

PARSHAS REEH

by Gedalia Litke

This week's parsha discusses Pesach. We are to closely watch (shamor) the month of Aviv so as to make Pesach at that time, because in the month of Aviv Hashem took us out of Egypt, at night (layla). 16:1.

Rashi first notes that shamor is to be understood as keeping a careful eye on conditions well before Pesach; if it is not yet Aviv (Spring), add a month to the year so that Pesach will occur when it is Aviv. Shamor means not just guard or watch reactively, but anticipate well in advance, proactively.

Rashi then asks how it is possible for the pasuk to say that we were taken out of Egypt at night when other psukim state clearly that we left at daybreak. Rashi answers that at night Pharaoh notified Moshe and Aharon that they had permission to depart; the departure itself did occur during daylight. So the pasuk's meaning is that Hashem took us out of Egypt, with Pharaoh's permission for this great occurrence coming the night before.

1. Rashi does not articulate his questions. He just writes his answers, and from the answer we can infer the question. (Thus the age-old question students are always asked : "What's bothering Rashi?") When Rashi does articulate a question it is a good bet that there is a more fundamental question he is asking, while the stated question is just a way of bringing out the answer. (The M'forsihei Rashi refer to the more fundamental though unarticulated question as the 'hergesheh mibachutz/the outside or unspoken emotion'.) So in our case where Rashi specifies a question - how could it say we left Egypt at night if we know that we left during the day - our question has to be what is the more fundamental, though unspoken, question of Rashi.

2. Regardless of the answer to the first question, why is this the place to discuss that Hashem took us out or informed us at night? The pasuk is discussing the overall timing of Pesach as being an Aviv event; why bring in an issue about night versus day which has no bearing on the topic?

1. Maskil L'Dovid explains that the main question in this pasuk is that grammatically it should say 'balalya' - at night, or in the night. Instead it just says 'layla' - night. So Rashi explains that the missing 'ba'/'in the' is hinting at the fact that it didn't actually occur 'in the' night; it was the news which came at night in advance of the next morning's event.

2. Perhaps the answer to the second question is embedded in the first Rashi explaining shamor and derives from it. The pasuk is saying we should anticipate in advance the timing for Pesach and make sure it comes out properly. That is the main topic of this pasuk. So it is therefore an appropriate

setting to also mention 'layla', that we were given advance notice and permission about Yetzias Mitzrayim. Hashem arranged that Pharoah gave permission to leave in advance of our actual departure. We received advance notice, and so, in the same spirit, we should anticipate the annual arrival of Pesach with ample advance concern for its timing.

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