



Parashat Beshalach



English version

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## MY BELOVED, MY HORSE

There is a module I have discovered that is effective for change in any life area. I call it Triple A. Awareness. Acceptance. Action. First, we need to have awareness of the situation. The problem. The challenge. The options. The strengths and weakness. The powers that be. The ideal situation. Then, and only then, can we move on to step two. Acceptance. Accepting who I am, and accepting the other person or persons I am dealing with. Accepting the situation, accepting where G-d does not give us choice, accepting where He gives us choice. Accepting what G-d has given us or taken from us. Accepting the fact that we have not yet arrived at the ideal situation. And then, and only then, taking action. Something that will get us to the desired outcome. The best option for the present circumstance and people involved. You cannot skip stage two to get to stage three.

We have to learn to accept that not everything is picture-perfect. We have to learn to accept our kids the way they are, not how we think we want them to be. And we have to learn to accept the fact that sometimes in life, we don't understand G-d, and that whatever He did, does or will do, is for our best. Somehow. Somewhere. Sometime.

And when we first believe, when we first accept, not only can we then act, but G-d

actually changes His Universe for His Children's sake. He lets us run the show, so to speak. לְסִתִּי בְּרִכְבִּי פָרְעֹה דְּמִיתִידָה רַעֲיָתִי (Shir Hashirim 1;9) King Solomon, in his Song of Songs, the everlasting love-song between G-d and His People, mentions how G-d perceives His Beloved, The Jewish Nation. *To My mare (female horse) in the horses of Pharaoh, I compare you, My beloved.*

Why does G-d call his beloved a horse? How would a woman feel if her husband said to her, you are the most amazing thing in my life, honey! To me, you are like a horse! Not any horse, but Pharaoh's horse! What is the meaning behind this?

R' Chaim Volozhin,(NH 1,9) Noam Elimelech,(L Shoshana) and R Levi Y Berditchev all learn that there is something HUGE here in this passuk. The unique horse of Pharaoh is referring to the episode at the Sea. The sea split, and the Jews went right in, through dry land. Behind them, the water came crashing down on the Egyptians who ran after them. So, Pharaoh's army of horseback riders tried with all their might to steer away from the sea. But G-d made it that the horses just went running straight into the sea, taking their riders with them. Usually, the rider guides the horse; but here, the horse guided its rider.



In His eternal love-song, G-d says to His Beloved People, I love you so much! For Me, you are like the horse of Pharaoh, in that sometimes I allow you, as it were - kivayachol - to guide Me, instead of Me guiding you. I am like the Rider of the horse, who sometimes lets the horse take control.

What, in the world, does this mean??!!!

As deep as that idea was, there is something even deeper here. The Jews have just gone through an 86 year holocaust of Egyptian slavery. Where was G-d all this time? Why are such bad things happening to good people? And why are good things happening to bad people? How does G-d let it all just go? Sometimes, the greatest praise to G-d is accepting Him without asking WHY. By remaining quiet. Accepting *לֵךְ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ תְהִלָּה*. (Tehillim 65:2) To You G-d, silent acceptance is considered praise. Not asking why. Not complaining. At the Sea, there was a tremendous revelation of G-d, and at that time, the Jews reached a level of tremendous emunah.. And in the merit of Emunah, G-d split the Sea. The word *דימיתך* does not only mean that You, My beloved people, are *similar*, root being *דמיון*. It also means that you accepted with *silence*, from the root *דום* (S. Emet) And with that, with that level of Emunah, G-d allows us to control our fate, He makes things work our way, as if the horse now decides for the rider.

Sometimes in life, we need to accept. You are trying to run your business, but the phone is not ringing! You are trying to find your shidduch, or make your marriage happen, but there is "nobody home". You are trying to stay

healthy, lose weight, sleep well, but you find yourself gaining weight and sleeping less. In order for G-d to make miracles for you, He waits for you to accept His Will, to reach a certain level of serenity, knowing that He is Boss. You may not feel Him, because He is not "bossy", but He is the BIG BOSS of all bosses.

This idea is so powerful!!! I recently used it in Mir, Jerusalem, when I gave a class. When I got to the room, I realized that it can be extremely useful to have the Sefer of R Chaim Volozhin, Nefesh HaChaim, handy, so that I can read word by word from it. The classroom where I was supposed to give my lesson did not have sefarim. So, I said to myself, I accept that whatever is going to happen, whether or not I find the Sefer, I accept that G-d has my best interest in mind. There was a side room there; I walked in, and found no Sefer in the room, other than the Nefesh Hachaim!

The power of acceptance of G-d's Will is the power that got us out of Egypt. Of believing in the dark times that things are beautiful, or can be beautiful, somehow. While the men sang the Shira of Az Yashir, the women followed Miriam, who had a drum in her hand, and sang their Shira as well. Where did the women have these bongos from? Rashi says *מובטחות היו צדקניות שבדור שהקדוש ברוך הוא עושה להם נסים והוציאו תופים ממצרים* The righteous women were SURE that G-d was going to perform miracles for them, so they took drums with them when they went out of Egypt. While they were in Egypt, they were making drums, in preparation for the time when G-d would make His Miracles. Because they believed, even in the darkest of times, that great things were going to happen.

## ELEPHANT IN THE LIVING ROOM

Rabbi Meir the Great, of Premishlan (1703–1773), disciple of the Baal Shem Tov has a great Hassidic twist on the words we say every day in *זה א-לי ואנוהו*. אז ישיר וארממנהו.

*This is my G-d and I will glorify Him, the G-d of my father and I will exalt Him.* R' Meir tweaks that a bit. There are two types of relationship with G-d. There is *זה א-לי ואנוהו*,

*this is my G-d and I will build Him a dwelling place in my heart,* ( נוה also means dwelling place) and there is אלוקי אבי וארוממנהו. *The G-d of my father and I will exalt Him.* In other words, you can find G-d in everything, even point to Him, from your awareness alone, and serve Him by making room for Him in your life. Or you can just continue serving Him only because He is the G-d of your father, and only because you were taught to do so, because you are used to doing so, ignoring Him in the present. When you serve G-d this way, you ultimately exalt Him, or keep Him somewhere above you, but not in your life.

What stops us from being able to recognize G-d in the world we live in? Why is it so difficult for so many to bring G-d into their lives?

There is a power in the universe. That power is Amalek. Amalek is a nation whose whole purpose of existence is to take this awareness away from us. He wanted us to *ignore* that awareness, by showing us that in all those miracles in Egypt and at the Sea, nothing really happened. Even when it is clear, that *this is my G-d*, Amalek is able to get us to doubt our acknowledgment of G-d and our connection to Him. Amalek wanted to take away that excitement that made us able to point to G-d and say, *That's the G-d I want in my life.* Amalek wanted to replace that fiery enthusiasm with, *"That is the G-d of my father, but the G-d I never met."* Amalek wants to force us to ignore the "elephant in the living room".

It is Amalek's sworn mission to negate the power that G-d, Himself, created - to give Man the ability to choose to have G-d in life, or to ignore Him, no matter how obvious His presence is. The reason why G-d made this choice in the universe is a rule in relationships. What is better, a relationship that you want to

be in, or a relationship that you have to be in? Of course, a relationship you need to be in, and have to be in, is not as good as a relationship you want to be in. A relationship that you don't want to be in is an unhealthy relationship. And every unhealthy relationship or situation has an expiration date. G-d gives us choice, to want to have Him in our lives, or to be forced to have Him in our lives. And the way we choose between the two is by deciding what we focus on. How so?

I found a certain truism in life. The things that we fear and focus on the most turn out, in the end, not to be that big of a deal to tackle. But many times, the things that we fear the least are the ones that turn out to be the biggest issues we need to deal with in our future. Our health, our children, our Olam Haba. The amount of things we can focus on in life is limited. We tend to concentrate our awareness on things that are more urgent than important. Amalek is that nation that symbolizes the single-minded attempt to divert our focus away from G-d's power to the power of Man. And to ignore the entire Creation that sings זה א-לי.

A few years back, I was waiting to speak to R Moshe Shapiro, zt"l. The person before me was someone who approached R' Moshe, his Rebbe, and introduced his new son-in-law, asking for a *beracha*. Then, he said, "Rebbe, I had an idea I wanted to share with you. I want to know if it's true. שושנת יעקב צהלה ושמחה. *The Rose of Ya'akov was ecstatic and joyous when they beheld, together, how Mordecai was garbed in royal blue.* Why were the Jews happy when they saw Mordechai dressed in T'chelet, the bluish dye that is used for Tzizit? And what is the word יחד, together, referring to? And we see that the Megillah mentions a second time that Mordechai was dressed in t'chelet: ומרדכי יצא Then Mordechai מלפני המלך בלבוש מלכות תכלת



left the presence of the king in royal robes of blue. Why does the Megillah remind us, again, that Mordechai is wearing T'chellet?

The Talmud teaches us, in Sotah (17a), the reason why T'chellet is the color that G-d commanded us to wear on our Tzitzit. מה נשתנה תכלת מכל מיני צבעונין? מפני שהתכלת דומה לים, וים דומה לרקיע, ורקיע דומה לכסא הכבוד, שנאמר: ויראו את אלקי ישראל ותחת רגליו כמעשה לבנת הספיר וכעצם השמים לטהר, וכתיב: כמראה אבן ספיר דמות כסא The T'chelet was chosen because the T'chelet blue is similar to the color of the sea, and the sea is a similar color to the sky, and the sky is similar to the Throne of Glory. By wearing blue strings, one is constantly reminded of G-d, just from the associations one makes with that color. Now Mordechai, who was Shaul Hamelech's descendent, inherited the task of disposing of Haman, who was of Amalekite descent. At the end of our Parasha, G-d says אִין הַשֵּׁם שְׁלֵם וְאִין הַכֶּסֶּא שְׁלֵם עַד שִׁימַחַה זְרַעוּ שֶׁל עַמְלֶק upon which Rashi quotes the Tanchuma to explain,

The Name of G-d יהוה is not complete, and G-d's Throne is not complete, until the Name of Amalek is eradicated. (תנחומא ס"פ) Now, as mentioned earlier, the Throne of G-d is the color T'chelet. And because Mordechai eradicated Haman through prayer, through bringing the people together, through fasting, through Torah, and through bringing awareness of G-d to the people, he merited this T'chelet, this bluish dye, as he was the one who made the Throne of G-d complete. And he was the one who brought the Name of G-d יהוה to be whole with G-d's other letters, הוה.

R' Moshe responded that this is, of course, the explanation.

G-d's Name is not complete until we pray for its completion. Until we say, זה א-לי, seeking and finding G-d in our lives. The words יהוה שמייה רבא מברך is the prayer that the Name of G-d that is now only יהוה become full, become complete, through our prayers. (Machzor Vitri ; Tosefot Berachot 3a)

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