

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT BESHALACH

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
TAL Founder & Director

## TWO DIFFICULT MATTERS FOR G-D

In this weeks Parsha we read about one of the most miraculous events in the earth's history – the splitting of the sea (Krait Yam Suf). Am Yisrael were cornered in by the ensuing Egyptians on one side and the sea on the other. Upon Hashem's command Moshe raises his staff and the sea splits. Am Yisrael enter the sea which forms a wall on either side of them, whilst the Egyptians pursue. Eventually the Egyptians are drowned as the waters return to their natural state and Am Yisrael lets out a spontaneous song of exaltation and thanksgiving to Hashem.

This was an awesome event and interestingly the Gemara (in two separate places) compares two seemingly different ideas to that of the splitting of the sea.

In Pesachim (118a) R. Shizvi said in the name of R. Eleazar ben Azariah: A man's sustenance is as difficult as the dividing of the Red Sea.

It is written (Tehilim 136:25), "He gives food to all flesh," preceded by, "[Give praise] to He who divided the Red Sea in pieces."

And in Sota (2a) we read that it is as difficult for the Almighty to bring two individuals together in marriage as it is for Him to split the Sea.

When reading these Gemarot there are two glaring questions. First how can we say that something is difficult before the Omnipresent King of Kings? Surely nothing is too difficult before Him. Second what is the comparison between these two ideas and Krait Yam Suf?

The vast ocean even in today's day and age is a mystery. Two thirds of the Earth is covered by Seas. Taking a voyage by sea can be quite an experience. Our Rabbis have stated (Gemara Kedushin 82a) that "seafarers are mostly righteous". Rashi explains it is because they are in constant danger and are always turning to Hashem. They are in constant need of Siata Dishmaya – Hashem's help, and cry out to him through prayer for a successful return to land.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab elaborates further, sighting the Mechilta to our Parsha. When Moshe raised his hand over the water, the angel of the seas did not wish to allow the seas to split. Often an angel refers to the spiritual minister over a force; here it was the angel that ministered over the sea. However, when he saw Moshe's staff in his hand, the angel acquiesced.

Rabbi Schwab explains that the job of the angel of the seas is to ensure that Hashem's Hand is visible on the seas. The angel knowing that Hashem's manifestation is more visible on sea then on land, was worried that if Moshe were to turn sea into land then the seas would cease and the Hand of HASHEM would not be as visible anymore. This would make a Chilul Hashem and therefore he disagreed to allow this to happen.

It was only once the angel saw Moshe's stick (in which the Name of Hashem was engraved) that he realised that this was Ratson Hashem, - Hashem's Will - and it relented.

The message Hashem was sending to the angel and to Am Yisrael was that it was worth a momentary lapse in divine revelation for the enduring divine revelation and fame of the splitting of the sea.

For Hashem, there is no action too hard to perform. Yet the Gemara relates that Krait

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Yam Suf was 'hard' due to the fact that through its giving way to dry land there would be a loss of Kavod Shamayim – Heavenly Honour. Any action by Hashem Himself that causes a loss in Heavenly Honour is 'Difficult' for Him. Even in this case where there would result a greater divine revelation.

Let us now take a closer look at the two Gemarot.

Parnasa is not easy to come by. It requires effort and Siata Dishmaya.

But more importantly a person must constantly pray to Hashem that he receives his allotment.

When we pray, there is a great increase in Kavod Shamayim, Hashem's Name is Glorified. We come to a realisation that He Rules the world, that everything emanates from Him.

When Hashem answers our prayers, where does that Kavod Shamayim go? Once we have what we asked for and we no longer daily yearn for it, how is Hashem's Name Glorified?

It is for this reason that it is 'difficult' to provide us this Parnasa. Yet of course the answer to all these questions is that if we use this Parnasa that Hashem has provided us with, to do His Will then we will be Glorifying his Name in a greater and enduring fashion. This far outweighs the original Kavod Shamayim that was created through our

initial prayers.

Therefore, Hashem is willing to forego the beauty of the one who is praying asking for sustenance and provide for him because ultimately, more of Hashem's honour will fill the world.

Making a Shiduch - a marriage match, is also compared to the difficulty of splitting the sea for the same reason.

How many years of prayers are spent pleading with Hashem that we find the right match? How many different people do we have to go out with before we finally settle down? Although the voyage might seem long and hard, Hashem is constantly listening to our prayers. When we pray for our match, we come to a realisation that we are nothing. We cannot control nature and we definitely can't control other people's emotions. We beseech Hashem, in His Role as all Empowering to answer us. Yet when the time comes, if Hashem answers us, then where will this entire realisation go? What will happen to this Kavod Shamayim?

It is for this reason that it is 'difficult' to provide the match.

If we follow through with our faith and we enhance our match to build a Bayit NeEman BeYisrael – a solid faithful House in Israel, then we build a greater Kavod Shamayim then was achieved via our prayers.

When the Bnei Yisrael were 'trapped' at the sea, they could foresee no outcome. Why was it that Hashem who had hit the Egyptians for Ten mighty plagues, had not saved them. There were four groups of thought, those that thought of giving up to the Egyptians, others thought of fighting. The third group thought of going into the sea and trying perhaps to make an escape via that route, whilst others thought it better to pray. No one knew where the salvation would come from, there was confusion. Who would have thought that the sea with all its might and heavy current would split before the people?

In our daily lives we face a similar threat. We grow up and try and find the right match. We search high and low, and do not seem to find them. Yet the message from the parsha is clear – it will hit you when you least expect it, and very often in very unexpected circumstances. The same is true with our livelihood. We go out to work and set out in one direction, not knowing where the best business deal will be. We are confused, yet Hashem is always at hand to provide for us.

We must not despair, we must continue our powerful prayers, and when we are answered, we must remember to utilise that Beracha for the best!



**RABBI DAVID BAADANI**  
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

## THE POWER OF FEELING ANOTHER'S PAIN

When the Jewish people left Egypt, they were finally free from slavery. They entered the desert, and Pharaoh looked out and said, "These people are lost." But notice the words: he says, "Livnei Yisrael", to the children of Israel. Yet, by this time, they had already left. Who was he speaking to?

Our sages teach that Pharaoh was speaking about two mischief-makers, Datan and Aviram. These were not ordinary troublemakers, they were the ones who constantly stirred up dissent among the Jewish people, questioning Moshe, challenging G-d's direction. And yet, while everyone else who

chose to stay in Egypt during the plague of darkness perished, Datan and Aviram survived. More astonishingly, G-d split the sea for them individually, allowing them to cross.

Why would such troublemakers merit such extraordinary salvation? The answer lies in a small but profound act of compassion. When the Jewish people were forced into harsh labor, Pharaoh appointed overseers to enforce quotas. Datan and Aviram were among those appointed. And yet, when they saw their fellow Jews struggling under the burden, they did not push them to meet the quotas. They took the blows themselves rather than inflict more suffering. Their hearts ached with the pain of others.

It was this simple, human act, feeling another person's suffering, that distinguished them. Their mischief,

their flaws, their arguments against Moshe, none of that mattered when weighed against the capacity to empathize. G-d saw that in them, a spark of holiness remained, a sensitivity to human suffering that transcended their own egos. That spark was enough to merit salvation, enough that the sea itself would part for them.

This story teaches a timeless lesson: feeling another's pain or rejoicing in another's happiness does not always come naturally. Yet, when we open our hearts and connect to one another, when we share in each other's joys and sorrows, we touch something eternal. Even in the most unlikely people, even in the most unexpected circumstances, compassion can shine through. It is this quality, this sacred empathy, that has the power to move G-d and change the course of history.



## RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

*Tehillim for Our Times; Chapter 16: מכתם לְדוֹד שְׁמַרְנִי אֶל כִּי־חֲסִיטִי בָךְ*

### THE CHAFETZ CHAIM'S INVESTMENT ADVICE

Two men once came to the Chafetz Chaim. They were Russian businessman and they owned a significant amount of forest land which produced wood which they would sell open market. They told the him that they had an opportunity to buy a further portion of forest land for 25,000 roubles and the potential growth for their business could be huge.

The Chafetz Chaim replied saying that "If you are asking me if the new forest is a worthwhile purchase, then I don't know the first thing about forests, property or land. However, I will relate to you an episode which once occurred:

There was once a villager who purchased a barrel of wine. The shop assistant helped him load the barrel on to his wagon and he began the journey home. When he arrived outside his house he climbed down from the wagon and knocked onto his neighbour's house to ask him for some help in carrying the barrel off the wagon and into his house. The neighbour was happy to assist and together they carried the barrel inside. The villager thought it was only correct to reward his neighbour and accordingly he offered him the first drink of wine from the barrel. The neighbour turned the tap of the barrel anti-clockwise and collected some wine in a cup. He sipped the wine, swirled it around his mouth (like a real maven) and with a serious expression on his face he remarked that "it tastes really good. A fine wine. The only problem is that it could do with two taps because then you could drink more of it".

The villager looked at his neighbour with both shock and pity and replied "What are you talking about Yankele! What kind of criticism is that? Fitting an extra tap to the barrel will not produce more wine – it will just be more accessible!"

The Chafetz Chaim turned to the men and continued:

"Do understand my friends - The parnasah (livelihood) of a Jew is fixed by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You two have the money you need and probably much more. What do you think you will gain by purchasing another field like the one you have? You already opened the "tap of parnasah" when you set up your business and Hakadosh Baruch Hu – if he chooses – can send extra beracha through that tap.

You will not be able to earn more money than has been destined for you. What you need to do is to fix more time for learning and that is the one thing can bring extra mazel to your everyday work as the gemarah says "Anyone who engages in Torah study also has success in material matters".

Don't Amass More Than You Need.

The key instruction Hashem gives in connection with the manna is:

"The Jew should only collect what they need for that day in order that I can test them to see if they will walk in the ways of My Torah or not (Shemot;16,4)"

The implication here is that if a Jew collected more manna than he needed for that particular day then then he would fall into a category of people who are described as "Not walking in the ways of My Torah".

Why is the one who worries about tomorrow singled out for such harsh rebuke?

The Ramban explains that the true test of the manna was exactly this ;To rely on Hashem that tomorrow he will provide us with what

that tomorrow he will provide us with what we need, just as he did today. This is indeed, a great challenge. Can you imagine going to bed each evening with a cupboard and fridge empty of the food essentials you will need the very next morning; No cereal or milk for your children to feast on at 8 AM?

But it is exactly this level of trust which Hashem asks us to aspire to.

The core of our avodah and our attachment to Torah is the idea that we should not worry about tomorrow. Indeed the Gaon (genius) of Vilna strikingly wrote that

"The whole Torah revolves around bitachon (trust in Hashem)".

We certainly have to make the required effort to earn a living (hishtadlut); This point is hinted at by the fact that the Jews still needed to walk and collect the manna – it did not simply arrive on their doorstep. However, one does not need to overplay his hishtadlut. To look to provide for tomorrow and the day after ad infinitum shows that you believe that the main source of income is your own efforts, ignoring Hashem's role in providing our parnasa.

On visiting Bnei Brak some years ago I was struck by the sight of two helpers supporting R' Chaim Kanievsky zts"l as he struggled across the link bridge between his apartment and shul. I wondered how much time over his life R' Chaim had spent is worrying about his future, perhaps investing in numerous insurance policies which might be of benefit in his old age. I further wondered if those people who had invested heavily in their old age had themselves merited to have people on hand to carry them around wherever they needed to go.

"You will never stumble - nor will those who take refuge in you ever be humiliated" (Musaf, Rosh Hashana).



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### Refraining From Directly Counting Jews

Halacha is inferred from the Torah law of "Mahasit Ha'shekel," which requires that when a census of the nation is taken, this should be done by having every member donate a half-shekel, and this money is then counted to determine the number of people in Beneh Yisrael. The Torah warns, "Ve'lo Yiheyeh Bahem Negef Bi'fkod Otam" – counting directly could lead to a plague,

Heaven forbid (Shemot 30:12). The commentaries explain that counting directly invites the "Ayin Ha'ra" ("evil eye"), and thus poses danger.

This applies even when counting for the purpose of a Misva. Therefore, when one counts the men present in the synagogue to determine whether they comprise a Minyan, he should not count directly, saying, "One,

two, three" and so on.

Some people mistakenly think that it suffices to count people while saying, "Not one, "Not two," "Not three," and so on. This is incorrect, as saying "Not one" is no different from simply saying "one."

The two commonly accepted methods for counting people are to either count silently in one's mind, without saying the numbers, or

to use a verse consisting of ten words and count each person by saying a word from the verse. One such verse is "Hoshi'a Et Amecha U'barech Et Nahaletcha, U're'em Ve'nas'em Ad Ha'olam" (Tehillim 28:9). Hacham Baruch Ben-Haim would use the

verse, "Masmi'ah Hasir La'behema Ve'eseb La'abodat Ha'adam, Le'hosi Lehem Min Ha'aretz" (Tehillim 104:14). Others use the blessing of Ha'mosi, which consists of ten words ("Baruch Ata Hashem Elokenu Melech Ha'olam Ha'mosi Lehem Min Ha'aretz"). The

Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in Mi'kabse'el (Parashat Vayehi), writes that the custom in Baghdad was to use a bead bracelet to count the people in the synagogue, separating one bead for each man in attendance.



## WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Parshat Beshalach

Pharaoh finally sends B'nei Yisrael out of Egypt. With pillars of cloud and fire, G-d leads them toward Eretz Yisrael on a circuitous route, avoiding the Pelishtim (Philistines). Pharaoh regrets the loss of so many slaves and chases the Jews with his army. The Jews are very afraid as the Egyptians draw close, but G-d protects them. Moshe raises his staff and G-d splits the sea, enabling the Jews to cross safely. Pharaoh, his heart hardened by G-d, commands his army to pursue, whereup-

on the waters crash down upon the Egyptian army. Moshe and Miriam lead the men and women, respectively, in a song of thanks. After three days' travel only to find bitter waters at Marah, the people complain. Moshe miraculously produces potable water. In Marah they receive certain mitzvot. The people complain that they ate better food in Egypt. G-d sends quail for meat and provides manna, a miraculous bread that falls from the sky every day except Shabbat. On Friday a double portion descends to supply the Shabbat needs. No one is able to obtain more

than his daily portion, but manna collected on Friday suffices for two days so the Jews can rest on Shabbat. Some manna is set aside as a memorial for future generations. When the Jews again complain about a lack of water, Moshe miraculously produces water from a rock. Then Amalek attacks. Joshua leads the Jews in battle while Moshe prays for their welfare.

**Rabbi Sinclair,**  
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