



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ה"א שבט תשע"ה – פרשת בשלח – 31st January 2015 - Volume 7 - Issue 29

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Michael Brandeis on the forthcoming wedding of the granddaughter, Dina Sonnenberg to Yaakov Yitzchok Neumann in London.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davenning this Shabbos sponsored by Mr & Mrs Nissim Hassan.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Deserting in the desert; wait for dessert!

Dani Epstein

Exodus – the word itself is so replete with meaning; it conjures up fantastical spectacles of spectacular miracles and has made such an impression in the wider world to such an extent that it has even spawned a few movies for the benefit of the hoi polloi who find that books are printed too quickly and they struggle to read fast enough.

Unfortunately much of what actually went on is relegated to the background, and a few points are highlighted, some Rashis are blatantly misunderstood and then end picture is a bit like ending up with a garlic pizza when you actually ordered a chocolate eclair. Don Yitzchak Abravanel as usual opens the sedrah with a salvo of questions which perforce requires us to re-evaluate our comprehension of the narrative even if we merely contemplate the questions without reading the answers.

This week's sedrah starts with the following possuk: "וַיְהִי בַשְּׁלַח פְּרֻעָה אֶת – יְהוָה" it was when Pharaoh send out the people". The Torah, as always, is picking and choosing words very, very carefully. Each word counts; each letter and space counts; the position of each word and the order of the sentences are there to provide us with clues and hints to try to decode the entire picture.

The first part of this sedrah is all about a series of events that culminated in the spectacle of Kriyas Yam Suf – the tearing open of the Reed Sea. Every element we read about ought to be discussing this one central event, or lead up to this event or have some direct connection to this event. This, however, is not exactly the case.

Asks the Abravanel: why does the possuk start with Pharaoh sending out the Bnei Yisroel? What the possuk should have said was בצאת ישראל "when Yisroel left Mitzrayim". This was the real action, not Pharaoh sending them out. Who cares about Pharaoh? Did he have a choice in the matter anyway?

You might argue: well, without this how would we know that Pharaoh sent them out willingly? After all the word בשלח implies a participation (usually in the form of – לויה accompanying the person leaving at least a few steps) and at the very least agreement to the departure. Without this sentence we might assume that the Bnei Yisroel nipped off in the panic and confusion of Makkas Bechoros – the Plague of the First Born.

Well, scroll back a few pages (Remember how old-fashioned that used to sound when books were first invented? Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose...) and you will find this: "וַיֹּאמֶר קוּמוּ וְצֵאוּ מִתּוֹךְ עַמִּי גַם אֲנִי, גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכִי – יִשְׁרָאֵל וְכִי" – יִשְׂרָאֵל and he said get up and go from within my people; you and also the Bnei Yisroel" (Shmos 12:31). So, we know from here that Pharaoh sent them out altogether, and that it was done willingly, and therefore the question still stands – why mention Pharaoh here?

Next, we find the possuk stating a reason for the direction Hashem led them: "וְלֹא-נָהָם אֲלֵקִים דָּרָךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים, כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא – and Hashem did not guide them through the Land of Plishtim, because it was near". This implies that the reason for leading them through the desert as opposed to the nearest route – via Plishtim – was because of the proximity of Plishtim to Mitzrayim. Rashi mentions members of the shevet Efraim had tried to escape early on, and died in battle against the Plishtim, and the remains of their bodies were strewn all over the countryside there. Had the Bnei Yisroel encountered this scene they would have lost heart and returned to Mitzrayim.

This begs a question, however. Surely the real reason for leading them through the desert was to precipitate the event of kriyas Yam Suf and the destruction of the remnants of the Egyptian army, and the reason they did not go through Plishtim was because they did not have a Yam Suf handy? Of course the issue with the Bnei Efraim was clearly something to be concerned about, but surely that would be right at the bottom of the list compared to the importance of the tearing of the sea?

This is akin to saying that the reason aircraft have wings is to store fuel. Whilst this is technically true – fuel is commonly stored in aircraft wings – that's probably one of the last concerns on the list. The first one generally is that without wings, it's tricky to fly.

So why not mention the most important reason for the route they took – the event of kriyas Yam Suf – and ignore Plishtim which is really a minor issue here? At the very least, mention the primary reason first and then mention the secondary reason.

Next: in the second verse, we read " – וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם" the Bnei Yisroel went up armed." This really seems a little out of place and should have appeared in the earlier chapter 12, verse 37 when the exodus from Ramses and the journey to Succos started. Mentioning here the fact that they were armed seems to be a bit of a non-sequitur since it does not really appear to have any relevance to the rest of the story. After all, when they were actually presented with a fight they all stood around whining and arguing and wringing their hands. It did not enter their minds

The Week Ahead

פרשת בשלח

Candle Lighting	4.32pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.37pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.09am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Hilchos Shabbos Shiur	3.52pm
2nd Mincha	4.22pm
Seuda Shlishis	following
Motzei Shabbos	5.42pm
Ovos uBonim	6.57pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	4.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

