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Parshat Vaera 5769

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The Alumni Shabbaton at Yeshiva was the culmination of a special few weeks where many of our alumni dedicated their college break not only to visiting Yeshiva, but to becoming students again - recharging their batteries while visiting their "home away from home". The Yeshiva reaped much *Yiddishe Nachas* from all of them; especially as they took the time to speak to our current students and give them a little "heads up" on the future.

DRS Reunion

Last Wednesday night, DRS alumni participated in a reunion with HaRav Elly Storch, HaRav Aryeh Cohen, and HaRav Yisroel Kaminetzky. Over fifty DRS alumni participated, nearly half of them are now learning in Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh.

In addition, the alumni spent a spiritually uplifting Shabbos with Rav Cohen who joined in the Yeshiva's *Oneg Shabbos* (it was an in-Shabbos). Shabbos afternoon alumni were invited for a special Seudah Shlishit at the Inbal Hotel.

Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Vaera

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

NATURE VS. MIRACLES**NATURE: A MIRACLE WITHIN A MIRACLE**

In this week's *Parsha* we read of the plague of hailstones: "The flax and the barley were struck for the barley was ripe and the flax was in its stalk" (*Shmot* 9:31). The flax and barley were damaged by the hailstones because they had ripened early and were thus already



hard. "The wheat and the spelt, however, were not struck '*ki afillot hena*' for they ripen later ('*afilot*' = later)" (ibid. 32). Because the wheat and spelt had yet to ripen they were still soft when the hail fell, and were able to bend without breaking. (In fact we know that barley ripens before wheat from the fact that the Omer is offered on Pesach, while the wheat for the "*shtei halechem*" is not offered until Shavuot). This is the simple meaning of the *pasuk* and this is how Rashi explains it. He adds, however, "there are those of our Sages who differ with this explanation, and interpreted '*afilot*' to be from the word '*pilei plaot*' - wonder of wonders. 'Wonder of wonders' was performed for them that they were not hit".

This latter interpretation is very difficult on three accounts: 1) Rashi's first explanation seems quite plausible - harder objects do break more easily than softer ones, as the Talmud teaches "a person should always be soft like a reed and not hard like a cedar (so as not to break)" (*Taanit* 20b), why do the Sages quoted need to explain the *pasuk* in a way other than according to its simple interpretation, 2) Throughout the Torah and Shas we find that the word "*afilot*" implies later (see *Moed Katan* 6b), why did they need to provide an additional definition, and 3) If they were to explain that "*afilot*" is from the word "*plaot*", wonders why do they then add "*pilei plaot*" - wonder of wonders?

Allow me to offer the following explanation: The Sages quoted by Rashi agree with his initial interpretation that the flax and barley were struck because they had ripened early, while the wheat and spelt did not break because they were softer. The laws of nature, however, are not sufficient to explain the events that transpired, for everything that occurred in Egypt defied the laws of nature. Nature to us means that water is water and blood is blood. Yet in Egypt a Jew and non-Jew could drink from the same cup and the Jew would drink water while the Egyptian would drink blood, this is contrary to our understanding of nature. The plague of hailstones in itself was a miracle "and fire flaming amid the hail" (*Shmot* 9:24) - the water did not extinguish the fire. The laws of nature did not govern in Egypt, thus the fact that the wheat and spelt were not destroyed because they had not yet ripened, while on the surface appearing to be a result of nature was in actuality "*pilei plaot*" - a miracle within a miracle. Within this great wonder of hail, there existed another miracle that the wheat and spelt followed the laws of nature and were not destroyed perhaps such a fierce storm should have destroyed them as well. All the plagues in Egypt were what we refer to as "unnatural" and therefore anything that remained loyal to the laws of nature was "a miracle within a miracle".

RECOGNIZING HIDDEN MIRACLES - FOUNDATION OF OUR TORAH

The advent of the plagues in Egypt was not in order to punish Pharaoh, but rather for our sake, to teach us that there are no laws of nature but that the world is run in accordance with the will of Hashem. In his commentary at the conclusion of the ten plagues in Parshat Bo, the Ramban writes: "From the great and well known miracles that occurred in Egypt, man acknowledges the hidden miracles. Recognizing these less visible miracles is the foundation of our entire Torah. Man can have no share in the Torah of Moshe Rabenu without believing that all that happens in our lives is miraculous there are no laws of nature or 'ways of the world' therein" The miracles that occurred in Egypt serve to teach us that everything in this world comes from Hashem, there are no laws of nature! Anything that happens in this world only comes about because that is Hashem's will, if He desires it then it will occur, if not it cannot happen. We are told that our crops will be blessed when we observe the laws of *Shmitta* and separate the required tithes this certainly does not follow any laws of nature. One who lacks this basic belief does not believe in the Torah of Moshe Rabenu.

EXODUS - VITAL TO OUR BELIEF IN HASHEM

A large part of our belief in Hashem is based on the exodus from Egypt. It was there that we witnessed ten miracles, the ten plagues which Hashem brought upon the Egyptians. It was there that we saw that nature has no real meaning. By the laws of nature water is water and blood remains blood. In Egypt the same substance that the non-Jews experienced as blood, the Jews drank as water. Many of the events that took place there, we consider as "supernatural". A soldier marching along with the other troops may follow the lead without even knowing the identity of the commanding officer. Only upon hearing someone barking orders for the troops to turn left does he realize who his commanding officer is. Hashem instructed the entire creation to take a left turn - light turned to darkness, water turned to blood, and a hoard of wild animals suddenly appeared with intent of harming the Egyptians. Upon seeing this, we discover Who the Commanding Officer is and Who created the world, the exodus is thus a basic foundation of our faith.

Why did Hashem decide that the wheat and spelt should follow the laws of nature and not be destroyed because they were not yet ripe? There is no clear answer other than that is His will. Perhaps Hashem wanted to leave some food for the locusts which were destined to come with the next plague. Perhaps it was in order that Pharaoh still have free choice, as we see prior to the plague of locusts Pharaoh's servants beseeched him to heed Moshe's words: "do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?" (Shmot 10:7). By seeing that certain laws of nature were still in effect Pharaoh had the choice not to believe - "see, what was hard broke and what was soft bent but did not break".

MIRACLES HAVE A NATURAL EXPLANATION

Hashem runs the world in such a way that we always have the option whether or not to believe. Immediately prior to the actual splitting of the sea which the Jewish nation crossed safely and the Egyptians all drowned, the Torah writes: "Hashem moved the sea with a strong east wind all the night" (Shmot 14:21). If the splitting of the sea was such a supernatural event, why did Hashem create a strong easterly wind? Hashem wants to leave man the option of not believing if he so chooses. We find a similar idea with the mishkan. Although a fire descended from heaven on a regular basis, the halacha requires us to bring a man-made fire. Why? In order that people have a choice whether or not to believe. This was where Nadav and Avihu erred. They thought that as usual there was a mitzvah to bring a man-made fire. At this dedication ceremony, however, Hashem wished to show just how holy the Mishkan and highlight the fact that the fire descends from heaven. In general, Hashem wishes for things to have a "natural" explanation. Normally Hashem wants things to seem natural to some extent.

The Gemara teaches us: "blessings are found in things which are hidden from the eye" (*Taanit* 8b). Let us take for example a person who harvests his field. Hashem can see to it that he collects double his regular annual yield only if he has not calculated and measured the expected yield. If, however, he is expecting a particular yield down to the last grain, Hashem will be less likely to produce a miracle for then the blessing would not be considered as being hidden from the eye. This idea is consistent with what we discussed above that Hashem does not wish to produce miracles which are too visible.

When, G-d forbid, a person is very sick and doctors claim that they have exhausted all natural ways of saving him, we should not pray for his recovery but rather that

Hashem should do everything to alleviate his suffering. We may not pray for an individual miracle - when it comes to *Klal Yisrael* as a whole we may, but not for the individual. The Israeli elections are approaching - if we wish to keep any blessings from Hashem within natural means we should pray for Agudah and Shas to receive a large number of votes only before they are counted, once they are counted it would be an open miracle for the numbers to suddenly change.

Why does Hashem run His world in such a manner that His Providence is concealed from His creations? Why does He not run the world in a way that makes His Providence clear to all? The straightforward answer is that ruling the world through a system of laws of nature is necessary in order that man have Free Choice. If we would only see Shabbat observers being healthy, strong, wealthy, and living long lives, while desecration of the Shabbat meant instant death, who would dare violate the Shabbat? Shabbat observance as such, however, would not be out of fulfillment of the will of Hashem, but because desecration of Shabbat would be tantamount to eating poison. Does one who refuses to eat poison deserve a reward? Reward and punishment only make sense where there are laws of nature that hide Hashem's presence, and it is not clearly visible to all.

NATURE IS THERE FOR OUR CONVENIENCE

In addition, laws of nature are there for man's convenience. Imagine a scenario in which there was no concept of nature, how would I heat my water? Should I place it on the fire or is water boiled today in the refrigerator? Perhaps placing it under the table would accomplish this task. Who said water is healthy? Perhaps today kerosene would be good for my health. Without nature one cannot know. Of course, we could contact the prophet and ask him. But how do we find the prophet? Where does he live? Probably in Bnei Brak. If so, how do we get to Bnei Brak? Take the 400 bus line of course! But if there are no laws of nature, then the fact that the 400 took us to Bnei Brak yesterday is no guarantee that the same will be the case today. Perhaps today it is bus number 2, perhaps some other bus. Who said we take buses to Bnei Brak, maybe we get there by flying on a broomstick? Life would be very inconvenient if there was no system of nature. Therefore, for our convenience, Hashem gave us a system of laws in which He runs the world. If the 400 bus took us to Bnei Brak yesterday then with Hashem's help it will take us there today and tomorrow. If yesterday, water was good for drinking, then today as well we should drink water and not kerosene.

The exodus teaches us the hand of Hashem in everything. One of the biggest unnatural events in the history of the world is the great flood which destroyed the entire world with the exception of Noach and his family - "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth; and the windows of the heavens were opened" (Bereishit 7:11). Nevertheless the generation of the *dor haflaga* invented a natural phenomenon. They claimed that the flood was evidence that the world is destroyed once in one thousand six hundred fifty six years. They now must construct a tall building to support the heavens to insure that this does not happen again. We know that there is one day in the year that is very short and one that is very long, they felt that another law of nature is that every certain number of years there will be a flood. One may wonder why there should be a flood every certain number of years. The response is that that is simply the way it is.

WE TAKE MORE NOTICE OF THAT WHICH OCCURS LESS FREQUENTLY

An event that occurs so infrequently produces more interest than other events. What makes Yom Kippur so special for us is not the fasting and *davening* but the

fact that it occurs only once a year. Shabbat has greater sanctity and unfortunately we do not feel the same way about it. Did you ever notice that the noise made during *Megillat* Esther for the sounding of Haman's name is greater at night than in the morning? Why should there be a difference? Haman has not changed, the story of the *Megillah* has not changed. The answer is that by the morning it is already old news.

Chazal instituted a blessing upon seeing the Yam HaGadol (there is a dispute among the authorities as to its precise location whether it is the Mediterranean or the ocean). The reason behind this is that it is a site which we hardly see and we therefore find it awe-inspiring. Those who live in its proximity and see it on a regular basis do not recite this *bracha*.

By the same token, the average person is more taken by that which is considered "unnatural", for it is something which does not occur regularly. Our task in life is to see the Hand of Hashem in every facet of our life.

Staff Dvar Torah

by Rav Tzvi Shiloni, Shana Alef Rebbe

To Be Free, Or Not To Be

Avreimele wishes to escape slavery in Egypt, does he stand a chance? The Mechilta tells us that no slave ever escaped successfully from that country. It seems that all doors are shut!



But I have an idea! If Avreimele could just get his hands on one of those funny looking Egyptian hats, and one of those weird Egyptian skirts, he could wake up the next morning and make believe he's one of them. Of course, when they ask for his name, he better not say Avreimele. (I'm sure he'll think of something.) And I hope Avreimele's been doing his Egyptian *ulpan* homework; he's going to need it!

So how do you like my plan?

Sounds a bit unrealistic? I believe it's quite realistic indeed. In fact, I believe this is exactly what *Chazal* meant when they said that the reason we merited redemption from Egypt was because we did not change our names, dress, and language. Not only were these the symbols of Jewish identity, changing them actually represented a real ticket out of slavery. But the Jews didn't take the ticket. Why?

The Egyptians would be quite happy to accept Jewish turncoats, if only they could find them. These could be used as a "Jewish Police", to help make the slave labor more efficient and productive. But the Jews refused to cooperate. Not only did they refuse to convert to "Egyptianity", they even refused to properly fulfill their function as "Jewish Police" in the role of *shotrim*, allowed to keep their own names, dress, and language. (See the end of last week's parsha.)

The implication of this fact is quite remarkable. No Jew, not even one, was willing to trade places with one of **them**. Despite all the suffering, all the hardship, and all the abuse, for so many years, Avreimele would rather be a Jew, than be a morally depraved individual. For such strength of character, for such moral fortitude, we truly deserve redemption!

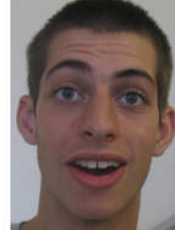
Shabbat Shalom!

Student Dvar Torah

by Yoni Harris, Shana Bet - King David High School (Manchester)

This week's *parsha* describes seven of the ten *makkot*.

In our Pesach Haggadah, following a listing of the ten plagues, we find an acronym attributed to Rabbi Yehudah: *dezach adash be'achav*



What is Rabbi Yehuda teaching us? Could we not have taken the first letter of each plague on our own and produced this acronym? Did we need Rabbi Yehuda to teach this to us?

The Netivot Sholom explains: Rabbi Yehuda did not simply take the first letter of each name, he also divided the plagues into three categories corresponding to the three ways Hashem rules the world:

1. From below.
2. On the ground.
3. From above.

Moshe was teaching Pharaoh a lesson - it is Hashem Who runs the world and not Pharaoh's useless idols (Pharaoh, after all, asked: "Who is Hashem")

In addition these three categories also correspond to three ways we express our belief in Hashem:

1. *Moach* - our minds. This represents the intellectual knowledge that Hashem exists but does not necessarily obligate us to observe mitzvot.
2. *Lev* - the heart. We feel Hashem's existence with our hearts, it has extended beyond the realm of an intellectual belief to a feeling within our hearts.
3. *Eivarim* - body parts. Every bone, every organ, every limb in our body responds to this knowledge and belief.

The Jewish people learned these valuable lessons during their long and bitter exile in Egypt. This is something each one of us should realize as we go through our own private *makkot* and *golus*. How much each person feels this depends on his level of *emunah*. The higher the level he is on, the better he will be able to understand the challenges of the *Makot* and produce a quicker *Geulah*.

May we all attain the level in which all of our actions, thoughts, and words are a fulfillment of Hashem's will. This will hasten the ultimate redemption speedily in our day

**Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List
Announcements from the Yeshiva**

Mazal Tov

The Yeshiva would like to wish a Mazal Tov to:

- Rav Yaakov and Gilia Bar-Or on the marriage of their grandson.
- Chaim (5755-56) and Dina Stepelman on the birth of a baby girl, Tova.
- Steven (5755) and Debra Bernstein on the birth of a baby girl, Nechama Miri.

Visitors

The following people have visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Mrs. Chani Moskowitz, Principal of JEC, came to visit her students and to speak to Rav Bina.
- Dr. John Krug, Director of Alumni Affairs
- Adam Azoulay (5767-68)
- Mr. & Mrs. Sol Mizrahi (5765-66)
- David Assil (5768)
- Jonathan Savage (5767)

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Toiby Yehudit bat Tama Gaisa
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Yosef ben Latife
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Perla bat Miriam
- Rachel bat Sarah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Nachum Tzvi ben Ratza
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly Bat Yaerah

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, let our office know so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - let us know! We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh