

Unexpected Miracles:

Meditations on the Red Sea Splitting

The Splitting of the Red Sea is one of the more fantastic of Biblical miracles. We can imagine the dramatic scenes. The Israelites, a vast slave nation escaping from Egyptian oppressors, are led by Moses raising his staff over the sea. Two tidal waves split in opposite directions and the nation rushes across the parting of the sea over to dry land. The Egyptian Pharaoh's army follow in close pursuit but the sea returns with great ferocity destroying almost the entire army. And the children of Israel sing a spontaneous song.

When I visit with people in my role as a hospital chaplain, I realize that every patient recovering from major medical procedures is going through their own personal and intimate miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea -- and passing through on dry land. I have been with patients who have no religious background, and yet who experience this moment as an unexpected miracle in their lives; they utter words of gratitude, thanking God or thanking the Divine for giving the attending physicians the healing wisdom that resulted in their recovery. I am amazed, just as they are, in suddenly seeing the Divine as having a part in their personal miracle.

Jewish tradition draws our attention from the miraculous parting of the sea to the Israelites' spontaneous and collective "singing a new song to the Divine." After living through a "parting of the sea" in our own lives, we too may be moved to speak out or to "sing a song", acknowledgment of the good in this special moment.

My reflection leads me to a meditative prayer inspired by my courageous patients and this week's Torah reading of the miracle of the parting of the sea:

Let us see each and every moment of our life
as an unexpected miracle.

Let us not wait for catastrophes
to open our hearts to You, Creator of all Healing.

Let us look at all moments as holding the possibility of a miracle.

Sometimes a spontaneous prayer from the heart is a miracle.

Sometimes listening to another person is a miracle.

Sometimes even a tear or a smile from a sad person is a miracle.

Let the Creator of healing inspire us to see in many moments
throughout the days of our lives
a possibility for the miraculous:
unexpected and intimate.

Excerpts from © Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, Rabbi Eliahu J. Klein.

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