

SEVENTH DAY PESACH 1985  
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

On the seventh day of Pesach we read how the Egyptian army was destroyed and the Jewish people's freedom was assured when the waters of the Red Sea cascaded down upon them as they were pursuing the Jewish people. Before this happened the Jewish people were frightened. They were on a peninsula which jutted out into the Red Sea.. They saw the Egyptian army approaching them and they did not know what to do. The rabbis say they divided into four groups: one said, "Let's go back to Egypt."; another said, "Let's commit suicide."; a third said, "Let's just scream and yell."; the fourth said, "Let's fight." The underlying theme of this Torah reading is, how do we deal with trouble, with tsores? In fact, this is the underlying theme of the Haphtorah, too, when we learn how David was very sorely tried because Saul was trying to kill him. When Moshe heard these four groups he told them, "Tem Tachareeshem, you should be quiet." In the next sentence it seems that G-d contradicted him when He says to Moshe, "What are you crying to me? Speak to the Children of Israel and they shall travel." Moshe, it looked like, had told them to be quiet, to sit passively. G-d was telling them to travel. What happens when tsores, troubles, come upon a person? Should a person just sit quietly and take his troubles? The rabbis say no. They ask a question, why did G-d create atheism, and they answer it by saying G-d created atheism so that when a person is in trouble, he should not just sit still and do nothing, but he should act as if there were no G-d. G-d helps those who help themselves and, most certainly, when a poor person comes to you for help, you should not look at the poor person and say, "G-d will help." At that moment you should be an atheist and stick your hand in your pocket and help. Actually, if we examine the word that Moshe used, "Tachareeshem", we see what we have to do when we are confronted with troubles. The word "Chareesh" can mean to "devise a plan", "to be an artisan", and "to be deaf." What is required of us is to: (1) Devise a plan; (2) Mobilize our resources and; (3) Turn a deaf ear to all thoughts of hopelessness or despair. G-d promises that if we do this He will then help us. Moshe was telling the people, "Do not despair or give up. Do not perform some sort of machismo suicidal act. Instead, devise a plan, marshal your resources, turn a deaf ear to hopelessness, and, rest assured, G-d will help." I am reminded of the story

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that Joe McCarthy, the famous manager of the New York Yankees, used to tell, that once he had a dream that he was in heaven and he was asked to form a baseball team. His players were going to play a team that the devil had put together. Joe put together a wonderful team: Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Ty Cobb, etc. The devil then called him and asked him if he was ready to play. Joe looked at the devil and said, "I got all the best players. You have not got a chance," at which point the devil said, "That may be so, but I got all the umpires." Devise a plan, marshal your resources, then a deaf ear to hopelessness, and you will always succeed.