

## The Classification of “Krias Yam Suf” Rather than “Bekias Yam Suf” Alluding to the Second Splitting for the Sake of Dasan and Aviram

In this week's parsha, parshas Beshalach, we learn of the incredible miracle known as “Krias Yam Suf” — a miracle which affects us to this very day. In the Gemara (Pesachim 118a), Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah states: **“קשין מזונותיו של אדם כקריעת ים סוף, דכתיב (תהלים קלו-כה) גותן לחם לכל בשר, וסמיך ליה (תהלים קלו-יג) לגזור ים סוף — a person's daily sustenance is as hard to come by as “Krias Yam Suf,” as it is written (Tehillim 136 25): “He provides bread for all creatures,” and nearby it is written (ibid. 13): “to He Who cut Yam Suf into strips.”** We also find a connection between “Krias Yam Suf” and the finding of a mate in the following Gemara (Sotah 2a): **“וקשין לזווגן כקריעת ים סוף” — it is as difficult to pair them together as “Krias Yam Suf.”** According to the Talmud, if a person wants to merit a suitable life-partner or a respectable livelihood, he must determine whether or not his deeds would entitle him to “Krias Yam Suf.”

Hence, it is fitting at this time, to entertain a perplexing question related to the subject of “Krias Yam Suf.” In the entire Torah, we do not find the terminology “kriah” related to Yam Suf; rather we find the term “bekiah,” as evident in the following passuk (Shemos 14, 16): **“ונטתה את ידך על הים ובקעתו” — and stretch your arm out over the sea and split it (u'veka'eihu).** Similarly, it states (ibid. 14, 21): **“ויבקעו המים” — and the waters split (va'yibak'oo).** In both instances, we find a form of the term “bekiah” employed and not “kriah.” So, why did our blessed sages choose to employ the term “kriah” in relation to the phenomenal splitting of the sea — as evidenced by the two quotes from the Talmud above -- rather than the term “bekiah”?

In the commentary Ramasayim Tzofim on the Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Zuta (16, 10), he writes that this question was posed to the great author of the Chiddushei HaRim, zy”a: **“אחר השלחן בבתי”** — גוואי [בביתו] שאלתי אותו, למה בדברי חכמינו ז”ל נקראת קריעת ים סוף, ובתורה — לא מצינו כי אם לשון בקיעה, והשיב שיש דברים הרבה בזה ואינו יכול לומר — he responded that there are many explanations, but that he is

not at liberty to reveal them. In addition, he writes later on: **“ושאלתי אותו למה בתורה נקרא בקיעה, והשיב לי כי אינו יכול לומר כי מסתימין — and I asked him why the Torah employs the term “bekiah”; he answered me that he is not permitted to say, because they have shut his mouth.**

### Why the Redundancy in the Passuk: “And Bnei Yisrael walked on dry land through the sea”?

Like a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I was struck by a wonderful solution to this perplexing question. I would like to explain why our blessed sages refer to the phenomenon as “Krias Yam Suf,” whereas the Torah employs the term “bekiah” — as in the passuk: **“ויבקעו המים”**. We should note that the Torah divides the miraculous feat of “Krias Yam Suf” into two phases. In phase one, Moshe Rabeinu splits the sea and transforms it into dry land (Shemos 14, 21): **“ויט משה את ידו על הים ויולך ה' את הים ברוח קדים עזה כל הלילה וישם את הים לחרבה ויבקעו המים, ויבואו בני ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם” — Moshe stretched out his hand over the sea, and Hashem moved the sea with a strong east wind throughout the entire night, and he turned the sea to damp land and the waters split. And Bnei Yisrael entered the sea on dry land; and the water formed a wall for them on their right and on their left.**

Immediately afterwards, the second phase of the miracle arrives. Moshe causes the waters of Yam Suf to return to their original state to devour and drown the Egyptians (ibid. 23):

**“וירדפו מצרים ויבואו אחריהם כל סוס פרעה רכבו ופרשיו אל תוך הים... ויאמר ה' אל משה נטה את ידך על הים וישבו המים על מצרים על רכבו ועל פרשיו, ויט משה את ידו על הים וישב הים לפנות בוקר לאיתנו... וישבו המים ויכסו את הרכב ואת הפרשים לכל חיל פרעה הבאים אחריהם בים לא נשאר בהם עד אחד, ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם.”**

**Mitzrayim pursued and came after them — every one of Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen — into the midst of the sea . . . Hashem said to Moshe, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, and the waters will go back over Mitzrayim, over its chariots and over its horsemen." Moshe stretched out his hand over the sea, and toward morning the water went back to its power . . . The waters came back and they covered the chariots and the horsemen of the entire army of Pharaoh, who were coming behind them in the sea — there remained not a one of them. And Bnei Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea; the water formed a wall for them, on their right and on their left.**

We must endeavor to explain why the Torah repeats itself. We were already informed in the first phase of the miracle: **"ויבואו בני ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם"**. So, why is this fact repeated for us in the description of phase two of the miracle: **"ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים והמים להם חומה מימינם ומשמאלם"**?

Additionally, we must explain the subtle nuances and differences found in the pesukim. In the earlier passuk, it states: **"בתוך הים ביבשה"**. First it mentions: **"in the midst of the sea"** and then **"on dry land."** Whereas in the later passuk, it states: **"ביבשה"**. First, it mentions **"on dry land,"** and afterwards, it states **"in the midst of the sea."** Secondly, earlier it states: **"המים להם חומה"**. The word **"חומה"**, meaning "wall," is spelled out completely, including the letter **"vav."** Whereas, when this phenomenon is repeated, it states: **"והמים להם חמה"**. Here, the letter **"vav"** is omitted. This is elucidated by the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 238) as indicating that the sea was full of anger towards them — **חמה**. That being the case, why does the word **"חומה"** appear in its full form, including the **"vav,"** in the earlier passuk, suggesting that the sea was not angry at them?

### The Sea Was Full of Anger toward Those Who Waited for It to Split

Let us begin our inquiry with the enlightening explanation of the Gra of Vilna, zy"a, found in Kol Eliyahu and also in the commentary of the Kli Yakar. They explain that at the time of "Krias Yam Suf," Yisrael was comprised of two distinct groups. The first group consisted of tzaddikim, trusting in Hashem, the likes of Nachshon ben Aminadav and the entire tribe of Yehudah. The Gemara (Sotah 37a) attests to the fact that they leaped into the sea and when the waters reached a life-threatening level, they screamed out to Hashem (Tehillim 69, 2): **"הושיעני אלקים כי באו מים עד נפש — save me, O G-d, for the waters have reached the soul. In**

the merit of that act of faith, the sea split for them and transformed into dry land. In contrast, however, there existed a second group that did not leap into the sea; rather, they waited for the sea to split and become dry land; only then did they enter its midst.

Now, regarding the passuk (Shemos 14, 15): **"ויאמר ה' אל משה — Hashem said to Moshe, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them journey!'"** — Rashi comments in the name of the Midrash: **"כדאי זכות אבותיהם והם, והאמונה שהאמינו כי יוצאו, לקרוע להם הים"** — **the merit of their forefathers, and of themselves, and the faith they had in Me when they went out are sufficient to split the sea for them.** This teaches us that the sea split for Yisrael in the merit of their **"emunah."** Therefore, those tzaddikim who believed in Hashem and his loyal servant Moshe, and jumped into the raging waters without fear for their lives, deserved to have the sea split on their behalf.

Now, we can appreciate why the narrative seemingly repeats itself and mentions twice that Bnei Yisrael went into the midst of the sea on dry land. The first time refers to the tzaddikim, who jumped into the sea, and only afterwards did the waters split and transform into dry land. Therefore, the passuk accurately states: **"Bnei Yisrael entered the midst of the sea on dry land."** First, they jumped into the sea -- **"בתוך הים"** — and only afterwards did they walk on dry land -- **"ביבשה"**. Regarding this first group, the Torah goes on to say: **"And the water formed a חומה (wall) for them on their right and on their left"** — where the word **"חומה"** appears in its complete form with a **"vav."** For, the sea was not enraged by these tzaddikim; on the contrary, it gladly formed a protective wall around them.

The latter passuk, however, refers to those who did not possess that level of **"emunah"** in Hashem. Instead, they waited for the sea to split first and become dry land; only then did they enter on dry land what had previously been the sea. Therefore, the narrative reflects this fact by changing the order as follows: **"And Bnei Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea"** — they only entered the sea when it had already transformed into dry land -- **"ביבשה בתוך הים"**. Seeing as they lacked the **"emunah"** of the previous group of tzaddikim, a subtle but significant change appears in the passuk: **"The water formed a חמה (wall) for them, on their right and on their left."** Here the word **"חמה"** appears without a **"vav,"** indicating that the sea split for them begrudgingly and was enraged by their behavior. They lacked **"emunah"** and did not deserve to have the sea split on their behalf. It only split for them in the merit of the tzaddikim.

## The Sea Split a Second Time Specifically for Dasan and Aviram

As it is the nature of Torah to be elucidated from seventy various aspects, I would like to offer up on the Royal table a wonderful reconciliation regarding the redundancy and changes noted in the pesukim under discussion. I will refer to the brilliant words of my esteemed uncle, Rabbi Avraham Aharon Friedman, z"l (who passed away during the years of upheaval on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Teves 5703, hy"d), in his sefer Beis Avraham Beis Aharon on the Pesach Haggadah, appearing in the commentary Ruach Chadashah. Here is the gist of what he writes.

In the Machzor Beis Yisrael for Pesach, he presents a fascinating idea in the name of the Midrash. Dasan and Aviram originally remained in Mitzrayim with Pharaoh; they were not with Bnei Yisrael when the sea split for them. Afterwards, however, when they witnessed the miracle of "Krias Yam Suf" and how the waters fell back upon the Egyptians, they regretted their decision and opted to rejoin Yisrael. Then, amazingly, the sea miraculously split a second time specifically for them.

Support for this notion can be found from the following passuk in this week's parsha (Shemos 14, 3): **וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל — and Pharaoh will say to Bnei Yisrael, "They are confined in the land; they are closed in by the midbar."** But how will Pharaoh be able to say such a thing to Bnei Yisrael after they have already left his realm and his presence? Rashi solves this difficulty as follows: **לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** — rather than speaking to Bnei Yisrael, he will be addressing his ministers and servants with regards to Bnei Yisrael and telling them that Bnei Yisrael are confined and trapped. Targum Yonatan, however, provides a different interpretation: **וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה לְדָתָן וְלָאֶבְיָתָר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּמִשְׁתַּיִּירִין — במצרים** — the passuk is informing us that Pharaoh will address members of Bnei Yisrael that will remain behind in Mitzrayim, namely Dasan and Aviram.

This interpretation agrees very nicely with the Midrash — that Dasan and Aviram were not part of Yisrael at the time of "Krias Yam Suf." Instead, afterwards, when they changed their minds, the sea split especially for them. A similar explanation is found in the Be'er Mayim Chaim on the passuk (Shemos 14, 29): **וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ לְמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר קַח אֶת אֲבִירֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלֹכִים בִּיבְשָׁה וְגו' מִיֵּעוֹט רַבִּים שְׁנַיִם, לֹמֵר כִּי עַל שְׁנַיִם מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל לִבְדּוֹ נִקְרַע הַיָּם, וְהֵם דָּתָן וְאַבְיָתָר שְׁאֵמְרוּ חֲזוֹל שְׁנִשְׁאָרוֹ וְנִקְרַע הַיָּם עֲלֵיהֶם לִבְדּוֹ** — the minimum plurality is two; so when the passuk states that Bnei Yisrael entered on dry land, it is referring to a mere two members

for whom the sea split, and they are none other than Dasan and Aviram — with regards to whom Chazal stated that they remained behind and the sea subsequently split for them alone. This viewpoint is also expressed in the Chiddushei Maharil Diskin (Shemos): **וְשִׁמְעָתִי בְּשֵׁם אֲדָמוֹר ז"ל שֶׁאֵיתָא בְּמִדְרַשׁ שֶׁהֵימָּן נִקְרַע לִפְנֵיהֶם**.

## The Sea Was Enraged by Dasan and Aviram

This now illuminates for us the precise language employed by the two pesukim. The earlier passuk is speaking of the first time the Yam Suf split on behalf of the entire nation of Yisrael. With regards to them it is written: **וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בִּיבְשָׁה — and Bnei Yisrael shall come into the midst of the sea on dry land.** For, in fact, Nachshon ben Aminadav and the tribe of Yehudah leaped into the sea ahead of everyone else; afterwards, following their lead, all of Yisrael joined them, jumping first into the midst of the sea -- **"בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם"** — and only afterwards did they walk on dry land -- **"בִּיבְשָׁה"**. Regarding them the Torah states: **"The water formed a "חומה" for them, to their right and to their left."** Here the word **"חומה"** appears in its full form, with a **"vav,"** because the sea was not angry with them; rather it formed a protective wall around them, to their right and to their left.

Subsequently, however, the Torah recounts how the Egyptians pursued Yisrael into the midst of the sea that had turned into dry land. At that point, HKB"H instructed Moshe to stretch his arm out over the sea and cause the waters to return and envelop the Egyptians: **וַיָּשׁוּבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת הַפָּרָשִׁים — לְכָל חֵיל פַּרְעֹה הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּיּוֹם לֹא נִשְׁאָר בָּהֶם עֹד אֶחָד, וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בִּיבְשָׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם וְהַמַּיִם לָהֶם חֹמָה מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׁמָאלָם — The waters came back and they covered the chariots and the horsemen of the entire army of Pharaoh, who were coming behind them in the sea — there remained not a one of them. And Bnei Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea; the water formed a wall for them, on their right and on their left.** It is now obvious that this latter passuk: **"And Bnei Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea"** — is referring to after the waters already returned to envelop the Egyptians.

Based on what we have learned, the picture becomes quite clear. The second passuk is talking about Dasan and Aviram, whom the Torah refers to as Bnei Yisrael in the passuk: **וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ לְמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר קַח אֶת אֲבִירֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלֹכִים בִּיבְשָׁה**. As the Targum Yonatan explains, this passuk refers to Dasan and Aviram, who remained behind in Mitzrayim. For them the sea split a second time after it had returned to its original state to drown the Egyptians.



This then is the interpretation of the pesukim: **“The waters came back and they covered the chariots and the horsemen of the entire army of Pharaoh, who were coming behind them in the sea — there remained not a one of them.”** Nevertheless, the sea split a second time for the sake of Dasan and Aviram. **“And Bnei Yisrael”** — namely Dasan and Aviram, who had remained in Mitzrayim — **“went on dry land in the midst of the sea.”** Here the Torah specifies that they went: **“ביבשה בתוך הים”** -- **on dry land in the midst of the sea.** For, they entered the sea after it had already turned into dry land once for Yisrael, at the first splitting of the Yam Suf, and subsequently it became a sea once again. So, regarding Dasan and Aviram, it is written: **“והמים להם חמה מימינם ומשמאלם”** — where the word חמה appears without a “vav.” This indicates that the sea became enraged — full of חמה — due to the fact that it had to split a second time for their sake. This is the gist of his beautiful explanation.

### **Toward Morning the Sea Returned “לאיתנו” — to the Condition Agreed upon with HKB”H**

I, the son of his brother, wish to add to the words of my uncle, z”l. According to his magnificent interpretation, we can reconcile a difficulty in the narrative addressed by the commentaries. When the sea returns to envelop the Egyptians, it states (Shemos 14, 27): **“וַיֹּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדוֹ עַל הַיָּם וַיֵּשֶׁב הַיָּם לִפְנוֹת בֹּקֶר לַאֲתָנּוּ”** -- **Moshe stretched out his hand over the sea, and toward morning the water went back to its power.** This is elucidated by the Midrash as follows (B.R. 5, 5): **“אמר רבי יוחנן, תנאין התנה הקב”ה עם הים שיהא נקרע לפני ישראל, הלא הוא דכתיב (שמות יד-כז) וישב הים לאיתנו, לתנאו שהתנה עמו”** — **Rabbi Yochanan said: HKB”H imposed conditions upon the sea — that it split before Yisrael — as it is written: “The sea went back to its power (לאיתנו),” to its condition (לתנאו) that had been agreed upon.**

All of the commentaries led by the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh find this perplexing. HKB”H stipulated that the sea split for the sake of Yisrael. Why then is this stipulation alluded to when the sea returned to its original state toward morning to cover up the Egyptians and not when the passuk describes the actual miracle of “Krias Yam Suf”? It appears that we can resolve this difficulty, however, according to my uncle’s explanation. For, the initial splitting of the sea for the sake of Yisrael did not require the stipulation HKB”H imposed upon the sea. After all, the purpose of taking Yisrael out of Mitzrayim was so that they would receive the Torah on Har Sinai.

It is a well-known fact in every Beis-Midrash that had Yisrael not accepted the Torah, the world would have returned to a state of chaos and nothingness — “tohu va’vohu.” We learn this from the following elucidation in the Gemara (A.Z. 3a): **“מאי דכתיב (בראשית א-לא) ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי, מלמד שהתנה הקב”ה עם מעשה בראשית ואמר, אם ישראל מקבלין את תורתי מוטב, ואם לאו אני אחזיר אתכם לתוהו ובוהו”** — **what is the significance of that which is written: “There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day”?** This teaches us that HKB”H made a stipulation with all of creation and said, **“If Yisrael accept My Torah then all is well; if not, I will return you to chaos and nothingness.”** Hence, the sea itself wanted to split for the sake of Yisrael, so that they would receive the Torah. After all, if they were unable to leave Mitzrayim and would not receive the Torah, all of creation, including the sea, would return to a state of nothingness. Clearly, every creation desires its continued existence rather than its elimination.

Yet, when the sea was supposed to split a second time for the wicked Dasan and Aviram, it refused. Nevertheless, it was obligated to honor and uphold the condition that HKB”H had imposed upon it — to split for the sake of Yisrael as long as the need existed. Therefore, at the time of the first splitting, the stipulation HKB”H made with the sea is not mentioned; since there was no need for it. With the second splitting, however, for the sake of Dasan and Aviram, it was necessary to impose the condition.

This then is the message conveyed by the passuk: **“וישב הים”** “לתנאו” and the elucidation in the Midrash **“לתנאו”**. Even after the waters had returned to envelop the Egyptians, it still had to uphold the condition imposed upon it by HKB”H — to split a second time for the sake of Dasan and Aviram. Hence, the Torah proceeds to clarify why the condition was necessary at this time: **“ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים”** — because this time it was splitting for Dasan and Aviram solely in the merit of the condition HKB”H imposed upon the sea at the time of creation.

### **Dasan and Aviram Were Jewish Guards Who Received Beatings on Behalf of Yisrael**

Now, it behooves us to address the perplexing matter with which the commentaries struggle. We know that Dasan and Aviram were already wicked while in Mitzrayim, as is evident from that which is written regarding Moshe (Shemos 2, 13): **“וַיֵּצֵא בְיוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וְהַנָּה שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים עֹבְרִים נִיּוּצִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְרֹשַׁע לָמָּה תִּכָּה רַעֲךָ”** — **he went out on the second day and, behold, two Jews were quarreling with one another. He said to the wicked**

one, “Why would you strike your fellow?” Rashi comments: These two Jews were none other than Dasan and Aviram, the same two who left over some of the “mahn.” Moshe inquires: “Why would you strike your fellow Jew?” Even though he hadn’t actually struck him, he is called a “rasha,” because he raised his arm to strike him. The passuk employs the word רעך to indicate that the fellow Jew was also wicked, just like the first one.

So, we must endeavor to explain why these two wicked men were allowed to live and to leave Mitzrayim. Why didn’t they perish during the three days of darkness along with all of the other “reshaim”? The matter is even more inexplicable in light of the Midrash which teaches us that the sea split a second time especially for Dasan and Aviram. How did these two wicked men merit such a feat?

A wonderful explanation, which is worth publicizing, appears in Chiddushei Maharil Diskin (Beshalach), authored by the great Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, ztz”l. He addresses the following passuk (ibid. 5, 14):

“ויוכו שוטרי בני ישראל אשר שמו עליהם נוגשי פרעה לאמר, מדוע לא כיליתם חקכם ללבוך כתמול שלשום גם תמול גם היום — the guards of the Bnei Yisrael, who had been appointed by Pharaoh’s taskmasters, were beaten, saying, “Why did you not complete your quota to make bricks, the same as yesterday and the day before, even yesterday and even today?” Later on, it is written (ibid. 19):

“ויראו שוטרי בני ישראל אותם ברע לאמר לא תגרעו מלכניכם דבר יום ביומו, ויפגעו את משה ואת אהרן נצבים לקראתם בצאתם מאת פרעה, ויאמרו אליהם ירא ה' עליכם וישפטו אשר הבאשתם את ריחנו בעיני פרעה ובעיני עבדיו לתת חרב בידם להרגנו.”

The guards of the Bnei Yisrael saw them in a bad state when they said, “Do not reduce your bricks, each day’s quota on that day.” They encountered Moshe and Aharon opposite them, as they left Pharaoh’s presence. They said to them, “May Hashem look upon you and judge, for you have made our very scent abhorrent in the eyes of Pharaoh and the eyes of his servants, to place a sword in their hands to murder us!” Here Rashi comments: “Our Rabbis have expounded that every use of the terms נצבים or נצים is a reference to Dasan and Aviram, for it says of them explicitly (Bamidbar 16, 27): “יצאו נצבים.”

We learn from these pesukim that Dasan and Aviram were Jewish guards who received beatings on behalf of Yisrael. The Midrash explains (S.R. 5, 21): “אשר הבאשתם את ריחנו, רבי יוחנן — it states “for you

have made our very scent abhorrent”; Rabbi Yochanan said: From the beatings they received, they developed an abhorrent smell. Thus, Rabbi Yehoshua Leib explains that it is precisely in this merit — that as Jewish guards they received beatings on behalf of Yisrael — that Dasan and Aviram did not perish during the three days of darkness.

## A Person’s Sustenance Is as Difficult as “Krias Yam Suf”

It appears that we can add a spicy tidbit to his incredible explanation regarding the fact that HKB”H arranged for the sea to split a second time especially for Dasan and Aviram. We have learned that every person’s success in life depends on “Krias Yam Suf,” in keeping with the statements: “קשין מזונותיו — של אדם בקריעת ים סוף” — a person’s sustenance is as difficult to come by as “Krias Yam Suf” — and “וקשין לזווג בקריעת ים סוף” — it is as difficult to pair them as “Krias Yam Suf.” So, what should a person do when it comes time for him to find his appropriate mate or to provide sustenance for his household — both of which are as difficult as “Krias Yam Suf”? He could very easily despair, thinking that he is unworthy — that he lacks sufficient merit to cause the sea to split on his behalf. How is he to proceed in these matters which are described as being as difficult as “Krias Yam Suf”?

It is precisely for this reason that HKB”H prepared the remedy in advance of the ailment — by having the sea split specifically for Dasan and Aviram. For, in truth, they were wicked men except for the fact that they had the merit of receiving beatings on behalf of Yisrael in their capacity as guards. Thus, a path was paved for all Yisrael throughout the generations. Whenever they will require sustenance or a proper mate — which are as difficult as “Krias Yam Suf” — they will be deemed worthy in the merit of their physical toiling in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of mitzvos. For, these demand an enormous physical toll as taught in the Gemara (Berachos 63b): “מנין שאין דברי תורה מתקיימין אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה, שנאמר (במדבר יט-יד) זאת התורה אדם מנין שאין דברי תורה — from where do we know that words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself for the sake of the Torah? For it is stated: “This is the Torah of a man who dies in a tent.”

Furthermore, if they extend themselves physically or financially to assist their fellow Jews, they will be no less worthy than Dasan and Aviram to merit “Krias Yam Suf.” In this manner, they will merit receiving the necessary sustenance or

finding the appropriate mate, which are as difficult to come by as “Krias Yam Suf.” According to what we have discussed, we can appreciate that which is written with regards to the mitzvah of tzedakah (Devarim 15, 10): **“נתון תתן לו ולא ירע לבבך -- באתך לו, כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכך ה' אלקיך בכל מעשיך ובכל משלח ידך -- you shall surely give him, and let your heart not feel bad when you give him, for in return for this matter, Hashem, your G-d, will bless you in all your deeds and in your every undertaking.** In the merit of taking one's hard-earned money and giving it to the poor in the form of tzedakah, one becomes worthy of “Krias Yam Suf” — no less so than Dasan and Aviram for whom the sea split due to their self-sacrifice on behalf of Yisrael. In this merit, a person will merit ample sustenance, which is as difficult as “Krias Yam Suf.”

This then is the meaning of the Midrash cited by the Ramban (Shemos 3, 13): **“במדרש אגדה, ומהו אהיה אשר אהיה, כשם שאתה הווה עמי כך אני הווה עמך, אם פותחין את ידיהם ועושין צדקה אף אני אפתח את ידי, שנאמר (דברים -- it states in an aggadic Midrash: And what is the meaning of the appellation “I will be what I will be”? As you behave presently with Me, so will I behave presently with you; if you open your hands and give tzedakah, so, too, will I open My hands, as it says: “Hashem will open for you His storehouse of goodness.”** When a Jew opens his hand to support a poor person, he merits “Krias Yam Suf” just as Dasan and Aviram did by suffering for the sake of Yisrael.

### “Krias Yam Suf” Refers to the Splitting of the Sea for Dasan and Aviram

Following this line of reasoning, we can explain why our blessed sages refer to the incredible miracle of Bnei Yisrael passing through the sea in terms of “kriah” -- **“קריעת ים סוף”** — even though the Torah employs the term “bekiah” -- **“ויבקעו המים”**. For, if we analyze the difference between the terms “bekiah” and “kriah,” we find that “bekiah” can be applied even to something performed entirely voluntarily — in accordance with one's will.

The term “kriah,” however, is usually associated with something that involves significant distress. For example, we find in sefer Bereishit (37, 29): **“וישב ראובן אל הבור והנה אין יוסף -- Reuven returned to the pit and, behold,**

**Yosef was not in the pit; so, he shred his garments.** Also (ibid. 34): **“ויקרע יעקב שמלותיו וישם שק במתניו” — Yaakov tore his garments and placed a sackcloth on his loins.** Similarly (Esther 4, 1): **“ויקרע מרדכי את בגדיו וילבש שק ואפר” — Mordechai ripped his clothes and he put on a sack and ashes.** Lastly, Shmuel HaNavi says to Shaul HaMelech (Shmuel I 15, 28): **“קרע” — Hashem has torn the kingship of Yisrael from upon you this day, and has given it to your fellow, who is better than you.**

This enlightens us as to why the Torah characterizes the incredible miracle of Yisrael passing through Yam Suf in terms of “bekiah”: **“ויבקעו המים”**. For, the Torah employs this term solely with regards to the initial splitting of the sea for the sake of the entire nation of Yisrael. On that occasion, the sea split of its own free will, without the need to resort to the condition imposed by HKB”H at the time of creation. In contrast, when the sea turned into dry land for a second time, specifically for Dasan and Aviram, the term “bekiah” is not mentioned at all. The passuk simply states: **“ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים” — and Bnei Yisrael walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.**

Therefore, our blessed sages correctly classify the second transformation of the sea into dry land for the sake of Dasan and Aviram as: **“קריעת ים סוף”**. In other words, on that second occasion, the sea was forced to split for Dasan and Aviram against its will — akin to a person who rents his clothes due to extreme torment and distress. This is substantiated by the fact that the Torah only mentions the stipulation HKB”H imposed on the sea at the time of creation to split before Yisrael with regards to the second splitting — as it is written: **“וישב הים לפנות בוקר לאיתנו” — לתנאו**.

We can now appreciate the depth of the sages' wisdom. They chose not to utilize the term **“Bekias Yam Suf,”** but rather the term “kriah”: **“קשין מזונותיו של אדם בקריעת ים סוף,” “וקשין לזווג בקריעת ים סוף.”** They wished to emphasize the merit of the entire nation of Yisrael. While it is true that finding sustenance and a proper mate is difficult, this difficulty is compared to “Krias Yam Suf” — the splitting of the sea especially for Dasan and Aviram. They earned merit by enduring beatings for the sake of Yisrael. How much more so are all of Yisrael worthy of “Krias Yam Suf” in the merit of their dedication and self-sacrifice in their study of Torah and their performance of mitzvot!

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