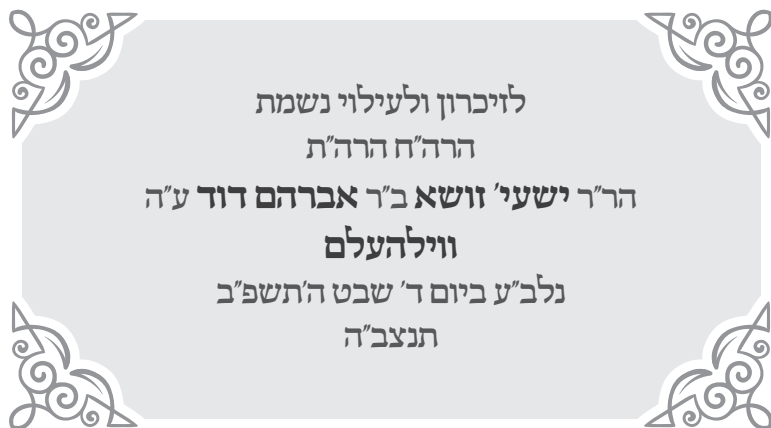


Beshalach

THE WEISS EDITION

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points*

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION



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בשלח

Beshalach

14:10 | י"ד'

וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל ה'

And Bnei Yisrael cried out to G-d.

Praying for a Living

Upon seeing Pharaoh and his army rapidly approaching, Bnei Yisrael became frightened and cried out to G-d for salvation.

Now, Bnei Yisrael knew that G-d had promised to bring them to the Land of Israel, and they were well aware of His ability to deliver on His promises. Why, then, did they deem it necessary to pray that G-d save them from Pharaoh's armies?

Rashi answers this question with his commentary on the words "and they cried out." In Rashi's words, "They seized the craft of their ancestors."

For Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, crying out to G-d was part of everyday life; they prayed regularly, not only in times of crisis. Rashi therefore refers to prayer as our forefathers' *craft*: prayer came so naturally to them, it was as though it was their full-time occupation. Similarly, Bnei Yisrael's prayer

did not stem from doubt that G-d would save them from the Egyptians. Rather, they prayed instinctively—“because that’s what Jews do”—despite their certainty that they would be saved.

The same is true for us in every generation and era. As descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, our service of G-d through prayer, and likewise our Torah study and mitzvah observance, should not be limited to fulfilling a specific requirement. We must emulate our ancestors and “seize their craft,” engrossing ourselves in these activities constantly and instinctively—simply because this is who we are and that is what we do.

Similarly, when we endeavor to draw others closer to Torah observance, we must recognize that prayer, Torah study and mitzvah observance are the natural craft of every descendant of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. No matter how far removed from Jewish practice a fellow Jew may seem, we must approach him with the conviction that Judaism is essentially his craft—his most natural way of life.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 11, pp. 52-54*

 יד:טו | 14:15

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מַה תִּצְעַק אֵלַי

G-d said to Moshe, "Why do you cry out to Me?"

Stop, Drop and Care

Bnei Yisrael were surrounded by danger on all sides. Moshe, their leader, cried out to G-d in prayer. G-d replied, "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and have them journey forth. And you, raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and split it, and the children of Israel shall come in the midst of the sea on dry land."

Rashi notes that before G-d instructed Moshe to split the sea, He reprimanded him, saying, "Why do you cry out to Me?" As Rashi explains, "Moshe was standing and praying. G-d said to him, 'Now is not a time to pray at length, when Israel is in distress.'"

We can only imagine the profound union with G-d that Moshe experienced during prayer. Nevertheless, G-d reprimanded Moshe for his lengthy prayers here. For notwithstanding the value of Moshe's Divine worship, the moment had come for him to lead Bnei Yisrael to salvation—it was not time to engage in anything else.

With the words "Why do you cry out to Me," G-d was teaching Moshe, and in turn each and every one of us, that our responsibilities toward our fellow Jews may not be treated as an afterthought. When a Jew is at risk of devastation, whether

physical or spiritual, we must put everything else aside and devote ourselves to saving him, even if this means sacrificing opportunities for our personal growth.

—*Toras Menachem, vol. 25, pp. 42-45*

 14:29 | יד:כט

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בְיַבֶּשֶׁת פְּתוּחַ הַיָּם

*But the children of Israel went on dry
land in the midst of the sea.*

From Sea to See

“Everything that exists on land also exists in the sea,” says the Talmud.¹ The difference is only the extent to which their occupants are visible to the human eye: unlike their counterparts on dry land, the creatures of the sea are mostly out of sight. Accordingly, Chassidus interprets *kerias Yam Suf*, when the sea was transformed into dry land, as a spiritual experience in which spiritual realities that are normally unseen became clear and visible.²

Kerias Yam Suf is not only a past event, but something we should strive for in our personal service of G-d as well.

One such form of spiritual *kerias Yam Suf* in our personal lives is to bridge the gap between the spiritual heights we experience during prayer and the activities we engage in the rest of the day. The focus of prayer is to arouse in our hearts and minds *conscious* feelings of attachment and subordination to G-d. Though daily prayer automatically impacts our conduct throughout the rest of the day as well, nevertheless, the intensity of our feelings during prayer tends to fade and be “hidden” from our conscious thoughts when we are preoccupied by the mundane demands that each day brings. *Kerias Yam Suf*, however, in which the hidden world of the sea became

1. Chullin 127a.

2. Likkutei Torah, Tzav 14c, and elsewhere.

exposed, teaches and empowers us to expose what is naturally “hidden,” and make it conscious and “visible.” Meaning that even while going about our ordinary activities, we can and must strive to maintain a constant and *conscious* submission before G-d like that which we experience during prayer.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 3, p. 1016e*

 15:20 | ט:כ

וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם תְּנֻבָאָה אֶחָזֶת אֶהָרֵן אֵת הַתֶּף בְּיָדָהּ
 וַתֵּצֵאֵן כָּל הַנָּשִׁים אַחֲרֶיהָ בַּתְּפִים וּבַמְחֹלֶת

Miriam the prophetess, Aharon's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women came out after her with tambourines and with dancing.

The Women's Dance

The drowning of the Egyptians in the sea (after Bnei Yisrael had safely passed through) brought a complete end to the Egyptian exile, whereupon the Jews burst into song to thank G-d for their redemption. The Torah tells us that the women, led by Miriam, surpassed the men in their celebration. The men only sang, but the women also danced and played musical instruments.

The women's rejoicing was greater than the men's because their suffering in Egypt had also been greater. Harsher than the backbreaking labor that the Egyptians inflicted upon Bnei Yisrael were Pharaoh's decrees regarding the Jewish children. Most notoriously, Pharaoh decreed that all Jewish baby boys should be drowned, and later he bathed in the blood of Jewish children, as related in the Midrash.³ Though these decrees obviously caused *all* the Jews anguish, such pain is naturally experienced more severely by the child's mother than by the father. Since the women's suffering in Egypt had been more painful than the men's, their joy upon the redemption was commensurately greater, too.

3. Shemos Rabbah 1:34.

This idea is highlighted by the fact that the women's rejoicing was led by Miriam, whose very name reflected the bitterness of exile: the root of מרים—Miriam is the Hebrew word מר—*mar*, which means “bitter.”⁴ Our Sages tell us that as a young girl Miriam prophesied about the redemption,⁵ a prophecy whose fulfillment she witnessed only more than 80 years later. Having lived her life in painful anticipation of the end of the bitter exile, Miriam's joy upon the redemption knew no bounds, and she now led the women in their abundantly joyous celebration.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, pp. 139–140;

Sefer Hasichos 5752, vol. 1, pp. 303–304

4. See Shemos Rabbah 26:1.

5. See Rashi, Shemos 15:20.

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' ישעי' זוסיא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
מקושר לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
שליח למדינת פנמה
מנהל וראש ישיבת מתיבתא אהלי תורה
הוגה בתורה בהתמדה רבה
פה מפיק מרגליות
חיבר ספרים והרביץ תורה ברבים
בנגלה ובחסידות
עסק בהפצת המעיינות
תמך במוסדות ובשלוחי הרבי
אהוב על הבריות, רודף צדקה וחסד
ביתו פתוח לרווחה וקיבל את כולם בסבר פנים יפות
העמיד דור ישרים מכורך, צאצאים ותלמידים
ומהם שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר ועושי דברו
נלב"ע ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

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