



ALTER RAUBVOGEL

A Miracle to be Proud Of

The Shabbos before Pesach is called *Shabbos Haggadol*, The Great Sabbath, because a great miracle happened on [that Shabbos]: The Paschal lamb offered in Egypt was acquired on the tenth [of Nisan]... which was on a Shabbos. Every [head of household] took a sheep for his Pesach and tied it to the foot of his bed. The Egyptians asked them, “Why you need this?” and they replied, “To slaughter... as Hashem has commanded us.” The Egyptians gritted their teeth at this—the Israelites were slaughtering [the Egyptians’] deity! But [miraculously,] they weren’t allowed to say a thing. (Tur, O.C. 430)

Many ask that, if so, we should commemorate this miracle on the tenth of Nisan, even if it falls on a weekday! I heard—in the name of Rabbi Moshe Charif, of blessed memory—that [many years later,] on that date, another miracle was performed, when the Jordan River split; people might think that [the commemoration is because of that later miracle], so [our Sages] proclaimed it to be “The Great Sabbath,” as the crossing of the Jordan did not happen on Shabbos. (Taz, Magen David, O.C. 430)

MAGEN AVRAHAM, WRITTEN LATER, OFFERS a different answer to the Taz’s question.

10 Nisan was at one time observed as a fast day, because it’s the anniversary of Miriam’s death.

In *Darash Moshe*, Rav Moshe Feinstein asks: What’s wrong with commemorating the splitting of the Jordan? And why did Magen Avraham disagree and look for another explanation?

Rav Moshe explains that not all miracles are alike. Sometimes they come at a cost.

Our Sages taught a story of a man whose wife died, leaving a suckling child, but who had no money with which to hire a wet nurse. A miracle happened—[the man’s] breasts were opened like a woman’s, and he nursed his son.

Rav Yosef said, “See how great this man was, that such a miracle was performed for him!”

Abaye responded, “Just the opposite—how lowly he was, that nature was changed on his behalf [when Hashem could simply have provided him with money for a nurse]!” (Talmud, Shabbos 53b)

Before Hashem manipulates the natural course of events to provide a certain outcome, it has to be “worth it,” as it were. Otherwise, the beneficiary may have to “pay” Hashem to intervene with a miracle, using the credit he has earned by doing mitzvos. That’s what Abaye meant when he said the desperate father must not have been very deserving.

However, there are some very righteous people, such as Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, for whom Hashem performs miracles gratis. The Talmud tells several stories like this one:

Once [Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa] was walking down the road, and it started to rain. He said, “Master of the universe—the whole world’s at ease, while Chanina is suffering!” Immediately the rain stopped. When he got home, he said, “Master of the universe—the whole world is suffering [from lack of rain], while Chanina’s at ease!” Immediately the rain resumed. (Ta’anis 24b)

Yet this doesn’t seem to have affected the reward he got for serving Hashem.

The world [to come] was only created... for Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. (Talmud, B’rachos 61b)

How does that work?

Rav Moshe explains that, to a large extent, it all hinges on how a person perceives things.

To most of us, nature, and the cause-and-effect way in which the world runs, are, well, *natural*. If Hashem were to intervene and override the “normal” on our behalf, we would say that “a miracle” had happened. That being the case, Hashem may very well expect a “fee” for such preferential treatment, unless there’s some other justification for that miracle.

On the other hand, there are people—like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who, in a pinch, once said (Ta’anis 25a),

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Thursday

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Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
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Minyanim Daylight Time

Shacharis
Sunday.....8:15 AM
Monday–Friday.....7:20 AM
Shabbos.....N/A

Mincha
Sunday–Thursday.....5:45 PM
Shabbos.....5:30 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday.....9:45 PM
Thursday.....10 PM
Shabbos.....N/A

Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**
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Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

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(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

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Rabbi Meir Minster.....
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Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

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Rabbis Dani Schon
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Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

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(private & small groups).....times vary



PESACH BREAK The Kollel will be on recess from Sunday, March 6 to Monday, April 23.

Improving on a Good Story CONTINUED

“The One who tells oil to burn will tell vinegar to burn!”—who truly feel that everything is brought about by Hashem, and that even “nature” is miraculous. If Hashem intervenes on behalf of such a person, he or she will perceive it to be a miracle, whether the intervention was “supernatural” or not. Since it makes no difference to such a person whether or not Hashem performs what we might call a miracle, Hashem won’t bill his heavenly account if He decides, for whatever reason, to render His services by extraordinary means.

The miracles Hashem performed in Egypt, argues Rav Moshe, were also of a kind that would not be charged to anyone’s account. They were *necessary*, as

a means of teaching the fledgling Jewish People, and the rest of the world, about Hashem’s supremacy. If anything, such miracles are a source of merit, something to celebrate.

However, after the lessons of the Exodus and forty years of miraculous Providence in the wilderness, it should not have been necessary for Hashem to make another demonstration of power when the Israelites reached the Jordan River. If they had found all of the materials necessary to construct a bridge resting on the river bank, waiting to be put to use, they should also have recognized that as the work of Hashem’s hand. The miracle of splitting the Jordan should have been superfluous; the fact

that Hashem made a demonstration out of it reflects poorly on the people who needed that demonstration to bolster their faith—just as Abaye felt the “miracle of the milk” reflected poorly on the desperate widower.

This, explains Rav Moshe, was the reasoning of the Taz, when he explained why Shabbos Haggadol is on Shabbos, not the tenth of Nissan.

And Magen Avraham? He must have held that the splitting of the Jordan *was* something to celebrate. It was, after all, a great miracle, performed on the behalf of the Jewish People, and it fortified them as they prepared to conquer the land of C’naan. 🍷