

# *Shiur L'Yom Chamishi<sup>1</sup>*

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS:     ***Torah Beshelach:***             **Exodus 15:1-21**  
                  ***Haftarah:***                             **Judges 4:17-24**  
                  ***B'rit Chadasha:***               **John 6:36-37**

*And Moshe and B'nei Yisrael sang this song to the Holy One ....*  
[Exodus 15:1]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 78:15-16;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus: Petition #13, *Retzeh* - the Prayer for Intimate Relationship]

*Az yashir-Moshe uv'enei Yisra'el et-ha-shirah hazot l'Adonai* – Moshe and B'nei Yisrael will sing this song to the Holy One .... Exodus 15:1.

It is great nation-birthing season! And behold ... *B'nei Yisrael* – has come forth from Egypt's traumatized womb right on cue. Destined to become the Creator of the Universe's *special treasure people, royal priesthood, holy nation, and habitation of God*, this nascent nation's rigorous season of training is about to kick into a higher gear. But *wait a minute!* Are the people and families of this new nation-in-waiting *ready for this?* They have never been anything but slaves. They have no organization. They have no constitution. They have no national history. Only two men among them, Moshe and Aharon, have conversed with the Holy One. Even those two blessed men have seen nothing but the outermost fringes of the Creator's majesty. No Hebrew alive has yet experienced the Holy One's Beauty Realm. Not one has the slightest clue of the gravitas into which they are being called. Thus far they haven't had time to catch a vision for anything besides escaping the malevolent clutches of Pharaoh.

## ***Who are These 'New Faces' Who Now Walk With Us? And Why are They Tagging Along?***

In Egypt we were the ultimate social outcasts. Absolutely no one wanted to associate with us. Suddenly, however, all that seems to have changed. Now thousands of refugees from the nations have decided to cast their lot with us. Is it possible these 'foreigners' have a part to play in the Grand Plan? Is it possible the new nation is to include others of different bloodlines? Is it possible that a remnant from all the raging nations and vain imagination obsessed ethnicities of the earth has a place in what the Holy One is doing? Will the Holy One graft these people into His metaphorical *olive tree*, accept them into His sheepfold as *adopted sons and daughters*, and disciple them in righteousness right alongside the biological

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seed of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov? Is He planning on teaching them – as well as us - how to live more excellent lives, raise more excellent families, and build more excellent communities - a culture free of raging nations perversion? Is this how the great nation the Holy One promised to raise up from Avraham's seed is going to be unlike any other nation? Is this how the Holy One plan to redeem mankind as a species, bloodline by bloodline, and restore the ecosystem of Creation to its intended Edenic state of beauty, fruitfulness, and *shalom*?

Oh, what an idea! The great nation the Holy One is creating is not to be built on common ethnicity, shared philosophies, shared geography, or shared hatred of an enemy, as other nations are. This nation is instead to be built upon two pillars: [1] *intimate knowledge of and relationship with the Creator*, and [2] *co-laboring with the Creator, according to His Timing, Methods, Protocols, and Directions, to humbly serve mankind as a species and Creation as an ecosystem* by counterbalancing the *ra-*, *shachat-* and *chamas-*spreading ways of the raging nations and the peoples of vain imagination.

Because the Holy One knows that every nation needs a song to sing – an inspiring anthem of national identity and shared calling – we are about to be serenaded. This is our season of singing in general, and the day of *Shirat Ha-yam* – the ‘*Song of the Sea*’ - in particular. This is a very special day. On this day the symphonic sounds of Heaven will invade earth's atmosphere. Refrains of praise and adulation which are constantly being sung around the Throne of Heaven by *cherubim*, *serafim*, elders, and angels will soon be heard bursting forth like spring water from the throats of human instruments. The Holy One will orchestrate it. His breath will empower it. His wisdom will give it lyrical substance in the language in which He always speaks to men – *i.e.* Hebrew. And as the Heavenly choreography unfolds – in what human beings think of as ‘real time’ - waves of the purest tribute any representatives of mankind have uttered in relation to their Creator since the Fall will flow from the lips of ordinary men, women, and children. Thus will the true tone of the sounds, words, and atmosphere of Heaven find expression on the earth. Thus will the ultimate co-writing phenomenon known as *tehillah* - *i.e.* Divinely inspired psalmistry - be born. Thus will the great love song that flows in the DNA of Avraham's seed receive its mesmerizing meter, its captivating melody, its lilting verse, its soaring chorus, and its immortal, Heavenly-courts vocabulary. Thus, at long last, will awaken in the awestruck hearts of men a Kingdom-worthy *Hallelu-Yah*.

***Az Yashir Moshe Uv'nei Yisrael!***

***Our Introduction to the Kingdom-Worthy Hallelu-Yah!***

It all started with Moshe. Then it spread like wildfire. First came tears, then

laughter. Bodies began to rock forward and back. Bending of the knee was followed by bowing at the waist. Hands began to raise, faces to shine, lips to quiver, feet to dance. Then, spontaneously, words never before uttered on earth erupted from millions of mouths at the same time: *Ashirah l'Adonai* - *I will sing to the Holy One ... Ki-ga'oh ga'ah* – *for He exalted Himself exponentially...* *sus v'rocheivo ramah vayam* – *horse and his rider He has drawn into the sea!* And suddenly the earth was filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Holy One – even as the waters cover the sea.

*Selah! Selah!* Oh, a thousand times, *Selah!* Every time we read the special section of Torah that begins with *Az yashir Moshe u'vnei Yisrael* something joyful and exciting, humbling and empowering, inspiring and energizing, should begin to happen within us. As it is with '*Sh'ma Yisrael ...*', so it should be with '*Ashirah l'Adonai ...*'. The Song of the Sea is not just some faceless, nameless, Hebrew pilgrim's story from a long time ago; it is OUR STORY, every day. It is not 'their' song; it is OUR SONG. It provides our 'noble theme'. It is our anthem, it is our ballad, and it is our lullaby. It is our *Iliad* and our *Odyssey*; our *Divine Comedy* and our *Paradise Lost*; and our *Beowulf*, *Canterbury Tales*, and *Hiawatha* all rolled into one. The powerful message and inspiring Hebrew melody are essential components of our identity, our mission, and our destiny – as well as that of our children and children's children. It provides our marching cadence. It syncopates our meditations.

We were created not just to know this song, but to *live it and breathe it*. We are to love, sing, and dance to this song - and teach our children to love it and sing it and dance to it as well. We are to see Moshe and Aharon spinning round and round in delight as we sing the words, and are to hear the beat of Miryam's tambourines as we dance to the melody. We will one day join the throngs of Heaven in singing this very song over all the redemptive miracles the Holy One has wrought for those who call upon His Name. We were created to catch the Wind Energy of Heaven and spontaneously declare and exult in the *Wonderful Works of God*<sup>2</sup>. *Ki ga'oh ga'ah* – *for He has exalted Himself exponentially!* *Sus v'rocheivo ramah vayam* – *horse and his rider has He drawn into the Sea!*

Before we can hope to understand the song we were born to sing – much less sing it as it is meant to be sung – however, we must understand what this song is and what it is not. It is not just another work of human creativity. It is not the product of any human effort. It is not an offering. It is not a sacrament. It is not a

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase is taken from Acts 2:11. The pilgrims from the nations that came to Jerusalem for the Divine Appointment of *Shavuot* [known to the Greek-speaking world as 'Pentecost'] in the year the *Ruach ha-Qodesh* [Holy Spirit] was 'shed abroad' heard the ecstatic speech of Yeshua's talmidim and *cried*: "*we hear them speaking in our own tongues ta megaleia tau theou – i.e. the wonderful works of God.*"

manipulation. It is, instead, the spontaneous, passionate response of a human being to the revelation of the greatness of the Person and Works of our God. This is a song that cannot be sung – at least in any way that has its intended effect – by anyone who is not presently experiencing the throes of a revelation of the goodness and the power of our God. It is a song that can be sung with meaning only by people awash in a wave of *Yirat Adonai* [i.e. the fearsome awe of the Holy One].

### ***The Essential Empowerment of Yirat Adonai – i.e. The Fear of the Holy One***

At the conclusion of yesterday's aliyah we read of the immediate effect of the miracle the Holy One performed for us at the sea. The miracle inspired those people to engage with the redemptive plan in two important ways: they '*feared*' the Holy One and they '*put their trust*' in the Holy One and His servant Moshe. **Exodus 14:31**. This great wave of *Yirat Adonai* is what provided the atmosphere-shifting energy for the release of the Song of the Sea.

What does it really mean, however, to 'fear' the Holy One? How does this special kind of what our English Bibles call 'fear' release energy in human beings? Let's talk about that. The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as 'fear' is *yara*<sup>3</sup>. This verb is closely related to the verb *ra'ah*, meaning *to see something or someone for what it or he is, with all its or his ramifications, and to react what one sees*. *Yara* simply adds to the action of seeing something or someone as that thing or person really is, with all its or his ramifications, the *involuntary* response of *sudden trembling*. *Yara* involves being overwhelmed, overcome with emotion at a sudden revelation or discovery about the essence, attributes, and ramifications of something or someone.

To 'fear' the Holy One – i.e. to flow in *Yirat Adonai* - is thus to suddenly see Him for who He really is - with all the ramifications that has for one's life and worldview – and to *tremble inside* as a result. To tremble is to release *energy* and to set *sound waves* in motion. The purpose the trembling serves is to enable us to *shake off negativity, overcome inertia, and inspire humble surrender* to the majesty, the wisdom, the kindness, the mercy, the beauty, the agenda, the will, and the directives of the Holy One.

#### ***1. Shaking Off Negativity – and its Dark, Depressing Anti-Energy***

Ever since the Fall every human being born has been constantly immersed in a flood of serpentine negativity. Sometimes this negativity takes the form of *the lust of the flesh*. To be caught up in *lust of the flesh* means we process every decision and potential experience in the world through the self-obsessed lens of '*what will*

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<sup>3</sup> *Yara* is *yod-resh-alef*. Strong's Hebrew word #3373, it is pronounced *yaw-raw*'.

*allow me to experience the maximum amounts of fleshly pleasure*’ vs. *‘what will cause me to experience any level of fleshly discomfort*’. This is a particularly crippling form of negativity because it assures that if we do not shake it off we will spend our lives chasing meaningless illusions of fleshly pleasure, while carefully avoiding anything and everything that offers real growth, maturity or meaning.

Another form of serpentine negativity to which fallen human beings are constantly subjected is the *lust of the eye*. To be caught up in *lust of the eye* means we are constantly distracted and seduced by things in our field of earthly vision. We start to obsess over material things, images and ideals we want to attain to – or manipulate others into attaining to, people, ‘news’ items, fads, and trends. This is a form of blindness, because it substitutes things of temporal and fleeting import for things that have long-term and/or cross-generational and/or eternal impact and meaning.

A third form of serpentine negativity with which fallen human beings are now constantly tempted is the *pride of life*. To be caught up in the pride of life is to focus one’s time, energy, resources, and passion on things, concepts, opinions, and ideas that exalt us above, or makes us feel superior to, other human beings. This causes us to live off the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It causes us view everything, every person, every circumstance, and every event in our life through the lens of our faulty, short-sighted, self-righteous definition of what we think of as good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral, fair and unfair, and appropriate and inappropriate. Instead of focusing on solutions, resolutions, reconciliations, healings, and deliverances those caught up in this form of negativity focus on assessing blame, criticizing, judging, accusing, separating, assigning labels [i.e. cursing], and condemning. This is the most crippling form of negativity of all. The antithesis of humility, the disdain of love, and the opposite of compassion, this form of negativity absolutely prohibits anyone who walks in it from being a humble servant, a faithful friend, an encouraging mate, or a nurturing parent – much less a trustworthy Covenant Partner for the Holy One.

*Yirat Adonai* – trembling inside at the revelation of Who He really is and what that means for us and for our world – is the only effective antidote for these forms of negativity. *Yirat Adonai* is the beginning of wisdom because it provides us both the inspiration and the empowerment to cast off serpentine negativity.

## ***2. Overcoming Inertia – and Bucking the Tide of the Death Spiral***

Inertia is the tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest or the tendency of a body in motion to continue in motion, going in the same direction, moving at the same pace. Serpentine inertia is what keeps one following the same line of thinking,

repeating the same old clichés, having the same uninspired and uninspiring conversations, engaging in the same programmed responses and reactions to irritation and challenges, and doing the same unproductive things over and over. It takes a fresh wave of *Yirat Adonai* to wash over us and set us a-tremble in order to break us out of our ruts. *Yirat Adonai* empowers and energized us to begin to move with fresh purpose and intentionality again, to renew our minds, to refresh our souls, to free us up to respond to what the *Ruach* [Spirit] is saying, and to enthusiastically start to participate in what the Holy One is doing.

### ***3. Inspiring Humble Surrender to the Redemptive Agenda of the Bridegroom-Deliverer***

The most effective test of whether a person is flowing in *Yirat Adonai* is whether he or she is presently humbly surrendering to and embracing, or is instead subconsciously resisting, the redemptive agenda, will, and directives, of the Holy One for the people and situations within his or her sphere of influence. *Yirat Adonai* enables us to see people and situations through the Holy One's eyes instead of staring at them condescendingly through the eyes and predispositions of our own flesh. In our flesh we tend to see people as locked up permanently in destructive sin patterns, to see their broken lives as messed up beyond repair, to see the challenges they face as insurmountable, and to see the situations they are in as hopeless. He sees something altogether different. He sees potential for greatness, capacity for kindness, and a glorious testimony of His deliverance in every person and situation we want to accuse, condemn, and write off.

### ***Very Special Things Always Happen When a Wave of Yirat Adonai Washes Over the Holy One's People***

The release of *Yirat Adonai* upon the Redeemed Community always brings about something very special on the earth. This will be the day a great prophetic symphony is going to be released through human voices. It will be as if the Holy One moved upon the face of the waters, and the Beautiful Voice of the Creator said, '*Let there be a spontaneous outburst of praise!*'

This will be one of those rare and precious moments in time when *Heaven and Earth tangibly touch*. Both the Presence and the Glorious Essence of the Creator of the Universe have been stunningly revealed. We have seen the wonder that He is and the miracles of deliverance of which He is capable. We are a-flutter and a-tremble. As a result, seemingly from everywhere at once *angelic voices of pure praise are about to burst forth spontaneously out of our overwhelmed human hearts. Our human lungs, larynxes and lips will begin to resonate with the trembling of our hearts, and the result will be called a shir - i.e. a song.*

This will be one of the rare moments when *all creation becomes an orchestra*, and *all living beings a symphony*, and all of them respond in perfect harmony to the movement of *the Divine Maestro's Unveiled Hand*. Such times *cannot be planned or manipulated by men*. They are not about rhythm or rhyme, melody or lyric. Such times are not '*led*' by song leaders. Indeed, usually the moment a human being steps forward to lead or dares to inject the slightest human input such moments become impossible.

Such times are *not of this world*. They are of another. And the sounds that issue forth during such moments are not 'songs' or 'music'<sup>4</sup> as we understand them in this world – they are something else, something *indescribable in human language*. *On earth as it is in Heaven*.

### ***The Uncomfortable Truth About Most Modern 'Praise and Worship'***

I do not wish to offend you brothers and sisters. I do not want to burst anyone's religious bubble. But I have a stunning message from the Creator to all of us. Here it is: 'Praise and worship' songs – from hymns to choruses to Messianic music and beyond - as we know them in this world, are not of Divine origin. They are all, to the contrary, purely human inventions. They are conceived by human minds, constructed of human will, and conducted through human effort. *Flesh*, some call it. Wood, hay, and stubble. They are '*Little Drummer Boy*' efforts. They *begin in flesh*, they *end in flesh*, and they *appeal to and traffic in flesh*. Whatever words such compositions may use, they are not *really* about – or even truly for – the Holy One. They are for *human beings*. They 'minister' to the flesh and the emotions of human beings. Oh, the human beings who write and perform these songs may think – hope – and even *earnestly desire* to 'worship' through them – but songs, scores, and lyrics written by human beings are *simply incapable of such lofty goals*.

How I wish it were not true. How the human heart within me wishes there were a way to make human "music" and song become *true praise* – i.e. worship *in spirit* and *in truth*. No one wishes this more than me. I am, you see, by no means an enemy of 'praise and worship'. I do not condemn or shake my finger at it. I confess that I absolutely *love it*. Indeed I love it far, *far too much*, I fear.

You see, *the heart of the little drummer boy* beats in me as well as you. It is part of our human nature. If we recognize it for what it is, we can *surrender it to the Holy One* and let Him teach us – and lead us in – the higher forms of *pure praise* and the

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<sup>4</sup> The English word *music* is a fascinating word indeed. It is plucked directly from the Greek worldview, and literally means '*of the Muses*'. A '*muse*', of course, in Greek mythology/religion, was one any of the 9 daughters of the pagan 'god' Zeus by the goddess Mnemosyne [the goddess of memory]. The Greeks propagated the legend that every human endeavor in the arts and sciences was initiated and led by one of the muses. One can quickly see how pagan the English concept of 'music' necessarily is.

*deeper levels of real worship.* Because there really are moments when Heaven and earth tangibly touch. And in those very special moments ... well, in those moments everything we ever thought – or wished - was ‘praise’ or ‘worship’ *is revealed for exactly what it is.* Once you have experienced one of those ‘moments’ you will never look at praise - or worship - the same again. For your sake, and for mine, I pray that the reading of today’s aliyah will prove to be one of those moments for all of us – as I fully believe it was intended to be by the Master.

### ***The Moment Heaven and Earth Touched***

In the ancient Hebrew Scrolls of Torah the verses of today’s aliyah ***Beshelach*** - the “*Song of the Sea*” - are clearly marked off from the preceding and following narrative. The spacing is different. This passage is meant to be understood - must be understood - as something totally unique. Let us approach it with wonder and with appropriate awe. Let this song be in our hearts and on our tongues forever!

#### ***Ashirah l'Adonai***

*I will sing to the Holy One,*

#### ***ki-ga'oh ga'ah***

*for he has been majestically majestic:*

#### ***sus v'rocheivo ramah v'yam***

*Horse and his rider has He drawn into the sea.*

#### ***Ozi v'zimrat yah***

*The Holy One is my strength and song*

#### ***vayehi-li lishu'ah***

*He has become my Yeshua:*

#### ***zeh Eli v'anveihu***

*He is my God, and I will enshrine him;*

#### ***Elohei avi v'aromemeinhu***

*He is my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

If the Exodus story as revealed in Torah were to be compared to Handel’s *Messiah*, this passage would be the “*Hallelujah Chorus*”. [The audience will please stand]. It is a *crescendo of praise - a passionate declaration of love.* It is not narrative. It is not even poetry. It is *a cry of the heart of man to His God,* enabled by God. It is not a “victory dance” in the face of a vanquished enemy. It is *a wedding dance of passionate lovers in warm embrace.*

Unlike the “*Hallelujah Chorus*” however, this song appears to be *totally spontaneous.* Imagine that! No one sat and *composed* this song’s verses. No one *orchestrated* even one of its dramatic movements. No one *choreographed* even one of the flowing steps of its dance. No one *practiced* it. No one *played an intro,* or *worked out a ‘lead’,* or *wrote a single verse or chorus or bridge,* or *laid down a*

*chord progression*, or even, for that matter, *chose a key*. Out of the stirred deep waters of the *Ruach HaQodesh* the words and the melody just came, like gushing water from a rock, or like torrents of manna from the morning sky. The throats of 600,000 burly men of the desert - brick-makers, stonemasons, and laborers, not musicians or songwriters - erupted simultaneously with flowing verse. In the aftermath of the movement of the Holy One's *Mighty Hand* at the Sea of Reeds, they suddenly saw 'behind the veil', and recognized the One moving on their behalf as the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov, and Yosef, and were undone, overcome, and enraptured with love.

The Holy One was, you see, to them no longer merely the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov, and Yosef – or even the God of Moshe and Aharon. He was THEIR GOD. He had moved, and the lives of 2,000,000 people standing by the shore were caught up in the Tidal backwash of His Wake. The vacuum created by the Holy One's *Ruach* upon the face of the Deep drew the humans who stood nearby into a spiritual realm. And gazing in wonder and awe, they saw the One whom their souls loved, running and leaping on the hills, awesome in His splendor and majesty, and overwhelming in His beauty. That is what happens when Heaven touches earth, and *Yirat Adonai* washes over the Holy One's people.

### ***Words of Angelic Praise Burst Forth***

So unexpectedly from somewhere within the ranks of the redeemed a brick mason suddenly stood up, and shouted out, from a heart overflowing with praise:

***Adonai ish milchamah***

*The Holy One is a man of war.*

***Adonai shemo***

*YHVH is his shem [the expression of His character, essence, and eternal nature].*

***Markevot Par'oh v'cheylo yarah vayam***

*Pharaoh's chariots and his host has he cast into the sea;*

***umivchar shalishav tubei'u v'Yam-Suf***

*His chosen thirds are sunk in/encompassed by/swallowed up the Sea of Reeds.*

***Tehomot yechasi'umu yardu bimeitzolot keimo-aven***

*Depths cover them. They went down into the depths ... like a stone."*

As the brick mason fell silent with tears streaming down his face, a brawny stonecutter raised his rugged right hand, stared at it for a long moment, then gazed into Heaven and with trembling in his voice broke forth with these words in sweet melody:

***Yemineicha Adonai nedari bakoach***

*Your right hand, Oh Holy One, is glorious in power,*

***Yemineicha Adonai tir'atz oyev***

*Your right hand, Oh Holy One, dashes the enemy in pieces.*

As this broad-shouldered giant choked with emotion and could sing no more, another voice – that of a former ‘straw boss’ of one of Pharaoh’s construction crews – one before whom our ancestors had once cringed in fear, comes from the crowd and wafts heaven-ward:

***Uverov ge'oncha taharos kameicha***

*In the greatness of Your Excellency You overthrow those who rise up against You:*

***teshalach charoneicha yocheleimo kakash***

*You send forth Your heat; it consumes them as stubble.*

***Uveruach apeicha nei'ermu mayim***

*With the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up.*

***nitzvu chmo-ned nozlim***

*The floods stood upright as a heap.*

***kaf'u tehomot b'lev-yam***

*The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.*

By now a realization begins to dawn, that every single man, woman and child who followed Moshe out of Egypt is *standing on very holy ground*. Their God is doing something in them, equal in power to what He has just done to Pharaoh’s army. They have now come to *know* [yada] Him in His awesome power, and in the process, the Divine Suitor has stirred something primeval in their hearts and souls. The presence of the Angel of the Holy One has opened a portal of angelic praise over them.

A hush falls over the multitude. But then, three young brothers lift their hands to Heaven simultaneously, and spontaneously declare in the strength of their youthful voices:

***Amar oyev erdof asig***

*The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake,*

***achalek shalal***

*I will divide the spoil.*

***timla'eimo nafshi***

*My soul lusts/appetites will be satisfied on them.*

***arik chareibi torisheimo yadi***

*I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.'*

***Nashafta veruchacha kisamo yam***

*But then You blew with Your Breath and the sea covered them.*

***tzaleilu ka'oferet b'mayim adirim***

*And they sank like lead in mighty rushing waters.*

As soon as these three fall silent, kneeling in the sand, side-by-side, an old man who has known nothing but backbreaking slave labor and the bite of a taskmasters whip all his years – their father – stands beside them, stares into Heaven, and shouts out with all his strength:

***Mi-chamocha ba'elim Adonai***

*Who is like you, Oh Holy One, among the gods?*

***mi kamocho ne'edar bakodesh***

*Who is like you, glorious in holiness?*

***nora tehilot oseh-fele***

*Fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

***Natita yemineicha tivla'emo aretz***

*You stretched out your right hand; the eretz swallowed them.*

***Nachita v'chasdeicha am-zu ga'alta nehalta***

*You, in your lovingkindness, have led the people that you have redeemed.*

***v'ozcha el-neveh kodsheicha***

*You have guided them in your strength to your holy habitation.*

### ***The Song of Miryam and All the Women***

The women present that day - who probably numbered well over a million - responded just as spontaneously with a never-before heard or imagined chorus. As they did so, they provided percussion with whatever they could find that would clink or clang or jangle like a tambourine.

***Vatikach Miryam ha-nevi'ah achot Aharon***

*Miryam the prophetess, the sister of Aharon,*

***et-ha-tof b'yadah***

*took a tambourine [Hebrew, tof – rhythm-maker] in her hand;*

***vatetzeina chol-ha-nashim achareiha b'tupim uvim'cholot***

*and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

[Exodus 15:20]

As one of the men concluded his spontaneous expression the women would dance, and make percussion noise, and punctuate each verse sung with the chorus. Torah describes the process as follows:

***Vata'an lahem Miryam***

*Miryam answered them [sang responsively],*

***shiru l'Adonai ki-ga'oh ga'ah***

*I will sing to the Holy One, for He has been majestically majestic:*

***sus v'rocheivo ramah v'yam***  
*a horse and his rider He has drawn into the sea."*  
[Exodus 15:21]

The way I picture it each chorus of the women would lead to another man stepping forward and spontaneously expressing praise in his own way. Then the chorus of the women would be repeated. Then another verse would be sung, and so on, and so on, until at last approximately two million people fall silent, and stand, weeping, for hours, in the desert, by the sea, in the embrace of the Holy One their God – the God they now have begun to know – the God who led them out of Egypt, to be their God. *Selah!* [Pause, and think quietly about that for a moment]

### ***The Song's Prophetic Final Verse***

The Song at the Sea is indeed among the most breathtaking ecstatic outbursts of praise ever to be recorded. Few times in the history of man so far has there been a comparable eruption of spontaneous adoration from a people absolutely entranced by the Holy One's manifest Presence.

But the *Shir* of *Yam Suf* is much, much more than just a song of praise. It is also a *prophetic* song. It does not, you see, merely address what the Holy One has just done to Pharaoh and Egypt – it *looks far beyond*. Beyond the shadow of the pyramids, beyond the bodies, chariots and armor that are washing up on the shores of the Sea, the singers proclaim *mysteries too great for them to possibly know*. That is the way of *angelic praise*.

The sages were absolutely fascinated with this aspect of the song. They say that at *Yam Suf*, prophetic vision was released in such volume that ‘*a maid-servant at the Sea of Reeds saw more than any of the [Biblical] prophets [like Isaiah and Ezekiel and Jeremiah, for instance] ever saw.*’<sup>5</sup> It was definitely a *Joel 2:28-29 kind of moment in time*. In other words, when enveloped in the Presence of the Holy One, as they were in the midst of pouring forth praise, sons and daughters, old men and young men, and menservants and maidservants received ‘gifts’ of prophetic utterance, and declared the future.

What did they prophesy? First, they proclaimed in advance what the Holy One is going to do in the remainder of the Book of Exodus:

***Nachita v'chasdicha am-zu ga'alta nehalta***  
*With covenant-based kindness You will lead the people You redeemed*  
***v'ozcha el-neveh kodsheicha***  
*And with might, You will lead [them] to Your holy place.*  
[Exodus 15:13]

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<sup>5</sup> Rashi's comments to Exodus 15:2; Shir Ha-Shirim Rabba 3:15; see also Mechilta Shirah, chapter 3.

Next the inspired voices of the singers at the Sea prophesy of the effect the Holy One's deliverance of His People will have in the future on the other nations of the Earth [after all, the Holy One's plan of redemption involves making Himself known to all peoples of the earth]:

***Sham'u amim yirgazun***

*Nations will hear and shudder*

***chil achaz yoshvei P'lashet***

*Terror will grip those who dwell in Philistia.*

***Az nivhalu alufei Edom***

*Edom's chiefs will then panic*

***Eylei Mo'av yochazeimo ra'ad***

*Moav's heroes will be seized with trembling*

***namogu kol yoshvei Kena'an***

*Kena'an's residents will melt away*

I have news for you, Beloved. These things *have yet to come to pass in fullness*. There is yet an *appointed time* for them to occur. The nations will tremble before the Holy One – when the Holy One brings and establishes His People, the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, natural and engrafted, in his Holy Place. Why do I say this? Because the prophetic singers of *Yam Suf* next declare:

***Tevi'emo***

*You will bring them [people drawn to the Holy One]*

***v'tita'emo b'har nachalatcha***

*and [You] will plant them on the mountain of your possession*

***machon l'shivteicha pa'alta Adonai***

*the place You dwell - [the crowning] accomplishment of the Holy One -*

***mik'dash Adonai koneinu yadeicha***

*The holy place of the Holy One, built by Your Hand.*

**[Exodus 15:17]**

Behold *a mystery*. The Holy One will bring people from all nations to a New Jerusalem that He Himself will build, and will cause them to dwell together there in peace.

The prophecy of *Yam Suf* crescendos and concludes with a stunning pronouncement of a truth that belongs not to any time during the lifetime of the singers, but to the period of time at the end of the present age, after Messiah has established His Kingdom on earth:

***Adonai yimloch l'olam va'ed***

*The Holy One will reign forever and ever.*

**[Exodus 15:18]**

Now do you see the connection between the Song of the Sea and Handel's *Messiah*? Now do you see the connection between the Song of the Sea to the Song of Moshe the Servant of God, and to the 'Song of the Lamb', referenced in Revelation 15:2-4 as being sung at a Sea 'as of glass'? *And He will reign forever and ever indeed! May it occur quickly, and in our day, Beloved. Amen v'amen.*

***But ... What of the Little Drummer Boy –  
and the Organizational/Institutional/Congregational  
'Worship Leader' Job?***

Those who know me know I am passionate about what we casually call 'praise' and 'worship'. I am fascinated by instrumentation. I 'love' to sing. I have had the opportunity to play and sing on numerous 'worship teams'. I have had the opportunity to lead worship, and the Holy One has given me words and musical arrangements for many songs which human beings would call – and I would wish truly were - praise and worship. But I see in the *Song of the Sea* something different, something deeper, *something to which I can only aspire*. Having seen this, I know in my heart that it will never again be enough, for me, just to sing songs while overhead projectors dictate words for God's people to parrot while trained musicians play notes someone has written on a page. No more *bah-rum-pum-pum-pum*. No, Beloved, I want more. I *must have* more. I want to *dance with the King of Glory*. I want to *move in tune with rhythms only cherubim and serafim can play*. And I want to *fall silent, in awe, and weep as He holds me in His arms of unshakeable covenant love*. And as He holds me there I want to *taste the salt of the sea, and see the blood in the sand, and hear the beating of a million tambourines in heavenly rhythm*. And I want to know - beyond the shadow of a doubt - that because the Holy One is my God, I – and the world with which I share that moment - will *never be the same again*.

***A Three-Day's Journey Back to 'Virtual Reality'***

Those who sought our lives are dead. We have seen their lifeless bodies washed ashore. We have retrieved, and armed ourselves with, their weapons. We are now free from Pharaoh indeed. He will not come after us again. But we are - even yet - still not totally free from *Egypt*. And the Holy One knows it, even if we don't. *Egypt*, you see, was more than where we worked and lived. It was where we *got our food*. It was where we *got our water*. It was where we *received protection from thugs and gangs* – after all, no one in their right mind would attack Pharaoh's slaves.

And now that we were safely out from under Pharaoh's *oppression* – we were also out from under his *provision* and his *protection*. Our lives were about to change drastically. And so after the wonderful, ecstatic experience of worship and

dancing, singing and rejoicing, and holy awe which filled the first part of today's aliyah and put the finishing touches on the exodus from Egypt, the pillar of fire and cloud arose suddenly, and headed across Southward down the Western Edge of the Sinai peninsula.

We did not have time to 'relish the moment'. It was time to move on to – wherever! Moshe followed the cloud. We followed Moshe. But alas, it was *very, very hot*. Our *feet hurt*. *Sand blew* in our faces. The *babies cried*. The *donkeys balked*. We had no idea where we were going - or what awaited us when we got there. The journey was *slow and tedious*. And somewhere on the three-day march that followed the ecstasy of *Yam Suf* [the Sea of Reeds] *reality set in*. Here is how Torah describes it:

***V'yasa Moshe et-Yisra'el miyam-Suf***  
*Moshe led Yisra'el onward from the Sea of Suf,*

***vayeitz'u el-midbar-Shur***  
*and they went out into the wilderness of Shur<sup>6</sup>;*

***v'yelchu sh'loshet yamim b'midbar***  
*and they went three days in the wilderness,*

***v'lo-matz'u mayim***  
*and found no water.*  
[Exodus 15:22]

Okay. Now it sinks in. No Pharaoh means – NO WATER!

### ***The Desert Station Called Marah***

And then the Holy One's pillar of cloud and fire led us purposely and methodically to the desert station we have come to call *Marah*. It was just a small oasis in the desert. But we could see water. And our throats were parched with thirst. No, the water we saw at Marah wasn't water such as we were used to seeing flowing freely in the Nile. No, it wasn't even water such as we had recently experienced in deep reservoirs at the Sea of Reeds. It was just a little pool of water at a deep place in a *wadi*. It was not *running water*. It was not clear, sparkling water. But it was wet. And lo, we were *very, very dry*.

To us, the sight of Victoria Falls couldn't have been more beautiful. We rushed to the pool, cupped our hands, and brought the water to our parched tongues. And that is when the disappointment struck. The water was bitter. It was undrinkable. It was all a cruel joke.

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<sup>6</sup> *Shur* is *shin, vav, resh*, Strong's Hebrew word #7793, pronounced *shuwr*. Strong's translates it as 'wall', but it is not a 'wall' in the sense we might think. It is a metaphorical type of wall, or barrier, as we use in the English expression 'up against a wall'. It is derived from a verb root meaning 'he journeys', or 'he travels' [Strong's Hebrew word #7788].

***Vayavo'u Maratah***

*When they came to Marah,*

***v'lo yachlu lish'tot mayim miMarah ki marim hem***

*they couldn't drink from the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.*

***al-ken kara-sh'mah Marah***

*Therefore the name of it was called Marah.*

**[Exodus 15:23]**

*Marah*<sup>7</sup> is a noun derived from the verb root *marar*<sup>8</sup>. Those who have participated in a Seder at *Pesach* are familiar with this word. It is the name given to the bitter substance in which we dip the *matzah* [unleavened bread], to remember the 'bitterness of bondage in Egypt'. As the bondage of Egypt was bitter, so were the waters of *Marah*. And so, we found out, were *we*. We were bitter *at the water*. We were bitter *at each other*. We were bitter *at Moshe*. And we were bitter *at the Holy One*. The empowering wave of *Yirat Adonai* that swept over us after the miracle at the Sea of Reeds had left us almost as quickly as it had come.

***Programmed Reality Check!***

And here is the most marvelous part - *the Holy One orchestrated the whole thing*. He orchestrated *the heat*, right after the celebration at the Sea of Reeds. He orchestrated *the windstorms* right after we danced ecstatically to the beat of tambourines. He led us right through these things by the pillar of cloud. And the first place He led us after we sang the glorious Song of the Sea - was right here, to this *place of bitter waters*. He did it *on purpose*. Why? Perhaps it was because the Holy One knew that the infatuation we had felt at *Yam Suf* – while it was wonderful - would not sustain us in our relationship for long. He wanted more from us – and *for us* – than infatuation and ecstatic praise. He wanted us to hunger for another wave of *Yirat Adonai*. He wanted us to love and desire Him more than our flesh thirsts for water.

We had responded to the deliverance He wrought for us at the Sea of Reeds with trembling, with fervency, and with passion. In the empowerment of the moment we had sung, and danced, and raised our hands, and wept, and shouted, and prophesied, and stood in awe. But that was by no means enough to make us vessels of true praise. That was just a 'good beginning'. What more does He want from us? What more is He trying to draw out of us? He wants us to joyfully, enthusiastically *partner with Him in the redemptive process* He has in mind for the world and the species of man. He wants us to reach our potential, to embrace the purpose for which we were created, and to passionately pursue His agenda.

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<sup>7</sup> *Marah* is *mem, resh, hey*. Strong's Hebrew word #4785, it is pronounced *maw-raw'*.

<sup>8</sup> *Marar* is *mem, resh, resh*. Strong's Hebrew word #4843, it is pronounced *maw-rawr'*.

You see, after the ecstatic experience at the Sea of Reeds some of us thought we had ‘arrived’. I mean, we had danced before the Holy One with all our might, and ‘sung a new song’ in the Spirit. We thought we were now ‘spiritual’. We were mistaken. We *mistook the initial stirrings of fervency and passion we had experienced for spiritual maturity*. We *thought* we were ready to be His Bride. But we weren’t ready - not by a long shot. Being free from Egypt, and infatuated with the Holy One, was ‘entry level’ stuff. We had yet to learn to *eat what He feeds us*. We had yet to learn to know – much less begin to respond to - *to the sound of His Voice*. We had yet to learn *His standards of right behavior – behavior becoming His Bride*. We had yet to learn to accept and adopt as our own *His plan for our future*. We had yet to hunger for *His Bridal chamber* [the land of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov] more than any other place on earth. And so the Holy One, ever the faithful Bridegroom, picked up the pillar of cloud and led us on a 3-day hike in the desert. Follow the leader. You go where I go. Don’t lag behind!

He caused our skin to chaff with heat. He caused our feet to blister. He caused us to *thirst* like we had never thirsted before. Then He led us to *bitter waters*. And He let us stew about it. Because He wanted our relationship to be REAL.

***V’yilonu ha-am al-Moshe***

*The people murmured against Moshe,*

***l’emor mah-nishteh***

*saying, Mah-n’shatah? ["What shall we drink?"]*

***V’yitz’ak el-Adonai***

*Then he cried to the Holy One.*

**[Exodus 15:22-25(a)]**

That’s as *real* as it gets.

### ***The Tree of Life Re-enters Man’s Experience***

In Genesis 3:24 the Holy One put a barrier – an angel with a flaming sword - between man and the Tree of Life in the center of the Garden of Eden. The tree of life had not been a part of man’s experience since that time. But all that is about to change.

***Vayoreihu Adonai etz v’yash’lech el ha-mayim***

*And the Holy One showed him [Moshe] a tree, and he threw it into the waters,*

***v’yimteiku ha-mayim***

*and the waters were made sweet.*

What tree did the Holy One show Moshe? Where was that tree, that it was *hidden from Moshe until the Holy One showed it to him*? What kind of tree *changes stagnant pools into fountains of living water*? Perhaps the same kind of tree *the*

*leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.* The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘tree’ in this passage is *etz*<sup>9</sup>. It is the same word the Torah uses to describe all trees. But this was no ordinary tree. This was a tree that can make life’s bitter experiences *sweet*<sup>10</sup>.

Did you catch that last term – *nurturing*? A big part of *nurturing* is helping the one being nurtured to learn how to make that which seems bitter to become sweet. And that, Dear Reader, is what the experience of the desert station called *Marah* is all about. It was for the purpose of teaching us how to make what is bitter become sweet that He led us there.

### ***Questions for Today’s Study***

1. Today’s aliyah calls upon all of us to re-examine the nature and purpose of what we do and call “corporate worship”. Let us not do so in a critical fashion, condemning other people or organizations - but let us not be afraid to probe the depths of truth - and make appropriate adjustments. The point, you see, is not what *others* may be doing that is “wrong”. The point is what *we* are to do with the revelation of Scripture - and particularly, the revelation of the Song of the Sea.

[A] In today’s aliyah Moshe and the redeemed remnant which has just witnessed the miraculous intervention of the Holy One at the Sea of Reeds responds spontaneously with a song [Hebrew, *shir*] of pure praise and adoration. What dis-similarities do you see between this “first instance” of corporate worship and what occurs today in churches, synagogues, and worship conferences?

[B] What similarities do you see between this “first instance” of corporate worship and what occurs today in churches, synagogues, and worship conferences?

[C] Look at Moshe’s prophecy in verse 13. What is the Hebrew word translated as “salvation” in this verse?

2. In today’s haftarah we are introduced to a woman named Yael.

*However Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Ya`el the wife of Hever the Keni;  
for there was shalom between Yavin the king of Hatzor and the house of Hever the Keni.*

*Ya`el went out to meet Sisera, and said to him,  
“Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; don't be afraid.”*

*He came into her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug.  
He said to her, Please give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.  
She opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.*

*He said to her, “**Stand in the door of the tent,***

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<sup>9</sup> Etz is *ayin*, *tzade sofit*, Strong’s Hebrew word #6086, it is pronounced *ates*.

<sup>10</sup> The word in the original Hebrew text of Torah is *mataq*. Strong’s Hebrew word #4985, *mataq* means ‘pleasing’ and/or ‘nurturing’.

*and it shall be, when any man does come and inquire of you,  
and say, Is there any man here? that you shall say, No.”*

*Then Ya`el Hever's wife took a tent-pin, and took a hammer in her hand,  
and went softly to him and struck the pin into his temples,  
and it pierced through into the ground; for he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died.*

*Behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Ya`el came out to meet him,  
and said to him, “**Come, and I will show you the man whom you seek.**”  
He came to her; and, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the tent-pin was in his temples.*

*So God subdued on that day Yavin the king of Kana`an before the children of Yisra'el.  
The hand of the children of Yisra'el prevailed more and more  
against Yavin the king of Kana`an, until they had destroyed Yavin king of Kana`an.*

[A] What does the name **Yael** [our English Bibles translate it as “Jael”] mean?

[B] From what nationality/culture did Yael and her husband come?

[C] Whose side were Yael and her husband allied with before the great battle?

[C] How did the Holy One use Yael to fulfill the prophecy given to Deborah in Judges 4:9?

3. In today’s reading from the apostolic Scriptures Yeshua discusses those who are *His* and those who *are not*.

***But I told you that you have seen Me, and yet you don't believe.  
All those who the Father gives Me will come to me.  
Him who comes to Me I will in no way throw out.***

[A] What was it that people who were not “His” were incapable of believing about Him?

[B] Who was it that Messiah indicated in these verses *would* come to Him?

*May your heart erupt with true, spontaneous praise.  
And may your approach to worship never be the same.*

### ***The Rabbi’s son***

## ***Meditation for Today’s Study***

Psalm 78:15-16

*He split rocks in the wilderness,  
and gave them drink abundantly, as out of the depths.  
He brought streams also out of the rock,  
and caused waters to run down like rivers.*