



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Beshalach 5765

Tonight's *Melave Malka* is also the *seudas sheva brachos* for two *chasanim*. The topic of marriage is certainly connected to this week's *parsha*.

As we find in *Maseches Sotah* (ב:):

“Rabba Bar Chana said in the name of R. Yochanan, ‘Making their *zivugim* (match) is as difficult as the splitting of *Yam Suf*.’”

We need to understand why *Chazal* chose to specifically compare the process of finding a match to the splitting of *Yam Suf*.

Perhaps it can be explained by understanding the *Midrash* (פסיקתא זוטרתא בשלח י"ד:ט"ז) “The waters were split into twelve, one for each of the twelve *shevatim*.”

The *Midrash Yalkut Hamakiri* (תהלים קל"ו:י"ט) elaborates further: “R. Yehuda bar Ilai said, Once Am Yisrael went into the sea, *Yam Suf* split for them, and the water stood as walls (dividing the sea into pathways) with windows in the walls. And Yisrael looked and saw each other and spoke with each other so that they would regain their *daas* - understanding.”

These descriptions lead us to ask the following questions;

The *Midrash* tells us that it was Hashem's will to split the sea into twelve separate pathways, so that each *shevet* would follow the specific pathway that is appropriate for that *shevet*, and not the pathway of another *shevet*. If so, why was it necessary to create windows in the walls that



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separated one pathway from the other? Shouldn't the walls have been totally solid and opaque, ensuring that each *shevet* would be careful to follow only their particular outlook and approach?

On the other hand, if Hashem wanted *Am Yisrael* to cross *Yam Suf* together, as a unified people, why was the sea split into twelve distinct pathways? Wouldn't it have been more appropriate for there to be only one path for all of *Am Yisrael*?

However, by learning *Chazal's* words in depth, we can identify the lesson they wished to teach us.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu split the *Yam Suf* into twelve distinct paths in order to prepare *Am Yisrael* for the time when they would enter *Eretz Yisrael* and each *Shevet* would dwell in the area designated for them. There, they would retain and follow the specific *minhagim* and approach that they inherited from their forefathers. By doing so, they would follow the instruction of Shlomo Hamelech, (משלי א:א) - וְאַל תִּטַּשׁ תּוֹרַת אִמְךָ - Do not abandon the *Torah* of your mother. It is vital that they take care to follow the *mesorah* of their particular *shevet*.

Nonetheless, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* also ensured that the wall of water that separated the *shevatim* from each other would have windows. This would enable each *shevet* to see how the others served Hashem, and to learn from them. This would prevent any particular *shevet* from feeling that the only correct way of *avodas Hashem*, was that of their *shevet*. If separated, members of one *shevet* could mistakenly believe that no other way of *avoda* truly pleases Hashem as theirs does.

This is why Hashem provided *Am Yisrael* with windows in the walls of water. This would ensure that each individual will understand that just as his *avodas Hashem* brings *nachas ruach* to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, so does the *avoda* of his fellow Jew from a different *shevet*. In fact, the goal is that each Jew will understand that only by the combination of the



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shevatim's different paths of *avoda* can *Am Yisrael* completely fulfill their purpose of serving Hashem in this world.

This understanding applies to our own *avodas Hashem* today. Each community should maintain the *minhagim* of their forefathers with great *mesirus nefesh*. However, they must simultaneously appreciate and respect the customs of other communities, understanding that each contributes a unique and necessary aspect to *Am Yisrael's* efforts to serve Hashem as completely as possible.

We can now understand why Chazal compared marriage specifically to the splitting of *Yam Suf*. As I have often explained, a basic foundation of *shalom bayis* is that there is no need to ensure that the character traits and midos of the *chasan* and *kalla* will be as similar as possible. In fact, it is often the differences between the two spouses that enable them to build true *shleimus*. Their differences enable them to complement each other.

The *Chafetz Chaim* derived this lesson from the lesson of R. Akiva in *Maseches Sotah* (י.ז.):

“R. Akiva taught, if איש ואשה are worthy, the *shechina* will dwell among them. If they are not worthy, אש אוכלתן fire will devour them, for Hakadosh Baruch Hu will remove his name from amongst them (the letter 'י from איש and the letter 'ה from אשה) so that they remain אש and אש.”

The *Chafetz Chaim* pointed out the letters that symbolize the Divine Presence that is found in a successful marriage are the two letters that are different in the words איש and אשה - namely the letters 'י and 'ה. In fact, the letters that they have in common 'א and 'ש represent the destructive force of fire, that prevents the *shechina* from dwelling in that home. This teaches us that sometimes, it is specifically the areas in which husband and wife resemble each other that lead to the conflict represented by אש. It is the differences between husband and wife that create the harmonious relationship that welcomes the *shechina* into their home.



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I often quote a clever *peirush* of the *Gaon* Rav Yehoshua of Kutna zt"l. In *Parshas Bereishis*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ - I will make for him a helper כנגדו (בראשית ב:י"ח), usually translated as "opposing him."

In *Maseches Yevamos*, Chazal say:

"זכה נעשית לו עזר, לא זכה, נעשית כנגדו" - If he is worthy, she becomes his helper; if he isn't worthy, she becomes his opponent.

However, the *Gaon Mi'Kutna* questions that translation. He says that the proper translation of כנגדו isn't "opposing" or "against" but rather "alongside" or "parallel to". For example, Eisav proposed to Yaakov נִסְעָה וְנִלְכָּה, וְאֵלְכָה לְנֶגְדְךָ (בראשית ל"ג:י"ב) - Let us travel and walk and I will walk לנגדך. Rashi explains לנגדך as בשוה לך - along with you or parallel to you.

Therefore, he explains that Chazal meant to say, לא זכה, כנגדו - If he isn't worthy, his wife will be similar to him, doing what he does. When he davens, she davens. When he learns, she learns. When he says *tikun chatzos*, she does as well. Meanwhile, the home falls apart.

If he is worthy, she won't imitate him, but will take care of the home and family. When he davens, she will clean. When he learns, she washes and organizes etc.

Every *chasan* must learn from *Kriyas Yam Suf* that while he must follow the ways and customs of his family, he must also appreciate the *minhagim* of his wife's family.

ובאופן זה נזכה כולנו להמשך אחר שמחת החתנים, ולהקים בתים נאמנים בישראל, ולזכות להשראת השכינה בבתינו, וכענין שאמרו, "זכו שכינה ביניהם" אכ"ר



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