

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
BESHALACH 5778

בְּשַׁלַּח

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

A Flicker of Light

Finally, after the culmination of the ten *Makkos*,¹ Pharaoh is terrified for his own life, and demands that the Jewish people leave Egypt. The *Medrash* explains that the term 'Beshalach' does not mean that Pharaoh sent out *Klal Yisrael*, (as everyone recognized that he had nothing to do with their egress²) rather, it means that Pharaoh personally escorted them out of Egypt. For this action, the Egyptians were rewarded with the allowance to convert to Judaism, and the third generation after conversion may marry into the Jewish nation.

It's hard to understand the underlying rationale for this reward. True, Pharaoh did escort the *Bnei Yisrael* out of *Mitzrayim*. However, didn't the Egyptians enslave the *Bnei Yisrael* for 210 years? They wouldn't allow the *Bnei Yisrael* to leave despite the first nine *Makkos*. And, in fact, pursued them after they left, demanding that they return to *Mitzrayim*! If these sins against *Klal Yisrael* would disallow the Egyptians from converting, what was the redeeming factor of a couple of steps from Pharaoh?

Reb Yehudah Leib Chasman³ explains that we are all created from two parts - "dirt from the ground" and an "eternal *Neshamah*." Therefore, every action we execute is driven by both of these ingredients. We only see the finished product, and ascribe completely malevolent or benevolent intent to their actions. But the truth is, the human is made up of many, many layers. And though it may be covered with darkness, a human still has an eternal *Neshamah*.

And being that the *Neshamah* comes from an Infinite Source, there are potentially infinite layers at play behind every thought and action that we do. Thus, Hashem recognized there was a small spark in Pharaoh's soul that drove his decision to escort the *Bnei Yisrael*. A small spark from a soul is a big deal. The impact of this spark is monumental. Beforehand, the Egyptians would not have been allowed to join the Jewish nation. But his decision as leader of the Egyptians elevated all of the Egyptians, to the point that they too may join the *Bnei Yisrael*.

There are times where it may seem difficult to do the right thing. We may be tired, overcome by strong emotions or desires, or have other rationales for our conduct. However, we can be empowered with the knowledge that 1. We have a soul that desperately desires to do the right thing, 2. Hashem will discern and reward even the smallest admirable motive, and 3. The reward for our actions is beyond our comprehension. And just imagine how much more the reward is, as that spark gets progressively brighter and bigger as the driving force in our thoughts and actions!

1 *Medrash Tanchumah Beshalach* 1

2 *Medrash Rabbah Shemos* 20:3

3 *Ohr Yahel*, Vol 2. p. 99-100

**A small spark
from a soul is
a big deal.**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Knowing that we have an infinite soul is one thing, but how do we use this knowledge to change the way we act

Often, we tend to think that we're 'average,' sometimes doing good, and sometimes, not so good. Our self image is that we're somewhere in-between.

However, once we acknowledge that our pure soul fiercely wants to do good, our perception changes. It's almost as if we have someone who is totally righteous, right there with us. And you know what? That righteous person is you!

When faced with a difficult decision, instead of thinking, "Well, I'm average, so what's the big deal if I don't make the right choice?" instead think, "Deep down, I want to do the right thing! How can I deny myself that?"

By accustoming yourself to recognize that a part of you truly wants to do the right thing, it smooths the path through challenging choices.¹

1 Based on *Rambam Hilchos Gerushin* 2:20

Become a Beshivticha Sponsor

Please contact us at info@ohr-yisrael.com
or 732-451-GROW (4769)

CAN'T DOUSE THE FLAME

Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, founder of Hineni (an outreach organization), wrote the book, *The Committed Life*, which details many stories that she encountered during her career. The following story is one of many from this amazing book.

On a trip to Israel, Rebbetzin Jungreis was asked by *Kol Yisrael* (Radio Israel) to say a few words to those trapped behind the Iron Curtain. In those days, Radio Israel was beaming messages of hope regularly to communities throughout the world where Jews lived in isolation.

Boris Gurevitch-Ling, living in Red China at the time, was playing with his radio when he heard this voice speaking from Jerusalem. He felt something awaken in his soul, and shared his feelings with his mother. "What does it all mean," he asked. "What's pulling at me? What is this place Jerusalem?"

His mother remained silent for a long time. Then she got up, and closed the door. "I must tell you something, something so important, but you must keep it a secret. I am Jewish, and you have these feelings, because you are Jewish. I never told anyone, as it's too dangerous. However, I've never forgotten, and neither should you. I have applied for exit visas, but it may take some time until we get them. Until then, I ask that you not tell anyone that you are Jewish."

Ten years later, Boris arrived in the United States, and found his way to Hineni. Rebbetzin Jungreis was organizing a trip to Israel at the time, and asked Boris if he'd like to join. He did, and met his future wife, Debbie, on the trip. Today, Boris and Debbie are raising a beautiful family of sons and daughters who continue the legacy.

The story of Boris and Debbie is the miraculous story of our people, for no matter how we may have been oppressed, no matter how far we have distanced ourselves from our faith, we never gave up hope of reclaiming our spiritual inheritance.

No matter how far we have distanced ourselves from our faith, we never gave up hope of reclaiming our spiritual inheritance.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Every action is weighed and measured. A person is rewarded for any good thought or trait that may have been mixed into the action of an *Aveirah*.¹
- Hashem primarily rewards us for putting in our best effort, and less so on the outcome!²
- There are many variables that Hashem uses when judging or rewarding someone, but the overarching assessment is determined by how difficult it was for this person, in this situation, at this time.³

¹ *Chidushei HaLev Bereishis* 26:18

² *Chidushei HaLev Bereishis* 6:9 (of course, one must strive to do good actions)

³ *Ohr Yisrael*, Letter 6