



THE SHALOM BAYIT JOURNAL



Parashat Beshalach

Who Split the Sea?

Understanding the Torah and the Human Experience

When we speak about the miracle at the Sea, we often use two different expressions. Sometimes we refer to Kriat Yam Suf—the splitting of the Sea. At other times, we say in our prayers, "Bakata lifneihem"—You split it before them. Why the different language?

When we say Kriat Yam Suf, we are focusing on Hashem's role. We look at the Sea and say, "Look what Hashem did." Water does not naturally divide. Walls of water do not stand upright. The miracle was clearly His.

But when we say Bakata lifneihem, the emphasis shifts. The Sea was split before them. The focus is no longer only on the miracle itself, but on the people who stood before it.

The Midrash teaches that Nachshon ben Aminadav entered the water before it split. He continued forward until the water reached his neck, and only then did the miracle occur (Mechilta, Beshalach; Sotah 37a).

From our perspective, Hashem split the Sea. From Heaven's perspective, Bnei Yisrael walked forward with faith. We look up and say, "Look what Hashem did." Hashem looks down and says, "Look what My children did." Both are true.

The miracle belonged to Hashem, but it also required the courage, faith, and commitment of a nation willing to move forward into the unknown.

This perspective has profound implications for marriage. Many couples become experts at noticing what their spouse is doing wrong. They see the forgotten chore, the insensitive comment, the unmet need, or the recurring frustration. Over time, appreciation is replaced by criticism, and gratitude is replaced by disappointment.

Instead of focusing on what our spouse failed to do, we can learn to notice what they are already doing. Instead of focusing on what is missing, we can practice focusing on the acts of kindness, effort, and commitment we no longer see, actively looking for things to appreciate and acknowledge.

One of the greatest shifts in a relationship occurs when people stop asking, "What am I not receiving?" and start asking, "What is my spouse already giving that I have stopped noticing?"

We look up and say, "Look what Hashem did." Hashem looks down and says, "Look what My children did." Healthy marriages are built in much the same way. Instead of blaming one another, each partner looks for opportunities to praise the other.

