

HaShem

The Master Military Strategist

In Parshath *Masaai*, the *Torah* recounts the stops that B"Y made on their journey from liberation from bondage in Egypt, to the conquering of the Land of Israel.

It recalls to us that B"Y left Egypt from *Raamses* and they stopped at Sucoth, Eitham at the end of the desert, and they then sat/*Vayashav* on *Pi Hachiroth*.

The *Torah* had already told us earlier, that the Egyptians had given over their burden of building two treasure cities, named *Pithom* and *Raamses* to B"Y.

So it is interesting to note that B"Y's first stop was the second treasure city- *Raamses*. The Chachamim, however, reveal to us that the city mentioned as the fourth stop in the *Torah*, *Pi Chiroth*, was actually another name for *Pithom*, which was the first treasure city that they had built.

So if we follow the time line- the Jews went as far as the end of the desert, and then they almost retraced their steps back to the Egyptian treasure city of *Pithom*.

As the Jews approached *Pithom*, the *Torah* tells us that the Egyptian have regrets and exclaim "What is this that we have done, that we have sent B"Y from serving us". "Paroh mounted his chariot and takes his nation with him." (Shemoth 14, 5-6). One could imagine that they thought that B"Y were possibly coming back to empty out this treasure city.

Rashi on that pasuk points out, that Paroah entices his nation to follow him, in the chase, by telling them that he is not going to send them forward and watch from the back, like other leaders, but rather he will lead the way at the vanguard.

The Chachamim, further teach us, that Paroah and his people, paradoxically, also brought with them the gold and silver, etc, that the Jews hadn't taken the first time, as they pursued B"Y.

There is an interesting *Avoth Derebi Nathan* that teaches- All that honor the *Torah*- their bodies will be honored..." Then it continues to say, that *Paroah*, in this instance actually decided to go to the front as a way to honor *HaShem*, who was, as if to say, leading B"Y in the desert. He felt that he should be the first one to 'greet' *HaShem* when the two camps met. The *mishnah* then explains how he was rewarded for leading his nation to their death.

According to *Midrash*, *Paroah* himself survived the encounter and made his way to Nineveh- where he became the king, and was the one who lead his nation to repent for their sins against *HaShem*, when *Yonah* finally made it there, and announced *HaShem's* intent to wipe out the island nation.

A bystander, who was traveling with B"Y at this point, and realizes that they were actually going right back to their former overlords, would have been in a panic, trying to figure out what was going on.

As they ran back into the desert, away from the Egyptians that were pursuing them, they would have panicked further, once they hit the sea. In fact that's exactly what did happen. B"Y started crying and yelling to HaShem asking him for help, arguing that they would soon either be drowned in the sea, or massacred by the Egyptians.

Moshe conveys the Jew's message to HaShem who goes on to answer," Why are you yelling to me? Talk to B"Y and get going!" (*Shemoth* 14, 15)

In the end, as we all know , Nachshon Ben Aminadav, finds the courage to throw himself into the sea, the sea splits, B"Y pass through on dry land, the Egyptians follow them in, and are drowned when HaShem releases the waters.

All the treasure that they had taken with them during the chase washes up on the seashore and B""Y take days to collect all the spoils, until Moshe Rabeinu A"H ends up having to 'pull them away' from there.

Now we can take a step back, and as trustworthy servants of HaShem, realize the wonders that just happened.

WE were running away from Egypt after 210 of servitude, we ended up going right back there after a few days.

The Egyptians start chasing us again, and catch up with us on the seashore, where we will either drown in the sea or, get slaughtered by the Egyptians.

But all of this was just an illusion.

HaShem had promised *Avraham Aveinu* that we would serve a nation that would make us suffer, but in the end we would leave with a massive treasure, and He would also judge/punish, the offending nation.

When B"Y left Mitzrayim this had not happened yet.

But with this brilliant military tactic that HaShem Employed, it all came to pass.

The nation that had agreed to let B"Y just leave, with no intention of going after them anymore, was aroused to reconsider that.

Their king, in effect, fools them to follow him into the wilderness to meet their doom, with the intention of Honoring HaShem, who had again shown his mastery of even the tiniest aspect of creation. So that the promise of punishing the nation that had made B"Y suffer, is kept to Avraham Aveinu.

Furthermore, the king and his servants bring their valuables with them, in what seems to be an absurdly foolish move, and it is all offered up by the sea to B"Y , in order to keep the promise of having B"Y leave Egypt with a massive treasure .

We should all take heart in seeing the big picture here.

The Chachamim teach us that the redemption from the last galut will mirror that of the first one.

May we all be zocheh to keep working on our part to reach the Olam Habah, and finally rejoice in all of the good that is awaiting for us then. But we all have to do our parts.

