



SHABBAT ZEST

Parshat Beshalach 15th Shevat 5777

Torah Reading / Haftara:

Artscroll – p.366/1152

Living Torah – p.320/1104

SHABBAT TIMES:

Candle Lighting:
4:47pm

Kabbalat Shabbat
Davening: 6:30pm

Shabbat Morning
Davening: 9:15am

Mincha: After Kiddush

Shabbat Ends 3:00pm

NEXT SHABBAT
YISRO

CANDLE LIGHTING
@ 5:13 PM

Parsha In a Nutshell

Exodus 13:17-17:16

Soon after allowing the children of Israel to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh chases after them to force their return, and the Israelites find themselves trapped between Pharaoh's armies and the sea. G-d tells Moses to raise his staff over the water; the sea splits to allow the Israelites to pass through, and then closes over the pursuing Egyptians. Moses and the children of Israel sing a song of praise and gratitude to G-d.

In the desert the people suffer thirst and hunger, and repeatedly complain to Moses and Aaron. G-d miraculously sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and later has Moses bring forth water from a rock by striking it with his staff. He causes manna to rain down from the heavens before dawn each morning, and quails to appear in the Israelite camp each evening.

The children of Israel are instructed to gather a double portion of manna on Friday, as none will descend on Shabbat, the divinely decreed day of rest. Some disobey and go to gather manna on the seventh day, but find nothing. Aaron preserves a small quantity of manna in a jar, as a testimony for future generations.

In Rephidim, the people are attacked by the Amalekites, who are defeated by Moses' prayers and an army raised by Joshua.

Haftarah

Judges 4:4-5:31

This week's Haftarah describes the fall of the Canaanite general Sisera and his armies, who were swept away by the Kishon River, and Deborah's ensuing song of thanks. This parallels this week's Torah portion which discusses the drowning of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea and the subsequent songs led by Moses and Miriam.

Deborah the Prophetess was the leader and judge of the Israelites at a difficult time; the Israelites were being persecuted by King Jabin of Canaan and his general Sisera. Deborah summoned Barak son of Abinoam and transmitted to him G-d's instruction: "Go and gather your men toward Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun. And I shall draw to you, to the brook Kishon, Sisera, the chieftain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will give him into your hand." At Barak's request, Deborah accompanied him, and together they led the offensive.

Sisera was informed of the Israelites' mobilization and he gathered his forces and proceeded towards the Kishon River. Barak's army below and the heavens above waged battle against the Canaanites and utterly destroyed them. The river washed them all away; not one of the enemy survived.

The defeated general fled on foot and arrived at the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite. She invited him in and offered to hide him. When he fell asleep, Jael took a tent-peg and knocked it through Sisera's temple.

The next chapter of the Haftarah is the Song of Deborah, which describes the miraculous victory and thanks the One Above for His assistance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

12th February: Sunday

Shacharit 8:45am

12th March: Purim including 9am
Shacharit, 10am **Breakfast**,
10:30am **Megillah** reading
followed by **Purim Party**
including lunch

21st March – Ladies Guild
Lunch – Guest Speaker film and
documentary producer Pamela
Wagman

11th May: AGM

21st May – Rabbi Half Marathon
run.

Recurring Events

Cheder CLOSED

Mummy and Me CLOSED
restarts: 22nd February 2017

Yahrzeits for the coming week
15th – 21st Shevat:

- 15. Merle Lewis – Mother
- 16. Ian Fagelson – Mother
- 16. Heather Lieberman – Father
- 18. Lesley Adams – Father
- 18. Nigel Tobias – Mother
- 20. Vincent Coen – Brother
- 21. Irene Rose – Mother
- 21. Gill White – Mother

A Little Deeper – Just Do It

Moses orchestrates a full year of plagues which completely debilitates Egyptian society. After the climactic 10th and final plague, the slaying of the First Born, Pharaoh finally agrees to let the Jews leave Egypt. But, like any good megalomaniac, Pharaoh changes his mind and chases after them. When the Jews look in their rear-view mirrors and see the thundering Egyptian chariots fast approaching, panic spreads. The Jews feel trapped. There is no other outlet but the sea — the Red Sea. The Jews begin to berate Moses: "Why did you have to bring us out here to die in the desert? You should have just left us alone to work for the Egyptians!" (Exodus 14:11-12) Ludicrous! How could the Jews, after 210 years of intolerable suffering in Egypt, complain to Moses for liberating them?!

About 20 years ago, an incident occurred in Stockholm where terrorists captured and held hostages. The hostages were abused both physically and emotionally. At the news conference following their release, the hostages all spoke in complimentary, glowing terms about their captors! Psychologists have since identified the "Stockholm Syndrome," whereby prisoners develop comfort and satisfaction in captivity.

For the Jews in Egypt, life was comfortable. In slavery, the rations may be meagre and the bed made of straw, but there's an up-side as well: all one's needs are provided, and there are no challenging decisions to be made. No laundry, no shopping, no deals, no deadlines. The Hebrew word for Egypt, "Mitzrayim," means a "place of confinement." Sometimes it's the smallest box which makes us feel the most secure.

Three million Jews are standing at the shores of the Red Sea. Their options are either to go forward into the un-split sea, or back to Egypt. The sea is cold, strange and foreboding. Egypt is warm, familiar and comfortable.

The Egyptians are thundering closer. The Jews are panicked. And then Nachshon, from the tribe of Yehuda, steps foot into the sea. (The original "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.") But the sea still does not split. Nachshon continues as the water reaches his ankles, then up to his knees. Still no split. Nachshon forges deeper: Up to his waist, his chest. Still no split. By now the water has reached his neck. Nachshon is being challenged to his limit. Yet he continues into the sea. As the water reaches his nostrils, at this last possible moment... the Red Sea splits. The Jewish People all rush in after him. Finally, freedom.

The Red Sea appears in our own lives as well. Ultimately, the story of our lives comes down to a few key moments of decision. These spell the difference between a life of achievement versus one of regret. Often we procrastinate until the best option no longer remains. The door is closed and we comfort ourselves by saying, "Oh well, what could I do, things just didn't work out."

Unfortunately, our lives are not equipped with background music reaching its crescendo, to alert us that the "big moment" has arrived. Our only hope of escaping the confines of Egypt is to honestly confront our fears and embrace the opportunities that G-d gives us to grow. Of course, we cannot always know what's waiting on the other side of the sea. But that's part of the beauty. It's our chance to become invigorated with the fullness of life.

The Torah tells us: Nachshon chose life. We must do the same. The feeling is liberating. Our self-esteem depends on it. And it is our only true option.

Wishing you all a peaceful and uplifting Shabbos.