



Beshalach

The Hidden Wisdom of Children

In Parshat Beshalach, there is an intriguing passage.

After the **אֶזְרִישִׁיר מֹשֶׁה**, describing how Moshe led the nation in singing praises to Hashem after the miraculous parting of the waters of the Red Sea, we are told:

וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אֲחוֹת אַהֲרֹן אֶת-הַתֵּבָה בְּיָדָהּ
Miriam, the prophetess, sister of Aharon, took a drum in her hands.

And thereafter all the ladies of the people of Israel followed her, and they celebrated in a most joyous way together. Now I have two questions to ask. Miriam is introduced to us in two ways. First of all, we were told she was a **נְבִיאָה** - a prophetess. Where in the Torah is there any prophecy from Miriam? Secondly, she's described as being **אֲחוֹת אַהֲרֹן**, sister of Aaron. Now, that of course, was true, but she was also the sister of Moshe. Where is his name? And especially as this portion appears straight after the **אֶזְרִישִׁיר מֹשֶׁה** in which her brother Moshe was the key figure. Now there is a well known midrash which actually, at one of the same time provides the answers to both of these questions. We are told how, after Pharaoh decreed:

כָּל הַבֶּן הַיָּלֹד הַיֵּאֲרָה תִּשְׁלִיכֶהוּ
Every Hebrew baby boy who will be born will be cast into the waters of the Nile, will be drowned.

Miriam's parents, Amram and Yocheved, decided to separate. This was their calculation. If they would stay married, they would have a child. There was a 50% chance it would be a boy and he would be killed. How could they do that to that child? They felt it was better to separate. Once

they did that, their little daughter Miriam said to them: "You have to get together again. If all parents would be just like you, that would be the end of our nation."

Take a calculated risk and it's in the hands of Hashem, and you will see. It'll all be all right. And isn't that exactly what happened? So what Miriam was saying to her parents then was not just a hopeful, sweet piece of advice. This was **נְבוּאָה** - it was prophecy. It was the word of Hashem speaking through her. Her parents listened to her advice. And the rest, as they say, was all history. Now we can understand as well - why she is described as being **אֲחוֹת אַהֲרֹן**, the sister of Aharon, and not of Moshe, because at that time she only had one sibling and he was Aharon - it was before Moshe was born.

I believe that there are two powerful lessons emerging from this passage.

The first is: Let's listen to what our children say. Often, they just comment on things. They say sweet nothings. But sometimes there's something really perceptive. Sometimes children can get right into the heart of a matter, far better than we can. And here you can see how the advice of a little child made all the difference to the future of our people.

And secondly, very often it is necessary for us to take responsible, calculated risks. Because if we don't, so many amazing projects would never get off the ground. And when we do so in a responsible way, Hashem helps in order to guarantee our future success.

Shabbat Shalom.