

## Shabbat Shira 5781

### **The Jewish Study Bible Ex. 15:1-21**

The Song of the Sea, a lyric poem, sung as a hymn, celebrates God's defeat of Egypt at the sea. Rich in imagery, hyperbole, and poetic license, it expresses the unrestrained enthusiasm of the Israelites over their miraculous rescue from disaster. Formally it is divided into three sections, each ending with a simile followed by a bicolon addressed to God in which the opening phrase is repeated in the colon, and a conclusion... the general plot of the poem - God's control of the sea followed by the building of His sanctuary and the acclamation of His kingship - and some of its vocabulary allude to motifs found in other biblical poems that tell of His primordial defeat of the sea and assumption of kingship, which themselves hark back to ancient Near Eastern myths about the storm god's defeat of the sea god followed by the building of his palace/temple... the Lord, the warrior: The warrior metaphor was frequently applied to deities in the ancient world, reflecting the conviction that victory is in reality an achievement of God, not of human warriors... in keeping with the custom of women celebrating the victor after a battle (*ie Yiftach's daughter in Judges, David after killing Goliath*), the women dance and play music, led by Miriam who summons them, or all the Israelites, to sing God's praises.

### **BT Megillah 10b**

ואמר רבי יוחנן מאי דכתיב (שמות יד, כ) ולא קרב זה אל זה כל הלילה בקשו מלאכי השרת לומר שירה אמר הקב"ה מעשה ידי טובעין ביים ואתם אומרים שירה אמר רבי אלעזר הוא אינו שש אבל אחרים משיש ודיקא נמי דכתיב כן ישיש ולא כתיב ישוש ש"מ

**Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And the one came not near the other all the night" (Exodus 14:20)? The ministering angels wanted to sing their song, for the angels would sing songs to each other, as it states: "And they called out to each other and said" (Isaiah 6:3), but the Holy Blessed One said: The work of My hands are drowning at sea, and you wish to say songs?**

**Rabbi Elazar said God does not rejoice over the downfall of the wicked, but causes others to rejoice. One can learn from the language of the verse as well, as it is written: "So the Lord will rejoice [ken yasis]" (Deuteronomy 28:63). And it is not written yasus, the grammatical form of the verb meaning: He will rejoice. Rather, it is written yasis. The grammatical form of this verb indicates that one causes another to rejoice. Learn from it that this is the case.**

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### **Exodus 15:1**

אֶזְרָא יְשִׁיר־מִשְׁהַ וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְיְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאֹמְרֵי אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי־גָאֵה גָאֵה סוּס וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בְּיָם:

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said: I will sing to the LORD, for God has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver God has hurled into the sea.

### Exodus 15:20-21

וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אָחוֹת אַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַתֶּף בְּיָדָהּ וַתִּצְאֵן כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים אַחֲרֶיהָ בַּתְּפִים וּבַמַּחְלֹת: וַתַּעַן לָהֶם מִרְיָם שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־גָאֵה גָאֵה קוֹס וָרֶכֶב וְרָמָה בַיָּם:

Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her in dance with timbrels. And Miriam chanted for them: Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea.

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### Dirshuni Vol. 1 "Sing to the Lord" by Rabbi Dr. Tamar Duvdevani

"אֲזַיִשִׁיר מִשֵּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאַמְרוּ: אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה" (שמות טו, א)

"וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אָחוֹת אַהֲרֹן אֶת הַתֶּף בְּיָדָהּ, וַתִּצְאֵן כָּל הַנָּשִׁים אַחֲרֶיהָ בַּתְּפִים וּבַמַּחְלֹת.

וַתַּעַן לָהֶם מִרְיָם: שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה, קוֹס וָרֶכֶב וְרָמָה בַיָּם" (שמות טו, כ-כא) על שום מה נאמר "וַתַּעַן לָהֶם מִרְיָם"? שהרי כבר בקעה השירה מפי משה, שנאמר "אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה"?  
אלא שמרים ידעה שירה שמשה לא ידע. מהו שירו של משה? "אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה" היא שירת היחיד הבודד, שאינה מצטרפת לכלל מקהלת קולות וניגונים. ביקש משה להוציא את הקול מתוך לבו של כל אחד ואחד ולגאול את שירו. אבל שירת הגאולה לא הייתה עדיין שלמה.

ומהי שירתה של מרים? "שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה", לשון רבים היא. למדה מרים: "אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה דְּבַר ה' אֵל כָּל קְהֵלְכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ הָעֵנָן וְהָעֲרָפֶל, קוֹל גְּדוֹל וְלֹא יִסָּף" (דברים ה, יט). "קוֹל גְּדוֹל" על שום מה? על שום שהוא מכיל בתוכו ריבי רבבות קולות, מבטאים, לשונות וצלילים. שהקול קול אלוהים והצלם צלם אלוהים - מורכב מכל בני האנוש, על פרצופיהם ודעותיהם השונים. על כן קראה "שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה" - שהיא מאספת ומצרפת כל הקולות כולם, ומחברת את "אֲשִׁירָה" האישי לשירה משותפת ורבת פנים.

אמרה להם מרים: "שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה" והזכירו לעצמכם את צלם אלהים אשר בכם, מורכב משבעים פנים ומשבעים לשון ומשבעים ניגונים. "שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה בְּרָכוּ שְׁמוֹ" (תהלים צו, ב): בשעה שאתם שרים לו, אתם מברכים את שמו.

Why does the verse state "And Miriam chanted for them"? Hasn't the song already burst from the mouth of Moses, as it states, "then Moses sang...for God has triumphed gloriously"? Rather, Miriam knew a song that Moses did not know. What was the song of Moses? Moses recited, "I will sing to God." This is the song of the individual alone, that does not attach to the community's gathering of melodies and voices. Moses sought to bring out the voice of each person's heart and to redeem through his song. But the song of redemption was not yet complete. What was the song of Miriam? "Sing to the Lord." This is in the plural. Miriam taught: "The LORD spoke those words—those and no more—to your

whole congregation at the mountain, with a mighty voice out of the fire and the dense clouds” (Deut. 5:19). What is the meaning of “mighty voice”? It includes within it multitudes of voices, accents, tongues, and sounds. That the voice is the voice of God and the image is the image of God - is made up of each human being, of their perspectives and different opinions. Thurs Miriam called, “Sing to the Lord, for God has triumphed gloriously” - since she is gathering and joining together all voices and she composes the personal “I will sing” to the shared and multifaceted song. Miriam says to them: “Sing to the Lord” and remind yourselves that the image of God is in you all, made up of 70 faces and from 70 tongues and from 70 melodies. “Sing to the Lord bless God’s name” (Psalm 96:2): When you all sing to God, you bless God’s name.

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### Exodus 15:2

עֲדִי וְזָמַרְתִּי יְהוָה לִי יְיָ הֵי-יְהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֲנִי הוּא אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאֲרַמְמָנָהוּ:

The LORD is my strength and might; God has become my deliverance. This is my God and I will enshrine Them; The God of my ancestor, and I will exalt Them.

### BT Shabbat 133b

דְּתַנִּיא: “זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֲנִי הוּא”, הַתְּנָא לְפָנָיו בְּמִצְוֹת: עֲשֵׂה לְפָנָיו סוּכָה נְאֻה, וְלוּלָב נְאֻה, וְשׁוֹפָר נְאֻה, צִיצִית נְאֻה, סֹפֵר תּוֹרָה נְאֻה, וְכָתוּב בּוֹ לְשֵׁמוֹ בְּדִין נְאֻה, בְּקוּלָמוֹס נְאֻה, בְּלַבָּלְר אִימָן, וְכוּרְכוּ בְּשִׁירָאִין נְאֻין. אָבָא שְׂאֵוִל אֹמֵר: “וְאֲנִי הוּא” – הָיִי דּוֹמָה לוֹ, מָה הוּא חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם – אַף אַתָּה הָיִי חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם.

What is the source for the requirement of: “This is my God and I will glorify Him”? **As it was taught** in a *baraita* with regard to the verse: “**This is my God and I will glorify Him [anveihu]**, the Lord of my father and I will raise Him up.” [The Sages interpreted *anveihu* homiletically as linguistically related to *noi*, beauty, and interpreted the verse:] **Beautify yourself before God in mitzvot. Make before God a beautiful *sukka*, a beautiful *lulav*, a beautiful *shofar*, beautiful ritual fringes, beautiful parchment for a Torah scroll, and write in it God’s name in beautiful ink, with a beautiful quill by an expert scribe, and wrap the scroll in beautiful silk fabric. Abba Shaul says: *Ve’anveihu* should be interpreted as if it were written in two words: *Ani vaHu*, I and [God]. **Be similar to God: Just as God is compassionate and merciful, so too should you be compassionate and merciful.****

### Dr. Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel*<sup>1</sup>

The Israelites are delivered collectively out of the womb of Egypt. National birth, much like individual births (and all the more so in ancient times), takes place on a delicate border

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between life and death. It involves the transformation of blood from a signifier of death to a signifier of life. It also involves the successful opening of the womb, the prevention of the womb's turning into a tomb....God performs a variety of wonders in Egypt (the ten plagues in fact are perceived as such), but the parting of the Red Sea seems to surpass them all. It marks the nation's first breath—out in the open air—and serves as a distinct reminder of the miraculous character of the birth. Where there was nothing, a living creature emerges all of a sudden.