

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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PARSHAS BAMIDBAR

תשפ"ד SHAVUOS RAV BRAZIL

SHAVUOS COMMEROATING THE MILK AND REEDS

There is a custom to spread flowers and grass in the shuls and houses in honor of *Shavuos*. The Chidushei Harim gives the following explanation to this *minhag*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was born of the seventh of *Adar*. The Torah tells us that Yocheved his mother was able to hide him for three months because he was born three months prematurely. So it was on the seventh of *Sivan* that she placed Moshe in a basket amongst the reeds that grew on the edge of the Nile River. That day Pharoah's daughter went down to the river and she saw the floating basket. She stretched out her hand and a miracle happened and it reached the basket from a distance. She opened it and found Moshe crying. She saved him and took Moshe to her house and raised him as her own child. In commemoration of this miracle on Shavuos on the date Moshe was saved, we decorate the shul and houses with flowers symbolizing the reeds of the Nile where Moshe the giver of the Torah escaped death.

In the *sefer Avnei Nachal* he adds that this is the origin of the custom to have *milchiks* on *Shavuos*. For on that same date Miriam arranged for her mother to nurse Moshe because he refused to be nursed by an Egyptian. Because of his refusal he was chosen to be the leader of *Am Yisrael* and to present them with the Torah (Sotah 12b).

There is a third aspect of this episode of Moshe and the princess Basya that is also commemorated for generations. It is the miracle of the *outstretched* hand that happened to Basya in her attempt to save Moshe. In Shmos 14,31 the passuk which we say every *Tefillas Shacharis* is וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה אשר עשה ה' במצרים that *Am Yisrael* saw the big hand that Hashem made in Egypt. The term "big hand" that he made is not so understandable. It should have read they saw Hashem's big hand? This is to teach us that that this description of a big hand is not referring only to Hashem's hand but also to Basya's hand which stretched in order to save Moshe. This is the meaning of אשר עשה that Hashem made her hand bigger than it was.

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One would think that is natural for one to lose sight of the trees when he looks at the huge forest as a whole. When being consumed with experiencing an overwhelming **Kerias Yam Suf** where they pointed with their finger to Hashem, or the Revelation of Hashem at **Har Sinai** when He opened up the seven heavens for them, it is almost impossible to think about trivia small miracles that happened more than eighty years previously concerning your leader who was then at the age of nine months and now he is you the Torah. However gratitude to Hashem is not only for big miracles but for the small ones as well. Yes every *Shavuos* we must remember and commemorate how *Moshe Rabbeinu* was saved as a nine month old child in a basket by the reeds of the Nile and how because he refused to drink milk from a *Mitzris*, he merited to give you the Torah over eighty years later. Without these small miracles there would not have been *Kerias Yam Suf* and *Matan Torah* the way we know it.

The truth is that in *Am Yisrael* there are no small miracles. Every day in the *berachos* which we recite every morning we thank Hashem for the smallest things of which people merely think it is the laws of nature. For us, our focus is not on the nature of the object or gift that one receives through a miracle to which he feels the gratitude towards Hashem. Rather it is a focus upon the most awesome, Infinite, and unfathomable creator of the universe, the Light of the *Ohr Ain Sof* who lovingly delivers and blesses his finite creations with life energy on a second to second basis.

ועל נפלאותיך וטובתך שבכל עת ערב ובקר וצהרים. We know why we wear a watch. It is for the purpose of telling the correct time in order not to come late to our jobs, tasks, meetings, appointments, *zman Kerias Shma* and *tefilah* and *shekiah*. In short, without it we would become dysfunctional physically and spiritually. Yet as I write this I just thought of another reason. If one takes the acronym of the above one will find that it spells the word **שעון** which is a watch or clock. In the word **שעון** is the root word **שעה** which means hour or time in general. The word **שעה** also means to find favor and acceptance as the *passuk* says by Kayan's *korban* **שעה לא מנחתו** ואל Hashem had no desire and wanting for it. Therefore we wear a watch so whenever we look at the time we should realize

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it is now that time which Hashem showers His benevolence, good will, and his miracles upon you. Everything in nature is included in the need to recognize the constant miracles and the gratitude we owe Hashem for them.

We have been counting *Sefirah* already for six weeks. We count both days and weeks. Days are small segments of time and weeks are bigger ones which are built from the smaller ones. On *Shavuos* we bring ourselves to remember the seeds of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the reeds and the milk which correspond to the saving of Moshe and his merit of being the giver of the Torah to us. In the big picture of *Matan Torah* these two events would have been lost in the shuffle. Yet *Klal Yisrael* acknowledges the reality that every gifted miracle of life energy is a kiss and embrace from Hashem and deserves a *beracha*. Whether it is a day or a week, small or big, both are counted equally in our anticipation for the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos*. The segment of the day which we count parallels the milk and reeds which at *Matan Torah* would be looked upon as small and insignificant. The segment of the week represents *Matan Torah* the greatest miracle in Jewish History, the revelation of Hashem. We count both days and weeks as they both have significance when one realizes they come from Hashem. As we experience on *Shavuos* *Matan Torah* and stay up all night learning the Torah, we incorporate in this momentous event the reed and the milk, to demonstrate that even the small miracles brought us to this *Yom Tov*.

Gut Shabbos and Gut Yom Tov,

Rav Brazil