even while crossing the sea. And as Chazal teach us, although normally one who thinks of a sin does not get judged as having actually done it, if one thinks of Idol worship it is as if he indeed served those idols.

The Goan tells us that these people were found amongst Shevet Dan. The Shevet of Dan was the last Shevet in the formation of the Bnai

Yisroel through the Midbar and was therefore the last one to cross the sea. Now we can understand these two pesukim. The Goan is learning that the Bnai Yisroel crossed the Red Sea as a single column of people. Therefore as the first group was crossing the sea the last ones were still on dry land. And as the first group arrived on dry land the last group was still in the sea.

This is wording of the pesukim; "and the Bnai Yisroel came within the sea on dry land", meaning that the first group was in the sea while the remainder was still on dry land being yet to enter the split sea. The second posuk describes a later moment as the first group already exited and the end of the column was still crossing through the sea, "the Bnai Yisroel went on dry land in middle of the sea".

The Medresh tells us that at the time of Krias Yam Suf the Angels protested that the Bnai Yisroel were being saved and the Egyptians killed. Both serve idols they argued, why are you only saving the Bnai Yisroel? To which Hashem answered the Bnai Yisroel trust in me and are therefore worthy of me saving them.

Now we can understand the missing Vav. The Ibam Ezra explains that Choma without a Vav is read as Chaima – anger. The water rose in anger around the Bnai Yisroel.

Therefore as the first group was crossing the sea, the idol worshippers were still on dry land, so the water around them was as firm as a wall, for these people were indeed worthy of being saved. However as the latter groups to cross were in the sea and the former group had already exited the water rose up in fury, as it was these people that had thoughts of idol worship and on these people the Angels protested.

We can explain this in a slightly different manner as well. The Angels protested that both the Egyptians and the Bnai Yisroel were serving idols, to which Hashem retorted but they have complete faith in me. It was only the first group who jumped into the sea – before it split – that we can say on them that they had complete trust in Hashem. Everyone else entered on what was already dry land.

Now we can read the pesukim, as the first people entered the posuk says "And the Bnai Yisroel came within the sea on dry land", for these people actually leapt into the sea, and on these people the posuk says the water formed a wall, because they displayed complete faith in Hashem leaving the Angels silent.

As the latter people crossed the posuk says, "The Bnai Yisroel went on dry land in middle of the sea". These people simply went where they thought it was safe, they did not display the same faith in Hashem; therefore the sea rose up in protest, "both serve idols"! For this reason the vav is missing, to show the protest of the Angels as to why the Bnai Yisroel was being saved and the Egyptians drowned.

Rav Yosef Shaul, the Author of the Shoel U'maishiv, also goes with a similar approach. As long as the Egyptians were not yet drowning the Angels remained silent. Therefore as the first group crossed the Egyptians were still on dry land, the posuk therefore says the water was a wall.

As the Bnai Yisroel exited on one end and the Egyptians entered and began to drown, it was then that the Angels spoke up, "didn't the Bnai Yisroel also serve idols"? Therefore at that time the water rose up in fury, hence only in the latter posuk is the word Choma spelled as Chaima, missing the Vav.



"ויבאו מרתה ולא יכלו לשתת מים ממרה כי מרים הם וכו', ויצעק אל ה' ויורהו עץ וישלח אל המים וימתקו המים" (פרק ט"ו, פסוק כ"ג-כ"ד)

"They came to Marah, but they could not drink the waters of Marah because they were bitter... And Hashem showed him a tree; he threw it into the water and the water became sweet".

The Medresh when relating this episode explains the events in an unusual way, "and he sweetened the waters, the water became sweet". What is the Medresh adding on here, if he sweetened the water obviously the water became sweet?

The previous Rosh Yeshiva of Gateshead, R' Aryeh Zev Gurvitz, (Rebbe's grandfather) would explain the Medresh as follows. If one has a cup of tea or coffee, before drinking he adds a spoonful of sugar as the beverage itself is too bitter to be drunk plain. However once he stirs in the sugar the coffee doesn't lose its bitterness rather when drunk together with the sugar the drink now has a pleasant taste. But the coffee or tea remains the same. The sugar covers up the bitterness and gives the drink a sweet taste.

However in Marah, Hashem made a nes and changed the laws of nature. By adding the tree, which Chazal tell us also had a bitter constitution; the water reversed its nature and became sweet. Not that the tree acted as a sugar to cover up the bitterness but rather the water itself became sweet. This is the point of the Medresh; the water itself underwent a transformation and became pleasant to drink.

The parallel here is to another tree, the tree of life to those who support it; the Torah. When a person studies the Torah properly his actions and behavior changes, not just because the Torah teaches him a code of conduct which he follows but because the Torah has the power to change a person inside.

A person has to realize that for the Torah to change a person, the Torah can't be approached as a study, a casual form of learning only relevant while he is in the Bais Medresh. Rather he must internalize his learning, to live the Torah, only then will the Torah change his life. When people see such a person they will say "look at this person who learns Torah, see how refined his actions are how pleasant are his ways."

They say that Aristotle's students once observed him eating and they were abhorred at how he resembled an animal at feeding time. Shocked, they exclaimed "Aristotle! Does it really befit a respected philosopher as yourself to eat like an animal?" To which he responded "Right now I am not Aristotle now I am eating!"

This is the difference; a Ben Torah even when not in front of his Gemorah remains a Ben Torah. His behavior and demeanor will always be refined, because his Torah is a part of him changing his very essence into a better person, as Chazal say the Torah has a power to elevate and raise a person to higher levels.

"And he sweetened the water, the water became sweet."

(Adapted from Rav Nissan Kaplan's Keshet Shel Kayma)