

# NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Beshalach

([http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh\\_TorahSummary.htm](http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm))

## Parsha Outline

- Escape from Egypt
- Splitting of the Reed Sea
- Song at the Sea
- Bitter waters
- Mann from heaven
- Shabbat laws
- Water from a rock
- Amalek attacks

## Parsha Summaries

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/347708/jewish/Beshalach-Roundup.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/347708/jewish/Beshalach-Roundup.htm)

### Beshalach Roundup

Finally, in last week's parshah, after years of the Jews' enslavement and then all the ten plagues that G-d heaped upon the Egyptians, Pharaoh had let the Jews out of Egypt. But in this week's parshah, no sooner are the Jews out of Egypt that Pharaoh changes his mind and begins chasing after them!

Now, in front of the Jews is the sea, and behind them is Pharaoh with thousands of soldiers. If they move forward they will drown, but if they turn around, or do nothing, Pharaoh and his army will reach them and they will be forced back to Egypt. What should they do?! They are trapped!

G-d tells Moses to take his stick and strike the sea. Moses does, and an amazing miracle happens--the sea splits, allowing the Jews to walk through on dry land! The Egyptians try to follow the Jews into the sea, but the sea begins to flow again and closes in on them.

When the Jews come to the other side, they sing a song of thanks to G-d, awesomely grateful for the miraculous way they were saved.

Now, the Jews have come to the desert, and they are worried that they will not have food to eat. So G-d sends quail for the Jews to have meat, and every morning, a special food called Manna falls to the ground. The Jews collect one portion of Manna every day, but on Friday there is a double portion for Shabbat. Then Moses hits a rock and it becomes a fountain, giving the Jews water.

Next, a nation called Amalek comes and attacks the Jews. Moses sends Joshua to gather an army from the Jews and go fight them. Joshua does this, and he wins against the Amalekites. But G-d is very angry, and promises to never forget what Amalek did to the Jews, that they were the first one to attack them in the desert.

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/622913/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/622913/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm)

## Beshalach Aliya Summary

**General Overview:** In this week's reading, *Beshalach*, Pharaoh pursues the Israelites into the desert. The Red Sea splits, the Israelites cross the sea while the Egyptian army is drowned. Moses and the Israelites sing a special song thanking G-d for this miracle. The Israelites complain about a lack of food and drink. G-d sends Manna and quail for them to eat, and miraculously produces water from a rock. Amalek attacks the Israelites and is soundly defeated.

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**First Aliyah:** After Pharaoh sent the Israelites from his land, G-d did not allow them to take the most direct route to the Promised Land, fearing that a confrontation with the Philistines, who were situated along this route, would frighten the Israelites, causing them to return to Egypt. Instead G-d had them take the circuitous desert route, leading them with a pillar of cloud during daytime and a pillar of fire after dark. G-d then commanded the Israelites to backtrack and encamp along the Red Sea. They would thus appear to be hopelessly lost, which would prompt the Egyptians to pursue them. The Israelites followed this instruction, and, indeed, the Egyptians armies set out after the "lost" and cornered Israelites.

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**Second Aliyah:** The Israelites noticed the approaching Egyptian armies, and they panicked. "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us to die in the desert?" they screamed at Moses. "Don't be afraid," Moses reassured. "Stand firm and see G-d's salvation that He will wreak for you today . . . G-d will fight for you, and you shall remain silent."

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**Third Aliyah:** G-d instructed Moses, "Speak to the children of Israel and let them travel!" G-d told Moses to stretch out his staff over the sea and divide it, and the Israelites should then proceed through the split sea. "And the Egyptians shall know that I am G-d, when I will be glorified through Pharaoh, through his chariots, and through his horsemen." Meanwhile, the pillar of cloud that normally led the Israelites moved to their rear, insulating the Israelites and plunging the Egyptian camp into darkness. Moses stretched out his staff and the sea divided, and the Israelites walked on the seabed, on dry land. The Egyptians quickly pursued them into the sea.

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[Fourth Aliyah](#): Moses stretched his hand over the sea and the waters that had been standing like walls now fell upon the Egyptians, drowning them all. Moses then led the Israelites in song, praising G-d for the wondrous miracle that had transpired. Miriam, Moses' sister, then led the women in song and dance, with musical accompaniment. The Israelites traveled on in the desert, journeying three days without encountering water. They then arrived in Marah, where there was water—but bitter water. Moses miraculously sweetened the water.

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[Fifth Aliyah](#): One month after the Exodus, the Israelites' provisions ran dry. They complained to Moses, mentioning nostalgically "the fleshpots of Egypt," that they left behind. G-d responded that He will rain down bread from heaven in the mornings, and meat will be provided every night.

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[Sixth Aliyah](#): The meat, in the form of quails, appeared in the evening and covered the Israelite camp. In the morning, bread – called manna – fell from heaven, encased between layers of morning dew. Moses told the Israelites to gather one *omer* (a biblical measure) of manna per household member every day. Miraculously, no matter how much manna one picked, he arrived home with precisely one *omer* per head. Furthermore, Moses commanded the Israelites not to leave any manna over from one day to the next. Some disregarded this instruction, and next morning found their manna worm-infested. On Friday everyone picked two *omers*. Moses explained that the second portion was to be prepared and set aside for Shabbat—when no manna would fall. Again some disregarded Moses' directive, and went out pick manna on Shabbat. G-d was angered by this disobedience. G-d instructed Moses to take a jar of manna and place it in the (yet to be constructed) Tabernacle, as a testament for all future generations.

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[Seventh Aliyah](#): The Israelites journeyed further and as they arrived in Rephidim their drinking water ran out again. The Israelites complained, and G-d instructed Moses to smite a certain rock with his staff. Water came pouring out of the rock and the people drank. The Amalekites then came and attacked the Israelites. Moses directed his student Joshua to assemble an army and battle Amalek. Joshua did so, and the Israelites were victorious—aided by Moses' prayer atop a mountain. G-d told Moses to record in the Book that He will "surely erase the memory of Amalek from under the heavens."

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/3361>

Pharaoh finally sends *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt. With pillars of cloud and fire, G-d leads them toward *Eretz Yisrael* on a circuitous route, avoiding the Pelishtim

(Philistines). Pharaoh regrets the loss of so many slaves and chases the Jews with his army. The Jews are very afraid as the Egyptians draw close, but G-d protects them. Moshe raises his staff and G-d splits the sea, enabling the Jews to cross safely. Pharaoh, his heart hardened by G-d, commands his army to pursue, whereupon the waters crash down upon the Egyptian army. Moshe and Miriam lead the men and women, respectively, in a song of thanks. After three days' travel only to find bitter waters at Marah, the people complain. Moshe miraculously produces potable water. In Marah they receive certain *mitzvot*. The people complain that they ate better food in Egypt. G-d sends quail for meat and provides manna, a miraculous bread that falls from the sky every day except Shabbat. On Friday a double portion descends to supply the Shabbat needs. No one is able to obtain more than his daily portion, but manna collected on Friday suffices for two days so the Jews can rest on Shabbat. Some manna is set aside as a memorial for future generations. When the Jews again complain about a lack of water, Moshe miraculously produces water from a rock. Then Amalek attacks. Joshua leads the Jews in battle while Moshe prays for their welfare.

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[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1)

## פרשת בשלח

(שמות יג:יז-יז:טז)

### The Jewish People Begin their Journey

When the Jewish people began to journey from the land of Egypt, Hashem did not take them by the most direct route to *Eretz Yisrael*, which was the land of the *Plishtim*, because the people might be frightened by war. Instead they went by the way of the *Midbar Yam Suf*.

The people took the bones of Yoseph with them on the journey. Hashem led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Upon Hashem's instructions, the Jewish people encamped by the sea.

### קריעת ים סוף – *Kriat Yam Suf*

Pharaoh changed his mind and decided to pursue the Jewish people with his chariot troops. He overtook the Jews at their encampment by the *Yam Suf*. When the Jewish people saw the Egyptian forces they panicked and cried out to Moshe. Moshe reassured them that Hashem would fight for them. Then Hashem told Moshe to lift his staff over the sea. When Moshe did this, the sea split and the Jewish people walked through the sea on dry land.

The Egyptians pursued the Jews into the passage within the sea. The walls of the sea then closed over the Egyptians, drowning them all.

## **שירת הים – Shirat HaYam**

After seeing the miraculous salvation of the splitting of the sea, Moshe and the Jewish people sang the famous *shirat hayam* – “song of the sea.” (This is the *Az Yashir* we recite everyday in *Pesukei D’Zimra*.) The women, led by Miriam, also sang. Some famous phrases from this *shira* are:

זֶה אֱ-לֹהֵי וְאֶנְהוּ אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאֶרְמְמְנֶהוּ : (טו: ב)

“This is my God and I shall glorify Him, the God of my father and I shall exalt Him.”

ה' אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה (טו: ג)

“Hashem is the Master of war”

מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֱלֹהִים ה' (טו: יא)

“Who among the powers is like You, Hashem?”

ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד : (טו: יח)

“Hashem shall reign for eternity.”

## **Marah**

The Jewish people came to Marah, where the water was undrinkable due to its bitterness. The people complained to Moshe. Hashem showed Moshe a tree, which he threw into the water, making it sweet.

## **The מן (Manna)**

The Jewish people complained about a lack of food. Hashem told Moshe that He would provide them with a daily portion of food from heaven every morning (except Shabbat), and on the sixth day it would be a double portion. He also said that he would provide meat in the evening.

Moshe admonished the people for their complaints against Hashem. He told them that Hashem would provide them with food.

In the evening, quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning a miraculous food settled on the earth like dew. Each person could gather an *omer* of the food, no more and no less, and they were not permitted to leave from one day to the next. If they attempted to do so, the leftovers would become wormy and putrid.

On the sixth day, a double portion (two *omers*) was provided. The second portion was to be used for the Shabbat, when new food would not be provided. Some individuals went out on Shabbat to find new food, and Hashem criticized them.

The miraculous food was called *mon*. It resembled small white seeds and tasted like a cake fried in honey. A jar of *mon* was collected and stored in the *mishkan*. The Jewish people lived on *mon* for forty years.

## **The Miraculous Well**

The Jews then traveled and encamped in Refidim. The people complained because of a lack of water. Moshe condemned their complaining. Hashem told Moshe to take his staff and strike a certain rock. He did so and water flowed forth. Moshe named the place *Masa u'Meriva*.

## **Amalek Attacks**

The nation of Amalek attacked the Jewish people while they were encamped at Refidim. Moshe instructed Yehoshua to choose men to go forth and battle Amalek. Yehoshua led

the men to battle, and Moshe, Aharon, and Chur went up to the top of the hill. During the battle, when Moshe would raise his hand, the Jewish people would be stronger, and when he lowered his hand, Amalek would be stronger. Moshe had difficulty keeping his hands up, so Aharon and Chur helped him keep his hands raised in prayer until sunset, and Yehoshua defeated Amalek.

(The raising of the hands symbolized that the Jewish victory came only from Hashem above.)

Hashem then told Moshe that He would destroy Amalek from beneath the heavens. "For the hand is on the seat of God, Hashem is at war with Amalek from generation to generation."

## Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/573590/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/573590/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm)

### Lyrics:

To the promised land  
Through the desert sand  
A cloud guided them by day  
At night fire led the way

To the sea the Jews fled  
"Chase after them," Paroh said,  
When the Jews saw Paroh's men  
"Save us!" they cried to Hashem

Hashem split the Red Sea  
Our people now were free  
Moshe sang a song of praise  
To Hashem and his mighty ways

## Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1467>

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1),

[http://www.chinuch.org/admin\\_topic\\_search.php?id=130](http://www.chinuch.org/admin_topic_search.php?id=130),

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=7075](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=7075)

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

K-2

## Questions

1. What did Pharaoh do as soon as the Bnei Yisrael left Egypt?
2. What two things protected the Bnei Yisrael while traveling in the midbar?
3. Where did the Egyptians catch up with the Bnei Yisrael?
4. What did Hashem tell Moshe to do?
5. What did Moshe and the Bnei Yisrael sing after they crossed the Yam Suf?
6. What did the Bnei Yisrael eat in the desert?
7. Did the manna fall on Shabbat? If no, then how did the Bnei Yisrael get food for Shabbat?
8. What did Moshe do to the rock to get water?
9. Who attacked the Bnei Yisrael in the desert?
10. What happened when Moshe lifted his hands and what happened when Moshe lowered his hands?

## Answers

1. Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the bnei Yisrael go and chased after them.
2. The Amud Anan (pillar of clouds) protected the Bnei Yisrael by day and the Amud Esh (pillar of fire) protected the Bnei Yisrael at night.
3. The Egyptians caught up with the Bnei Yisrael by the sea.
4. Hashem told Moshe to lift his staff and split the sea.
5. Az Yashir.
6. The manna.
7. The manna did not fall on Shabbat. A double portion was given on Friday.
8. Moshe hit the rock.
9. Amalak attacked the Bnei Yisrael in the desert.
10. When Moshe lifted his hands the Bnei Yisrael was stronger and when Moshe lowered his hands Amalek was stronger.

3-4

## Questions

1. What did Pharaoh do as soon as the Bnei Yisrael left Egypt?
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3. Where did the Egyptians catch up with the Bnei Yisrael?
4. What did Hashem tell Moshe to do?
5. What did Moshe and the Bnei Yisrael sing after they crossed the Yam Suf?
6. Who led the ladies in shira?
7. What did Moshe take out with him? Why?
8. Describe the water in Marah?
9. Why was the place called Marah?
10. How did Moshe make the water sweet?

11. What did the Bnei Yisrael eat in the desert?
12. Did the manna fall on Shabbat? If no, then how did the Bnei Yisrael get food for Shabbat?
13. What did Moshe do to the rock to get water?
14. Who attacked the Bnei Yisrael in the desert?
15. What happened when Moshe lifted his hands and what happened when Moshe lowered his hands?

## Answers

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2. The Amud Anan (pillar of clouds) protected the Bnei Yisrael by day and the Amud Esh (pillar of fire) protected the Bnei Yisrael at night.
3. The Egyptians caught up with the Bnei Yisrael by the sea.
4. Hashem told Moshe to lift his staff and split the sea.
5. Az Yashir.
6. Miriam.
7. Moshe took with him the bones of Yosef since Yosef made the Bnei Yisrael swear that they would take the bones with them from Egypt.
8. The waters were very bitter.
9. The place was called Marah because the waters were very bitter (Marah means bitter).
10. Moshe through a tree into the water.
11. The manna.
12. The manna did not fall on Shabbat. A double portion was given on Friday.
13. Moshe hit the rock.
14. Amalak attacked the Bnei Yisrael in the desert.
15. When Moshe lifted his hands the Bnei Yisrael was stronger and when Moshe lowered his hands Amalek was stronger.

## 5-6

### Questions

1. What did Pharaoh do as soon as the Bnei Yisrael left Egypt?
2. What two things protected the Bnei Yisrael while traveling in the midbar?
3. Where did the Egyptians catch up with the Bnei Yisrael?
4. What did Hashem tell Moshe to do?
5. Who was the first person to jump into the Yam Suf?
6. What did Moshe and the Bnei Yisrael sing after they crossed the Yam Suf?
7. What is the special name given to this week's parsha to commemorate this?
8. Who led the ladies in shira?
9. What did Moshe take out with him? Why?
10. Describe the water in Marah?
11. Why was the place called Marah?

12. How did Moshe make the water sweet?
13. What did the Bnei Yisrael eat in the desert?
14. What happened to the leftovers?
15. Did the manna fall on Shabbat? If no, then how did the Bnei Yisrael get food for Shabbat?
16. What do we do on Shabbat to commemorate that?
17. Why do we put out food for the birds on Shabbas Shira?
18. What did Moshe do to the rock to get water?
19. Who attacked the Bnei Yisrael in the desert?
20. What happened when Moshe lifted his hands and what happened when Moshe lowered his hands?

## Answers

1. Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the bnei Yisrael go and chased after them.
2. The Amud Anan (pillar of clouds) protected the Bnei Yisrael by day and the Amud Esh (pillar of fire) protected the Bnei Yisrael at night.
3. The Egyptians caught up with the Bnei Yisrael by the sea.
4. Hashem told Moshe to lift his staff and split the sea.
5. Nachshon Ben Aminadav from the tribe of Yehudah.
6. Az Yashir.
7. Shabbas Shira.
8. Miriam.
9. Moshe took with him the bones of Yosef since Yosef made the Bnei Yisrael swear that they would take the bones with them from Egypt.
10. The waters were very bitter.
11. The place was called Marah because the waters were very bitter (Marah means bitter).
12. Moshe through a tree into the water.
13. The manna.
14. The leftovers became infested with worms.
15. The manna did not fall on Shabbat. A double portion was given on Friday.
16. We eat lechem mishnah (two challah rolls).
17. Dasan and Aviram put out manna on Shabbat morning and the birds ate it.
18. Moshe hit the rock.
19. Amalak attacked the Bnei Yisrael in the desert.
20. When Moshe lifted his hands the Bnei Yisrael was stronger and when Moshe lowered his hands Amalek was stronger.

## Parsha Stories

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/349097/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349097/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm)

Living with the Parsha: Action

By [Tali Loewenthal](#)

Rafi sat by the computer, completely engrossed in an exciting game. It's sort of educational, he told himself as he brushed away the guilt feelings that were beginning to surface. The sound of a cough behind him startled him, and he turned round. His older brother Benjy was standing there, holding a thick file of schoolwork. "Sorry, Rafi", Benjy said, "but I have to finish my Religious Studies coursework and I must use the computer." Rafi groaned, but decided it wasn't worth kicking up a fuss.

The question now, was: what else he could do to avoid what he was supposed to be doing. He suddenly remembered the game in the park. Of course, it was the first Sunday of the month. There would a football game in twenty minutes. He went downstairs and slipped on his coat. He opened the front door as quietly as possible, just as his father was coming down the stairs. He smiled. "Bye Dad. There's a game in the park now."

His father raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Have you finished getting all the paint off the shed floor?" Rafi shifted from foot to foot uneasily, his eyes focusing on the hall mat. "I thought," said his father "that we had agreed you would spend your Sunday morning cleaning up that mess. I left a bucket with some scrubbing brushes and white spirit there earlier for you. You'll probably want to wear some old clothes too. Your mother will be pretty annoyed if you ruin these trousers as well."

Rafi closed the front door and walked despondently up the stairs. A week ago, he and some friends had decided to build a small boat, with some leftover wood they had found in a skip. Unfortunately, they had not taken as much care with the paint as they should have, and when they decided to see if their water guns could shoot paint as well, the results were quite disastrous. It was possible to clean the shed, but it would be a lot of hard work. Dan and Misha, his 'accomplices in crime,' as his father called them, were both down with the flu, so he could not even get them to come and help.

Benjy looked up at him as Rafi passed the computer table. "It's not that difficult", Benjy said encouragingly. "You could always ask Dad if you can use the sanding machine to get the bits off the walls. I seem to remember us using it once for that. I don't mind helping you a bit when I'm finished with this." Rafi nodded his thanks. Benjy was always very kindhearted.

"Anyway, there's no point procrastinating anymore," Benjy said as Rafi sat down on the second chair next to the computer table. "You know, Mummy was saying something really interesting about the Jews coming out of Egypt. They were finally released from their slavery, but when they came to the sea, they saw the Egyptian army chasing them. It was very frightening to see this powerful army, and the Jews were divided in four groups as to what was best to do. One group wanted to fight the Egyptians, another wanted to go back to Egypt and continue being slaves. A third group thought they should just pray to G-d and a fourth thought there was no other option but to throw themselves into the Sea and commit suicide. None of these were good ideas."

"What was wrong with praying to G-d?" asked Rafi.

"Not when action is required," said Benjy. "G-d told Moses: just go straight ahead. Don't worry, there will be a miracle and the Sea will split. So then it was a question of who would make the first move into the Sea."

"I know. Nachshon the son of Aminadav. He jumped in, and the water went higher and higher, up to his chin, and then the water split," said Rafi.

"Quite right," said his brother. "That's what it's all about: action! Because of him, the Jews were saved. Action is crucial."

"Okay, okay", said Rafi, going towards his room to change his clothes. "I shall act, now!"

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/349098/jewish/Beshalach-Parshah-Lesson.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349098/jewish/Beshalach-Parshah-Lesson.htm)

## Beshalach Parshah Lesson

By [Malka Touger](#)

Long ago, in the days of the famed rabbi, the Maharal of Prague, the children of the city looked forward eagerly to Shabbat of the Torah portion of Beshalach. Even the cold European winter could not keep them home on this Shabbat.

"Come on," Aron urged his little brother Lazer, pulling him gently by the hand. "We don't want to be late."

Bundled in their warm sheepskin coats, the two boys hurried down the narrow cobblestone streets of the Jewish quarter of Prague.

"There's Benjamin with his father," Aron said as he spotted his friend up ahead. "Let's catch up to them and we'll go together."

From every corner, children, parents and teachers were making their way to the central synagogue where the great Jewish leader and rabbi, the Maharal of Prague, had instructed them to gather on the roof of the synagogue. There the teachers would tell the children the story of the splitting of the Red Sea.

"Even the birds chirped and fluttered their wings when the Jewish people sang," the teachers would describe enthusiastically. "And the little children picked the buds off the sea plants and fed them to the chirping birds."

After the story was told, the teachers, following the rabbi's instructions, gave the children buckwheat grains which they tossed to the birds and the hens below. "Just like the

children fed the birds at the splitting of the sea," the children of Prague called out with delight.

Then a hush swept over the roof of the synagogue. Everyone turned toward the beloved leader of Prague. The Maharal himself had joined them, and now he blessed the children. "May you merit to bring your children to Torah, marriage, and good deeds," the Rabbi said.

This was the custom that the Maharal encouraged in ancient Prague.

Are you wondering why the rabbi insisted that the children follow this custom, and why he himself took the time to participate? The Maharal was a brilliant scholar who taught and wrote very deep explanations of the Torah.

This practice on Shabbat Shirah taught the people a great lesson, but the lesson was not about how to keep mitzvot. After all, it only recalled a story in the Midrash. The story wasn't even about people, but about birds. And the day was Shabbat, when a Jew should strive to be involved only in holiness. Still, the Maharal gave some of his precious time to the little children. The reason was that he wanted to stress to them how important it is to follow our customs and to be happy about keeping our ancient traditions.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-Beshalach.pdf?docid=3367&ie=1&showobject=1>

## LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

### AMALEK

Amalek. The perpetual nemesis of the Jewish people. Where and how did the conflict with Amalek begin? The Children of Israel were encamped in Refidim. There was no water to drink. They fought with Moshe, demanding water. "Why did you take us out of Egypt to die of thirst in the desert?" (Shemos 17:3). Hashem instructed Moshe to take his staff, strike the rock, and water will come out. He did so and the rebellion stopped. "The place was called 'Masse Umeriva' (literally test and contention) because of the fighting of the Children of Israel and their testing of Hashem by saying, 'Is Hashem among us or not?'" (Shemos 17:7). Then came Amalek.

Rashi has a parable to this episode. A man once took his son on his shoulders and went out on the road. The son saw something nice by the side of the road. "Abba, can you pick that nice thing up and give it to me?" he asked. The father picked it up and gave it to his son. The son saw another goodie lying by the road. "Abba can you also get that for me?" Of course the father got it for him. The same thing happened a third time. They father and son then met a man on the road. The son asked the man, "Have you seen my father?" The father said to his son, "You do not know where I am?" He took the boy off his shoulders and a dog came along and bit him. So too with the Jewish people. Hashem is always

found among us. He is ready and waiting to fulfill all of our needs. How can we dare say, “Is Hashem among us or not?”

Kinderlach . . .

Let us have a contest at the Shabbos table. Everyone try to think of an example of Hashem helping him. How about the time that your neighbor lost his scooter. You put up signs for hashovas aveida (returning a lost object). Someone found his scooter, read the sign, and returned it to your neighbor. Then you lost your wallet. That very same neighbor whom you helped find his scooter, found your wallet! Is there any doubt that Hashem is among us?

## FIVE WEAPONS

Class, I have a few questions for you on this week’s parasha. Please look at the first two verses. Who would like to read them?” “I would, Rebbe.” “Go ahead, Chaim.” “It happened when Paroh released the people, Hashem did not lead them through the land of the Pelishtim, because it was near (Mitzrayim). For Hashem said, ‘So that the people do not change their minds when they see war and return to Mitzrayim.’ Hashem led the people around through the desert to the Yam Suf, and the Bnei Yisrael had gone up armed from the land of Mitzrayim” (Shemos 13:17,18). “Very good Chaim. Take note, class, that these two verses mention the Jewish people four different times. The first three times, they use the word, ‘ha’am’ – ‘the people.’ The fourth time, they are referred to as ‘Bnei Yisrael.’ My first question is – ‘mah nishtanah?’ what is the difference between the first three times, when they are referred to as ‘ha’am,’ and the fourth time, when they are called ‘Bnei Yisrael?’ “Second question: the verse states, And Bnei Yisrael went up ‘chamushim.’ What does the word ‘chamushim’ mean?” “Armed with weapons.” excellent, Avi. That is how our Sages translate this word. The Keli Yakar, however, asks several questions on this translation. The Bnei Yisrael were slaves for generations. They did not know how to use weapons. Why would they carry something that they did not know how to use? Furthermore, the battles of Klal Yisrael were not fought with conventional arms. Rather, The Almighty was (and is) our protector, and Torah and tefillos are our weapons. Why take arrows, spears, and clubs along if you have no use for them?” “Rebbe, perhaps they took along those weapons in order to do the hishtadlus (preparative action) for war that Hashem requires. They were not allowed to rely on miracles; therefore they had to appear to be prepared to fight a conventional battle.” “Excellent, Yankie. The Keli Yakar addresses your point. He answers that this fact is well known. The Torah does not need to relate it to us at this point. Furthermore, ‘chamushim’ means five weapons. The verse details them. “Shield and buckler, bow, arrow, mace, and spear” (Yechezkel 39:9). There is really no need to mention the number of weapons here. Additionally, there is no apparent reason that each one should have exactly five weapons. Based upon the strength of all of these questions, the Keli Yakar concludes that there must be a deeper meaning to this verse.” “What is it, Rebbe?” “The nation had no weapons in their hand other than the Chumash, which is hinted to by the word ‘chamushim’. We need only the five books of the Torah to fight our battles.” “That is fascinating, Rebbe. Is there a relationship between this and the answer to the first

question about 'ha'am' and 'Bnei Yisrael?' " "Definitely, Yitzy. They were merely an 'am' when they left Mitzrayim. They were, in many respects, like any other 'am'." "Why, Rebbe?" They were lacking the main factor that distinguished them from the other nations – the Torah. The 'am' was not yet ready to receive the Torah." "Why not, Rebbe?" "They first needed to strengthen themselves by going through the tests of the Yam Suf and the Midbar." "In what way were they tests, Rebbe?" "The Yam Suf was a gigantic test of their emunah in Hashem. Only someone who believed totally in The Almighty would throw himself into the freezing waters. The Midbar, on the other hand, developed their middah (character trait) of histapkus (being satisfied with what Hashem gives you). They went forth into a hostile environment, unable to sustain life. They learned to rely totally on the food and protection that Hashem provided for them, as the Mechilta states, 'The Torah was only given to those who ate the mun.' The verses refer to these two tests. 'Hashem led the people around through the desert to the Yam Suf' (13:17).

After passing these two tests, they earned the zechus (merit) of being referred to as 'Bnei Yisrael,' as the verse states, 'and the Bnei Yisrael had gone up armed from the land of Mitzrayim' (13:18)." "What an inspiration for us, Rebbe!" "Yes, Chaim. We must always remember what our true weapon is. When we are in danger, we do not rely on the conventional weapons of the other 'amim'. Rather we strengthen our Torah learning. That is our protection. That is our 'megaton bomb'. That wins our battles.

Kinderlach . . .

It does not matter how many policemen we have. The number of soldiers is also irrelevant. Guns, tanks, planes, bombs, helicopters, and missiles will not win wars for Klal Yisrael. What does our arsenal consist of? Just five weapons – the five books of the Torah. They protect us and win all of our battles. How do we acquire them? Step one is strengthening our emunah in Hashem and our middah of histapkus. Step two is learning Torah with all of our koach. Arm yourselves kinderlach, and you will win every battle.

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/pArchive.asp?eventType=16&eventName=Beshalach>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

[http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Acting\\_Cruel.asp](http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Acting_Cruel.asp)

**Beshalach** (Exodus 13:17-17:16)

**Acting Cruel**

## From this week's Torah Portion

There's nothing good about being mean. In this week's portion we learn how the Amalekite nation attacked the Jewish people for no other reason than to be cruel and spiteful. They weren't fighting over land, nor were there any previous fights

between them. They simply wanted to harm and destroy. We can learn from this how *not* to act - not to be cruel or hurtful to others.

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## Story

*In our story, a nasty scene helps a kid discover the truth about being mean.*

### IN THE MEAN TIME

"Ow!" yelled Danny, rubbing his arm that just got a hard pinch from his older brother, Bob. "Why'd you do that?"

"Cuz it's fun, squirt," laughed the older boy. "Anyway, stop complaining and hurry up. I have a dentist's appointment and Dad said if we're not home by three, I'll be in trouble. And if I get into trouble, you can bet I'm going to make sure *you* suffer *twice* as much."

Danny had no doubt his brother meant it. Bob's favorite hobby seemed to be picking on him and doing whatever he could to make Danny miserable.

"Come on! I mean it, run!" commanded Bob with a hard slap on the back. Afraid, Danny started running, only to flop right away on the ground after tripping over the foot Bob sneakily stuck in his way.

"Ha! Haaa! What's the matter, squirt - forgot how to walk or something?"

"Bob, come on, cut it out!" the boy sputtered as he picked up all the stuff that spilled out of the heavy book-bag he was carrying. The bag was extra heavy from all of the extra stuff his brother made him haul. "What did I ever do to you?"

"You exist - that's bad enough. Now come on, we're getting later by the minute."

The boys started walking home, Danny nervously making sure to keep his eye on Bob in case he tried another one of his many 'tricks.'

They were about a block from home when they saw a commotion. A few kids were standing in a circle, holding sticks, laughing and making loud noises. Curious, the brothers got closer and were shocked to see a tiny, frightened kitten cowering in the middle of the circle. Each time it tried to escape, one of the kids would yell loud and bang down his stick inches away from the terrified creature's head.

Danny watched as Bob, who was bigger than any of the kids there, pushed his way into the circle.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU GUYS!?" he thundered. "If you don't put those sticks down this second and get out of here - you're going to be wearing them in your nose!" He clapped his hands and made some threatening stomps, which immediately dispersed the group in every direction. The kitten, sensing freedom, quickly slinked off and disappeared into some tall grass.

Bob, obviously feeling proud of his good deed, turned to Danny and shook his head. "Can you believe the mean streak those guys had? Tormenting a poor innocent creature much smaller than them - just to have fun! Isn't that sick?" he asked, rolling his eyes.

"Well, um, you're right, Bob," Danny nodded. "And it's great how you saved the kitten, b-but ... aren't I smaller than you too and d-don't you hurt me for no reason?" Danny's eyes were tearing and as Bob realized what his little brother was getting at, only his age and toughness stopped his eyes from tearing too. The kid was right. Why was his picking on his little brother any better than those guys being cruel to an animal? In fact ... he swallowed hard ... it was probably worse.

"Yeah ... um ... well, maybe you're right. But anyway, squ i... I mean Danny, let's head home. Dad's waiting for us. Um, if you want you can give me your book-bag to carry for a while and take a load off your back."

The kids bounded home without a single tease, pinch or trip along the way. All thanks to a little kitten, and a little kid that taught a big boy an even bigger lesson.

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## Discussion Questions

### Ages 3-5

Q. How did Bob feel about picking on Danny at first?

A. He didn't think twice. It was fun for him and he didn't care how Danny felt.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. He realized that what he was doing was no better than those kids who were hurting the kitten.

### Ages 6-9

Q. What life-lesson do you think Bob learned that day?

A. Although he had been acting very cruel to his younger brother, he hadn't realized he was wrong until he saw the kids tormenting the cat and it dawned in him that the way he'd been treating Danny was just as cruel.

Q. Why do you think that people act cruelly?

A. Many times it comes from not liking themselves, or because others had been cruel to them.

### **Ages 10 and Up**

Q. How would you compare being cruel to animals with being cruel to other people?

A. While cruelty to animals is certainly wrong and forbidden by the Torah, we should realize that being cruel to our fellow humans who are more self-aware than animals and therefore in many ways even more sensitive to pain - including emotional pain - can be even worse.

Q. Do you think acting harshly can ever be justified?

A. While generally harshness is a negative behavior, when dealing with people who are acting in a seriously destructive way and they will not be influenced by a soft approach, acting harshly is not only ethical, but perhaps even mandatory.

## **Parsha Games**

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

## **K-2**

After the B'nei Yisrael had come through the Reed Sea they knew that Hashem had saved them from the Egyptians and they were safe. They sang a song to show how happy they were and that they trusted Hashem. Miriam, the sister of Moshe and Aharon, together with the women sang and danced to show how happy they were

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Expressing joy**

### **Activity**

**When we're happy we love to sing and dance. Sing the song 'If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands'. Add other 'action' verses e.g. 'If you're happy and you know it: ...dance around'**

...shake our hands'  
touch you toes'

OR

Sing this song to celebrate Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees, which occurs this week.

**Tune: Did You Ever See a Lassie**



Have you ever had an apple, an apple, an apple?  
Have you ever had an apple  
And heard it go crunch?  
Have you ever had an orange, an orange, etc.  
And heard it go slurp?  
plum..... go squidge?  
(think of other fruits and the noises that go along with them)

## 3-4

Whilst in the desert, the people complained that they missed all the delicious food they had in Egypt. God sent 'Mun' (Manna) which the people were to collect. They were only to collect enough for that day. If they took more than they really needed, it rotted

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Be satisfied with what you have**

### **Activity**

**Have the children suggest ways in which we are 'greedy', personally and globally. In small groups act out either the story of the 'Mun', showing a greedy family and a satisfied family, or another illustration of this issue.**

## 5-6

When the B'nei Yisrael reached the water's edge and saw the Egyptians coming after them, they were afraid, as they could go no further. As others hesitated, only one man, Nachshon ben Aminadav, trusting that God would save them, walked into the sea, which immediately split

### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Act promptly to do what you think is right**

## Activity

The story of Nachshon ben Aminadav illustrates Hillel's dictum 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?' Whilst all the tribal leaders stood around saying they wanted to go into the sea, no one actually did, until Nachshon took the initiative and the sea split. Discuss 'Actions speak louder than words'. Who else in history (ancient or modern) acted like Nachshon ben Aminadav? Examples: The little Dutch boy, the schoolgirl and the tsunami warning.