

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Beshalach



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Torah Wellsprings - Beshalach

Emunah Without Fear

When Bnei Yisrael stood at the shore of the Yam Suf and saw the Mitzrim pursuing them, they panicked and they said to Moshe Rabbeinu (14:11) **הַמִּבְלֵי אֵין קָבָרִים בְּמִצְרָיִם לְקַחְתָּנוּ לְמוֹת** "Were there no graves in Mitzrayim that you took us to die in the desert? What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Mitzrayim?"

Their complaints are surprising. After a year of witnessing the ten makos and the other miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim, why did they think that their lives were in danger? They should have understood that Hashem is preparing another miracle for them. Furthermore, why did they suspect that Moshe took them out of Mitzrayim to die in the desert? Did they forget everything Moshe did for them?

There is a rule in human nature that when a person loses his peace of mind, he is at risk of losing his emunah.¹ When the nation saw Pharaoh's mighty army chasing after them, their instinctive and natural response was to panic and to be frightened. After losing their peace of mind, they lost their emunah, too. They lost their ability to think rationally.

Therefore, Moshe replied to them (14:13) **אֲלֵה תִּרְאָו הַתִּצְבֹּו וְרָאָו אֶת יִשְׁוּעָתָה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁעַה לְכֶם הַיּוֹם**, "Do not fear! Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem that He will perform for you today." Moshe's counsel to them was **אֲלֵה תִּרְאָו**, "don't panic." **הַתִּצְבֹּו**, stay firm and calm, and you will see **יִשְׁוּעָתָה**, Hashem's salvation. Moshe didn't tell them to have emunah. He only told them not to panic. Because when they

control their fears, they will automatically trust in Hashem.

This is the counsel we tell people who are afraid. Their fears might be financial; they don't know how they will cover certain expenses, or they might fear wars and the like. Whatever they dread, the first counsel is to calm down. Fear annuls the emunah. When they can think rationally, they will remember the many times Hashem helped them in the past. With this awareness, they will trust in Hashem that He will save them from their present predicament, as well.

At this time of danger, when the Mitzrim were approaching, Moshe was davening to Hashem for salvation. Hashem told Moshe (14:15) **מַה תִּצְעַק אֱלֹהִי**, "Why do you cry out to Me?" Hashem was telling him that there was no need to pray. The Zohar (vol.2, 52b) says that Hashem told Moshe that he doesn't have to pray because the salvation is dependent on Atika, **בָּעֲתִיקָא תְּלִיא מִילְתָּא**".²

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l (Divrei Emes, Vayishlach) says **בָּעֲתִיקָא תְּלִיא מִילְתָּא** means that Hashem said their salvation will come when they stop thinking about their tzaros and worries. This is the translation of **עֲתִיקָא**. It means to be detached and removed from the situation. Instead, they should place into their hearts that no matter the outcome, they will be o.k. with it, because this is Hashem's will.

This is the meaning of the pasuk **וַיֹּאמֶר הָנָה מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ תְּהִלָּתָה מִלְתָּא מִלְתָּא**, **אֲלֵל מִשְׁאָה מִה תִּצְעַק אֱלֹהִי זָכָר אֲלֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּשְׁפַּע**, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey forth.' Hashem's counsel was **וַיַּשְׁפַּע**, that they

1. Perhaps a hint to this is in Eiruvin 41b, which states that poverty and other tzaros cause people to lose their minds and rebel against Hashem

2. Literally, this means the salvation will come from the highest places in heaven where Hashem's compassion for Bnei Yisrael manifests itself in its purest and most perfect manner. From this high place will come the salvation of Bnei Yisrael.

should travel. The Chozeh explains that Hashem was telling them that their *minds* should travel away from thinking about their problems. They shouldn't focus on their fears. They should feel confident that Hashem knows what He is doing, and that Hashem will only do what's good for them. With this thought in mind, there is nothing to fear, and whatever it will be, they should trust that it is good.

Chazal (Pesachim 118a) say, "A person's parnassah is as difficult as the splitting of the sea." The Chozeh explains that for parnassah, one should use the same counsel that was used to split the sea, which was to stop worrying. He should place into his heart that whether he will be saved or not, or whatever else might occur, he is okay with it, because he is in Hashem's hands, and Hashem does solely that which is good for us. This high level of emunah and bitachon has a segulah to bring about good *hashpaos*. This emunah brought the splitting of the sea. The Chozeh explains that we should use the same method for earning parnassah.

We quote the Chozeh's words: "If a person is having a hard time earning parnassah, he should do what was done at kriyas Yam Suf. He shouldn't want those things specifically in a certain way. He should think, 'Whatever Hashem wants is good.' As it states (Tehillim

55:23) 'Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you!...'"

Cast upon Hashem your burden, cast from your conscious thoughts and worries about how you will arrange your parnassah. Turn your thoughts entirely away from these matters, and trust that whatever Hashem desires, it will be good. If Hashem wants to give you parnassah, you will have it. If Hashem wants differently, you are also o.k. with that, because you are in Hashem's hands, and you know that Hashem is leading you in the best way. With these thoughts in mind, you will merit enjoying revealed kindness. You will merit that Hashem will support you.

These were the thoughts of the Yidden at the Yam Suf. Whatever Hashem decides, it will be good for them. When they had this emunah, they received revealed kindness, and the sea split before them.

This is the counsel and the solution for all one's worries. Generally, when a person has a problem, his mind is focused on the problem. The Torah's counsel is *דַבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּצְשַׁע*, move away from those thoughts and just trust in Hashem. There is nothing to fear, because whatever Hashem does, it will be good. With this thought in mind, one attains the segulah that he will merit seeing the good, and Hashem will perform revealed kindness with him.³

3. It states (14:13) *וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעָם אֶל תִּירְאוּ הַתִּיצְבוּ וְרִאוּ אֶת יְשׁוּעָת הָאָשֶׁר רָאַתֶּם אֶת מִצְרָיִם הַיּוֹם לֹא תִּקְפְּוּ לְרֹאָתֶם* "Moshe said to the people, 'Do not fear! Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem that He will perform for you today; for as you have seen Egypt today, you shall not see them ever again! Hashem shall make war for you, and you shall remain silent."

As we explained, the counsel here is *אֶל תִּירְאָה*, "do not fear." There is nothing to fear because whatever happens is for the good. Additionally, in the merit of this emunah, you will see revealed miracles. *הַתִּיצְבוּ*, "Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem that He will perform for you today", all in the merit that you stopped your thoughts and your fears, and you trusted in Hashem.

Emes l'Yaakov zy'a (son of the Saraf of Magilintza zt'l) teaches that the final words, *עד עַלְמָם*, mean that this process remains true in all generations, to this day. When we rely on Hashem, we receive Hashem's kindness and miracles. The Yidden had the sea before them, snakes and scorpions on either their sides, and behind them were the Mitzrim. They had no place to escape to, and Hashem saved them. Similar things happen in every generation. There are many troubles and problems, such as hardships earning a living, hard work, inability to serve Hashem as we desire, and so on. But we shouldn't lose hope, *הַתִּיצְבוּ*, we should stand straight, and

Hishtadlus for Parnassah

It states (16:4) **וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים מֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לְךָם לְקַחַם לְקַחַם** "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold I shall rain down for you food from heaven.' The expression **נָתַתִּי** sounds like *parnassah* can be easy to attain, as easy as rain falling from heaven. Noam Elimelech explains that Hashem says, "I am always prepared to give you *parnassah* from heaven." If people had *bitachon*, they would receive their *parnassah* in an easy way. But people work hard for their *parnassah*, as the *pasuk* continues and states, **וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹם בָּיִלְמֹד**, "people go out and pick each day's portion on its day."

Parnassah should be easy to attain, but when one lacks *bitachon*, it becomes difficult. Noam Elimelech writes, "When a person doesn't have *bitachon*... **וְלֹקְטוּ דָבָר יוֹם בָּיִלְמֹד**, he has to gather his *parnassah* every day, anew. If he would trust in Hashem with all his heart, his *parnassah* would come to him without distress and without working for it. It would come down like rain that comes without effort."¹⁴

The Jewish nation came to the desert with **וְחַטְמָנִים עַל בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** weapons, as it states (13:18) **כִּי אָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם**, and Rashi explains that this means they came with weapons. However, they didn't come with food and provisions, as it states (Shemos 12:38) **וְגַם אַזְהָר לֹא עֲשֹׂו לְקַחַם**. What is the explanation? Why did they do *hishtadlus* and bring weapons, and not food?

Reb Moshe Feinstein zt'l explains that this episode teaches us an important lesson in *bitachon* and *hishtadlus*. Our obligation to make *hishtadlus* is solely when *hishtadlus* is possible. When it is impossible, because whatever he does, it won't be enough, he is exempt from *hishtadlus*. His only obligation is to trust in Hashem.

When they went to the desert, it was impossible to prepare food for all their needs. They didn't know how long they would be in the desert, and in the end, they would need to trust in Hashem, so they might as well place their trust in Hashem immediately. They were exempt from *hishtadlus* and went to the desert without

we will be saved. This will occur in every generation. He writes, "In every generation, if you do *teshuva* and *daven*, the *Baal HaRachamim* (the Merciful One) will quickly have compassion on you and save you from the *tzarah*..."

When *Bnei Yisrael* stood by the sea, it states (14:15) **וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים מֵה תִצְעַק אֶל בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁעַ**, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to *Bnei Yisrael* and let them journey forth.'

Rashi writes, "This teaches us that Moshe was standing and praying. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'This isn't the right time for prayers. The Jewish people are in a *tzarah*! ... All they need to do is travel. The sea won't stand in their way. **כְּדַאי וָכוֹת אֶבֶתְּהֶם**, and **וְהַאֲמֻנוּ שְׁהָאָמַנָּו בָּי**, and **וְהַאֲמֻנוּ שְׁהָאָמַנָּו בָּהֶם**, and **וְהַאֲמֻנוּ שְׁהָאָמַנָּו בָּהֶם**. It is sufficient that the sea should split for them in the merit of their fathers, their own merits, and for the *emunah* that they had in Me to leave *Mitzrayim*, and journey into the wilderness."

The Klausenburger Rebbe zt'l (Shefa Chaim, Chumash Rashi, 5742, Beshalach) emphasized the final words of this Rashi. They deserved that the sea should split for them because **וְהַאֲמֻנוּ שְׁהָאָמַנָּו בָּי**, "the *emunah* that they had in Me." Their own merits and the merit of their fathers weren't enough for the sea to split for them. They also needed *emunah*. And in the merit of their *emunah*, the sea was split.

4. It states (17:1-3) **וַיִּצְמְאֵת שְׁם הַעַם וְאַזְמָא שְׁם הַעַם לְשִׁתְּתַהְתָּה הַעַם... וַיִּצְמְאֵת שְׁם הַעַם וְאַזְמָא שְׁם הַעַם לְמַיִם** "They encamped in *Refidim*, and there was no water for the people to drink... The people thirsted for water..."

Chidushei HaRim zt'l (Imrei HaRim, Beshalach) asks that the *pasukim* seem to be repetitive, because if there was no drinking water available, then obviously they were thirsty. Why does the *pasuk* repeat **וַיִּצְמְאֵת שְׁם הַעַם וְאַזְמָא שְׁם הַעַם**? He explains that if they had *bitachon*, they wouldn't have been thirsty. Somehow, Hashem would have given them water. But the nation became afraid and worried, as it states (17:2) **וַיֹּרֶב הַעַם עִם מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ תִנְחַ**, "The people argued with Moshe, and they said 'Give us water that we may drink!' When people are worried, this results in the problem of **וַיִּצְמְאֵת שְׁם הַעַם לְמַיִם**, that they become thirsty for water.

food. But they brought along weapons, because that was a hishtadlus they were able to do.

A hint to this concept can be found in a Mishnah in Masechta Pesachim (1:2), which discusses the halachos of bedikas chametz. The question the Mishnah deals with is: after a person made bedikas chametz, how can he be certain that his home is clean from chametz? Perhaps a rodent dragged some chametz into his home? The Mishnah says: **אין חוששין שטן גורחה חלדה מבית ובית ומתקום למקומות, ואם גורחה מחרר לער, אין לדבר סוף.** "We aren't afraid that a weasel might have brought chametz from one house to another house, or from one place to another, because if we will be concerned about this, we will have to be concerned that perhaps a weasel brought the chametz from one courtyard to another, or from one city to another, and there is no end."

We see from this Mishnah that even when it comes to the severe aveirah of owning chametz, a person isn't obligated to make hishtadlus when it is impossible to be entirely cautious. As the Mishnah says, **אין לדבר סוף.** We see the lesson that Reb Moshe reveals. When hishtadlus is possible, one is obligated to do hishtadlus. But when hishtadlus is anyway impossible, all he needs to do is to trust in Hashem. He is exempt from the obligation to make hishtadlus.

When the Yidden stood at the sea, they had plans on how to save themselves, but no one imagined that Hashem would split the sea for them. Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l says that Hashem generally helps in a manner that a person never even considered. The Lechovitzer zt'l explained the pasuk (Tehillim 130:7) **ונרבה עמו פדות** "with Him is abundant redemption," that Hashem has many ways to save us. It doesn't have to be in the way we imagined.

Targum Yonason (14:13) says that the Jewish nation was divided into four opinions on how to save themselves from the Mitzrim who were pursuing them.⁵ They had logical plans to deal with the situation, but Hashem had His own plan.

It is important to remember this because when a person plans and thinks that Hashem can only save him in this particular way, to an extent, he is trusting in himself, in his wisdom, and not in Hashem. It is best to trust in Hashem that **ונרבה עמו פדות** Who has many ways to save us.

Rebbe Meir of Premishlan explained the pasuk (14:14) **ה' ילחם לכם ואתָם תחרישׁוּ**. He said that **ה' ילחם לכם** means Hashem will give you **לחם** and **parnassah**. **וְאתָם תחרישׁוּ**, but you think that it comes from your thoughts. (**תחרישׁוּ** means thoughts, as in the pasuk [Mishlei 6:14] **תחרישׁ רע**.) You are constantly making plans, and you think your **parnassah** will come from there. Actually, **parnassah** comes from Hashem.⁶

5. Targum Yonason writes, **אַרְבָּעַ פִּינּוּ אֶתְעַבְּדִיו בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל גַּף יָמָא דְּסִוף חֶדָּא אַמְרָה יְהוָה לֵיכָא וְחֶדָּא אַמְרָה יְהוָה נִיחּוֹת לִיכָּא וְחֶדָּא אַמְרָה נִיחּוֹת לְמִצְרָיִם וְחֶדָּא אַמְרָה נִיחּוֹת לְקַוְּבָלִיהָן סְדֵרָה קְרָבָה וְחֶדָּא אַמְרָה נִבְלָלָא לְקַוְּבָלְיהָן וְנִעֲרַבָּה יְתִהְוָה** "At the shore of the Yam Suf, Bnei Yisrael was split into four groups. One group said 'Let's go into the sea,' another group said 'Let us return to Mitzrayim.' A third group said 'We should wage war against them,' and a fourth group said, 'Let us go towards them and shout and confuse them'."

6. The Midrash (Zuta, Shir HaShirim 2) writes, "When Yisrael entered the sea, the sea didn't split. Even when the water reached their stomachs, it didn't split. But when it reached their nostrils, and they stood a moment before drowning, that's when the sea split." The explanation is that as long as Yisrael thought they could save themselves through their own strength, they didn't receive miracles. But when they realized that they wouldn't be saved by the rules of nature, and that only Hashem can save them, that is when they merited the miracle of the splitting of the sea.

It states (15:9), **אמֵר אוֹיֵב אַרְדֵּךְ אֲשֶׁר אַחֲלָק שָׁלַל תִּמְלָאָמוּ נַפְשֵׁי אַרְקָה חֲרֵבִי תָּוֹרִישָׁמָנוּ יְהִי** "The enemy declared, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide plunder; I will satisfy my lust with them. I will unsheathe my sword, my hand will impoverish them.'

The Tefillos of Baalei Teshuvah

Whose tefillos are more likely to be answered first? The tefillos of a tzaddik who was perfect all his life or the tefillos of a baal teshuvah?

Moshe was davening for Bnei Yisrael. He was praying that they be protected from the Mitzrim who were coming to attack. Hashem told him (14:15), **מַה תְּצַעַק אֲלֵי**, "Why do you cry out to Me?" Essentially, Hashem was telling him to stop praying. The meforshim ask why Hashem stopped him? Was he doing something wrong? Isn't tefillah what every Yid should do when he is in a tzarah?

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 21:1) says that Hashem told Moshe to stop davening because there was no need for it anymore. Klal Yisrael also davened, and their tefillos were already answered. The Midrash says that the following pasuk alludes to this. It states (Tehillim 34:18) **אָשַׁעֲקָו וְהִשְׁמַע וּמְגַלֵּ אֶרְזֹתָם הַצִּילָם** "They cried out to Hashem, and Hashem listens, and from all their troubles, He rescues them." The pasuk is referring to the Yidden's tefillah at this time. The Midrash explains, "Bnei Yisrael shouted out to Hashem at the sea, as it states (14:10) **וַיַּעֲלְמָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל הַיָּם**, 'Bnei Yisrael cried out to Hashem,' and Hashem heard their tefillos. Therefore, Hashem said to Moshe, **מַה תִּצְעַק אֲלֵי**, why do you shout out to Me? There is no need. I have already heard their shouts. **דְּבַר אֲלֵי בְּנֵי**, speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey forth. Their tefillos were answered, and now they will receive the miracles."¹⁷

Reb Shlomo Kluger (Chachmas HaTorah year 5603) says that this Midrash is teaching us a great *chiddush* that the tefillos of baalei teshuvah are answered before the tefillos of a perfect tzaddik. Moshe Rabbeinu was a perfect tzaddik; he davened for Klal Yisrael, but Hashem answered the tefillos of Bnei Yisrael because they were baalei teshuvah, and the tefillos of baalei teshuvah are accepted.

Bnei Yisrael are called baalei teshuvah because when they saw the Mitzrim chasing them, their first reaction was that they complained and said to Moshe, (14:11) **הַמְּפֻלִיאֵין קָבָרִים בָּמְאָנִים לְקֹחַתָּנוּ לְמוֹת בְּמֹדֵבָר מַה זֹּאת עֲשִׂית לָנוּ** "Were there no graves in Mitzrayim that you took us to die in the desert? What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Mitzrayim?" But they did teshuvah, and they shouted and prayed to Hashem. Those tefillos, the tefillos of baalei teshuvah, were answered first and saved them.

As we wrote above, the Midrash quotes a pasuk from Tehillim to prove that Hashem listens to the tefillos of the baalei teshuvah. The pasuk states (Tehillim 34:18) **צְעָקוּ וְהִשְׁמַע וְמִקְלֵל אָרוֹתָם הָצִילָם**, "They cried out to Hashem, and Hashem listens, and from all their troubles, He rescues them." If we look at the two pesukim before this one (Tehillim 34:16-17), we find that the pesukim discuss tzaddikim and l'havdil resha'im, and it points out the difference between them. The pasuk begins **צְעָקוּ וְהִשְׁמַע**, "They cried out to Hashem, and

The Ramban asks why Pharaoh's thoughts are written in the Torah? What lesson does it teach us?

We can also ask why didn't Hashem stop Pharaoh when he was still in Mitzrayim? Why was he able to come all the way to the Jewish nation, to frighten them, and only then was he stopped?

But we can answer these questions that Hashem wanted to show us His strength, so that we shall know that we should rely on Him. Pharaoh plotted, planned, and caught up to the Jewish nation. The nation was a step away from being destroyed, r'l. And then Hashem wondrously saved them.

7. The following are the words of the Midrash:

Hashem listens". Who are the "They" that the pasuk is referring to?"

The answer is written in the pasuk before it (34:17): "בְּעֵשֶׂי רֹעֶה פָּנִים הַבָּעֵשֶׂי רֹעֶה", "The face of Hashem is against evil doers." Hashem listens to the tefillos of the רֹעֶה, evildoers, when they do teshuvah and turn to Him in tefillah. This is because the tefillos of the baalei teshuvah are very precious to Hashem.

Let us now study one pasuk earlier (34:16): It states עַיִן הַאֵל צְדִיקִים וְאַזְנוֹנִים אֵל שְׁוֹעַתָּם, "The eyes of Hashem are towards the righteous, and His ears to their cries." This pasuk discusses the way Hashem listens to the tefillos of tzaddikim. Rebbe Shlomo Kluger points out that for tzaddikim, the pasuk doesn't state שְׁמַע, that Hashem listens to their tefillos. Instead, it states וְאַזְנוֹנִים אֵל שְׁוֹעַתָּם that Hashem bends his ears to their tefillos. This means that Hashem checks their tefillah and decides whether He wants to accept them or not. However, as we wrote, for baalei teshuvah it states (34:18) שְׁמַע אָשָׁעָקָו וְהַשְּׁמַע, when they call out to Hashem, and Hashem listens and accepts their tefillos.

Reb Shlomo Kluger says that the baalei teshuvah received this benefit and this strength of tefillah from a brachah Yitzchak Avinu gave to Yaakov Avinu. Yitzchak said (Bereishis 27:22) הַקְלָל קֹל יְעַקָּב וְהַיָּדִים יְדֵי עִשּׂוֹ, "The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are Eisav's hands." This means that Hashem listens to the tefillos of those who used to be עִשּׂוֹ, at a low level. When they do teshuvah it becomes יְעַקָּב. Such people's tefillos are answered. Their tefillos are answered even before the tefillos of the perfect tzaddikim. This is the brachah that Yitzchak Avinu gave the Jewish people.

Chazal say בַּמִּקְומָם שְׁבָעֵלי תְּשׁוּבָה עָומְדִים אֵין צְדִיקִים, "In the place that baalei teshuvah stand, the most perfect tzaddikim can't stand." Or La'Shamayim zt'l explains that עָמְדִים and לְעָמָד refer to tefillah, which is called Amidah. It hints to us that the tefillos of baalei teshuvah are at a higher level than those of the perfect tzaddikim.

Or LaShamayim writes that this is also alluded to in the pasuk (Shemos 10:18) וַיֵּצֵא מֵעַם פְּרֻעָה נִיעַטָּר אֶל הָ, "He left Pharaoh, and he entreated Hashem." וַיֵּצֵא מֵעַם פְּרֻעָה alludes to a person who does teshuvah and leaves the kelipos. נִיעַטָּר אֶל הָ, he is a baal teshuvah, and therefore, has the power of tefillah.

Furthermore, נִיעַטָּר has the same *shoresh* as עַטָּר, which means pitchfork. Chazal (Succah 14a) say that tefillah is called עַטָּר because just as a pitchfork turns over the hay from one corner of the storage to another, when one davens, he turns *midas hadin* into *rachamim* (Hashem's strict judgment turns into compassion).

Or LaShamayim writes, "The tzaddik never tasted the bitter taste [of aveiros], so his strength isn't as strong as someone who was immersed in sin, and then raised himself from this low place."

The Wonders of Teshuvah

It states (Devarim 23:8) לֹא תַתְעַכֵּב מִצְרֵי, "You shall not abhor an Egyptian." Shouldn't it have said לֹא תַתְעַכֵּב מִצְרָיִם, "You shall not despise Egyptians," in plural?

The Shach (al HaTorah, from the students of the Arizal) answers that it is in the singular tense, because the pasuk is discussing one person - Pharaoh. לֹא תַתְעַכֵּב מִצְרֵי, "You shall not despise Pharaoh." This is because Pharaoh did teshuvah.

Let us contemplate this. Pharaoh was among the greatest *reshaim* of history. How severely Klal Yisrael suffered from him in Mitzrayim! Years later, this same Pharaoh became king of Ninveh, and the Navi tells us that they were great *resha'im*, as it states (Yonah 1:2) קָם לְךָ אֶל נִינְוָה הַגְּדוֹלָה וְקָרָא אֲלֵיהֶךָ כִּי עַלְתָּה, "Go to Ninveh, the great city and call out against her, for their wickedness has ascended before Hashem." (Yonah was upset when Hashem accepted the teshuvah of Ninveh because they were such terrible *resha'im*.) Pharaoh was their leader and was a rasha like them.

But in the end, this great rasha did teshuvah. The Torah therefore tells us לֹא

תַּתְעַב מֵאָרָי, "You shall not despise Pharaoh..." After teshuvah, he has an entirely different status.

We learn from this the great strength of teshuvah. No matter how sinful a person was, after he does teshuvah, the Torah says that we cannot despise him. We must respect him, for he is now in an entirely different status, due to his teshuvah.

Pirkei d'Reb Eliezer (ch.43) states, "Reb Nechunya ben HaKanah said, 'You can discover the power of teshuvah from Pharaoh, the king of Mitzrayim. He rebelled a lot against Hashem, and he said (Shemos 5:2) מַיְהִי הָאָשֶׁר אֲשֶׁר בְּכָלָלָי, 'Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice...?' The same word that he used for his sin, he used when he did teshuvah, for he said (15:11) מַיְהִי כָּמָתָה בְּאֶלְמָה הָאָשֶׁר, 'Who is like You among the heavenly powers, Hashem.' And because of his teshuvah, Hashem saved Pharaoh among the dead." When the Mitzrim drowned in the Yam Suf, Pharaoh survived because he did teshuvah. Due to his teshuvah, despite his terrible past, Hashem tells us לא תַּתְעַב מֵאָרָי, "You shall not despise Pharaoh..."

It states (14:15) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָל מֹשֶׁה מַה תִּצְעַק אֵלִי דָבָר, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey forth.' The Be'er Mayim Chaim asks why, indeed, was Moshe davening? Moshe certainly knew that Hashem brought the nation to the Yam Suf, and He brought the Mitzrim to pursue them, so of course Hashem would save them! Furthermore, just before, Moshe told the nation (14:13) אַל תִּرְאֹה תְּצִיבָנוּ וְרָאוּ אֶת יְשׁוּעָת הָאָשֶׁר מִצְּרָיִם, "Do not fear! Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem that He will perform for you today." Moshe wasn't afraid. He was sure that Hashem would save them, so why was he standing and praying to Hashem?

Be'er Mayim Chaim answers, אָמַנוּ עַירְכָּת הַתְּפִילָה לֹא הָיָתָה כִּי אָמַן עַל הַעֲרָב רַב שְׁקִיבָּלָם מִדְעָתוֹ, "Moshe's tefillos were solely for the Erev Rav that he accepted on his own. For them, he davened lengthily, that Hashem should save them as well, since they came under

the wings of the Shechinah. About this, Hashem replied, מַה תִּצְעַק אֵלִי, why are you davening so long? They claim they joined the Jewish nation to be close to Me, so I will certainly save them, for the honor of My name." We learn from this that whoever comes close to Hashem, Hashem will save him.

The power of teshuvah is also seen from the Jewish nation, who sinned severely, and shortly afterwards, they merited the miracles of kriyas Yam Suf, with all the revelations that happened there. Initially, the nation was afraid of Pharaoh's army that was pursuing them and they said to Moshe, (14:11) הַמְּבָלִי אֵין קָבָרִים בְּמִצְרָיִם לְקַחְתָּנוּ לְמוֹת בְּמִקְרָב מִזְרָחָתָנוּ, "Were there no graves in Mitzrayim that you took us to die in the desert? What is this that you have done to us to take us out of Mitzrayim?" But the next night they merited kriyas Yam Suf! How did they merit this miracle, a day after their aveirah?

Furthermore, at Kriyas Yam Suf, the nation came to very high levels and had great revelations. They said (15:2) הַזְּה אִ-לְיִ וְאַנְהָוּ, "This is my G-d..." The expression is like when one points with his finger and says, "This is my G-d." Rashi writes, בְּכָבוֹדוֹ וְהַיְוָן אֲוֹתָוּ בְּאַצְבָּעָרָתָה שְׁפָחָה עַל הַיּוֹם מְגֻלָּה עַלְיָהָם וְהַיְוָן אֲוֹתָוּ בְּאַצְבָּעָרָתָה שְׁפָחָה עַל הַיּוֹם, "Hashem's revealed to them in His honor, and they pointed with a finger. A maid servant at the sea saw what *nevi'im* didn't see." How did they attain this high level after sinning severely the night before?

The Sfas Emes (Pesach 5632) says that this shows us the strength of a Yid. He can change himself and turn himself around in a moment. A Yid can change himself from being a rasha to being a tzaddik, from living in darkness to living with light, and to be loved, precious, and close to his Father in Heaven.

It states in this week's parashah (15:26) כֹּל הַמְּתָחָלָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁנַתִּי בְּמִצְרָיִם לֹא אֲשִׁים עַלְיךָ כִּי אַנְהָה רְפָאֶךָ, "Any of the diseases that I placed in Mitzrayim I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem, your healer." Chasam Sofer zt'l

(Toras Moshe (ד"ה כי אוי רופאך) asks that we don't find any diseases in Mitzrayim, only the ten makos. It should state **כל הַמְּבָשָׂר אֲשֶׁר שָׂמַחְתִּי בְּמִצְרָיִם** "Any of the **makos** that I placed in Mitzrayim I will not bring upon you." The Chasam Sofer answers that the **מִתְּחָלָה**, disease, mentioned in this pasuk alludes to the disease of (Shemos 10:1) **כִּי אַנְּיִנְהַכְבִּידְתִּי אֶת לְבָבֵךְ וְאֶת לְבַבְּעֲבָדָיו**, "for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants hard." Hakadosh Baruch Hu made their hearts hard, and they couldn't do teshuvah and return to Hashem. Hashem promises that he won't give this disease to Bnei Yisrael. The gates of teshuvah will always be open for them.⁸

Believe in Yourself

Reb Tzaddok HaCohen (*Tzidkas HaTzaddik* 154) writes, "Just as one must believe in Hashem, one must believe in *himself*. This means he must believe that Hashem wants *him* and that he wasn't created for nothing. He must believe that... Hashem has pleasure when he serves Him. As it states (14:31), **וַיַּאמְתַּן כֵּן וּבְמִשְׁהָ עֲבָדוּ**, 'They believed in Hashem and in

Moshe, His servant.' Moshe represents each of the six hundred thousand Yidden of the generation. They believed that Hashem desires them and derives pleasure from the good that's in them."

Yesod v'Shoresh HaAvodah (3:7) writes, "When you say [in Oz Yashir] **עַד יַעֲבֹר עַמְּךָ הָ** 'Until Your people pass through...' try to be extremely happy that we are the nation Bnei Yisrael, who are chosen from the seventy nations... When you say **עַם זֶה קָנִית**, "This nation You love," think of Rashi's explanation, that **קָנִית** means **חִבּוּבָת**, 'You love them more than all nations,' and become extremely happy."⁹

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zy'a* taught that a Yid is purely good because he is part of Hashem. If you see bad in a Yid, know that it was adapted from the goyim, among whom we live. It is not a blemish in his neshamah.¹⁰

Once, Rebbe Dovid'l Lelover *zt'l* was collecting money with the Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa *zt'l*. When they came to one home,

8. At the beginning of parashas Shemos (1:8) it states, **וְיָקָם מֶלֶךְ חָשֵׁשׁ עַל מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַע אֶת יוֹסֵף**, "a new king arose over Mitzrayim, who did not know Yosef."

We wonder, how could this king not know of Yosef? Yosef was renown in Mitzrayim. He saved the Mitzrim from the famine, and he made the country very wealthy. How could he totally forget Yosef, and then force Yosef's nation into slavery?

I heard from a wise person that this king had an exceptional ability to "forget." He knew how to block out things from his mind and completely ignore things that he knew.

After this, it states in parashas Bo (10:26) **כִּי מִנְפְּנֵינוּ נָפְחַת לְעַבְדֵּת הָ**, "from him shall we take to serve Hashem."

We can explain (**כְּדַבֵּר מִתְּמִימָנָה**) that we take this trait from Pharaoh and use it to serve Hashem. Pharaoh successfully forgot and ignored things he knew to be true. We can do the same when it is to our advantage. When it comes to aveiros of the past, we can ignore what was and strengthen ourselves to improve our future.

9. The Rebbe of Zlotchev *zt'l* (*Orach l'Chayim, HaAzinu*) teaches that a Yid has the power to turn over worlds, and to attain all his *gashmiyos* and *ruchniyos* needs. The problem is that he doesn't believe in his own strength, and this prevents him from achieving great things. As it states (*Devarim* 32:2), **כִּי דָוִר תַּהֲפֹכּוֹת הַמִּזְרָחָה**, they are a nation that can turn everything over, **בְּנִים לֹא אַמְוֹן בָּם**, the problem is that they are children who don't believe in their own strength.

10. The Gemara says, **גּוּ שְׁבַת חַיְבָה מִתְּהָ**, "A non-Jew who keeps Shabbos deserves death." The Chidushei HaRim *zy'a* taught that it is therefore important to do *teshuva* on Friday, before Shabbos arrives, so that only the Yid within us keeps Shabbos. The Goyish parts in us, which we adapted in *galus*, shouldn't be with us on Shabbos.

Rebbe Dovid remained inside for a long time while the Yid Hakadosh waited outdoors. When Rebbe Dovid came out, he apologized for the delay and explained, "I saw a lot of *yiras Shamayim* in that home; I simply couldn't leave."

What *yiras Shamayim* did he see? He explained, "In this home, a young man works together with his elderly father. The old man made a mistake in the business, and his son was angry with him. I heard the son tell his father, 'If I didn't fear Hashem, I would kill you.' I heard him say that he fears Hashem, and I wanted to be around this special Yid who has so much *yiras Shamayim*."

Rebbe Dovid Lelover focused on the good because that is the genuine essence of a Yid. He didn't want to see the bad. And this is what Hashem does too, as it states (Bamidbar 23:11) *לא הביט און ביעקב ולא ראה عمل בישראל* ("He doesn't look at the iniquity in Yaakov..."

My grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, zt'l, says that the Jewish nation that crossed the sea didn't believe in themselves. His proof is the pasuk (*Tehillim* 106:7), *וימרו על ים כים סוף* "They rebelled by the sea, at the *Yam Suf*." The Gemara (*Pesachim* 118:) explains that they said, "We are leaving the *Yam Suf* from one side, and the Egyptians are leaving the *Yam Suf* from another side." They were afraid that they would once again meet with the *Mitzrim*, and they were scared for their lives.

After all the wonders they saw, how could they have had these worries?

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zy'a answers, "Although they believed in Hashem, they didn't believe in themselves." They didn't think they were unique to Hashem, chosen from all nations, and that Hashem would perform miracles for them. That was their error.¹¹

Az Yashir

The Beis Ahron zy'a teaches that the history of the world, and all the future events, are all hinted at in the words of *Az Yashir*. Furthermore, one can acquire all his needs – spiritual and material – by saying *Az Yashir* with all his heart.

The Midrash (*Shemos Rabba* 21:6) says that when the *Yam Suf* split, all waters in the world split together with it. Wherever there was a river or a gathering of water, any place in the world, the waters split.

The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l asks why this miracle occurred? It is known that Hashem doesn't perform a miracle unless there is a purpose.

He answers that "waters" represents tzaros, as it states (*Tehillim* 69:2) *הוֹשִׁיעַנִי אֶלְקִים כִּי בָאֹ* "Save me, Hashem, for the waters have reached until the soul." In this pasuk, "waters" represent tzaros. At *krias Yam Suf*, all waters of the world split, and this

11. There is a mitzvah to hate and to destroy Amalek in all generations. We don't have this mitzvah regarding Pharaoh. We aren't obligated to destroy his descendants and obliterate his memory. However, it seems that Pharaoh was worse. He openly denied the existence of Hashem. So, why is Amalek punished for all generations, and his punishment is worse than Pharaoh's?

The answer is that Pharaoh didn't believe in Hashem, and he taught his heresy to others. Amalek was worse because he didn't believe in Klal Yisrael. As it states (*Devarim* 25:18) *וַיַּגֵּב בָּךְ כָּל הַגְּחַנְתִּים אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאַפָּה צִפְּרָנָע וְלֹא* "He struck those of you who were hindmost, all the weaklings at your rear, when you were faint and exhausted and he did not fear Hashem."

Rashi writes that Amalek smote those who sinned and were expelled from the *עֲנֵי הַכְּבֹוד*, the clouds of glory that protected Bnei Yisrael. Amalek went after those sinners with the intention to cause them to feel worthless.

Therefore, Amalek is worse, and we are commanded to obliterate his memory.

was an indication that in every generation, the miracle of kriyas Yam Suf will occur again. The waters will split, which means all tzaros will disappear and end, and salvations will come to Klal Yisrael. In particular, those matters that are associated with kriyas Yam Suf, such as parnassah, shidduchim, and births, which Chazal (Sotah 2b, Pesachim 118a) say are as difficult to attain as kriyas Yam Suf, are the salvations that Hashem gives in every generation. This occurs every day when we say *Az Yashir* in the tefillah, and on Shabbos and yom tov when we read *Az Yashir* in the sefer Torah.

The Magen Avraham (Trisk) zt'l teaches that when the Jewish nation says *Az Yashir*, Hashem puts on His crown. The Magen Avraham writes, "When a king puts on his crown, he gives gifts to his people. Certainly, the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, when He dresses Himself with the crown of His kingdom, He gives gifts to Yisrael. He gives them all their needs, *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*, for the individual and for the community, children, parnassah, health and *refuos*, speedily in our days, amen."

Mishnah Berurah (51:17, quoting a *Zohar*) writes, "Say *Az Yashir* joyously and imagine that you are crossing the sea today. When one says it with joy, all his sins are atoned."

The *Zohar* (Bo 40:) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu is happy when Yidden say *Az Yashir*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gathers all the *malachim* and tells them, 'Come and listen to the story and praises of My children. They are happy that I redeemed them.'

The Rebbe Reb Shmelke of Nickelsburg zt'l hardly slept. (It is repeated that his mother once said, "I have two children: One never says *kriyas Shema she'al hamitah*, and the other one never recites *birchas hamazon*." She meant that her son Rebbe Shmelka hardly slept, and her son the Hafla'ah barely ate.) Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk zt'l once hosted Rebbe Shmelka and requested that he sleep well, because he believed that he would accomplish more if his mind were well rested. Rebbe Shmelka agreed to Rebbe Elimelech's request.

In the morning, at the tefillah, Rebbe Shmelke reached very high spiritual levels, and the entire community became inspired together with him. When they got to *Az Yashir*, people raised the hems of their clothing because they felt themselves crossing the sea and didn't want their clothes to get wet.

After the exalted tefillah, Rebbe Shmelka said to Rebbe Elimelech, "Sleep is excellent, but who has time for it?"

According to another version, he said, "Sleep is excellent, but who can risk it? (because you might oversleep)."

The Chareidim (ch.73) tells a story of a high-ranking officer in Castella, Spain, who was hunting in the forest. He tried to catch a fox, and the fox bit him in the leg. It was a small bite; he hardly felt it at first. But his foot became infected, and three days later, his entire leg was swollen, and his life was in danger. The king's doctors brought expensive remedies, but they didn't help him. Everyone lost hope, and he began saying his last goodbyes to his family as they cried before him.

One of the officer's loyal servants didn't know about his master's illness. He came in to serve his boss and was shocked to see the officer in bed, writhing in pain, near death. He asked, "What happened to you? I saw you just three days ago, and you were fine."

The family told him about the fox bite. The servant replied, "Don't worry. With G-d's help, I will heal him."

He ran outside and gathered certain plants. He ground them, put the mixture on his master's foot three times, and there was immediate improvement. Three days later, the officer was healed and could walk again. The doctors were shocked, and they praised Hashem for creating plants with healing powers.

The servant's inexpensive remedies healed the officer. They were more helpful

than the expensive remedies of the king's doctors.¹²

The Chareidim tells this story to explain that the same is true when it comes to curing a person who became sick in a spiritual sense with sins. There are very difficult treatments that will bring atonement. For example, he can fast excessively, give large amounts of money to tzedakah. And then, there are easier paths, which can heal just as well.

He writes six simple cures for spiritual ailments that remove people's *aveiros*. Among them are to answer *amen yehei shemei rabba* with all one's strength and to keep Shabbos with all its details.

His third counsel is to say *Az Yashir* with *kavanah*. This isn't so hard to do, and it cleanses a person from all his *aveiros*.

The Chareidim writes, "When you say the daily *Az Yashir*, say it out loud, with immense happiness, as if you are now leaving Mitzrayim. Because Chazal say on the *pasuk* (15:22), וַיֹּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן סִינַי (the *pasuk* after *Az Yashir*) that Moshe הִשִּׁיעַ מִיעוּנוֹתֵיכֶם, drove them away from their *aveiros*. Their *aveiros* were forgiven because they sang the *Shirah*. Because whoever experienced a miracle and praises Hashem, all of his *aveiros* are forgiven.

Hashem commanded us to say the *Shirah* every day, as it states (15:1, at the beginning of *Az Yashir*), וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאֹמֶר, 'and they said to say,' and Reb Shimon bar Yochai explains that this obligates us to say *Az Yashir* every day and with the same immense joy as the first time it was said. If one does so, he will benefit from the same *segulos* as the first time it was said.¹³

We are in the days of *Shovavim*, and we seek easy ways to purify ourselves from sin. The methods of the past, fasting, rolling in the snow, cold *mikvaos*, etc., to attain purity aren't applicable in our times. Today, we are weaker, and we need easier forms of rectification for severe *aveiros*.

As we've discussed in previous weeks, we can attain purity by studying Torah and saying *Tehillim*. And now we have learned another solution. Saying *Az Yashir* will purify us from our *aveiros*.

The *Or Lashamayim* (B₀) writes, "In early generations, the *tikun hanefesh* (rectification from sin) came from afflictions... But in this generation, close to Moshiach, the *tikunim* are easier. One doesn't need afflictions. Rectification can be achieved through having *emunah* in Hashem, the Creator of the world."¹⁴

12. Rebbe Dovid Biderman zt'l gave a *segulah* for *refuah*:

Take olive oil and say, "The Rambam was a doctor. In his merit, please send a *refuah sheleimah* to *ploni ben ploni*." And light the oil at the Rambam's *kever* when the opportunity arises.

13. Chazal say that those who recite *Perek Shirah* every day are *bnei Olam HaBa*. *Perek Shirah* is a collection of the praises that animals and other creations say to Hashem. Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zy"a asks: The praises of humans are certainly greater than the praises of the animals. So why don't Chazal also say that "Whoever says *Az Yashir* every day is a *ben Olam HaBa*"? If for saying the praises of animals one receives *Olam HaBa*, we should certainly be rewarded with *Olam HaBa* for singing the praises of humans.

Rebbe Bunim answers: *Perek Shirah* isn't the praises that animals say. They are the praises that people say when they fall into sin and fall to levels of animals. Due to their sin, people become like wild animals, rodents, snakes, scorpions, etc. If they, nevertheless, praise Hashem from that lowly place (because they believe that no matter how far they fall, Hashem still loves them), then these praises are very precious to Hashem, and as a result, they merit *Olam HaBa*.

14. It states (Chavakuk 2:4), צְדִיק בָּאָמְנוֹתָיו חַיָּה. The *Yismach Yisrael* (*Shemos* 6) explains that this means with *emunah* alone one can become a *tzaddik* – a tzaddik.

Similarly, Reb Yechezkel Levinstein zt'l said, "We are now in the days of Shovavim. Chassidim and *anshei maaseh* would immerse themselves in *avodas Hashem* during these days. They would fast, say many *selichos*, etc. But I think the primary emphasis should be on having *emunah*, because when one establishes *emunah* in his heart, he has everything."

The Yesod HaAvodah (quoted in *Toras Avos, Emunah u'Bitachon* 53) explains the *pasuk* (*Yirmiyahu* 5:1) **שׁוֹטְטוּ בְּחַזְוֹתֵי יְרוּשָׁלָם... אִם תִּמְצָאוּ אִישׁ... מַבְקֵשׁ אֶמְוֹנָה** ("Walk about in the streets of Yerushalayim...if you will find a man...who seeks *emunah*...I will forgive her.") The *pasuk* teaches that it is sufficient to be a *man*, to search for ways to strengthen one's *emunah*. That achieves atonement.¹⁵

Parashas HaMon

The Meor Einayim (*Likutim* ד"ה כשריך) teaches that each salvation and *chesed* has its portion and area in the Torah, and one can study that section and attain his salvation from there. For example, *refuah*, healing, comes from the words (*Shemos* 21:19), **וּרְפֵא יְרֵפָא** (see *Meor Einayim*, end of *Likutim*). By studying those words, one can draw down *refuos*.

Parnassah comes from *parashas hamon*. Studying that section will grant us *parnassah*. Therefore, some have the custom of saying *parashas hamon* every day to draw down *parnassah*.

As the Meor Einayim writes, "All salutations can be found in the Torah. If a

person needs a salvation, he should attach himself to Torah, for salvation can be found there... For example, if someone needs the *chesed* of food, he should read *parashas hamon* daily. Similarly, all other matters are in their place, in the Torah."

Every Shabbos, for twenty-two years, Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov zt'l would teach lessons in *parashas hamon*, to bring down *parnassah* for Bnei Yisrael.

It is also repeated in the name of Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov zt'l that reading *parashas hamon* on Tuesday of *parashas Beshalach* is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

Chidushei HaRim writes in a letter: "Rosh Chodesh Nisan, ב' תר"ב: I had an idea that I should say a *chiddush* in *parashas hamon* every day; that way, my *parnassah* will come from the Torah. As the Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 97:3) states, **פָּרָנָסָה בְּכָל יֹם**, every day has its *parnassah*...". The Chidushei HaRim wanted to draw his *parnassah* from *chiddushei Torah* on *parashas hamon*.

Shulchan Aruch (*Orach Chaim* 1:5) states, **טוֹב לְאֹמֵר ...פָּרָשַׁת הַמּוֹן**, "It is good to say...*parashas hamon*." The Mishnah Berurah (1:13) explains, "It isn't sufficient just to say the words. One must think about what he is saying and recognize Hashem's wonders. By reading *parashas hamon* we remember that *parnassah* comes with Hashem's *hashgachah*. The Yerushalmi says that whoever says *parashas hamon* daily is guaranteed never to lack *parnassah*. The Tashbatz quotes this and adds וְאַנְתִּי עֶבֶד, "and I guarantee it."

15. Rebbe Moshe Kобрiner zt'l said that a person who never forgets Hashem won't forget Hashem in Gehinom, either. And when one remembers Hashem in Gehinom, the fires of Gehinom don't harm him. Also in this world, when one remembers Hashem, the fire of the yetzer hara won't burn in him.

Reb Sholom Teumim was a student of many early chasidic Rebbe. He writes (Or Torah Bo, p.141, "I heard a holy tzaddik tell his relative that when one goes through any distress or hardship - money or other issues, r'l - he should say 'Ribono Shel Olam, You created me, and You give me life. I trust only in You. I have nowhere to turn to for aid, other than You...' If you will say that, you will be protected and guarded from all harm and tzaar. This is tested."