**S.A.L.T. – PARASHAT BESHALACH**

**By Rav David Silverberg**

**In loving memory of**

**Yitzchak ben Chaim Zvi Schwartz z"l, who passed away on 13 Shvat 5771**

**and Sheva Shayndel bat David Schwartz z"l, who passed away 13 Shvat 5778**

**Dedicated by Avi and Sarah Schwartz**

Motzaei Shabbat

 The *haftara* for Parashat Beshalach is the famous story told in Sefer Shoftim (4-5) of *Benei Yisrael*’s triumph over the Canaanites under the leadership of the prophetess Devora, and the song of praise sung after the battle by Devora and *Benei Yisrael*’s general, Barak. Devora and Barak conclude this song with the prayer, “So shall all Your enemies be destroyed, O Lord, and those who love Him shall be like the sun going out in all its might” (Shoftim 5:31).

 The Gemara (Gittin 36b, Shabbat 88b) famously comments that the phrase “those who love Him” in this verse refers specifically to those “who are insulted but do not insult, who hear their shame but do not respond…” Such people, the Gemara comments, are worthy of resembling “*tzeit ha-shemesh bi-gvurato*” – the brilliant shine of the sun.

 The *Sefer Ha-chinukh* (341) cites this famous Talmudic passage in his discussion of the prohibition of *ona’at devarim* – causing people emotional harm through hurtful words (Vayikra 25:17, as understood by the Gemara, Bava Metzia 58b). According to the *Chinukh*, the Gemara refers here to an especially high standard of piety, as opposed to the strict letter of the law. As far as the strict *halakha* is concerned, one is not required to remain silent in the face of insults. When the Torah forbids verbal insult, it refers to initiating such speech. But if a person comes under verbal assault, he is, strictly speaking, permitted to respond in kind in order to defend himself. However, the Gemara teaches that there is a higher level of “*ne’elavin ve-einan olevim, shom’in cherpatam ve-ein meshivin*” – keeping silent in the face of verbal abuse, remaining unaffected and undisturbed, confident in one’s worth and importance even when others insult him, and thus feeling no need to respond.

 The question, however, arises, why is a person who achieves this level compared specifically to “*tzeit ha-shemesh bi-gvurato*,” the powerful shine of the sun? Why is this an appropriate analogy for an individual with the strength and self-assurance to ignore insults and hurtful comments?

 Rav Yehuda Leib Ginsburg, in his *Mussar Ha-mishna* (Rosh Hashanah 1:2), suggests that the Gemara here refers to the sun’s capacity to trigger the growth of vegetation. When a person conducts himself with the kind of dignity, composure and piety described in this passage, he inspires other people. Just as the sun’s rays inspire the growth of delicious produce, similarly, exemplary character inspires the growth of other people’s characters. While it may be true that, as the *Sefer Ha-chinukh* writes, the Torah cannot expect every person to remain silent in the face of insults, such a person has the opportunity to be like the sun, to help people grow by setting an inspiring example of dignity. If a person responds with anger, although he has not done anything wrong, he has not accomplished anything constructive, either. But by remaining silent, and abstaining from angry reactions, he can leave a deep impression on the people around him, thereby shining like the sun and bringing a bit more “light” and positivity into the world.

Sunday

 Parashat Beshalach tells the famous story of *keri’at Yam Suf* – the miracle of the splitting of the sea to allow *Benei Yisrael* to escape from the pursuing Egyptian army. The Midrash (*Midrash Tehillim*, 114) curiously associates this miracle with the story of Yosef’s escape from Potifar’s wife when she attempted to lure him to an illicit relationship. The verse in Tehillim (114:3) describes the miracle of the sea with the words, “*Ha-yam ra’a va-yanos*” (“The sea saw and fled”), and the Midrash explains that the sea “fled” – meaning, its waters split – when it “saw” Yosef’s coffin, which *Benei Yisrael* were carrying with them. The word “*va-yanas*” is used to describe Yosef’s escape from Potifar’s wife when she grabbed his garment in her attempt to seduce him (“*va-yanas va-yeitzei ha-chutza*” – “he fled and went outside,” Bereishit 39:12), and thus the Midrash teaches that the sea “fled” in the merit of Yosef’s “fleeing” from Potifar’s wife.

 The *Divrei Yechezkel* (Rav Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam of Shinova) suggests an insightful explanation of the Midrash’s comments based on a verse in Sefer Yeshayahu (57:20) which compares the wicked to the waves of the ocean – “*ve-ha’resha’im ka-yam nigrash*.” Rashi, in his commentary to Yeshayahu, explains that just as the ocean’s waves repeatedly try extending beyond the boundary set for them, and continue their efforts despite their and their fellow waves’ repeated failures, likewise, the wicked stubbornly seek to violate the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The image of the seashore, then, symbolizes the evildoers’ desire to extend beyond the limits on appropriate conduct, to free themselves from constraints and follow their base wishes and desires. The *Divrei Yechezkel* thus explains that the Midrash depicts Yosef and the ocean waves as two opposite models – a model of restraint, and a model of unrelenting efforts to breach accepted boundaries. According to one view in the Gemara (Sota 36b), Yosef nearly succumbed to temptation when he was lured by Potifar’s wife, but he succeeded in abstaining because of his firm commitment to remain within accepted limits of behavior. As opposed to the ocean waves, which constantly aspire to exceed their limits, Yosef’s desire was to limit himself to what is morally acceptable. The image of the ocean waters receding upon seeing Yosef’s coffin thus symbolizes the polar opposite tendencies of evildoers – represented by the sea – and the righteous, such as Yosef. Whereas the wicked seek to extend beyond acceptable limits, and breach the boundaries of appropriate behavior, the righteous seek to live with moderation and restraint, enjoying the pleasures of the world within the boundaries set by God, and always striving to respect those boundaries without ever exceeding them.

Monday

 The Torah in Parashat Beshalach tells about the manna which God sent from the heavens each morning as *Benei Yisrael* traveled through the wilderness, except on Shabbat. A double portion of manna fell on Friday morning, which sufficed for both that day and Shabbat, when no manna fell. God commanded the people not to leave the camp to look for manna on Shabbat, instructing Moshe to tell them, “*Al yeitzei ish mi-mekomo ba-yom ha-shevi’i*” – “No man shall leave from his place on the seventh day” (16:29).

 The Gemara in Masekhet Eiruvin (51a) interprets this verse as not only instructing that generation not to go search for manna on Shabbat, but also establishing for all generations the prohibition of “*techum Shabbat*” (literally, “the Shabbat boundary”). This command forbids one from walking on Shabbat 2,000 *amot* (approximately 3,500-4,000 feet) beyond the town where he spends Shabbat. This is how *Targum Yonatan Ben Uziel* translates this verse, as well. (The law of “*eiruv techumin*” allows a person to walk beyond this distance if he places food before Shabbat at a site within 2,000 *amot* from the boundary of his town, in which case he may then walk until 2,000 *amot* beyond that site.)

 The Rambam lists this command as one of the Torah’s 365 *mitzvot lo ta’aseh* (Biblical prohibitions) in his *Sefer Ha-mitzvot* (*lo ta’aseh* 321). Citing the aforementioned verse in Parashat Beshalach – “*Al yeitzei ish mi-mekomo ba-yom ha-shevi’i*”) – the Rambam writes that the Torah here introduces the prohibition against walking on Shabbat beyond 2,000 *amot* outside one’s city. This is also the position taken by the *Behag* (*Hilkhot Eiruvin*) and the *She’iltot* (Parashat Beshalach).

 Interestingly, the Rambam modified his position in *Mishneh Torah*. In *Hilkhot Shabbat* (27:1), he writes – based on the Talmud Yerushalmi (Eiruvin 3:4) – that the Biblical prohibition of “*techum Shabbat*” forbids only walking a distance of twelve *mil* – or 24,000 *amot*,which tradition teaches was the length of the Israelite camp in the wilderness. The Rambam explains that Moshe instructed the people not to walk outside the camp on Shabbat, which meant, in practice, that they should not walk a distance of more than twelve *mil* – and thus this is the distance forbidden by Torah law. The 2,000-*amot* boundary, the Rambam writes, was enacted later by *Chazal*.

 Several other *Rishonim*, however, including the Ramban (in his critique to *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, and in *Milchamot Hashem*, Eiruvin 5a in the Rif’s pages), the *Ba’al Ha-ma’or* (Eiruvin 5a in the Rif’s pages) and the Rosh (Eiruvin 1:24), maintain that the entire institution of “*techum Shabbat*” originates from *Chazal*. The *Ba’al Ha-ma’or* notes that the origin of this prohibition is a matter of debate among the *Tanna’im*, as the Gemara in Masekhet Sota (30a) attributes specifically to Rabbi Akiva the view that “*techum Shabbat*” constitutes a Torah violation. Seemingly, then, the majority view maintains that it was enacted by the Sages, and does not constitute a Biblical prohibition.

 A number of *Acharonim* raised the question of whether the opinion which regards “*techum Shabbat*” as a Torah prohibition applies this view even on Yom Tov. According to this view, the source of “*techum Shabbat*” is God’s instructions to *Benei Yisrael* in the wilderness regarding the collection of manna on Shabbat. It is thus questionable whether this Biblical prohibition was stated also in regard to Yom Tov. Nevertheless, as some *Acharonim* note, *Tosefot* write explicitly in Masekhet Pesachim (93b) that according to Rabbi Akiva, the Biblical prohibition of “*techum Shabbat*” applies also on the first day of Pesach, clearly assuming that no distinction is drawn in this regard between Shabbat and Yom Tov. By contrast, the *Peri Chadash* (O.C. 495) concluded that on Yom Tov, the “*techum*” prohibition applies according to all opinions on the level of Rabbinic enactment.

 Rav Menachem Kasher, in *Torah Sheleima* (Parashat Beshalach, appendix 23), cites several sources from the *Geonim* clearly indicating that no distinction exists in this regard between Shabbat and Yom Tov, and that if “*techum Shabbat*” constitutes a Torah prohibition on Shabbat, this is true on Yom Tov, as well. Rav Kasher further notes the explicit comment in the *Mekhilta* to Parashat Beshalach (16:26) that the manna did not fall on Yom Tov just as it did not fall on Shabbat. Hence, since the Biblical source of “*techum Shabbat*” is the command not to leave the camp to search for manna on Shabbat, it follows that according to this view, this Biblical prohibition applies on Yom Tov, as well.

Tuesday

 Yesterday, we noted the different views that exist regarding the origin of the “*techum Shabbat*” (“Shabbat boundary”) prohibition, which forbids walking over 2,000 *amot* beyond one’s city on Shabbat. The Rambam maintained that this constitutes a Torah prohibition, whereas several other *Rishonim* asserted that only the minority position of Rabbi Akiva regarded “*techum Shabbat*” as a Biblical prohibition, whereas the consensus opinion is that this law was enacted by the Sages.

 Within the view of the Rambam, different opinions exist as to the scope of the Biblical prohibition of “*techum Shabbat*.” The Mishna in Masekhet Beitza (37a) establishes that one’s belongings are limited by his “*techum Shabbat*” boundary, and may not be brought even by somebody else beyond 2,000 *amot* outside his city. This means that if somebody prepared an “*eiruv techumin*” before Shabbat outside his city, which allows him to walk on Shabbat 2,000 *amot* beyond the site of the *eiruv*, he may not take with him something belonging to another person, who had not prepared an *eiruv*. The *Magen Avraham* (404:1) cites Rav Levi Ibn Chaviv as asserting that this aspect of “*techum Shabbat*” was enacted by the Sages, according to all opinions. Even the Rambam, who maintains that walking beyond “*techum Shabbat*” constitutes a Torah violation, limits this prohibition to walking, and concedes that the restriction on one’s belongings originates from *Chazal*. The Biblical source of “*techum Shabbat*,” as we saw yesterday, is the verse in Parashat Beshalach (16:29) in which God commanded *Benei Yisrael*, “*Al yeitzei ish mi-mekomo ba-yom ha-shevi’i*” – “No man shall leave from his place on the seventh day.” This verse speaks only of people walking beyond the boundary, and says nothing about people’s belongings, and thus, in the view of Rav Levi Ibn Chaviv, even the Rambam would concede that the law’s application to people’s belongings was enacted by *Chazal*, and does not constitute a Biblical provision.

 However, Maharam Alshakar (41) disagreed, and maintained that according to the Rambam, even this aspect of “*techum Shabbat*” applies on the level of Torah law.

 A third view is that of the *Yeshuot Yaakov* (404:2), who suggested distinguishing between one’s animals and other belongings. The *Yeshuot Yaakov* contended that the aforementioned *Acharonim* (Rav Levi Ibn Chaviv, and Maharam Alshakar) disagree only in regard to the status of animals vis-à-vis “*techum Shabbat*,” as one view maintained that the law forbidding bringing a person’s animal beyond his permissible boundary on Shabbat constitutes a Torah violation. When it comes to other possessions, however, such as food, clothing and utensils, all views agree that the prohibition against bringing such belongings outside their owner’s permitted boundary was enacted by *Chazal*, and is not forbidden by Torah.

 In truth, however, this issue was debated already by the *Rishonim*, as noted by the *Minchat Chinukh* (24). The context of the discussion is the case addressed by the Gemara in Masekhet Eiruvin (79b) of a stockpile of straw situated on the border separating between the “*techum Shabbat*” boundaries of two towns. If half the pile is situated within one town’s “*techum Shabbat*” boundary, and the other half is situated within the second town’s boundary, the residents of each town are allowed to take straw from their half. The Gemara comments that intuitively, one might have assumed that according to Rabbi Akiva’s position, viewing “*techum Shabbat*” as a Biblical prohibition, we should forbid taking straw in such a case, given the risk of mistakenly violating a Torah prohibition. No such law was actually enacted, but this possibility which the Gemara says would have been considered. Rashi explains that the possible risk was that somebody might unwittingly take straw from the wrong part of the pile, thereby violating the Torah prohibition of “*techum Shabbat*.” The Ritva, however, dismisses this view, asserting that even Rabbi Akiva, who views “*techum Shabbat*” as a Biblical prohibition, limits this position to walking beyond the prescribed boundary, and agrees that bringing one’s belongings outside the boundary does not fall under the Torah prohibition. He therefore explains the Gemara to mean that we would have considered forbidding taking straw in this case because people might not realize that their half is within the permissible boundary, and they thus might mistakenly conclude that they are allowed to leave the boundary to bring straw. It seems clear that Rashi and the Ritva debate this very question, and that Rashi felt that according to Rabbi Akiva, the “*techum Shabbat*” prohibition applies on the level of Torah law even as it applies to one’s belongings. Rashi’s comments appear to contradict the theory advanced by the *Yeshuot Yaakov*, that all views agree that the application of “*techum Shabbat*” to possessions other than animals was enacted by *Chazal*. This point was made by [Rav Asher Weiss](http://www.torahbase.org/%D7%91%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%93-%D7%90%D7%99%D7%A1%D7%95%D7%A8-%D7%AA%D7%97%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%91%D7%A9%D7%91%D7%AA-%D7%AA%D7%A9%D7%A2%D7%96/).

 In defense of the *Yeshuot Yaakov*, it should be noted that Rashi’s comment was made in explaining the rationale for why the Gemara considered the possibility of forbidding taking straw in such a case. Initially, the Gemara comments, we might have thought that this should be forbidden due to the potential violation of a Biblical law according to Rabbi Akiva. As we saw, however, no such prohibition was actually legislated. The *Yeshuot Yaakov* perhaps understood the Gemara to mean that we might have intuitively assumed that even bringing straw outside the permitted boundary constitutes a Torah violation, which warrants a safeguard, but in truth, this is not the case. The Gemara’s conclusion is that Rabbi Akiva concedes that the Torah prohibition of “*techum Shabbat*” does not apply to straw, and for this reason no safeguard is necessary.

Wednesday

In loving memory of

Yitzchak ben Chaim Zvi Schwartz z"l, who passed away on 13 Shvat 5771

And Sheva Shneidel bat David Schwartz z"l, who passed away 13 Shvat 5778

Dedicated by Avi and Sarah Schwartz

 The Torah in Parashat Beshalach tells of the manna with which God miraculously fed *Benei Yisrael* during their travels in the otherwise uninhabitable wilderness. In informing Moshe of the daily miracle that would occur, with the arrival of bread from the heavens, God told him that the purpose of this miracle was “in order that I may test them, whether they will follow My law, or not” (16:4).

 The obvious question arises as to what kind of “test” *Benei Yisrael* faced by receiving manna each morning. How were they “tested” by being fed miraculous, heavenly food that descended from the sky before they woke up every day?

 Rashi explains that this refers to the two commands associated with the manna – that the people should not leave over any manna at night for the next day, and that they should not go searching for manna on Shabbat. The system of the manna “tested” *Benei Yisrael*’s faith in that they were required to trust that a fresh supply of manna would fall the next morning on weekdays, and that Friday’s supply would remain fresh until Shabbat. According to Rashi, it was through these commands that the manna posed a “test” to *Benei Yisrael*.

 The Maharal of Prague, in *Gur Aryeh*, notes the difficulty in Rashi’s explanation, as it does not seem to account for God’s reference to the “test” as the purpose of the manna. God told Moshe that he was sending the people manna “*lema’an anasenu*” – “in order that I may test them,” suggesting that the entire purpose of providing manna was to test the people. According to Rashi’s approach, however, it was not the manna itself, but two particular details, that posed the test.

 The Ramban, after citing Rashi’s interpretation and commenting, “It is not correct,” suggests that the manna tested *Benei Yisrael* in the sense that they had to show their unbridled faith in God. They followed God through the wilderness despite not having any natural means by which to sustain themselves, and being forced to go to sleep each night with absolutely no food with them, trusting that miraculous food would arrive the next morning. This, according to the Ramban, was the “test” of the manna, as *Benei Yisrael* followed God for forty years trusting that He would provide for them.

 We might note, however, that in this verse the test is described as determining whether or not the people would follow God’s laws (“*ha-yeileikh be-torati im lo*”). This formulation would imply that the test related to obedience and compliance with instructions – as Rashi explained – and not general faith, as the Ramban suggested.

 A different possibility is proposed by Chizkuni, who writes that *Benei Yisrael*’s miraculous sustenance, which obviated the need to invest time and energy into securing a livelihood, “tested” how *Benei Yisrael* would use their time. Freed from the normal burden of working to feed themselves and their families, *Benei Yisrael* had the opportunity to devote themselves to study, and this was the “test” of the manna to which God referred when He said the manna would determine whether “*ha-yeileikh be-Torati*” – whether they would devote themselves to Torah. This approach is also taken by Netziv, in his *Ha’ameik Davar*.

 An especially creative interpretation is offered by *Chatam Sofer*, who suggests that the manna tested the people by continuing to arrive even when they did not deserve it. The morning after *Benei Yisrael* made a golden calf, and prepared to worship it, the manna fell. The morning after the spies returned, and *Benei Yisrael* announced their plans to return to Egypt instead of proceeding into the land God promised them, the manna fell. The morning of Korach’s revolt, when the people expressed their scorn and contempt for Moshe, the manna fell. According to *Chatam Sofer*, this was the great test of the manna, and, in a broader sense, this is the test of the kindnesses which God bestows upon us all each and every day. We are the beneficiaries of His grace and compassion at all times, even when we are hardly deserving of His benevolence. God’s kindness thus tests us in the sense that we are to commit ourselves to act and live the right way, even though we do not see immediate consequences when we do not.

Thursday

 Parashat Beshalach begins by telling that when *Benei Yisrael* left Egypt, God chose not to lead them along the shorter, more direct route to the Land of Israel, and instead had them follow a circuitous route, through the Sea of Reeds: “*Va-yaseiv Elokim at ha-am derekh ha-midbar, Yam Suf*” – “God brought the nation around by way of the desert, [towards] the Sea of Reeds.”

 The Midrash (*Shemot Rabba* 20:18) famously associates this verse with the obligation of *heseiba*, which requires reclining at various points during the *seder* on Pesach. Commenting on the word “*va-yaseiv*” in this verse, the Midrash writes that this is the source for the Mishna’s ruling in Masekhet Pesachim (99b), “*Afilu ani she-be’Yisrael lo yokhal ad she-yaseiv*” – “even a poon person among Israel may not eat [on Pesach night] unless he reclines.” Many commentators addressed the question as to the connection between this verse and the *heseiba* obligation, and the special emphasis on the fact that even the poor are required to recline at the *seder* as a display of luxury. Beyond the word “*va-yaseiv*,” which is linked to the word “*heseiba*,” what else about *Benei Yisrael*’s route upon leaving Egypt relates to the *heseiba* obligation, and its application even to the poor?

 *Ketav Sofer* suggests that the connection lies in the miracle of *keri’at Yam Suf* – the splitting of the sea – which became necessary as a result of the route chosen by God. Since God led *Benei Yisrael* by way of the sea, they ended up trapped against the water when the Egyptians pursued them, and they were saved by a miracle. *Benei Yisrael* found themselves in a hopeless situation, trapped between the ocean and the powerful Egyptian army, and they saw no possible solution to their dire predicament. This event thus serves as a source of encouragement for the downtrodden, for those struggling with hardship which they fear cannot ever be overcome. Just as God was able to rescue *Benei Yisrael* at the shores of the sea, *Ketav Sofer* writes, He is capable of rescuing individuals from even the most intractable predicaments. *Ketav Sofer* suggests that this is part of the reason why God led *Benei Yisrael* along the route that took them to the sea – in order to perform this great miracle which would forever provide reassurance for those who struggle with difficult problems for which they see no solution. Therefore, *Ketav Sofer* writes, when the Mishna establishes the *heseiba* requirement, it emphasizes that it applies even to the poor – because even they have reason to feel confident and to celebrate. *Benei Yisrael*’s experiences after leaving Egypt show that even the direst circumstances can be resolved, that help is always possible, in ways which we could never imagine, and so even those enduring financial hardship must recline and feel confident on Pesach night.

 We might add that the Midrash perhaps points to the specific aspect of “*va-yaseiv*” – circuitousness – as the reason why even the poor must recline on Pesach. Even if one currently struggles and faces hardship, he can nevertheless feel assured and confident, because, as *Benei Yisrael*’s route after the Exodus demonstrates, life so often takes us along roundabout roads to our destination. Just as *Benei Yisrael* did not proceed directly into the Land of Israel, but were rather forced to endure years of travel through a barren wilderness before arriving in the Promised Land, similarly, life generally does not bring us immediately or directly to our personal “Promised Land,” to the conditions we desire and hope for. Struggle and hardship are part of the “circuitous” route along which life leads us, and so even in life’s darker periods, we must find the strength to “recline,” to remain upbeat and joyous, confident in God’s ability to bring us through the “desert” to the destiny that we long for.

Friday

 We read in Parashat Beshalach the “*Shirat Ha-yam*” – the special song of praise sung by *Benei Yisrael* after the miracle of the splitting of the sea, a song which has been incorporated into the daily *Pesukei De-zimra* text recited each morning. This song is introduced with the phrase, “*Az yashir Moshe u-Vnei Yisrael et ha-shira ha-zot*” – “Then did Moshe and the Israelites sing this song…” (15:1).

 The word “*yashir*,” as several commentators noted, is actually written in the future tense, as if implying that Moshe and *Benei Yisrael* will sing this song in the future. On the simple level of interpretation, as Ibn Ezra writes, this is nothing more than a poetic style, and indeed, several other examples exist in *Tanakh* of verbs conjugated in the future tense after the word “*az*” (“then”) but refer to past events. For example, we read in Sefer Devarim (4:41), “*Az yavdil Moshe shalosh arim*” – that Moshe designated three cities as cities of refuge, an event which clearly happened in the past, despite the verb “*yavdil*” being conjugated in the future tense. Rashi adds that this construction denotes a conscious decision or firm resolve to perform the action. In this case, “*Az yashir*” means that Moshe and *Benei Yisrael* reached the decision that the extraordinary events they had just experienced warranted a special song of praise.

 The Gemara (Sanhedrin 91b), however, as Rashi cites, suggests interpreting the word “*yashir*” in this verse as actually referring to the future, such that the Torah here alludes to the time of the resurrection of the dead. The verse is formulated in a manner that could be understood to mean that Moshe and *Benei Yisrael* – who, of course, have already passed on – will yet sing this song, indicating that the dead will one day be returned to life, whereupon this song will be sung.

 What might be the point of connection between the *Shirat Ha-yam* and the future resurrection? Why might have the Gemara pointed to this verse, which introduces *Benei Yisrael*’s exuberant song of praise, as the Biblical allusion to the future restoration of life to the dead?

 The Tolna Rebbe suggested that the message expressed by the Gemara relates to the “resurrection” of those who are “lifeless” in the figurative sense. The Gemara perhaps seeks to draw our attention to the power of *shira*, of exultant and heartfelt song, to restore joy, vitality and hope to those languishing in sorrow or despair. The key – or one of the keys – to *techiyat ha-meitim*, to bringing energy and vigor to a broken spirit, is joyous song.

 The *Shirat Ha-yam* was sung at a moment of great triumph and inspiration, when *Benei Yisrael* witnessed an unprecedented, dramatic miracle that saved them from what had seemed like a hopeless situation. The Gemara’s comment, as understood by the Tolna Rebbe, takes note of the fact that joyful, spirited singing is also meaningful and beneficial in the opposite circumstance – in times of pain and distress. Just as the *Shirat Ha-yam* gave expression to the people’s overwhelming feelings of elation, singing can also help restore “life” to those burdened by anguish or fear, repairing their broken spirits and lifting them so they can once again experience confidence and vitality even as they deal with difficult challenges.

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