



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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Birthdays and anniversaries are important opportunities in our lives to express our gratitude to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for what we have, and to share it with our friends and families. Similarly, on the other side, when we observe a *yahrzeit*, it reminds us of a dear parent, grandparent, sibling, or other loved one who is no longer with us, and gives us pause to think about them and to share their legacy with others.

This past *Motzei Shabbat*, I sat with my wife and the first thing we did was call our granddaughter on FaceTime to wish her a very happy birthday. Naama just turned two, and we, as proud grandparents, were very excited to wish her a happy birthday and a year full of, *b'ezrat Hashem*, growth and happiness with her incredible parents.

I recently conducted an experiment in the OU Israel office. I asked a number of employees if they could tell me what date the pagers blew up in Lebanon, or when Nasrallah was killed, effectively ending the war with Hezbollah with a decisive victory. They did not know the answer.

I then asked if they could tell me what day we eliminated Sinwar in Gaza. Once again, they did not know. The same continued to be true for so many of the huge military successes that we have experienced with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu's* help. Now, it's not that my employees don't consider these events important. So many of us celebrated when witnessing the downfall of the heads of terror in the countries that surround Israel throughout this war. So why don't we remember the day these things happened?

I found myself thinking about *Parshat Beshalach*, where the song of *Az Yashir* appears. This is such an important song, sung by *Klal Yisrael* with Moshe Rabbeinu after the splitting of the Red Sea and the defeat of the Egyptians. We can only imagine that *Bnei Yisrael* were beside themselves with all the miracles they were experiencing in those moments.

Yet the Midrash tells another story. When the Jewish people were walking "*betoch hayam bayabashah*," "through the sea on dry land" (Shemot 14:22), the midrash says that some Jews complained that this was just like when they were in Egypt. For when they were in Egypt, they had mud on their feet from constantly working with mortar and cement, and here they were walking through *Yam Suf* and once again they had mud on their feet!

When reading that midrash, I asked myself: How could it be that the greatest miracle in history was literally happening right in front of them, where they saw the water split into two, where they walked on dry land that had been completely covered in water two seconds

**In loving memory of our father,
grandfather and great grandfather**

Morris Zimmerman ז"ל

משה בון מנחם מנדל ורבקה ז"ל

נפטר בח"י שבט, תשפ"א

on his fifth yahrzeit

*The Zimmerman family
Nof Ayalon, Kerem Reim,
Nairobi, Jerusalem*

prior, where the Torah tells us with the water became like two walls on either side of them? How could it be that they saw all of this and what was going through their minds was the fact that they had mud on their shoes? The answer is that we too easily miss the miracles happening in our lives. It becomes commonplace to us, and we fail to recognize them as the miracles they are.

In a way, we recreate the midrash's story and lesson every day. In the morning *Shacharit* prayer, we recite *Az Yashir*, and we allow ourselves to grow accustomed to it. And then, *Parshat Beshalach* comes around, and we give the Shabbat a special name – *Shabbat Shira*, the Shabbat when we sing to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Then, *Az Yashir* elevates to something special. Many shuls have the custom to either stand for the entire Torah reading, or at least during the part when they get up to the song of *Az Yashir* in the Torah.

I think the idea is that this special emphasis serves as a reminder to us that great miracles happen, and that our job is to make sure that we recognize it every single day. And not only is it important to remember that the miracle happened, but it's important as well to remember that we must thank *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for this incredible miracle of splitting the sea for the Jewish people.

Maybe it's time to mark more dates on the calendar. Perhaps days like the miraculous day the last remaining hostage, Ran Gvili z'l, was returned home- 8th of Shevat 5786, so too for the one in which the pagers went off – the 15th of Elul, 5784 – should be a day that we thank *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Perhaps make a *l'chaim*, perhaps have a *fleishig* meal – something to mark the occasion and express our gratitude. As well as for the day Nasrallah was killed, the



25th of Elul. Or, every person should pick a date that is important in their lives. It could be for a family living in Sderot or Kiryat Shmona, it's the day they were finally able to return home. These are days that are very joyous for the Jewish people. Perhaps for someone else, it's the day they received their dream job, or the day they made *aliyah*. Great things happen in our lives, and I think this beautiful practice of standing up every year on *Shabbat Shira* and saying, "Thank you, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, for the incredible gift that You gave us of walking through that water and being saved from the Egyptians" should inspire us to create similar moments of gratitude throughout the year.

Many talk about how *Klal Yisrael* were at the

May the Torah learned
in this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of

Libby Pattashnick א"ח
ליבה בת הרב דוד ע"ה

Our beloved Tante Libby
on her fourth Yahrzeit, כ"ב שבט

*The extended Pattashnick family
in Israel*

lowest levels of impurity at the moment of the Exodus. For hundreds of years, they had been influenced by the Egyptian pagans, in many ways. Yet, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* took them out anyway in His abundant kindness, as he had promised to Avraham Avinu.

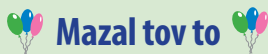
Today, we are living through another miracle. Hashem promised *Rachel Imeinu* that He would bring us back even after our long exile, and here we are, building up this beautiful Land with so many of us coming back to our homeland. As a Jewish people, we must continue thanking *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for all the great things He does for us. We must continue to recognize that He is giving our soldiers and our defense forces endless strength to accomplish what needs to be done to protect the Jewish people.

May *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* give blessings to all those around the world who help the Jewish people. And *b'ezrat Hashem*, we should be able to celebrate many great occasions and to thank *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for those great moments – as individuals and as a nation – until 120 in good health.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat Shira,



Rabbi Avi Berman



Mazal tov to
Avi & Becky Katz
and Michael & Michele Meiner
on the birth of their
precious new grandson
son of Benji & Michal Meiner

Rabbi Avi Berman
and the OU Israel Family



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