

בס"ד  
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## פרשת בשלח

Midway through this week's *parsha*, Hashem chastises Moshe for crying out to Him, saying "מה תצעק אלי." <sup>1</sup> Many commentaries try to explain these lines, and numerous lessons can be learned from each interpretation and applied to our everyday lives.

Rashi<sup>2</sup> explains that HaKadosh Baruch Hu was telling Moshe, "Do not lengthen your davening now; Bnei Yisrael are embroiled in agony!" The Gemara in *Sotah*<sup>3</sup> says that Hashem was admonishing Moshe for focusing solely on their prayers while His beloved nation was drowning in the sea. Sometimes, despite all of our *tefilos*, the most important thing is for us to act practically; instead of only relying on prayer, we should also focus on what Hashem has brought before us.

There is a tale of a man who was stuck on his rooftop in a flood, praying to Hashem for help. Soon, a man in a rowboat paddled by and shouted to the man on the roof, "Jump in, I can save you!" The stranded man shouted back, "No, it's OK, I'm praying to Hashem and he is going to save me," and the rowboat went on. A fellow motorboat then drove by, and shouted, "Jump into the boat and save yourself!" To this, the stranded man said, "No thanks, I am praying to Hashem and I have faith that he will save me," and the motorboat continued to drive. Afterward, a helicopter came by and the pilot shouted down, "Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety!" The stranded man again replied, "No thank you. I'm praying to Hashem and he is going to save me; I have faith," so the helicopter reluctantly flew away. Soon, the water rose above the rooftop, drowning the man. When he got up to *shamayim*, he exclaimed, "I had faith in You, but You never saved me, and I drowned! Why did I deserve to die?" Hashem replied, "I sent you a rowboat and a motorboat and a helicopter; what more could you possibly expect?" In life, we must not only try to see *Yad Hashem* every single day but act upon such signs with great alacrity, taking advantage of Hashem's message.

*Seforno*<sup>4</sup> says that Moshe was crying out to Hashem because he suspected Bnei Yisrael were complaining with a lack of desire to enter the *Yam Suf*. Hashem responded to him, "Why are you crying out? You're judging people unfairly - why bitter your mouth like this?" Instead of trying to raise the morale and boost the spirits and optimism of Bnei Yisrael, Moshe was instead suspecting the worst of the nation. In times of crisis, it is vital to maintain one's level of *לכף זכות*,<sup>5</sup> and continue to assume the best of others.

*Targum Yonasan*<sup>6</sup> translates the pasuk to "ומצלי קדמי הא צלותהון דעמי קדמת לדיך מליל עם בני" - "Why are you davening before Me? Bnei Yisrael's prayers precede your own," which we can see from the pasuk of "ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה'".<sup>7</sup> From here, it is important to note the importance of prayers in public and *b'rov am hadras melech*, the concept that the more Jews are present in a single place,

<sup>1</sup> שמות יד:טו

<sup>2</sup> רש"י שמות יד:טו ד"ה מה תצעק אלי

<sup>3</sup> סוטה לז.

<sup>4</sup> ספורנו שמות יד:טו ד"ה מה תצעק אלי

<sup>5</sup> פרקי אבות א:ו

<sup>6</sup> תרגום יונתן יד:טו

<sup>7</sup> שמות יד:י

the greater the honor for Hashem.<sup>8</sup> While a man of Moshe's status and stature would have an incredibly powerful davening, nonetheless the overall davening of Klal Yisrael would certainly have superiority, as there is tremendous power from a prayer that comes from a cohesive unit.

Rabbeinu Bechaye<sup>9</sup> says that Hashem was responding, "Why are you crying out to Me? The matter is solely dependent on *Am Yisrael* - go speak to them and reassure them that the sea will split, and then they will trust you." It's clear that throughout the entire time that Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, the people were apprehensive and worried about what was to come. In fact, the *Kli Yakar*<sup>10</sup> says that the reason that HaKadosh Baruch Hu refrained from immediately taking *them* to Eretz Yisrael is that Bnei Yisrael lacked a full sense of natural faith in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, so they had to circle their path so they could acquire *emunah*; only then would they be worthy of entering the land. At times, we may find ourselves in a situation where people may be lacking faith or trust, and being swayed in either direction (whether it be generating a mood of positivity and optimism or negativity and pessimism) can have a tremendous impact, and it is crucial for us to remember which of the two we should strive to use as the foundation of the culture which we create.

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<sup>8</sup> משלי יד:כח

<sup>9</sup> רבינו בחיי שמות יד:טו ד"ה מה תצעק אלי

<sup>10</sup> כלי יקר שמות יג:ד"ה ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם