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ISSUE #10 | JANUARY 31, 2026 | י"ג שבט תשפ"ו

Neshama aliyah Reuven ben Fievel

Reflective Question:

What have you been avoiding—and what might change if you faced it with light?

Gematria on the Parshah: Milchemet Amalek: The World Was Created for Me



By: Moshe Herskovits

In Parshat Beshalach, Bnei Yisrael are ambushed by Amalek. Amalek is so despised by Hashem that He declares His Name and His Throne will not be complete until Amalek is eradicated from the world. Chazal teach that the ultimate defeat of Amalek will only occur in the days of Mashiach. How does Amalek attack the Jews? How does Amalek diminish Hashem's Name? Why can only Mashiach defeat this evil?

How Amalek Attacks

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that Amalek wages a war against emunah. Amalek attacks Bnei Yisrael immediately after they lack water and cry out in distress, questioning, "Is Hashem in our midst or not?" Amalek is the lingering thought that perhaps Hashem is not truly involved in our lives.

Amalek also attacks by minimizing the value of every Jew. The Torah describes how Amalek struck from behind, targeting the weakest and most distant from Hashem. Spiritually, Amalek whispers that what a Jew does does not matter, and that the Jew himself does not matter. Famously, the gematria of עמלק (Amalek) is 240, equal to ספק (doubt). Amalek injects doubt into a Jew's heart, eroding his sense of worth and spiritual significance.

How Amalek Diminishes Hashem's Name

The Zohar teaches that Yisrael is part of Hashem's Name. Every Jew possesses a unique Divine spark that no one else has, and therefore reveals Hashem's glory in a way no other soul could. Indeed, the gematria of יהי ישראל (YHVH God of Israel) is 613, equal to אורות (lights) and the number of mitzvot in the Torah. Each Jew shines Hashem's light uniquely into the world.

Amalek denies this truth by claiming that a Jew who is far from Torah is insignificant. The Ruzhiner Rebbe taught that every Jew is a diamond. Sometimes it is covered in mud, but its value never disappears. The task is not to discard the diamond, but to remove the mud, and reveal its light.

This idea is embodied in Rabbi Akiva. He began his life as an unlearned Jew who despised Torah scholars, yet from that very place emerged the greatest teacher of Torah in Jewish history. Rabbi Akiva exposes the lie of Amalek. No Jew can ever be written off, because the true measure of a soul is not where it stands now, but what it is capable of becoming.

How Mashiach Will Defeat Amalek

We can now understand why Mashiach is the one who defeats Amalek. Mashiach is the opposite of Amalek in every way: where Amalek diminishes the value of each Jew, Mashiach recognizes and reveals the infinite worth in every soul. Rav Pinchas of Koretz teaches that the greatness of Mashiach will lie in his ability to see the greatness of each Jew more clearly than anyone who has ever lived. The Baal Shem Tov compares Yisrael to the stars: from earth, a star appears small, but in reality it can be larger than a planet. So too in shemayim the infinite value of every Jew is revealed and Mashiach will reveal this truth to the world.

Defeating Amalek Today

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Our sages ask why Adam was created alone (Sanhedrin 37a). It is to teach that every person should say, "The world was created for me". The gematria of מלחמת עמלק (War of Amalek) is 758, the same as בשבילי נברא העולם (The world was created for me). When we perceive this idea, that every Jew is so precious that Hashem would create the world just for them, this is how we defeat Amalek.

There is a story of the great tzaddik Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. In 1967, when the Lubavitcher Rebbe began his tefillin campaign, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman visited the Kotel and saw Lubavitcher Chassidim helping Jews put on tefillin, even those who were not yet observant. He turned to his students and remarked, "People think the Lubavitcher Rebbe is a great believer in God. It is clear to me that the Rebbe's greatness is that he believes in Jews!" This teaches us an important lesson: to reveal the spark of Mashiach within ourselves, we must see the sacredness in every Jew.

Challenge for this week: When we look at another Jew, let us see them with the reverence of a Sefer Torah. Chazal teach that each Jew is a letter of the Torah. Even when a Jew appears covered in mud, remember that in truth they are a priceless diamond.

If You Want to Stop Seeing Egypt, You Have to Look at It



By: Adam Klasner

There is a strange moment right after the Jewish people leave Egypt.

They are finally free. Pharaoh himself chased them out. And then God tells Moshe to do something that makes no sense. Turn back. Camp by the sea. Go closer to danger.

Pharaoh does exactly what you would expect. He pursues them. The Jews look up and see Egypt charging toward them. Panic takes over. And they explode at Moshe.

Were there not enough graves in Egypt? Why did you take us out? We begged you to leave us alone. Better to be slaves than to die like this.

This is not just fear. It is despair. The feeling that the entire attempt at freedom was a mistake.

Moshe responds with words that seem unnecessary.

"As you see Egypt today, you will never see them again."

Of course they see Egypt today. That is the problem. Why say it?

The Baal Shem Tov reveals something subtle and powerful. Moshe is not stating a fact. He is giving a condition.

The reason you will never see Egypt again is because you are willing to see it now.

If you refuse to see it, you will see it again and again.

Egypt is not just a place. It is an inner state. A pattern. A survival system. A voice that says, stay small, stay familiar, do not risk freedom. You can leave Egypt physically and still carry it inside you for decades.

This is why healing feels dangerous to so many

people. Looking at pain feels like going backward. Facing emotions feels like reopening wounds. Suppressing them feels safer.

But suppression does not make things disappear. It buries them. And buried things leak. They show up as anger, numbness, anxiety, control, disconnection. They show up in our marriages, our parenting, our faith.

Moshe is saying something radical. Do not be afraid to look. Looking is not the danger. Avoiding is.

Painful does not mean dangerous.

When you truly see something, you also begin to see its edges. And once it has edges, it no longer owns the entire room.

That is why the Torah says the greatest wealth did not come from Egypt, but from the sea. The deepest treasures are hidden precisely in the places we were most afraid to face.

What we call Egypt is often guarding something precious. Innocence. Sensitivity. Love. Power. Creativity. It hid there to survive.

Redemption does not come from denial. It comes from courageous awareness. From holding the light of the soul and looking without shame.

The way you see Egypt today, you will never see it again.

Not because it vanishes. But because you change.

Redemption Requires Readiness

By: Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski



As Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt, the Torah describes their departure with a puzzling phrase:

וְהַמְשִׁיחַ עִלּוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - "And the Children of Israel went up from the land of Egypt" (Shmos 13:18). What does it mean to leave Egypt מְשִׁיחַ?

The Ibn Ezra explains that מְשִׁיחַ means armed and prepared for battle. The Jewish people did not flee Egypt as broken slaves; they departed with strength and confidence, ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead – even war. Redemption, in this view, demands readiness for the struggles of freedom. They now needed to be prepared to fight.

Rabbeinu Bachya, citing the Midrash, offers a very different interpretation. מְשִׁיחַ refers not to preparedness, but to proportion: only one-fifth of Bnei Yisrael left Egypt. The remaining majority perished during the plague of darkness, having chosen not to leave.

At first glance, these explanations could not be farther apart. Were the Jewish people courageous and armed – or was the majority incapable of leaving?

Perhaps the Torah is teaching us that these interpretations are not in conflict, but rather describe the same reality from different angles.

Those who left Egypt were מְשִׁיחַ – armed not merely with weapons, but with inner strength. They possessed the emotional and spiritual fortitude to walk away from what was familiar and predictable toward a future filled with uncertainty, guided only by Hashem. Those who remained



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behind were not physically restrained; the door was wide open. But they were unarmed on the inside. Lacking courage, faith, or resilience, they could not take the single step that redemption now required.

Redemption, then, is not only about Hashem opening the door. It is about whether a person is prepared to walk through it.

This is not merely a historical observation; it is a recurring human reality. In our own lives, Hashem presents many opportunities for growth, change, and elevation. Sometimes it is a chance to improve a relationship, to take responsibility, to leave a familiar but limiting situation, or to grow spiritually. The path forward is laid before us – but it demands effort, risk, and struggle.

And so we hesitate. Not because the opportunity is unavailable, but because we are not yet **הַמְשִׁיב**.

Parshas Beshalach teaches that true freedom requires preparation. To leave one's personal Egypt, a person must be armed – with faith, resolve, and the willingness to endure discomfort in pursuit of something greater. Hashem may open the door, but the courage to step forward must come from within, if we are to accept our own redemption.

The Torah of Marah

By: Rabbi Adam Law



Shmos 15:22-23: "...they went for a three day period in the wilderness but they did not find water. They came to Marah, but they could not drink the waters of Marah because they were bitter... The people complained against Moshe saying, "What shall we drink?" He cried out to H", and H" showed him a tree. He sent it forth into the water and the water became sweet, there He set for him a decree and an ordinance and there He tested it. He said if you will surely listen to the voice of H" your G-d and do what is right in His eyes, and heed His mitzvos and guard all of His decrees, all the sickness which I placed upon Egypt I will not put upon you, for I am H" your healer."

In Beshalach the incident of Marah is immediately after the Splitting of the Sea, and precedes the revelation of Matan Torah in Yisro. The importance of Marah is often overlooked because of its position between them.

According to the sages Marah was a small, preliminary revelation of the Torah before Har Sinai. Although the full revelation was yet to come, Marah is an important bridgeway event which reveals something we need to know now.

Marah means bitterness. The people were sick shortly after the Splitting of the Sea. We were unhappy again as we sunk into old ways. Even such a revelation wasn't enough to change our outlook. While intense love experiences deepen our connection, for it to be sustainable, people need parameters.

Therefore there was a revelation of Torah here, and three mitzvos were given over. The Mei HaShiloach says these mitzvos all are alluding to borders. Shabbos shows the power of NOT doing, and dinim establish order. The Para Adumah is the mystery of the dualism of this world ultimately unifying in the future.

While we already received some mitzvos in Mitzrayim, here H" establishes the path of mitzvos specifically as the antidote to the bitterness of this world. The structured life gives lasting fulfillment with G-d.

But why does this lesson appear in the symbolism of Moshe throwing the tree into the waters? The holy sefarim tell us that every appearance of a tree in the Torah is referring to the Eitz Chaim. When we take out the Torah we recite, "It's a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it (Mishlei 3:18)." When the waters of this life are bitter, The Torah is the tikun that will make it sweet. It is the tree which we grasp unto to keep us being swept away by the great river of life.

Before Har Sinai and the heaviness of it's revelation, Marah gives us a grasp to the Tree of Life. Its branches reach up high and its roots run through the land. It's light is the life of the universe. H" overjoyed in it two thousand years before the world was created. When there was a man to enjoy it, the Tree of Life was planted. However through their interest with that other tree, the light of Torah diminished in the time of Adam and Noah.

Avraham, however, searched for the truth and G-d revealed Himself to him. He was given access to the lights of the Torah. Yitzchak dug the path further, and Yaakov, the perfect son, mastered it. However this knowledge was mostly lost in the exile of the tribes to Mitzrayim. Now, as the children of Israel left towards their destiny, the Torah was to be given to all, small as they were. At Marah we were given a few important mitzvos to grasp onto as a start.

Marah opened up a window to the Eitz Chaim. While the Tree of Knowledge only brought death to the world, here we were shown that the Tree of Life is our holy Torah. Our grasp on it will keep us afloat in the churning waters of life.

Chased Into Greatness!

By: Rabbi Jacks



What if the thing you fear most is a Divine invitation to become the person you were meant to be? What if the crisis you are currently trying to outrun is a divine invitation to step into your destiny?

In Parshas Beshalach, we find the Jewish people trapped between the churning Red Sea in front of them and the thundering Egyptian army behind them.

The Torah uses a peculiar phrase to describe the moment: "And Pharaoh drew near" (u'Pharaoh hikriv).

Grammatically, the Hebrew word hikriv is causative. It doesn't just mean Pharaoh approached the Jewish People; it means he brought them near to G-d.

Rabbi Berechiah, in the midrash, states that Pharaoh's pursuit was more effective for the spiritual growth of the Jews than a hundred fasts and prayers.

Think about that. A hundred days of self-deprivation and formal liturgy couldn't accomplish what one terrifying moment of pursuit did. Why? Because comfort is the enemy of growth. When things are "okay," our prayers, too, might be just "okay." They may feel repetitive and routine. But when the chariots are close enough that you can hear their wheels grinding, our prayers are transformed into a scream from the depths of our souls.

We often know what we should do to improve our lives, but we lack Pharaoh's army to make us actually do it. Sometimes, the "thing" chasing us is Hashem's way of ending our procrastination.

If you feel like you are being hunted by debt, health issues, or professional failure (G-d forbid), ask yourself: What is this pressure forcing me to do that I was too comfortable to do yesterday? In the world of resilience and self-help, there is a concept called Post-Traumatic Growth. This is the capacity to use the energy of our difficulties to open new doors and to propel us mentally and physically toward a higher state of being.

We spend our lives trying to outrun the things we fear. But Parshas Beshalach suggests that without the pursuit, the sea might never have split. The very thing chasing you is often the very thing that will force you to change your destiny.

So, don't just survive the chase. Use the momentum of the pursuit to propel yourself toward the miracle. Make crisis the very thing that ensures you reach your most magnificent destination!

When Trust Becomes a Blessing

By: Yacov Aboudi



At the climax of Keriat Yam Suf, after the sea splits and the danger finally fades, the Torah pauses to describe something subtle but transformative—not only what Bnei Yisrael saw, but what changed inside them:

"וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּיָדֵינוּ וּבְמִשְׁחָה עָבְדוּ."

"They believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant." (Shemot 14:31)

The Torah could have stopped at belief in Hashem. It doesn't. It adds belief in Moshe, Emunah, the Torah is teaching us, is not only faith in God—it is also the willingness to trust the people through whom Hashem guides us.

The Zera Shimshon explains that this was the real turning point at the sea. Bnei Yisrael believed in Hashem long before this moment. But when pressure mounted, they repeatedly fell back on their own understanding. They questioned Moshe, resisted direction, and trusted what felt logical in the moment. The challenge wasn't a lack of faith—it was an inability to let go of self-reliance.

And that's where this becomes personal. There is a real limit to how far we can trust ourselves. Our thinking is shaped by emotion, fear, comfort, and blind spots we don't notice while we're inside them.

The Maharal says it plainly: "כִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֵינָה דְּבַר שִׁינּוּל הָאָדָם לְהַשִּׁיב בְּדַעְתּוֹ לְבָדּוּ."

"The Torah is not something a person can grasp through his own understanding alone." (Netzach Yisrael, ch. 25)

And the Kuzari adds: "אֵין הָאֱמוּנָה נִלְדָּת מִן הַסִּבְרָה, אֲלֵא מִן הַיִּבְרָה"

"Faith is not born of reasoning, but of transmission." (Kuzari I:25)

This isn't about shutting down our minds. It's about bitul—the humility to admit that my perspective is not the full picture, and that growth sometimes requires submitting my instincts to something higher.

That's also why a Rav is not meant to be a "flavor of the week." A Rav isn't someone we consult only when the advice feels comfortable or confirms what we already think. Choosing a Rav is an exercise in consistency and bitul—staying connected even when the guidance challenges us.

I can say personally that the steady relationship my wife and I have with our Rav has changed everything for us. Not because we stopped thinking—but because we stopped thinking alone. Having someone who truly knows us, who sees beyond the moment, has strengthened our marriage, deepened our spiritual lives, and brought clarity even into practical and material decisions. The power has come from the consistency of that relationship, not its novelty.

The Arizal explains that blessing flows through channels. When we align ourselves with those channels, we don't lose ourselves—we gain direction. Practicing bitul in a healthy way allows blessing to flow.

That's what happened at the sea. Once Bnei Yisrael stopped insisting on their own way of seeing things and fully accepted Moshe, the sea split. And only then did the song come.

Beshalach reminds us that humility is not weakness. It is the doorway to connection, to blessing, and to growth we could never reach on our own. A gentle question to sit with:

Where might bitul—not more self-confidence—be the key to the next stage of my growth?

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