

# אור הצפון

Weekly

Parshas Beshalach | 1/14-1/15 |



תשפ"ב | י"ג שבט | Issue 28

Candle Lighting 4:33 PM	Mincha/Maariv 4:40 PM	Shacharis 7:45 & 8:45 AM	Zman Shema 9:41 AM	Daf Yomi 3:40 PM	Maariv 5:31 PM	Havdalah 5:37 PM
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## The Rabbi's Drasha

Rabbi Lebowitz

One of the things you learn in shul work, and anybody who has ever served on any shul's board can corroborate this, is that people get agitated and emotional about trivial things. It is somewhat humorous to me that one of the most contentious issues I had to deal with in ten years in the shul is whether we all sing lecha dodi and kel adon in unison or we do it responsively. Somebody once actually told me that his family chose North Woodmere because all the shuls here sang this piyutim in unison, and my establishing of a minhag to recite it responsively borders on making his house purchase a mekach ta'os. To this day, I am not completely sure whether the person was joking or not.

As trivial as such a matter may seem, this seems to be a debate that dates back to the times of the Gemara and relates to the first communal singing we ever experienced as a people. Chazal seem to have this same dispute when it comes to the Shiras hayam. Essentially, there are three opinions in the Gemara sotah daf 30 as to how the Shiras hayam was sung:

R' Akiva holds that Moshe said each line, and the people responded with the same refrain, Ashira La'hashem, to every single line, never contributing anything new. It would be the equivalent of the chazan saying shamor, likras, etc' and each time the tzibur just responding with lecha dodi.

Rebbi Eliezer banu shel Rebbi Yosi Haglili holds that Moshe said each phrase and they repeated every phrase after him, the way a cheder rebbe would sing the chumash to the students.

Rebbi Nechemya says that everybody sang simultaneously – it was miraculous that each member of klal yisroel came up with the same words at the same time.

The medrish offers a fourth approach, which minimizes Moshe rabbeinu's contribution. Rebbi Eliezer ben Todai says that Moshe would start off each verse and the Jews would repeat what he said AND continue the rest of the stanza (which Moshe rabbeinu hadn't even said). Obviously chazal are not just debating a historical event. After all, mai de'havah havah – whatever they did turned out just fine. Why would it matter exactly how they did it? Rather, Chazal are trying to teach us something important. What is the message of this debate?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks draws a remarkable parallel between this dispute and a Gemara in mesechtas kedushin daf 32, which speaks of whether a person in a position of authority can be mochel on his kavod. In short, there are four categories of authority figures who are entitled to be honored, and the rules for each may differ. A king can certainly NOT be mochel on his kavod because the dignity of his office is too important. There is a machlokes whether a Rebbe can be mochel on his kavod, and we pasken that he can be mochel since torah deyalei hu. There is a machlokes whether a nasi, a

### Youth Corner

The first 4 children from each group who tell Rabbi Klein the answer to the question will receive an extra 3 raffle tickets each!

### QUESTION:

How did Hashem cause the wheels of the Egyptian chariots to fall off? 14:25

(Answer for Parshas Bo: Goat milk, date and fig honey)

political leader, who has to maintain the dignity of his office, can be mochel on his kavod. A parent can certainly be mochel on his kavod (probably because ritzono adam zehu kavod). (Rabbi Sacks suggests that each of these authority figures have different goals, treat us differently and in turn we treat them differently. The unique character of each of these figures is represented by a different form of shirah. Using Rabbi Sacks' framework I want to elaborate on each a little bit.

First, a king is the ultimate authority who dictates policy and everybody must fall in line. One who is morid bemalchus, even on the smallest and most insignificant matter, is chayav misah. We aren't familiar with this level of authority, but it is the level of authority that we must attribute to the melech malchei hamlachim. His kavod can never be mochel and is completely non-negotiable, regardless of how we feel about any of His commandments – ain chachma, ain tevuna, ve'ain eitzah neged hashem'. The format of shirah when lead by a king is to simply repeat the equivalent of an affirmation, an emphatic "Amen!" to everything that he says, as rebbi eliezer banu shel rebbi yosi haglili teaches.

Second, a rebbe has authority, but his authority is not something that he was born with. It is something that he must earn on his own – torah deyalei hu – it is his own Torah. The rebbi is supposed to be a model of behavior for his students. As the Gemara moed katan daf 17 teaches: im domeh limalach hashem tzevakos tevakesh Torah mi'piv – he should be a paradigm of good behavior and ethics. A rebbe is the person that when we aren't sure how to behave, we should be able to close our eyes and try to visualize how our rebbe would behave in this situation. Obviously, to a very large extent, Judaism charges parents with the responsibility of being a child's first and longest lasting rebbe. This is reflected in the classic teaching style of repetition of each phrase, which amazingly, with all the modern educational research, is still found to be the most effective way to teach young children. In truth it is modeled after the way that the greatest Rebbe in the history of our people, Moshe rabbeinu, taught the torah. The Gemara tells us that he said it to aharon and aharon repeated it exactly that way to the zikeinim who repeated it exactly that way to the people. The format of shirah that Moshe rabbeinu is therefore reflected by the opinion of Rebbi Eliezer banu shel Rebbi Yosi Haglili, who held that each phrase is repeated precisely by the people.

Third, a nasi is the political authority, who on the one hand may be permitted to be mochel his honor because he is a representative of the people, yet on the other hand may not be able to be mochel his honor because it is not his honor as much as it is the people's honor. The nasi must be a faithful representative of the people, serving as their mouthpiece, and interested in representing them properly. The ultimate nasi, Rebbi Yehuda Hanasi, served as the voice for all of the tana'im, through his arrangement of the mishnayos. Rebbi Nechemya's understanding of shirah reflects the leadership of a nasi, where everybody's voice is heard together, as the leader is indistinguishable from the people that he represents.

Finally, a parent can be mochel on his kavod because a parent's entire goal is to have his child outperform him. A parent is the most emotionally invested of the four. The parent's identity and legacy is clearly bound with that of the child. As great as avraham avinu was, and as much as he impacted tens of thousands of lives by teaching them of monotheism, ultimately "ki beyitzchak yikra lach zera" – it was through yitzchak that his legacy was cemented. The greatest honor the parent will ever have, is to raise honorable children, her children are her ultimate praise. The parent is happy to be anonymous as his child achieves greatness. The parents who raised the greatest child, amram and yocheved, are merely described to us as an ish mibeis levi and a bas levi, completely anonymous. Leading shirah like a parent would lead involves starting off and then retreating in to the background. This is reflected in Rebbi Eliezer ben Todai's understanding of shirah where Moshe starts each Pasuk and the people repeat what he said, but then add the conclusion on their own. It is every parent's dream to see his children use what he has been taught and build on it to accomplish new heights.

It is important for us to take stock of our relationships with our leaders and contemplate whether we have accomplished the important roles of subjects to our king hakadosh baruch hu unfailingly following his every directive, students to our teachers using them as role models and repeating their teachings, constituents to our political leaders making sure to vote for those who will best represent our true values, and children to our parents working hard to use their teachings to bring them the ultimate nachas of quietly enjoying our achievements.

# Torah From The BKNW Family

## Singing Our Song of Happiness

By: Sruli Fruchter

Happiness is a complexity that none can completely understand, yet the pursuit to firmly identify its catalyst and achieve that sublime state is one that never seems to end. Purpose, meaning, and pleasure are some of the most common suggestions of attaining happiness, the undefined objective sought after by many. While I am not naïve enough to attempt to explain or define happiness, I do believe that Parshat Beshalach can offer profound insight into happiness.

At the onset of Parshat Beshalach, Bnei Yisrael is finally beginning their exodus out of Egypt, only to be subsequently pursued by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Then, as the Egyptians near closer, Bnei Yisrael experiences great angst and terror, as the *pesukim* say, *“And they said to Moses, “Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness’” (Shemot 14:11-12).*

The disrespect and insults flung at Hashem and Moshe by Bnei Yisrael are quite perplexing considering that they seem to completely disregard any notion of appreciation or gratitude they owe. Soon after, Moshe famously splits the sea, providing a pathway for Bnei Yisrael, while the waters swallow up the Egyptians.

Following this final assurance that Hashem has saved Bnei Yisrael, the *pasuk* writes, *“Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said: I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea” (Shemot 15:1).*

Or HaChaim explains that once Bnei Yisrael was enveloped in their state of awe and fear for Hashem, they in turn acquired a heightened level of faith in Hashem and Moshe, breeding divine inspiration for them to sing that song of appreciation and jubilation.

On a similar note, the Kedushat Levi writes that Bnei Yisrael experienced tremendous joy and needed to express that through the beauty of poetry and song.

Comparing the state of mind between Bnei Yisrael in the 14<sup>th</sup> *perek* with the 15<sup>th</sup> *perek* is astounding; how could such a radical shift in attitude and perception have taken place? I believe the concept is best identified by Dovid HaMelech when he writes, *“You [Hashem] have transformed my mourning into a dance for me; You have loosened my sackcloth and girded me with happiness” (Tehillim 30:12).*

Rabbi David Aaron once wrote, “The Torah teaches that the way to happiness is to choose the path of truth, apply your intelligence and skills to do the will of G-d. When the soul is in harmony with the whole divine symphony of life then it feels a deep and lasting happiness.” This is a commonality found between the mindsets of Bnei Yisrael and the words of Dovid HaMelech.

Happiness is synchronizing with Hashem and basking in our unbreakable, divine relationship. Consciously connecting to Hashem through actions, words, and thoughts unlocks the wellspring of happiness. As we begin our personal journey through our hardships and struggles, seeking to recognize that relationship with Hashem, we will begin to sing our song of happiness.

# The Parsha Corner

Rabbi Balsam

1. The B'nei Yisrael were not taken: a) in the straight path, b) towards the land of the Pelishtim, c) in the direction of the Yam Suf, d) towards Bal Tz'fon.
2. Paraoth said that the B'nei Yisrael were: a) running away from him, b) looking to cross the Yam Suf, c) looking to raise an army against him, d) lost in the desert.
3. When the B'nei Yisrael complained to Moshe, he responded: a) now is the time to daven, b) now is the time to travel, c) stand by and watch Hashem's salvation, d) you brought this on yourselves.
4. Moshe was told to \_\_\_\_ the Yam Suf: a) raise up his staff and stretch out his hand over, b) use his staff to split, c) ask Aharon to hit. d) reach his staff as far as he can over.
5. Which of the following nations is NOT mentioned in the Shiras hayam: a) C'na'an, b) Pelishtim, c) Mo'av, d) Amalek.
6. The B'nei Yisrael went for \_\_\_\_ without water: a) 1 week, b) 3 days, c) 3 weeks, d) 1 day.
7. The mann fell in the \_\_\_\_ and the slav fell in the \_\_\_\_: a) morning...morning, b) morning...evening, c) evening...morning, d) evening...evening.
8. Who, according to the text of the Parashah, left over the mann: a) men, b) Dasan and Aviram, c) many members of the nation, d) everyone.
9. To get water for the B'nei Yisrael, Moshe: a) spoke to the rock, b) hit the rock, c) asked Aharon to speak to the rock, d) asked Aharon to hit the rock.
10. Who held the hands of Moshe during the war with Amalek: a) Aharon, b) Yehoshua, c) Chur, d) both a & c.

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Answers: 1) b, 2) d, 3) c, 4) a, 5) d, 6) b, 7) b, 8) a, 9) b, 10) d