

Discourse 24

*“Vayehi Beshalach Pharaoh et HaAm... -
It happened when Pharaoh sent the people...”*

Shabbat Parshat Beshalach,

13th of Shvat, 5725

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹¹⁵² “It happened when Pharaoh sent the people etc.” Now, about this we find that Pharaoh sent the Jewish people by force (as the verse states,¹¹⁵³ “With a strong hand he will drive them from his land,” meaning,¹¹⁵⁴ “Against the will of the Israelites.”)

However, we must understand how Pharaoh was capable of ruling over the children of Israel to be able to drive them out by force. That is, it makes sense that he had dominion over the children of Israel in restraining them to be in Egypt, being that this was because of a decree from *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above. However, that he had dominion over the children of Israel in driving them out of Egypt, by sending them by force to receive the Torah, is not understood. This is especially so considering that the fact that “Pharaoh sent the people” after the ten plagues, by which the external husk (*Kelipah*) of Egypt was

¹¹⁵² Exodus 13:17

¹¹⁵³ Exodus 6:1

¹¹⁵⁴ Rashi to Exodus 6:1

shattered,¹¹⁵⁵ at which time of the exile had already ended, thus ending Pharaoh's dominion over the children of Israel automatically, in that already then, they no longer were under his dominion at all. This being so, how could he reign over them in driving them out of Egypt?

This question is more strengthened, based on the well-known fact, that Jews have the matter of free choice, as the verse states,¹¹⁵⁶ "Behold, Man has become like the Unique One amongst us etc.," stemming from their root in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, where the true matter of free choice is. This being so, how can it apply for Pharaoh to have any dominion over the free choice of the children of Israel?

In regard to the fact that we find that there is a matter of "compelling him [until he says, 'I want'] etc.,"¹¹⁵⁷ this only applies when the force is exerted by a Jew, (or also when he is smitten by an idolator and told to "do what the Jewish people tell you").¹¹⁵⁸ The reason is because there [also] is the command, "you shall love your fellow as yourself,"¹¹⁵⁹ and "you shall surely reprove your fellow,"¹¹⁶⁰ and these commands are what grant empowerment from Above and assist the Jew in compelling his fellow. In contrast, this is not so when an idolator exercises force over a Jew of his own volition, (even if

¹¹⁵⁵ See Torah Ohr, Va'era 57a

¹¹⁵⁶ Genesis 3:22; See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 5:1

¹¹⁵⁷ Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 1:3; Talmud Bavli, Arachin 21a

¹¹⁵⁸ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Geirushin, end of Ch. 2

¹¹⁵⁹ Leviticus 19:18

¹¹⁶⁰ Leviticus 19:17

Torah law allows for it, and how much more so, if he exercises force that is not in accordance to Torah law).¹¹⁶¹

Thus, since Pharaoh sent the Jewish people himself (and not because the Holy One, blessed is He, commanded the Jewish people), this being so, how was he able to exercise dominion over the free choice of the children of Israel?

2.

This may be understood by prefacing with the explanation in Torah Ohr on the Torah portion of this week,¹¹⁶² (the Chassidic Torah portion), in explanation of [the verse], “It happened when Pharaoh sent the people etc.,” with the known preface,¹¹⁶³ that “the husk (*Kelipah*) precedes the fruit.” That is, the light and vitality manifest in the external husks (*Kelipot*) is of very high and lofty levels, from the aspect of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* which preceded the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, [the world of Repair-*Tikkun*] being the root of the Jewish people. Thus, when the children of Israel were in exile in Egypt, they refined and elevated the sparks of holiness that fell there through the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*, and because of this a much greater elevation was added to them etc.

This then, is the meaning of “It happened when Pharaoh sent the people etc.” That is, he sent the Jewish people (in that the meaning of “the people-*et HaAm*-את העם” [with the addition

¹¹⁶¹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Geirushin, end of Ch. 2 *ibid*.

¹¹⁶² Torah Ohr, Beshalach 61a and on

¹¹⁶³ See Zohar II (Sabba Mishpatim) 108b; Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 9d; Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee, Vayikra Vol. 1 p. 209.

of the word “*et-אֶת*” indicating inclusion], as in “with the people-*Eem HaAm-עַם הָעַם*”) with their boughs and branches etc. In other words, he sent them out with the sparks of holiness that were refined and elevated by them when they were in Egypt.

Based on this, we can explain [the verse] “It happened when Pharaoh sent the people etc.” according to its simple meaning. (That is, not only did he send **with** (*Eem-עַם*) the people, the sparks of holiness that were refined in Egypt, but he also sent the children of Israel themselves from Egypt.) That is, it specifically was after the ten plagues and the enslavement ending, this being the matter of the refinement of Egypt, that there was both the possibility and the need for the matter of “Pharaoh sent out the people.” For, since they already were refined and there already was the revelation of the sparks of holiness that were in his possession, then because of the great elevation of the sparks of the world of *Chaos-Tohu*, he had the ability to send the children of Israel out of Egypt.

The explanation is that after the slavery in Egypt already ended, there were those amongst the children of Israel who thought it would be best to remain in the land of Egypt, in “the best part of the land, in the land of Goshen,”¹¹⁶⁴ and to serve *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, in tranquility etc. They therefore did not want to go out into the wilderness, in which the “snake, serpent, and scorpion,” are present¹¹⁶⁵ and is “a land not sown”¹¹⁶⁶ (even in the spiritual sense).¹¹⁶⁷ However, all this

¹¹⁶⁴ Genesis 47:6; 47:11

¹¹⁶⁵ Deuteronomy 8:15; See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 2, p. 374

¹¹⁶⁶ Jeremiah 2:2

¹¹⁶⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Naso 20a; Masei 88c

stems from the aspect of the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, which is in a way of measure and limitation, of lights (*Orot*) as they are within vessels (*Keilim*), which is why it is possible for them to remain in Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מצרים, meaning to remain in the constraint-*Meitzarim*-מיצרים and limitations of the side of holiness.

However, it specifically is Pharaoh, whose root is in the aspect of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*, which transcends being settled within vessels (*Keilim*), about whom the verse states,¹¹⁶⁸ “Pharaoh brought close (*Pharaoh Heekreev*-הקריב-פרעה),” meaning that “he brought the hearts of the Jewish people close to their Father in Heaven,”¹¹⁶⁹ so that they left the constraints (*Mitzrayim*-מצרים) of the side of holiness, by arousing the matter of “the kindness of your youth... your following Me into the wilderness, into an unsown land.”¹¹⁷⁰

3.

Now, it should be added that we also find this in regard to what is stated later in the Torah portion,¹¹⁷¹ “*HaShem*-יהוה showed him a tree, and he threw it into the water and the water became sweet.” About this it states in Midrash,¹¹⁷² that this was an Oleander Tree (*Hardufni*), which is bitter, and the fruits of

¹¹⁶⁸ Exodus Pharaoh 14:10

¹¹⁶⁹ Midrash Shemot Rabba 21:5

¹¹⁷⁰ Jeremiah 2:2 *ibid.*

¹¹⁷¹ Exodus 15:25

¹¹⁷² Mechilta to Exodus there; Midrash Shemot Rabba 23:3, 50:3; Targum Yonatan ben Uziel to Exodus 15:25

which are poisonous.¹¹⁷³ Yet, even so, it was specifically by means of it the bitter waters were sweetened.

The explanation¹¹⁷⁴ is that, as we once explained,¹¹⁷⁵ this is not brought about because of the revelation of the light (*Ohr*) of the side of holiness, but it rather is the matter of the transformation (*It'hapcha*) of the side opposite holiness, such that the side opposite holiness itself becomes transformed to holiness, because of its root in the world of Chaos-*Tohu*. In other words, it specifically is through the Oleander Tree (*Hardufni*), which is the ultimate of bitterness, that there is the awakening of the revelation of the root of the aspect of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*, through which there thereby is caused to be the sweetening of the bitter waters. This is the matter of “the transformation (*Ith'hapcha*) of darkness to light and bitter to sweet,”¹¹⁷⁶ such that the darkness and bitterness **themselves** become light and sweetness.

This matter reaches much higher than the refinement brought about through the revelation of light (*Ohr*), (even though the refinement brought about through the revelation of light (*Ohr*) also reaches much higher than the revelation of the light (*Ohr*), in and of itself). This is similar to the fact that specifically the left nostril of the nose reaches the aspect of “the

¹¹⁷³ Sefer HaAroch, section on “*Hardufni*” cited in Matnot Kehuna to Midrash Shemot Rabba 50:3 *ibid*.

¹¹⁷⁴ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 3, p. 1,315 and on; p. 1,328.

¹¹⁷⁵ See the discourse entitled “*Machar Chodesh* – Tomorrow is the New Moon” 5711 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5711 p. 69, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5711, Discourse 8); Also see the discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden” 5715 (Torat Menachem, Bati LeGani Vol. 1, p. 162 and on, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5715, Discourse 8); Discourse entitled “*Chassidim v'Anshei Maaseh*” 5729 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729 p. 38).

¹¹⁷⁶ Zohar I 4a

Life of all life,” which is much higher than the right nostril, which only reaches the aspect of “life.”¹¹⁷⁷ This matter is similar to the explanation before, that specifically through Pharaoh, the addition of even greater elevation was caused etc.

This is likewise the general matter of the exile. For, as explained in Torah Ohr,¹¹⁷⁸ it is analogous to the sowing of a seed in the earth, that it rots and decomposes (which is why it is in a way of “those who sow tearfully”).¹¹⁷⁹ However, specifically through this sprouting and growth is caused (“will reap gladly in song”)¹¹⁸⁰ with addition and abundance, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹⁸¹ “A person sows one *kor* [of grain] in order to bring in several *kor* [of grain].”

¹¹⁷⁷ See Zohar III (Idra Rabba) 130b; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2, p. 448 and on; Discourse entitled “v’*Heinif Yado* – And He shall wave His hand” 5711 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5711, p. 58 and on, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5711, Discourse 7); Discourse entitled “v’*Hayah BaYom HaHoo* – It shall be on that day” 5722 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5722, p. 229, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5722, Vol. 2, Discourse 27); Also see the preceding discourse of this year entitled “*Vayikach Min HaBa B’Yado* – He took from that which had come in his hand,” Discourse 14, Ch. 2 and the citations there (Sefer HaMaamarim 5725 p. 95).

¹¹⁷⁸ Torah Ohr, Beshalach 61a and on

¹¹⁷⁹ Psalms 126:5

¹¹⁸⁰ Psalms 126:5 *ibid*.

¹¹⁸¹ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 87b, this is as it is cited in Torah Ohr, beginning of Beshalach (and elsewhere), but in our editions it states a “*Se’ah*.”