

Good Shabbos, everyone.

The terror attack in Neve Yaakov, Yerushalayim, this past *Leil Shabbos*—targeting people coming out of shul on Friday night—is horrifying and disturbing. We mourn together with the families of the seven who were killed and the many who were wounded, and daven that Hashem comfort them and heal the wounded...and that we see His promise to defeat Amalek and all those who threaten the Jewish people מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור...Amen.

On a happy note, I am excited to announce that Shomrei will be partnering with Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh to host **HaRav Menachem Mendel Blachman** this Wednesday evening. He will be giving a *shiur* in the G. Leonard Rubin Beis Medrash on at 8pm about the Aseres HaDibros. He has spoken here in the past, and his *shiurim* are always erudite and entertaining!

Thank you to the drasha sponsors:

- Arnold and Myra Berlin, in honor of his mother, Sarah Berlin's 109th birthday, may she live until 120 in good health! And, in memory of his father, David Berlin, Dovid ben Gedalia, whose *yahrtezt* is the 17<sup>th</sup> of Shevat. May his *neshama* have an *aliya*.
- Ari and Heather Elbaum, "in appreciation of Rabbi Marwick." Thank you!
- Murray and Baila Jacobson, in memory of Baila's father, Yosef Levi Labovitz, whose *yahrtezt* is the 13<sup>th</sup> of Shevat. May his *neshama* have an *aliya*.
- Eva Katznelson, in memory of her mother, Sara Sterba, whose *yahrtezt* is the 14<sup>th</sup> of Shevat. May her *neshama* have an *aliya*.

May all the sponsors be rewarded for their support of the shul with *bracha*, *hatzlacha*, and good health!

Finally, after 210 years of slavery, the Jewish people are set free! The Torah tells us two facts—first, their route, a surprisingly circuitous one and, second, what they brought with them as they left. What is the significance of these things, and are they related to each other?

וַיְהִי בְשִׁלְחַן פְּרִעָה אֶת־הָעַם וְלֹא־נָחֵם אֱלֹהִים דֶּרֶךְ אֲרָץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא כִּי ו אָמַר אֱלֹהִים פְּנִי־יִנְתֶּם הָעַם בְּרֹאֲתָם מִלְחָמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרָיִם:

Now when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although it was nearer; for God said, "The people may have a change of heart when they see war, and return to Egypt."

וַיֹּסֶב אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָעַם דֶּרֶךְ הַיַּבֵּשׁ וְיַם־סוּף וְחַמְשִׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרָיִם:

So God led the people round about, by way of the wilderness at the Sea of Reeds. Now the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt.

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ כִּי הִשְׁבַּע הַשָּׁבִיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פִּקֹּד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעֲלִיתֶם אֶת־עַצְמוֹתַי מִצֵּה אִתְּכֶם: And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had exacted an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will be sure to take notice of you: then you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

The Jewish people armed themselves (**Onkelos'** translation of "*chamushim*") and Moshe Rabbeinu brought out Yosef's bones. Why does the Torah highlight this seemingly incidental fact—right here?

The **Lubavitcher Rebbe** says the word *atzmos* hints to the word *atzmius*—essence, meaning Moshe Rabbeinu did not simply take Yosef's bones. He brought the essence of Yosef's life story along with him. He connected to Yosef as a leader, as a Jew. He connected to Yosef's struggles and to his remaining firm and committed to his values, his history, and his people throughout his life.

עלינו לומר שהביטוי "עצמות" בא לרמז על "עצמות". כשם שהעצמות הן תוקפו וחוזקו של האדם כך "עצמות יוסף" מבטאות את עצמיותו, את תוקפו וחוזקו את עיקר ענינו של יוסף הצדיק. לקיחת "עצמותיו" של יוסף מבטאת את העובדה, שמששה הטל עמו את מהותו ועצמיותו של יוסף לקראת המסע במדבר.

We must say that the phrase "bones" comes to imply "essence." Just as the bones are the core and strength of man, so the "bones of Joseph" express his self, his core and his strength, the main content of the righteous

*Joseph. Taking Joseph's "bones" expresses the fact that Moses took Joseph's essence with him in preparation for the journey through the desert.*

מה עצמיותו של יוסף? הדבר רמוז בשמו, וכפי ההסבר שנתנה רחל: ותקרא את שמו יוסף לאמרו יוסף ה' לי בן אחר. מהותו של יוסף היא להוסיף עוד בן, ולא בן רגיל אל "בן אחר" כלומר יוסף הופך את ה"אחר" את מי שרחוק מעולם הקדושה ומהקב"ה לבן.  
*What is Joseph's essence? This is alluded to in his name, and as the explanation given by Rachel: And call his name Yosef to say the Lord will add another son. The essence of Joseph is to add another son, not an ordinary son, but a "different son", that is, Joseph transforms the "other," the one who is far from the world of holiness and from G-d, a son.*

Yosef's commitment to his heritage was so strong that he was able to influence others to serve Hashem. The **Sfas Emes** writes that the slavery was a result of the Jewish people being separated from their identity. Paraoth wanted to make people,—including the Jewish people, forget Yosef יוסף. But Moshe had reminded them...of who they were, where they came from, and where they were going... ויקח את עצמות יוסף עמו.  
*שפת אמת ויקרא פסח שנה תרנה: והנה שורש הגלות והגאולה הכל במדריגת יוסף הצדיק. בתחילת הגלות כתיב אשר לא ידע את יוסף. ובגאולה כתיב ויקח משה את עצמות יוסף:*

*And here is the root of exile and redemption, all in connection to Joseph the Righteous. At the beginning of the exile, the Torah says that "he did not know Joseph." And in the redemption, Moses "took the bones of Joseph."*

And this was the essence of the battle with Amalek, as well. The **Zohar** teaches that the opening for Amalek was **the Jewish people's lack of self-confidence, their deadly self-doubt, forgetting their essence**. The Zohar teaches that the words *va-yavo Amalek* (and Amalek came--to attack the Jewish people), follow immediately upon the Torah's description of Israel's doubt: הֲיֵשׁ ה' בְּקִרְבָּנוּ אִם אֵין, "Is God among us or not?" Note that this question is not a matter of theological debate, no religious skepticism is implied. The question is not whether God exists. Rather, it is a question of one's connection to God: is God *be'kirbenu*, in our midst? The Jewish people did not question God. They questioned themselves: Are we worthy to have Him with us?

מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת בשלח: אחרים אומרים אין רפידים אלא שרפו ידיהם מן התורה ולפיכך עמלק בא עליהם,  
The **Medrash Tanchuma** writes that this doubt expressed itself in their behavior.

It is precisely at this time that Amalek attacked. For Amalek recognized this elementary human principle: **when a powerful self-confidence confronts extreme self-doubt, then the side that is more resolute will triumph**. Amalek was certain of its policy of hatred and injustice; its contempt for law and decency. Israel was not certain whether God was with them. Hence, Amalek attacked and came close to winning—**because the more they attacked and mocked the Jews, the more the Jews doubted themselves** **היש ה' בקרבנו אם אין**. Many commentators have pointed out the *gematriya*, or numerical value, of the word "Amalek" is equal to that of the Hebrew word *safek*, doubt. Amalek's strategy was to look for the opening of doubt in its adversary; that is where it unleashed the full force and fury of its faith in its own nefarious and perverse principles.

How does one defeat such an adversary? The Torah tells us how: **יהושע** בחר לנו אנשים והלחם ויאמר משה אל יהושע בחר לנו אנשים והלחם. Moshe said to Joshua, choose people for us and go out and do battle with Amalek tomorrow. Chazal asked: למה שלח יהושע, why did Moses send Joshua? After all, in all of the other great challenges that faced the Jewish people, Moshe went out himself as the head of his people. Whether it was to receive the law or to obtain food or to do battle with enemies, it was always Moshe who did things himself. Why, when confronted with the arch-enemy, Amalek, did he suddenly delegate this critical responsibility to his lieutenant, Yehoshua?

איתא בפסיקתא רבתי ובמ"ר כאן בזה"ל, למה שלח יהושע, אמר לו משה, זקנך [יוסף] אמר את האלהים אני ירא (פ' מקץ) ובוה [בעמלק] כתיב (פ' תצא) ולא ירא אלהים, יבא בן בנו של מי שאמר את האלהים אני ירא ויפרע ממי שנאמר עליו ולא ירא אלהים, ע"כ,

The Rabbis answer: *Moshe reasoned that Yehoshua was a descendant of Yosef, and it was Yosef who, as a young man just taken out of prison and facing the royal splendor of Pharaoh and his whole imperial court, proclaimed to them in clear and uncertain terms ירא את האלקים אני ירא, I fear God! He was confident in his own religious position, despite the odds stacked against him.*

To answer the strength of Amalek's position, reasoned Moshe, we need the strength of our own confidence. **To confront the certainties of evil, we need the certainties of good. To counter the unquestioning ולא את האלקים אני ירא, we need the unquestioning**

When the Jewish people are strong and proud, and sure of their place in history, sure of their destiny and their connection to God, then Amalek, looking for an opening of self doubt, has no power over us.

But Moshe Rabbeinu, by physically taking the bones of Yosef with him, was reminding the Jewish people that **remembering** Yosef, and being **inspired** by Yosef, is not enough. Inspiration is a nice start. But if there is one message from Parshas Beshalach, it is that **inspiration alone is not enough**. It must be backed up by action. Transformative action. One must find a way to bring it along with them in life. That is why, even though Yosef had asked for his bones to be brought out **אתכם, along with you...** the *Pasuk* says Moshe brought it **עמו, together** with him. The **Maharil Diskin**, drawing on the grammatical difference between **אתו** and **עמו**, says that Moshe was transformed by his connection to Yosef and all that he stood for. And he brought that out with him,,,

**Rav Yaakov Galinsky** writes in *V'Higadta Shemos* (p. 280) regarding the punishments that the Egyptians suffered, which did not successfully change their behavior...

...יסוד גדול שנינו כאן, שענשים אינם פועלים אלא לשעה! אדם צריך לעשות לעצמו...

*External inspiration—remains external. Even gruesome makos were not enough to change them.*

He cites **Rabbeinu Yonah** in *Shaarei Teshuva*, who writes that when Hillel made his famous statement of **אם לא עכשיו אימתי** he was referring to the need to out inspiration into action...

**ספר שערי תשובה לרבינו יונה שער ב אות כ: והנה נחתום הענין הזה במאמר נכבד אשר לחכמי ישראל זכרונם לברכה (אבות פרק א, משנה יד): היה הלל עליו השלום אומר: אם אין אני לי מי לי? וכשאני לעצמי מה אני? ואם לא עכשיו אימתי? ביאור הדבר - אם האדם לא עורר נפשו מה יועילוהו המוסרים, כי אף על פי שנכנסים בלבו ביום שמעו, ישכחם היצר ויעבירם מלבו. . .**

**Inspiration must be internalized, and actualized immediately...otherwise it dissipates...**

When a person is inspired, he immediately needs to do something with the inspiration. Find ways to bring it with him, as Moshe did...

The Jewish people unfortunately had so much inspiration—but they struggled to internalize it, to effect real change within themselves...

...אחרי כל ניסי יציאת מצרים וקריעת ים סוף באו לרפידים שרפו ידיהם מן התורה. ואחרי כל נסי מתן תורה נעשה העגל ואחרי הרדת האש מן השמים וקריאת ה' הוא האלים אמר אליהו עזבו בריתך בני ישראל. השנוי חייב לבוא מבפנים, בעמל עצמי ולא מבחוץ בענשים או בנסים! תמיד אמרו בקלם מי ראה יותר את יד ה' מאשר פרעה—חווה את עשר המכות וטבע בים ומקום נתבצר לו, ונצל ואף שב למלך ומה...

He cites a teaching from the Kelm Yeshiva that the one who saw the most inspiration from Hashem was Pharaoh and look at how that turned out...

**Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz**, in *Maamar 56 (Sichos Mussar, pp. 238-240)*, says:

והנה, במה שאמרו חז"ל "ראתה שפחה על הים מה שלא ראו הנביאים" יש להתבונן, כי לכאורה כיון שראתה השפחה יותר מן הנביאים, היה לה להיות במדרגה נעלה מהם, ועם כל זאת, הנביאים הם "נביאי ד'" ואילו השפחה נשארה בדרגתה השפלה והפחותה "שפחה" הגם שזכתה לאאות בהתגלות ד' יותר מן הנביאים.

מבוא מזה, כי על ידי גודל ההשגה וההכרה כשלעצמה לא תתהפך מהותו של האדם ולא ישתנה במאומה, כי הגם שרואה וזוכה להכרה נעלה ועמוקה, הרי הוא עצמו נשאר כמו שהיה במדרגתו הקודמת. ולכך אע"פ שראתה השפחה על הים יותר משראו הנביאים, עם זאת נשארה "שפחה" כשהיתה...לא כן הנביאים, שמעלתם נקנתה להם בגודל יגיעתם ועבודתם, שעלו מדרגה לרגה עד שהגיעו בהכנתם לדרגת "נביא" להם הנבואה היא עליה גדולה בעצם מהותם...

He writes that everyone at *Krias Yam Suf* achieved more inspiration than was achieved by the greatest prophets. So why didn't everyone become a great prophet? Because they didn't take the next steps—of action and growth and transformation...which takes hard work.

Rav Chaim Shmuelovitz says this is what Chazal mean when they say in **Megillah 6b** לא יגעתי ומצאתי אל **there is no such thing as growth without hard work**. And real growth takes time—hence the circuitous route along which God took the Jewish people.

I recently read the following imagined response on Chabad.com ([Is This Your Ten Million Dollars? - Chabad.org](http://Chabad.org)) to a spam email about winning \$10 million (the type that appears in many of our junk folders).

*Congratulations. Your e-mail has been randomly selected to win a cash prize of \$10,000,000.00 (ten million dollars). This lottery is sponsored by big computer companies to encourage Internet usage. To claim your prize, please contact claim manager Mr. James Bell, and quote ticket number 012fg25/951 within 2 (two) weeks of receiving this notification. Again, congratulations, and we hope to hear from you very soon. Vince Valentino, Winner's Notification Department E-mail Lottery, Amsterdam*

*Dear Vince,*

*I would like to thank you for 2 (two) things. Firstly, for spelling out the numbers for me, as I have trouble reading them otherwise. Secondly, for the kind offer to receive \$10,000,000.00 (ten million dollars). But I am afraid I will have to decline. I cannot accept this prize, as it goes against my beliefs.*

*I do not doubt your sincerity, but I cannot believe that I have really won this prize. According to my tradition, if something is not earned, it is not really yours. The world we live in is called the "world of toil." **Nothing comes easy in this world, and if it does, then it disappears just as easily. Only what I have earned is truly mine. Even an inheritance, if not carefully guarded and actively protected, will wither away in time. To receive true blessing, I must create a vessel to contain that blessing. The vessel is my effort, and without it the blessing spills to the floor, never really becoming mine.***

*I know this because I have inherited a great fortune. I am Jewish. This means I am heir to 4,000 (four thousand) years of spiritual riches and moral achievement. My life is inspired by the wisdom and insight developed over 4 (four) millennia. My marriage benefits from the accumulated experience of 500 (five hundred) generations of marriages. The richness of Jewish tradition belongs to me, but I dare not take this inheritance for granted.*

***If I am not actively Jewish, if I do not invest in my spiritual traditions, if I do not engage my mind and heart in my Jewishness and make it my own, then it will fade. If I want to keep this grand inheritance and bequeath it to my children, then I have to work at it. I cannot rely on my ancestors' spirituality, I need to put effort into making my own spiritual connection.***

*This is why we refer to G-d as "Our G-d, and G-d of our fathers." Only when we develop our own relationship with G-d can we benefit from the relationship He had with our ancestors. When we experience Him as our G-d, then we can also benefit from His being the G-d of our fathers.*

*So, Vince, I must politely decline your offer. I didn't even so much as buy a ticket in your lottery, so I don't feel it can really be mine. Anyway, with my Jewish inheritance, I am rich already.*

May we merit to find inspiration in our lives, and in our rich heritage, and find ways to grow and transform ourselves from that inspiration. May we be *zoche* to the day when inspiration will be readily available in the days of *Mashiach*, *bimehra veyameinu...amen*.