

This week is **צו פרשת**, which is **שבת הגדול**, the great **שבת** before our wonderful **יום טוב** of **פסח הגדול**. **שבת הגדול** is called by this name for many reasons. One reason is that the **דרשה** on the **הלכות** of **פסח** was given on this **שבת**. Since it was a major **דרשה**, it became known as **שבת הגדול**. Another reason is that on this day, **בני ישראל** were commanded to take the **שה**, tie it to the bedpost, and prepare it as the **קרבת פסח**. This was a great **נס**.

What was the נס? The נס was that the מצרים didn't react. משה רבינו had protested to Hashem, saying, “בני ישראל can't do this! The מצרים's עבודה זרה, and they will kill us!” Hashem responded, “חייך - I swear, they are not leaving מצרים until they do exactly that.” Now, within the great panoply of מכות, ניסים, and the entire story of יציאת מצרים, tying a שפסל to the bedpost seems like a rather minor detail. Yet this is what we call הגדול שבט. What is the underlying message here?

We can gain some insight into what הקדוש ברוך הוא considers to be גדול and how we should orient ourselves by looking at another instance where the word גדול is used. Where do we find this? At קריעת ים סוף, which took place at the end of פסח. What does the פסוק say, which we recite every day in davening? - וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם - witnessed and saw the great hand of Hashem, in that which he did to מצרים. This is written immediately after קריעת ים סוף.

The Lutzker Rav, the אֲזַנִּיִּים לְתוֹרָה, one of my favorite סְפָרִים, asks an important question. There were two major aspects to קְרִיעַת יַם סוּף. The first was the incredible נִס of the sea splitting, allowing בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל to cross, a once-in-history event. The second was that, after בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל had crossed (and even while they were still crossing), the sea returned to its place, drowning the מִצְרִים. The question is: which of these two events is referred to as the יַד הַגְּדוּלָּה?

The answer is that it refers not to the splitting of the sea, but to the drowning of the מצרים בני ישראל. Yehoshua witnessed the יד השם, not just in the supernatural event of the sea splitting, but in what seemed to be a natural occurrence - the water returning to its place. They were able to experience, realize, and internalize that הקדוש ברוך הוא runs the world, even in the mundane forces of nature, such as gravity.

This is what גדולה truly is. גדולה is recognizing אחד ושמו אחד and living with the awareness of שְׁוִייתִי ה'. לְנִגְדֵי תָמִיד. We must realize that Hashem is constantly with us - no matter what we are doing, no matter how we act. גדולה is present in every moment, in every step we take, in every breath we breathe. We must appreciate this and keep it in mind as we navigate our daily routines and the challenges that עולם presents. All of these difficulties and stresses are designed to help us learn more and more about Hashem's חסד and His הנהגה in the world - to recognize that Hashem is the מנהיג העולם. One crucial lesson we should take from פסח is that Hashem's involvement in the world is not a one-time event but an ongoing reality. Hashem is truly our מלך מלכי המלכים, השם אחד ושמו אחד. we will have a בעזרת השם. יום טוב wonderful.

There is one more interesting point to mention, since we are in פרשת צו, and we can't overlook it. The קרבן תודה is mentioned in צו. As we know, the תודה is a קרבן brought for many reasons. The גמרא lists four specific cases in which a person brings a קרבן תודה: someone who traveled across the ocean, someone who traveled through the מדבר, someone who was sick and recovered, and someone who was in the בית הסורים and was released.

All of these situations involve יצועות from Hashem, and they warrant bringing a קרבן תודה. It's important for us to keep this in mind as well. Every day, except for שבת, we say מזמור לתודה in our תפילה. Why don't we say it on שבת? Because the קרבן תודה could not be brought on שבת. Interestingly, it also could not be brought on פסח, since it was offered together with לחם חמץ.



This is a timely reminder, as we approach פסח, that we should always have a deep sense of gratitude to Hashem. We should constantly say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you," all day long, for all of the חסד that Hashem does for us. The תודה קרבן represents the concept of הכרת הטוב - the recognition of goodness. This applies not only to Hashem, but to anyone who does us a חסד. הכרת הטוב is not just about saying "thank you" with words; it must also affect the way we relate to the one who has done us the kindness.

One of the most powerful examples of הכרת הטוב in the תורה is found in the story of יציאת מצרים. רש"י, in פרשת בשלה, explains that when the פסוק says וְחַמְשִׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, it means that בני ישראל left armed. If they were armed, why was it necessary for הקדוש ברוך הוא to perform the extraordinary נס of קריעת ים סוף? Why didn't בני ישראל simply turn around and fight off the מצרים who were pursuing them?

The חתם סופר answers this question with a remarkable insight. The הכרת הטוב that בני ישראל owed to the מצרים prevented them from fighting against them. This is astounding. After all the years of suffering, oppression, and cruelty - after the מצרים had murdered their children and forced them into unbearable labor - still, the תורה teaches us that כלל ישראל remained bound by a sense of הכרת הטוב. Why? Because, despite everything, מצרים had originally welcomed them as guests and had provided them with a place to live.

This shows us the depth to which הכרת הטוב must extend. הקדוש ברוך הוא had to perform the נס of קריעת ים סוף specifically so that כלל ישראל would not have to engage in battle against מצרים. That is how far הכרת הטוב must go.

in the merit of expressing gratitude - both to Hashem and to others - may we continue to receive ברכה and הצלחה. May Hashem continue to shower us with His kindness, and may we soon merit to see the גאולה שלמה with the coming of בימינו, במהרה צדקנו, משיח צדקנו. Good Shabbos!

