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לעילוי נשמת הרב ארי' משה אליהו ב"ר שמואל קפלן נפ' י"ד שבט תשמ"ג

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation. For sponsorship opportunities or to sign up to the weekly newsletter, email [weekly@zeraemes.com](mailto:weekly@zeraemes.com) or visit [www.zeraemes.com](http://www.zeraemes.com)

## A Time for Song

The Jewish people were being chased by Pharaoh and the Egyptian army. They could not continue because in front of them was the Yam Suf. In essence there was nowhere left to go. Escape seemed impossible. By all outward measures, they were trapped.

Moshe Rabbeinu stood before a terrified nation and told them not to fear. Hashem had informed him that they were to proceed forward—into the sea itself—and that they would walk upon dry land. At that moment, the Torah relates, the Malach Hashem moved to the rear of the camp, placing a barrier between the pursuing Egyptians and Klal Yisrael. “And one did not come near the other all night” (*Shemos* 14:20).

On the words, “And one did not come near the other all night,” the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 39b) teaches that at that moment the *malachim* sought to sing Shira before Hashem, but He restrained them, saying: “My handiwork is drowning, and you wish to sing?”

The simple reading is well known. Hashem was referring to the Egyptians, who were drowning, and teaching that even when our enemies are punished, it is not a time for celestial song.

### CELESTIAL SONGS

Rav Yitzchak of Neshchiza is troubled by this explanation. After all, the Egyptians were being punished *midah k'neged midah* for drowning Jewish children in the Nile. Justice demanded their destruction. Moreover, Klal Yisrael themselves

sang Shira after crossing the sea. Clearly, song is permitted—indeed required—when the enemies of Hashem are defeated.

He turns to another episode: the destruction of the army of Sancheiriv, 185,000 strong, wiped out in a single night (*Melachim* II 19). The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 95b) records several explanations for how this occurred. One opinion, that of R' Yitzchak Nafcha, states that they were killed by hearing the song of the *malachim*. Ordinary human beings cannot survive exposure to such song. Normally, the human ear is shielded from it—but that protection was removed, and they perished instantly. A massive army erased through song and praise to Hashem.

With this in mind, Rav Yitzchak returns to fleeing Jewish people and their Egyptian pursuers catching up at the Yam Suf. Rav Yitzchak of Neshchiza explains that when Chazal say that

REB ELIMELECH OF GRODZISK WRITES IN HIS HASKAMAH OF THE SEGULAH IN POSSESSING THIS BOOK: "IT IS FITTING FOR EVERY JEWISH PERSON TO BRING THIS BOOK INTO HIS HOME SO AS TO PROCURE ENDURING BRACHOS".



## ר' יצחק ב"ר מרדכי שפירא מנשכיז

Although R. Yitzchak Shapiro (1788-21 Shevat 1868) was the third son of R. Mordechai (1742-8 Nisan 1800), the first Rebbe of Neshchiz (Ukraine), he succeeded his father. Apart from his father, R. Yitzchak was a student of the Chozeh (1745-1815), as well as his wife's grandfather, R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809). With the passing of the Chozeh, R. Yitzchak began his 50+ years of leadership in Neshchiz. His teachings were collected and published posthumously in a volume entitled *Toldos Yitzchak* (Warsaw 1868). Among his students was the ToldosAdam (R' Yehoshualah Ostrova), and the Ramatim Tzifim, and R' Elimelech Grodzitz.

the *malachim* wished to sing Shira, it was not an expression of celebration. It was the type of song that would destroy the Egyptian army—just as Sancheiriv’s forces were destroyed.

Now Hashem’s response becomes precise and chilling: “My handiwork drowned.” The “handiwork” is not the Egyptians. It is the Jewish children who had already been drowned in the Nile – years earlier. And therefore: “You want to sing?”—to kill the Egyptians through song? No. Their punishment must be exact. They must die *midah k’neged midah*—by drowning, not by song.

This approach resolves another difficulty.

According to the simple understanding, the *malachim* wanted to sing while or after the Egyptians were drowning. But the *passuk* cited—“And one did not come near the other all night”—occurs before anyone entered the sea. According to Rav Yitzchak, however, the timing is exact. The *malachim* wished to sing while the Egyptian army was still alive, as a means of destroying them. That is why Hashem intervened at that precise moment.

Maybe we can use this same method today. We can daven and sing to Hashem and hope the angels follow our lead, and with that we can defeat the enemies of Hashem and usher in the final redemption.

## Go Straight

On Seder night, we fulfill the mitzvah of recounting Yetzias Mitzrayim. At certain points we describe the miracles –beyond the night of the Exodus – in a step by step process (Dayeinu). Each stanza teaches that even a partial redemption would have been sufficient.

There we say: “If the sea had split for us, but we had not crossed it on dry land—Dayeinu.”

The Orach L’Chaim of Zlotchov asks a simple question: what value is there in the sea splitting if we never pass through it? Are we merely thanking Hashem for witnessing a spectacle?

He explains that Klal Yisrael fully intended to enter the sea. But had the waters split entirely from top to bottom, they would have been forced to descend to the deepest point of the seabed and then climb back up the other side—a long, exhausting journey. Instead, Hashem performed a double miracle. The upper waters split, while the depths hardened. The seabed became level.

Thus, even had the sea merely split, it would have enabled escape from the Egyptians—Dayeinu. But Hashem went further. He smoothed the path and shortened the journey, allowing them to walk straight across on dry land.

This is precisely what Klal Yisrael sang about in Shiras Hayam:

“With the breath of Your nostrils the waters piled up; the flowing waters stood like a wall; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea” (*Shemos* 15:8).

They were not merely praising the miracle of the split. They were thanking Hashem for the congealed heart of the sea—the hardened depths that transformed a perilous descent into a direct path to freedom.

We too must appreciate each part of our miraculous existence. Very often, Hashem is making things easier than we realize.

ר' אברהם  
חיים צ"ר  
גדליה  
מזלוטשוב

R' Avraham Chaim (8 Tishrei 1726-26 Teves 1816) was a student of the leaders of the second generation of the Chassidic movement: The Maggid of Mezeritch (c. 1700 - 1772), and R' Yechiel Michel (1726-1784) of Zlotchov, Ukraine both of them students of R' Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov (c. 1695 - 1760). R' Avraham Chaim also studied under R' Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz (1726-1778) of Nikolsburg, ultimately marrying his niece, Malka, daughter of R' Pinchas Horowitz (1731-1805) of Frankfurt, author of the *Haflah* and *Panim Yafos* among other sefarim. After suffering years of childlessness, the couple divorced, and R' Avraham Chaim married the daughter of R' Yissachar Ber, the Rav of Zlotchov. R' Avraham Chaim was appointed the Rav of Zbariv, Ukraine, until 1793, when his father-in-law R' Yissachar Ber emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, and R' Avraham Chaim replaced him as the Rav of Zlotchov. Although not blessed with biological children, he raised several orphans, including his wife's son Yosef Azriel, and Yekusiel Shmelka (1800-1861) the son of R' Moshe Leib (1745-1807) of Sassov. R' Avraham Chaim prepared a volume of his teachings, entitled *Orach L'Chaim*, that was ultimately published posthumously (Berditchev, 1817). In 1873, 2 additional volumes of his teachings (on Avos, and on the Haggadah), were published in Lvov, entitled *Pri Chaim*.