

The Song at the Sea {Shirat Hayam}ⁱ

Commentary on Parashat BeShalach (Exodus 13:17-17:16) {When he sent}

After Pharaoh had let the people go...(Exodus 13:17)



(LaShem Ashirah Lemor Vayomru) LaShem (Hazot) HaShirah
הַשִּׁירָה (הַזֹּאת) לַיהוָה (וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאֹמֵר אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה)
Yah VeZimrat Ozi BaYam Ramah Verochebo Sus Ga-ah Ga-oh Ki
כִּי-גָאָה גָאָה סוֹס וְרֹכְבּוֹ רָמָה בַּיָּם: עָזִי וְזִמְרַת לִּי
VaArommenhu Avi Elohei VeAnvehu Eli Zeh Lishuah Li Vayehi
וַיְהִי-לִי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֲנֹהוּ אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאַרְמְמָנְהוּ

They Sang This Song Unto Adonai

“Then Moshe and the people of Isra’el sang this song to ADONAI: “I will sing to ADONAI, for he is highly exalted: the horse and its rider he threw in the sea. Yah is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. This is my God: I will glorify him; my father’s God: I will exalt him. ADONAI is a warrior; ADONAI is his name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he hurled into the sea. His elite commanders were drowned in the Sea of Suf.” (Exod 15:1-4).

Parashat B’shalach, “After he had left go,” is replete with important events that help to establish the national identity of our people Israel. In four chapters B’shalach covers the Israelites’ departure from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian chasers, the providing of *man-hu* (manna) by Adonai in the wilderness, the celebration of the Sabbath by the corporate congregation of Israel, the giving of water from the rock in the wilderness at Horeb, and Israel’s Battle with the Amalekites. This portion is full of valuable history that forms much of the basis for Israel’s identity for centuries to come and for our Jewish identity as well.

“Then Pharaoh will say that the people of Isra’el are wandering aimlessly in the countryside, the desert has closed in on them I will make Pharaoh so hardhearted that he will pursue them; thus I will win glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will realize at last that I am ADONAI.” The people did as ordered. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people. They said, “What have we done, letting Isra’el stop being our slaves?” So he prepared his chariots and took his people with him - he took 600 first-quality chariots, as well as all the other chariots in Egypt, along with their commanders. ADONAI made Pharaoh hardhearted, and he pursued the people of Isra’el, as they left boldly. The Egyptians went after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, with his cavalry and army, and overtook them as they were encamped by the sea, by Pi-Hachiroth, in front of Ba’al-Tz’fon. As Pharaoh approached, the people of Isra’el looked up and saw the Egyptians right there, coming after them. In great fear the people of Isra’el cried out to ADONAI and said to Moshe, “Was it because there weren’t enough graves in Egypt that you brought us out to die in the desert? Why have you done this to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Didn’t we tell you in Egypt to let us alone, we’ll just go on being slaves for the Egyptians? It would be better for us to be the Egyptians’ slaves than to die in the desert!” (Exod 14:3-12)

These verses from *B'Shalach* describe the situation that ensued following the Israelites' departure from Egypt. The L-rd specifically allows Pharaoh to be hardhearted after the Israelites leave so that *"I will win glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and all his army"* (vs. 4). Obviously, we know that this occurred through the destruction of his forces in the Red Sea. Because of this judgment they truly knew that יהוה was the Holy One of Israel.

But it is not only because of this why Pharaoh chases after the Israelites. He himself says *"What have we done, letting Isra'el stop being our slaves?"* (vs. 5). After all, the Israelite slaves were a major economic asset to the Egyptian Empire. Who would build the massive palaces, temples, and other facilities that gave testimony to the *"greatness of Egypt?"* In Pharaoh's mind, he had to get them back. So Pharaoh takes off with *"600 first-quality chariots, as well as all the other chariots in Egypt"* (vs. 6) to get the Israelites back. Unfortunately for him, his forces were destroyed. Scripture is not clear whether or not the Pharaoh himself actually was killed. But even if he survived, he no doubt went back in utter disgrace.

But what of the reaction of the Israelites to the Egyptians chasing them? When seeing the elite forces of Egypt they cry out to Moses in doubt, believing that they are in the wilderness only to die and saying that it would have been better to stay in Egypt than rot to death in this desert. Of course, at this point Moses is instructed by יהוה to lift up his staff and then the Red Sea departs giving the Israelites an escape.

There are strong parallels between the story of the Egyptian perusal of the Israelites at the bank of the Red Sea and the prophesied Tribulation period that is to befall Planet Earth in the Last Days. Many believe that prior to the beginning of this times all "Christians" will be given a pre-tribulation rapture to Heaven while the "Jews" experience the Tribulation. Well, if we look at what happened back in the Exodus, יהוה protected His people during the time of difficulty as a testimony to His greatness. Yes, the people did recoil, but they were delivered through the tribulation. Let us learn from their example and not be escapists and afraid, as many who claim faith in Messiah are. Let us as the Messianic Believers of today not cower and desire to see יהוה glorified in the Earth as He was before the Egyptians. The Prophet Isaiah tells us *"when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"* (Isaiah 26:9, KJV).

So let us sing unto the L-rd, for he is highly exalted: the horse and its rider he threw in the sea! (Read Exodus Chapter 15) At the end of chapter 15 the L-rd proclaims "I am Adonai Ropheicha!"

(כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפְאֶיךָ).

Man Hu?

When our people were hungry and complained to יהוה in Exodus 16, He gave them *"bread that rained from heaven."* Since they did not know what to call it, they called it **Man-Hu** (מֶן הוּא) literally, from Him (from, of, out, more than). We also have bread that came from heaven.

Accordingly, when the crowd saw that neither Yeshua nor his talmidim were there, they themselves boarded the boats and made for K'far-Nachum in search of Yeshua.

²⁵ *When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"* ²⁶ *Yeshua answered, "Yes, indeed! I tell you, you're not looking for me because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the bread and had all you wanted!"* ²⁷ *Don't work for the food which passes away but for the food that stays on into eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For this is the one on whom God the Father has put his seal."*

²⁸ *So they said to him, "What should we do in order to perform the works of God?"* ²⁹ *Yeshua answered, "Here's what the work of God is: to trust in the one he sent!"*

³⁰ They said to him, “Nu, what miracle will you do for us, so that we may see it and trust you? What work can you perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate manna in the desert—as it says in the Tanakh, ‘**He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**’ ³² Yeshua said to them, “Yes, indeed! I tell you it wasn’t Moshe who gave you the bread from heaven. But my Father is giving you the genuine bread from heaven; ³³ for God’s bread is the one who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread from now on.” ³⁵ Yeshua answered, “I am the bread which is life! Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever trusts in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ I told you that you have seen but still don’t trust. ³⁷ Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will certainly not turn away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of the one who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of the one who sent me: that I should not lose any of all those he has given me but should raise them up on the Last Day. ⁴⁰ Yes, this is the will of my Father: that all who see the Son and trust in him should have eternal life, and that I should raise them up on the Last Day.”

⁴¹ At this the Judeans began grumbling about him because he said, “I am the bread which has come down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “Isn’t this Yeshua Ben-Yosef? We know his father and mother! How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” ⁴³ Yeshua answered them, “Stop grumbling to each other! ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father—the one who sent me—draws him. And I will raise him up on the Last Day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, ‘**They will all be taught by Adonai.**’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God—he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Yes, indeed! I tell you, whoever trusts has eternal life: ⁴⁸ I am the bread which is life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the desert; they died. ⁵⁰ But the bread that comes down from heaven is such that a person may eat it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that has come down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. Furthermore, the bread that I will give is my own flesh; and I will give it for the life of the world.”

⁵² At this, the Judeans disputed with one another, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³ Then Yeshua said to them, “Yes, indeed! I tell you that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life—that is, I will raise him up on the Last Day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I live in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me, and I live through the Father, so also whoever eats me will live through me. ⁵⁸ So this is the bread that has come down from heaven—it is not like the bread the fathers ate; they’re dead, but whoever eats this bread will live forever!” ⁵⁹ He said these things as he was teaching in a synagogue in K’far-Nachum. (John 6:24-59)

Bread is necessary for life (the staff of life)

Bread is to be eaten daily (not by bread alone but by every word)

Bread helps produce growth

The Rock

Yeshua is the Rock! When Rabbi Sha’ul gave the midrash in 1 Cor. 10, do people see a Jewish rabbi making what was common for him to say? I think not! In fact, Rabbi Sha’ul is often so misunderstood! Let us re-read his words with a Jewish mindset:

10 ¹ For, brothers, I don’t want you to miss the significance of what happened to our fathers. All of them were guided by the pillar of cloud, and they all passed through the sea, ² and in connection with the cloud and with the sea they all immersed themselves into Moshe, ³ also they all ate the same food from the Spirit, ⁴ and they all drank the same drink from the Spirit—for they drank from a Spirit-sent Rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah. ⁵ Yet with the majority of them God was not pleased, so their bodies were strewn across the desert.

⁶ Now these things took place as prefigurative historical events, warning us not to set our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Don’t be idolaters, as some of them were—as the Tanakh puts it, “**The people sat down to eat and drink, then got up to indulge in revelry.**” ⁸ And let us not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, with the consequence that 23,000 died in a single day. ⁹ And let us not put the Messiah to the test, as some of them did,

and were destroyed by snakes. ¹⁰ And don't grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the Destroying Angel.

¹¹ These things happened to them as prefigurative historical events, and they were written down as a warning to us who are living in the acharit-hayamim . ¹² Therefore, let anyone who thinks he is standing up be careful not to fall! ¹³ No temptation has seized you beyond what people normally experience, and God can be trusted not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. On the contrary, along with the temptation he will also provide the way out, so that you will be able to endure.

I will stand in front of you there on the rock in Horev. You are to strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so the people can drink." Moshe did this in the sight of the leaders of Isra'el. (Exod 17:6)

Yeshua is the rock at Horeb. The children of Israel were aware that “something” or “someone” accompanied them in their journey in the wilderness—the angel of Adonai, Y’shua! The image of G-d as a solid rock is used in the *TNK* (Deut. 32, Ps 18, 19, 29,31,42,62,etc.). Our people sing a Shabbat song *Tzur Mishelo* (Rock of Ages). We in Kol Simcha similarly sing:

♪ El es la roca cuya obra es perfecta ♪ (Deut. 32:1-7)

♪ I Am the Bread of Life ♪ (John 6)

♪ The Song of Moses ♪ (Rev. 15:3-4)

♪ I Will Sing Unto the L-rd for He has triumphed gloriously ♪ (Ex. 15:1,2)

♪ The L-rd answer you in the day of trouble...We will shout for joy over your victory and in the name of our G-d lift up our banner. ♪ (Psalm 20)

♪ Mi Kamocha BaElim Adonai ♪ (Ex.15:11)

¹ Portions adapted from Beshalach, *Torah Club*, FFOZ, CO 2002