

## **This Week In Torah *B'Shallach***

Exodus 15:1 reads: “Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to יהוה. They said: I will sing to יהוה, for God has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver God has hurled into the sea.”

Amazingly they were delivered. The Sea split and they were redeemed. They sang together but noticed they used a personal singular pronoun.

There is a *midrash* that states that when the Sea split it did so 12 times—one path for each tribe. While in Egypt, the servitude was so burdensome that the Israelites were hardly a people. At best, they were a tribe. They were weighed down by the work and heaviness of the task. They cried. They lost hope. They could not see beyond their own sense of pain. Thus—when liberation and redemption came, they could not pick their heads up to see beyond their immediate surroundings. But when the Sea miraculously split as Moses lifted his hands as God ordered, a weight was lifted off their shoulders. The bent back was made straight and they realized the others who had journeyed with them. They were once myopic and now they could see the holiness that surrounded them.

*Az yashir Moshe v'venei Yisrael ...* Thus- Moses sang and the children of Israel sang. Sang as individuals but in unison. Their experiences were now shared; their voices now can blend into a singular sound. A cacophony transformed into harmony.

Note: it was not the shedding of the burdens alone that did this. It was the manifestation of newly discovered faith, just as Torah described: “Trust in God and Moses the Holy One’s servant” [Exodus 14:31]. Their experiences shaped their faith and their deliverance gave them the security to trust in Moses’ leadership.

That for us is important to understand—important to emulate as well. We are a community; a group of people who come together. We each have our own experiences which creates a difference in our lives; but we also can create shared communal memories—holidays, life-cycle events, meals, sporting events etc. Some sacred, some rather pedantic; some mundane, some awe-inspiring. But they are shared.

Just as the Israelites crossed on their own path, when they sang and danced it was communal. So may it be with us. That way we can join in unison with shared feelings:  
“Who is like You, O God?”