

## “Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey”

# The Vital Lesson from the Decision to Jump into the Turbulent Sea: the Amazing Tikun for the Indecisiveness Caused by the “Galus HaDa’as”

This coming Shabbos is known as “Shabbos Shirah.” This name derives from the fact that we read parshas Beshalach from the Torah containing the “shirah” — the song of praise uttered by Yisrael concerning the incredible miracle of “krias Yam Suf.” Hence, it is only fitting that we examine the relevance of “krias Yam Suf” to our daily lives today. We read in our parsha (Shemos 14, 27): **“ויט משה את ידו על הים וישב הים לפנות בקר לאיתנו”** — Moshe stretched out his hand over the sea, and toward morning the water went back to its strength.

We find the following elucidation in the Midrash (B.R. 5, 5): **“אמר רבי יוחנן, תנאין התנה הקב”ה עם הים שיהא נקרע לפני ישראל, הדא הוא דכתיב וישב הים לאיתנו - לתנאו שהתנה עמו”** — according to Rabbi Yochanan, the phrase “the water went back to its strength” indicates that HKB”H stipulated with the sea at the time of creation that it would split for Yisrael; so after it split, it continued to uphold the terms of this stipulation. [While the Hebrew word “לאיתנו” means “to its strength,” it resembles the word “לתנאו” meaning to its stipulation or condition.]

The Ohr HaChaim hakadosh finds this passuk puzzling. If the stipulation was that the sea would split for Yisrael, why does this passuk appear after the sea returns to its original state? It returned to its natural state of being — to the way it was created; seemingly, that did not require any stipulation. A wonderful solution to this puzzle is found in the Derashos Mahari Mintz:

**“הכוונה היא שהקב”ה התנה עם יסוד המים, שיסור למשמעת הצדיקים בכל עת וזמן שיגזרו עליו, על הים שיקרע למשה רבינו, על הירדן ליהושע (יהושע ג-טז), על נהר גינאי לרבי פינחס בן יאיר (חולין ז.), והקש על זה יאמר אם כן, וישב הים, למרוצתו הטבעית, אבל בתנאי להיות מן המוכן לתנאו הראשון, בכל עת שיצטרך.”**

HKB”H made a proviso with the element of water. It would heed the decrees of tzaddikim. Thus, we see that it split for Moshe Rabeinu at the Yam Suf; the Yarden split for Yehoshua; the Ginai River split for Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair. So, although the sea returned to its natural state, it only did so on the condition that it would be at the ready to fulfill the original stipulation whenever necessary.

Let us add an interesting tidbit based on our sages’ statement (Pesachim 118a): **“קשין מזונותיו של אדם כקריעת ים סוף”** — man’s sustenance is as difficult as “krias Yam Suf.” Similarly, we have learned (Soteh 2a): **“וקשין לזווגן כקריעת ים סוף”** — it is as difficult to match a man and a woman as it was to split the Yam Suf. Apparently, for a man to merit his proper mate and his sustenance, he must invoke the condition of “krias Yam Suf.” For this very reason, HKB”H stipulated that the sea return to its original state — obligated to fulfill the original proviso whenever Yisrael require sustenance or a proper match.

### Nachshon ben Aminadav Jumped into the Sea First

Let us expand on this concept and explain its practical significance for each and every one of us. It states in our parsha (Shemos 14, 15): **“ויאמר ה’ אל משה מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו, ואתה הרם את מטך ונטה את ירך על הים ובקעהו, ויבואו בני ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה”** — Hashem said to Moshe, “Why do you cry out to me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey. And you, lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea and split it; and Bnei Yisrael shall come into the midst of the sea on dry land.”

Rashi comments in the name of the Mechilta: **“אין להם אלא ליסע”** שאין הים עומד בפניהם, כדאי זכות אבותיהם והם, והאמונה שהאמינו כי **“ויצאו, לקרוע להם הים”** — they need merely travel; for the sea is not a barrier before them; the merit of their “avos,” their own merit, and the merit of their faith they had in Me . . . are sufficient to split the sea for them.

Regarding this matter, we have learned in the Gemara (Soteh 37a):

**“זה אומר אין אני יורד תחילה לים, וזה אומר אין אני יורד תחילה לים, קפץ נחשון בן עמינדב וירד לים תחילה... ועליו מפרש בקבלה (תהלים סט-ב) הושיעני אלקים כי באו מים עד נפש... באותה שעה היה משה מאריך בתפלה, אמר לו הקב”ה, ידידי טובעים בים ואתה מאריך בתפלה לפני.”**

אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם ומה בידי לעשות, אמר לו דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו, ואתה הרם את מטך ונטה את ירך וגו', לפיכך זכה יהודה לעשות ממשלה בישראל, שנאמר (תהלים קיד-ב) היתה יהודה לקדשו ישראל ממשלותיו, מה טעם היתה יהודה לקדשו וישראל ממשלותיו, משום דהים ראה וינוס."

None of the tribes wanted to be the first to go down into the sea. Finally, Nachshon ben Aminadav was the first to jump into the sea. . As the water rose up to his mouth he called out to Hashem (Thilim 69:2): "הושיעני אלקים כי באו מים עד נפש" — "Help me G-d because the waters have reached my sole". Moshe prayed at length. HKB"H said to him: "Those dear to me are drowning in the sea, and you linger before Me in prayer?" Moshe responded: "What am I to do?" HKB"H replied: "Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey. And you, lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea."

Now, we have learned from Rashi that Yisrael were worthy to have had the sea split before them in the merit of their faith in Hashem. If so, why did HKB"H find it necessary to add the additional test: "Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey" — that they should travel on and jump into the sea? Understood simply, HKB"H was testing their faith; were they willing to sacrifice their lives on His behalf? Jumping into the turbulent waters represented a truer test of their devotion than their previous willingness to depart Mitzrayim and go from slavery to freedom. Notwithstanding, we can suggest other explanations regarding the practical significance of Yisrael's momentous jump into the sea.

### The Klipah of Mitzrayim — Galus HaDa'as

Let us begin our journey with a precious introduction from our teacher, the Arizal, in Shaar HaKavanos. He teaches us that the galus in Mitzrayim was not only a physical, material exile but, in fact, was primarily a spiritual exile — "Galus HaDa'as" — the element of knowledge in the universe was in exile. As such, there was an opposition to the knowledge and recognition of kedushah. This is similarly explained in the Toldos Yaakov Yosef (end of Vayishlach) in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, zy"a: "שמעתי ממורי כי ענין גלות מצרים היה, שחסר להם הדעת שידעו להכריע שיש בורא אחד המחודש בטובו תמיד מעשה בראשית, עד שבא משה ועל ידי הנסים שעשה — נתפרסם בעולם שיש בורא אחד המחודש תמיד" — the knowledge and cognizance that there exists a single creator in the universe, who renews and revitalizes creation constantly, was absent. Then Moshe appeared and by means of the miracles he performed, the existence of a single creator became universal, public knowledge.

He proceeds to explain in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that although the "Da'as" came out of exile during the exodus from

Mitzrayim, the redemption of the "Da'as" was not complete. In truth, during each of the exiles — and particularly in our current, bitter exile — the element of "Da'as" remains in galus. Only with the future geulah will the "Da'as" come out of exile entirely. This is expressed by the following passuk (Yeshayah 11, 9): "לא ירעו ולא ישחיתו בכל" — they will neither injure nor destroy in all of My sacred mountain; for the earth will be as filled with knowledge of Hashem as water covering the sea bed. The passuk states explicitly that only in the Future to Come will the knowledge and awareness of Hashem fill the land.

Elsewhere (Pekudei), the Toldos explains that this is why Pharaoh's immediate and initial response to Moshe and Aharon was (Shemos 5, 2): "לא ידעתי את ה'" — I do not know Hashem. His response alludes to the fact that he represented the klipah of "Da'as" — opposing the knowledge of kedushah — reflected by the passuk (D.H.I 28, 9): "ידע את אלקי אביך ועבדהו" — know your G-d, your father and serve Him.

Thus, we can deduce that Yisrael's redemption from the galus in Mitzrayim involved acquisition of the "Da'as" of kedushah. For this reason, "Da'as" is frequently mentioned in connection with the exodus from Mitzrayim (Shemos 6, 7): "וידעתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם" — and you shall know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim. It is also written (ibid. 10, 2): "בןך את אשר התעללתי במצרים ואת אותותי אשר שמתים בם וידעתם כי בןך את אשר התעללתי במצרים ואת אותותי אשר שמתים בם וידעתם כי — and so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I have amused Myself with Mitzrayim and My signs that I placed among them, that you may know that I am Hashem.

So, we see that by means of the exodus of Yisrael from Mitzrayim — involving miracles and supernatural phenomena — the element of "Da'as" came out of exile. So much so that even the Egyptians recognized Hashem — as it is written (ibid. 7, 5): "וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'" — and Mitzrayim shall know that I am Hashem. In a similar vein, it states (ibid. 7, 17): "כה אמר ה' בזאת תדע כי אני ה'" — so says Hashem, "Through this shall you know that I am Hashem."

Now, it behooves us to achieve a better understanding of what "Galus HaDa'as" signifies. According to the Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Shemini), it is crucial to understand this concept. For the overall geulah depends on the personal geulah of each individual. He refers to the elucidation of the passuk (Tehillim 69, 19): "קרבה אל נפשי" — before one prays for the overall geulah, one must first pray for his own personal geulah. Therefore, let us endeavor to explain and understand the meaning of "Galus HaDa'as" as it applies to the individual person.

## Galus HaDa'as — Indecisiveness

Let us begin our explanation with an introduction from the immaculate teachings of the Bnei Yissaschar (Adar 3, 1). His words are based on an important principle from the author of the Tanya in Likutei Amarim (Chapter 3). HKB"H created man with ten aspects which are divided into two distinct parts — the intellect in the brain and the character traits in the heart. The intellect consists of the first three attributes (midos): **חכמה, בינה, דעת** — chochmah, binah, Da'as. On the other hand, the character traits consist of the lower seven attributes (midos): **חסד, גבורה, תפארת, נצח, הוד, יסוד, מלכות** — chesed, gevurah, tiferes, netzach, hod, yesod, malchus.

It is man's task to insure that the three intellectual aspects in the brain control the seven character traits of the heart — not allowing them to satisfy his heart's desires. All the more so that they should not be used, chas v'shalom, to commit "aveirot." Rather, they should be employed solely in the service of Hashem: chesed — to love Hashem, gevurah — to fear and revere Hashem, tiferes — pride in Hashem, netzach — overcoming the yetzer hara, hod — to thank Hashem, yesod — to connect with Hashem, malchus — to allow Hashem to reign over one's 248 limbs and 365 sinews.

To help us understand how one insures that the intellect controls the character traits, the author of the Tanya characterizes the nature of the three aspects of the intellect known as: chochmah, binah, Da'as. They represent three stages in the development of man's thought process — until he arrives at a final decision to perform a particular act. Based on this decision, he influences the seven midos in the heart to act upon the thought and transform it into a reality. We can understand the process as follows:

**Chochmah:** The initial thought or idea — before a person even considers how to accomplish the particular feat. For example, when a person considers building a house, this initial conscious idea is part of chochmah. It is termed chochmah, because the Hebrew word **חכמה** can be broken down and rearranged to form the words **חכמ"ה** — a thing's potential. For, this initial thought still lacks substance-- so long as the person has not explored the matter further and considered how to execute his plan.

**Binah:** the second step in the process of ideation: inferring one thing from another. In other words, after considering the initial thought of building a house, one begins to plan the actual construction — how many rooms and all the other necessary details. So long as the person is still weighing the options and possibilities concerning these details and he has not arrived at a final decision, he will not begin to build the house; this is the aspect of binah.

**Da'as:** This is the final absolute decision to build the house based on the results of his deliberations during the chochmah and binah phases. This phase is referred to as Da'as; the term is derived from the passuk (Bereishis 4, 1): **"והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו"** — and the man knew Chava, his wife. This knowledge signifies union and connection. To execute a plan and make it a reality, a person must commit fully to his decision. For, if he is not committed to his plan and his decisions, he will be overwhelmed with doubts as to how to proceed. So, we see that Da'as is not a new or original thought. It is the culmination of the two previous phases. It is the decision arrived at after contemplating and weighing the alternatives on the scales of chochmah and binah. It is significant, because it allows that which exists in theory to become a reality.

Based on these concepts, the Bnei Yissaschar addresses the subject of "Galus HaDa'as." Certainly, Yisrael comprehended on the levels of chochmah and binah that Hashem is the one and only G-d. Nevertheless, they were incapable of committing fully to this belief and establishing it as a reality; it didn't achieve the status of Da'as of kedushah. Consequently, they sank to the forty-ninth level of tumah and were even guilty of idolatry — avodah zarah.

How nicely this helps us understand the following statement in the Gemara (Nedarim 41a): **"אמר אביי, נקטינן אין עני אלא בדעה. במערבא אמרי, דדא ביה כולא ביה, דלא דא ביה מה ביה, דא קני מה חסר, דא לא קני מה קני"** — one who possesses knowledge, possesses everything; one who lacks knowledge, has nothing. One who acquires knowledge does not want for anything; one who has not acquired knowledge, what has he acquired? In other words, a person who lacks the knowledge to decide what the proper course of action to take is, is incapable of accomplishing anything. For, he will always be overcome with doubts.

### **"It is revealed and known to You that it is our will to perform Your will"**

Let us now elaborate on this subject on a practical level and in terms of actual performance. We have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 17a): **"רבי אלכסנדר בתר דמצלי, אמר הכי, רבון העולמים גלוי וידוע לפניך שרצוננו לעשות רצונך, ומי מעכב, שאור שבעיסה ושעבוד מלכות, יהי רצון לפניך שתצילנו מידם, ונשוב לעשות חוקי רצונך בלבב שלם"** — after Rabbi Alexandri would finish davening Shemoneh Esreh, he would say: "Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known to you that it is our will to perform your will. Who prevents us from doing so? The yeast in the dough and our subjugation to foreign regimes. May it be Your will that You save us from their hands and that we return to perform the statutes of Your will wholeheartedly."

This teaches us that it is every Jew's internal desire to fulfill Hashem's will. Yet, when he proceeds to make this internal desire a reality, the yetzer hara — referred to as the "yeast in the dough" — intervenes.

Occasionally, this intervention manifests itself in the form of foreign nations, under whose rule we find ourselves in exile. They exert all of their power to prevent a Jew from making his internal will a reality.

Apropos to this topic, how sweet are the words of the Yitav Lev (Mishpatim)! He addresses the prayer that was instituted to be recited after saying Tehillim: **“ועוברות של עמך בית ישראל תצילן שלא תפלנה ולדותיהן”** — spare the pregnant women of your people Yisrael that they should not miscarry their fetuses. He explains that the thought of a Jew to serve Hashem is analogous to a pregnancy. The Jew requires tremendous assistance from above to foil the yetzer hara in its efforts to prevent the desire from coming to fruition and becoming an actuality.

This is also inherent in Rashi’s comment (beginning of Noach): **“שעיקר תולדותיהם של צדיקים מעשים טובים”** — tzaddikim’s main offspring are their good deeds. Not only do tzaddikim have good intentions to serve Hashem — analogous to a pregnancy — but they also merit carrying out their good intentions — analogous to a successful live-birth. Thus, the main offspring of tzaddikim are their good deeds specifically. Not only do they have good intentions, but they bear fruit and become a reality.

Therefore, we pray: “may the pregnant women of Your people Yisrael” — all the good intentions of Yisrael to serve Hashem, analogous to pregnancies — “may they be spared from miscarrying their fetuses” — do not allow the yetzer hara to prevent these good intentions from becoming reality — analogous to a miscarriage where the conceptus does not yield a live-birth.

This ties in beautifully with what we learned above from the Baal Shem Tov — that all of the exiles are characterized by “Galus HaDa’as.” In other words, since the “Da’as” is in exile, a person is unable to transform his plans and desires into reality. Hence, the Gemara states: “Who prevents us from doing so? the yeast in the dough and our subjugation to foreign regimes.” Just like “Galus HaDa’as,” they prevent us from uniting our desire with action.

Thus, we can begin to comprehend how “Galus HaDa’as” manifests itself in every generation — as uncertainty and indecisiveness in the service of Hashem. This is the modus operandi of the yetzer. It introduces doubt and uncertainty into a person’s heart and mind: Why are you learning this subject instead of another subject? Why are you serving Hashem in this way and not in that way? In this manner, it confuses man to the point that he is uncertain as to how to act and proceed. For this very reason, our blessed sages instituted a special blessing in Shemoneh Esreh: **“אתה חונן לאדם דעת... ברוך אתה ה' חונן”** — **“הדעת”** — You graciously endow man with knowledge . . . Blessed art thou Hashem, Who graciously gives man knowledge.

## The Hearts Are Influenced by Actions

Following this exalted path, let us rise to the occasion and explain HKB”H’s statement to Moshe: **“מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל”** — **“ויסעו”** — Why do you cry out to me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey — into the sea. First, however, let us examine the Scriptures describing Yisrael’s state of mind while they were gathered near the sea (Shemos 14, 10):

**“ופרעה הקריב וישאו בני ישראל את עיניהם והנה מצרים נוסע אחריהם ויראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה', ויאמרו אל משה המבלי אין קברים במצרים לקחתנו למות במדבר, מה זאת עשית לנו להוציאנו ממצרים, הלא זה הדבר אשר דברנו אליך במצרים לאמר, חדל ממנו ונעבדה את מצרים, כי טוב לנו עבוד את מצרים ממותנו במדבר, ויאמר משה אל העם אל תיראו התיצבו וראו את ישועת ה' אשר יעשה לכם היום, כי אשר ראיתם את מצרים היום לא תוסיפו לראותם עוד עד עולם.”**

And Pharaoh drew near; Bnei Yisrael raised their eyes and behold! — Mitzrayim was journeying after them, and they were very frightened; Bnei Yisrael cried out to Hashem. They said to Moshe, “Is it because there are not enough graves in Mitzrayim, you took us to die in the wilderness? What is this that you have done to us — taking us out of Mitzrayim? Is this not what we told you in Mitzrayim, saying, ‘Let us be and we will serve Mitzrayim?’ It is preferable for us to serve Mitzrayim than to die in the wilderness.” Moshe said to the people, “Do not be afraid! Stand fast and see the salvation of Hashem that He will perform on your behalf, today; for as you have seen Mitzrayim today, you shall not see them ever again.”

There appears to be a blatant discrepancy regarding Yisrael’s level of faith as described in these pesukim. At first it states: “Bnei Yisrael cried out to Hashem” — indicating that they had so much faith in Hashem that they cried out to Him. Yet, immediately afterwards, it records that they said to Moshe: “Is it because there are not enough graves in Mitzrayim?” Even worse, they argued: “Is this not what we told you in Mitzrayim, saying, ‘Let us be and we will serve Mitzrayim?’ It is preferable for us to serve Mitzrayim than to die in the wilderness.” These remarks seem incongruous with a high level of emunah in Hashem.

Based on what we have learned above, we can provide an explanation. Prior to the phenomenal miracle of “krias Yam Suf” — where the Egyptians were drowned in the sea — Yisrael had not yet completely left the “Galus HaDa’as” of Mitzrayim. Therefore, although they believed in Hashem; they were still not completely committed to this belief — beyond a shadow of a doubt. So, on the one hand, they cried out to Hashem for salvation. On the other hand, they were overcome by the “Galus HaDa’as”--wondering if they were not better off remaining in servitude in Mitzrayim than dying in the wilderness.

Therefore, in order to complete the exodus from the “Galus HaDa’as” of Mitzrayim, HKB”H said to Moshe: **“מה תצעק אלי דבר”** --Why do you cry out to me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey. This can be explained based on the well-known words of the Chinuch (Mitzvah 16); he explains why HKB”H commanded us to perform so many mitzvot commemorating the exodus from Mitzrayim — “zecher l’yetziat Mitzrayim”:

**“דע כי האדם נפעל כפי פעולותיו, ולבו וכל מחשבותיו תמיד אחר מעשיו שהוא עושה בהם אם טוב ואם רע, ואפילו רשע גמור בלבבו וכל יצר מחשבות לבו רק רע כל היום, אם יערה רוחו וישים השתדלותו ועסקו בהתמדה בתורה ובמצוות אפילו שלא לשם שמים, מיד יטה אל הטוב ומתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה ובכח מעשיו ימית היצר הרע, כי אחרי הפעולות נמשכים הלבבות.**

**ואפילו אם יהיה אדם צדיק גמור ולבבו ישר ותמים, חפץ בתורה ובמצוות, אם אולי יעסוק תמיד בדברים של דופי, כאילו תאמר דרך משל שהכריחו המלך ומינהו באומנות רעה, באמת אם כל עסקו תמיד כל היום באותו אומנות, ישוב לזמן מן הזמנים מצדקת לבו להיות רשע גמור, כי ידוע הדבר ואמת שכל אדם נפעל כפי פעולותיו.”**

Man is influenced by his actions. Therefore, we have the well-known concept that if a person performs a good deed on a continual basis, even for the wrong reasons, he will eventually come to perform the deed for the proper reasons — “mi’toch she’lo l’shema ba l’shema.” This holds true for even a truly evil person. Unfortunately, the converse is also true. If a truly righteous, Torah-observant person performs improper or undesirable acts on a continual basis, he will eventually abandon the path of righteousness and become an evil person.

### Go to the Opposite Extreme

Additionally, let us present the famous words of the Rambam (Hilchos Deios 1, 4) instructing us to always choose the middle road — not to deviate to either extreme: **“הדרך הישרה היא מדה בינונית שבכל דעה ודעה”** — **“מכל הדעות שיש לו לאדם”** — this applies to all aspects of life. Furthermore, the Rambam adds (ibid. 2, 2) that if a person becomes corrupted with regard to any particular character-trait, he should remedy that character-trait by adopting the opposite extreme. Once the flaw has been corrected, he should then return to the middle path. Here are his sacred words:

**“וכיצד היא רפואתם, מי שהוא בעל חימה אומרים לו להנהיג עצמו, שאם הוכה וקולל לא ירגיש כלל, וילך בדרך זו זמן מרובה עד שיתעקר החמה מלבו, ואם היה גבה לב ינהיג עצמו בבזיון הרבה, וישב למטה מן הכל, וילבש בלויי סחבות המבזות את לובשיהם וכיוצא בדברים אלו, עד שיעקור גובה הלב ממנו, ויחזור לדרך האמצעית שהוא דרך הטובה, ולכשיחזור לדרך האמצעית ילך בה כל ימיו.”**

For example, if a person is haughty and arrogant, he should do things that are degrading and humiliating. He should sit in the least prestigious place; he should wear clothes that are degrading and unbecoming. He should continue to do these things until the arrogance has been completely eradicated. Then he should return to a middle of the road form of behavior — which is always the best; he should continue on that path for the rest of his days.

We can now appreciate why HKB”H commanded Moshe: “Why do you cry out to me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey.” Since their “Da’as” was in exile, Yisrael could not transform their good intentions into reality. Therefore, HKB”H told Moshe to command them to jump into the turbulent waters of the sea — performing an act of self-sacrifice. Such an act required decisiveness and the pure, simple faith that Hashem would split the sea to save them. Since people’s hearts are influenced by their actions, this would lead them to begin serving Hashem decisively and with commitment — demonstrating the Da’as of kedushah.

How thrilling to find an earlier source that we can rely on for support! The great gaon, the Haflah (Kesubos 5a) explains the passuk (Mishlei 3:20): **“בדעתו תהומות נבקעו”** - “With His knowledge the depths were split” that the passuk is speaking about when Hashem split the sea, and that He accomplished this through his attribute of “daas”. Thus we see clearly that the miracle of the splitting the sea was done through “daas”. This fits perfectly with our explanation that the miracle of krias Yam-Suf was able to be performed, because they jumped into the sea with the determination and “daas” in order to fulfill the wishes of Hashem.

This also illuminates for us our blessed sages’ elucidation of the passuk: **“וישב הים לפנות בוקר לאיתנו - לתנאו שהתנה עמו”** — toward morning, the sea returned to its strength — to the condition that had been stipulated with it. They were teaching us a lesson relevant to each and every generation. Suppose a Jew decides to serve Hashem but is thwarted by the yetzer hara — preventing him from carrying out his good intentions. Even if at first glance it appears as if the task is too formidable — as if he is standing before the turbulent waters of the sea — he should not be frightened or discouraged. He should follow in the footsteps of shevet Yehudah; he should jump decisively, without hesitation, into the turbulent sea. If he does so, he is assured that the sea will abide by the original stipulation and part for Yisrael whenever necessary. Nothing will prevent them from carrying out their good intentions and transforming their will into reality.

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