

TEMPLE BETH-EL SHABBAT AM TORAH STUDY 5782

B'Shalach.... Exodus 14:1-31

KOSHI = What's the Question that calls us to inquire?
What compelled the rebellion at the sea?

PSHAT....*The Simple Meaning...What is the straightforward story we are trying to understand?*

Verse	JPS	HEBREW
1	The LORD said to Moses:	וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
2	Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea.	דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּשׁוּבוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ לִפְנֵי פִי הַחִירֹת בֵּין מִגְדֹּל וּבֵין הַיָּם לִפְנֵי בַעַל צְפֹן נִכְחוּ תַחְנוּ עַל־הַיָּם:
3	Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, "They are astray in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them."	וְאָמַר פַּרְעֹה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְכִּים הֵם בְּאֶרֶץ סָגַר עֲלֵיהֶם הַמִּדְבָּר:
4	Then I will stiffen Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them, that I may gain glory through Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD. And they did so.	וַחֲזַקְתִּי אֶת־לֵב־פַּרְעֹה וַרְדַּף אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֶכְבְּדָה בַּפַּרְעֹה וּבְכָל־חֵילוֹ וַיִּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן:
5	When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his courtiers had a change of heart about the people and said, "What is this we have done, releasing Israel from our service?"	וַיִּגְדַּל לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם כִּי בָרַח הָעָם וַיִּהְיֶה לִּבָּב פַּרְעֹה וְעַבְדָּיו אֶל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂינוּ כִּי־שִׁלַּחְנוּ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִעַבְדֵּנוּ:
6	He ordered. his chariot and took his men with him;	וַיֹּאסֶר אֶת־רֶכְבוֹ וְאֶת־עַמּוֹ לָקַח עִמּוֹ:
7	he took six hundred of his picked chariots, and the rest of the chariots of Egypt, with officers ^b <i>Heb. shalish; originally "third man on royal chariot"; hence "adjutant," "officer."</i> in all of them.	וַיִּקַּח שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת רֶכֶב בָּחוּר וְכָל רֶכֶב מִצְרַיִם וְשָׁלְשָׁם עַל־כָּלֹ:
8	The LORD stiffened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he gave chase to the Israelites. As the Israelites were departing defiantly,	וַיַּחֲזֶק יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְדַּף אַחֲרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יָצְאוּ בְיַד רַמָּה:
9	the Egyptians gave chase to them, and all the chariot horses of Pharaoh, his horsemen, and his warriors overtook them encamped by the sea, near Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.	וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁיגוּ אוֹתָם חֲנִיּוֹת עַל־הַיָּם כָּל־סוּסֵי רֶכֶב פַּרְעֹה וּפָרָשָׁיו וְחֵילוֹ עַל־פִּי הַחִירֹת לִפְנֵי בַעַל צְפֹן:
10	As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the LORD.	וּפַרְעֹה הִקְרִיב וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־אָזְנוֹ וַיִּצְעֲקוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וַהֲנִי מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְאוּ מָאֵד וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוָה:

11	And they said to Moses, "Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt?"	וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הַמַּבְלִי אֵין־קִבְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם לְקַחְתָּנוּ לָמוֹת בַּמִּדְבָּר מֵהַזֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לָּנוּ לְהוֹצִיאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם:
12	Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness'?"	הֲלֹא־זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְנוּ אֵלֶיךָ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר חַדְל מִמֶּנּוּ וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֶת־ מִצְרַיִם כִּי טוֹב לָנוּ עֲבֹד אֶת־מִצְרַיִם מִמָּתְנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר:
13	But Moses said to the people, "Have no fear! Stand by and witness the deliverance which the LORD will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you will never see again.	וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ הַתִּיַצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲשֶׁר רְאִיתֶם אֶת־מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד עַד־עוֹלָם:
14	The LORD will battle for you; you hold your peace!"	{פ} יְהוָה יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תַּחַרְשׁוּן:
15	Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward.	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מַה־תִּצְעַק אֵלַי דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ:
16	And you lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it, so that the Israelites may march into the sea on dry ground.	וְאַתָּה הָרֵם אֶת־מִטְּךָ וְנָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־ הַיָּם וּבִקְעָהוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּתּוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיַּבָּשָׁה:
17	And I will stiffen the hearts of the Egyptians so that they go in after them; and I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his warriors, his chariots, and his horsemen.	וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מַחֲזֵק אֶת־לֵב מִצְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֶכְבְּדָה בְּפָרְעֹה וּבְכָל־חֵילוֹ בְּרִכְבּוֹ וּבַפָּרָשָׁיו:
18	Let the Egyptians know that I am the LORD, when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."	וַיִּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּהַכְּבֹדִי בְּפָרְעֹה בְּרִכְבּוֹ וּבַפָּרָשָׁיו:
19	The angel of God, who had been going ahead of the Israelite army, now moved and followed behind them; and the pillar of cloud shifted from in front of them and took up a place behind them,	וַיֵּטַע מַלְאָךְ הָאֱלֹהִים הַהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּלֶךְ מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיֵּטַע עַמּוּד הָעָנָן מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמֵד מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם:
20	and it came between the army of the Egyptians and the army of Israel. Thus there was the cloud with the darkness, and it cast a spell." upon the night, so that the one could not come near the other all through the night.	מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין מַחֲנֵה וַיָּבֵא בֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי הָעָנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאֲר אֶת־ הַלַּיְלָה וְלֹא־קָרַב זֶה אֶל־זֶה כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה:
21	Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split,	וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּוּלַךְ אֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֲזָה כָּל־ יְהוָה הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַיָּם לַחֲרָבָה וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם:

22	and the Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.	וַיָּבֹאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיַּבְשָׁה וְהַמַּיִם לָהֶם חוֹמָה מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׂמָאלָם:
23	The Egyptians came in pursuit after them into the sea, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and horsemen.	וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם כָּל סוּסֵי פָּרְעֹה וְרֶכֶבָּו וּפָרָשָׁיו אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַיָּם:
24	At the morning watch, the LORD looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud and threw the Egyptian army into panic.	וַיְהִי בְּאַשְׁמֹרֶת הַבֶּקֶר וַיִּשְׁקֹף יְהוָה אֶל־ מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ וְעָנָן וַיִּזְחֹק אֶת מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם:
25	He locked the wheels of their chariots so that they moved forward with difficulty. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."	וַיִּסַּר אֶת אַפְּנֵי מִרְכָּבֹתָיו וַיִּנְהָגוּ בְּכִבְדֹת וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם אָנוֹסָה מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי {פ} יְהוָה נֹלָחֵם לָהֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם:
26	Then the LORD said to Moses, "Hold out your arm over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians and upon their chariots and upon their horsemen."	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נִטֵּה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־ הַיָּם וַיָּשָׁבוּ הַמַּיִם עַל־מִצְרַיִם עַל־רֶכֶבָּו וְעַל־פָּרָשָׁיו:
27	Moses held out his arm over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal state, and the Egyptians fled at its approach. But the LORD hurled the Egyptians into the sea.	וַיִּטֵּ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיָּשָׁב הַיָּם לַפְּנוֹת בֶּקֶר לְאִיתָנוֹ וּמִצְרַיִם נָסוּ לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיִּנְעֶר יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם:
28	The waters turned back and covered the chariots and the horsemen—Pharaoh's entire army that followed them into the sea; not one of them remained.	וַיָּשָׁבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת־הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת־ הַפָּרָשִׁים לְכֹל חֵיל פָּרְעֹה הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּיּוֹם לֹא־נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם עַד־אֶחָד:
29	But the Israelites had marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.	וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בַּיַּבְשָׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם וְהַמַּיִם לָהֶם חוֹמָה מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׂמָאלָם:
30	Thus, the LORD delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians. Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea.	וַיִּזְשַׁע יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד־ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מִצְרַיִם מֵת עַל־ שַׁפְּתֵי הַיָּם:
31	And when Israel saw the wondrous power which the LORD had wielded against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD; they had faith in the LORD and His servant Moses.	וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת־יְהוָה {פ} וַיִּאֱמִינוּ בַּיהוָה וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ:

REMEZ.... *The Hint...Searching for clues that gives us greater insight into the world of our ancestors*

14:10-11 *As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the Lord. And they said to Moses, "Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us here to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us taking us out of Egypt?"*

RASHI...The people are frightened that they will be overtaken and destroyed. Out of fear and disappointment they turn upon Moses, accusing him of leading them to their deaths at the brutal hands of the Egyptians. The terror of death generates their complaints.

IBN EZRA...It was not fear that brought on the Israelites complaints. It was their perception of themselves as weaklings before their former Egyptian masters. Even though they outnumbered Pharaoh's army, their morale was so low, and their self-esteem so shaken that they could not imagine themselves successfully battling the Egyptians. Instead, they turn upon Moses, make him a scapegoat for their frustrations, and blame him for bringing them out to the desert to die.

RAMBAN...They had left Egypt bravely and were now in the desert. They had thought that Moses would lead them to a city or safe place where they would find food, drink, and shelter; they believed it would not be long before they entered the Promised Land of Israel. However, after a month of wandering in the desert, their provisions were nearly gone. They were thirsty and hungry. Their essential needs were not being met, and they feared for the safety of their children. So they said to Moses, "What shall we eat? With what will this great wilderness into which we have come supply us?" Their complaints were not only understandable but both realistic and justified.

14:13-14 *Moses said to the people: Have no fear! Stand by and witness the deliverance which the Lord will work for you today; for the Egyptians you saw you shall never see again. The Lord will battle for you; so hold your peace!*

MUNK...An analysis of the arguments reveals four perspectives. Some argued in desperation that the only thing to do was cast themselves into the sea, while others said there could be hope in a return to Egypt. A third group proposed to stand and fight, while the last segment thought to raise their voices in war to frighten Egypt off. Moses responded to all four...to the first he said, "*Do not fear! Stand fast and see God's salvation!*". To the second group he replied: "*For as you've seen Egypt today, never again shall you see them.*" Regarding those who wanted to fight, Moses said: "*The Lord will battle for you.*" And to the last group he said: "*And you- keep still! Stand by and witness the deliverance.*"

IBN EZRA...The root "YaTsaV" frequently alludes to the act of lifting oneself up to acquire the prophet spirit. Moses was not simply asking for Israel to stand still, but to ascend to a higher vision.

14:15 *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward.*

RASHI...*why do you cry out?*...This verse teaches that Moses was standing and praying. But the Holy One cried out to him saying: “Now is not the time to prolong prayer, for Israel is in distress. Do something!”

MIZRACHI...*Why do you cry out “A-lai---upon me”* as if it is my responsibility? The matter is not dependent upon Me, but rather, upon you!

MEKHILTA...*Speak to the children of Israel*...could be understood as the alternate to “why are you crying out to Me?” In other words, it is to the Children of Israel to whom you must speak. The verse then implies that the Children of Israel would only be ready to enter the sea after Moses spoke with them.

Tell the Children of Israel to go forward

RASHI...They have only to march forward, for the sea does not stand in their way.

GUR ARYEH...As Rashi understands, the Children of Israel had no need for any further preparation for the miracle to be done for them, for the merit of their forefathers and their own faith were sufficient to split the sea.

IBN EZRA...Since the Children of Israel greatly outnumbered the Egyptians, why did they not turn the other way and fight? For the Egyptians had been masters over the Israelites, and since their youth they had learned to bear the yoke of slavery. The children of Israel could never overcome their slave masters.

14:16 *As for you, lift up your staff and hold your arm out over the sea to split it, then the Children of Israel shall come into the midst of the sea on dry ground...*

SHEMOT RABBAH...Rabbi Shimon understands the word “Harem---lift up” to mean “remove.” Moses was then not to lift up his staff but to put it away, so that the people would not be misled into thinking that the sea could not split without it. It was up to them to make the miracle happen.

<p>DRASH <i>The Interpretation...How do ancient truths impact our modern reality?</i></p>

V.15 *Then the Lord said to Moses: Why do you cry out to Me/ Tell the Children of Israel to go forward...*

TALMUD...Rabbi Meir stated: When the Israelites stood on the brink of the sea, the tribes contended with one another. One said: “I will go down into that sea first!” The other replied, “No, I will go down first!” While they stood and argued, the tribe of Benjamin took the plunge and went down first. For this reason, Benjamin was granted the privilege of playing host to the Divine Presence, the Sanctuary built in its territory. Rabbi Judah countered: It didn’t happen his way. One tribe said: “I will not go first!” The others countered: “Neither shall we!” While they were arguing with one another Nachshon ben Aminadav of the tribe of Judah plunged into the waves. For this reason, Judah was granted dominion over Israel, as it is stated: “Juda became His sanctuary, Israel his dominion.” (Psalm 142:2) Sotah 36b.

MEKHILTA...Rabbi Joshua stated: God said to Moses: "The Israelites have only to march forward!" We must understand this to mean that the Children of Israel usually followed Moses, as sheep do a shepherd. But at the sea, God told Moses to rely upon the faith of Israel to walk into the sea. In virtue of their act, the sea would divide for them, with Moses walking behind.

SOD.... *The Secret* What deeper knowing do we take away after spending time with the Torah text?

Rabbi Kerri Olitsky...Very often we manage to paralyze ourselves into indecision. We analyze, we rationalize, we procrastinate. We talk it into the ground. And yet we do not act. According to the Midrash, God did not split the Red Sea until the children of Israel walked in up to their necks. Even when it comes to miracles, God wants us to get as far as we can by ourselves. Do not rely on miracles to bolster your faith. More often than not, the road to everyday miracles is paved with strong faith and the best that we can do.....

Life is like that, too; we sometimes have to get uncomfortable in order to get comfortable. If we keep doing the things we've always done, we're just going to get the results we've always gotten. Many people effectively excuse themselves from life. They are too old for this. Too heavy. Too scared. Fear of failing and fear of trying new things and fear of being seen as less than perfect are all forms of self-enslavement too.... We will go further than our wildest dreams if we just do the best we can and have faith that our Higher Power is there to help. But first we have to get wet.

NECHAMA LEIBOWITZ...Miracles do not necessarily change human nature and cannot by themselves make us fear and love God. If such was their state of mind both before and after the deliverance, what, we may ask, had they done to deserve the miracle in the first place? The answer is that the Holy One performs great miracles for the sake of the meritorious few, for those like Nachshon, willing to take the plunge...