



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

## February 2, 2023

### *Shabbat Shalom*



Light candles 5:22pm

Shabbat Services 9:30am

## Shabbat Services

The Carnegie Shul continues to offer hybrid Shabbat services. Please join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19. Masks are optional. To attend virtually, watch for a Zoom link in your email. If you don't receive it, contact Rosalyn Hoffman at [rjlynman@yahoo.com](mailto:rjlynman@yahoo.com). The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found on line at [https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading\\_cdo/aid/2492619/jewish/Beshalach-Torah-Reading.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2492619/jewish/Beshalach-Torah-Reading.htm)

## Miracles Abound

There are two things in this week's parshah and Haftorah that I think are very noteworthy.

The first is the concept of faith. Many times I hear people question if Hashem really is responsible for Torah miracles, or if Torah stories are merely allegories or fable. To them I say that I have faith that Hashem can and does do miraculous things every day.

When the Israelites arrived at the Red Sea, many were reluctant to enter, but we are told that a man of great faith, Nachshon ben Amiinadav, stepped in when the others hesitated. The waters parted and the rest, as we are told in this week's parshah, is history.

The other thing that I find to be very noteworthy is found in this week's haftorah, which describes the great faith of Deborah. I often hear people say that our religion minimizes women, but this is hardly the case. We sing Lecha Dodi on Friday evening to welcome the Sabbath queen. We also sing A Woman of Valor on Friday evening. And what about Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, the four matriarchs who built up the Jewish nation? And Miriam, and Chana,

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and Esther, and Deborah? All women of faith and all heroes in their own rite.

And yes, my new granddaughter is named Chana Miriam. May she live a life as full of faith in Hashem as did the Biblical Chana and Miriam.



# Beshalach in a Nutshell

**Exodus 10:1–13:16**

*From Chabad.org*

The name of the Parshah, “Beshalach,” means “When he sent” and it is found in Exodus 13:17.

Soon after allowing the children of Israel to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh chases after them to force their return, and the Israelites find themselves trapped between Pharaoh’s armies and the sea. G-d tells Moses to raise his staff over the water; the sea splits to allow the Israelites to pass through, and then closes over the pursuing Egyptians. Moses and the children of Israel sing a song of praise and gratitude to G-d.

In the desert the people suffer thirst and hunger, and repeatedly complain to Moses and Aaron. G-d miraculously sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and later has Moses bring forth water from a rock by striking it with his staff. He causes manna to rain down from the heavens before dawn each morning, and quails to appear in the Israelite camp each evening.

The children of Israel are instructed to gather a double portion of manna on Friday, as none will descend on Shabbat, the divinely decreed day of rest. Some disobey and go to gather manna on the seventh day, but find nothing. Aaron preserves a small quantity of manna in a jar, as a testimony for future generations.

In Rephidim, the people are attacked by the Amalekites, who are defeated by Moses’ prayers and an army raised by Joshua.



# Haftorah in a Nutshell

## Judges 4:4-5:31

This week's haftorah describes the fall of the Canaanite general Sisera and his armies, who were swept away by the Kishon River, and Deborah's ensuing song of thanks. This parallels this week's Torah portion which discusses the drowning of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea and the subsequent songs led by Moses and Miriam.

Deborah the Prophetess was the leader and judge of the Israelites at a difficult time; the Israelites were being persecuted by King Jabin of Canaan and his general Sisera. Deborah summoned Barak son of Abinoam and transmitted to him G-d's instruction: "Go and gather your men toward Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun. And I shall draw to you, to the brook Kishon, Sisera, the chieftain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will give him into your hand." At Barak's request, Deborah accompanied him, and together they led the offensive.



Sisera was informed of the Israelites' mobilization and he gathered his forces and proceeded towards the Kishon River. Barak's army below and the heavens above waged battle against the Canaanites and utterly destroyed them. The river washed them all away; not one of the enemy survived.

The defeated general fled on foot and arrived at the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite. She invited him in and offered to hide him. When he fell asleep, Jael took a tent-peg and knocked it through Sisera's temple.

The next chapter of the haftorah is the Song of Deborah, which describes the miraculous victory and thanks the One Above for His assistance.

# Haftorah Commentary

## Shoftim 4:4

*By Rabbi David Siegel*

This week's haftorah calls upon the Jewish people to display total faith in Hashem, irrespective of their personal level of spirituality. Throughout the era of the Judges the Jewish people fluctuated between devout service of Hashem and practices of idolatry. They would typically become secure in their ways and enjoy the comforts of their land which would inevitably cause them to stray from the path of Hashem. In response, Hashem would send one of the powerful nations of the world to oppress the Jews and remind them that it was time to return to the ways of the Torah.



In this week's haftorah, we read about one of those times when the Jews strayed severely from the proper path. In response, Hashem sent Yovin, the king of Canaan to capture the Jewish nation and annex it to his mighty empire. After Yovin's firm control over the Jews for twenty years, the message finally began to sink in and the Jews

started to repent. Hashem responded to their initial stages of repentance and sent them the Prophetess Devorah to inspire them to complete the process. Through Devorah's efforts the Jewish people merited an incredible miracle and Devorah composed a most moving song of praise describing Hashem's great revelations.

Barak, the leading Jewish general of the time was instructed to select ten thousand men and charge into the Canaanite lines. Yovin, the king of Canaan had gathered an army of hundreds of thousands and planned a massive attack against the Jewish people. Hashem intervened on behalf of His people and created an illusion of enormous proportions, which forced the Canaanites to retreat and flee for their lives. In the midst of all of this, Hashem brought blazing heat to the battle front and the Canaanites went down to the Kishon Brook to cool off. At that exact moment, the brook miraculously overflowed and the Canaanites were swept into the water and drowned. Devorah sings about this miracle and says, "The Kishon Brook swept them away, that ancient brook Kishon, my soul treads with strength." (Shoftim 5: 21) Devorah refers to the Kishon as an ancient brook, seeming to relate the Kishon to an earlier incident in Jewish history. Our Chazal in Tractate Pesachim (115b) explain that this earlier incident was, in fact, at the time of the splitting of the Reed Sea which we read about in this week's sedra.

Chazal (ad loc.) quote an intriguing conversation which took place between Hashem and the angel appointed by Hashem to control the Reed Sea. The Rabbis reflect on a passage in Tehillim (106) which indicates that the Jewish people were seriously lacking in their degree of faith in Hashem even while crossing the sea. Although they heard the message of Moshe Rabbeinu regarding the destruction of the Egyptians some doubted the authenticity of Moshe's prophecy and found it difficult to believe that it would actually transpire. Therefore when the sea miraculously opened and remained open there were those who entertained the idea that the Egyptians were also crossing the sea in safety. The reason for this doubt was because some of the Jewish people felt undeserving of a miracle of such great proportions. Now that the sea actually split it was difficult to believe that it would immediately cave in on the Egyptians. They therefore entertained the possibility that the Egyptians were also crossing in safety. In order to dispel this fiction, Hashem instructed the angel in control of the Reed Sea to arrange for the sea to spit out the dead Egyptians onto the shore. Once the Jewish people would see the dead Egyptians, they would understand what had truly transpired inside the sea. The angel fulfilled his command but responded that the fish deserved their newly acquired gift of Egyptian bodies and requested for a replacement sometime in the

future. Hashem agreed and informed the angel that the Kishon Brook would eventually sweep replacements into the sea and the fish would retrieve their ancient gift.

The above discussion suggests a direct corollary between the splitting of the Reed Sea and the overflow of the Kishon Brook. It reveals that there was a missing dimension of faith at the Reed Sea but that it was finally rectified in Devorah's times at the Kishon Brook. The analogy of the fish reflects an incomplete sense of the miracles of Hashem. Although the Egyptians drowned in the sea, this did not complete their destruction process and they remained intact laying on the sea shore. Due to the shortcomings of the Jewish people the Reed Sea was not permitted to function in its fullest capacity by swallowing up the Egyptians. In truth, the splitting of the sea served a dual function; to provide salvation for the Jewish people and to destroy the Egyptian nation. Although the first function was fulfilled to perfection, the second was not carried out in its entirety, because of the doubts of some Jewish people. Their lack of faith caused that the sea could not act in its usual manner but was instead forced to cast the Egyptians onto the shore to prove its authentic role in their destruction. The angel's response to this phenomena was that the sea deserved a perfect role in miracles and should have the opportunity of a perfect demonstration of the hand of Hashem. To this Hashem responded that the miracle of the Kishon Brook would serve this capacity in full.

In the days of Devorah a similar spiritual climate existed to that at the Reed Sea and the Jewish people didn't feel worthy of great revelations. They had recently begun the long process of return and could never imagine that Hashem would perform miracles on their behalf. However, when Barak was instructed to select his ten thousand men and charge against the massive Canaanite army he accepted his command immediately and acted out his role. He and his men demonstrated total faith in Hashem and believed whole-heartedly that Hashem would perform an open miracle solely on their behalf. Although their level of spirituality was far from perfect they displayed total faith in Hashem. This time there was no doubt in their minds and no need existed for Hashem to prove the extent of His involvement on behalf of His people. This time the sea was granted its complete role and was permitted to swallow the Canaanites without casting them out onto the shore. Hashem's revelation of the Reed Sea was finally complete because the subsequent miracle of the Kishon was met with perfect faith in Hashem. We learn from this to trust in Hashem and His prophets, irrespective of our assessment of our own spiritual level. Hashem truly cares about us and will deliver whenever the need does arise.

## Yahrtzeits

*This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:*

**Harry C. Block**  
**Samuel Miller**  
**David Raskin**

**Ben Herman**  
**Brenda Cramer Miller**

*May their memories be for a blessing.*