

# בְּשַׁלַּח

## BESHALACH/WHEN HE SENT Shemot/Exodus 13:17-17:16

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**Miracles.** The Israelites have already witnessed the miracles of Egypt. This week we read of another incredible series of supernatural phenomena including the parting of the Red Sea, the bitter waters sweetened at Mara, quail and manna from heaven, water from the rock, and the defeat of Amalek. Why does יהוה display His power over creation through miracle after miracle for the Israelites? It is commonly thought that the intention was to bring the people to faith. Torah seems to support this:

*Shemot 14:31 Thus Israel saw the great work which יהוה had done in Egypt; so the people feared יהוה, and believed יהוה and His servant Moshe.*

*Shemot 15:1 Then Moshe and the children of Israel sang this song to יהוה, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to יהוה, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"<sup>2</sup> יהוה is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my Elohim, and I will praise Him; My father's Elohim, and I will exalt Him.*

Yet despite the miracles, the Israelites are constantly complaining. A few days after the death of the firstborn of Egypt and their outstanding exit:

*Shemot 14:10 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to יהוה.<sup>11</sup> Then they said to Moshe, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?"*

A bit later when they're hungry:

*Shemot 16:3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of יהוה in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

And then they're thirsty:

*Shemot 17:7 So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted יהוה, saying, "Is יהוה among us or not?"*

Yeshayahu Leibowitz comments that miracles "have no long-lasting influence on future events...at the very least, we can say that they are ineffective in forming a basis for religious faith...it was faith of the moment - for the fleeting moment that they experienced the feeling of victory."

So what was the Almighty's plan concerning the miracles? Over and over again the Israelites are reminded to "remember" the Exodus of Egypt which occurred with "a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm":

*Devarim 5:15 And **remember** that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and יהוה your Elohim brought you out from there by **a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm**...*

The Almighty demonstrates the power of His “**mighty hand and outstretched arm**” through His miracles and signs. Moshe was given the “**staff of Elohim**” (*Shemot 17:9*) which in his “**hand**” became an extension of the “**hand and arm**” of Elohim and produced many miracles and signs. This “**staff**” was waved over the Nile River and turned it into blood. In fact the “**staff**” was involved with most of the plagues. It was also lifted over the waters of the Red Sea when it split. And it struck the stone when the waters poured forth from the rock.

But interestingly enough, after Mount Sinai, this powerful “**staff**” went into retirement, and the miracles performed by Moshe are few and far between. Instead of being known as a miracle worker, Moshe assumes the only title he is today known as, “Moshe rabbeinu” – Moshe our teacher...our teacher of Torah.

So were the miracles that Moshe performed intended to show that he was יהוה’s prophet? Torah warns that, by themselves, miracles should be considered with a certain amount of suspicion. In and of themselves, miracles bear no truth. But the intention of the miracles was to lead them to Torah. The prophet is described as one who continues with what is given from Mount Sinai. Miracles impressed the people, and they brought about initial faith, but the people would soon return to their daily routine. What would change them was TORAH. The instructions of Torah had the power to touch every moment of their lives. Torah was/is transforming! Torah enabled them to live free.

We know that Yeshua’s ministry also began with many miracles:

*John 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His Name when they saw the miraculous signs which He did.*

Nicodemus recognized Yeshua as a “**miracle worker**” and “**teacher**” sent by יהוה:

*John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus...said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a **teacher** come from Yah; for no one can do these **miraculous signs** that You do unless Yah is with him."*

After Yeshua’s famous words on being “**born again**” and being sent into the world to save the world, He speaks of living by the truth (Torah):

*John 3:21 "But **he who does the truth** comes to the light, that his **deeds** may be clearly seen, that they have been done in Elohim."*

In Yeshua’s own hometown, the people were not accepting of “**miracles**” PLUS His “**Torah teaching**”. For this reason, He did not “**do many miracles there**”:

*Matthew 13:54 Coming to his hometown, he began **teaching** the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked...<sup>57</sup> And they took offense at him. But Yeshua said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."<sup>58</sup> And **He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.***

**Miracles and Torah go together. Yeshua warns those who focus on miracles by themselves:**

*Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Adonai, Adonai,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."<sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Adonai, Adonai, have we not prophesied in Your Name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'<sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Torahlessness)*

**Rav Sha'ul also combined the importance of "miracles" with the "obedience of Torah":**

*Romans 15:18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Messiah has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey Yah by what I have said and done--<sup>19</sup> by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit.*

We know that the "coming of the lawless (Torahless) one" will be with "counterfeit miracles". People will perish because they want the miracles without the "truth":

*2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,<sup>10</sup> and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

In the last days, truth will be what enables us to have discernment concerning the miracles performed by the evil one:

*Revelation 13:13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men.<sup>14</sup> Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth....*

*Revelation 16:14 They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of El Shaddai.*

**Praise יהוה, we also know the end of this Torahless one:**

*Revelation 19:20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*

Obviously, we could go on and on with this point...**miracles and Torah obedience must go together. Moshe exemplified this and Yeshua, who was a greater prophet, likened to Moshe, also taught this.** We may see miracles with our own eyes in these days to come, but living Torah today will give us discernment concerning the origin of these future miracles.

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Ardelle**