

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Beshalach

For the week ending 13 Shevat 5759
29 & 30 January 1999

Parsha Questions

1. What percentage of the Jewish people died during the plague of darkness?
2. Why did the oath that Yosef administered to his brothers apply to Moshe's generation?
3. When, besides the week of *Parshas Beshalach*, do we read from *Parshas Beshalach*?
4. Why did the Egyptians want to pursue the Jewish People?
5. Where did the Egyptians get animals to pull their chariots?
6. What does it mean that the Jewish people "took hold of their fathers' profession" (*tafsu umnus avosam*)?
7. How did Hashem cause the wheels of the Egyptian chariots to fall off?
8. Why were the dead Egyptians cast out of the sea?
9. To what future time is the verse hinting when it uses the future tense of "Then Moshe and *Bnei Yisrael* will sing"?
10. Why are the Egyptians compared to stone, lead and straw?
11. Why did "fear seize the inhabitants of *Pelashes*?"
12. The princes of Edom and Moav had nothing to fear from the Jewish People. Why, then, were they "confused and gripped with trembling?"
13. Why is Miriam referred to as "Aharon's sister" and not as "Moshe's sister"?
14. The Jewish women trusted that Hashem would grant the Jewish People a miraculous victory over the Egyptians. How do we know this?
15. Which sections of the Torah did the Jewish People receive at Marah?
16. When did *Bnei Yisrael* run out of food?
17. What lesson in *derech erez* concerning the eating of meat is taught in this week's *Parsha*?
18. How did non-Jews experience the taste of the *manna*?
19. The Prophet Yirmiyahu showed the Jewish People a jar of manna prepared in the time of Moshe. Why?
20. Why did Moshe's hands become heavy during the war against Amalek?

Sherlox and the Mysterious Cry

"The words tell a lot about the speaker," said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes. "Yet, a close look at the speaker tells you a lot about his words."

"Well then, perhaps you can explain this text about the Children of Israel and their words," said Watstein. "The text says: The Children of Israel lifted their eyes and saw the Egyptians pursuing, and the Children of Israel cried out to G-d." (Shmos 14:20)

"Whenever an army pursues you to the sea ... pray, I always say," said Sherlock.

"I agree. The text is self-explanatory. Why, then, does Rashi comment? Rashi says that by praying, 'they latched on to their ancestors' craft.'" (Rashi)

"Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov all cried to G-d in times of distress. Now their offspring were doing the same. Is that hard to understand?"

"No, but why the need for this comment? Rashi's comments are designed to answer textual difficulties, yet this verse couldn't be simpler: The Jews prayed. So, Mr. Holmes, what textual difficulty is Rashi trying to answer?"

"A close look at the speaker tells you a lot about his words."

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Parshas **Beshalach** — 13 Shevat 5759, 29 & 30 January 1999

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Answer

“Who cried out?” asked Sherlox.

“The Children of Israel, of course. It says so explicitly.”

“And if it wouldn’t say so?”

“Hmm, I suppose we would know it anyway because the preceding phrase says that the ‘*Children of Israel*’ saw the Egyptians pursuing...”

“Aha!”

“I see your point. The second ‘*Children of Israel*’ seems redundant.”

“You can say that again.”

“Therefore, Rashi explains that the phrase ‘*Children of Israel*’ doesn’t tell us *who* cried out, it tells us *how* they cried out. Their prayer wasn’t an ordinary response to a scary situation; rather, it reflected their lofty calling as the *Children of Israel*, the offspring of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov (also known as *Israel*), latching on to their ancestral art of prayer.”

“Artfully said, Dr. Watstein.”

(Based on *Maskil L’David*; *Sherlox*” is by Reuven Subar, inspired by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek’s “*What’s Bothering Rashi*”)

I Did Not Know That!

“Macho Emche ... I will obliterate the remembrance of Amalek” (Shemos 17:14).

The phrase “I will obliterate” (*macho emche*) has the same numeric value as the phrase “this refers to Haman” (*ze haman*), Amalek’s most infamous descendant.

Ba’al HaTurim

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

14:4	The Miracle of Egyptian Pursuit
14:13	Promise or Command?
14:15	No Need to Cry
14:21	Nature or Miracle?
15:19	When the <i>Shira</i> was Sung
16:4	The Purpose of Trial (part 2)
17:9	The War Against Amalek

Ibn Ezra

14:13	Slave Mentality
14:29-30	Drowning and Dry Land

Malbim

14:11-12	Red or Dead
14:16	The Ten Miracles of the Crossing of the Sea

Answers to this Week’s Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary, unless otherwise stated

- 13:18 - Eighty percent (four-fifths).
- 13:19 - Yosef made his brothers swear that they would make their children swear.
- 14:5 - On the seventh day of Pesach (and also on Purim).
- 14:5 - To regain their wealth.
- 14:7 - From those Egyptians who feared the word of Hashem and kept their animals inside during the plagues.
- 14:10 - They cried out to Hashem.
- 14:25 - He melted them with fire.
- 14:30 - So that the Jewish People would see the destruction of the Egyptians and be assured of no further pursuit.
- 15:1 - Resurrection of the dead during the time of *mashiach*.
- 15:5 - The wickedest ones floated like straw, dying slowly. The average ones suffered less, sinking like stone. Those still more righteous sunk like lead, dying immediately.
- 15:14 - Because they slew the members of the Tribe of Efraim who had escaped from Egypt at an earlier time. They feared vengeance for this act.
- 15:14 - They felt horrible seeing Israel in a state of glory.
- 15:20 - Aharon put himself at risk for her when she was struck with *tzara’as*. (See *Bamidbar 12:12*)
- 15:20 - They brought musical instruments with them in preparation for the miraculous victory celebration.
- 15:25 - Shabbos, Red Heifer, Judicial Laws.
- 16:1 - 15th of Iyar.
- 16:8 - One should not eat meat to the point of satiation.
- 16:21 - The sun melted whatever *manna* remained in the fields. This flowed into streams from which animals drank. Whoever ate these animals tasted *manna*.
- 16:32 - The people claimed they couldn’t study Torah because they were too busy earning a livelihood. Yirmiyahu showed them the manna saying: “If you study Torah, G-d will provide for you just as he provided for your ancestors in the desert.”
- 17:12 - Because he was remiss in his duty, since he, not Yehoshua, should have led the battle.