

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT BESHALACH

Reveal What Is Hidden

Before the splitting of the sea, the Jewish people were in a place called Pi Hacheros, which opened up to the shore of the Sea of Reeds, the sea was raging and Pharaoh with the whole Egyptian army was pursuing them, quickly approaching. Moshe said to them, "Have no fear, stand firm and witness the deliverance that Hashem will perform for you today, for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see again. Hashem will do battle for you, and you shall remain silent."

The Midrash says that there were four factions, four opinions of how to deal with their situation. One group said, "We should drown ourselves in the sea," anything but resume to be their slaves. The second group said, "We should return to Egypt," and be their slaves, at least we will live. The third said, "We should make war against them," perhaps we will win. And the fourth group said, we shouldn't do any of the first three options, but "we should cry out to Hashem," and He will surely help.

Our verses were a refutation to all four factions. To those who said, "We should drown ourselves in the sea," Moshe said, "Stand firm and witness the deliverance that Hashem will perform for you today," to those who said, "We should return to Egypt," he said, "for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see again." To those who said, "We should make war against them," he said, "Hashem will do battle for you," and to those who said, "We should cry out to Hashem," he said, "You shall remain silent."

Rather, what should they do? Hashem said, "Speak to the children of Israel, and they should journey forth." Continue on the path that leads to Mount Sinai, where you will receive the Torah because that is the whole reason for the Exodus from Egypt.

It is hard to understand how the answer to all of these four opposing opinions could be in a single statement. They are so different that some are diametric opposites.

WHERE THERE'S STRUGGLE, THERE'S PURPOSE.

opposite of, "making war against them." All three are taking matters into their own hands, as opposed to "crying out to Hashem," which is putting it in Hashem's hands. So how can they all be swept away with one short statement?

The order of Moshe's answer is also difficult to understand. It would make sense to first respond to "return to Egypt" because that was the lowest of the four and the opposite of what they were doing, the Exodus from Egypt. Then the other three, each a step higher, drowning, war, and prayer. Instead, he responded to "drowning in the sea" first. Why?

"We should drown ourselves in the sea," is the diametric opposite of, "returning to Egypt." And both are, in a way, giving up; the diametric

Another question. What was wrong with their recommendations, that they had to be refuted? True, drowning in the sea, is against our belief, one must not take his or her own life, and returning to Egypt is giving up, and as a Jew, one must never give up hope in Hashem. However, to go to war with them, is a noble gesture, standing up to our oppressors, and protecting our families. What is wrong with that? And what could be better than putting our total faith in Hashem, by turning to Him in prayer? Isn't that what we are meant to do in a crisis?

Finally, what are we meant to learn from this event?

Even though the Exodus happened seven days earlier, the Jewish people were not completely free until the splitting of the sea, as they were still being pursued by the Egyptians. It was only after they crossed the sea and the Egyptians drowned, that the Exodus was complete.

This is one of the reasons that we mention the splitting of the sea in our prayers. Because we have an obligation to mention the Exodus every day, and according to some, one must also mention the splitting of the sea, the end of the Exodus, otherwise, it isn't considered as if he mentioned the Exodus at all. Because until the splitting of the sea, we weren't completely free.

From this is understood, that in order to free ourselves from our personal Egypt, as we say in the Haggadah, "In every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he came out of Egypt." And as it is explained to mean, "In every generation, and every day," we have to negate the first four opinions and act in the way of "journeying forth." In other words, there are two stages in the Exodus, first leaving Egypt, and second, the splitting of the sea.

Leaving Egypt is the first stage, in it we negate the confines and the servitude to the evil inclination and the animal soul, and we serve Hashem by accepting His yoke; without which there is no freedom. Because if he is not able to keep even one mitzvah, because of the hold the evil inclination and animal soul have on him, he is not truly free.

The problem he faces after entering this stage is that since he is only serving Hashem through accepting His yoke, Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the evil inclination and the animal soul, continue to chase after him and cover up the light of the G-dly soul that is in him.

However, when he enters the second stage, he starts to serve Hashem in a way that "turns the sea into dry land," he uncovers and reveals the G-dliness that is hidden in the world; he sees Hashem in everything. Then he is truly free, the evil inclination and the animal soul can't bother him anymore. When he works on himself, reveals his true purpose, and follows the path that Hashem wants him to take (in other words, the path that allows him to "journey forth"), then he is truly free.



The problem with the four opinions is that they keep you from "journeying forth." The groups are in the order of worst to least encumbering.

The worst of all, is "we should drown ourselves in the sea." This is the attitude of one who cuts himself off from the world. He isn't interested in taking care of anybody but himself. He throws himself into the sea, the sea of Torah, the sea of Tefillah, and the sea of Teshuva. And when you ask him, "What about the world? What about another Jewish person?" He says, "Let someone else do it! Why should I mix into Hashem's affairs?!" It is cold in the exile, so he puts on his coat and he is warm. He could warm up others, but he says, "I can't warm up the whole world," it is beneath his dignity to do a small amount, if he can't warm up the whole world, he will do nothing. So he puts on his coat and he is warm. Very nice.

The problem with this way of thinking is that it goes nowhere.

The next faction said, "We should return to Egypt," and be their slaves. This is the person who is stuck. He feels the burden of the Torah, the burden of Judaism, but it is a burden. He keeps the Torah, but he has no enjoyment in it. He serves Hashem by accepting His yoke. It is honorable to serve Hashem this way, but accepting His yoke is only the beginning of serving Hashem, ultimately, one has to understand and find pleasure in his service. But what should he do? It is difficult to be a Jew. Nebach.

The problem with this way of thinking is that he is stuck in the jail of his mind, in perpetual servitude, and because of that, he can't move forward.

The third faction said, "We should make war against them." This is the person who sees the Torah and its holiness as fighting the forces of evil. He is leading the charge.

The problem with this way of thinking is that Hashem wanted us to go to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai, and this is a distraction from the task at hand. Plus, how does he know that it is coming from the right place? Perhaps it is just his nature to like to fight. Did he ask Moshe if it's what Hashem wants?

The fourth faction said, "We should cry out to Hashem." This is the person who is at a very high level, he puts his total trust in Hashem. The problem with this is that he does nothing, but Hashem wants us to put in our effort and use our abilities to serve Him.

We as Jews live in a dichotomy, on one hand, we have to trust in Hashem that He will take care of us, and at the same time. He wants us to use our abilities to the fullest. On one hand, we are meant to believe that everything that happens is from Hashem, and therefore, totally good, even if we don't see it that way. And at the same time, we are meant to ask for revealed good and trust that He will grant us what we are asking for.

This way of thinking is totally valid and praiseworthy; it is the essence of a Jew. Why do we have this dichotomy? Because Hashem is able to have polar opposites within Him, and we are one with Him, therefore we have this ability, this dichotomy, as well.

I see this in my own life. It is so hard for me, and it is so difficult and heartbreaking for my wife and children to live this life. On one hand, we know that this is Hashem's will, and we know that he has a good reason for giving me ALS. We do our best to be happy, and we try to use our challenge to do good, lift others up, and teach the ways of Hashem. On the other hand, we pray every day, for this test to come to an end, that we see revealed good, total health and function, and we expect it to happen. I know it's crazy, but that is who we are as Jews, and that is truth at the highest level; when you are who you are.

What is the path that we are meant to follow? The path of Hashem, to "journey forth," to head towards the destination that will accomplish what Hashem wants. To make this world into a home for Hashem.

The common denominator of the four opinions is that they were all opinions based on human intellect, which is, at best, flawed. And since they share this common link, they were refuted in the same short statement.

How do you figure out which path Hashem wants you to take?

It is the path that you know is correct, but it is also the one that you want to follow the least. The mitzvah you have the most difficulty with is the one that you need to do the most. Because the evil inclination puts up a fight when it comes to what is most important for you to do.

May we journey forth on the path that Hashem wants us to, even though it is a struggle. This struggle will uncover the G-dliness within us, and the G-dliness that is in the world. Just as following Hashem's path split the sea for us and completed the redemption from the Egyptians, so too, by following the path that Hashem wants us to, and not what is easy, we will once again split the sea, reveal the G-dliness that is hidden in the world, and Moshiach will come. The time has come.

"Dear Rabbi Yitzi

Thank you for sharing your life and wisdom with us! I am so inspired by you and your family.

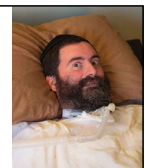
Your resilience and strength to continue spreading light is a strong life lesson in its own right, and the wisdom and content of each of your writings is so impactful! Please continue to inspire! May Hashem bless you all with good health and all you deserve!!!

Reading you from France"

- Dvora B. Toulon

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



DEDICATED IN HONOR OF THE BIRTHDAY OF
RABBI YOSSI BISTON

• ט' שבט •

SPONSOR AN EDITION OF TORAH FROM MY EYES: (937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

FOLLOW RABBI YITZI HURWITZ'S WISDOM ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@RABBIYITZI



TEXT 'SUBSCRIBE' TO (937) 770-4802