This week we read about the spectacular escape of the Jews from Egypt through the ‘Yam Suf’ ‘the Reed’ Sea (A.K.A. Red Sea) in preparation for receiving the Torah at Sinai and entering Israel.

The prophet Micha tells us that this crossing the sea and the entire miraculous Exodus from Egypt; ten plagues, manna from heaven etc, was only a preparation for the arrival of Moshiach and the even greater miracles he will bring to the Jews and the entire world in the future redemption, ”As the days of leaving Egypt I will show miracles”. Micha (7:15)

Because we are all impatiently expecting this future ‘redemption’ we must learn what we can from every detail of this Reed Sea crossing.

The Torah informs us that after the Jews crossed the sea: ”They believed in G-d and Moshe (Moses) His servant”. (14:31)

In other words, although HaShem (another name for G-d) miraculously destroyed Egypt with ten plagues, brought water from a rock, protected the Jews with clouds of glory etc … they only began believing in Him when they came out of the sea?! Why didn’t they believe earlier?

Also what does it mean they ‘believed’ in G-d AND Moshe? How can the belief in Moshe be equated with the belief in HaShem?!

I would like to explain with a story told to me years ago by Rabbi Zalman Sudkevitch o.b.m. here in Kfar Chabad.

The story begins with a ‘Farbringen’ (Chassidic gathering) of the Chassidim (followers) of the previous (sixth) Lubavitch Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak) in France shortly before WWII. The Rebbe’s son-in-law (who in another ten years would become the next i.e. the seventh, Lubavitch Rebbe) was also present and he was the main speaker, but some of the other Chassidim also spoke.

One of them told of a miraculous experience that he had two years earlier. Rabbe Yosef Yitzchak had been jailed and sentenced to death by the Communists in Russia in 1927 but miraculously he was released and given permission to leave the country. After many harrowing travels he moved his headquarters to Poland and many Chassidim joined him. But when Germany began threatening and WWII was eminent Rebbe told many of his followers to leave Poland and settle in other countries, for instance the one telling me the story was one of a group of five that the Rebbe told to go to France.

Now back in those days this was no small task; for various reasons they couldn’t travel directly and had to cross several borders, among them dreaded Germany, and to make matters worse one of them had a non-valid passport which there was no time to renew.

On the portions of their travels that were by train one of them would lie on the bench and the other four would sit on him, covering him with their long winter coats to avoid the passport checks. And when they reached the various border check points they had a ‘trick’; the second in line, after he passed through, would hand his stamped passport back to the fourth in line. But the check post at the German border was notoriously dangerous, especially for Jews, and for Jews
with no passports it was suicide. They had no choice but to stand in line, look calm and pray that their trick would work.

As they neared the front of the line they heard shouting and from inside the inspection center, then a pistol shot followed by a moan and silence. They tried to look as confident as possible but were really trembling inside, if it wasn't for the Rebbe's blessing they would all have returned to Poland on the spot.

But to their amazement when the first Chassid got to the window, the official began talking to someone behind him, snatched the passport from his hand and stamped it without asking questions! And so he did to the second. Then he began talking on the phone and stamped the remaining three passports without even looking at them!

But their problems were far from over; the place was full of cruel robot-eyed policemen and soldiers checking and rechecking everything and everyone that moved (probably that is where the shots came from) but strangely the police paid no attention to them! They walked through the station unnoticed, as though they were invisible, hailed a taxi, and left. One half hour later they were in a telegraph office sending a message back to the Rebbe ... they were free! It was a miracle!!

The Rebbe's son-in-law listened attentively to the story. When it finished he asked for the exact date and time of the miracle and when he heard the answer he smiled and said, "Now I understand something that was a mystery to me these last two years.

"The Rebbe, my father-in-law, had to have a nurse come in every day and give him an injection because of his health. (After his imprisonment and torture in Stalin's prisons he became increasingly paralyzed).

"One day the nurse came in and saw a frightening sight: the Rebbe was sitting rigidly in his chair, eyes slightly open and completely unresponsive. She was sure that he was having a catatonic attack of some sort, and immediately called the Rebbe's wife. When the Rebbetzin entered she began weeping frantically, but before they called a doctor they called for me.

"When I entered I also was shocked at first, but then I noticed something that made me realize that there was noting to worry about; it was almost imperceptible but the Rebbe's lips were moving, he was saying or reciting something!

"I bent down and listened and then straightened up and announced that there was, in fact, no cause for alarm ...the Rebbe was saying ‘Az Yashir Moshe’ (The song that the Jews sang after crossing Yam Suf. (Shmot 15:1 -19))!! "After ten minutes the Rebbe opened his eyes and returned to normal.

"I never asked the Rebbe for an explanation but now I have it. It was the exact same time that your miracle was occurring. The Rebbe was passing you all through the German inspection like Moshe passed the Jews through the sea!

That is the Job of a Rebbe; to free Jews (and all mankind) from unhealthy restrictions.

Now we can answer the above questions: Why didn't the Jews believe in G-d until they crossed the sea and how could this be equal to their belief in Moses.

There was something unique about the miracle of Yam Suf: In all the previous miracles the Jewish people did not have any spiritual uplifting. They were being freed from physical bondage but spiritually did not feel and were not yet aware of being G-d's people. G-d seemed to them to be a super force in which they believed from 'afar'.

But at Yam Suf it all changed. When Moshe split the sea, 'all the water in the world' opened (Rashi 14:21). The Lubavitch Rebbe explains that this refers to even the highest spiritual levels, which
are likened to water (see Gen. 1:7) ‘split’ and the Creator of Heaven and Earth was revealed.

In other words, the spiritual (which is also a mere creation) no longer concealed G-d and human nature (even spiritual nature) no longer concealed the awareness of the Creator: the Jews saw the source of the spiritual, that’s why they said “This is my G-d” (Rashi 15:2 ‘zeh’) and their consciousness became united with the Infinite One for the first time in history. For the first time all the Jews REALLY believed in and felt the Creator of the Universe.

This is true redemption: to FEEL the Creator in every aspect of His Creation.

But equally important, they saw that it all was because of Moshe; without Moshe they could never have achieved it on their own. (As we see later when they thought Moses was dead they worshiped the Golden Calf, see Ex. 32:1-4)

That is why the Torah equates Moshe with G-d.

This is the Torah’s message here for us: In every generation, just as Moshe ‘lifted’ the people to feel G-d in preparation for receiving the Torah and entering Israel, there are Tzadikim like the Lubavitch Rebbe, preparing the Jewish nation for Moshiach and the coming redemption when all Jews will observe the Torah and return to Israel and all mankind will feel and worship ONLY the G-d who is creating them.

This can be hastened by learning ‘Chassidut’. (visit your local Chabad House for details).

The teachings of the Baal Shem Tov called ‘Chassidut’ (especially that of Chabad called ‘Torat Ha Moshiach’) are to change the consciousness of the Jewish people and awaken their unique Jewish souls.

To make everyone realize, as the Rebbe said, ‘Moshiach is here; we must only open our eyes!!

It all depends on us; one more good deed, word or even thought can tilt the scales, split the darkness around us and reveal .......

**Moshiach NOW!!**

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