

LAMPLIGHTER

10 Shevat
Parshas Beshalach
Yud Shevat
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, we read about the splitting of the Sea. This miracle prepared the Jewish people for the giving of the Torah and the Final Redemption.

Concerning the splitting of the sea, the Torah tells us that Nachshon ben Aminadav risked his life to jump into the Sea. It was only after Nachshon entered the Sea that the waters parted and the Jews were able to proceed.

How could Nachshon disregard his life and jump into the sea? How could he not! For Nachshon knew that G-d had taken the Jewish people out of Egypt for the sole purpose of giving them His Torah at Mount Sinai. Nachshon was guided by the desire to advance toward the Torah. It mattered not to Nachshon that a body of water obstructed his path; he jumped into the Sea.

Faced with a seemingly impossible situation the Jewish people had been of several opinions. Nachshon, however, was uninterested in any of their "options" - returning, waging battle or running away - for he knew that none of this would bring them closer to Mount Sinai. He was also not interested in arguments or calculations. There was only one solution: to go forward to Mount Sinai. And so he did, with tremendous mesirat nefesh (self-sacrifice).

The portion of Beshalach is generally read on the Shabbat preceding or following the 10th of Shevat, the anniversary of the passing of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. The circumstances surrounding the splitting of the Sea contain a timeless lesson; so do the actions of the Previous Rebbe. For throughout his life the Previous Rebbe acted with mesirat nefesh and set an example for all future generations.

The Previous Rebbe did not specifically seek out mesirat nefesh; this was not his intent, as his sole objective was to spread Torah. He did not stop to consider if self-sacrifice was necessary, nor did he pay attention to the prevailing opinions and views of the other Jews of his time. To him, their arguments carried no weight at all. The only thing that motivated the Previous Rebbe was the need to get closer to Mount Sinai. Even if a "sea" stood in his way, he would jump in. What would happen next? That was G-d's concern, not his. This was immaterial to the Previous Rebbe. He simply did what he had to in order to reach Mount Sinai.

From this we learn a lesson to apply in our daily lives. Our function on earth is to serve G-d, to love His creations and bring them closer to Torah. Differences of opinion and approach are not our concern. Our only true goal is to draw nearer to Mount Sinai, and to do so without consideration for any obstacles that seem to obstruct our path.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 1

Split Your Sea

By Lazer Gurkow

Behind them was an army bristling for war. Before them was an ocean, deep and impassable. They could neither advance nor retreat. They were ambushed. What could they do?

Moses tried an age-old tactic: he cried out to G-d. But G-d rebuked him: "Why do you cry to me? Tell the Children of Israel to journey forth."

Journey forth, but how? There was an ocean before them! G-d never addressed this question, and Moses never asked it. G-d said to journey forth, and journey they did. That was the entire point. Don't ask questions. Don't raise doubts. If G-d issues a command, He will provide the means to see it through.

Yet the Children of Israel hesitated. They were prepared to plough into the ocean, but they needed to be led. A leader appeared in the person of Nachshon, son of Aminadav, tribal prince of Judah. Leading his tribal column, Nachshon strode into the sea. Wading through the rising tide, the waters first reached his waist, then his chest and shoulders.

At the very last moment, as the waters reached his nostrils, the Red Sea parted and the Children of Israel followed him into the sea.

The Midrash cites many reasons for which our ancestors merited the splitting of the Red Sea. According to at least one of our sages, the waters parted because of the merit of our ancestors' profound faith and unwavering confidence that G-d would protect them.

All created beings are subject to change. Winds blow, waters flow, plants grow, even stones are subject to being worn down. Man, too, is subject to change. The only constant in our ever-evolving world is G-d.

However, the Jew emulates G-d's unchanging character. Our implicit trust, unshakable certainty, unchanging belief and absolute faith in G-d manifest a measure of G-d's immutable character. In other words, when we believe, we personify the divine.

When our ancestors approached the waters with implicit faith in G-d, the waters saw in them a measure of the divine. Because the created being cannot controvert its creator, the water instinctively and spontaneously receded before the personification of the divine.

Thus King David wrote in Psalm 114: "The Ocean saw and fled." Asks the Midrash: What did it see, and from whom did it flee? It saw divinity reflected on Moses' raised arm, and fled from its position as an obstacle in G-d's path.

The question is not why did the waters part, but why did the waters wait till Nachshon performed his act of brinkmanship?

The waters were waiting for the Jewish people to express their faith through action. It was not enough that the Jews believed. The sea demanded an external demonstration of their faith.

Faith is a quality of the soul. It exists within us at all times. Even when we deny our faith, our soul within continues to believe. But G-d is not satisfied with concealed inner faith. G-d challenges us to fan the flames of our smouldering but silent faith and bring it forth.

Silent faith is dormant. It cannot impact the physical world unless it is physically expressed. This is why the waters waited. They waited for our ancestors to give physical expression to their faith. When Nachshon sallied forth and expressed the faith that the nation carried within themselves, the waters quickly parted.

Every Jew is capable of reaching the pinnacle of devotion that Nachshon reached at that moment. When a Jew resolves to perform G-d's will with total disregard for the obstacles, G-d provides a way to overcome the obstacles.

If we are absolutely determined to keep Shabbat, G-d will find a way to make it possible. If we are absolutely committed to bind *Tefillin* each morning, G-d will find a way to make it happen. If we are absolutely committed to walk in the path of Torah, G-d will give us the strength to do so. Like the Red Sea, our obstacles will recede and allow us clear and unimpeded passage.

Slice of LIFE

Once, in the early days of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's leadership, (which began in 1950) a young religious Jew entered the Rebbe's office and begged for a blessing that he be exempt from military service in the Korean War).

The young man was very nervous and was careful to explain to the Rebbe that he was a normal Jew, didn't believe in Rebbes or Chassidim especially not Chabad, but the reason he came was that he had tried everything else, had letters from doctors and psychiatrists but nothing worked and now he was desperate.

The Rebbe looked at him and asked, "Have you ever had trouble with your back?" "Yes! Yes Rabbi" The young man exclaimed as he opened a small briefcase he was carrying, put a pile of neatly arranged papers on the Rebbe's desk and pulled one out. "In fact, here is a doctor's report that...."

"No good" said the Rebbe. "What about your feet? Have you ever had problems with them? "Oh Yesss! Sure! See?" He pulled out another paper from the pile. "I already showed these to the army, well maybe now it'll work, here's the paper.

"Well then, what about your eyes?" the Rebbe asked.

"Eyes? I have terrible eyes.. See he says, pulling out yet another doctor's report!"

"What about your teeth?" The Rebbe asked.

"Teeth? No." the young man answered, "I have papers proving that I've had troubles with almost everything else, but not my teeth. In fact I've never even had a filling!

"Good" continued the Rebbe, "Tomorrow at the draft board tell them that you have troubles with your teeth".

"But... but" Stammered the poor confused fellow, but he realized that it was too late; the Rebbe was finished talking to him.

Standing on the sidewalk before the Rebbe's Synagogue our hero chastised himself. "Ah!! I shouldn't have said those things about not liking Chabad. Acchhhh! I'm a fool! What am I going to do now?? I'm finished! If I tell them I have teeth problems they'll put me in jail!!"

The next day he found himself again standing yet again back in the drab, scary draft centre room before a uniformed army officer. But this time he had no excuses. The officer mechanically read his papers, looked up at him like a farmer looks at a cow and reached for his rubber stamp to seal the young man's fate.

Suddenly our hero shouted "MY TEETH!"

"What?" Said the officer, "Your teeth? Why did you wait till now? You already tried every other trick! Look at all these doctor's letters. Teeth? Go to the dentist, room 215, he'll see through your lies in a second! You'll be back here soon and I'll see to it that you sit in jail for this nonsense!!"

Our hero was soon standing alone in the dentist's room shaking like a fish out of water.

"Ah ha!" Exclaimed the dentist as he looked up from his 'patient's' papers. Without getting up he closed his office door with his foot so no one outside would hear, narrowed his eyes in hatred, looked at the young man and almost whispered, "Goldberg eh?" He hissed through his teeth, "I know

you Jews. You'll want free dental care and you'll always say you can't work or do anything because of your teeth! The U.S. army doesn't need parasites like you." In a fury he grabbed his 'Unfit' stamp and brought it thundering down on Goldberg's draft papers.

"Now GET OUT!!!"

"Oy! A MIRACLE" Goldberg whispered to himself as he left the room and walked as rapidly as possible toward the exit trying not to look like some weird dervish. "The only thing that worked was teeth! Oy!! A miracle!!!"

He took the first cab to the Rebbe's headquarters in Crown Heights and requested the secretaries to give him permission to thank the Rebbe face to face. Just for a second.

"Sorry, we can't do it" was the answer. "If everyone got in to say thank you it would take twice as much of the Rebbe's time. Just write a note and we'll take it in at the first opportunity."

When the note was brought before the Rebbe he looked up at the secretary that brought it, smiled and said. "My Father-in-law (the previous Rebbe) was always careful to do miracles that could be explained in natural terms so that the one that was saved would choose of his own free will to believe in G-d.

"But I saw that this young man was so closed minded that he would explain any miracle according to nature. He would NEVER connect it to G-d unless I did a miracle that was impossible to explain naturally."

The Rebbe almost 'forced' the young man to realize the nearness of G-d.

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ISSUE 1176

MOSHIACH MATTERS

At the present time, when the world trembles, when all the world shudders with the birth-pangs of Moshiach, for G-d has set fire to the walls of the Exile... it is the duty of every Jew, man and woman, old and young, to ask themselves: What have I done and what am I doing to alleviate the birth-pangs of Moshiach, and to merit the total Redemption which will come through our righteous Moshiach? (*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Previous Rebbe*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

17th of Shevat, 5723 [1963]

To All Participants in the Reunion of Camp Gan Israel

I trust you know that a few days ago (on the 10th of Shevat) we observed the Yahrzeit of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, my father-in-law of saintly memory.

Camp Gan Israel, which you enjoyed so much during the summer, and which you are now gathered to honor, is one of the important activities of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, which the late Lubavitcher Rebbe has created for your benefit.

In this connection, I wish to tell you a story which my father-in-law related. Some of you may have already heard it, but it is worth repeating, for its lesson can never become "out of date."

The story is as follows: The first Lubavitcher Rebbe, known as the "Old Rebbe" [Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi] (and about three weeks ago, on the 24th of Teveth, we observed the 150th year since he passed away) had a son Rabbi Dov Ber, who later succeeded his father as the second, or "Mitteler," Rebbe. Rabbi Dov Ber was known for his unusual power of concentration. When he was engaged in study or prayer, he did not hear or see a thing around him.

Once, when Rabbi Dov Ber was engaged in study, his baby sleeping in a nearby cot fell out of its cradle and began to cry. Rabbi Dov Ber did not hear the baby's cries and continued learning. But the infant's grandfather, the Old Rebbe, who was in his room on an upper floor and was also learning at that time, did hear the baby's cries. He interrupted his studies, went downstairs, picked up the infant, soothed it and put it back in its cradle. Still, the infant's father did not hear or see what went on around him. Later on, the Old Rebbe told his son: "No matter how important the thing is in which a Jew is engaged, one must always hear the cry of a child."

This story was told not only to parents, teachers and grown-ups who have to take care of children, but also to the children themselves, because this story has an important lesson for children also.

You see, everyone has a Yetzer Tov [Good Inclination] - which puts good ideas into the head and a Yetzer Hora [Evil Inclination] - which tries to put bad ideas into the head. The Yetzer Hora is the "older" one, for it comes early in the life of every boy and girl to tempt them to do things they shouldn't. The Yetzer Tov is the "baby."

It sometimes happens that just when a boy or girl has to do something really important, such as to study, do homework, and the like, he suddenly gets an idea to do something else instead, which may also be good in its proper time, but not now. For example, when it is time to do homework, the boy or girl wants to put his room in order, or run an errand. Worse still, when the Yetzer Hora tempts them to do something they shouldn't at any time. When this happens, the Yetzer Tov "baby" feels pushed out of its cradle, unhappy, and begins to cry.

The story I told you is to remind you to hear the cry of the "baby," the Yetzer Tov, and keep it happy by doing the right thing at the right time, and not doing the wrong thing at any time....

CUSTOMS CORNER

The Shema

Before reciting the Shema, one should have the intention of fulfilling the mitzvah of reciting the Shema, which we were commanded by the Holy One, blessed be He. When one recites Shema Yisroel, one should concentrate on its meaning: "Hear [i.e., comprehend] Israel, that G-d is our Lord and He is the One G-d, single and unified in the heavens and the earth."

It is customary to recite the verse Shema Yisroel in a loud voice, to arouse one's concentration. A person should cover his eyes with his right hand [when reciting the verses Shema Yisroel and Boruch Shem].

A person should prolong his pronunciation of the ches of Echod in order to pronounce G-d as king in the heavens and the earth. One should also prolong the pronunciation of the dalet slightly in order to allow one to meditate on how G-d is One is His world and the ruler within all four directions of the world.

However, one should not prolong the word any longer than that. Also, one should take care that in prolonging the pronunciation, one does not mispronouncing the word Echod.

A WORD

from the Director

This Friday; the 10th of Shevat, is the day that is celebrated in the Chabad calendar as the day that our esteemed Rebbe accepted leadership of the Chabad Lubavitch movement.

In the year 5710 (1950) the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, had written a four-part Chasidic discourse based on the verse from Song of Songs, "Basi L'Gani - I have come into My garden, My sister, My bride". The Previous Rebbe directed that the first part be released in advance of and to be studied on the tenth of Shevat. That day marked the anniversary of the passing of his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, wife of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. It came to pass, however, that the tenth of Shevat was the date of the Previous Rebbe's own passing.

As "all the effort of a person for which his soul toiled during his life...becomes revealed...at the time of his passing," it is clear that this series of discourses summarizes the parting message of the Previous Rebbe. In fact, the Rebbe later stated that the Previous Rebbe released the discourse for his own passing.

The following year, on the 10th of Shevat, the one year anniversary of the Previous Rebbe's passing, the Rebbe expounded upon the discourse in his own first public discourse. This marked the Rebbe's formal acceptance of and ascendancy to leadership.

Just as the original discourse was a summarization of the Previous Rebbe's life work, the Rebbe's explanation of the discourse was a preamble of what would be his mission and the mission of our entire generation:

"We are now very near the approaching footsteps of Moshiach, indeed, we are at the conclusion of this period, and our spiritual task is to complete the process of drawing down the Shechina (Divine Presence) - moreover, the essence of the Shechina-within specifically our lowly world" said the Rebbe.

The drawing down of the Shechina or in other words bringing a total awareness of G-d into this world will culminate at the time of the Redemption. Our task, as outlined by the Rebbe in that first discourse and from then on, is to enhance our observance of mitzvot- especially acts of "Ahavat Yisroel"- love for another Jew, increase our study of Torah, thereby preparing in all ways possible to greet Moshiach, may it happen immediately.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The *poritz* (nobleman) and his son were having a heated argument. The son, an only child, had asked his father for permission to go hunting with his friends in the dense forests around the city of Liozhna, in White Russia. The elderly father, concerned for his son's safety, had refused to grant it. The father's opposition to what he considered a dangerous venture seemed immovable.

At the height of the argument, however, the *poritz* had suddenly stopped speaking. For a few minutes he was silent, lost in thought. "I will let you go on one condition," he finally decided. And indeed, it was a very odd stipulation.

"In the city of Liadi there lives a famous Rabbi. He is the spiritual leader of all the Jews in this area, and every word he utters is considered holy. Go to this Rabbi and ask his blessing. If you promise to do this, I will let you go hunting." The son was very surprised, but gave his word. The next day he left on the expedition.

In those few moments of silence, the *poritz's* memory had carried him back to the time he had served as an interrogator in the main prison in Petersburg. Although he had interrogated hundreds if not thousands of prisoners in the course of his career, his experience with the Rabbi who had been charged with rebelling against the government was something he could never forget. His regal bearing, majestic long beard and deeply expressive eyes were permanently engraved on the nobleman's heart.

He could remember the Rabbi's answers to the interrogators' questions as if he had heard them just yesterday. The wisdom and truth they contained had been evident in every word, and the *poritz* had been extremely impressed by the Rabbi's character. In fact, the Rabbi's subsequent release from jail and the dropping of all charges against him were in large part due to the *poritz's* intervention.

The Rabbi, of course, was Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe and founder of the Chabad Chasidic movement, whose opponents had slandered and labelled him to the authorities. But despite the accusations, the young interrogator had been convinced that the Rabbi was a G-dly man. Now, decades later, the *poritz* felt that if his only child could see the holy Rabbi for himself, it would somehow set his own mind at ease.

As it turned out, the *poritz's* misgivings proved to be well founded. A few weeks into the expedition the hunting party had been halted by a blinding rainstorm. The son, who had wandered off from the rest of his friends, was alone in the middle of the forest. Seeking shelter under a tree, he had no choice but to wait for the storm to pass. But the weather did not improve, and only grew worse. It was several days until the storm abated.

Soaked to the bone, hungry and sick, the *poritz's* son despaired of ever leaving the forest. It was truly miraculous when he eventually found a path through the foliage and succeeded in dragging himself to an inn on the outskirts of Liozhna.

The next day, burning with fever, he suddenly remembered his promise to his father and resolved to fulfil it. With his last ounce of strength he arose from bed and set out for the city to find the famous Rabbi.

Once in town he soon learned that Rabbi Shneur Zalman had recently passed away. The *poritz's* son felt a pang of conscience until the Jews informed him that the Rabbi's successor, his son Rabbi Dovber (subsequently to be known in Chabad as the "*Mitteler*" [middle] Rebbe), was also a holy person. But the *Mitteler* Rebbe was no longer living in Liozhna, and

now resided in Lubavitch.

There was no rational explanation for the urgency he felt to see the son of the famous Rabbi his father had praised so highly. Nonetheless, he hired a carriage and set out for Lubavitch, despite his weakness from his recent ordeal.

That night, when the *poritz's* son arrived in Lubavitch, he was disappointed to learn that the Rebbe was addressing his Chasidim and would not be receiving visitors. But the young nobleman would not be turned back. Undaunted, he insisted on being told the exact location where the Rebbe was speaking.

The study hall was packed to the rafters, so that no one noticed the stranger when he entered. In the front of the room the *Mitteler* Rebbe was seated at a table saying a Chasidic discourse. The *poritz's* son was astounded by the scene. Such a large crowd of people, yet everyone was silent and focused on the Rebbe. He found himself rooted to the spot.

About an hour later it occurred to him how odd it was that he was standing, given the state of his health. When he left the study hall he could actually feel his strength returning, which he had no doubt was in the merit of the holy Rabbi. He was also very grateful for having been able to fulfil his promise to his father.

[This story was related many decades later by the poritz's son - by then a nobleman in his own right - to a Chabad Chasid.]

Biographical note:

Rabbi DovBer Shneuri [9 Kislev 1773 - 9 Kislev 1827] was the eldest son and successor to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad movement. The author of numerous deep, mystical texts, he is known in Lubavitch circles as "*the Mittler* (Middle) Rebbe."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

The L-rd will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace. (Ex. 14:14)

According to the Midrash, the statement, "and you shall hold your peace" refers to the fact that, even after G-d assured them of victory, the Children of Israel continued praying for success against the Egyptian army when they were threatened at the Red Sea. G-d reprimanded them by saying "you shall hold your peace" - that this is not the time to pray. There are times when a Jew is required to "close his prayer book" and go out of the synagogue. This is because outside, there are thousands of Jews at the shores of the sea threatening to drown them. At this point, it is more important for the person to be involved with saving the people who are threatened by the rising water. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

And the waters were a wall unto them (Ex. 14:22)

When a Jew observes Torah and mitzvot faithfully to the extent that he is willing to jump into the sea, not only does the "sea" disperse, but it is transformed into a protective wall that safeguards him. (*Likutei Sichot*)

See, G-d has given you Shabbat. (Ex. 16:29)

The joy and happiness that one feels on Shabbat is in direct proportion to the effort expended in preparation during the previous six days. For, indeed, it states in the Talmud, "He who takes pains on Friday will eat on Shabbat." This is what is meant by "G-d has given you Shabbat" - G-d has given you the ability to determine the amount of holiness and pleasure you will feel on Shabbat. (*Likutei Torah*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 30 JANUARY 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
8:17MELBOURNE	9:18
8:07ADELAIDE	9:06
6:26BRISBANE	7:21
7:02DARWIN	7:53
6:25GOLD COAST	7:20
7:02PERTH	7:59
7:45SYDNEY	8:43
7:56CANBERRA	8:55
8:18LAUNCESTON	9:21
8:17AUCKLAND	9:17
8:27WELLINGTON	9:30
8:21HOBART	9:26
7:25BYRON BAY	8:21
7:02SINGAPORE	7:52



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BESHALACH
10 SHEVAT • 30 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:17 PM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:55 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:03 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:18 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 8:00 AM
		9:15 AM
		6:30 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:20 PM
	MINCHA:	9:10 PM
	MAARIV:	