



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH

ISSUE 16

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BESHALACH

11th Shevat 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 13, verse 17 - Chapter 14, verse 8

- ✚ Before departing, Moshe gathers up Yosef's coffin in order to fulfil Yosef's request of being buried properly in the land of Israel.
- ✚ Guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Hashem led Bnai Israel away from Mitzraim towards the midbar (desert) and the Yam Suf (red sea), rather than the more direct route back to the Promised Land.
- ✚ Reports came back to Pharaoh that Bnai Yisrael seemed to be wandering aimlessly around and are now trapped between Baalzephon and the sea. Pharaoh regrets letting them go and decides to give chase so he can return them back to Mitzraim, as his slaves once more.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 9 - 14

- ✚ Riding alongside his army and all of his horses and chariots, Pharaoh quickly overtakes the area where Bnai Yisrael were encamped.
- ✚ Seeing the Pursuers from afar Bnai Yisrael cried out to Moshe, asking him why he took them out of Mitzraim, only to be killed here in the desert. Moshe tells them not to be afraid as they will not be harmed because Hashem is on their side and will save them.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 15 - 25

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe to stretch out his rod over the Yam Suf and the waters will divide long enough for Bnai Yisrael to travel through it on dry land in order to continue their journey.
- ✚ The pillar of cloud which was guiding Bnai Yisrael moved to the back separating and protecting them from the imminent attack from the Egyptians.
- ✚ Moshe lifted his hands over the sea and an East wind parted the waves, creating walls on either side so Bnai Yisrael could now enter the water safely. The Egyptians followed suit and went in after them.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 14, verse 26 - Chapter 15, verse 26

- ✚ On Hashem's command. Moshe stretched his hands out towards the sea once more, returning it back to normal, drowning all the Egyptians in the process.
- ✚ Bnai Yisrael are in awe of what Hashem had achieved and began singing songs of praise in recognition of the miracle they all just witnessed.
- ✚ Three days later they arrive in Marah and start complaining to Moshe that there is no water to drink as it is bitter. Hashem shows Moshe a tree, which once thrown into the water, will make it sweet and drinkable.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 15, verse 27 – Chapter 16, verse 10

- ✚ Continuing on with their journey, Bnai Yisrael complain to Moshe again. This time because their supply of food has run out and they are starving. Hashem tells Moshe he will rain down, food called Mahn for the people to collect daily, except on Shabbat, so they have to gather double portions on Friday in order to have enough.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 16, verses 11 - 36

- ✚ Before the arrival of the Mahn the next day, a flock of quails flew over the camp that afternoon, which were caught and eaten. (The Mahn remained to be the main source of food throughout the forty years, wandering through the Midbar)

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 17, verses 1 - 16

- ✚ Moshe implores Hashem for help, once more because yet again, Bnai Yisrael are complaining due to the lack of drinking water. Hashem. Tells him to go to a place called Horev and strike a rock he finds there. Moshe obeys and water starts gushing out from it.
- ✚ The tribe of Amalek attacks. Moshe is told to keep his arms raised high in the air, as Yehoshua (Joshua) along with a small army of men went to fight them off. Once victorious, Hashem commands Moshe to write this episode down and promises that one day, he will utterly wipe out the memory of Amalek's existence for what they have done.

Haftorah – SHOFTIM (JUDGES) Chapter 42 verse 5 to Chapter 43 verse 10

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ The Jewish nation is being oppressed by King Yavin of Amor and his general Sisrah
- ✚ Devorah, a prophetess, manages to rally the people to stand up and fight against their oppressor. Although Bnai Yisrael is outnumbered, miraculously they are able to win the war.
- ✚ In recognition for Hashem's intervention, Devorah leads the nation thanking and praising Hashem for his help in their victory

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ Just as, in our Parsha, for performing one of the greatest ever miracles of splitting the sea, and leading Bnai Yisrael through safety, away from their pursuers (the Egyptians). Moshe, followed by Miriam led Bnai Yisrael in singing out their gratitude towards Hashem in the form of a song; the Haftorah follows suit with Devorah, conducting the people in praising Hashem with a song.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Straight after witnessing the great miracle of the splitting of the sea, we read that Moshe breaks into song praising Hashem and encourages Bnai Yisrael to join in. Why?

Our Commentators give many answers to this question, but I would like to only elaborate on just one. Moshe was seeking forgiveness, trying to amend for the harsh words he spoke to Hashem earlier when he doubted Hashem's attentiveness towards Bnai Yisrael's plight and hardship under the Egyptians. Moshe had not only accused Hashem of being oblivious to their peril but seems to condone the injustices being done, standing back and doing nothing to alleviate their suffering. After witnessing all the miracles at the time of the splitting of the sea. Moshe acknowledges his mistake at misunderstanding the way Hashem runs the world and expresses his deep apology in the form of a song.

Rabbi Frand taught that normally there are two types of shira (praise) in our daily davening. The first is offering thanks to Hashem for the bountiful blessings of giving us life, health, livelihood, etc. The other type is when someone offers up their deepest thanks after being rescued from a situation of grave danger which could easily have been life threatening, had Hashem not intervened.

However Rabbi Frand went on to say there is a third type. Someone who is sensitive enough to recognise the true nature of Hashem's loving kindness and realise that although there is much pain and suffering in the world, Hashem knows what he is doing and has his reasons for allowing it. The classic example of this was during the time of the Holocaust where so many of us lost their lives; and just like Moshe's grievance earlier, many Jews were asking the same question of why Hashem seemed to have abandoned them?

Looking back on both of these events, when 'Belief' in the Almighty was no longer possible because of the 'Harsh Reality', the Jewish people were given a concept about which they could have Emunah and faith once more. The Holocaust led to the birth of the state of Israel and the events at the splitting of the sea gained us the merit of receiving the Torah.

Moshe came to the realisation that the whole purpose of what had gone on before was all because of 'Spiritual Refinement' (making Bnai Yisrael worthy of becoming Hashem's treasured nation). I think, now armed with this new insight, why Moshe encouraged the people to sing alongside him too. Moshe wanted everyone to move on to a higher level of praising Hashem, in which they no longer just thanked him for all the good bestowed upon them but also for his constant concern for us, even though at times it may seem painful and difficult.

Moshe's lesson for us today is to remain patient and continue putting our trust in Hashem's hand, because despite all the hardships going on around us; Everything is for the greater good in the end and we should all be confident that we will all live in peace and harmony speedily in our days; experiencing the full measure of Hashem's blessings.

