

# CLASS 37 - BESHALACH

by Rabbi Heshy Grossman

*"Az Yashir Moshe - 'Az', when he witnessed the miracle, the thought to sing Shirah entered his heart....we learn that the letter 'Yud' [as in 'Yashir'] is said in reference to a thought [for the future]. But, according to the Midrash, our rabbis said: here is an allusion in the Torah to T'chias HaMeisim...." (Rashi, Shemos 15:1)*

After seeing the splitting of the sea, a wonder that surpassed even the miraculous escape from slavery, Klal Yisrael merits to sing a song of praise to the Almighty, relating the power and glory of the King of all Kings.

Our Sages understand that this song refers to a revelation of the future, the resurrection of the dead, when all of mankind will rise from the grave. Certainly, this hint cannot be deduced from a mere grammatical connotation, but must bear a direct connection to the Song of the Sea.

In our shiur this week, we will describe what is revealed at Krias Yam Suf, and attempt to explain the nature of Techiyas HaMeisim.

1

The Maharal explains the use of the term 'Yashir' - 'he will sing'. Although Moshe actually sang long ago, the Torah often uses future tense when describing an action that takes place over an expanse of time. That is, since the incident is not a split-second occurrence, but rather, one that extends from past to future, the reference to the future is an appropriate one.

In contrast, the term 'Az' refers to one particular moment, a freeze-frame in time, removed from the continuum of time and space.

In Lashon HaKodesh, the word for time - 'Zman' - relates to 'Hazmanah' - as in preparation and preparedness. Each moment invites the next, time being an extended process with each millisecond only a small part of a larger unit.

Time flows from past to future with the precise present impossible to grasp. Even were we to say that the present moment is '10:39 p.m. and 45 seconds' we would not be accurate. If measured more carefully, we would count by the hundredth of a second. Even that would not be exact, for a finer instrument could measure to the thousandth of a second, and so on, ad infinitum. To be honest then, we must say that time is merely society's measure of a period that stretches from past to future, with the present hidden somewhere between those two points.

The Maharal makes this point thusly: The one Aleph of 'Az' stands above the seven directions of the

'Zayin', the varied forms and paths of our physical and three-dimensional existence. Much as Hashem stands alone, above the seven days of creation, the Song of the Sea unifies all of time under the aegis of One G-d, acknowledgment that the world rests upon the timeless framework of a supernatural realm. It is for this reason that the Mitzva of Bris Milah is performed on the eighth day, connecting the immortal Jew to a world beyond time.

While the miracles in Egypt reflect G-d's control and direction of the physical world, the splitting of the sea takes this lesson one step further. More than stopping the water's flow, the miracle reveals this: the sea is a mere facade, as are all of nature's rules. The sea disappears before a higher force, succumbing to the staff of G-d in the hand of Moshe Rabbeinu, revealing a different dimension, a world without time.

This is 'Az Yashir'. With no past and no future, only the eternal presence of a present moment that never ends, Moshe Rabbeinu leads the Jewish people in song, expressing perfectly the purpose of their being.

2

Our general impression of creation is an autonomous entity that exists in its own space, standing on its own. This world is our reality, and while we profess belief in G-d, we view His domain as a different realm of existence, one that does not contradict the substantive foundation of our own physical universe. Though aware that our lives are destined to end, we believe that we will go off to a different sort of place, an independent world of the future whose existence does not belie the authenticity of our present state of being.

Time, as we perceive it, is a river that wears away at the fabric of our world, steadily eroding the strength and vitality of all physical things. From this perspective, time and space exist side by side, for nothing can encroach upon the free-standing viability of this planet.

This is all quite mistaken.

'Breishis Bara Elokim' is the initiation of time. Before the appearance of anything else, the creation of time allows for the formation of the world as we know it. The entire universe exists within this boundary. More than an independent sidebar impacting upon other entities, time is the essential ingredient of Olam HaZeh, containing all of life within its limited and measured confines.

In the words of the Maharal - "HaMakom V'HaZman Echad Hu" - time and space are one, a formulation that preceded Einstein by some four hundred years.

Our world does not exist freely, but within a deeper dimension that defines its being. It follows then, that the physical substance of this planet does not have a tangible reality of its own, but is merely the external expression of G-d's hidden plan, existing only as a temporary vehicle that fulfills the precise command of His will.

This truth was revealed to all the world at Krias Yam Suf, and this sparks the song that encircles all of time. The physical world surrenders to a deeper and more substantive order, swallowing whole the distortions of Egypt, and Klal Yisrael is bound no more.

3

Nowhere in our world is there any indication that the dead can come back to life, even the living are destined towards a bitter end.

The believing Jew holds out faith in a future resurrection, confident that the dead will rise once again.

The common perception is that man will stand up from his grave and continue life from where he left off, this time to no end, pushing on for eternity.

The reason Techias HaMeisim is perceived in this manner, is our belief that the physical world is real and independent, existing forever, though its inhabitants pass on. That is, in the absence of any catastrophe, our planet will continue on its present course. Because, as discussed earlier, we hold this world to be substantial and tangible, we cannot see the resurrection in any other way, certain that our present existence is real and self-contained.

This too, is a critical mistake.

Man only lives once. There is no such thing as later.

Let us explain.

Within a limited framework of time, HaKadosh Baruch Hu has granted man life. Though we sense only the physical side of mortal man, in actuality our existence extends well beyond these confines, and the essential identity of our true selves climbs a ladder to heaven. The elevated side of our nature exists in a dimension that supplants the limitations of time and space, and it is this exalted part of man that reflects the eternal image of G-d.

It is this description that defines the total man, and nothing new will occur to change this basic picture. Though, to most of us, our higher side remains a hidden enigma, in Olam HaBa we will discover that life was not as we believed, and we will comprehend our physical being as a mere fraction of reality.

Let us now return to our explanation of Az Yashir.

There are two aspects to time, the extended period stretching in a process from past to future, and the elusive moment of the present. When these two elements are joined together, man understands that the creation of the world is a process that exists within the present moment.

In other words, the present is where G-d's presence rests, eternally provident in a world beyond time. The physical existence of time is a mere process of creation, a temporary framework that

allows for good and evil, reward and punishment, freedom of choice. This temporary structure conceals the deeper dimension of an eternity that never changes. Though man is destined to leave the physical setup of this world, his life never ends.

As most people comprehend it, what has happened is gone, and the future is yet to be. A reversal of fortune and the rise of the dead can mean only one thing, life goes on from the point at which it ended.

Our understanding is quite different: Nothing ever ends.

Life itself is merely a small part of a larger procedure. Death is the removal of that veil, the revelation of a more complete picture, and even the finite failures of a moribund existence will reveal themselves to be integral elements of one unified whole.

To the man who lives with this heightened awareness, each minute is a precious commodity. He knows that eternity lies within every moment, and he yearns to connect his time-bound existence to a world that lives forever.

Man has but one life, and he needs to get it right the first time.

While the sea splits for Israel, reverting to dry land, the army of Egypt drowns in the tumultuous turmoil of a world that dooms everything in its wake.

Klal Yisrael is not frightened, for they see no sea, merely the outstretched Hand of G-d as He reaches for His people.

Taken beyond time, carried above space, they call out once and forevermore:

"Hashem Yimloch L'Olam VaEd"

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