

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Beshalach	Jan 27, 2018	11 Shevat 5778	Exod. 13:17-17:16	Judges 4:4-5:31	Matt. 14:22-33

In parashat Bo, the Israelites and the multitude left Egypt on the way to the Promised Land. The Ten Plagues showed the world who is the Creator and its creation. The Zohar explains that there were two ministering Pharaohs. One is the Pharaoh of this world, and the Pharaoh of the world above. The Pharaoh of the world above is known as the Great Tamim, or serpent. He is the father of all *kelipot* (shells, husk), the head of *tummah* (impurity). He is the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) called as Satan.

This week's parashat begins with "It was when Pharaoh sent out the people." וַיִּהְיֶה, בְּשַׁלַּח פְּרָעֹה אֶת-הָעָם (vay-hi be-sha-lach Paroh et-ha-am) Why is the Scripture saying that the Pharaoh had some authority to send the people? Why is it giving credit to him? Rather, the Sages tell us that "Pharaoh sent out the people" means he sent out spies, criminals, traitors who switched side to the Israelites when the Israelites were leaving Egypt. They were also escorted by the officers.

In a word play with Pharaoh (פֶּרַעַה), it can become 'neck' (עוֹרֶפֶת) *oreph*, that is the back part of the neck. And the throat is גֶּרוֹן (*garon*). So, the *yetzer hara* comes to the neck and make it stiff which means obstinate or stiff-necked making him not to do the *mitzvah*. Therefore, the Torah is hinting that the pharaoh of Egypt is *yetzer hara* of this world.

But sometimes, there are miracles that a person does repent. Hashem wakes up the person and the person does *teshuvah*. He regrets the bad things he did. Not only he regrets of what he did, he admits that he did something wrong. And he leaves his sins. That the *yetzer hara* let goes and the person realizes what he did wrong. And right away, he regrets what he did. Now, if he takes credit for overcoming *yetzer hara*, it comes back a lot stronger. So, we have to learn that we cannot give credit to ourselves for leaving *yetzer hara*.

Upon the commands of Hashem, *yetzer hara* leaves your neck and let you be free for a minute. We also have to learn that there is no discount in front of Hashem. All of us will stand for a judgement in front of Hashem. Hashem is saying that you would think that there should be a credit for leaving the sin because of what I told you not to do? The very fact you did *teshuvah* is nice. Hashem is happy for your *teshuvah*. But you suppose to do it anyway. It is also a *mitzvah* to do *teshuvah*, a positive commandment. When an actual *teshuvah* is done, then the sin will turn into a merit and you will receive some credit.

For example, if you are trying to hold both ends of the rope, you are not really doing *teshuvah*. People wanted to eat the cake and keep it full. So, when people do *teshuvah*, they want good of the both world. We can only hold on to one end of the rope.

Therefore, in chapter 14:5, "What is that we have done?" The *yetzer hara* was removed by Hashem. But it continues, "That we have sent away Israel from serving us?" The *yetzer hara* returned again to the Pharaoh.

We will return back to the beginning of the parashat in chapter 13:17, "It was when Pharaoh sent out the people." The Midrash tells us that when the Israelites left Egypt, they were escorted by the officers of Pharaoh. After three days later, when the officers saw that the Israelites had no intention of returning to Egypt, they demanded that the Israelites should return to Egypt. The Israelites arose and chased Pharaoh's officers away from the camp.

Now, Hashem did not lead the Israelites toward the land of Philistine up north even though it was close. Instead, He had them turn south from Succoth to Etham. Even though there was a war in Philistine, they still honored Yitchak and would accept the Israelites with open arms. But they were still jealous of a nation leaving Egypt. So they were not 100% good. Another reason that Hashem did not lead the Israelites to Philistines, because it was near Egypt, and the Israelites might change their heart and return to Egypt.

Beginning at Sukot, a pillar of cloud to guide the Israelites and a pillar of fire at night, so they can travel at night time. Now, the cloud did not just hover over the Israelites. There were total of 70 clouds with one to give directions for Israelites to follow. The clouds protected over their head. It surrounded the Israelites on all four corners, and on the ground as well to protect Israelites from any harm. And the mountainous trek would flatten out for Israelites, so they can walk in easy pace.

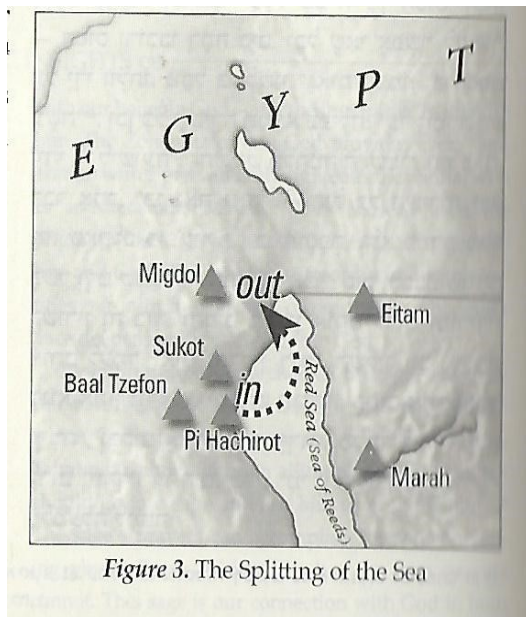


Figure 3. The Splitting of the Sea

Hashem then led the Israelites eastward from Sukot to over the Sea of Reeds to Etham. Hashem then led them from Etham to Pi-hahiroth (the Mouth of Freedom), formally known as Pitom (1:11), just past Sukot. Pi-hahiroth had sheer cliffs on both side and water to the front, making Egyptians to believe that the children of Israel were disoriented and confused as to their direction.

The Pharaoh took this opportunity to launch an attack and took 600 chariots with him. Why did Pharaoh take 600 chariots? For in Deuteronomy 32:30 says that “one can chase a thousand and two can chase ten thousand.” With 3 million people or 600,000 men, Pharaoh only needed 120 chariots, not 600. The Sages explain that Pharaoh did not know 80% of Israelites died during the period of Darkness. During the first three-days of Darkness, the Israelites who wanted to continue their lives in Egypt died. If the Egyptians saw the Israelites are dying as well, then they (Egyptians) would consider this miracle as ‘natural occurrence’

since the Israelites were dying with them and they (Egyptians) would reject the power of Hashem. Hashem also covered the dead to hinder any discovery of death brought upon the Israelites. That is the reason that Pharaoh took 600 chariots with him. The second three-days of Darkness brought immobilization of the Egyptians. Whether they were eating, drinking, bathroom, etc., that was the position they remained on the second part of three-day Darkness.

Now, the Israelites find themselves caught between the sea in front of them and the pursuing Egyptians in back. They are beginning to panic. What to do? The Torah says: Thus Moses said to the people: “Don’t be afraid. Stand by and see the salvation of Hashem, which He will show you today. You have seen the Egyptians today, but you will not see them again, ever. Hashem will fight for you, and you will be silent.” (Exod. 14:13-14) And Hashem said to Moses: “Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel, that they go forward.” (Exod. 14:15) The Midrash, and more specifically a commentary on Exodus called the Mechilta, says that at that time the Israelites split into four factions:

- One fact said: “Let us cast ourselves into the sea.”
- Another said: “Let us return to Egypt.”
- A third said: “Let us wage war against the Egyptians.”
- A fourth said: “Let us cry out to Hashem.”

It adds that when Moses spoke, he addressed these four factions in succession:

- To those who said, “Let us cast ourselves into the sea,” Moses said: “Don’t be afraid; stand by and see the salvation of Hashem.”
- To those who said, “Let us return to Egypt,” he said: “You have seen the Egyptians today, but you will not see them again, ever.”
- To those who said, “Let us wage war against them,” he said: “Hashem will fight for you.”
- To those who said, “Let us cry out to Hashem,” he said: “And you will be silent.”

These are the four reactions most people adopt when facing trouble:

- One is to adopt the ostrich philosophy: Ignore the danger, retreat into isolationism, or even commit suicide: “Let us cast ourselves into the sea.”
- Another is to follow the flow: If you can’t beat ’em, join ’em: “Let us return to Egypt.”
- A third is to fight vigorously: “Let us wage war against them”.
- And the last is to pray: “Let us cry out to Hashem.”

Which of the four is the proper attitude? One might be tempted to answer that there is no single solution. It depends on the time and the place, the circumstances, and one’s personal inclination. For example, if defeat is all but certain, fighting may not be the best course if the alternative is slavery rather than death.

However, we must factor the next verse into our thinking: Hashem simply said to Moses: “Let them go forward.” The last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Schneerson, interprets that to mean that Hashem rejected all four approaches, when He said simply: “Let them go forward.” He said: Which each approach has its time and place, none of them is a complete vision to guide our lives and define our relationship with the world. We must simply go forward, take another step towards our goals. Not escape reality, not submit to it, not wage war on it, not pray for it to change, but “go forward.” Do another mitzvah, ignite another soul, take one more step towards your goal. (Contributed by R’ Mizrahi)

We now come to the splitting of the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea), the climax of the Exodus. The phrase says, “The waters were divided”¹ וַיַּבְּקֵן הַיָּם, הַיָּם (va-yi-bak’u ha-ma-yim). The proper language should be “va-yi-baka hayam”, instead it says “va-yi-bak’u ha-ma-yim”. From this idiom, the Sages teach ‘kol hamayim sheba’olam’, that all of the waters in the world were split. Not just the Red Sea, per se.

Water has 2 part hydrogen and 1 part oxygen in a molecular structure. So, to split water means to split its molecular structure composed of two different basic elements. The periodic table shows the atomic number of water is 10 because hydrogen is 1, so 2 times 1 is 2, and oxygen is 8. So, the very phrase, ‘va-yi-bak’u ha-ma-yim’ has 10 letters. And, when the phrase itself is calculated in a certain numerical calculation, which is called *meespar seeduri* (ordinal numbering²), the phrase itself equals 100 exactly. Meaning, that the average value of each letter is 10.

The allusion in the Torah to splitting 10 into 2 and 8 appears in *parashat Yitro*, commonly known as the Ten Commandments. It says that the first 2 Commandments, we heard directly from the Voice, the Mouth of Hashem. Whereas, the 8 Commandments afterwards, we heard from Moses, from Moshe Rabbeinu. We see very clearly that in the 10 Commandments, the 10 divides into 2 and 8.

¹ Exodus 14:21

² Example: Ordinal: Tenth, Normal: Ten

Where do we find this in nature itself? We can find similar process known as the photosynthesis, the light photons... A reaction known as photolysis takes place during photosynthesis. It is a separation of water molecule by the action of light. That a light photon actually results in the splitting the water molecules in the plant into the hydrogen part and the oxygen which is released to the air that we breathe. Therefore, we can say that the concept of splitting all of the waters in the world simultaneously to the splitting of the Red Sea is a very beautiful reference to this phenomenon, which is called photolysis.

There are other ways to split 10. 10 can split into 1 and 9, or split into 3 and 7, to 4 and 6, and so on. In the Torah, we find all possible splitting of 10. For instance, in the 10 sayings of creation, the 10 were split into 1 and 9. Because the first one, *Beresheet* (In the beginning), which is also a saying, is an implicit saying. So, there is one implicit saying that everything was created *ex nihilo*³. All of the other 9 explicit sayings of the 10 are not creation. According to Rashi, not creation *ex nihilo*, but just formation from something to something, changing of form. Or, taking some amorphous matter and giving it form. So actually, the 10 sayings split into 1 and 9.

The 10 Commandments, in the way that we just saw, split into H2 versus O, because the Torah is likened to water and water splits into 2 and 8. The 10 plagues split into 7 and 3 because in *parashat Va'eira*, there are 7 plagues and then there are 3 plagues.

In Kabbalah in general, 10 splits into 7 and 3 because 7 are the emotions of the heart and 3 are the intellectual faculties, the 10 powers of the soul in general split into 3 and 7. The letter which is 10 in Hebrew, is the letter *yud*, the first letter of Hashem's Name. When it is written "in full" it is written *yud vav dalet*. And the two letters that "fill" the original letter are *vav* and *dalet* which equals 6 and 4 alluding to the fact that the 10 itself splits into 6 and 4. 6 are relatively male powers of the initial 10 and 4 are the relatively female powers.

Sometimes 10 splits into 6 and 4. Even in this very phrase itself, *va-yi-bak'u ha-ma-yim*, which has 10 letters and the average value of the 10 letters is 10, the splitting of the 2 words is into 6 letters *va-yi-bak'u*, the first word, meaning "And it split," has 6 letters to it. And *hamayim*, "the water," has 4 letters to it. 5 and 5 is as it begins in *Sefer Yetzirah*, the Book of Formation, it says that the 10 *sefirot* are just like the fingers of the two hands, 5 versus 5.

It's like the two tablets, in relation to the 10 Commandments that we are going to read about next week in the Torah. The 10 Commandments were inscribed, were engraved upon 2 tablets of the covenant and each tablet had 5 and 5. So actually in the 10 Commandments, there are two divisions of 10 either into 2 and 8 which are the first 2 Commandments that we heard directly from Hashem, and the 8 following commandments that we heard from Moses. Or in the way they were engraved on the two tablets of the covenant, which is 5 and five.

Let's give one final example of how the *yud*, also splits into *hei* and *hei*. The first Matriarch of Israel, Sarah. Her name originally was Sarai שרֵי. She had a *yud* at the end of her name. But in order for herself and her husband Abraham to merit to bear *Yitzchak*, a child, her *yud*, which was also her drop of water at the end of her name had to split into 5 and 5. First 5, *hei* was given to her husband, Avraham who previously was called Avram and now he's Avraham, and the other *hei*, the other 5 remained in her name. This is one more very beautiful and important example of the 10 splitting, of the water splitting into 2.

So, as we explained before, the water first has to split in order to manifest all of the beauty of its potential of its infinite potential. And the very photon of light, which is the soul of Israel that enters to affect the split also affects ultimately the unification of the two dimensions of the water. And then water is all one *mayim*. As we

³ Def.: Out of nothing

said, that it's a word that is actually one, but it's in the plural. Meaning that "One is all and all is One," "Hashem is all, all is Hashem".

Trivia: There are four people in the Scripture who never sinned in their lives. If it was not for the curse of Adam and Chava, and the snake, these people would be still alive today. Can you name them?

1. Benjamin ben Yaakov (Benjamin son of Jacob)
2. Ishai, father of King David (Jesse, father of King David)
3. Amram, father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam
4. Kileab, also known as Daniel, the second son of King David with Abigail (1Chr 3:1; 2Sam 3:3)