

Beshalach 2015

1.

Why didn't the Jews sing a song when they received the Torah?

“Then Moshe and the children of Israel chose to sing this song to Hashem, and they said the following:” (15, 1)

"אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת ליקוק ויאמרו לאמר אשירה ליקוק כי גאה גאה סוס ורכבו רמה בים."

Nachalas Tzvi page 176:

The sefer Lechem Ashir asks; **why did the Jews sing a shira (song) when they crossed Yam suf (sea of Reeds) unlike when they received the Torah? The Nachalas Tzvi's son, Moshe, says that one can't sing shira when they don't fully want to receive what is being given to them. By Yam Suf, the Jews were happy because they were being saved; it was therefore fitting for them to sing. Conversely, by Har Sinai, since the Jews were forced to accept the Torah (as stated in Shabbos 88), they therefore didn't sing.**

(Regarding that Gemara, Tosefos points out that the Jews had already said “נעשה ונשמע/we will do and we will obey.” (24, 7) which symbolized their acceptance of the Torah?! Nevertheless there still existed a potential concern that they would go off the derech (the proper Torah path). The Medrash Tanchuma (in parshas Noach) offers an additional answer and explanation which is, that utterance of “נעשה ונשמע” only signified their acceptance of the Torah shebechtav (written Torah). Regarding the Torah shebeal peh (oral Torah), they needed to be forced.)

The Nachalas Tzvi offers a second answer. The Tosefos Yom Tov (Berachos 7:3) asks why when making a zimun (with ten or more men) for benching do we say אלוקינו (which represents the midah of judgment) unlike in Birchas Hatorah where we say יקוק (i.e. midah of compassion)? We attain food through judgement. The law is that Hashem has to give us food in order that we will live. This is why we say אלוקינו by benching. Dissimilarly, since the Torah was mercifully given to us, we say יקוק, which represents Hashem's compassion. The Mishna at the end of Makkos states Hashem wished to confer merit upon Israel; therefore He gave them Torah and mitzvos in abundance, as it says: “Hashem desired, for the sake of (Israel's) righteousness, that the Torah be made great and glorious.” (לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצות שנאמר (ישעיה מ"ב) "ה' חפץ למען צדקו יגדיל תורה ויאדיר." רבי חנניה בן עקשיא אומר רצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לזכות את ישראל)

Furthermore, the Maharam Mint explains the pasuk in Tehelim (13, 6) “But as for me, I trust in your kindness; my heart will exult in Your salvation, I will sing to Hashem, for He has dealt kindly with me.” (“ואני בחסדך בטחתי יגל לבי בישועתך אשירה ליקוק כי גמל עלי.”) We need to believe in Hashem's kindness, even when we aren't worthy of receiving it. However, in this type of scenario one is prohibited from singing a shira because he is not truly worthy of the mercy being bestowed upon him. In a case where one earned Hashem's mercy through his own merit, he can sing.

Applying that to our question, **the splitting of the Yam Suf had to have occurred because of the Jews merit** because they were able to actually see the Egyptians, their enemies, being killed. One will only be able to witness his enemy being killed if their death was self-earned. A proof to this is Lot. He was saved because of the merit of Avraham. Therefore, Lot wasn't allowed to turn

around and see the destruction of Sodom. **For that reason, they sang a shira; because they knew this happened in their merit. However, Bnei Yisroel didn't receive the Torah solely due to their merits; it was a chessed (kindness) from Hashem.**

We see from here that we always need to be grateful for the good bestowed upon us.

2.

Bitachon

“The children of Israel came within the sea on dry land; and the water was a wall for them, on their right and on their left.” (14, 22) “The children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea; the water was a wall for them, on their right and on their left.” (14, 29)

"ויבאו בני ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם." "ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים והמים להם חמה מימינם ומשמאלם."

Chumash Hagra page 151:

The Gra asks multiple questions on these two pesukim. Firstly, why is the order switched? Why does one pasuk say they went into the sea on dry land and the other says they went on dry land into sea? Additionally why do we need this second pasuk at all? It seems to just be a complete repetition of the earlier pasuk. Lastly, why is the word that both pesukim use for ‘a wall’, i.e. ‘חומה’, spelled differently? The first pasuk spells it with a ך while the later pasuk omits the ך. The Jews consisted of two different groups after they left Egypt. One group was composed of people who had one hundred percent, unwavering belief in Hashem. This consisted of the entire tribe of Yehuda who, following the lead of Nachson ben Aminadav, walked into the sea until the water reached their necks. Also, the Shemos Rabbah (21, 7) relates that the angels asked Hashem why the Egyptians drowned while the Jews were spared since they both worshipped idolatry. Hashem replied that it was due to the group of people who had complete faith and walked into the sea.

With this, we can answer the aforementioned questions. These two pesukim are referring to two different groups. The first pasuk, which says that they walked into the water and then the sea became dry land, is referring to the Jews who trusted in Hashem and walked into the Yam Suf before it actually split. Additionally, the water turned into a wall for them. The word חומה is therefore spelled with a ך. The second pasuk which reverses the order refers to the other group who didn't walk into the sea until it turned into dry land. Why is the word ‘חומה’ spelled without a ך in the second pasuk? The word חמה means anger. Since the angels were angry. They didn't understand why the Jews weren't being killed with the Egyptians. The first ‘חומה’ refers to an actual wall. The second חומה (which is spelled חמה) symbolizes why it was made into a wall; it was angrily done (see Talelei Oros page 221 for more).

The following story is related in the biography of the Chazon Ish (page 20): during WWI, it was two days before Sukkos and there were no esrogim to be found in his town. So he traveled to Minsk and spent his Sukkos there, despite the danger that traveling entailed during wartime. Upon his return, someone asked him why he traveled so far and put himself in danger if, according to Halacha, he was likely exempt anyway due to extenuating circumstances? He answered that if it was a few days before Pesach and you didn't have any Matzah, would you not eat on Yom tov? One would surely try to find matzah, no matter what. So too, I needed to have an Esrog on Sukkos.

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