



Parshas Beshalach 2022, The Path You Own

This week's Parsha Perspective is sponsored by Eliyahu Ohr Ben Chana in honor of Yud Shevat, the Rebbe, and the work of Lubavitch worldwide.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Shaul Ben Berta. And in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Pharaoh regretting his decision to free the Jewish nation; he decides to chase after them and finish his Jewish problem. As the Jewish nation approached the Yam Suf - the sea of reeds, they noticed the Egyptian army quickly approaching from behind and trapping them against the water.

They panicked and cried to Moshe, *"why have you taken us out of Egypt?"* Moshe Rabbeinu responded, *"Don't be afraid! Stand firm and see the salvation that G-d will do for you today. G-d will fight for you, and just remain silent."*

G-d told Moshe to stretch out his stick over the water to split for the Jewish nation. Moshe did as G-d instructed, and a strong wind came from the east and split the water creating a dry path for the Jewish people to pass through.

As they finished crossing the sea, the waters immediately came crashing down on Pharaoh and his armies.

Moshe and his sister Miriam led the Jewish people in song and dance as the water spat out the deceased Egyptians. They thanked and praised G-d for the incredible and awesome miracle that had just occurred.

As they traveled through the desert, some Jewish people turned to Moshe and complained about the food situation. They said, *"If only we had died in Egypt when we were full of bread rather than dying of starvation in the desert."* G-d responded by raining Man - heavenly bread upon the Jewish camp each day to satisfy their hunger.

However, a question comes to mind: What prompted the Jewish people to complain about food more than a month after leaving Egypt? What were they eating until now, and why did their circumstances change?!

Rashi (*Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading commentary on the Torah*) answers this question with a simple calculation. He estimates that the Jewish people baked enough Matzah in Egypt to last them sixty-one meals.

The Torah specifically recounts when the complaint began (16:1-2) *"on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed Egypt. The Jewish community began to complain to Moshe and Aaron."* Since they ate twice a day, whatever provisions they brought from Egypt were finished.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan commentator and kabbalist*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the Jewish people realized that they were not going on the most direct route to Israel. It seemed to them that they were just wandering in the desert pointlessly. They had already crossed the sea of Reed's and were now ready to travel to Israel.

So they turned to Moshe and Aaron and said they would be near cities where they could replenish their food as needed if they were on the direct route. Instead, it appeared to them that they were traveling aimlessly, forcing them to use their food reserves.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that the Jewish people did not understand why they weren't already in Israel. They thought it was Moshe and Aaron's choice to lead them on their long journey.

However, Jewish people did not realize that it was really G-d guiding their way. He led them on the long road necessary to purge and remove their slave mentality. **They could only be enslaved to one master, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, or G-d, the king of kings.**

The Jewish people reinforced G-d's motive for the long journey when they requested food. For they were swift to mention that they had food and were satiated in Egypt. This story and the spies' shocking account of Israel showed G-d that they had not detached themselves from Egypt just yet.

The Ohr Hachaim continues that this unfortunate reality compelled G-d to place them on a 40-year journey and not allow any of them to enter the promised land. They could not fathom and appreciate that their road was the path they truly needed. **A period of separation and detachment from Egypt's constraints to embrace G-d's depth and wisdom.**

In our daily life, what we see when we look at others is only what they wish to show us. Hence, being envious of their apparent amazing life is incorrect as we don't know what they are going through.

Worst of all, it tries to compel us to define ourselves by their successes and put us on a path that is not our own. This will guarantee that we do not accomplish and achieve what G-d has particularly in store for us.

However, aspiring to grow like someone else can give us the motivation and necessary drive to begin our unique journey. To focus on finding our singular and distinct purpose in this world.

**“Every journey conceals another journey within its lines:
the path not taken and the forgotten angle.”**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*