

A Taste of Pardes

What was the most important aspect of the miracle of the splitting of the sea? The words, “*the horse with its rider drowned at sea*” are the only words which are reiterated in the song of Miriam. Although it would seem that this is a seemingly minor detail, the *Ramban* actually says that this was in fact the greatest miracle of all! How so? In addition, we could ask why the introductory line of the song, “*Oz yashir Moshe*-then Moshe will sing,” is written in the future tense. Furthermore, our sages teach us that this song was sung as an expression to a prophetic revelation so intense as to be deemed to be akin to and even greater than the prophecy of Ezekiel. How so?

The prophecy of Ezekiel was of a *Merkavah* (a chariot). Our sages write that this prophecy cannot be expounded upon to a group but only individually to a Torah scholar. These prophetic visions hold within them the secrets of G-d’s direction, as if on a chariot, of the world. Rabbi Moshe Shapiro *Shlita*, a leading *Rosh Yeshiva* in Jerusalem, expounds upon a number of relevant passages in the Talmud and through doing so gives us a deeper appreciation for the event of the splitting of the sea and the ensuing song which flowed forth from the lips of our forefathers at that time. Let us look at his explanations on the Talmud to guide us through this fascinating event.

The Talmud, in Tractate *Chagigah* (11b) writes that there were four sages who entered into the highest levels of understanding of G-d’s workings of this world. This area of study is referred to as, “*Pardes*.” Rabbi Akiva was one of these scholars. Rabbi Akiva warned the others that when they reach a point where they could see two

separate things that look like water, they should not label them by saying, “water, water.” What does this mean? Before we can understand this passage, we must first analyze another cryptic passage in order to come to a proper explanation of this subject.

The Talmud in tractate *Succah* (48b) says that there were two seduces who were known as “Happiness” and “Rejoicing.” Rejoicing said to Happiness, “I am greater than you because it says in the Torah that in the end of days the Jews will attain rejoicing first and only then happiness”. Happiness responded, “to the contrary, I am greater than you because after the Purim story it says that first there was happiness for the Jews and only then rejoicing.” (The *Vilna Gaon* is known to have said that the secrets of the future lie in these cryptic words.) Although we are not privy to the complete understanding of this passage, Rav Moshe Shapiro’s explanation by means of an analogy will also shed light on the song of the sea, “*Oz Yashir*.”

When a person goes out to work at the beginning of the day he is happy that he has a job, yet it would be premature to rejoice over his accomplishments as he has not yet begun his work. Upon his return from having accomplished his objectives and goals he may rejoice in his success. So too it is with this world. G-d created this world for a specific purpose. Our mission is to use the materials of this world such as a horse towards achieving these goals. At times we put the cart in front of the horse and think we are so powerful and mighty that we could accomplish goals that are contrary to the will of G-d. We take the reigns of this mighty force and run wild with it. There may even be times when such individuals are successful to such a degree that it appears that

there are two separate powers in this world. The splitting of the sea was one of those rare moments when such a seemingly powerful nation was shown to be completely under the domain of the One and Only true and everlasting power, G-d. Not only were they drowned but they were drowned in their saddle, “*the horse with his rider*.” Their ability to turn away from the raging waters was stripped from them. G-d showed the Egyptians and the Jews that not only is He the creator but the reigns of this world too are firmly in His control. This is the meaning of why what appears to be two separate powers, represented by two things that look like water, are really all one and should be labeled as water, not: water, water.

All waters, emanations, are from one source. All events in this world lead to one conclusion. The happiness which came as a result of the clarity of the hand of G-d that was seen through the miracles of Purim were just the beginning. The full rejoicing which will come from seeing how everything that transpired throughout history leads to the glorification of G-d’s name will not come to its full expression until “*oz – then*”, that glorious day when the whole world will see, “*Hashem Echad Ushemo Echad*.” His essence and His name (the way we perceive Him) will be One, meaning, that this truth will be recognized by one and all. This is truly what the verse is referring to when it says that *Oz*, then, Moshe, together with the entire Jewish nation, will sing a song of exaltation. Only then will we be able to rejoice fully by singing the full version of the song of the sea and the prophesy of Ezekiel. The guiding hand of G-d will be seen and recognized “*Oz*” – then, at the time of the final Redemption. May it be speedily in our days.

Have A Great Shabbos !!