
א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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בשלח

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Doing Our Part

By Moshe Garland

Every day in תפילה we say אז ישיר, which is sung by משה רבינו and בני ישראל during קריעת ים סוף in פרשת בשלח. Before the sea is split, we read that בני ישראל are trapped between the Egyptians behind them and the water in front of them. משה רבינו cries out to 'ה, and 'ה responds "מה תצעק עלי", which translates to "why do you cry out to me?" This response from 'ה is pretty strange. 'ה told us that we need to Daven to Him, so why is He telling משה רבינו not to? There are many solutions to this issue, but I'm going to focus on four in particular.

רש"י explains that 'ה is telling משה to stop davening because בני ישראל were in trouble, so he doesn't have time to daven. He needs to focus on trying to help them escape from the Egyptians. A modern-day example of this, is if God forbid someone faints during תפילה, we don't stand there and pray, we call an ambulance and pray for them *after* they get to the hospital.

רמב"ן gives a slightly different answer. He starts by quoting עזרא, who says that 'ה was instructing משה to tell בני ישראל to stop praying, and to guide them forward. רמב"ן then rejects this answer and says the proper interpretation is that of the חכמים, who say that משה was really praying on his own behalf because he didn't know how to act. 'ה was telling משה not to worry because 'ה had already told משה that He would protect בני ישראל.

ספרא, on the other hand, takes the opposite approach. He explains that משה knew that 'ה would protect בני ישראל from פרעה, but he was scared that בני ישראל would rebel against himself and 'ה. 'ה was chastising משה for assuming בני ישראל didn't have faith in them.

The final, and I think, most interesting interpretation, is that of the שפתי חכמים. It explains that, based on the טעמי המקרא, the phrase "מה תצעק" is separated from "עלי", which means, 'ה is saying "Why are you praying? It is my responsibility." This is supported by the previous פסוק which says "ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תחישון" "God will battle for you; you hold your peace."

What all four of these explanations have in common is faith. Some people don't realize that faith is really a two-way street. Of course, we need to have faith in 'ה, but we also need to do our part and make sure we do what we can. These two things are codependent. In order to get help from 'ה, we need to play our role and make sure we do what is necessary. On the other hand, we still need to have faith in 'ה and believe that He will help us and take care of things that are out of our control.

אז ישיר in The Dual Tenses

By Ethan Ravid

In Judaism we have some miracles that occur that seem crazy. In this week's פרשה we have the story of the sea splitting in 2 for בני ישראל. Afterward the nation sings to ה', אֲזַיִשִּׁיר-מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת, "ה', Then משה and בני ישראל sang this song to ה'."

This is a beautiful poem, but why does the תורה say "אז" -now, referring to present tense, then say "ישיר" - they will sing, in future tense. How can you mix these two tenses in the same sentence?

רש"י gives 2 possible answers, and אבן עזרא gives another. The first opinion in רש"י is that, the usage of the different tenses in אז ישיר, shows that when משה saw the miracle (אז), it entered his mind, that he would sing (ישיר) a song. That is why משה sang this song. רש"י's second opinion is based on a מדרש from our sages. They say, from the fact that future tense is used, we may learn that this statement comes from our belief that תחית המתים is from the תורה. Not only will משה sing the song now, but he will sing it when משיח comes. Both these answers make sense, and answer this question.

אבן עזרא, however, says that this occurs because this song is separated into 2 parts. The first is Moshe, and the second is בני ישראל responding to משה, just like in זמירות. Because of this משה sang now(present), and בני ישראל respond immediately after משה(in the future), in praising ה'. I like this opinion even more because it explains the different tenses, and shows how much בני ישראל respect ה' to sing praise with משה, and to participate in the שירה.

From all these opinions, we can realize that this was done in order to show us that ה' cares for us, and He is watching over us. This applies to our everyday lives. The first רש"י shows us that when we see something unusual in our lives we make a ברכה, or in this case sing praises to ה', on what occurred. The second רש"י applies to our everyday lives because it directs our attention to when תחית המתים occurs, they will sing this song for ה' again. אבן עזרא's idea connects to us today because it teaches us to follow our leaders, teachers and Rabbi's. I hope that we, as a Jewish people can work together, and learn from this that together as a nation we can sing together our support of Israel, and Judaism. May we be זוכה to sing this שירה with משה במהרה בימינו, very soon.

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