

FREIGHT AND HANDLING

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"They measured in an omer and whoever took more had nothing extra and whoever took less was not lacking; everyone according to what he eats had they gathered" [Shemot 16:18]

When the children of Israel left Egypt they barely had enough provisions to survive a short time and certainly not enough to sustain approximately 3,000,000 people for 40 years. G-d had planned before the Exodus to provide a daily ration of heavenly food called manna for every member of the masses dwelling in the Sinai desert. The miraculous distribution system was designed by our Father in Heaven to teach that Hashem provides for those who have faith in Him. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch said that He limited the ration to just enough for one day and delivered a fresh portion daily to show that He is the provider for all time. He sent a double portion on Friday to teach that Shabbat observance will never be an impediment to one's livelihood.

A peasant, who lived all of his life in the country, made his first trip to the city. He was totally unfamiliar with city life. His eyes and mind had trouble absorbing all the beautiful sights and he could hardly keep up with the fast paced life, to which city dwellers were accustomed. The big super stores and busy offices were things he had never seen before and he tried his best to understand all that he saw.

Standing at the window of the post office, he saw a man walk in and pay the clerk a few dollars and walk off with a large carton. As the man exited, the peasant asked about the contents of the large parcel. "This box has valuable equipment in it," advised the gentleman, "it is worth hundreds of dollars." Back at the window the peasant observed another postal customer pay a small sum as the clerk passed him a bundle across the counter. Again he asked and again he was told that the package contained merchandise worth many times the amount that the simpleton saw paid to the clerk. He immediately entered and emptied his pockets on the counter and told the clerk, "I am here to pick up my gift worth thousands of dollars. Here is my payment." The clerk laughed and said, "You are under the wrong impression. The money that I receive has nothing to do with the contents of the packages and it is certainly not payment for the contents. These packages were already paid for and they belong to the people who pick them up here. All the money that they pay to me is only for the freight charges."

The lesson is that Hashem has set the amount that a person will earn in a year in the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. However, when Adam sinned Hashem declared, "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." [Beresheet 3:19], i.e. a person will work and struggle to earn

his sustenance. What one must understand is that the effort expended produces nothing -- it is only the freight one must pay before one can pick up his or her package from the post office. The contents of the package are already his or hers from the beginning of the year. Kohelet says "And also not for the wise bread; and not for the intelligent wealth." [Ecclesiastes 9:11] Intelligence and expertise do not have the power to produce income nor can they make one wealthy. Hashem determines and He provides.

When the children of Israel went out to collect the manna some gathered a little and others worked harder and carried home more. When the manna was weighed, however, each person found only one omer of manna for each member of the family. The extra work produced no more than what Hashem had determined each person would receive. The heavenly food could not be stored overnight lest it spoil. Hashem wanted to teach us that He provides for every one, our efforts produce no more than what He decides one should have and His provisions are supplied newly every day. It is a lesson one must keep in mind when dealing with financial pressures, which deter one from strict Torah observance, and from giving oneself the time needed to develop oneself and to train one's children in the ways of our holy Torah.

Shabbat shalom

TABLE TALK--QUESTION ON THE PARASHA

"Then Moshe sang with Bne Yisrael-- [Az Yasheer Moshe U-Bene Yisrael]" When the Jews saw the Egyptian corpses thrown on the seashore they broke out in the famous song of the sea.

The Gemara in Masekhet Megillah says, "The angels who serve in heaven wanted to sing (when they saw the Egyptians drowning in the sea) --Hashem said to them, 'The works of my hands are drowning in the sea and you want to sing?'"

QUESTION: Why did Hashem prevent the Angels from singing when they saw the dead Egyptians, yet He allowed the Jews to sing?

ANSWER: The Kli Hemdah explains that the Jews were not motivated to sing by the downfall of the Egyptians. Moshe and his people sang out of praise and thanks to G-d for saving them from certain annihilation. The verse says "The might and vengeance of G-d was a salvation for ME!" [Shemot 15:2]. The Angels, however, were never slaves in Egypt and were not subjugated to servitude. Their song would be a joyful ode to the downfall of others -- and Hashem does not appreciate when an uninterested party enjoys another's defeat.

NOTE: We see from here that the Torah attitude is not to enjoy another's misfortune. A person should feel happiness when Hashem does good to them or to another -- but even if Hashem's punishment brings benefit to a person the hurt caused to the enemy is not a cause for joy.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

If one has a salad in which there are onions, and he or she does not want to eat the onions, one should not remove the onions from the salad on Shabbat, since the person who does not want the onions gives the onions the status of --pesolet-- waste product and it is to separate the waste from the useful on Shabbat [borer]. The recommended procedure is to eat the vegetables that one does want to eat and leave the onions behind in the bowl. However, if someone else who is participating in the meal wants to eat the onions [or any other item that the person does not want to eat] it is permitted to take the onions from the salad and serve them to the other person to eat immediately, since for the other person it is considered food and not waste and separating food to eat immediately on Shabbat does not violate the melakha of borer [selection]. (Yalkut Yosef, Siman 319:19,20)

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