

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Shimon Spitzer

Today's Rejoicing, Tomorrow's Redemption

In the days of Reb Meir Premishlan, a group of businessmen ran a business selling animal hides. At one point, they decided that it would be prudent to take out a loan and invest in stocking their store with large quantities with which they could sell the hides to customers. It seemed like a reasonable and prudent business decision. But some time after, the price for hides went down, and with it, the business began to plummet. Fewer and fewer customers and clients were interested in buying any hide, and certainly not any inventory. With the future uncertain and their incomes in question, on top of the worries of how they'd ever be capable of paying back the steep loan they took out, they approached Reb Meir Premishlan.

Hearing their plight, Reb Meir returned to them with his suggestion. "Make a seudah (festive meal), and then you will have a yeshua (salvation)."

Following the instructions, the businessman gathered a group together with the intention of hosting a festive meal and dancing. And they did just that.

Within weeks, the markets fluctuated, and the hides rose in price, thereby enabling the company to not only recoup the loss, but make a huge financial gain.

In response to this incident, Reb Meir Premishlan remarked that this idea can be seen from the Megillas Esther. The Megillah tells us that the Jewish people had "Ohr," which

means light. Now, while the Megillah spells the word "Ohr" with the letter aleph, which refers to light, the word "Ohr" can also be pronounced just the same when spelled with an ayin, and refers to "hide." The remainder of the Pasuk states, "And the Jews had Ohr (read as "hide), and happiness and rejoicing, and y'kar." Y'kar refers to honor or respect, but also can mean "an increase in value." The Pasuk was therefore alluding to this very incident— "And the Jews had hide; they were happy and rejoiced, and it (the hide) went up in value."

This fact, however, that a person should make a seudah, festive meal, and rejoice even before the yeshua has arrived is not a new concept. Many tzaddikim conducted themselves this way, and it has been sourced as a bona fide measure to take to yield a positive outcome.

The Chasam Sofer (1:185) notes that there is one part of the Purim storyline which doesn't quite fit in. Esther invites Achashverosh and Haman to a meal. Afterwards, the Megillah describes the redemption which ensued for the Jewish nation. The connection between the seudah which Esther held and the subsequent yeshua for the Jewish people is not arbitrary. The power of rejoicing in the form a seudah even before the positive deliverance which you are seeking has occurred is very significant. When you truly believe that Hashem is bringing you to a better life situation, and you can discover within yourself to identify with that good and rejoice in it even before it

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has arrived, such an attitude produces wondrous results.

This is why, explains the Chasam Sofer, Esther hosted a seudah prior to the Jewish nation being saved, and why the Megillah records this fact. It is a relevant guide to us, instructing us with a certain means whereby we can activate positive measures in our life even before they arrive before us in a revealed way. Believing with certainty that Hashem will help you, and openly expressing that fact in the form of a joyous seudah, is a very valuable channel to bring down blessing.

Moreover, writes the Chasam Sofer, the verses in Tehillim (Ch. 22) which discuss the journey of Esther state, “My G-d, my G-d, why have You forsaken me; why so far from saving me, from the words of my outcry?” (22:2). The Chasam Sofer interprets this to mean, “My salvation was distant from me because I was only crying and

shouting to Hashem.” A person may be crying out for a yeshua and find that he has yet to be answered, as the next Pasuk says, “O my G-d! I call out by day—and You do not answer; and by night—but there is no rest for me.” However, what brings about an outflow of deliverance and blessing from Heaven is when such bitachon in Hashem is strongly solidified in the physical manifestation of actual celebration and rejoicing. “Yet You are the Holy One, seated upon the praises of Israel.” Hashem, explains the Chasam Sofer, is “sitting and waiting” for the time when we will praise Him. When the time arrives that we thank Hashem and rejoice in his soon-to-be yeshua, such an action will yield fountains of blessing.

The import of this message is very powerful. If you are going through a difficult situation, not only knowing that everything Hashem does is

good, and not only praying that you should see the revealed good soon, and not only feeling happy that the yeshua will arrive, but hosting a seudah now while celebrating with confident bitachon that the yeshua will occur is a potent means to bring about tremendous blessings in your life.

Of course, this is not meant to be a little “technique” to get what you are seeking. It is rooted in genuine bitachon and the real feeling that everything Hashem does in this world is good and moreover that this situation in particular that you are experiencing is good too. With this in your heart and in your mind, you will see an overflowing of goodness in your life speedily.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn

You Will Make It

The Gemara (Erchin 15a) tells us something remarkable.

When the Jewish people crossed the Red Sea, we assume that they entered on one side and exited on the other side and the Egyptians pursued them from behind. But in learning the Gemara, that is not what happened. The Jews didn't enter on one side and leave on the other.

Tosfos, in fact, includes a picture demonstrating this. The Jews entered and exited the Yam Suf in a semi-circle. They entered on one side and existed on the same side, miles away from their starting point.

Now, if this is the case, then we realize something extraordinary. The Gemara tells us that all the Shevatim, tribes, were lined up

side by side as they walked through the Yam Suf. The tribe that was therefore walking on the innermost side of the circle had the shortest distance to traverse from their starting point to end point. Conversely, the tribe that walked on the most outer side of the circle had the furthest distance to travel from their starting point to end point.

Every tribe had a different route in which they traveled. No two tribes walked the same distance. To each, their own. Some had it shorter, some had it longer.

Rav Chaim Sanzer, the Divrei Chaim, extracted from this Gemara a marvelous insight, and one that is very important and encouraging. The Gemara (Sotah 2a) tells that shidduchim, matching a man and woman for marriage, is as difficult as the splitting of the Red Sea. In-

sights abound in explanation of this Gemara. In light of the above, we have a new way of understanding the correlation between shidduchim and Krias Yam Suf.

For some boys and girls, the process of shidduchim is akin to a short walk, like the tribe that had the least distance to travel from one side of the Sea to the other side. For others, the process of shidduchim takes longer. And yet for others, even longer. However, for all of them, they all made it. Everyone reached the other side.

If you or your loved one is in the process of shidduchim and it is taking time, do not be worried. The process is like that of moving through the Yam Suf. For some it is a shorter process, and for others it is longer, but everyone will make it across.

We should all gain chizuk, encouragement, from this. You too will make it.

Rabbi Ari Bensoussan

A Waste?

The Chazon Ish had a Kollel in Israel in the mid-1900s. But with its financial stability uncertain, one of the students was designated to take trip by boat to America from Israel. As matters turned out, after six months of doing what he could to raise funds, he hadn't collected anything. Literally. Finally, after months of working at it, he had raised just enough for himself to purchase a return ticket to Israel.

Though he had returned to Israel, he felt so ashamed that he had not collected anything. As a result, he didn't make any return visit to the Chazon Ish. In no way did he want to approach the Chazon Ish and inform him that he had absolutely nothing to offer the yeshiva in return for his months spent in American trying to raise money. He would join another yeshiva or find some other place to study. He just couldn't bring himself to face the Chazon Ish so ashamed.

Days later, a few students approached the man and informed him that the Chazon Ish wanted to see him. With a heavy heart, he appeared before the Chazon Ish.

Humbly and with great remorse, he explained that he had done with utmost. He had davened and attempted to meet with whomever he could, but he just had not seen any fortune. He was so broken and so sorry.

"You collected \$50,000," said the Chazon Ish. The man was perturbed. "What do you mean? I didn't collect anything." "About two months after you left, a very wealthy man from Australia was looking for a minyan. He ended up praying with us, and after he inquired into our yeshiva, he was impressed and told us that he would help support the yeshiva for the new couple years. He then donated \$50,000."

The student couldn't believe it. "I got on a boat to go to America and missed my wife and kids and embarrassed myself... and all I had to do was stick around here and that man would have showed up from Australia?" If the man had been beside himself before, he was now even more. But the Chazon Ish replied to the man in a way that for generations has shaped how we best can approach the balance of our efforts in life.

"You needed to put in effort for that man from Australia to come

here. Had you not gone to America, he would never have come here. Your hishtadlus (effort) was necessary for Hashem to bring about what we needed. But it is not your specific effort that yields the outcome. Your efforts don't amount to the result. It is the bitachon in Hashem that brings it about. You just needed to put in effort. And when that was done, it opened the channel for Hashem to then respond to what we needed."

Our own efforts are not what bring us our success. It is our trust in Hashem. What we do is necessary for the results to occur, for Hashem operates within the natural ways of the world as He set them up. Once we put in our effort, it activates that Hashem can grant us our needs. But it is not "this-and-that specific" effort that does the job. Our efforts do not equal our results. It is our bitachon in Hashem that does it; and with that, everything flows as a result.

Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

No Regrets

The end of an era. Bnei Yisroel's forty-year journey through the desert was coming to a close. Forty years of travels, encampments and life lessons, during which members of the older generation

passed away.

In Parshas Chukas, we learn of the loss of two beloved leaders, Miriam and Aaron.

"...Vayeishev ha-am b'Kadesh, vatomos shom Miriam, va-

tikaver shom, The people settled in Kadesh, and Miriam died there, and was buried there. V'lo hayah mayim la'edah, And there wasn't water for the people." (Bamidbar 20:1-2)

"... Vayomos Aaron shom b'rosh Ha-Hor, Aaron died there at the top of Mount Hor. Va-yivku es Aaron

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shloshim yom kol Beis Yisroel, And the entire nation wept for Aaron's death for thirty days." (Bamidbar 20:28-29)

While the Torah tells us that the entire nation was mourning for Aaron, following Miriam's death, the Chumash speaks of the people's sudden loss of water. Rashi cites from the Talmud that from this pasuk we learn that Bnei Yisroel's supply of refreshing drinking water was in Miriam's merit.

Chazal teach that three Divine gifts graced the nation in the desert – Manna, Ananei HaKavod (Clouds of Glory) and Be'er Miriam (the Well of Miriam).

The manna fell in the z'chus, merit of Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe provided spiritual sustenance for the people, while the manna provided physical sustenance. The Clouds of Glory were in merit of Aaron HaKohein. Aaron was an oheiv shalom, a rodeph shalom, a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace. He brought shalom bayis, peace to the homes of so many. The clouds surrounded the nation, symbolic of a strong dwelling, the protective and peaceful homes that Aaron had a part of

The thirst-quenching water came from the Be'er Miriam, Miriam's Well. In Miriam's merit, a magical well traveled with Bnei Yisroel, providing water, not only for themselves but also for their sheep and cattle. With Miriam's death, the well dried up, and the source of water was no more.

We recall that when Miriam was as a young girl, she hid behind the bulrushes, watching over her baby brother Moshe, who was lovingly tucked in a basket floating on the Nile. When Miriam saw Pharaoh's daughter pull the basket out of the river, she fearlessly approached her, telling her that she

knew of a perfect baby nurse (Her's and Moshe's mother, of course). In the z'chus of Miriam standing by the waterside, the miraculous well accompanied the nation.

Miriam died at Kadesh. A name that alludes to the kedusha, the sanctity that personified Miriam's life. Miriam's neshamah was filled with emunah and bitachon, elevating her very being to a place of holiness. She convinced her parents to overcome so many challenges and remain together under the bleakest of circumstances in Mitzrayim. She assumed the responsibility of "Puah", helping to bring life into the world where all was dark and seemingly hopeless. And it Miriam who, with a tambourine in her hand, told the women of Am Yisroel to never give up hope, but to prepare musical instruments, for HaShem will surely perform miracles and redeem them from Egypt. Later, it was Miriam who led the women in shirah, a song of praise and gratitude to HaShem, as they crossed the Yam Suf. Once again, Miriam stood strong by the water; this time by the Yam Suf.

Yet, we don't find the nation in a state of mourning for Miriam as they were for Aaron. The Alshich comments that because Bnei Yisroel did not mourn and feel her loss appropriately, the Be'er Miriam, their source of water dried up and disappeared. It was only after losing their source of water, did they fully acknowledge what Miriam did for them.

What a life lesson. Unfortunately, all too often we don't appreciate the life of a loved one until it is too late.

Bnei Yisroel's cry for water following Miriam's death was their mourning, their realization of the miracles

she brought into their lives, and how much they now missed her.

How often do we cry after losing a loved one, our hearts filled with "if only's". If only I appreciated more, if only I called more, if only I spent more time and held on to every minute with a grandparent, parent, sibling, child, or a dear friend.

I would give anything to have one more day with my parents, to be able to ask for one more bracha, to hear one more bit of advice, even just to listen to their voice once again... if only!

There are times when we say "wish I could do it all over again". How important it is to cherish every opportunity we have to be with a loved one.

My mother a"h would teach that Hebrew is called lashon hakodesh, for every word is holy, each word has its own message. My mother would say look at the words lamah and maduah, both meaning why. Yet, they also have a deeper meaning. Lamah, is le-mah, for what purpose, for what reason. Maduah can be understood to mean mah-dai-ah, what knowledge can I absorb, what can I learn.

Death is hard to comprehend. We ask lamah, we ask maduah. Not understanding, we ask why. But instead of why, we should ask le-mah, for what purpose, mah-dai-ah, what can I learn. To take a lesson from Miriam's death, to learn to appreciate what our loved one's meant to us and everything they did for us during their lifetime. To see the good and to acknowledge it, unlike the nation that had to wait until it was too late, until the well dried up, before realizing the blessing of having Miriam in their midst.

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