

WHY LURE EGYPT TO THE RED SEA?
SIMPLY KILL THEM IN EGYPT.



5757
5770
13
YEARS

JewishTimes

Dedicated to Scriptural and Rabbinic Verification
of Authentic Jewish Beliefs and Practices

Volume IX, No. 11...Jan. 29, 2010

WWW.MESORA.ORG/JEWISHTIMES

Download and Print Free

IN THIS ISSUE

PARSHA: BESHALACH	1-3
PARSHA: THE RED SEA	4-7
LETTERS	8

THE JEWISHTIMES

800,000 COPIES
IN CIRCULATION.
GLOBAL JEWISH
EDUCATION & ACTIVISM

JOIN IN THE MITZVAH
WWW.MESORA.ORG/DONATE

CANDLE LIGHTING 1/29

Boston	4:35	Moscow	4:36
Chicago	4:42	New York	4:50
Cleveland	5:19	Paris	5:22
Detroit	5:23	Philadelphia	4:56
Houston	5:37	Phoenix	5:38
Jerusalem	4:51	Pittsburgh	5:15
Johannesburg	6:43	Seattle	4:46
Los Angeles	5:01	Sydney	7:44
London	4:24	Tokyo	4:46
Miami	5:43	Toronto	5:06
Montreal	4:37	Washington DC	5:06

Weekly Parsha

Beshalach

RABBI BERNIE FOX

The Role of the Wind in Splitting of the Reed Sea

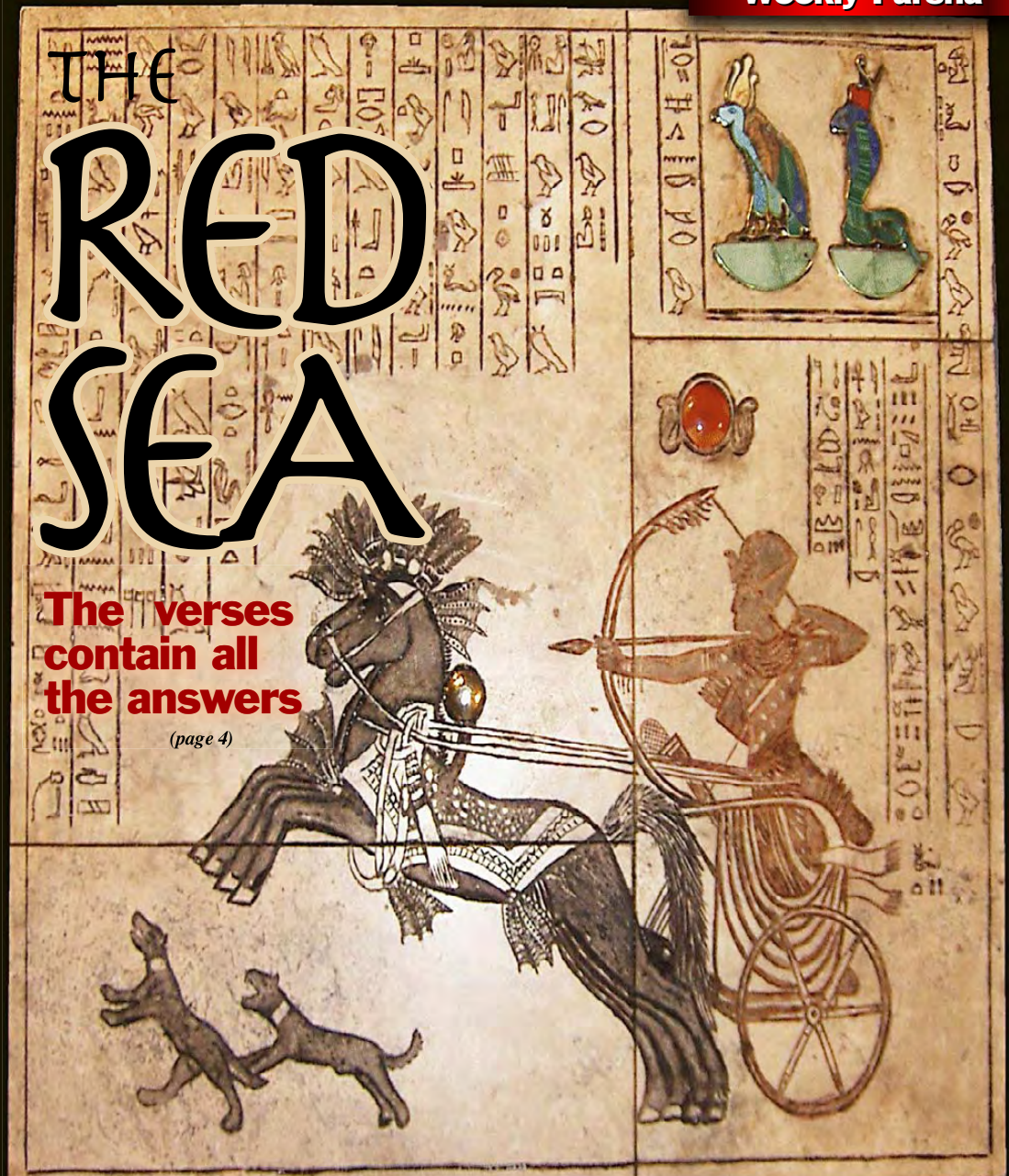
And Moshe extended his hand over the sea. And Hashem drove back the waters with a powerful east wind the entire night. And it made the seabed into dry land. And the waters were divided. (Shemot 14:27)

(continued on next page)

THE RED SEA

The verses
contain all
the answers

(page 4)



Weekly Parsha

(Beshalach cont. from pg. 1)

Weekly Parsha

JewishTimes

Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought



The JewishTimes is published every Friday and delivered by email. Subscriptions are FREE. To subscribe, send any email message to: subscribe@mesora.org

Subscribers will also receive our advertisers' emails and our regular email announcements.

Contacts:

We invite feedback or any questions at this address: office@mesora.org
Ph(516)569-8888 Fx(516)569-0404

Advertising:

<https://www.Mesora.org/Advertising>

Donations:

<https://www.Mesora.org/Donate>

Content at Mesora.org:**JewishTimes Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/JewishTimes>

Philosophy Archives:

<http://www.Mesora.org/Philosophy>

Weekly Parsha Archives:

<http://www.Mesora.org/WeeklyParsha>

Audio Archives:

<http://www.Mesora.org/Audio>

Interactive, Live, Audible Sessions:

<http://www.Mesora.org/TalkLive>

Database Search:

<http://www.Mesora.org/Search>

Articles may be reprinted without consent of the JewishTimes or the authors, provided the content is not altered, and credits are given.

Bnai Yisrael flee from Egypt. The people arrive at the shores of the Reed Sea. The sea stands before the nation and the pursuing Egyptians are directly behind them. Bnai Yisrael is trapped. Hashem performs one of His greatest miracles. He splits the Reed Sea. Bnai Yisrael enter the sea; they travel across the sea over its dry seabed. The Egyptians enter the sea in pursuit of their escaped slaves; the sea closes upon the Egyptians and they are drowned. This is the general description of this miracle. However, the Torah provides some interesting details. According to the above pasuk, the sea did not immediately split in response to Moshe's command. Moshe extended his hand over the water and a mighty wind arose. The wind blew the entire night. What was the function of this wind? Why did Hashem not immediately split the waters?

According to Nachmanides, the wind that preceded the parting of the sea was part of an elaborate deception. Hashem brought the Egyptians to shore of the Reed Sea in order to destroy them. However, how could the Egyptians be induced to enter the sea? After all, if the Egyptians recognized that Hashem had split the sea in order to save Bnai Yisrael, it was not likely He would allow their pursuers to follow them! What would the point be of a miracle that failed to save Bnai Yisrael? Certainly, the Egyptians would realize that Hashem would not keep the waters parted for their benefit!

Nachmanides explains that the wind was part of a ruse. The Egyptians believed that the wind had split the sea. Bnai Yisrael were escaping into the sea as the result of remarkable good fortune. They just happened to reach the sea at the onset of a tremendous storm. The storm cleaved apart the waters. The Egyptians felt that they too could take advantage of this opportunity. The wind would continue to drive the waters apart. They could enter the sea and overtake Bnai Yisrael. The deception worked. The Egyptians were lured into the trap!

Of course, the Egyptians were mistaken in their interpretations of the phenomenon. They were not witnessing an unusual meteorological occurrence. They were seeing a miracle. They entered the sea and Hashem brought the waters crashing down upon them.[1]

Rashbam adopts a completely opposite

approach to explaining this wind. He contends that the wind actually split the water. Hashem employed natural forces to bring about His miracle. Rashbam adds some detail to his explanation of the function of the wind. He explains that the wind had two functions. First, it caused the water to back up. Once the water backed up, the seafloor was revealed. Second, it dried the seafloor and created a passable path across the seabed.[2] Ibn Ezra adds that the wind continued to blow as Bnai Yisrael crossed the sea. Only the power of the wind prevented the water from rushing in on Bnai Yisrael.[3]

Then Moshe and Bnai Yisrael sang this song to Hashem. And they said as follows: I sing to Hashem for His great victory. Horse and rider He threw into the sea. (Shemot 15:1)



**Aerial view:
Jews entering Red Sea**

Bnai Yisrael emerged from the Reed Sea. They saw the drowning of their adversaries. In response, Moshe lead the nation in the beautiful Song of the Sea. This praise describes Hashem's awesome omnipotence and His destruction of the Egyptians. The above passage begins with the word az.

This we have translated as "then". To what does the term "then" refer? Rashi explains that Moshe and Bnai Yisrael only sang their song of praise after they had actually seen the miracle of the splitting of the sea and the destruction of the Egyptians.

This suggests a question. Moshe knew prior to the actual occurrence of the miracle that Bnai Yisrael would be rescued and the Egyptians would be destroyed. He conveyed this message to the people. Before the sea parted, he told them that they would see Hashem's salvation. He also assured them that the Egyptians would be destroyed and not seen again.[4] Why did Moshe not lead the nation in praise and in a song of thanksgiving in response to Hashem's assurance that He would rescue them? Why did the nation need to actually experience their salvation singing praise to Hashem?

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik Zt"l suggests that Moshe and Bnai Yisrael were following the dictates of the Torah. King David writes in Tehilim, "And I trust in Your kindness. My

(continued on next page)

soul rejoices in Your salvation. I sing to Hashem for He has dealt kindly with me.”[5] Rav Chaim suggests that a careful analysis of this pasuk reveals a startling principle. David explains that he had complete trust that Hashem would rescue him from his troubles. This trust was so great that David viewed his salvation as a certainty. Before he was actually saved from his predicament, his heart rejoiced in the knowledge that Hashem would save him. However, he only sang to Hashem after Hashem had actually “dealt kindly” with him. In other words, David only praised Hashem, in song, after the fact.

Rav Chaim explains that Moshe and Bnai Yisrael followed this principle outlined by King David. Like David they were completely confident in their salvation. Moshe told them they would be saved and they had no doubt in the credibility of his assurance. However, as King David teaches, the time to sing praise is after the event – once the salvation has actually occurred.[6]

This insight raises an important and obvious question. Why is it proper to wait until after the event to praise Hashem? A song of praise and thanksgiving is an expression of joy. King David clearly states that he experienced the joy of his inevitable salvation before he was actually saved. Should he not have responded with song as an expression of this exultation? Why does David teach that one must wait until after the actual event?

We can answer this question through better understanding the purpose of the praise and thanks that we offer Hashem. We must distinguish between this praise and thanks, and the praise and thanks that we offer to human beings. When we thank or praise a human being, we are showing our gratitude. Our benefactor deserves this response. We are attempting, to some small extent, repay a debt. However, this motivation does not apply in our dealings with Hashem. We cannot repay Him. He is omnipotent. He does not need our praises or accolades. Why, then do we praise and thank Hashem?

We praise and thank Hashem in order to reinforce our own appreciation of Hashem’s beneficence. We must remind ourselves of the role that Hashem plays in our lives and our dependence upon Him. When we praise and thank Hashem, the message is addressed to Hashem, but it is directed to ourselves. This explains King David’s principle. When a human benefactor helps us, we are obligated to show appreciation from the moment that the assistance is offered or promised. Our patron has already made a commitment. This is even more true if we are

completely certain that our rescue is imminent. We are already indebted and obligated to show our appreciation. However, this is not the time to thank or praise Hashem. At this point, we are aware of our dependence on Hashem and we recognize that our approaching rescue is an expression of His beneficence. However, once we have been rescued, it is important to remind ourselves that our salvation came through Hashem. We must remind ourselves that our salvation is a result of His kindness. ■

[1] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban/Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Shemot 14:21.

[2] Rabbaynu Shemuel ben Meir (Rashbam) Commentary on Sefer Shemot 14:21.

[3] Rabbaynu Avraham ibn Ezra, Commentary on Sefer Shemot, 14:21.

[4] Sefer Shemot 14:13.

[5] Sefer Tehillim 13:6.

[6] Rav Y. Hershkowitz, Torat Chaim, p 66.



Weekly Parsha

THE RED SEA

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

**The verses
contain all
the answers**

This week's parsha, Bishalach, commences with the Jews' journey immediately following their Egyptian exodus, (Exod. 13:17) "God did not guide them via the path of the land of the Philistines, as it was near, lest the people repent when they see war and return to Egypt." As Maimonides teaches in his great work, The Guide for the Perplexed (Book III. Chap. 32), God's initial plan was not to lead the Jews towards the Red Sea, but towards the Philistines. But a separate consideration demanded this Philistine route be avoided, which we will soon uncover. However, why would the Jews return to the very place they were now fleeing, as that verse above ends? Nonetheless, we are taught to prevent the Jews' return to Egypt, God circumvented their route.

We then read that God clearly orchestrated these events to make the Jews appear as easy prey for Pharaoh, enticing him to recapture his fled slaves. God told Moses to encamp by the sea for this purpose (Exod. 4:3): "And Pharaoh will say about the Children of Israel that they are confused in the land, the desert has closed around them." The purpose of traveling not by way of the Philistines, but towards the Red Sea now appears to have a different objective: to lure Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea, ultimately to be drowned. But it does not appear this was the plan from the outset. Had it been, God would not have taught of His consideration regarding the Philistines. That nation's war would not have entered into the equation.

The ultimate purpose in the death of Pharaoh and his army is stated in Exodus 14:4, "And I will strengthen Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them, and I will gain honor through Pharaoh and his entire army, and Egypt will know that I am God..." God sought to gain honor by leading the Jews to the Red Sea, luring in Pharaoh, and creating the miraculous partition of waters. We are confused; did God lead the Jews to the Red Sea to circumvent the Philistines, or to lure Egypt to their death and gain honor? Furthermore, why does God seek to "gain honor" for Himself?

Upon their arrival at the Red Sea, the Jews soon see Pharaoh and his army in pursuit. Moses prays to God, and God responds, "Why do you cry unto me?" This is a surprising response! A basic principle in Judaism is the beseeching of God's help when in need, and the Jews most certainly were. So why does God seem to oppose such a principle at this specific juncture?

Another question apropos of this section is what the goal was of the Ten Plagues, in contrast to the parting of the Red Sea. If the Red Sea parting was merely to save the Jews and kill Pharaoh and his army, God could have easily spared this miracle and wiped out the Egyptians during one of the Ten Plagues. God prefers fewer miracles; this is why there is "nature". Our question suggests that God's destruction of Pharaoh and his army had an objective other than the destruction of the Egyptians alone. What was that objective?

There is also an interesting Rashi, which states a metaphor taken from Medrash Tanchumah. Rashi cites that when the Jews "lifted their eyes and saw the Egyptian army traveling after them, they saw the 'officer of Egypt' traveling from heaven to strengthen Egypt." (Exod. 14:10) What is the meaning of this metaphor?

Looking deeper into the actual miracle of the Red Sea splitting (Exodus 14:28-29) we read, "And the waters returned and they covered the chariots and the horsemen and the entire army of Pharaoh coming after him in the sea, and there was not left of them even one. And the Children of Israel traveled on dry land in the midst of the sea and the water was to them walls on their right and on their left." Ibn Ezra states that in this one body of water – the Red Sea – Pharaoh and his army were being drowned, while simultaneously the Jews crossed through on dry land. This is derived from the Torah first stating that Pharaoh was drowned, followed by a statement that the Jews traveled on dry land. Although one section of the sea turbulently tossed and submerged the

(continued on next page)



Egyptian Pharaoh in a War-Chariot, Warrior, and Horses

(Red Sea continued from previous page)

Weekly Parsha

Egyptian army, "and God churned Egypt in the midst of the sea", the adjoining portion contained waters parted into two calm walls on either side of the Jews, bearing the dry seabed. Ibn Ezra calls this a "wonder inside a wonder". We must ask why God deemed it essential to combine salvation and destruction in one fell swoop. God could have exited the Jews completely, prior to allowing the Egyptian's entrance into the sea. What is learned from God's intended simultaneity of Jewish salvation with Egyptian destruction?

Now we must ask an unavoidable and basic question which Moses pondered: why were the Jews subjected to Egyptian bondage? To recap, Moses once saved the life of a Jew, beaten by an Egyptian. Moses carefully investigated the scene, he saw no one present, and killed the Egyptian taskmaster and buried him in the sand. The next day, Moses sought to settle an argument between the infamous, rebellious duo, Dathan and Aviram. They responded to Moses, "will you kill us as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses feared the matter was known. But how was this matter made public? The Torah described the scene just before Moses killed the taskmaster (Exod. 2:12), "And he turned this way and that way, and there was no man (present)..." So if there was clearly no one present, who informed on Moses? A Rabbi once taught there is only one possible answer; the informant was that very Jew who Moses saved. We are astounded that one whose life was saved, would inform on his savior. What causes such behavior? The Torah's literal words describing Moses' astonishment are "(Moses said) therefore the matter is known", referring to the disclosure of Moses' murder of the Egyptian. Rashi quotes a Medrash on the words "the matter was known", paraphrasing Moses' own thoughts, (Rashi on Exod. 2:14) "The matter has been made known to me on which I used to ponder: What is the sin of the Jews from all the seventy nations that they should be subjugated to back-breaking labor? But now I see they are fit for this."

Moses now understood why the Jews were deserving of Egyptian bondage. This ungrateful Jew's backstabbing act answered Moses' question. But this ungrateful nature is not its own trait, but a result of another trait: The act of informing on Moses displays an inability to question Egyptian authority; "Even if my brother Jew saves me, Egypt is still the authority who I must respect". It wasn't aggression against Moses, but an unconditional allegiance to Egypt. The Jews' minds were emotionally crippled by

their decades as slaves. The famous Patty Hearst case teaches us of the Stockholm Syndrome, where victims grow to sympathize with their captors. Israel too sympathized with Egypt. Such identification would cause one to inform on his own friend, even on his own savior, Moses. Moses witnessed this corrupt character trait firsthand and realized that Israel justly received the Egyptian bondage as a response. But how does the punishment fit the crime? (You may ask that this is reverse reasoning, as this ungrateful nature came subsequent to bondage, not before. Moses too knew this, yet Moses saw something in this ungrateful act which he knew predated

Egyptian bondage, answering Moses' question why Israel deserved this punishment.) So what was Moses' understanding of the justice behind Israel's bondage? Seeing that the Jew informed on him even after saving his life, Moses said, "the matter is known", meaning, I understand why the Jews deserve bondage.

In approaching an answer, I feel our very first question highlights the central issue - the cause for the splitting of the Red Sea. The two reasons given for God redirecting the Jews' journey are not mutually exclusive. The latter, drowning of

(continued on next page)

SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEMS FOR YOUR BUSINESS or HOME !!

WATCH LIVE or PLAYBACK RECORDINGS ANYTIME... FROM VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE!

**Super Sharp****H.264
Compression
Technology****Hi-Def &
Low Prices !!****Special Offer
10% OFF
Regular Pricing
With This Flyer**

Custom Designed Systems For All Types of Applications

- DELL PC-DVR w/ Intel Dual Core & H.264 Hi-Def Video Technology for Surveillance, Recording & Remote Access
- 19" High Resolution Flat Panel Monitor
- Point & Click to Watch In Single or Split-Screen Views
- Real-Time Live View at 30 Frames Per Second Per Camera
- Record Up To 30 Frames Per Second Per Camera
- Up to 4 Terabytes of Hard Drive for Recordings
- CD-RW and USB for Saving and Back Up
- Available in 4, 8, 16, 24 and 32 Channels
- Audio Ready on Each Channel
- Remote View Software & Internet Browser Capability
- Choice of High Resolution Color Cameras: PTZ, Bullet, Dome, Box, Infrared, ID and License Plate Cams
- Spot Monitors and POS / Register Interfaces Available
- Technical Support w/ Remote Virtual Assist
- One Year Warranty Includes Parts and Labor

Superior Quality - User Friendly - Affordable
FIRST ALLIANCE
Protection Systems

★ Present this flyer and we will donate 10% of the purchase or lease value to Mesora ★


**Need a Complete System?
Upgrade? DVR? Cameras?**

Call Today For a FREE Consultation
(800)258-8028

www.faps.com

(Red Sea continued from previous page)

Weekly Parsha

Pharaoh and God's gaining honor is in fact a response to the former: the Jews' security in Egypt fostered by their extended stay. I suggest as follows: God did in fact wish to take the Jews directly to Sinai. This is His response to Moses' question as to the merit of the Jews' salvation, "they are to serve Me on this mountain". Meaning, their merit of this Exodus is their future Torah acceptance at Sinai and their subsequent adherence. But due to a peripheral concern of the Philistines, a new route was required. And not just a route on the ground, but also a route that also addressed the underlying inclination towards an Egyptian return. God initially wanted only to bring Israel to Sinai. But now He sought to address the Jews' dependence Egypt. God desired to drown Pharaoh and his army to respond to the Jews' current mentality: the Jews preferred Egyptian bondage to warring with the Philistines to maintain freedom. This was unacceptable to God. God enacted the miracle of the Splitting of the Red Sea, for many objectives, but primarily to remove the security Egypt afforded these former slaves. Destruction of the Egyptian empire was a necessary step in Israel's development towards a people who rely on God alone.

This answers why God responded "Why do you cry unto Me?" to Moses' prayer when the Egyptian army drew near. In other words, God was telling Moses that prayer is inappropriate right now. Why? Because the very act of traveling to the Red Sea was in fact the solution for

what Moses prayed - the destruction of Egypt. God was informing Moses that what you pray for is already in the works, and therefore your prayer is unnecessary.

Egypt's destruction was not an end in itself. It had a greater goal - to replace Egypt's authoritative role with the True Authority - God. This dual 'motive' is displayed in a specific formulation of the Red Sea miracle. Moses tells the Jews "as you see Egypt today, you will never again see them. God will war for you, and you will be silent." There are two ideas here. The first is the termination of the Egyptians. The Jews had to be rid of the Egyptian 'crutch'. Seeing them dead on the seashore emancipated them psychologically: there were no more Egyptian taskmasters to direct their lives. The phenomena of a slave can be created by nature, or nurture. In Egypt, the Jews were nurtured into a slave mentality, a dependency on a dominating authority. This mindset actually affords some psychological comfort, despite physical pain. When one prefers slavery, he in other words prefers not to make decisions, and relies heavily on a leader. Perhaps for this reason, the very first laws given (in Parshas Mishpatim) address slavery. They outline this institution as a simple, monetary reality. One has no money, so he pays his debt via servitude. But in no way is human respect compromised when he is a slave. The master must give his slave his only pillow and suffer a loss of comfort himself to accommodate another human. The slave remains equal to the master in

all areas and deserves respect as any other man. Slavery is simply an institution under the heading of monetary laws. This teaches the Jews that the slavery they experienced is not a way of life, but a temporary state. The fact that God does not prefer slavery for man is His statement that "you are servants to Me and not to man." The Torah law of boring a slave's ear physically brands him of his corruption in not "listening" to God's command on Sinai, "servants to Me are you, and not servants to servants (man)". (Rashi, Exod. 21:6)

The second idea derived from "God will war for you, and you will be silent", is that God alone delivers salvation. Your "silence" means God alone will bring salvation. There cannot be another cause sharing God's role as the "Go-ale Yisrael" - the Redeemer of the Jews is God alone. Why is this necessary? This underlines the primary concept of the miracle of the sea. The goal was to instill in the Children of Israel an appreciation for God, and an acceptance of His authority. This authority would remain compromised, had Egypt survived. Respecting God's exclusive authority is also a prerequisite for the Jews' impending acceptance of the Torah on Sinai. For this reason, many of God's commands are "remembrances of the Exodus" for the goal of engendering appreciation for the Creator's kindness. When man's relationship with God is based on appreciation for Him - as guided by the commands - man is thereby

(continued on next page)



NYDesign.com

Corporate Identity Website Design Marketing
Advertising Fund Raising Package Design
Presentations Flash Animations Business Plans

Developers of Mesora & the JewishTimes
516.569.8888 info@NYDesign.com

reminded that God desires the good for him. As man acts to fulfill his Torah obligations, he will not view them as inexplicable burdens, but he will seek to understand God's intended perfection in each command. Man will then arrive at his true purpose, and find the most fulfilling life. Man will be guided in all areas by Divine, rational and pleasing laws which conform perfectly to man's mind. All conflicts will be removed.

The males and females of the Children of Israel verbalized identical, prophetic responses to God's triumph, "God is greatly exalted, the horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea". God's objective of not only eliminating Egypt's authority, but gaining honor for Himself was achieved. This identical song of praise (Az Yashir) of both the male and female Jews displayed the newly instilled appreciation for their victorious God. The destruction of the Egyptians and the acceptance of God were the two primary issues that were addressed successfully. This explains why the Jewish salvation and the Egyptian destruction happened simultaneously – in one body of water the Jews were saved and the Egyptians were drowned, as they formed one goal. Had God desired simple destruction of the Egyptians as its own ends, He could have done so in Egypt. But it was only in response to the Jew's overestimation of Egypt, that God destroyed them in the Red Sea, together with the Jewish salvation. The death of the Egyptians was a means for the acceptance of God, not obscured by any other master. Subsequent to the parting of the sea, the Jews in fact attested to God's success in His plan, as it is said, "and they believed in God and in Moses His servant."

Additionally, God's desire that the Jews glorify Him, is not "for" God. Nothing man can do may benefit God, nor does God share man's nature of "need", as in needing to gain honor for Himself. All that God does is to benefit man. This is most clearly witnessed in the great holiday of Passover, where the Creator of the universe educates man (both Jew and Egyptian) with the hopes of their conformity with reality, with monotheism. Only after the Egyptians displayed disobedience and ignored the fundamentals taught through the Ten Plagues, did God have no recourse but to destroy them. God then continued His acts of mercy on man, and delivered the Jews to freedom to accept the Torah.

How do we explain the Medrash regarding the "officer of Egypt"? It now fits in precisely with our theory: The Jews felt unconditionally bound



to Egypt as inferiors. At the shores, they did not actually see any "officer of Egypt traveling from heaven." This metaphor means they looked at Egypt as "invincible", as if some heavenly force defended Egypt, over which they could not prevail. This is the meaning of the Medrash. It is a metaphor for Israel's vanquished state of mind, and their view of Egypt as the authority.

In summary, the plagues of Egypt served to spread fame of God, "And you will speak of My name throughout the land." The splitting of the Red Sea had a different purpose, "And I will gain honor through Pharaoh and his entire army." The honor God acquired is for the good of Israel, not just Egypt. The Jews will view God as One who is the incomparable, true Creator, and the One who take notice of man and manages his affairs. (Ramban, Exod. 13:16)

The Red Sea miracle was executed as a response to the crippled mentality of the Jews, as God stated, "...lest they repent when they see war and return to Egypt." The circumvention from Philistine to the Red Sea was to avoid an inevitable return to Egypt, and to also correct that very impulse, as the Jews would witness God's triumph over Egypt. This victory would instill tremendous appreciation for God. In one act, Israel's view of the Egyptian authority was removed and a new faith in God was born, "and they believed in God and in Moses His servant."

This simultaneous termination of Egypt and salvation for themselves was reiterated twice in the Az Yashir song, "God is greatly exalted, the horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea". This response displayed how effected the Jews were by God's miraculous wonders and salvation.

In all honesty, the Jews do revert to "fond" recollections of Egypt not too long after these events, and in the Book of Numbers. However, we cannot judge any acts of God's as failures, if His subjects subsequently err. God's method - and perfection - is to offer man the best solution at a given time. This is a tremendous kindness of God.

Man has free will and can revert back to his primitive state even after God steps in to assist him. This human reversion in no way diminishes from God's perfect actions. Our appreciation of His wisdom and His precision in His divine actions remains firm. All of God's actions displaying His perfection and honor are not for Him, as He does not need a mortal's praises. He does it for us, so we may learn new truths and perfect ourselves in our one chance here on Earth. ■

Letters



Letters

from our

READERS



High school students:

We wish to hear your questions on areas of Jewish philosophy & Tanach.

Email us: office@Mesora.org

We will publish questions and answers in this section.



The 10 Plagues: Natural Events?

Reader: A while ago, Time magazine published an article claiming that the plagues in Egypt were caused by natural occurrences. I am on an E-list with lost Jews and I wish to refute this. Are you aware of any site/article which I can post? I have been looking all over and cannot find what I need. I would appreciate any help you can give me. Thank you.

Rabbi: Accepting the plagues from the Bible, TIME magazine is inconsistent.

God created hail mixed with fire. The waters of the Red Sea "piled like heaps" are also described as "walls on their right and their left". Regarding the Death of Firstborns, how can this be explained naturally: a plague against bodies, but not based not on genetics, germs or cell damage, but on the order of one's birth? This is equivalent to saying that of a nation, only those wearing red strings will die. There is no biological connection between red strings and death. So too, there is no biological connection between one's order of birth and this sudden plague. This is certainly a Divine phenomena.

Furthermore, each plague happened exactly as Moses predicted, and precisely when forecasted. How could a man predict that frogs will engulf a city, or that lice, locusts, hail, darkness, blood, beasts, boils, and all the rest will occur when he says, and as he says? The only explanation is that the Creator of all natural law intervened and altered these laws, what we refer to as a "miracle". ■

Why Be Observant?

Rabbi: I regularly hear the sentiments of non-observant Jews explaining why they do not follow Torah: "It's just not for me". "It's inconvenient". "God just wants me to be a good person". The list goes on.

I wonder how such people would react to a doctor who tells them that to save their life, they must take ten pills every day. Would they say "Those pills aren't for me", or "I don't have the time in my schedule"? That is certainly ridiculous.

Why then, do such people place doctors on a higher level than God, and their bodies more important than their souls? History clearly proves the plagues of Egypt, the splitting of the sea and our receipt of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Why do people reject God, but accept doctors?

The most primary reasons for non-observance are a person's denial of death, and the blind acceptance that fame, pleasure and wealth are real values...although there's a line around the block of celebrities waiting to buy drugs and alcohol. Fame and wealth don't seem to buy them happiness, as people wish to believe.

If you wish to be honest with yourself, you must admit three things: history proves God exists, He knows better than doctors, and you cannot escape death. God promised us the most happy Earthly life, and an even happier eternity if we follow His laws, meant for our own good. If this Creator offers happiness, don't you owe it to yourself to use just a little of your time to investigate His words?

The greatest minds agreed. Kings David and Solomon, Moses, the patriarchs and matriarchs, Ramban, Rashi, Maimonides and countless of other extraordinary leaders expressed their preference living a Torah lifestyle over any other. Why not trust them? They were wiser than anyone today.

You live only once.

Investigate why such intelligent people made this choice. Contact us, and we will help answer your concerns and take the first steps with you: office@Mesora.org ■



Teach Others

“Rabbi Meir said, ‘One who learns Torah but does not teach it, this is a case of, ‘The word of God he despises’.”

(Talmud Sanhedrin 99a)

“One who teaches others the correct path and helps correct the wicked has greater merit than the Prophets.”

(“Duties of the Heart” pg. 871)



In your tefilos, please include
Gershon ben Chava
 for a Refuah Shlayma. Thank you.

iPhoneDevelopers

1,000,000,000
downloaded apps

50,000,000
iPhone/iPod users

...which explains why
 numerous industry leaders
 have developed iPhone
 apps, and why you should.

Contact us today.
 A few million customers
 want to meet you.



www.iPhoneDevelopers.info

JewishTimes

The Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought

**It's better to give
 and to receive!**

Give: Email a FREE subscription of the JewishTimes to a friend or relative and they'll also receive 2 free gifts at right: our 60 pg book Retrospective and the 32 pg Passover Special edition with astonishing imagery.

Receive: As you help grow our readership, more advertisers place ads. We pass that on to you in the form of your continued, free JewishTimes subscription. Plus, we'll give you these 2 publications! *Invite others today!*

www.Mesora.org/Subscriptions



Now on Facebook and Twitter

Follow Us

Mesora is on Facebook and Twitter. Join both to meet and chat with other members and receive updates and Torah thoughts from the Rabbi throughout the week. Click the icons on the top-right of this page:
www.Mesora.org/Website



office@mesora.org
(516)569-8888

JewishTimes

advertising