



Parshas Beshalach

January 29, 2021

A Taste of Torah

Silent Treatment

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshaya Freeman

They found themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place. The parsha records that the Jewish People encountered a very dangerous situation as they were trapped between the Egyptians and the *Yam Suf*, the Sea of Reeds. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Taanis 2:5) teaches that there were four groups among the Jewish People that presented different suggestions as to what they should do. One group said they should jump into the water. The second group said they should return to Egypt. The third group said they should wage war. The fourth and final group said they should cry out to G-d.

Moshe addressed all of these groups with a single solution, as the Torah says (Shemos 14:13-14) "Moshe said to the people, 'Do not fear! Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem that He will perform for you today; for as you have seen Egypt today, you shall not see them ever again! Hashem shall make war for you, and you shall remain silent.'"

It seems that the Jewish People played absolutely no role in bringing about their salvation. Yet Moshe orders them to "remain silent;" it would seem that this itself is their part in bringing about their salvation. How is this silence to be understood?

The Jewish People needed to attain a higher level of faith in Hashem than they had achieved previously during the Ten Plagues in Egypt. They needed to come to the realization that *ain od milvado*, "there is nothing besides Hashem." Many people look at the world and observe that it has

a certain order and protocols, and Hashem oversees and manages the system. In reality, however, the reason that anything exists in this world at any given moment is only because Hashem chooses to cause it to exist at that instant. Hashem is constantly recreating the world at every moment. "Nature" and its rules are an illusion that Hashem presents to the world and that He puts into place for most of the time, but, in truth, the entire world is being recreated all the time. There is no system, and there are no rules - anything can change in the blink of an eye. Thus, the job of the Jewish People leading up to the Splitting of the Sea was to realize, at a very deep, existential level, that the same way Hashem causes the sea to flow, He can also choose, at any given moment, to make the sea split. Their "silence," then, was to sit back and do absolutely nothing, thanks to their understanding that Hashem, and only Hashem, can cause anything to occur.

This idea extremely relevant in our daily lives as we often hit dead ends where it seems like there is no way out. In fact, the Talmud (Pesachim 118a) teaches that providing sustenance for a person is as difficult as the splitting of the *Yam Suf*. In a similar vein, the Talmud (Sotah 2a) teaches that bringing a man and woman together into the coexistence of marriage is as difficult as the splitting of the *Yam Suf*. These two areas of life - finding a source of income and finding a suitable spouse - often present a person with scenarios that seems to have no solution. The splitting of the

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Stories for the Soul

Preparation Care

During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach (1899-2001) was faced with a dilemma. He lived in Jerusalem, but he had a position teaching in Petach Tikvah. The road between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which led to Petach Tikva as well, was often targeted by Arab ambushes, and so travelling back and forth was often quite dangerous. This meant that Rav Shach often had to remain in Petach Tikva, sometimes even for Shabbos. He was hosted by a family in Petach Tikva, and he spent his time there studying Torah.

One Friday, as Rav Shach studied at his host's home, the woman of the house bustled about, preparing the Shabbos food. She had an infant who was bawling, and so she quickly finished the task at hand and went to care for the baby. Suddenly, though, the baby stopped crying. As she entered the main room, she found Rav Shach rocking the baby in his arm, soothingly cooing, "*likavod Shabbos kodesh*" (in honor of the holy Shabbos).

The woman was embarrassed that this great Torah scholar was caring for her child, and she apologized and made a move to take the infant from him. However, Rav Shach replied that he wanted to rock the baby. He explained that the Talmud says that everyone should take part in the Shabbos preparations. "I may not be able to prepare the Shabbos food, but I can take part and care for the baby so you can complete

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Kollel Happenings

TORAH FOR TYCOONS VIA ZOOM ON WED., FEB. 3

Torah for Tycoons resumes on Wed., Feb. 3 via Zoom. **Please note time change for this class, 8-9 pm.** Join Dr. Daniel Mogyros, MD, Infectious Diseases Specialist, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, for *High-Priority Question: Precedence in Vaccination*. Visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org for more info.

KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit www.denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: Two people are eating the exact same food with the same intentions yet they make different blessings how can this be?

Answer: Hearts of palm. The Gemara (Brachos 36a) rules that hearts of palm, although harvested from palm trees, require a *shehakol*. However, the Gemara's reasoning is that dates, not hearts of palm, are the primary product of the tree, and so the secondary hearts of palm are *shehakol*. Based upon this, may halachic authorities rule that today's commercially produced hearts of palm, which are grown on specialized trees meant exclusively

for hearts of palm production, would require a blessing of *ha'adama*. (*Ha'eitz* is not recited because one is eating the tree itself, not the fruit. There is a minority view that *ha'eitz* should be recited.) However, if a person were to eat hearts of palm that came from a tree meant for date production, a *shehakol* would be recited (see *VeZos Habracha* 5761 ed. pgs. 298-299).

This week's question: Two people are eating the exact same food without any particular intention or preference, yet they make different blessings - how can this be?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Saadia Gaon - Part XIV

Despite this warning, Dovid ben Zakkai proceeded to offer Rav Saadia the position of Gaon of the Sura Yeshiva in 928 CE, and Rav Saadia accepted. He was relatively young, around 45 years old, when he assumed the position. The Sura Yeshiva

flourished under his leadership.

However, it was not long before Rabbi Nissim Nehora's concerns came to pass. Some two years after his ascension as Gaon of the Sura Yeshiva, a conflict arose between Rabbi Saadia and the *Raish Galusa* (Exilarch).

A Taste of Torah

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Yam Suf reminds us that Hashem's salvation knows no bounds.

As we find ourselves in very unsettling times, wondering how everything will play out and how the myriad problems the world, as well as those we, as individuals, face, we need to internalize the idea expressed in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 97a) that teaches that the Final Redemption will only come when the Jews give up hope for

the redemption. At first glance this seems strange and almost heretical, as one of the Rambam's basic tenets of faith is to constantly yearn for the final redemption. Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky (1891-1986) explains that the Talmud means giving up hope in all other solutions the world has to offer and to put our hope in Hashem only, realizing that *ein od milvado*.

Stories for the Soul

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your preparations for Shabbos!"

In this week's parsha, Hashem instructs the Jewish People to prepare

their food for Shabbos on Friday. It is a great mitzvah to engage in properly preparing for Shabbos.

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