

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH

ISSUE 16

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BESHALACH

13th Shevat 5776

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

GEMATRIA LINKED TO SEDRA:

- When Hashem told Moshe he was going to wipe out all remembrance of Amalek he used the phrase 'אמחה ממה' Maho Emheh (I will erase), which as a numerical value of 107.
- Later on, when a descendant of Amalek rose up to destroy the Jewish People in the Purim Story; Megilla Esther quotes 'המן זה' Ze Haman' This is Haman' Proving that Hashem's intention was to eradicate the memory of Haman as the gematria of these words also add up to 107.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

The story of Amalek written in this week's Parsha of Beshalach forms part of the narrative of the journey from Mitzraim to Sinai. The Torah's account of what occurred is historical and factual, describing how Moshe appointed Yehoshua as his Chief of Staff of the army and how that army was able to defeat Amalek. "And Yehoshua weakened Amalek and his nation with the sword" (Shemot 17:13). Immediately afterwards Hashem orders Moshe to write an account of what had transpired as a reminder that 'I (Hashem) will erase the memory of Amalek from under the heavens'. Yet when we jump forward forty years when Moshe is recounting the events to the next generation; Moshe emphasizes the fact it is our duty and obligation to wipe out and erase the memory of Amalek. And not Hashem as previously stated. Why?

One answer I heard was that forty years later when Moshe reflected on what happened the words spoken seem to apply that the reason behind Amalek's attack was because 'they did not fear Hashem'. In my mind this statement is a bit ambiguous because it's unclear who it was, exactly, didn't not Hashem. Amalek or Bnai Yisrael? Should we link the lack of fear to the immediately preceding phrase, reading it as, "and you [the Jewish people] were weary and tired and did not fear Hashem"? Or does it refer back to the beginning of the verse, speaking of Amalek who attacked the weary and weak because they did not fear Hashem?

Our sages indicate that this purposeful vagueness is no accident. The Torah is teaching that both Amalek and the Jewish people were lacking fear. At that point in history in Parsha Beshalach, the Jewish people were still traumatized after being enslaved for so long in Mitzraim, so it would have been beyond their capabilities to behave any differently because they were still struggling with the fact that they were now free and after the events which transpired at the Yam Suf they felt totally invincible because Hashem had saved and protected them all from the wrath of the pursuing Egyptians. However, in biblical literature, fear of Hashem is equated with morality, and the lack of such fear is the license for doing evil; which is clearly demonstrated in what happened next.

Basically they got so accustomed to Hashem being there providing them with all their needs and protection they got too complacent and started to forget about him. So of course it's only when Hashem tests them at Refidim, when there was no water to drink. Instead of recognizing their lack of faith in Hashem they questioned him by asking Moshe 'Is Hashem in our midst or not' So it no surprise that the very next verse read, "And Amalek came and fought with the Jewish people"

The battle with Amalek in Parsha Beshalach was a relatively simple one. all Bnai Yisrael had to do was look up towards heaven recognize Hashem once more, and victory was theirs The battle with Amalek recorded in Ki Tsetse is much more difficult. The Torah follows this account of Amalek with the mitzvah of bikkurim, where the farmer must take his first fruit to Jerusalem and publicly proclaim that the land was given to us as part of our historical mission to be a holy nation. Amalek attacked (externally) baderech, on the way, as they tried to stop our historical journey and was thwarted. Yet even today they still have the power to attack us (Internally) in the ways we conduct ourselves if we don't behave properly or weakens us with a lack of fear towards Hashem.

Amalek has always been and always will be our eternal enemy. Hashem can take care of the external Amalek and erase their memory as stated in the verses of Beshalach, but only we can defeat the internal Amalek inside us all which is enforced by Moshe's statement in the book of Devarim. There is little we can do to get the Amalek's of the world to fear Hashem, but we must at least remember and ensure that we, ourselves, have the requisite fear of Him.

