

Parsha Plug: Parshat Beshalach

Shemot 14:30-15:19	שמות יד-ל"ט:יט
<p>30 On that day the Lord saved Israel from the hand[s] of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dying on the seashore. 31 And Israel saw the great hand, which the Lord had used upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in Moses, His servant. 1 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and they spoke, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for very exalted is He; a horse and its rider He cast into the sea. 2 The Eternal's strength and His vengeance were my salvation; this is my God, and I will make Him a habitation, the God of my father, and I will ascribe to Him exaltation. 3 The Lord is a Master of war; the Lord is His Name. 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army He cast into the sea, and the elite of his officers sank in the Red Sea. 5 The depths covered them; they descended into the depths like a stone. 6 Your right hand, O Lord, is most powerful; Your right hand, O Lord, crushes the foe. 7 And with Your great pride You tear down those who rise up against You; You send forth Your burning wrath; it devours them like straw. 8 And with the breath of Your nostrils the waters were heaped up; the running water stood erect like a wall; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 [Because] the enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will share the booty; my desire will be filled from them; I will draw my sword, my hand will impoverish them. 10 You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the powerful waters. 11 Who is like You among the powerful, O Lord? Who is like You, powerful in the holy place? Too awesome for praises, performing wonders! 12 You inclined Your right hand; the earth swallowed them up. 13 With Your loving kindness You led the people You redeemed; You led [them] with Your might to Your holy abode. 14 Peoples heard, they trembled; a shudder seized the inhabitants of Philistia. 15 Then the chieftains of Edom were startled; [as for] the powerful men of Moab, trembling seized them; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted. 16 May dread and fright fall upon them; with the arm of Your greatness may they become as still as a stone, until Your people cross over, O Lord, until this nation that You have acquired crosses over. 17 You shall bring them and plant them on the mount of Your heritage, directed toward Your habitation, which You made, O Lord; the sanctuary, O Lord, [which] Your hands founded. 18 The Lord will reign to all eternity. 19 When Pharaoh's horses came with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought the waters of the sea back upon them, and the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.</p>	<p>(ל) וַיִּשְׁעַק יְקֹנֶק בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מִצְרַיִם מֵת עַל־שַׁפַּת הַיָּם: (לא) וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְקֹנֶק בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת־יְקֹנֶק וַיֵּאמְרוּ וַיִּאמְרוּ בְּיַקְוֶה וּבִמְשָׁה עֲבָדוֹ: (א) אֲזַי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיְקֹנֶק וַיֵּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר אֲשִׁירָה לַיְקֹנֶק כִּי־גָאָה גָאָה סוֹס וּרְכֹבֹו רָמָה בַּיָּם: (ב) עֲזִי וְזִמְרַתְּ יְהוָה וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה קִלִּי וְאִנְוָהוּ אֱלֹקֵי אָבִי וְאַרְמְמָנָהוּ: (ג) יְקֹנֶק אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְקֹנֶק שְׁמוֹ: (ד) מִרְפַּקֶת פָּרַעַה וַחֲזִילוֹ יָרָה בַּיָּם וּמִבְּחַר שְׁלִשְׁוֹ טַבְּעוּ בַּיָּם־סוּרָו: (ה) תַּהֲמַת יִכְסִּימוּ יָרְדוּ בַּמְצוֹלֹת כַּמוֹ־אָבֹו: (ו) יִמְיִנְךָ יְקֹנֶק נְאֻדָרִי בַּכַּף יִמְיִנְךָ יְקֹנֶק תִּרְעֵץ אוֹיֵב: (ז) וּבִרְבַּב גְּאוּנְךָ תַּהֲרֵס קַמִּיךָ תִּשְׁלַח חַרְבְּךָ יִאֲכַלְמוּ פִקֻּשׁ: (ח) וּבְרוּחַ אֲפִיךָ נִעְרַמוּ מַיִם נִצְבָו כַּמוֹ־גִד גְּזֻלִים קָפְאוּ תַּהֲמַת בְּלִבְיָם: (ט) אֵמֶר אוֹיֵב אֶרְדָּף אֲשִׁיג אֲחַלֵּק שְׁלַל תַּמְלָאֲמוּ נַפְשֵׁי אֲרִיק חֲרַבִּי תֹורִישְׁמוּ דִּי: (י) נִשְׁפַּת כְּרוּחְךָ כַּסְמוּ יָם צָלְלוּ כְּעוֹפֶרֶת בַּמַּיִם אֲדִירִים: (יא) מִי־כַמְכָה בְּאֵלִם יְקֹנֶק מִי כַמְכָה נְאֻדָר בְּקֻדְשׁ גּוֹרָא תַּהֲלִית עֲשֵׂה פְלָא: (יב) נְטִית יִמְיִנְךָ תִּבְלַעְמוּ אֲרִץ: (יג) נְחִית בְּחֻסְדְּךָ עַם־זוֹ גְּאֻלַּת נְהִלַּת בְּעִוְךָ אֶל־גְּוָה קֻדְשְׁךָ: (יד) שְׁמַעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגְּזוּ חֵיל אֲחִזוּ וַיִּשְׁבִּי פְלִשְׁתִּי: (טו) אֲזַי נִבְהִלוּ אֱלוֹפֵי אֲדוּם אֵילֵי מוֹאָב אֲחִזְמוּ רַעַד נִמְגּוּ כָל יִשְׁבֵי כְנַעַן: (טז) תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימַתָּה וַפְחַד בְּגִדְלִי זִרוּעַי יִדְמוּ כַּאֲבֹו עַד־יַעֲבֹר עִמְךָ יְקֹנֶק עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַם־זוֹ קִנִּית: (יז) תִּבְאֲמוּ וְתִטְעֲמוּ בְּהַר נְחֻלְתְּךָ מְכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פַּעֲלַת יְקֹנֶק מִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנִי כּוֹנֵנּוּ יְדִיךָ: (יח) יְקֹנֶקוּ מִיָּד לְעֵלִם וְעַד: (יט) כִּי־בָא סוֹס פָּרַעַה בְּרִכְבּוֹ וּבִפְרָשָׁיו בַּיָּם וַיִּשָׁב יְקֹנֶק עֲלֵהֶם אֶת־מֵי הַיָּם וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִלְכוּ בַּיַּבֵּשָׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם:</p>

Shemot Rabbah Parshat Beshalach 23:3	שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשת בשלח כג:ג
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Moshe said, "Lord of the universe! I will praise You with that which I have previously sinned...I know I have sinned before You with the word 'az', because I said, 'For since (me-az) I came to Pharaoh' (Shemot 5:23), but since You have now drowned him in the sea, I will therefore sing Your praises with the word 'az'". Thus it says, "Then (az) sang Moshe". Note the custom of the righteous to atone with the very same thing whereby they have offended.

אמר משה רבון העולמים במה שחטאתי לפניך בו אני מקלסך...יודע אני שחטאתי לפניך באז שנאמר (שמות ה) ומאז באתי אל פרעה והרי טבעת אותו לים לכך אני משבחך באז הה"ד אז ישיר משה, בא וראה דרך הצדיקים במה שהם סורחים הם מתקנים...

Shemot Rabbah Parshat Beshalach 23:4

From the day when God created the world until Israel stood near the sea, no one except for Israel sang to God. He created Adam, yet he did not utter song. He delivered Avraham from the fiery furnace and from the kings, and he did not utter song. Yitzchak also when saved from the knife did not utter song. Nor did Yaakov when he escaped alive from the angel, from Esav, and from the men of Shechem. As soon, however, as Israel came to the sea, which was divided for them, they uttered song before God, as it says, "Then sang Moshe and B'nai Yisrael"...God said, "I have been waiting for these".

שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשת בשלח כג:ד

מיום שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את העולם ועד שעמדו ישראל על הים לא מצינו אדם שאמר שירה להקב"ה אלא ישראל, ברא אדה"ר ולא אמר שירה הציל אברהם מכבשן האש ומן המלכים ולא אמר שירה, וכן יצחק מן המאכלת ולא אמר שירה, וכן יעקב מן המלאך ומן עשו ומן אנשי שכם ולא אמר שירה, כיון שבאו ישראל לים ונקרע להם מיד אמרו שירה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא שנא' אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל...אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לאלו הייתי מצפה.

Shemot Rabbah Parshat Beshalach 23:7

Rebbe Yochanan said, "When the angels desired to chant the song before God on that night when Israel crossed the sea, the Holy One blessed be He prevented them saying, 'My legions are in distress and you wish to utter song before me?'...As soon as the Israelites emerged from the sea, the angels rushed in to be the first to utter song before God, but God said, 'Let my children be the first to do so'. Thus it says, 'Then Moshe sang'. It does not say 'shar' but 'Az Yashir' (let him sing) because God said, 'Let Moshe and his children of Israel be the first to sing'...It can be compared to a king whose son was taken into captivity and whom he went and rescued. Then both his courtiers and his son wanted to sing praises to him. The king was asked, 'Who shall sing your praises first?' He replied, 'My son comes first. After, whoever wishes can praise me'".

שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשת בשלח כג:ז

א"ר יוחנן בקשו המלאכים לומר שירה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא באותו הלילה שעברו ישראל את הים ולא הניח הקדוש ברוך הוא א"ל לגיונותי נתונין בצרה ואתם אומרים לפני שירה...וכיון שיצאו ישראל מן הים באו המלאכים להקדים שירה לפני הקדוש ב"ה א"ל הקדוש ברוך הוא יקדמו בני תחלה הה"ד אז ישיר משה, אז שר לא נאמר אלא אז ישיר שהקב"ה אמר ישיר משה ובני ישראל תחלה...משל למלך שנשבה בנו והלך והצילו והלכו בני הפלטון מבקשין לקלס למלך ובנו מבקש לקלסו אמרו לו אדונינו מי יקלסך תחלה א"ל בני, מכאן ואילך מי שרוצה לקלסני יקלסני...

Shemot Rabbah Parshat Beshalach 23:8

Rebbe Yehudah said, "It was those babies whom Pharaoh had sought to cast into the Nile who sang praises to the Holy One blessed be He, Whom they recognized at the sea. Why was this? Because when Israel were in Egypt and a Hebrew woman was about to give birth, she would

שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשת בשלח כג:ח

ר' יהודה אומר מי אמר קילוס להקב"ה התינוקות, אותן שהיה פרעה מבקש להשליך ליאור שהם מכירין להקב"ה, כיצד כשהיו ישראל במצרים והיתה אשה מבנות ישראל מבקשת לילד והיתה

go to a field and be delivered there. And as soon as the child was born, she would forsake him and entrust him into the hands of God, saying, 'Lord of the universe, I have done my part, now do Yours'...They grew up in the field, for it says, 'I cause you to increase even as the growth of the field' (Ezekiel 26:7), and as soon as they had grown up they would return to their parents' homes. When they were asked, 'Who looked after you?' they replied, 'A fine handsome young man came down and attended to all our needs'...When Israel came to the sea, and their children with them, and the children beheld God at the sea, they said to their parents, 'This is the one who did all those things for us when we were in Egypt', as it says, 'This is *my* God and I will glorify Him'" (Shemot 15:2).

יוצאת לשדה ויולדת שם וכיון שהיתה יולדת עוזבת הנער ומוסרת אותו להקב"ה ואומרת רבון העולם אני עשיתי את שלי ואתה עשה את שלך...והיו גדלים בשדה שנאמר (יהזקאל טז) רבבה כצמח השדה נתתיך, וכיון שהיו גדלין היו נכנסין לבתיהן אצל אבותיהן והיו שואלין להם מי היה זקוק לכם והיו אומרים להם בחור אחד נאה ומשובח היה יורד ועושה לנו כל צרכינו...וכיון שבאו ישראל לים היו אותן התינוקות שם והם ראו להקב"ה בים התחילו אומרים לאבותיהם זהו אותו שהיה עושה לנו כל אותן הדברים כשהיינו במצרים שנאמר זה קלי ואנוהו.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *The Spirituality of Song: Ha'azinu 5776*

In his book, *Musicophilia*, the late Oliver Sacks (no relative, alas) told the poignant story of Clive Wearing, an eminent musicologist who was struck by a devastating brain infection. The result was acute amnesia. He was unable to remember anything for more than a few seconds. As his wife Deborah put it, "It was as if every waking moment was the first waking moment." Unable to thread experiences together, he was caught in an endless present that had no connection with anything that had gone before. One day his wife found him holding a chocolate in one hand and repeatedly covering and uncovering it with the other hand, saying each time, "Look, it's new." "It's the same chocolate," she said. "No," he replied, "Look. It's changed." He had no past at all. Two things broke through his isolation. One was his love for his wife. The other was music. He could still sing, play the organ and conduct a choir with all his old skill and verve. What was it about music, Sacks asked, that enabled him, while playing or conducting, to overcome his amnesia? He suggests that when we "remember" a melody, we recall one note at a time, yet each note relates to the whole. He quotes the philosopher of music, Victor Zuckerkandl, who wrote, "Hearing a melody is hearing, having heard, and being about to hear, all at once. Every melody declares to us that the past can be there without being remembered, the future without being foreknown." Music is a form of sensed continuity that can sometimes break through the most overpowering disconnections in our experience of time. Faith is more like music than science. Science analyses, music integrates. And as music connects note to note, so faith connects episode to episode, life to life, age to age in a timeless melody that breaks into time. God is the composer and librettist. We are each called on to be voices in the choir, singers of God's song. *Faith is the ability to hear the music beneath the noise.* So music is a signal of transcendence. The philosopher and musician Roger Scruton writes that it is "an encounter with the pure subject, released from the world of objects, and moving in obedience to the laws of freedom alone." He quotes Rilke: "Words still go softly out towards the unsayable / And music, always new, from palpitating stones / builds in useless space its godly home." The history of the Jewish spirit is written in its songs. I once watched a teacher explaining to young children the difference between a physical possession and a spiritual one. He had them build a paper model of Jerusalem. Then (this was in the days of tape-recorders) he put on a tape with a song about Jerusalem that he taught to the class. At the end of the session he did something very dramatic. He tore up the model and shredded the tape. He asked the children, "Do we still have the model?" They replied, No. "Do we still have the song?" They replied, Yes. We lose physical possessions, but not spiritual ones. We lost the physical Moses. But we still have the song.