

**פרשת**  
**בשלח**  
*Parashat Beshalach*

*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16, Judges 4:4-5:31*  
*Matthew 5*

**Having a change of heart**

In this week's Torah portion we read the following, *1 וידבר יהוה 1 וידבר יהוה 1 וידבר יהוה*  
*דבר אל־בני ישראל וישבו 2 The LORD said to Moses: 2 דבר אל־בני ישראל וישבו 2*  
*ויחננו לפני פי החירת בין מגדל ובין הים לפני בעל צפון נקחו תחנונו על־הים:*  
*Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between*  
*Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it,*  
*by the sea. 3 ואמר פרעה לבני ישראל נבכים הם בארץ סגר עליהם המ־ 3*  
*Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, “They are astray in the land;*  
*the wilderness has closed in on them.” 4 וחזקתי את־לב־פרעה ורדף 4*  
*אחריהם ואפבדה בפרעה ובכל־חילו וידעו מצרים כי־אני יהוה ויעשו־כן:*  
*Then I will stiffen Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them, that I may*  
*gain glory through Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall*  
*know that I am the LORD. And they did so. 5 ויגד למלך מצרים כי ברח 5*  
*העם ויהפך ללב פרעה ועבדיו אל־העם ויאמרו מה־נאת עשינו כי־שלחנו*  
*When the king of Egypt was told that the people had*  
*fled, Pharaoh and his courtiers had a change of heart about the people*  
*and said, “What is this we have done, releasing Israel from our ser-*  
*vice?” We are told the Lord directs Israel to turn back and encamp be-*  
*fore Pi-hahiroth facing the sea. The Lord states specifically in the text*

that this was for the purpose of hardening Pharaoh's heart, he would become prideful to observe how Israel did not appear to know what she was doing wandering around. Pharaoh's pride was accompanied with thoughts of incompetence, superiority, and that the people were dumb. Have you ever thought in this way towards others? If so there is a hardening in part of the heart of the one who does this. In the Torah, pride accomplished the process of hardening, and Pharaoh's servants also had a change of heart. Why did they have a change of heart? Was it because they thought Israel have decided to turn back to the ways of sin by not leaving this region completely? *Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 14:2 part 2* states that this place they were to turn towards had two different names. The reason why the Torah refers to this place by a different name was so Israel could encounter a city with free men. The idea was if they made it as far as Pi-hahiroth they would have gained their freedom. The rabbinic interpretation is Israel was trying to find the shortest route to freedom. As we can see in the narrative, the shortest route is not always the best way possible. The Lord God preforms a miracle on behalf of Israel to deliver her from bondage and sin by doing the impossible, dividing the Red Sea. It is in a similar way we are to look for our deliverance, in an astonishing way the Lord will also deliver us from bondage and sin. The Lord promised us in His Messiah we would be given freedom, just as the people were promised freedom by the hand of Moshe. Rashi also states "*the words לִפְנֵי פִי הַחִירוֹת (lifney pi hakhirot) meant the reason why the Torah mentions that location is to mislead Pharaoh into thinking that the Israelites had gotten lost, as a result of which they had second thoughts about leaving Egypt, and the proof is that they encamped at that location, one familiar to them as they had built the fortifications in that town, it being known to them as Pittom.*" The commentary speaks of taking three day journey, and parallels this to having second thoughts, turning back to the ways of sin, to Egypt, to bondage, or having some reservations of completely leaving their former lives. One of God's purposes for giving us His Word is to provide assurance of His salvation. The Apostle John wrote: "*This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and*

*that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:11-13 and see also John 3:15-17).* When we consider the Torah portion for this week, all of the events that take place reveal to us how we are to be careful to properly understand God’s graces, which are meant for our repentance and trusting in Him. We are given God’s Torah in order to properly define sin. A false definition of sin will lead a person astray, and in a similar way, wrongly defining God’s graces (mercies) will also lead one astray. We have to trust in God’s Word and His promises. The evidence of His mercy in our lives draw us to praise His name, increases our faith, and leads us to repentance, turning from sin to His holy and righteous ways. In the Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:7 the rabbis say there is life in God’s Torah, that one finds healing, is happy, and finds grace in the commands of God. Mercy is found in the Torah, the reason being, the Lord provides for us the way of Teshuvah (repentance) and what it means to turn from sin. The proverbs are given as the rabbinic explanation for the benefit of the Torah, one finds length of days, an addition of years, wealth and honor, and a life that is filled with peace. Does this sound like the typical definition of the Law of God today? The Torah is described as a way of life for God’s people and the road upon which we are to set our feet upon. The reason being, the Torah speaks of the faithfulness of God to those who trust in Him.

In Parashat Beshalach, we are told when the people left Egypt, the Lord had delivered Israel with a mighty hand and both Pharaoh and his people drove Israel out of the land. We are then told **יז וַיְהִי בַּשָּׁלַח** **פְּרַעֲוֵה אֶת-הָעָם וְלֹא-נָחֵם אֱלֹהִים דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא כִּי | אָמַר** **פֶּן-יִנָּחֵם הָעָם וְיָשׁוּבוּ מִצְרָיִמָּה:** *13:17 Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, ‘The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.’ (NASB)* As a result, the Lord took the people in a direction that didn’t quite make sense to them or to Pharaoh. This teaches us today in regard to the manner of God’s guidance in our lives. The problems we face today may be summarized according to *Mishley / Proverbs 14:12* which states *“there is a way which seems right to a person, but its end is the way of death.” (NASB)* Jeremiah states the problem is related to man’s inability to direct his own life; in *Jeremiah 10:23* he said, *“Lord, we know that people do not control their own destiny. It is not in their*

power to determine what will happen to them.” (NASB) Because of man’s finite wisdom and ability, his limited understanding of the facts coupled with his sinfulness, man simply cannot direct his steps. What seems right to him results in the way of destruction and death. As man’s thoughts are not God’s, so do his ways fall short of God’s perfect and all-wise plan. This is why it is important to follow in God’s footsteps according to His Word. *Isaiah 55:8-9* states, “55:8 *Indeed, my plans are not like your plans, and my deeds are not like your deeds, 55:9 for just as the sky is higher than the earth, so my deeds are superior to your deeds and my plans superior to your plans.*” (NASB) When we are faced with real life hurts and issues, trusting God when we don’t understand is easier said than done. It’s easy to say, “*give your cares to the Lord and trust Him*” when everything in life seems to be going well. When we learn to trust the Lord completely, we begin to have a sense of rest in Him. We begin to realize that God has everything under control even when life appears to be out of control. Trusting the Lord God of Israel when we do not understand brings us to a point where we decide to trust the Lord and NOT in our own logic and understanding. As the children of God, we must make the decision to trust God regardless of how scary the situation may seem. (Note Yeshua’s comments on the little children, see *Matthew 18:3*, and note the situation at the beginning of Parashat Beshalach) Trusting the Lord does not prevent us from being in uncomfortable situations but it does allow us to be placed in a position where we seek the Lord’s presence, provisions, guidance and promises. This was the situation occurring to the people of Israel when leaving Egypt, they did not understand what the Lord had in plan for them. As a result, they said, וַיִּפְרְעוּ הַקְּרִיב וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-עֵינֵיהֶם וְהִנֵּה מִצְרַיִם | נִסַּע אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ מְאֹד וַיִּצְעְקוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-יְהוָה: יָא וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הַמְּבִלִי אֵין-קְבָרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם לְקַחְתָּנוּ לְמוֹת בְּמִדְבָּר מֵה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ לְהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם: *14:10 As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. 14:11 Then they said to Moses, ‘Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt?’ (NASB)* Moshe however reassured them saying, יג

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אֶל-תִּירְאוּ הַתִּיַצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָּכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתֶם אֶת-מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד עַד-עוֹלָם:  
*14:13 But Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. (NASB)* Within the greater context of the Torah portion, we learn that if we are not seeking the Lord and His righteousness, we will not see the Lord working in our lives in powerful ways. Moshe speaks of a great and powerful salvation (יְשׁוּעַת, *14:13*) which has led to the future expectation of what we have in Yeshua the Messiah. This draws in the context of our seeking the Lord and His ways for our lives, recognizing our need for forgiveness and redemption, and for us to cleave unto the Father in heaven in His son Yeshua the Messiah. This is the definition of a life lived as a child of God (a repentant attitude).

This week we are looking at the Scriptures from *Shemot / Exodus 13:17-14:13*.

### ***Shemot / Exodus 13:17-14:13***

*13:17 Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, 'The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.' 13:18 Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. 13:19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.' 13:20 Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. 13:21 The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 13:22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. 14:1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 14:2 'Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea. 14:3 'For Pharaoh will*

say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' 14:4 'Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.' And they did so. 14:5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, 'What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?' 14:6 So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; 14:7 and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. 14:8 The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. 14:9 Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. 14:10 As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. 14:11 Then they said to Moses, 'Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? 14:12 'Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' 14:13 But Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. (NASB)

יז וַיְהִי בְשַׁלַּח פְּרַעֲזָה אֶת-הָעָם וְלֹא-נָחָם אֱלֹהִים דְּרָדָה אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים  
כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא כִּי | אָמַר אֱלֹהִים פֶּן-יִנָּחֵם הָעָם בְּרֹאֲתָם מִלְחָמָה וְשָׁבוּ  
מִצְרַיִמָּה: יח וַיִּסַּב אֱלֹהִים | אֶת-הָעָם דְּרָדָה הַמִּדְבָּר יָם-סוּף וְחַמְשִׁים  
עָלוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: יט וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת-עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ  
כִּי הִשְׁבַּע הַשָּׁבִיעַ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם

והעליתם את-עצמתי מזה אתכם: כ ויסעו מסכת ויחנו באתם בקצה המדבר: כא ויהיה הלך לפניהם יומם בעמוד ענן לנחתם הדרך ולילה בעמוד אש להאיר להם ללכת יומם ולילה: כב לא-ימיש עמוד הענן יומם ועמוד האש לילה לפני העם: פ א וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: ב דבר אל-בני ישראל וישבו ויחנו לפני פי החירת בין מגדל ובין הים לפני בעל צפן נכחו תחנו על-הים: ג ואמר פרעה לבני ישראל נבכים הם בארץ סגר עליהם המדבר: ד וחזקתי את-לב-פרעה ורדף אחריהם ואכבדה בפרעה ובכל-חילו וידעו מצרים כי-אני יהוה ויעשו-כן: ה ויגד למלך מצרים כי ברח העם ויהפך לבב פרעה ועבדיו אל-העם ויאמרו מה-זאת עשינו כי-נשלחנו את-ישראל מעבדנו: ו ויאסר את-רכבו ואת-עמו לקח עמו: ז ויקח שש-מאות רכב בחור וכל רכב מצרים ושלשם על-כלו: ח ויחזק יהוה את-לב פרעה מלך מצרים וירדף אחרי בני ישראל ובני ישראל יצאים ביד רמה: [שני] ט וירדפו מצרים אחריהם וישיו אותם חנים על-הים כל-סוס רכב פרעה ופראו ויחילו על-פי החירת לפני בעל צפן: י ופרעה הקריב וישאו בני-ישראל את-עיניהם והנה מצרים | נסע אחריהם ויראו מאד ויצעקו בני-ישראל אל-יהוה: יא ויאמרו אל-משה המבלי אין-קברים במצרים לקחתנו למוות במדבר מה-זאת עשית לנו להוציאנו ממצרים: יב הלא-זה הדבר אשר דברנו אליך במצרים לאמר חזל ממנו ונעבדה את-מצרים כי טוב לנו עבד את-מצרים ממתנו במדבר: יג ויאמר משה אל-העם אל-תיראו התיצבו וראו את-ישועת יהוה אשר-יעשה לכם היום כי אשר ראיתם את-מצרים היום לא תספו לראתם עוד עד-עולם:

יז ויהי The Torah portion (Parashat Beshalach), opens saying, בשלח פרעה את-העם ולא-נחם אלהים דרך ארץ פלשתים כי קרוב הוא *13:17 Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, 'The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.'* (NASB) These words illustrate for us that God's ways are not man's ways, and that the Lord knows our deepest thoughts and desires. While bringing the people out of Egypt, the Lord took the people in

a direction that didn't quite make sense to them or to Pharaoh. This is related to the manner of God's guidance in our lives. When we are faced with real life hurts and issues, trusting the Lord when we don't understand is easier said than done. These Scriptures reminds us that regardless of our own understanding, we must remain faithful to the Lord trusting that all things are in His hands and designed for a special purpose.

*Midrash Rabbah Shemot Parashat 20, Part 18* describes the Lord's leading His people out of Egypt in the following way:

***Midrash Rabbah Shemot Parashat 20 Part 18***

*What does "...led the people around (vayasev)..." (Exodus 13:18) mean? That the Holy One surrounded them, just as it says "But I will be for it-says the Lord-a wall of fire around (saviv)..." (Zechariah 2:9) Like a shepherd who was shepherding his sheep and saw wolves descending upon them, he turned back the sheep in order that they not be hurt. So to, when Israel came out of Egypt the chiefs of Edom, Moav, Canaan and Amalek stood around and took counsel on how to come upon Israel. When the Holy One saw this He sent them around in order that they not come upon them, as it says "So God led the people around..." (Exodus 13:18) Not only was this so in this world, but it will be so in the next as well. From where do we do know this? As David said "Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the Lord is around His people..." (Psalms 125:2) Another explanation. "So God led the people around..." (Exodus 13:18) From here our Rabbis said that even the poorest in Israel should not eat until he reclines (yasev), because this is what the Holy One did for them 'So God led the people around (vayasev).'*

יח ויִסֹב אֱלֹהִים | אֶת- 13:18 הַעַם דָּרָךְ הַמִּדְבָּר יָם-סוּף וְחַמְשִׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:  
*Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land*



*of Egypt. (NASB)* focussing upon the word **וַיֵּצֵא** (vayasev). The rabbis say that the Holy One led the people out of Egypt, and in doing so, He surrounded them, protecting them, and delivering them from their enemy. The Torah says in *Shemot / Exodus 13:21* *The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 13:22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. (NASB)* We are also told that the pillar stood between Israel and Egypt to protect Israel from the Egyptian army. Many examples are given in the midrash:

- *the Holy One surrounded them, just as it says “But I will be for it-says the Lord-a wall of fire around (saviv)...” (Zechariah 2:9)*
- *He sent them around in order that they not come upon them, as it says “So God led the people around...” (Exodus 13:18)*
- *As David said “Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the Lord is around His people...” (Psalms 125:2)*

The idea is that the Lord is here in the midst of His people. This concept of a holy God being in the midst of His people leads us to understand the kind of people we are called to be. In Midrash Tehillim 110, Part 4, the rabbis state, *“The Holy One blessed be He, reassured him, Where your feet tread, there is no stain of iniquity.”* This is written in the context of Abraham slaying the men who took his nephew Lot and questioning whether there was a righteous man among them, drawing in the context of righteousness, death, success in battle against one’s enemies, and the presence of God. Note how Abraham’s enemies were living in unrighteousness that leads to death. This suggests that we are to daily seek the righteousness of God, to walk in that righteousness, to live a holy life, to seek justice, and to dwell in God’s truth (in His word). Now the fact of the matter is that we all fall short of these things, where we don’t always live a righteous life, we are not always holy, and sometimes, especially in our hearts, we think of great injustices against others. The important thing to remember is taking a Torah cen-

tric understanding of Scripture, the context the Torah brings us is of the mercy of God that He shows towards us, His empowering of our lives to get back up to repent, to seek Him and his Mashiach, and His helping us to turn from our former ways to begin (start over) again. This is the message of the Torah. It is not a message of condemnation as the modern church theologies would have you believe. The message of the Torah is one of repentance, seeking the Lord God and his Mashiach, and starting over again! Yeshua taught these things as our example according to the Apostolic Writings (see *John 13:15, John 14:21-23, 1 John 2:4-6, 1 John 5:3*). To summarize the point, Yeshua said in *John 15:13* “*For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.*” We are told that Yeshua washed his disciples’ feet, that he might teach us to think nothing of ourselves but to think of others. In *1 John 2:6* *He that said he stays in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he. (NASB)* Just as the midrash states, “*Hence, he will sit to it in truth in the tent of David.*” The meaning of the word “*sit*” is to dwell, therefore, we are to “*dwell*” in the truth, meaning that we are to look to the Messiah of God and do as he did living his life according to God’s Word. It is the Lord God Almighty who fights our battles for us, just as it is the Lord, according to the midrash, that caused Abraham to sit at God’s right hand saying that “*I*” (the Lord) will fight all the battles for you. What is significant is how the midrash connects these things to a prophetic message about David, according to *Tehillim / Psalm 110*, and then to the Messiah in which his throne will be established forever in truth and in the tent of David. Notice how all of these things are distilled down to the concept that the Lord will bring one man (Yeshua the Messiah) to lead the way, to be seated at the right hand of God, drawing in the context of the power and presence of God in the midst of His people who are walking in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. It is within this context the Lord God Almighty was leading His people with Moshe as their Mashiach according to Parashat Beshalach. In addition, we can see how concerned the Lord was for His people in the statement that He did not want to frighten the people with war and cause them to turn back to Egypt. Can you see the pattern here the Lord is showing us in the Exodus from Egypt?

Rashi has the following to say concerning the opening verses in this week’s Torah Portion.

***Rashi on exodus 13:17, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4***

**נחם** ויהי בשלח פרעה... ולא נחם **AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN PHARAOH HAD SENT [THE PEOPLE AWAY] THAT GOD GUIDED THEM NOT** — The word **נחם** means *He guided them, just as, (Exodus 32:34) “Go, guide (נחה) the people”, and (Proverbs 6:22) “when thou goest it shall guide (תנחה) thee”.*

**כי קרוב הוא** **BECAUSE IT WAS NEAR**, and it would therefore be easy to return by the same route to Egypt. — *Of Midrashic explanations there are many (cf. Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 13:17).*

**בראתם מלחמה** **WHEN THEY SEE WAR** — *For instance the war mentioned in (Numbers 14:45) “Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites came down etc.” If they had proceeded by the direct route they would have then turned back. This is evident, for what would have been the case? If, when He led them about by a circuitous way, they said, (Numbers 14:4) “Let us appoint another chief and go back to Egypt”, had He led them by a direct route how much the more certainly would they have spoken so.*

**פן ינחם** **PERADVENTURE [THE PEOPLE] REPENT** — *peradventure they cherish a different thought (they change their mind) about having gone out and set their hearts on returning (cf. Rashi on Genesis 6:6).*

Rashi re-iterates the idea that the route back to Egypt (bondage, sin, unfaithfulness, etc) is short and easy for the people. The Lord however was going to show them that He is able to overcome anything in their lives. In fact, the Lord taking the people through the Red Sea illustrates for us that there was no way possible to turn back to Egypt. They were to utterly give up their sinful ways. This is the illustration the

Lord wants to show us today! The people as well as Pharaoh thought they were going in the wrong direction. The basic idea is if the land of Canaan was given to the people, they should have gone straight up to Canaan, however they circled around to the Red Sea. The Lord, by the hand of Moshe, took the people in a direction that didn't quite make sense to them or to Pharaoh. The point however was due to their weakness, the Lord moved them slowly towards the Land of Promise, and not quickly. Note here based upon these opening verses, from Parashat Beshalach, how repentance (Teshuvah) is taken to be interpreted in two differing ways, which may be understood as either turning towards the righteousness of God or turning towards sin (i.e. returning to Egypt). Rashi says that this slow route was taken so the people would not cherish a different thought and change their minds and return to their bondage, sin, and unfaithfulness. This is an illustration of our thought life and the need to guard our thought life very carefully. This same issue is very relevant for us today, whether we will repent (turn) towards God's ways, or repent and then turn towards the ways of bondage, sin, and unfaithfulness.

Sforno has the following to say concerning the opening verses in this week's Torah Portion.

*Sforno on exodus 13:17*

*ויהי בשלח...ולא נחם אלוקים דרך ארץ פלשתים, even though it had been G'd's plan to lead the Israelites to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah there, and only from there to the land of Israel, as He stated Himself in Exodus 6:7-8 "I will take you as My people, and I will bring you to the land, etc.," at this point, G'd's plan was to lead them to the Sea of Reeds, which was neither the route to the land of the Philistines, nor the route that led to Mount Sinai. [we must remember that Moses had stood at Chorev (Mt Sinai) at the burning bush and he did not have to cross the sea to do this. Ed.] The major reason for this was to bring about the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in the sea. [it is important to always remember that due to man's free will, G'd cannot deal with man in the way He deals with inert objects or even*

*animals, none of which could oppose Him. G'd needs to create a scenario which gives man a chance to delude himself, thus bringing him to act in a manner enabling G'd to insure that His design will be carried out. Ed.] An example of G'd acting in this manner is described in Judges 4:7 where G'd Himself speaks about how He “dragged” Sisera and his army and 900 armored vehicles across the river Kishon to face Barak. The simplest route to get to the Sea of Reeds was by traversing the land of the Philistines. דרך ארץ פלשתים, G'd did not want them to travel this route*

Sforno states that the way to the Red Sea was neither to the Land of Canaan nor to the mountain of Sinai. Sforno states, “*remember that Moses had stood at Chorev (Mt Sinai) at the burning bush and he did not have to cross the sea to do this.*” Sforno states that the Lord deals with man due to his free will, and it is necessary for the Lord to move slowly towards his end goal because of our own will and desire for self, as opposed to learning spiritual lessons that would draw us nearer to the Lord and to what His will is for our lives. This is Sforno’s conclusion saying, “*G'd needs to create a scenario which gives man a chance to delude himself, thus bringing him to act in a manner enabling G'd to insure that His design will be carried out. Ed.]*” The Lord works in a way so that man deceives himself to live according to God’s plan. In the sense of Pharaoh, this would be the case. For God’s people however, we are not unaware of the Lord working in our lives for His righteousness. The Lord has a plan and His plan is explained in *Shemot / Exodus 14:13* which states, *יג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אֶל-תִּירְאוּ הַתִּירְאוּ הַתִּיצְבוּ וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲשֶׁר רְאִיתֶם אֶת-מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד עַד-עוֹלָם:* *14:13 But Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. (NASB)* The example given to us in Parashat Beshalach is of a powerful and mighty work of God in the lives of His people to save them from their enemies, from bondage, and from sin. The point of the matter is that the Lord guides us and takes care of us and sometimes we don’t always understand why

the Lord chooses the path that He does for our lives. The Lord worked a great and powerful salvation (יְשׁוּעָה, 14:13) which led to the future expectation of what He has for our lives as well. Do you expect the Lord to work in your life in a powerful way, just as the Lord did for His people in the past? This Torah centric understanding of God's word draws in the context of our seeking the Lord and His ways for our lives, recognizing our need for forgiveness and redemption, and the need for us to cleave unto the Father in heaven in His son Yeshua the Messiah. This is what all of Scripture is teaching us and why Teshuvah (Repentance) is so important for us as His people!