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Parsha Chol Hamoed Passover
by Julie Zhuk on 2024-04-27

Before the Jews had crossed the Red Sea they needed somewhere to go, they stayed in a place called Pi Hachiroth and this had opened up to the shore of the Sea of the Reeds. All of this time the Sea had been raging while Pharaoh was upset as he had been pursuing the Jewish people. He was struggling to do so and he was not alone, he had his entire Egyptian army with him. As the Egyptian army approached, Moses told the Jewish people he had heard from G-d to have no fear and to stand firm because he had heard directly from G-d. G-d was going to help and deliver a lot of help. The Jewish people would see a performance coming from G-d that they had never seen before. Moses was telling the Jewish people that G-d would perform a battle for the Jewish people and the Jewish people just had to stay silent. The Midrash tells us that there were four actions on how Jewish people were to act in the situation that the Jewish people were in.

Some Jews stated that they should have drowned themselves out in the sea. This way they would have avoided being enslaved by the Egyptians and Pharaoh. A second group stated that they should leave everything behind where they were and go back to Egypt. That way they would remain alive. The third group stated they should make war against them. They thought that maybe they would win! The fourth group was against doing any of these things but wanted to cry out to G-d. They thought that this way for sure He would help them. In response to all of this G-d had some words for Moses. For the group that wanted to drown themselves in the Sea G-d told Moses to say, "Stand firm and witness the deliverance that G-d is going to perform for you today. G-d had a message for the second group that said they wanted to return to Egypt, those Egyptians who you saw today. Guess what, you will never see them again. G-d's message for those Jews who stated that they wanted to go to war, G-d said He would go do battle for them instead!

The last message G-d had for the fourth group to those who said they were going to cry out to Him for His help was, "You shall remain silent." Moses asked G-d what should the Jewish people do. G-d told the Jewish people to just keep going forward on the path that was going to lead to Mount Sinai. It would be there that they would receive the Torah. Getting the Torah was the reason for the Exodus from Egypt in the first place! In this week's Parsha it is hard to understand why there were four different aspects of responses from the Jewish people. One thing we learned from this week's Parsha is no Jew should ever want to take their own life. The group of Jews who wanted to return to Egypt were giving up their hope in G-d. G-d didn't want any Jew to do that.

G-d thought it was a noble gesture for the Jewish people to go to war with the Egyptians, but he didn't want the Jewish people to do this. Standing up to our oppressors and protecting our oppressors was one thing. G-d wanted the Jewish people to put their faith in Him, by turning to prayer and for Him. For us to do this when we are in a time of a crisis. In this week's Parsha we are supposed to learn something, the Exodus had happened about a week ago already. Yet the Jewish people had not gone completely free until the splitting of the Red Sea. This was because the Egyptians were still coming after them. Only after the Jews crossed the Red Sea and the Egyptians had drowned that the Exodus was complete. At the end of every seder the Jewish

people say, "In every generation, a person is obligated to see it as if they had left Egypt. This means that in every generation and every day we must make sure that the Jewish people are always going forward. This means the Jewish people always have two stages in the Exodus to go forward there is to leave Egypt and then there is the Splitting of the Red Sea.