

Dvar Torah – (Parsha Beshallah) by Zev Beigel

Shabbat shalom. In my parsha, Beshallah, the Pharaoh has a change of heart about freeing his slaves and orders his army of 600 hundred chariots to pursue the Israelites. As the Egyptians close in on the Israelites, the Lord commands Moses to hold his arm over the water to split the Sea. After the Israelites pass, the water is returned to its normal state. The Pharaoh's army, who followed them, perishes in the Sea. This leads Moses and the Israelites to sing triumphantly to the Lord. This is why this Sabbath is called Shabbat Shira. The women, led by Miriam, join in a dance with the timbrel (which is an instrument like a tambourine.)

The Israelites then travel in the wilderness in search of food, until the Lord rains down bread known as "mannah" from the sky. Mannah provides the Israelites the sustenance they need to travel to the Promised Land.

To me, mannah is like macaroni and cheese, because macaroni and cheese gives me sustenance. Recently, my neighbor provided me with a large dish of macaroni and cheese in order to help my family, because my mom gave birth to twins. Our family has also provided sustenance to people in need. Each Christmas, my family goes to a homeless shelter to serve dinner. We also invite people to our home for Shabbat dinner. Food is important in Judaism, as it is symbolic of serving others. Other examples of this tradition of serving food to others include: bringing food to a shiva. or bringing food to someone who is sick or unable to afford the cost of food. When I was little, I would ask my mom for a candy bar in the store. She said that instead of a candy bar, I could pick out food for the poor. I always chose macaroni and cheese. This taught me the importance of helping others.

The Torah teaches us that helping the poor is called "tzedakah". Doing acts of kindness is "chesed". For my tikkun olam project, I played my flute at Hughes nursing home, and for my elderly neighbors. I found that when I played music, the people there enjoyed listening to it. Music, like food makes us happy. Mannah gave the Israelites the energy to get to the Promised Land. Macaroni and cheese, which will be available at the Kiddush, is my mannah because it gives me the energy and inspires me to help and serve others.

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Please turn to page 399 in the Etz Hayim Chumash.