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Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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PARSHAS BESHALACH

תשפ"ד RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS BESHALACH

THE TWO SIDES OF THE HORSE AND ITS RIDER

The Plague of Locusts was different from the other *Makkos* in a few ways. One difference is that it rested on *Shabbos*. The Baal Haturim learns this out from the two words *וינח* rested, once mentioned concerning *Shabbos*, and the other by the Locusts. This teaches that the Locusts did not destroy the crops on the day of *Shabbos* which is a detail not mentioned by any of the other nine plagues. What then is the special relationship that Locusts have to with *Shabbos*?

Secondly, the *passuk* says Hashem turned back a very strong wind and it carried the swarm of locusts and plunged them into the Sea of Reeds. Why is it that in the Plague of Locusts we are told the place where Hashem got rid of them? By the *Makkah* of *ערוב* it merely says that Hashem removed them from *Mitzrayim*. Thirdly, why was the destination of their death in the *Yam Suf* of all places?

One of the unique characteristics of the Locust species is that it has no king or queen leader which is in contrast to other species such as the bee, ant, wasp. One would therefore think that without a leader, the locust colony would be dysfunctional from the mere lack of direction. Yet Shlomo Hamelech tells us in Mishlei *כולו חוצץ* (30,27). Even though the colony lacks a king and organizer of unity and function, it nevertheless goes out to task with a sense of oneness and direction. Unlike the saying in numbers there is strength, for the locusts it is rather "in unity and achdus are where the strength lies. As the Bais Yaakov from Ishbitz writes (*אות כב*) that he message of Shlomo Hamelech is that every locust possesses within itself the *koach* of kingship and leadership qualities.

The root and source of anything contains everything. The more it spreads out and distances itself from the source, the more it becomes diluted, compromised, and loses its strength and vitality. It is in this area that the locust is unique. Hashem created every locust to possess the characteristic of a king who knows exactly what to do and is therefore connected to the source which is found in itself.

Now we can understand why the demise of the locusts was in the *Yam Suf*. The Sfas Emes (*בשלח תרנ"ד*) asks why was it necessary to have the entire miracle of *Yam Suf* when they were already freed from complete servitude at their departure from *Mitzrayim*?

אבל הענין הוא כדכ' מצרים נוסע. שראו שרן של מצרים כו'. ויראו מזה. ומרע"ה ניחם אותם אשר ראיתם כו'. והענין הוא כי באמת כן עשה הקב"ה להיות למצרים אז עלי' ממש עד כל השורש שלהם. ואח"כ נאבדו הם עם השורש. וז"פ סוס ורוכבו. וזש"כ רמה וכ' ירה. כי נתעלו מקודם הירידה. שיפלו עם השורש. וזה גאה גאה שלא כדרך ב"ו כשמנצח מפיל השני. אבל הוא ית' הרים אותם ונעקרו עם השורש. וז"ש אחד מהם לא נותר. פי' אפילו שורש האחדות וראש בנין שלהם לא נותר. וכזה נתקיים בכל שבת. דבערב שבת הסט"א מתגברת לעלות. ויורדין עד נוקבא דתהום רבה. כמ"ש בפרות רשעים

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כמו עשב ויציצו כל פועלי און להשמדם ערי עד.

The Sfas Emes explains that even though they were freed from the servitude to Pharaoh, however from the servitude of Pharaoh's source, the heavenly angel in charge of *Mitzrayim*, they were still shackled and prosecuted. Many times we are successful in ridding ourselves from undesirable, unhealthy, manifestations of symptoms, but nevertheless we fall short of eradicating the cause and source of the sickness. At *Kerias Yam Suf*, not only did the *Mitzrayim* on earth meet their death in the sea, their angel in heaven the chief fault finding prosecutor to the Heavenly Tribunal against Yisrael also met its demise. This is hinted in the words ומצרים ונחריהם **נוסע** the angel of *Mitzrayim* was chasing after them and that is why the Torah used the singular *lashon* of נוסע and not נוסעים. At the miracle of the Red Sea, Hashem stripped *Mitzrayim* from its power, all the way up to the source, to the angel appointed over the life energy of the Egyptian nation.

This interpretation is revealed in what seems to appear as the essential phrase in the *Shiras Hayam* בים רמה ורכבו רמה בים. Rashi explains that the *passuk* is describing the death of the *Mitzrayim* whereupon the horse and the rider always remained attached to each other throughout their episode of death. Together they were lifted up high and then thrown down into the sea repeatedly. Why is their attachment together horse and rider such a noteworthy fact that even in Miriam's *shira* this was the only phase sung?

The profundity of this proclamation attests to the demise of the angel together with *Mitzrayim*. The horse is symbolic of the nation upon whom the rider, its angel who supplied them with a life force, also perished. Together they were destroyed, the earthly part of *Mitzrayim* with the spiritual sustainer of *Mitzrayim* its *malach*.

This could explain the extra ordinary structure of the *Shira* which is written with unusual large spaces between *pessukim* and phrases על גבי לבנה. This is in order to convey that our song of salvation is the victory over not only the physical visible enemy the Egyptian nation, but also over the spiritual energy force that is always concealed and hidden from the naked eye.

The Medrash says (Shmos Rabba 22,3) that the seventh day of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* the day of crossing the *Yam Suf* paralleled the seventh day of the week Shabbos. The Sfas Emes alludes to this connection between Shabbos and *Kerias Yam Suf* above. However the relationship between the two is even deeper. On Shabbos we receive the *neshamah yesairah* which connects us to our source above. *Chazal* tell us that an *Am Haaretz* if he is asked to whether he tithed his *maaser* on a particular food he is believed and trusted to have done so if he was questioned specifically on Shabbos but not during the week. *Chazal* say the fear of Shabbos us upon him and he would not say a lie. Here we are talking about an *Am Haaretz* an unlearned individual and yet on Shabbos he is transformed into an individual who is bonded with the *emes*!

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In other words we can say that there is a סוס ורוכב a horse and rider from the side of *tumah*, and there is a horse and rider from the side of *kedusha*. The *neshama* that is on earth inside of a Yid is like a סוס and the root *neshamah* in *shamayim* is the רובב. On *Shabbos* the horse and the rider are bound together stripped from any existing *mechitzos* or *chatzitos* that would interfere or veil the purity of its *deveikus* to one another. At *Kerias Yam Suf* all *Yisrael* had the revelation of סוס ורוכב and they even pointed with their fingers saying זה אלי ואנוהו which Rashi says (*Shabbos* 133) that the word ואנוהו is a combination of two words אני והוא that we are essentially bonded with Hashem by our two *neshamos*, one in our bodies and one in its source in *shamayim*.

On *Shabbos*, Hashem brings us to His treasure chamber. This conveys that on *Shabbos* we are gifted with a private showing of Hashem which is inaccessible during the week. In other words on *Shabbos* we are elevated to our roots where the purpose of our mission in this world is clear beyond any doubt. This relationship between *Yam Suf* and *Shabbos* is evident from the *gematriah* of בים כי גאה גאה סוס ורוכב רמה בים which equals שבת and its three letters.

After understanding the above we can now return to answer how the plague of Locusts relates to *Yam Suf* and why they perished specifically inside the sea. The common denominator between **Shabbos Yam Suf** and the **Locusts** is that all three relate to the שורש roots. *Shabbos* connects a *Yid* to his roots to his *neshamah yesairah* in *shamayim*. The Zohar says that *Shabbos* is the source of all *beracha* in the world כי היא מקור הברכה. The miracle of *Kerias Yam Suf* related to destroying the root of *Mitzrayim* in *shamayim* which is their *malach*. The locusts was a *makah* in which there was an overt demonstration of the mitzvah of keeping *Shabbos* as the *Baal Haturim* wrote. It is because the locusts do not have a king to direct instructions in order to have a functioning colony. The fact that it possesses a highly sophisticated Locust society of *achdus* only shows that everyone in the colony has kingship within themselves and are the source and root of life energy to the colony. The Locusts being plunged into *Yam Suf* was a harbinger of the final fate destined to *Mitzrayim*, that of the Egyptians together with their angel will perish in the *Yam Suf* בים ירה בים סוס ורוכב ירה בים.

Just like we find in all the other *makkos* that it was according to the seder ורפוא למצרים, and a plague to *Mitzrayim* and a *refuah* to *Am Yisrael*, so can be said of the *makka* administrated to *Mitzrayim* and their *malach* in the Final Blow. That *Yisrael* benefitted from the *makka* of סוס ורוכב רמה בים of *Mitzrayim*, for *Am Yisrael* received the experience of רובב. רבב שמים בעזרך Rabbeinu Bachya Bamidbar 14,17 on this *passuk*

כי כשישראל מקיימין התורה והמצות הש"י רוכב שמים, וזהו (דברים לג) רוכב שמים בעזרך, כלומר בעזרת ישראל משפיע כח במדותיו, ובוה מוסיפין כח בגבורה של מעלה שנאמר (תהלים ס) באלהים נעשה חיל, וכשאינן מקיימין התורה והמצות הוא מתרחק ממדותיו שנאמר (דברים לג) ובגאותו שחקים, כלומר שהוא מתגאה, מסתלק למרום מרומים ובוה משפיע כחו במדות ובוה מתישין כח של מעלה, שנאמר (שם לב) צור ילדך תשי.

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When *Am Yisrael* fulfills *mitzvos* we thereby add strength to Hashem and he pours down *shefa* from His *middos*. Hashem is the rider who rides and is elevated from our Torah and *Mitzvos* and thereby bestows upon us *berachos*.

Tu Bishvat is the Rosh Hashanah for Trees. It is on this date that the sap begins to ascend the roots, start the revitalization process, which will end with the delivering of its fruits on the branches. It is fitting for *Tu Bishvat* to fall on the week of the *Shirah* which is read on *Shabbos* for all three deal with the *tikkun olam* which comes from the closer connection of *Am Yisrael* to their **sources** of divine spiritual life.

Gut Shabbos

Rav Brazil