

# Parsha Knowledge

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בְּרוּךְ ה' ...

“Blessed is Hashem ...” (Shemos 18:10)

In this week's Parsha, the Jewish people are saved from the Egyptians. The Torah tells us that Moshe told his father-in-law, Yisro, about the great miracles that occurred in Mitzrayim and how Hashem rescued the Yidden. The pasuk says that Yisro's response was, “*Baruch Hashem asher hitzil eschem miyad Mitzrayim*” - blessed is Hashem who saved the Jewish people from the hands of the Egyptians.” Interestingly, the Gemara in Sanhedrin (94a) says that Yisro was the first person to recite the words *baruch Hashem*. Yisro was the very first one to bless Hashem. There is a big question here. Does that make sense? It is inconceivable and unfathomable to think that the Jewish people themselves never said *baruch Hashem*. The Yidden stood by the sea and sang the *shirah* in euphoria and jubilation. The Jews said *baruch Hashem* countless times! If so, how can it be that Yisro was the first person to say *baruch Hashem*? What does this mean? What's the Gemara coming to teach us?



The Radomsker Rebbe

I heard a beautiful answer from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita: The Radomsker Rebbe says that Yisro was indeed the first person to say *baruch Hashem*. Yisro was the first person to say *baruch Hashem* for a miracle that happened to someone else. Yisro was the first person to thank Hashem for someone else's success. Yisro was the first one to bless Hashem for someone else's salvation. Yisro wasn't in Mitzrayim. He wasn't affected by the Egyptians. When the Yidden said *baruch Hashem*, they were thanking Hashem for the miracle that happened to themselves. However, when Yisro said *baruch Hashem*, he was thanking Hashem for performing a miracle for others, and that's what differentiated Yisro.

In our day-to-day lives, it's easy for us to revel and rejoice when we experience a miracle. It's easy for us to take joy when something good occurs. What's hard is to take joy in other people's successes. We have a hard time celebrating other people's victories. It's easy for us to care about ourselves. What's hard is to care for others. That's what differentiated Yisro. Yisro said *baruch Hashem*. He wasn't there. He didn't experience the miracle of being saved from the Egyptians personally. Yet, even so, he took joy in someone else. Yisro took joy in the Yidden – and that's why he is credited as being the first person to say *baruch Hashem*.

A secular woman once went to a Beis Yaakov to enroll her daughter in the school. The principal was quite surprised. She was wondering why an irreligious woman wanted to send her child to Bais Yaakov instead of public school. They sat down and the woman said, "You may be wondering why someone like me wants my daughter to go to a Jewish school. After all, why would I – a secular woman, send my daughter to a Beis Yaakov?" The woman then shared the following beautiful story: "Recently, I was on the bus, and I was sitting next to an orthodox woman and her young daughter. Suddenly, an ambulance zoomed by, and I saw the little girl murmuring. She was whispering something.

In my curiosity, I turned to this girl's mother and asked her what her daughter was doing. The girl's mother turned to me and explained that her daughter was taught in Beis Yaakov that whenever she hears a siren, anytime she hears an ambulance, she should say *Tehillim* and daven for whoever it is that needs a recovery. I was shocked. After all, why would someone take an interest and care about someone who they don't even know? When I heard that, I decided that if that's what they teach in religious schools, that's where my daughter will go. That's why I'm here."

The girl went to the Beis Yaakov and ended up raising a beautiful Jewish family. Why? Because another girl took an interest in someone else. We never know how far our actions can go. Because this girl cared about another person, she caused another girl to become religious. Let's start thinking about others. Let's take an interest in others. Let's go beyond ourselves and start sharing in the joy and the pain of each other. We can make a difference!

# Have a Great Shabbos!

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