

# LIVING AND DYING AL KIDDUSH HASHEM / HASHEM'S PRESENTATION

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #931 – K'rias HaTorah: Must You Listen? Good Shabbos!

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## Why Did The Merit of Nachshon Ben Aminadav Not Suffice To Split the Sea?

The pasuk at the beginning of Parshas B'Shalach teaches "And G-d took the people around toward the way of the Wilderness to the Sea of Reeds. And the Children of Israel went up '*chamushim*' from the land of Egypt." [Shemos 13:18] There are a variety of interpretations given by the Rabbis to this ambiguous word '*chamushim*'. The first interpretation given by Rashi is that this indicates that the Children of Israel came out of Egypt with weapons (armed).

However, we do not find anywhere else this concept that the Children of Israel came out of Egypt with weapons. What does it mean they were "armed?" Rav Beryl Soloveitchik, z"l, said in the name of his father, the Brisker Rav, that when Rashi says that they were "*mezuyanim*," Rashi does not mean they were armed with weapons. Rashi means they were "armed" with the merit of Yosef's coffin. That was their armor. Yosef's coffin came with them as it is written: "And Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him" [Shemos 13:19]. This was the tremendous "weapon" they had.

In fact, Chazal interpret the *pasuk* "The sea saw and fled" [Tehillim 114:3], which we say in Hallel as, follows: What did the sea see that caused it to flee (i.e. -- split open)? It saw the coffin of Yosef. They expound: The sea fled ("*nas*") in the merit of the one who fled as it is written (by the incident with Potiphar's wife) "and he fled (*vaynas*) and he ran outside" [Bereishis 39:12]. This, says the Brisker Rav, is what constituted the "weapons" with which the Jews left Egypt.

I saw an interesting observation in the sefer Shemen HaTov from HaRav Weinberger. It would seem that at the crossing of the Red Sea, we did not need to rely on old merit (e.g. -- Yosef's righteousness). It would seem that at that time, there was new merit upon which to rely -- namely, the actions of Nachshon ben Aminadav. The Prince of the Tribe of Yehudah, according to Chazal,

risked his life and plunged into the Sea (before it split), confident in G-d's salvation of His people. In this merit, the Rabbis tell us, the sea split.

Why then do Chazal teach that it was necessary to rely on the merit of Yosef's coffin in order to have achieved the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea? If anything, it seems that the self-sacrifice of Nachshon should be a greater merit than the fact that Yosef withstood the temptation of his master's wife.

The Shemen HaTov explains that there are two types of *Kiddush HaShem* [sanctification of G-d's Name]. One type is dying with *mesiras nefesh* [self-sacrifice] and the other type is living with *mesiras nefesh*. Nachshon was willing to give up his life, but once someone is *moser nefer al Kiddush HaShem*, it is over. A person does not need to "live" with the consequences because he is dead. He is called a holy one, and he is destined to receive great reward in the next world. However, living *al pi Kiddush HaShem* is even more difficult than giving up one's life (*dying al pi Kiddush HaShem*). Yosef knew exactly what the ramifications of his deed were going to be. When Yosef was about to be seduced by Potiphar's wife and he ran out, he knew very well that the incident would not end there. In fact, she accused him of raping her. He wound up in prison. There was no parole for good behavior in the Egyptian prison system. As far as he knew, he was going to remain in the dungeon for the rest of his life. At that time, he was a very young man. He was looking at spending the rest of his life in unspeakable conditions. He was willing to give everything up just so as not to succumb to sin.

The intention here is not to diminish the great act of Nachshon ben Aminadav, but that was a one-time act. It does not compare to the self-sacrifice of Yosef, which was something he was prepared to live with for the rest of his life. That took an unbelievable strength of character requiring suppression of every sinew of emotion in his body. Self-preservation is the most basic of all human reactions. One who is able to overcome that instinct for the Sake of Heaven is a source of great merit for many generations to come!

Yosef over-ruled his natural inclinations and so, in his merit, the Red Sea over-ruled its natural inclinations. The nature of the water of the sea is to flow together. Chazal say it did something against its nature in the merit of the one who did something against his nature -- it fled in the face of the one who fled (*nas mipnei ha'nas*).

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## It All Depends On the Presentation

The *pasuk* says, "The entire assembly of the Children of Israel complained against Moshe and Aharon in the Wilderness. The Children of Israel said to them, 'If only we would have died by the hand of Hashem in the land of Egypt, as we sat by the pot of meat, when we ate bread to satiety, for

you took us out to this Wilderness to kill this entire congregation by famine." [Shemos 16:2-3]

Chazal say that up until this point, the Jewish people were eating leftover matzah they had with them from the time they left Egypt. At this point, the matzah ran out and they complained to the *Ribono shel Olam*. "Hashem said to Moshe: 'Behold! -- I shall rain down for you food from heaven; let the people go out and pick each day's matter on its day, so that I may test him, whether he will follow My Torah or not...' [Shemos 16:4].

From this point on, the institution of the manna began. For the next 39+ years *Klal Yisrael* lived day in day out on the manna. They had manna that came down in the morning which they had for breakfast and dinner and we also know from later on that in the evenings the quail would appear so they could have meat for supper.

Moshe and Aharon tell the people "And in the morning you will see the **Glory** of Hashem, that He has heard your complaints against Hashem -- for what are we that you incite complaints against us?" [Shemos 16:7]. What is the "glory" that they would see in the morning to which the *pasuk* refers? Rashi explains, "In the evening you will know that He has the wherewithal to satisfy your longing, and He will give meat, but He will not give it to you graciously, with a radiant countenance, because you asked for it improperly and from a full stomach. However, regarding the bread, which you requested for a legitimate need, in its descent in the morning you will see the glory of the radiance of His Countenance. For He will bring it down to you in a loving manner, in the morning, when there is sufficient time to prepare it and with dew above it and dew below it, as if it were placed in a box."

The request for manna was legitimate and G-d gave it literally "wrapped in a package with a bow on top." It will be delivered in the morning when they have time to prepare it. They are not rushed. It will be "hand-wrapped" by the Almighty in a nice package of dew so that it won't get soggy. This is what it means that "in the morning they will see the Glory of G-d". This is contrasted with the quail, which they asked for improperly because they really did not need it. 'Okay, they'll get it but they won't get it with "a pleasant countenance" (*b'panim me'iros*).'

This is all about "presentation". When one goes to a fancy restaurant or a fancy wedding, it is not sufficient that the food is delicious. Even the "presentation" must be beautiful. The manna came with "presentation" because they asked for it nicely and deserved it. The quail? Okay, you asked for it so you'll get it, but you were not really deserving of it and it will come without the "presentation."

Rav Yeruchem writes that there is an ethical lesson in all this. The lesson is that we often daven for a whole variety of things. Sometimes we receive the things we pray for with a '*geshmak*.' We receive them with beautiful wrapping and a beautiful package. This is because the *Ribono shel Olam* is saying, "you need it. You deserve it. I am going to give it *b'panim me'iros* -- with a great "presentation." At other times, we ask for things and the *Ribono shel Olam* gives them to us, but the way we receive things is an indication of how the *Ribono shel Olam* wants us to have them. When we receive them with '*geshmak*' and they come easily, we know the Almighty is giving them to us

with a pleasant countenance. However, while that which comes with difficulty and with great cost and disappointment may also be an answer to our prayers, the way in which we receive them demonstrates that perhaps we did not really need or deserve them. The 'presentation' of how we receive our gifts from Heaven indicates of whether it was appropriate to ask for such gifts and whether we really needed them.

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Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem [DavidATwersky@gmail.com](mailto:DavidATwersky@gmail.com)

Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD [dhoffman@torah.org](mailto:dhoffman@torah.org)

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