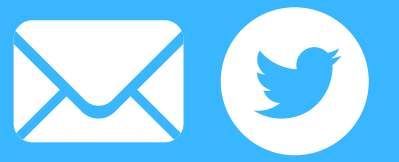




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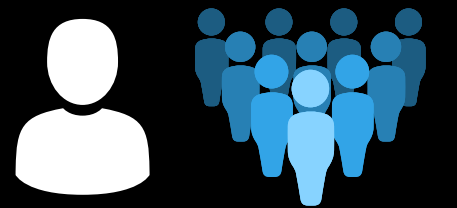
BESHALACH - בשלח

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

The Parsha begins with the Jews leaving Egypt armed, and Moshe taking Yosef's bones, as promised to Yosef in **Parshas Vayechi**. The Jews are guided by a **pillar of cloud** during the day and a **pillar of fire** at night, which Hashem uses to lead them to the **Yam Suf, Sea of Reeds**. Pharaoh regrets letting the Jews leave and chases after them with his army. The Jews see the Egyptians approaching and become very afraid, crying to Moshe that they would rather be slaves than die in the wilderness. Moshe reassures them that Hashem will save them. Hashem tells Moshe to stretch out his staff and hold his arm over the sea to split it for the Jews to cross through. The Jews camp overnight, protected by an angel in the **pillar of cloud**. In the morning, Moshe splits the sea and the Jews walk across on dry land. As Egyptians pursue them, Hashem instructs Moshe to hold his arm over the sea so the water will cover the Egyptians. The Jews see the Egyptian army destroyed, and Moshe leads them in the song of **Az Yashir**. **Miriam**, Moshe's sister, leads the women in song with the **instruments** that they took from Egypt. The Jews travel for three days and arrive in **Marah**. The Jews complain to Moshe about the bitter water there, and he sweetens the water by throwing a piece of wood into it. They travel to **Elim**, and then to **Sin** in the **Sinai Desert**. There, they complain to Moshe about lacking food, and Moshe says that Hashem will give them **bread from Heaven** every morning to be collected daily, except **Shabbos**, and **quail** in the evening. The Jews call the bread **man**, and Moshe instructs Aharon to take a portion of **man** and store it in the **Mishkan**, tabernacle, for future generations. The Jews travel to **Rephidim** and complain about lacking water. Hashem tells Moshe to go to **Horev** with the elders of the Jews and strike a rock to bring out water. The nation of **Amalek** attacks the Jews, and **Yehoshua** leads the battle against them. Moshe stands on a mountain and when he holds up his hands, the Jews overcome Amalek, but when he drops his hands, Amalek is strengthened. The Jews defeat Amalek, and Hashem commands Moshe to destroy the memory of Amalek from the world.

THINK ABOUT IT:

In the **Talmud**, our Rabbis teach us that the Jews were scared to walk into the Sea, and no one wanted to go first. **Nachson ben Aminadav**, leader of the tribe of **Yehuda**, walked first into the sea, and the people followed. **Imagine making Nachson's decision. Have you ever been the first to do something big? How did it feel?**



A SHABBOS OF SONG

This Shabbos is known as **Shabbos Shirah**, the Shabbos of Song, named for **Az Yashir**, the song that the Jews sang when they left Egypt. In a Torah scroll, the format of this song is rare and notable:

This Shabbos, we emphasize a subtle miracle in the splitting of the sea: at that moment, every single Jew had completely revealed faith in Hashem. **Rashi** (1040-1105, France) teaches that when the Jews said, "**This is my G-d**" (15:2) each and every Jew saw G-d so clearly that they could have pointed at Him.

Thus, we commemorate that faith and use it as inspiration for growth in our own belief in Hashem.

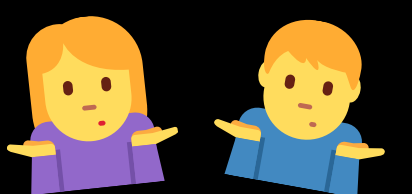


image from Chabad.org

WHO ARE AMALEK?

Amalek is the nation that attacked the Jews right after leaving Egypt. The **Midrash** compares their attack to someone who jumped into a scalding pot of water to cool it down for everyone else. Thus, Amalek attacked the Jews first because, as the whole world was hearing about Hashem's Power and the greatness of the Jews, Amalek wanted to bring **doubt** into the equation. In fact, **Our Rabbis** teach that the name Amalek, **עמלק**, has the same **gematria**, numerical value, as **doubt**, **ספק**.

Amalek attacks immediately after the Jews question G-d, asking, "Is Hashem present among us, or not?" Those few words, said only weeks after Hashem revealed Himself by splitting the Yam Suf, planted the first seeds of doubt into the Jews' minds and hearts. Amalek symbolizes any force that tries to conceal Hashem or destroy His People, the Jews.



DISCUSS:
Why can doubt be so damaging?

THE MYSTERIOUS FOOD

When the Jews ask for food, Hashem gives them **man**, which rains down from heaven every morning. They are commanded to take only what they need for that day and are limited to the amount of an **omer**, and are forbidden from leaving any over for the following day. They are also told to take a double portion on Friday and not to collect on **Shabbos**. The Torah tells us that Hashem gave us the **man** as a test, to see if they will follow **Torati** - either "**My instructions**", or "**My Torah**".



Why do you think Hashem wanted to test the Jews' commitment to the Torah through man? Other than Shabbos, can you think of any other mitzvos or values that can be learned from the man?



וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה הֲגִבִי מִמַּטֵּיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וּלְקַטּוֹ דָּבָר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לְמַעַן אֲנִסְנֶנּוּ הַיֵּלֶךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי אִם לֹא: (שמות ט"ז:ד)

And Hashem said to Moshe, "I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people shall go out and gather each day that day's portion, that I may thus test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not.

The way that Hashem gave the Jews the **man** is very interesting. The source of the **man** and the **quails** was falling from the sky. **Bechor Shor** (12th century, France) explains that this took away the possibility of accessing more **man**, and made the Jews look up to the sky every day to wait for more food to come from Hashem. Additionally, by making the Jews wait for a new portion daily instead of letting them stock up, the **Midrash** explains that Hashem forced the Jews to become constantly aware of their reliance on Him because they had to trust that more would come every day.

DISCUSS:
Do you think the system of the **man** was an ideal way to live? Why or why not?