

D'var Torah for Parshat Beshalach

By Elez Bell, 7th Grade

In Parshat Beshalach, after the splitting of the Red Sea, Moshe, Miriam and the Jewish People sing the praises of G-d. Here is the second verse of the song:

"עָנִי וְזִמְרַת לַיהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאֶרְמְמְנֶהוּ"

"The Eternal's strength and His vengeance were my salvation; this is my G-d, and I will beautify Him, the G-d of my father, and I will ascribe to Him exaltation."

Several commentaries wonder why Moshe uses the word אָנֹכִי, I will beautify Him, as a way of saying that he will praise G-d. It is certainly unusual. I'm going to focus on one explanation in the Talmud, as explained by Rashi:

"אבא שאול אומר ואננהו הוי דומה לו מה הוא חנון ורחום אף אתה היה חנון ורחום"

"Abba Shaul interpreted, "The word "אָנֹכִי" can be read as a compound word, meaning "I and He (G-d): which instructs, "You, human being! Be like Him: just as He is gracious and compassionate, so you be gracious and compassionate"

Rashi explains that Abba Shaul is interpreting אָנֹכִי as "אני והוא", I and He. Abba Shaul is saying that the Jews now realized that they could emulate G-d! This is very surprising! It would seem that their prophecy at the Red Sea, which gave them a greater understanding of G-d, would cause them to feel that they could not compare to G-d. Really, it did the opposite. Their prophecy after the splitting of the Red Sea not only showed them G-d's abilities, but also their own, since people are in the image of G-d. Just like G-d is kind, we should emulate Him and be kind to other people. And if you appreciate yourself more because you are in the image of G-d, you will also value other people in a new way, because they are also in the image of G-d.

This idea might help us if we have an opportunity to help someone in trouble but hesitate because we feel it is his own fault. If we remember that G-d helps unworthy people, that we are in God's image and that so is the person who needs help, we are more likely to rise to the occasion and help him!!