

זכור אתיום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל-מלאכתך,
יום השביעי שבת לה'

PARASHAT BESHALACH
13TH SHEVAT 5783
4TH & 5TH JANUARY 2023
VOLUME 33 ISSUE 13



בס"ד

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK



FEAR, FAITH & MERCY

ANNA FIRESTONE
SHEVET SEENAI

Beshalach is full of twists and turns. The *parasha* begins with Hashem leading the *Bnei Yisrael* out of Mitz-

rayim, following an atypical route, lest *Bnei Yisrael* turn back when they see war and the hardships present on the normal route. Then Hashem stiffens Pharaoh's heart for the final time and he gives chase. When the *Bnei Yisrael* see this, they cry out to Hashem for help.

Hashem responds strangely: "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward (*Shemot* 14:15)." This phrase seems puzzling; why would Hashem not want *Bnei Yisrael* to cry out to him in this time of need? The *Ohr Hachaim* explains that, at that moment, the Israelites were subject to the attribute of justice; Hashem was telling Moshe that the Israelites were addressing themselves to the wrong attribute in their prayers for help. Based on the pasuk "צור ילדך תשי" – 'you have weakened the Rock which begot you,' we understand that Hashem's respective attributes are 'strengthened' or 'weakened' in accordance with the deeds we perform or do not perform here on earth. While it was true that the attribute of Mercy was anxious to perform a life-saving miracle on behalf of the Israelites, their deeds had not yet strengthened this attribute in order to qualify for such a miracle. Hashem therefore advised Moshe to 'speak to the children of Israel to perform an act of faith such as entering the sea, so that I can activate my attribute of Mercy and perform the miracle that I have in mind.' Following such a demonstration of faith Moshe was to raise his staff to enable Hashem to perform the splitting of the *Yam Suf*. When God said to Moshe: "Why do you cry out to Me?", He meant: "the matter is altogether not in My hands." Only after Moshe speaks to *Bnei Yisrael* and they demonstrate the necessary measure of faith, then: "raise your staff, and divide the sea!"

Why hadn't the Israelites merited this miraculous act of mercy? The principal reason is because they had said they were better off serving Egypt than dying in the desert. This is why Hashem had declared that their appeal to Him at that stage was useless. So too in our lives when we don't have full faith in Hashem and believe we are not ready for something, just know that it is all up to Hashem, and we simply need to face it ourselves to prove to ourselves and Hashem that we are physically and mentally ready. This is what Hashem wanted from the *Bnei Yisrael*, to actively prove that they were worthy of his help.

Next, once the *Bnei Yisrael* had seen the wonders of Hashem, it states: 'And when Israel saw the wondrous power which Hashem had wielded against the Egyptians, the people feared God; they had faith in God and in God's servant Moshe (ibid. 14:31).' Surely this *pasuk* is written the wrong way round! The *Bnei Yisrael* had just seen the wonders of Hashem, why would they fear Hashem before having faith in Him and Moshe?

Rav Hirsch writes that fear and faith are the two basic traits which should always be alive and awake in the Jewish mind towards God. It's not one first, then the other, but that Hashem is the only one we should fear and trust at the same time; He alone is as loving as He is just, and as just as He is loving, and as infinitely almighty in the exercise of his love as of his justice. His justice is always to be feared, his love is always to be expected with confidence, as well as his power to reveal and teach. Practising all of them in one moment is the eternal meaning of this moment of salvation, the only one of its magnitude, that laid the powerful Egyptian body as a corpse at the feet of the slave people who had just become free. This moment became the eternal documentation of Hashem's love and justice and the truthfulness of Moshe. Moshe's hand was raised above the sea and through it Hashem led Egypt to death and Israel to the path to freedom and life.

ANNA IS IN SHEVET SEENAI AND IS ROSH OF BOREHAMWOOD AND ELSTREE SVIVA

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|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|
| London | In 16:38 Out 17:44 | Cambridge | In 16:37 Out 17:46 | Oxford | In 16:44 Out 17:52 |
| Manchester | In 16:43 Out 17:53 | Nottingham | In 16:40 Out 17:50 | Birmingham | In 16:45 Out 17:54 |
| Leeds | In 16:39 Out 17:50 | Brighton | In 16:43 Out 17:49 | Bristol | In 16:51 Out 17:58 |
| Thaxted | In 16:37 Out 17:45 | Liverpool | In 16:46 Out 17:56 | Jerusalem | In 16:39 Out 17:54 |

SHLICHA'S CORNER: WOMEN IN TANAKH II - MIRIAM

THE BELOVED TEACHER



We meet Miriam for the first time when *Am Yisrael* are in Egypt, ensnared in hard slavery. She was mentioned once, when she advised Batya to find a woman to feed the baby, Moshe. In our *parasha*, we read *shirat hayam* (the song of the sea), and after a long gap we encounter Miriam again.

After the Bnei Yisrael sing *shirat hayam*, “אָז יְשִׁיר־נִשָּׂא וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתְחַקְּוּ כַּנָּיִם הַנְּבִיאָה אֲחֻזּוֹת אֲהֲרֹן אֶת הַתּוֹרָה בְּיָדָהּ וּתְצַאנָן כָּל הַנְּשִׂיִם אַחֲרֶיהָ בַּתְּפִילִּים וּבַמְּחֻלָּה”

The *midrash* says: “Just as Moses sang with the men, so Miriam did the same with the women.”

The women of *Am Yisrael* come out of Egypt with singing, dancing, drums and lots of joy. This is probably the reason why to this day a tambourine is known as a “*tof miriam*”.

There is a big difference between the two times Miriam is mentioned. Rav Moshe Tzvi Neria *zt”l* learns from the way all the women easily followed Miriam that they were used to this kind of activity already. During the entire period Miriam was not mentioned, Miriam played music and sang with the women. This is Miriam’s way of action – to teach and inspire people experientially, through personal connection; this is what she had been doing all through the years in Egypt. When Moshe told *Am Yisrael* ‘*ashira lashem*’, ‘I will sing to Hashem,’ they repeat after him, but when Miriam said to the women ‘*shiru*, ‘sing!’ they all sang together.

Miriam educates the women through the personal experience shared by all. She makes the women greater, empowers them and gives them strength. Therefore, Rav Neria says that they were not part of most of the major sins committed by *Am Yisrael* in the desert.

In Egypt, *Am Yisrael* was redeemed in the merit of righteous women. In the sin of the golden calf, the women did not agree to give their jewellery to make the idol. In the sin of the spies, the *Kli Yakar* says that Hashem would have preferred to send women, who valued the land of Israel, and not men. Even in the sin of Korah and his followers, the wife of On ben Pelet saved him and several others.

Rav Neria continues:

‘These things are puzzling. Moshe, *Ish Ha’Elokim* (man of God), and Aaron, *Kohen Gadol*, could not raise the masses to the desired level, while Miriam did! How did this happen? It seems that the secret of educational success depends on the degree of relationship between the educator and the educated. Moshe taught, spoke and proved his points. Aaron was teaching Torah,

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his love of peace surrounded the entire camp of Israel. But Miriam, in addition to the teaching and guidance, with the acts of kindness that she began at a very young age in Egypt, she sang with the women! She danced with them! In the *Tanach* we encounter Miriam only once dancing, but surely this was repeated on every occasion of joy, in the tribe or in the family.

The Torah does not give us details about the daily life of *Am Yisrael* in the desert, but this single case can be extrapolated to teach about a frequent occurrence. This created a close bond between Miriam and her female apprentices, and this connection had a decisive influence. What Moshe and Aaron could not impart, Miriam could.’

Miriam Haneviah had this special wisdom that helped her impact the hearts of the women of Israel, who together led the entire *Am Yisrael* to its redemption.

Shabbat Shalom!

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TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

YISSACHAR SHLOMO TEICHTAL | YAHRZEIT 10TH SHEVAT

Now it's time to go back two stops on the IR90 to Lausanne, change for a train to Zurich, where we can sit for a 9-hour interlining trip up to Bratislava. After that, we change for the train up to Piešťany, with its famed hot springs and mineral baths.



Not so long ago, in the illustrious Rabbinic elite of Hungary, one man would undergo a shift so transformative that he would forsake all his former political affiliations in favour of the Zionist cause. Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal was born in 1885 into a family with strong Chassidic connections, his grandfather being a student of the Rebbe of Sanz. He also studied with the Belzer Rebbe and Munkacser Rebbe, with whom he was especially close. By the age of 22, he had received *semikha* from no fewer than three different *rabbanim*.

When Rav Teichtal was 19, he married Fraydle Ginz, a descendant of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, and whose father was a student of the Maharam Schick, but she tragically died shortly after. Teichtal was married again, to Nechamah Friedman, whose grandfather was a disciple of the Chatham Sofer (see *Shabbat Lashem parashat Bereishit*). Also at 19, Teichtal began writing his *chiddushim* (novel ideas), and by the age of 25, he was already receiving questions on all areas of Jewish law. In 1921, he was appointed Rabbi of Piešťany, where he would remain for two decades until the Holocaust. Piešťany, famous for its natural hot springs, was frequented by many dignitaries and Torah scholars, with whom Teichtal met and discussed matters of contemporary Jewish law.

At this time, Rav Teichtal espoused the opinion almost ubiquitous among the Chareidi world, that Zionism was a terrible plague upon the earth, whose endeavours are the work of Satan and whose proponents are wicked sinners. Writing in the Munkacs newspaper *'Yiddische Zeitung'* ('Jewish News'), which regularly critiqued not only the religious Zionist movement but even the ultra-orthodox *Agudat Yisrael*, Rav Teichtal penned an extreme rejection of any efforts to settle or develop the land of Israel. In discussion of the words **וְנֹאכַל מִפְרִיָּהּ וּנְשִׁבֵעַ מִטּוֹבָהּ**, 'may we eat of [the land of Israel's] fruit and be satisfied from its goodness,' in the *berakha* of *Al Hamichya*, the Bach (*Orach Chayyim* 208:12) writes that the earthly land of Israel draws its holiness from the supernal land of Israel, the divine influence of which then flows into the fruit of the land; thus by eating the fruit, we draw holiness into ourselves. However, when the land has been 'polluted' by the Jewish people and they have been exiled, the source of the land's fruit is now *tum'ah*, 'spiritual impurity,' and by eating the fruits now, we internalise this *tum'ah*. Based on other Kabbalistic teachings, Rav Teichtal takes this further, remarking that the land is described as **אֶרֶץ אֲכֵלֶת יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ**, **וְזוּמָה**, a land that consumes its own inhabitants. The impurity that is now rampant throughout the land will lead to the deaths of those who try to settle it, as it is surrounded by *kelipot* (the Kabbalistic representation of evil). Thus Rav Teichtal, in this newspaper, rejected any possibility of moving to the land of Israel until God himself were to cleanse it of its impurity. (Such poor reporting, unin-

formed perspectives and overall shoddy journalism have unfortunately come to typify many publications that bear the same name.)

The advent of Nazism and the horrors that accompanied it had a profound effect on Rav Teichtal. The Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938, they began deportations in 1942 and Rav Teichtal, his family, and ten other families hid in an attic above a *beit midrash*. Through cracks in the attic, he saw the brutal conduct of the Nazis beating the Jews and taking them away. These traumatic events prompted a paradigm shift in Rav Teichtal's outlook. He could not stop thinking that had the Jews been in the land of Israel, this would not have taken place. This is where Rav Teichtal began his *magnum opus*, the *Eim Habanim Semeicha*.

Eim Habanim Semeicha represented a complete about-turn in Rav Teichtal's hashkafa. He criticised the positions of the orthodox establishment, his own position included, which prevented religious settlement of the land: 'It is clear that he who prepares prior to Shabbat will eat on Shabbat (*Avoda Zara* 3a), and since the *chareidim* did not toil, they have absolutely no influence in the Land. Those who toil and build have the influence, and they are the masters of the Land. It is, therefore, no wonder that they are in control... What can the *chareidim* say? I do not know if they will ever be able to justify themselves before the heavenly court for not participating in the movement to rebuild the Land.' As well as this, Rav Teichtal advanced arguments drawing on the entire gamut of Jewish literature, which he recalled mentally without access to his library, and drew extensively on Kabbalistic assertions as to the value of the land of Israel. He adopts a position similar to Rav Kook, in ascribing equal value to 'secular' Jews who are building up the land of Israel, and 'orthodox' Jews who oppose Zionism. He writes that 'the builders of the land' are 'God's messengers, with foundations in the apex of sanctity... God forbid that we call our fellow Jews "wicked", for they are all descendants of Hashem's loved ones!'

Rav Teichtal and his family were eventually caught and sent to Auschwitz. With the advance of the Soviet army, many prisoners were transported inwards towards Germany, and Rav Teichtal was killed on the train to Mauthausen concentration camp.

Now, it's quite awkward to have your dad known not only as a Zionist, but as a former chareidi who became Zionist. So when *Eim Habanim Semeicha* was re-released, he added a foreword where he said: 'There is a great danger in reading this work superficially, seeking a modern-day ideology with which to associate its message. To reduce the sacred, Torah principles laid forth on these pages to [Zionism] is a desecration, a blasphemy!' Someone should maybe have told him to actually read the book first...



WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Birmingham SBM** continues this week! Join us on **Monday 6th February** at the usual location.
- Lani and Elad will be holding a **Tu Bishvat Seder** on **Monday 6th February** at the Manchester Bayit!
- **Lishmah** for bogrot and sixth-form women continues this **Tuesday 7th January!** Join this **dynamic makom torah** for women!
- **London SBM** continues this **Thursday 9th February** from 7pm at Kinloss! Make sure to sign up so that we can order enough food.
- Bnei Akiva will be **back on the road this February!** The Mazkirut and Shlichim will be

travelling the length and breadth of the country's Jew-niversities on the **Campus Roadshow**. See you there!

- **Shabbat Bogrim** is happening on **17th March!** Join us for a Shabbaton catered by Met Su Yan in Coventry!
- **Israel Machane** applications are almost closed! To view the brochure or sign up visit bauk.org/israel.
- **Summer Machane** applications are now open! Visit bauk.org/camps to sign up.
- To give any **comments** or **suggestions** to

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BEN AT CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG



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