



Parshas Beshalach 2020, define the why

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 Mon - heavenly bread upon the Jewish camp each day to satisfy their hunger.

A question comes to mind: When the Jewish people left Egypt, G-d could have led them on the most direct route to the land of Israel.

Instead, He led them to the Sea of Reeds, trapping them between the Egyptian armies and the water. Why did G-d not lead the Jewish people on the shortest route to the promised land?

One of the many answers is that G-d led the Jewish people to the Sea of Reeds to punish the Egyptians in a public fashion. He wanted the entire world to know that the Jewish nation is His chosen people. If any nations of the world were thinking of harming the Jewish people during their journey to the promised land, their punishment would be swift and severe.

However, a deeper and more powerful explanation is that G-d led the Jewish people to the Sea of Reeds to teach them a fundamental principle of our existence. **Just as fish cannot live without water, so too the Jewish people cannot live without the Torah.** The Torah is our physical and spiritual life force; it is the common denominator that unites all Jewish people, regardless of their identity.

The Torah shows us how to bring G-d's presence down to this physical world, enabling us to accomplish our mission in this world and the purpose of creation. As the Pasuk says in Devarim (29:20), *“For it (the Torah) is your life and the length of your days, to dwell on the land which G-d swore to our forefathers to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov.”*

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that before we embark on any endeavor or initiate a new venture, we need a purpose for doing so. Whether it is to fill a void in the market or just want to control your future, your determination begins with your why.

When you hit the inevitable bump in the road that obstructs your progress, your why will be the impetus to keep you going and accomplish far more than you thought possible.

“Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement.”

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*