



9 years of Points to Ponder on

Parashas Beshalach

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**In memory of**

**Avraham Ben Avraham**

**וַיְהִ֗י בְּשַׁלַּ֣ח פַּרְעֹה֘  And it was when Pharaoh sent the nation (13:17) –** The Talmud (Megillah 10b) notes that whenever we see the word “Vayehi” it means that there was pain there. Where was the pain and to whom did it affect in our Parasha? The Jews left Mitzrayim! Pharaoh kicked them out! Who was in pain? **Rav Mordechai Eliyahu .** explained that Pharaoh was in pain. As soon as he realized how valuable Jewish presence is in a country, and exactly what a Jewish nation could become if properly encouraged, Pharaoh was in pain over the loss of the economic and social potential for his country. This mistake has been mademany times in our people’s history.

**וַיְהִ֗י בְּשַׁלַּ֣ח פַּרְעֹה֘ אֶת־הָעָם֒ It was when Pharaoh sent the nation (13:17)** - Pharaoh didn’t SEND the people, they left because Hashem took them out, no? The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 20:3) notes that Pharaoh accompanied them out of Egypt. But why is that relevant? In the end, he was stubborn and received Maakos until he had no choice but to let the Jews go**? Rav Leib Chasman ztl** explains that Hashem does not let the smallest of credits to go to waste. Even the smallest signs of respect – that were later undone – deserved recognition and this is the intent of the Possuk here.

**דֶּ֚רֶךְ אֶ֣רֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּ֔ים כִּ֥י קָר֖וֹב ה֑וּא** **He didn’t lead them through the land of Pelishtim since he (it?) was close (13:17) –** The Baalei HaTosafos note that the closeness is a reference to Bnei Yisroel who were close to Hashem (L’Bnei Yisroel Am Kerovo**). Rav Simcha Zissel Broide .** notes that in the course of daily living we might forget that we are the chosen ones of Hashem and it is that reason alone that we are successful. When we recall it, it is the reason we are able to succeed despite the natural expectations.

**דֶּ֚רֶךְ אֶ֣רֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּ֔ים כִּ֥י קָר֖וֹב ה֑וּא And Hashem didn’t take them through the land of Plishtim since it was close (13:17) – the Chazon Ish** was troubled as to the Torah’s explanation here: Didn’t Hashem tell Moshe that when he took the people out of Mitzrayim they would serve Hashem on Har Sinai? Wasn’t THAT the reason that Bnei Yisrael needed to go into the Midbar and not Derech Eretz Plishtim? **Rav Shlomo Fisher** explains that the concern was expressed at the time that Hashem met Moshe at Har Sinai. (A similar thought is expressed by the Chasam Sofer).

**פֶּן־יִנָּחֵ֥ם הָעָ֛ם בִּרְאֹתָ֥ם מִלְחָמָ֖ה Lest the people regret when they see war (13:17) - Rav Yehuda Leib Segal ztl.** learned a valuable lesson from these possukim. He noted that the nation was tested quite often in the Midbar. The nation Was able to handle THOSE tests. Why not these? Rav Segal explained that clearly Hashem understood that there are different tests that apply to different people and that which is difficult for someone is different from a different person at a different time. Here, for whatever reason, Hashem felt that Bnei Yisrael would pass the tests in the Midbar but this test, if it were to be given to the nation, would send them right back to Mitzrayim. Hence he took them in a roundabout way.

**וַֽחֲמֻשִׁ֛ים עָל֥וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם And the Jewish nation left Mitzrayim *Chamushim* (13:18) – Rashi** explains that Chamushim means that 4/5 of the nation died in Makkas Chosheich. **Rav Noach Weinberg .** questions what the merit of the 1/5 was. He explains that it was not their piety – for they are identified as Ovdei Avodah Zara at the shores of Yam suf. Rather, he explains, it was due to their identification with the Jewish nation – through the names, the language, the clothing etc. that it was apparent that they wanted to be Jewish. That being the case, they merited salvation. We need to remember that when we work with others – to think long and hard before totally severing the ties with those identifying as Jews.

**וַֽחֲמֻשִׁ֛ים עָל֥וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם  They left armed (13:18)** - The **Rema MiPanu** notes that the Jewish nation was on the 50th level of Tumah and this is the intent of the Possuk when we note that they left armed (Chamushim = Chamishim). **Rav Moshe Wolfson**  adds that if you count the number of times that the Torah speaks about Yetzias Mitzrayim, it is 50 times. This, too reminds us of the departure from the 50th level of Tumah. When we say Kol HaMarbeh L’Saper Harei Zeh Mishubach we mean that we only mention the idea when it becomes a Shevach -- a praise.

**וַיִּקַּ֥ח משֶׁ֛ה אֶת־עַצְמ֥וֹת יוֹסֵ֖ף עִמּ֑וֹ** **Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him (13:19) - Rashi** cites the Midrash that Yosef made his brothers swear that their children would swear to take his bones out with them. They knew that they would not be the ones to fulfill the promise so they needed to bring their children into the picture and into the oath. Now, when it comes to oaths taken by a nation, the nation is obligated to keep the oath even if the people who make up the nation at the time of the oath are no longer present to carry it out. Hence, the **Ragachover *Gaon*** raised the question, why was it necessary for Yosef to have his brothers swear that they would have the next generation swear etc.? Why didn't he simply have the brothers swear representing *Klal Yisroel*, and that *shavua* would automatically be binding on all future generations? He answers that since Yosef died prior to Matan Torah, the concept of a united nation did not exist within Klal Yisrael. Hence, each brother needed to swear personally. **Rav Schachter**  would often note to us that this is the uniqueness of the concept of Am Yisrael. WE are not a band of individuals joined for some personal purpose (like Mishpichos HaAdama). We represent what it means to be an Am – a nation under Hashem that transcends person and time. This is the basis of Arvus and Achdus which exists only by Am Yisrael.

**וַיִּקַּ֥ח משֶׁ֛ה אֶת־עַצְמ֥וֹת יוֹסֵ֖ף עִמּ֑וֹ  Moshe took the bones of Yosef (13:19)** - The Talmud (Sukkah 13) praises Moshe for taking care of Yosef’s bones while the rest of the nation was taking money from the Egyptians. Moshe is credited with taking Mitzvos. But weren’t Bnei Yisrael ALSO doing a Mitzva? Didn’t Hashem tell THEM to ask for gold and silver? Also, the word  “Mitzvos” is a big reach -- isn’t it more correct to say “Yikach Mitzva”? **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky**   suggests that there are 2 types of actions. One type is the action for itself. You do that which is requested and this is what is appreciated. There are other actions that are not as important per se but have an intent behind them and if you achieve the intent it is as if you performed the action. When it came to taking spoils of Mitzrayim, Hashem wanted to enrich Bnei Yisrael. If a person said “I have enough” then Hashem’s intent would be considered achieved. When it comes to Yosef’s bones, the job cannot be circumvented. Thus, by passing up on the mitzva of taking from the Egyptians and dealing with Yosef’s bones, Moshe did 2 Mitzvos and was recognized for both.

**וַיִּקַּ֥ח משֶׁ֛ה אֶת־עַצְמ֥וֹת יוֹסֵ֖ף עִמּ֑וֹ  Moshe took the bones of Yosef (13:19)** – The Talmud (Sotah 13a) praises Moshe for being able to be involved in Mitzvos as the nation was involved in taking the gold & silver of Egypt. **Rav Zelig Yehuda Bengis** asked that this was one mitzvah. Why do Chazal say that he was involved in Mitzvos? He explained that Moshe was involved in keeping his promise but also involved in teaching the people a lesson – that although they may be taking all of the gold and silver, it is not these things that are significant – for these are fleeting and die.

**וְהַֽעֲלִיתֶ֧ם אֶת־עַצְמֹתַ֛י מִזֶּ֖ה אִתְּכֶֽם Hashem should remember you and you shall take my bones up from here with YOU (13:19)** – Why the stress that the bones would come up “Itchem? **Rav Schachter** often quoted Rav Yehuda HaChossid who noted that one cannot bury two enemies next to one another. Therefore, by noting that he requested that it be Itchem, he was also letting it be known that he had forgiven the brothers and that they could indeed be together and buried together.

**לִפְנֵי֙ בַּ֣עַל צְפֹ֔ן Before Baal Tzfoan (14:2) – Rashi** explains that Baal Tzfoan was the only remaining idol in Mitzrayim and was there to trick the Mitzriim. **Rav Wolbe** explains that when one is predetermined to sin, Hashem gives the person the opportunity. There are always alternative explanations available to the one who wants to deny Hashem’s hand in the world. This also explains the concepts of how Kinah, Taava and Kavod remove one from the world. There are times where each (Kinas Sofrim, Taava to raise children, Kavod Talmid Chacham) has an appropriate use as a tool to a greater purpose but when each is an end – not a means – it destroys the person.

**וַיֵּֽ֠הָפֵ֠ךְ לְבַ֨ב פַּרְעֹ֤ה Pharaoh’s heart was turned (14:5) - Rashi** notes that Pharaoh changed his mind from the position of wanting the Jewish people out. **Ohr HaChaim** asks where there was a choice for them? Pharaoh’s mind was changed for him by Hashem -- to let the Jews go and to not let the Jews go? **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum** explained that Pharaoh was upset at himself for not sending a guard to make sure that the people would return to Mitzrayim. He refused to see the hand of Hashem in the process and the acceptance of his loss in the battle with Bnei Yisrael. There is a little Pharaoh in each of us and thus we need to accept ourselves and Hashem’s will for us.

**הֲמִבְּלִ֤י אֵֽין־קְבָרִים֙ בְּמִצְרַ֔יִם They said to Moshe “are there not enough graves in Egypt that you took us into the desert to die (14:11) – Sforno** notes that Moshe cried out along with Bnei Yisroel. However, his cry was one against the complaint of the leadership that had asked about the graves. Moshe thought that due to their defiance of him they would not follow him into the ocean. Hashem let him know that this was not his problem. “You err in not trusting the people, tell them to move.” **Rav Boruch Sorotzkin** learns a critical lesson from here. Even leaders can experience doubt about their ability to lead in a particular moment. The leader can hear the screaming, blaming, complaining and cynicism and will refrain from responding, reproving or directing the people. Hashem tells Moshe that there is one thing to know about Bnei Yisroel – they respect spiritual leadership. Speak to them, tell them and they’ll move.

**וְאַתֶּ֖ם תַּֽחֲרִשֽׁוּן Hashem will fight for you and you shall be silent (14:14)** - When the Jews were challenged by the Egyptians they were told to stand down and let Hashem take care of the situation. At the end of the Parsha Moshe tells Yehoshua to fight Amalek, Why the change? **Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl.** explained that while the Egyptians threatened our physical lives, Amalek presented a spiritual challenge. The spiritual challenges cannot be met with a passive stance. We need to be assertive and aggressive in repelling any and all threats to his Jewishness.

**מַה־תִּצְעַ֖ק אֵלָ֑י דַּבֵּ֥ר אֶל־בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל וְיִסָּֽעוּ**: **Hashem told Moshe “what are you crying to me for? Talk to the Jews and tell them to move (14:15) – Rav Moshe Feinstein** notes that although Tefillah is a necessary component for salvation from Tzoros, it needs to be accompanied by the efforts of the people. Yaakov davened, but he also prepared for war with Esav. Beracha cannot happen if it does not have a place to be effective.

**מַה־תִּצְעַ֖ק אֵלָ֑י Why do you cry out to me (14:15) - Rashi** notes that Hashem told them that now is not the time for lengthy prayers. **Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita** notes that there are times in life and in Chinuch when we need to offer long spiritual messages and mussar schmoozin but at other times, the shorter messages have better impact. There is a Chochma to knowing which time the different styles need to be used.

**וְלֹֽא־קָרַ֥ב זֶ֛ה אֶל־זֶ֖ה כָּל־הַלָּֽיְלָה: And they didn’t come near one another all night long (14:20)** – The Talmud (Sanhedrin 39b) notes that this was the time that the angels wanted to sing Shirah to Hashem and Hashem responded that his creations are drowning in the sea and you wish to sing Shirah?! But Bnei Yisrael WERE permitted to sing Shirah. Why? Moreover why were the angels not permitted – after all, when the wicked are destroyed it is a time for Rinah? **Rav Yehoshua Leib Kutner** explains that when a person undergoes surgery, the family of the patient, all of whom know that it will be good for them in the future, are not happy with the surgery. After all, it is their loved one who is on the table. Similarly, during the time of ridding ourselves of evil which leaves the world with health, there is no Simcha. Once the surgery is over (and the evils were excised) then it was time for the Jews to sing.

**וְלֹֽא־קָרַ֥ב זֶ֛ה אֶל־זֶ֖ה כָּל־הַלָּֽיְלָה: And they did not come close to one another all night (14:20)** – The Gemara (Sanhedrin 39b) notes that at that point the Malachim wanted to sing Shirah. Hashem declared “Maaseh Yadai Toivim BaYam V’Atem Omrim Shira?”. Why then does Hashem allow Bnei Yisrael to sing Shirah when their enemies fall? **Rav Gedaliah Silverstone (of Washington)** notes that those who were not “There” cannot properly express the Shirah on redemption – Their entire Shirah is on the death of the enemy. This does not make Hashem happy (See Megillah 10b). The real Shirah is on our saving – Geulaseinu U’Peduus Nafsheinu. Azi V’Zimras Kah VaYehe LEE L’yishua -- the show of strength is a jumpstart for me and what I choose to do with it.

**וַיִּבָּֽקְע֖וּ הַמָּֽיִם And the waters split (14:21)** – Why is Kriyas Yam Suf such an incredible miracle? After all, Hashem CREATED the ocean – certainly he can SPLIT it! What is added by the miracle of Kriyas Yam Suf? **HaGaon Rav Asher Weiss** answers with the story of a master sculptor who once fashioned a sculpture of a horse whose detail was so magnificent that he wanted the community to see it and praise his sculpting ability. The Sculptor took the horse and brought it to town and tied it among the other horses. He sat by it for a full day and no one paid any attention to it. When he came home, he was dejected. His children and wife tried to cheer him up by explaining to him that the work was SOOO exquisite, everyone took it for granted that it was indeed a REAL horse – not just a wonderous sculpture and that this proved just how gifted a sculptor he truly was. The man decided to put his family’ theory to the test and cut the sculpture in half in the town’s square in order to see if the people would notice. Rav Asher explains that the same is true for Kriyas Yam Suf – sometimes we become so used to nature that it is the disruption of nature that reminds how amazing nature is.

**בְּת֥וֹךְ הַיָּ֖ם בַּיַּבָּשָׁ֑ה And Bnei Yisrael went into the sea on dry land (14:22)** – This Possuk refers to the children of Binyamin and Yehuda who went into the sea first waiting for it to split. Later (possuk 29) we read about the opposite order because the water had already split and the land was already dry. **Rav Eliyahu Lopian** explains that there were 2 depths discussed here: the first, was that of Binyamin and Yehuda who trusted in Hashem and the depth of the other tribes who followed suit. Rav Elya adds that the former style is one that is built on Torah and Mitzvos and is pure. Cries from a source like that, never go away empty handed. The latter faith is built on something else and depends on the merits of the believer to get him out and onward.

**וְהַמַּ֤יִם לָהֶם֙ חֹמָ֔ה מִֽימִינָ֖ם וּמִשְּׂמֹאלָֽם The waters were a wall for them (14:29)** – There is a Minhag to have a different trup used for the Shira. There is also a minhag to extend that trup to include the words “V’HaMayim Lahem Choma” as well. The thing is, those words appear twice. Which phrase is the proper one for the minhag of switching the Trup? The generally accepted practice is to apply the custom to the second repetition, the right before Az Yashir. **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** noted that the practice he grew up with was to switch the trup for the first, not the second one**. Rav Schachter Shlita** suggested that the second time the word Chomah is spelled Cheima or anger, since Hashem was angry that the Jews had taken the Pesel Micha with them from Mitzrayim.

**וַיַּֽאֲמִ֨ינוּ֙ בַּֽה וּבְמשֶׁ֖ה עַבְדּֽוֹ: They believed in Hashem and in Moshe his servant (14:31)-** What does this mean? **Rav Schachter** explained that there is a need for belief in Hashem should be a precursor for other Mitzvos. How can it be a Mitzvah in of itself (which is the Rambam’s opinion). It sounds like the **Rambam** understands that the Mitzva is Leida – to go over the logical and philosophical proof to Hashem’s existence. But, no one does that today? The **Baal HaTanya** says that when the word Leida is used, it means that the awareness that Hashem exists should be at the forefront of our minds at all times. Rav Schachter added that this is the meaning of U’B’Moshe Avdo – the same way that they were aware of Moshe’s existence because he stands before him, they have to have that faith in Hashem who needs to be in the forefront of their minds.

**אָ֣ז יָשִֽׁיר־משֶׁה֩ Then Moshe and Bnei Yisrael sang (15:1) – Rashi** notes the Gemara’s use of this verse to prove that there is Techiyas HaMeisim. The Gemara’s proof is that it says Moshe and the Jewish people will sing. What is the Gemara’s lesson? **Rav Dovid Kav** used to tell us that the proof to Techiyas HaMeisim was that in the future Moshe would sing with the entire Jewish people. That a group can stand together and sing in harmony successfully could only come in the future at the time of Techiyas HaMeisim. **Rav Aharon Lopiansky** offered a different interpretation. He suggested that the entire Shira written in its unique style allows not only the body of the words to flow but also the soul that comes from the spaces. Those spaces – representing the souls of Torah – sing in the future when unbound from the rules of nature. Hence, Techiyas HaMeisim min HaTorah.

**אָ֣ז יָשִֽׁיר־משֶׁה֩ Az Yashir (15:1)** – The midrash (Berashis Rabba 68:4) offers the explanation that those who wanted to, offered Shirah while those who didn’t preferred to cry. **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah** explains that there are those who evolve from their internal prison through pain and tears while others emerge through song and the lifting of spirt. The former style is common in the Mussar movement while the latter was more prominent in the Chassidic court. Both styles have their place. Sometimes the former is better, sometimes it is the latter.

**אָ֣ז יָשִֽׁיר־משֶׁה֩ Then they sang (15:1)** – Why didn’t they sing before? The **Yirushalmi (Pesachim 10:6)** answers that when Hashem performs miracles, the chance to sing Shirah for them only begins when the Geulah is complete. So how did they know that the Geulah was complete at the end? **Rav Zolti** explained that it says Vayaaminu BaHashem. The entirety of Geulah is the ability to have Emunah Sheleima and that is when they sang.

**כִּֽי־גָאֹ֣ה גָּאָ֔ה ס֥וּס וְרֹֽכְב֖וֹ רָמָ֥ה בַיָּֽם:  A horse and its rider (15:2) - Rashi**points out that the double language of Gaoh Gaah is important here because it highlights that Hashem did something that man could never do. Hashem destroyed the rider and the horse wherein horse and rider never separated -- even in all the tumult. Why was that such a big deal to the Jews viewing it? **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum** explains that when a person is so attached to his animal that s/he treats the animal as a human, s/he also becomes influenced by the animal’s behavior. A parallel concept exists by those influenced by Torah. If we are so close to it, we become living embodiments of the Torah’s standards. This was the intent here too. In order to contrast the Jew with the Mitzri, Hashem showed us that if you are so attached to something you will be uplifted by it or go down with it. That is the greatness of Hashem -- we should attach ourselves to Him.

**זֶ֤ה קאֵלִי֙ וְאַנְוֵ֔הוּ This is my God and I will praise him (15:2) – The Gemara (Sotah 30b)** notes that even a baby and a fetus in the mother’s womb stopped and pointed and declared “Zeh Keli”. The gemara is troubling. Normally Nevuah is only achieved by those who prepare for it (The Gemara compares the Kiryas Yam Suf to the vision of Yechezkel who definitely prepared), so how could a Shifcha or a fetus attain a higher level of prophesy than those who prepared**? Rav Haim Sabato** explains that the job of the Novi is to prepare himself to be a vessel of Hashem in totality. When a person perceives that his whole existence depends on Hashem, he merits a superior level of awareness (Zeh HaShaar L’Hashem). At the shore of Yam Suf, the babies and fetuses and the Shifcha were all those who fully recognized that their entire existence was in Hashem’s hands – as they were singled out for annihilation. The extra training of the Novi is such that he should not ever forget it – even after the immediate salvation is achieved (See Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz).

**זֶ֤ה קאֵלִי֙ וְאַנְוֵ֔הוּ This is my god and I shall beautify him (15:2)** – **Rav Pam** noted that the word v’anveihu comes from the concept of Ani V’Hu. The understanding is that all Hiddur Mitzva applications must also be based on the idea that it is the Kesher with Hashem that is strengthened in the process of doing the Hiddur. It also means that the Hiddur cannot come at the expense of doing a Mitzva properly – even one that is Bein Adam L’Chaveiro.

**זֶ֤ה קאֵלִי֙ וְאַנְוֵ֔הוּ THIS is my God (15:2**) – Chazal use this possuk to highlight that what the Shifcha saw on the shores of Yam Suf, Yechezkel Ben Buzi didn’t see in all of his prophesies. The question begs, why? And how did they not grow from the experience? **Rav Chaim Sabato**  notes that Nevuah comes in two ways: either as a gift, or through intense preparation for it. The difference between the Nevuah of Yam Suf was that it came easy, and it didn’t last. The Neviim worked hard to preserve their level of understanding and of spirituality whereby they took their attained spiritual levels and catapulted it to new heights. The Shifcha on the shore of the Yam cried for water, 3 days later**. Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz** puts it this way – She still remained a Shifcha.

**זֶ֤ה אֵלִי֙ וְאַנְוֵ֔הוּ This is my God and I will exalt  him (15:2) - Rav Schachter Shlita** would often remind us in the name of Rav Soloveitchik ztl. That every member of Am Yisrael is comprised of 2 connections to Hashem. On the one hand we all have an inherent Kedushas Yisrael but at the same time we accept Hashem’s Godliness upon ourselves. **Rav Soloveitchik** explained that this is why we relate to Hashem as Elokeinu and Elokai Avoseinu -- on the one side we accept Him ourselves and on the other, we have a Yirusha in the relationship.

**אִ֣ישׁ מִלְחָמָ֑ה  Hashem is the master of war (15:3) - Rav Reuven Bulka**  explains that to be a master of war means to be a winner in war and in life. Only Hashem has the ability to be a master of war because He has the ability to wage war while being focused on preservation of the sacred nature of human life. It is an ability to realize that the necessity to fight does not invade His essence or “personality.” A Jew whether Yaakov preparing for his confrontation with Eisav or a member of the IDF confronting those bent on destroying him, strives to Emulate Hashem in this regard.

**יָֽרְד֥וּ בִמְצוֹלֹ֖ת כְּמוֹ־אָֽבֶן They fell to the depths like stone (15:5)** – At certain points the Egyptian people are identified as lead, stone and straw. Why such different descriptions of the ways the Egyptians died? **Rashi** explains that the differences reflected the different styles of the way they experienced punishment. Those who were less evil to the Jews died faster. The worse suffered in the process of their deaths. **Rav Shteinman** explains that this is why in the Shiras HaYam at times the Egyptians are thought of in the single and at other times they are identified in the plural. When they were united as a nation an acted nationally, the single form of pronoun is used. When the people were segmented and their response to Bnei Yisrael diverse, they are identified in the plural because they acted as individuals.

**שָֽׁמְע֥וּ עַמִּ֖ים יִרְגָּז֑וּן The nations heard and trembled (15:14)** – Why is it so important to know how the nations reacted to the news of Kriyas Yam Suf? It seems to get a disproportionate amount of focus in the Shirah, Why? **Rav Belsky** explains that the word Az appears twice in the Shirah. It highlights the two ways one can handle moments that s/he is not prepared for in life. In the first way, Az is harnessed by Bnei Yisrael to see the glory of Hashem and to appreciate it. In the other way – the way of the other nations, it is a means of becoming overwhelmed and not rising to the occasion – choosing to be overtaken and immobilized by our fear. The method we use depends on how we can handle the world with a higher power running it.

**שָֽׁמְע֥וּ עַמִּ֖ים יִרְגָּז֑וּן The nations heard and trembled (15:14)** - The Mechilta notes that when the other nations heard that Pharaoh and his people died and the judgement affected their Avoda Zara, they trembled. But elsewhere we find that even the nations of the world said Mi Kamocha and denied their own Avoda Zara. How does this fit with the idea of trembling mentioned here? **Rav Yechezkel Sarna ztl** explained that in the mind of a non-Jew, it is possible to recognize Hashem supreme nature and at the same time, keeping their Avoda Zara beliefs intact.

**מִרְיָ֨ם הַנְּבִיאָ֜ה Miriam the prophetess (15:20)** - Why is she called a Neviah here? **Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** explained that here her prophesy was being fully actualized as Moshe was completing the rescue of the Jewish nation from their bondage. Therefore it is appropriate to call her the Neviah specifically now.

**וַתִּקַּח֩ מִרְיָ֨ם הַנְּבִיאָ֜ה אֲח֧וֹת אַֽהֲרֹ֛ן אֶת־הַתֹּ֖ף בְּיָדָ֑הּ And Miriam took the drum (15:20)** – After all of the joint singing why do we single out Miriam’s contribution? **Rav Volch** explains that the significance is not the song. Singing in the moment is a natural response to a miracle. The trick is to remember the event afterward. Miriam’s continuation of the song is the guarantee that even in the future the song and its impact will not be lost on the people. Whenever a chance to thank Hashem will come, songs will be sung by Bnei Yisrael to recognize the greatness due Hashem.

**וַתֵּצֶ֤אןָ כָל־הַנָּשִׁים֙ אַֽחֲרֶ֔יהָ בְּתֻפִּ֖ים וּבִמְחֹלֹֽת The women went out after her with drums and cymbals (15:20) - Rashi** notes that the women took these drums with them from Egypt because they had Bitachon that Hashem was going to perform miracles for them. Why does Rashi wait to make this point here? Why not make it when Miriam took the drum? **Rav Aizik Ausband** noted the comments of the Rambam (Yesodei HaTorah 7:4) that Neviim need to be ready to receive Nevuah at any moment and in order to be ready they often carry musical instruments with them in order to be b’Simcha. Miriam was a prophetess and therefore, that she had a drum was not a proof to Bitachon. Rather, when the Jewish women as a group carried the instruments, then it was an indication of intent for Bitachon and hence Rashi’s properly placed comment.

**שִׁ֤ירוּ לַֽה֙ כִּֽי־גָאֹ֣ה גָּאָ֔ה I will sing to Hashem for He is great (15:21)** - Why did Miriam highlight this possuk? **Rav Moshe Aharon Stern ztl.** explained that Miriam wanted to explain to the women as to what their connection to the splitting of the sea truly was. After all, it was a stop on the way to receiving the Torah which they were not obligated to study. Lest they think that they were any less a part of the Simcha, they are the ones who push their husbands and children to study in the way that chariots were also led by the horses that pulled them. Just like the assisting horses were no less significant than their riders, the women who encouraged their homes were no less important.

**וַיַּסַּ֨ע משֶׁ֤ה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ מִיַּם־ס֔וּף And Moshe led Yisrael from Yam Suf (15:22**) – The **Yalkut Shimoni** notes that he led them away from their Aveiros. Based on this, the Yalkut notes that one who experiences a miracle and says Shirah attains atonement for sin. The question is why? **Rav Aharon Kotler** explained that Shirah contains 2 components to it. On the one hand it is a Hakaras Hatov for salvation and on the other hand, it is an opportunity for the person to achieve greater spiritual heights within himself as he becomes more aware of godliness within the world. (Hence the Torah itself – source of holiness and spirituality, is known as a Shirah). To this second reason, we understand why the Jews were permitted to recite Shirah while the Malachim were not. Angels do not grow spiritually, ergo their need to sing was not necessary. When one grows from an experience, he becomes as if he is a new person. Thus, the Yalkut declares he is as if s/he is forgiven for sins.

**כִּ֥י מָרִ֖ים הֵ֑ם They came to Marah and could not drink the water there since they were bitter (15:23) – The Kotzker Rebbe** would note that the bitterness refers to the people, not the water. For when someone is bitter himself, everything tastes bitter.

**שָׁ֣ם שָׂ֥ם ל֛וֹ חֹ֥ק וּמִשְׁפָּ֖ט There he gave them Chok and Mishpat (15:25) - Rashi** (from Sanhedrin 56a) notes that in Marah the Jewish people received the Mitzvos of Shabbos, Parah Adumah and Dinim. Elsewhere (16:22) Rashi notes that the Jews learned first of Shabbos when they received the Manna. How could they have learned Shabbos in Marah and then not know of it in Parshas HaMan? **Rav Menachem Genack** explained that they received the Mitzvos to learn about them in Marah but the Mitzvos were not applicable until later. Hence the word “Yisasku” -- that they received the Mitzvos for learning purposes in Marah.

**שָׁ֣ם שָׂ֥ם ל֛וֹ חֹ֥ק וּמִשְׁפָּ֖ט** **Chok & Mishpat (15:25)** - The Gemara in Sanhedrin suggests that this means that the Jews received certain Mitzvos in Marah including the idea of Dinim. The problem is that Dinim are included in the concept of Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach? How could it be that the Jews received it again? The Gemara answers that this means that they received the rules of fines (Dinei Knasos) which did not exist prior. **Rav Schachter** reminded us that this does not fit with the position of the Ramban who holds that even the Umos HaOlam are commanded to have institutions of fines. This is perhaps the gemara’s intent at the end of Chullin where the gemara identifies 30 mitzvos Bnei Noach. Where are they? Rav Schachter suggested that this is the 24 Avos Nezikin along with the 6 remaining mitzvos Bnei Noach.

**שָׁ֣ם שָׂ֥ם ל֛וֹ חֹ֥ק וּמִשְׁפָּ֖ט** **There he established Chok U’Mishpat (15:25) – Rashi** cites the gemara that Hashem taught them certain mitzvos – Shabbos, Parah Adumah and Dinim. The **Torah Temimah** already challenges the idea that Parah Adumah was the intention here and suggests that it is a printer’s error and should read Kibbud Av. But where does one find Chok AND Mishpat in these concepts? **Rav Eliyahu Schlessinger** explains that Shabbos is both Zecher LBerashis and “LYetzias Mitzrayim – as part of Berashis it is a Chok preceding any reason to rest. As a Zecher to the slavery – it is a clear reminder – and a mishpat. As far as Kibbud Av is concerned – there is Chok and Mishpat – Sefer HaChinuch notes that it is an obligation of Hakaras HaTov while the gemara in noting its reward for Dama Ben Nisina suggests that it is merely a Chok. Even Dinim have both aspects to it: Rashi to Sanhedrin (56) – notes that knasos appeared in Marah as a Chok – since it is not mishpat. All 3 lessons of Marah share the duality.

**שָׁ֣ם שָׂ֥ם ל֛וֹ חֹ֥ק וּמִשְׁפָּ֖ט** **There He gave them law and statute (15:25) - Rashi** explains, based on the gemara in Sanhedrin, that this means that God commanded the Jews to observe three mitzvot even BEFORE receiving the rest of the Torah at Sinai. The three mitzvot were Shabbat, para aduma, and dinim (which Rashi later explains to refer to kibbud av va-em). **Rav Amital** would use this Rashi to help Chozrei B’Teshuva to learn a place to begin. He advised a three part approach:

1. Start by observing Shabbat. If it is too hard to be a Jew seven days a week, then try at least one day a week.

2. Pick any mitzva bein adam le-chaveiro such as kibbud av va-em and observe it scrupulously. It is important to stress that Halakha does not relate only to matters between man and God, but also legislates interpersonal ethics.

3. Para aduma: you must choose a mitzva which you don’t understand and observe it as well. One must realize that despite all the rationale behind the mitzvot, ultimately we cannot understand everything and we do not base our observance only on our rational appreciation of the mitzvot.

**כָּל־הַמַּֽחֲלָ֞ה אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֤מְתִּי בְמִצְרַ֨יִם֙ לֹֽא־אָשִׂ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ Any illness that I placed on Egypt I shall not place on you (15:26) – Rashi** explains that if I do send the illness it will be as if I did not send it. **Rav Meir Shapiro** explains that when Hashem heals directly, it is as if there is no illness and never was. When he sends a Shaliach, it is as if it was there but changed.

**וַיָּבֹ֣אוּ אֵילִ֔מָה וְשָׁ֗ם שְׁתֵּ֥ים עֶשְׂרֵ֛ה עֵינֹ֥ת מַ֖יִם They came to Eilim and there they found 12 wells and 70 date palms (15:27)** – Why was this so significant? Moreover 70 palm trees is not such a large number why is it significant? **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide** explained that there is a strong connection between the 12 and the 70 here and the 12 Shevatim and the 70 Zekanim. The significance is crucial. The dependence we have as a nation on the preservation of the ideals of the Shevatim and the Kavod due to the Zekanim is what keeps us strong. Already as the fledgling nation was growing, we were reminded to remain strong contributors from our position of strength and be rooted in a Torah life that is led by the fruit of the labors of the Zekanim.

**לְמַ֧עַן אֲנַסֶּ֛נּוּ** **So that I shall test you (16:4) - Rav Eliezer Melamed**  points out that the test of the Manna -- to depend on it from day to day and leave nothing over for the next day was a tremendous one. The main challenge that we have in this world is that challenge of providing for our families. Hashem’s goal in introducing the challenge of the Manna was an attempt to change the thinking constructs that the nation of former Avadim had -- namely that they were enslaved to Pharaoh and now they should not become slaves to their own desires and work schedules.

**וְנַ֣חְנוּ מָ֔ה And what are we (16:8)** – The Gemara (Chullin 9a) notes that what was written about Moshe is even greater than what is said about Avraham. Avraham said that he was dust and ash. Moshe didn’t even consider himself worth that much. But in the end, aren’t they both highlighting their smallness in face of Hashem’s greatness? **Rav Meir Shapiro ztl.** explained that to be in front of Hashem everyone is Ash and dust but to see oneself that way in front of others – that is a trait that was more praiseworthy when made by Moshe.

**עֹ֣מֶר לַגֻּלְגֹּ֗לֶת Take from it an omer for each head (16:16)** – Normally when the phrase “Zeh HaDavar Asher Tziva Hashem” is used, it refers to something that I relevant for future generations as well. Why is it used here in the context of the Manna which was only relevant for that generation**? Maran HaRav Schachter** explains that this is a reference to the ongoing obligation of a husband and father to take care of providing for his wife and children. It was a Horaas Shaah requiring them to go collect the Manna itself but a message for the future in regard to future generations as well.

**וַיִּקְצֹ֥ף עֲלֵהֶ֖ם משֶֽׁה They didn’t listen to Moshe and they left food and it became wormy and Moshe got angry (16:20)** - Why did Moshe get angry? Didn’t this show that Hashem’s will is supreme? **Rav Druk**  explains that until Dasan V’Aviram left things over, the people ate the Manna every day with the understanding that they were putting their faith in Hashem to provide for the next day. This would now have to change. Now that they were aware that leaving things over would lead to spoilage, the purpose in consuming every morsel became more mundane -- they would eat so that they would have to deal with the spoilage.

**הַיּ֕וֹם לֹ֥א תִמְצָאֻ֖הוּ בַּשָּׂדֶֽה Today you shall not find it in the field (16:25) – The Beis Yisrael of Ger** would often stop his Chassidim and ask them “Where did you eat today?” It was incumbent for the Chossid to understand his words. The Rebbe wanted his Chassidim to understand that Shabbos HaYom L’Hashem – today is totally Kadosh and on a day like today with such Kedusha, you need to grab every ounce you can because you will not find such an experience in the Sadeh – the days of the week.

**הֲיֵ֧שׁ ה' בְּקִרְבֵּ֖נוּ אִם־אָֽיִן**: **Is Hashem with(in) us or not? (17:7) – Rav Efraim Greenblatt** . points out that it is not enough for us to state that there is a Hashem. Rather, each and every Jew must recognize the part of Hashem that is inside each and every one of us. Each of us has the ability to create a Tzintzenet of Manna fr ourselves through Limmud HaTorah and remind ourselves of all the great tastes of the world we can enjoy because of the Torah.

**וַיָּבֹ֖א עֲמָלֵ֑ק** **And Amalek came (17:8)** – How could the nation about whom it is written that they saw the hand of Hashem become the nation attacked by Amalek? **Ohr HaChaim** explains that they were lazy in their study of Torah – that they didn’t remain trained for the battles it required so they fought a different battle – that of Amalek. **Kli Yakar** adds that the power of Amalek is like the power of the fly – it is a weak creation until it is placed on an open wound. When that happens it can place a deadly infection that can bring a whole body down. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel** adds that this is what happened with Amalek. That is why we deal with them so harshly.

**וַיָּבֹ֖א עֲמָלֵ֑ק** **Amalek came and fought Bnei Yisrael in Refidim (17:8)** – The **Yalkut Shimoni** notes that Refidim refers to the fact that they lightened themselves from Torah study. In 1968, **Rav Nachum Percovitz**  told his students that the intention of the Midrash was not to those who were totally deficient in their Torah study. Rather, it referred to those who would talk about the miracles of Hashem instead of studying the stories of Yevamos in depth. For someone who can study Torah deeply, spending the time telling miracle stories is a Rifyon in Torah diligence.

**וַיָּבֹ֖א עֲמָלֵ֑ק** **The battle of Amalek (17:8-13) – Rav Chaim Sabato** notes the incredible breadth of the Parsha that rests upon the hands. The beginning of the Parsha begins with the Yad HaGedolah but the end ends with Parshas HaMan and the battle of Amalek. Rav Sabato notes that the battle of Amalek teaches a valuable lesson in the way that Bnei Yisrael go to war. While Moshe’s hands are lifted, they are not miraculously the hands that win or lose the war. Battle still had to be waged down below by Yehoshua and the army. Rather, in the new reality, Hashem wanted to fight in the midst of the Jewish people not instead of them. The hands of Moshe alone would not make or break the battle (as in the future, taking the Aron into battle alone also would not make or break the war – the aron could be seized) but would serve as inspiration for the soldiers to remember for whom they fought and to be aware that Hashem was to be with them. The new reality involved taking personal Achrayos together WITH the involvement of Hashem.

**וַיֹּ֨אמֶר משֶׁ֤ה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁ֨עַ֙ בְּחַר־לָ֣נוּ אֲנָשִׁ֔ים וְצֵ֖א הִלָּחֵ֣ם בַּֽעֲמָלֵ֑ק He told Yehoshua go and choose people for us (17:9)** - Why did Moshe send Yehoshua to battle Amalek? **Rav Dovid Cohen Shlita (Gevul Yaavetz)** explain that Moshe did not want to respect the challenge of Amalek so he sent Yehoshua with a small army to show the disrespect toward the threat from Amalek. He added that Amalek’s association is the Midda of Leitzanus -- so he sent Yehoshua to demonstrate just how little we consider the worth of Leitzanus.

**וְאַֽהֲרֹ֨ן וְח֜וּר תָּֽמְכ֣וּ בְיָדָ֗יו מִזֶּ֤ה אֶחָד֙ וּמִזֶּ֣ה אֶחָ֔ד  Moshe’s hands were heavy...and Aharon and Chur each took one hand (17:12) - Rav Schwab**  notes that Aharon is recognized as the universal war hawk who moved to battle immediately. Moshe had to take each of these styles into account when leading the people through tough times and use each one appropriately. Rav Schwab adds that this ability to twin the styles was lost later when the people were going through the Eigel episode with Moshe absent.

**כְּתֹ֨ב זֹ֤את זִכָּרוֹן֙ בַּסֵּ֔פֶר** **And Hashem told Moshe to write this down in a Sefer (17:14)** – We do not find that Moshe followed through? Why is it not included here? **Rav Nissan Alpert .**explained that the Mitzva to destroy Amalek was not going to be achieved by Moshe Rabbeinu. Thus, the writing of the Mitzva was a middle step before the achievement which would happen only through Yehoshua. Thus, Moshe didn’t complete the job and such the Torah does not credit him with having done so.

**Haftarah**

**כִּ֣י בְֽיַד־אִשָּׁ֔ה יִמְכֹּ֥ר Hashem will sell victory in the hand of a woman (Shoftim 4:9)** – Who is the intended woman in this Possuk? **Redak** assumes it is Yael who ultimately kills Sisra. **Ralbag** assumes it is a reference to Devorah to whom the miracle is credited as seen by the song called Shiras Devorah. The **Meshech Chochma** wants to prove that Yael is the intended in so far as it is she who paid a price for the head of Sisra. For as a result of her actions she would no longer be able to be married to Chever HaKeini.

**וְסִֽיסְרָא֙ נָ֣ס בְּרַגְלָ֔יו  Sisra ran away with his feet (Shoftim 4:17)** - Why does the Novi need us to know how he ran -- why is the foot so crucial?  The **Ben Ish Chai** explained that whenever we undertake a physical action with any of our body parts, we need to include our heads first. Sisra, if he were thinking with his head first would not have stopped at the tent of Yael. But alas, he was thinking with his feet first and he paid for it with his life.

**וַתָּ֣שַׁר דְּבוֹרָ֔ה וּבָרָ֖ק בֶּן־אֲבִינֹ֑עַם** **Devorah and Barak sang that day (Shoftim 5:1) – Mesech Chochma** notes that unlike Moshe’s Shirah, this one did not mention that it was to Hashem. Why? He answers that it mentions the curse to Meiroz who did not join the battle. Hashem does not want his name associated with negativity. **Rav Chaim Zietchik .** notes the importance of care not to embarrass or curse someone even when engaging in holy work. Perhaps that is the time to be most careful – so that the work be associated with Meleches Shomayim. **Rav Binyamin Eisenberger** notes the importance of not focusing on the evil – for even in the context of Shirah to Hashem, the recognition of Hashem’s acceptance of the Shirah was knocked out of the Navi. We need to be careful that in our activities designed to be Mikadeish Shem shomayim we are not guilty of engaging in Avaira that extinguishes a Mitzva.

**יִבְחַר֙ אֱלֹהִ֣ים חֲדָשִׁ֔ים** **When the Jews chose new Gods (5:8)** – The Yalkut Shimoni explains that this is Elokim – a Shem Kodesh that Hashem loves new Chiddushei Torah. **Rav Schachter** quotes **Rav Soloveitchik** who explains that there is a difference between a Chiddush and a Shinui. Sometimes one needs to be careful not to overstep boundaries of the religion through Chiddush. Rav Soloveitchik noted that like Rosh Chodesh which also involves something new, we need to ask the Sanhedrin. This will help determine if we are making a Chiddush or a Shinui.

**עוּרִ֚י עוּרִי֙ דְּבוֹרָ֔ה ע֥וּרִי ע֖וּרִי דַּבְּרִי־שִׁ֑יר** **Arise Arise Devorah (Shoftim 5:12) - Rashi** cites the Gemara (Pesachim 66b) that Devorah lost her Ruach HaKodesh for her declaration that until I, Devorah came. If that was so bad, why does she repeat the error and single herself out again here? **The author of the Ben Porat Yosef** explains that the mention of her name here was to remove the Gaavah (hubris) hence she said -- “speak a shir” to daven to remove the Gaava from her heart. She was calling herself out on her missteps.

**כֵּ֠ן יֹאבְד֚וּ כָל־אוֹיְבֶ֙יךָ֙**  **So too, the enemies of Hashem should be destroyed (Shoftim 5: 31)** – The Gemara (Gittin 36b) notes that those who are embarrassed and do not respond are considered among the ones referenced here as part of the end of the Shiras Devorah – those who love Hashem. **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik** asked where the reference to the ones who are embarrassed appears in the possuk? He answered in the name of **Rav Kook** that in truth the possuk on the surface offers a contradiction – it refers to a Tzeis HaShemesh which refers to dawn and B’Gevuraso – when the sun is at its strongest which is much later – at Chatzos. What then does the Possuk refer to? It must refer to the one who is knocked down quietly but whose greatest strength is yet to be seen. That is the Tzeitz HaShemesh – the embarrassed one still has a lot of good things to say and do really soon…