

DAF TSAFON

27 January 2024
17 Shvat 5784

Shabbat Shira
Parashat Beshallah
ArtScroll 366 Hertz 265



The parsha begins, "And it was when Pharaoh sent out the nation and the Lord did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines for it was close. For the Lord said, lest the people fear when they see warfare and return to Egypt'" [Shmot 13:17]. The most logical route for travelling from Egypt to the Land of Canaan is by way of the land of the Philistines. However, God did not want them to take that route precisely, Ki Karov Hu.

What does this phrase, Ki Karov Hu mean? Rashi interprets the words, "Ki Karov Hu" [because it was close] at a "simple" level to mean that the proximity between Egypt and Canaan via the land of the Philistines would be a drawback in the sense that any slight setback could send the Jews scurrying back to Egypt.

A different opinion is offered by the students of Rashi, the Daat Zekeinim m'baalei haTosfot. They reinterpret the term, "Ki Karov Hu" to mean: for He is their relative, as it states elsewhere "to the Children of Israel, the nation related to Him (am k'rovo) [Tehillim 148:14]". According to this translation, "Ki Karov Hu" has nothing to do with geography, nor with the route. It relates to the closeness (literally, the relationship) between the Jews and the Almighty. Since the Jewish people are related to God, they should not travel the normal route.

What are the Baalei Hatosfot trying to teach us via this interpretation. One of the great rabbinic teachers of the 20th century, Rav Simcha Zissel Brody, explains that a great lesson for life lies in these words of the Daat Zekeinim. We Jews believe that we have a special closeness to the Almighty. As such, we are subject to personal Divine Providence (Hashgacha Pratit). What is normal and logical for the rest of the world is not necessarily what the Master of the World wants for His special people.

The lesson is – one that is so much easier said than done – when things happen in life and we ask ourselves, "This does not make any sense; why is this happening to me?" We have to remember that, "He is close to us". He is taking us by the hand and is giving us a different type of treatment. Things do not always work logically or the way we would want them to.

Imagine how the Jewish people felt. Here they are in the desert, having just left Egypt. They have a basic sense of where they're going. Everyone assumes they will be travelling via Eretz Plishtim. Suddenly, God does something different. God takes them and leads them towards the Red Sea. Then the Egyptians are suddenly in hot pursuit. What thoughts would be going through their minds at such a time?

The natural reaction would certainly have been, "Why did He do this to us? Why did He trap us like this between the sea, the desert and the Egyptian army? Had He taken us by way of the normal route, we would not be in this predicament!" The answer to that question is "Ki Karov Hu" – because the Jewish people are different, they have a close and intimate relationship with God and He treats them differently.

That was the result of the detour to the Yam Suf? It was a red-letter day in the history of Klal Yisrael. They were never the same people spiritually or materially after that day because of this detour. "And Israel saw the Great Hand ... and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant" [Shmot 14:31]. They came to a level of belief in God and in Moshe at Yam Suf that surpassed the level they had achieved in Egypt. They were a changed people, not to mention the material spoils of Yam Suf. It was a bonanza. All the money and gold of the Egyptians floated to the top and the Jews collected it all.

Rabbi Brody concludes: There are two things in life that Chazal compares to the splitting of the Yam Suf – Shidduchim [matrimonial matches] and Parnassah [earning a livelihood]. Sometimes young men or women have to go through terrible trials and tribulations when it comes to shidduchim. So often children suffer in this period of their life, their parents suffer as well. They ask: Why is this happening? I am a normal boy or a normal girl. I come from a wonderful family. Why is this so difficult? Why is God doing this to me? Everyone must keep in mind "Ki Karov Hu". Maybe there is a splitting of the Yam Suf that the Almighty wants you to experience. The bonanza may be yet to come.

The same is true regarding Parnassah. It affects all of us, and we know how difficult it can be. Again, we ask ourselves so many times: Why is this happening? I went to school. I got my degree. I am a professional. I had a good job. Why am I having so much trouble now? This should not be happening! Why can't I make a living? Why did I lose my job?

The answer is, Ki Karov Hu, the Almighty has His ways.

Shabbat Shalom

HAFTARAH

ArtScroll 1152

Hertz 281

DEBORAH'S SONG Judges IV, 4-V, 31

Towards the end of the 13th century B.C.E. the Israelites are oppressed by Jabin, king of the Canaanites. Deborah, the divinely inspired judge of Israel, calls on Barak to lead an attack against Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army. Barak agrees provided she accompanies him to infuse him with courage and hope. At the river Kishon the enemy suffers a decisive defeat and Sisera escapes to the tent of Heber, the Kenite, whose family have taken no part in the battle. Jael, Heber's wife, kills Sisera whilst he is asleep and delivers his body to Barak.

Deborah and Barak sing a song of thanksgiving (as Moses did after the crossing of the Red Sea).

מזל טוב

Wedding anniversaries

Rosie and Peter Caunt
David and Leona Goldstein
Rozelle and Maurice Joffee
David and Diana Laufer
Michael and Susan Moses
Alex and Tammy Zak

מזל טוב

Bar Mitzvah anniversary

Ze'ev Krischer

**A SPECIAL
EVENING SERVICE**

**Family Friendly Friday,
2 February 2024 - 6.00pm**

**Local politicians are joining us to
plant a tree for**

‘PEACE’

**followed by a special Kiddush,
candle-lighting and the
evening service.**

**Our congregation acknowledges the following
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to those
who are commemorating a yahrzeit
during the coming week.**

חיים ארוכים

Johanna Broerse	foster mother of Tina Vander Heyden
Sidney Cohen	father of Vivien Dembo
Charlotte Ferber	mother of Eda Millner
Renate Kaplan	grandmother of Jordan Milch
Roy Lipman	brother of Leonard Lipman
Mark Miller	brother of Wendy Penn
Harris Samuel Morris	father of Robyn Lenn OAM
Jack Leonard Smith	father of Malcolm Smith
Pamela Warnock	mother of Michael Warnock