



דרכים בפרשה

בשלח



אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת
“Then Moshe and the Bnei Yisroel sang this song”

Parshas Beshalach, also known as Shabbos Shira, features the beautiful *Az Yashir*, sung by Moshe Rabbeinu and the Bnei Yisroel, as well as the *shirah* that the women sang, led by Miriam Ha'neviah. Moshe began his song with the word *az*. Chazal tell us that Moshe sinned with the word “*az*” when he complained, ומאז באתי אל פרעה לדבר בשמך – “And from the time I came to Pharaoh, You made things worse for the People.” Moshe now wanted to fix this up. He corrected his sin with the use of this same word “*az*” when he sang “*Az yashir Moshe*.” The Midrash is not just telling us that the same word was used, so all is good now. Rather, it is emphasizing the thematic relationship between these *pesukim* and events. Let's explain how.

There are many explanations of this Midrash. The Beis HaLevi's is one of the more well-known: At the time of redemption, we will be privileged to look back and understand how all that we thought was bad and to our detriment was really a *bracha* in disguise. Moshe sang “*Az Yashir*” with the realization that the

suffering he complained of and questioned, “*me'az basi el Pharaoh*,” was really all for the good.

Moving on to the next *shirah*, we find that the *pasuk* begins: ותען להם מרים — *and Miriam chanted for them*. According to the rules of *dikduk*, the word להם should have been written as להן because Miriam was leading the women. It seems that Miriam did indeed first talk to the men. The Beis Yisroel once jokingly explained that she was yelling at the men, asking them to leave so the women can now have their opportunity to sing as well. Only after that did they begin to sing.

The *seforim hakedoshim* give another *p'shat*. Miriam was giving the men rebuke about their song. “It's really nice that all of you men are singing. But where was your song a minute before the Yam Suf split?” In other words — are you only a *ma'amin* when you see Hashem's salvation with your eyes? Is that what it takes to get you to say thank you to Hashem and sing His praise? The women have been singing all along. When Amram and Yocheved separated because all seemed lost, Miriam

approached Amram and convinced him to remarry, thus causing all the husbands to do the same. When Moshe and the other babies were drowning in the water, Miriam stood there, a bedrock of faith. In Mitzrayim, when the men couldn't think of carrying on any more, it was the wives that went out to the fields with a hot meal, dressed up beautifully for their husbands.

Similarly, the Gemara in Sanhedrin (92b) tells us a most fascinating story. Nevuchadnetzar threw Chananya, Mishoel and Azarya into a fiery furnace. At that moment, Hashem told Yechezkel to revive the dry bones that were nearby in the Dura Valley. After they were revived, these bones came and struck Nevuchadnetzar on his face. Upon seeing this miracle, Nevuchadnetzar offered a most incredible *shirah* to Hashem (Daniel 3:33). The *Malach* (Gavriel) came down and slapped him across the face, causing the song to conclude. The Gemara ends off by quoting Rav Yitzchok that were it not for the *Malach* causing him to stop, this new song could have overshadowed the songs of Dovid Hamelech.

Without dissecting this entire story, there is a very compelling question from the Kotzker Rebbe that needs to be mentioned (Sefer Lahavos Kodesh, pg. 109). Why did Hashem send a *Malach* to stop his song? Was he not singing Hashem's praises? The rebbe

explained that there is no *chochma* to praise Hashem after witnessing incredible miracles. "Let's give him a *potch* and see if he will still sing!" Of course, at the moment he was hit, the song ended. Contrasting him to Dovid Hamelech, the *ne'im zmiros Yisroel*, he was a man that *chapped petch* his entire life. His brothers chased him out, calling him terrible names; a lion tried to kill him in the forest; Shaul pursued him; he lost a baby son; one of his sons killed another; his son Avshalom rebelled against him; he had to put up with numerous detractors and foes, and so on and so forth. And yet, Dovid Hamelech never stopped singing Hashem's praises — because he knew that He always has a master plan.

This *parshah* teaches us to look at our lives — and no matter what is going on, buckle down and never allow the song to die out. Got questions? Sure, there are plenty! *Emunah*? All the more so! What was obvious to the women all along, Moshe Rabbeinu came to teach us all — making sure that the music will never fade for even a moment.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפּעל



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