

Candle Lighting

5:46

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:49

Sunset
6:05

Motzei
Shabbat
6:41



Parshat HaShavuah

BESHALACH

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פרשת בשלח
י"א שבט תשע"ב

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Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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LIKE A BABY IN HIS MOTHER'S ARMS
RABBI NOAH ZISQUIT

The Gemara (Sotah 37A) relates the following event which takes place in this weeks parsha: When the Jewish people were approaching the Reed Sea, the tribes began arguing as to who would be the first one to go into the sea. Fearful for their lives, each tribe refused, claiming that there was no way they were

going to go in first. All of a sudden, Nachson Ben-Aminadav jumps straight into the sea.

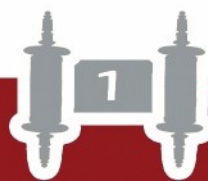
As a result of Nachshon's actions, he is rewarded later on with the privilege of being the first one to get to bring a korban (Bamidbar Rabba).

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz raises the following difficulty: How is it possible that the tribes do not want to be the first ones to enter the sea if by its very nature, the Jewish nation is built on self-sacrifice for the Almighty? Time and again throughout our history, Jews have been willing to sacrifice their lives al kiddush Hashem, so how could it be that the Jews who are always willing to sacrifice for Hashem lack the courage to jump in?

Rav Chaim explains that certainly these tribes would not have hesitated to give up their lives by jumping into the sea if that is what Hashem had commanded them to do. Here however, the real challenge that faces them is to cross a raging sea and reach the other side *alive*. Only Nachshon is on the spiritual level to have the confidence that crossing a raging sea is no different than traversing dry land if that is Hashem's desire. Hashem can save a persons life no matter what the external circumstances are, even if the situation seems naturally impossible.

When going into the sea, Nachshon wholeheartedly relies on Hashem, and there is no need to be concerned with the circumstances.

Continued page 4





HAVE A LITTLE FAITH

LAUREN IBGUI ('14)

This week's parsha discusses Bnei Yisrael's long awaited redemption from slavery in Egypt. After Pharaoh agrees to allow the Jews to leave, Hashem once again hardens his heart, and so Pharaoh sends his army to retrieve Bnei Yisrael. The Egyptians catch up to Bnei Yisrael at the Yam Suf, and in a panic, Bnei Yisrael begin to pray to Hashem. Hashem answers their prayers by splitting the sea and washing the Egyptians away. Amazed by this miracle, Bnei Yisrael start praising Hashem by singing *Az Yashir*.

Rashi teaches us that when Bnei Yisrael cross the Yam Suf and sing *Az Yashir*, they are emerging from a time of past suffering.

What suffering? Bnei Yisrael have just experienced both the ten plagues and Kriat Yam Suf— should they not be happy to be freed?

During the plague of darkness, at least eighty percent of the Jewish people were killed. There was not one family who was not affected. However, they sing nonetheless.

Rebbe Nachman teaches us that the “greatest level of simcha for which we should strive for is the level wherein we can turn *yagon v'anacha* (grief and lamenting) into *sasson v'simcha* (joy and gladness).” One of the messages we learn from Parshat Beshalach is when we face times of difficulty, we should know that Hashem is looking out for us and we should keep our faith in tact and as strong as ever.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED ON

DANIEL LASKO ('14)

As human beings, when we study the Torah, we are often quick to judge the events that occur. We may look back on a story and say that we surely would have behaved differently if put in the same situation. The truth, of course, is usually the opposite.


In this week's parsha we see the story of Kriat Yam Suf, the splitting of the sea, which is one of the unique moments where Hashem revealed Himself to the entire Jewish nation.

Chazal state that the people present at Kriat Yam Suf merit to see more of Hashem's presence than the famous prophets of later generations, like Yechezkel. The Rama of Pano explains that when Bnei Yisrael say, “*Zeh Keli v'anvaihu*,” they reach the level of the tzadikim, the righteous ones, in Gan Eden.

Nonetheless, the Gemarah in Sanhedrin (103b), based on a pasuk in Zecharia, tells us that Micha in fact carried an idol while crossing the Yam Suf.

Continued page 3





Lasko continued

How could people who are experiencing such a great miracle allow for an idol to be carried through the Yam Suf? Certainly none of us would have acted likewise!

This question can be answered with a simple statement: Avodah Zarah, idol worship, is not only the denial of Hashem; the Rambam asserts that a person who davens to Hashem through an intermediary is also guilty of Avodah Zarah.

Hashem desires to have a direct relationship with us. If we prefer to keep our distance from Him, we are also guilty of not serving Him properly. While Bnei Yisrael experience such great things, some feel the connection is too much for them and that they would prefer serving Hashem from a distance, and therefore, on a lower level— like Micha.

It is our job to realize that Hashem is our Father and that He wants to bestow upon us more good than we might think possible. We must not take the easy route, but rather must advance in spirituality.

FRIGHTENED OR FREE? **ALANA REICHENBERG (‘13)**

It is written in Parshat Beshalach, “And on that day the Almighty saved Bnei Yisrael from the hand of Egypt.”

The obvious question is: To which specific day is the Torah referring?

The Ohr Hachayim specifies that “that day” corresponds to the day the Egyptians drown in the Yam Suf. However, Bnei Yisrael are let out of Egypt prior to “that day,” so the question continues – why do they only feel safe once the Yam Suf engulfs the Egyptians and not when they are freed?

The answer is that Bnei Yisrael only feel completely safe once they see that there is no possible way for the Egyptians to retrieve them. Although they are free from Egypt, the Jews do not feel secure while there is a chance that Pharaoh and his army could (and eventually do) end up chasing after them. Only after Hashem removes this threat do they feel at ease.

From here we can learn that many people tend to only feel free when they are safe. If a person knows danger is lurking in the future, he will be overwhelmed by the frightening thoughts of that danger. Only once a person is no longer in danger is he truly free to serve Hashem.

Therefore, we must remove the yetzer hara, the only real danger, from our midst and only then can we serve Hashem wholeheartedly.



CHOOSING SIGHT, NOT RIGHT

JORDAN BROWN ('13)

The first pasuk in this week's parsha states, "When Pharaoh sent away the people Elokim did not lead them by way of the land of the Plishtim although it was the shortest route; for Elokim said, 'The people might change their minds should they encounter war, and return to Egypt.'"

We see that in this instance, Hashem does not take Bnei Yisrael on the quicker path, but rather on the one He knows will be the right one for them.

There is always an easy way out of every situation; however, the quick and easy path is not always the right one. Similar to the lesson learned by the Jews in the desert, in our lives, the harder and occasionally more difficult path is sometimes necessary.

The harder path teaches us far more than an easier path ever could. Having to endure the hardships of life is what shapes who we become. As high school students, our future is being molded every day by the experiences we have and our reactions to those experiences.

Rashi says that the reason Hashem does not take Bnei Yisrael through the land of the Plishtim is due to the fact that it is a shorter journey. A shorter journey to our promised land also guarantees a shorter journey away from our promised land. Hashem fears that when Bnei Yisrael will encounter a problem, returning to Egypt in a short, easy trip will be the most popular reaction. In our own lives too, the easy way out can bring us right back to our original problem.

With every decision that we make, it is up to us to choose to see the right decision or not. Sometimes we cloud our vision with our egos and emotions, but the solution to all of our problems, though it may not be what we want to do, is always very clear. Hashem does not challenge man to distinguish between right and wrong, for that we have the Torah. Hashem challenges man's ability to see clearly and choose the right path.

Rabbi Zisquit continued

If a mother is holding a baby, the baby does not notice where his mother is walking, whether it be somewhere dangerous or through a safe neighborhood. The baby's focus is on being in his mother's loving embrace as she holds him in her arms. In a similar vein, we can learn from Nachshon to depend on Hashem in all circumstances, knowing that He loves us and can always help us no matter how bleak the situation may seem. Let us strive to realize that like a baby in his mothers arms, no matter where He leads us, we can always rely on Hashem.

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