

# Shabbat Shira — *parahat Beshalach* January 15, 2011 10 Shevat 5771

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## NEWS TU B'SHEVAT

**W**hat is Tu B'Shevat and How is it Celebrated? This day is considered as the New Year of the trees. It is interesting to notice in the land of Israel that on that very day, the almond trees start to blossom and beautiful white flowers appears which announce the spring time. This year it will occur on Thursday, January 20th.

Tu B'Shevat is a festive day in Israel. The Torah praises the Land of Israel with reference to the fruits of the trees and the produce of the soil: "A land of wheat and barley and vines (grapes) and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and (date) honey. ...and you shall eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord your G-d for the good land which He has given you" (Deut 8:8-10). The Jewish people rejoice in the fruits, in the Land and in the Almighty Who has given them life.

It is celebrated by eating the special types of fruits for which Israel is renowned: dates, pomegranates, figs, grapes — and carob (St. John's bread).

Tu B'Shevat is also celebrated by planting trees in Israel. It is the most favorable day for planting trees in Israel. Everyone is planting trees in Israel. Even pupils from school, they have a free day, they go to the forests with their teachers and plant them.

If you can't get to Israel, you can purchase trees to be planted in Israel from your local Jewish National Fund Office, if not contact us, we will be happy to contact the KKL for you and to help you to plant trees in Israel.

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## IMMERSION IN FLORIDA

Jeff Zeremsky is always very faithful to send us news and we are happy to publish them. This week we received the very good news about their work and result: "We have just concluded a series on Daniel and Revelation and on January 1<sup>st</sup> immersed two people into the L-rd Mashiach.



We are hoping to be able to immerse a few more from these meetings soon. Attendance was solid throughout the meetings. Everyone who started the meetings are still attending with us. Attendance even grew as we went along. We did no advertising. The series was for the interests that have built up over the years. Average attendance was about 20 people each night with about 30 people total attending at least some of the meetings





# OVERVIEW

## BESHALACH

### EXODUS 13:17-17:16

**P**haraoh finally sends B'nei Yisrael out of Egypt. With pillars of cloud and fire, G-d leads them toward Eretz Yisrael on a circuitous route, avoiding the Pelishtim (Philistines).

Pharaoh regrets the loss of so many slaves and chases the Jews with his army. The Jews are very afraid as the Egyptians draw close, but G-d protects them. Moshe raises his staff and G-d splits the sea, enabling the Jews to cross safely. Pharaoh, his heart hardened by G-d, commands his army to pursue, whereupon the waters crash down upon the Egyptian army. Moshe and Miriam lead the men and women, respectively, in a song of thanks. After three days' travel only to find bitter waters at Marah, the people complain. Moshe miraculously produces potable water. In Marah they receive certain mitzvot. The people complain that they ate better food in Egypt. G-d sends quail for meat and provides manna, a miraculous bread that falls from the sky every day except Shabbat. On Friday a double portion descends to supply the Shabbat needs. No one is able to obtain more than his daily portion, but manna collected on Friday suffices for two days so the Jews can rest on Shabbat. Some manna is set aside as a memorial for future generations. When the Jews again complain about a lack of water, Moshe miraculously produces water from a rock. Then Amalek attacks. Joshua leads the Jews in battle while Moshe prays for their welfare.

### SHABBAT SHIRA

**T**his Shabbat is called "Shabbat Shira" - "Shabbat of Song". The reason for this name is that in this week's Parsha, B'Shalach, we read about the splitting of the Red Sea and the "Shira," the "song" which Moshe and the Jewish people sang praising G-d for the great miracle which they just witnessed.

### THE MIRACLE OF MANNA

**T**he story of the Manna is told in the Parsha as follows: "And all the Children of Israel murmured against Moshe and Aaron and

said, 'We would have been better off dying by the hand of G-d in the land of Egypt when we sat by the pot of meat, when we ate bread to our satisfaction; for you have brought us forth to die of starvation in this wilderness.'" (Ex 16:2-3)

In response, G-d told Moshe, "I will cause it to rain bread from heaven; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion each day, that I may test them to see whether they will follow My laws or not. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day [Friday], they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather each day." (Ex 16:4-5)

Each day of the week, except Shabbat, the manna would come down and the people would collect it each morning. On Friday they received a double portion of manna, for Friday and for Shabbat.

### GLORIFYING G-D

**T**he Torah States, "This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2). What is the Jewish practical application of this verse? The Talmud (Shabbos 133b) teaches us that when you do G-d's mitzvot (commandments), glorify G-d for the mitzvah and practice the mitzvah in the best way possible; have a beautiful sukah, and a beautiful Torah scroll. We find the same concept in reference to charity. Rambam writes, "When you give food to a hungry person, give him your best and sweetest food. When you give a needy person clothes, give him your best clothes" (Hilchos Isurai Mizbaiach 7:11).

### THE GREATER FREEDOM

**T**he Torah states, "And on that day the Almighty saved the Israelites from the hand of Egypt" (Exodus 14:30). Rabbi Packouz asks this question: which day does the Torah refer to when it writes "on that day"? The Ohr HaChayim comments that the Torah states that "on that day" that the Israelites were saved was the self-same day that the Egyptians who pursued them perished in the sea. However, the Israelites were liberated from Egypt and left Egypt before this. Why only now that the Egyptians drowned in the sea did they feel saved? Rabbi Packouz's answer:

The Israelites only felt saved once they felt secure that the Egyptians would no longer pursue them. We see from this that even though in actuality a person is free, he is not really considered free unless

he personally feels free. A person who worries and feels insecure is a person who is imprisoned even though he is not behind bars and no one will harm him. To be truly free you must feel free and this is up to you. You have a great deal of control over your thoughts if you work on it. If you worry about the future, even though future events might work out exactly as you would have wished, you still suffer in the present. This suffering will be the same as if you actually experienced some misfortune. However, all the suffering will be unnecessary. The greater your mastery over your thoughts, the greater freedom you will experience in life!

Our freedom is the freedom to be G-d's servants. And it is this servitude which is the ultimate freedom. The Sages say: "On the Tablets was engraved our freedom. Do not read 'engraved on the Tablets,' but rather 'freedom on the Tablets.'" Yeshua's talmid Yaacov understood this point when he called the Tablets "law of Freedom" in his letter to the believers he said "But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of freedom, and continues, not being a hearer who forgets but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in what he does." (Jam 1:25). According to this verse the one who tastes this freedom is the doer, that's why Rabbi Zev Leff says: Freedom is total immersion in Torah, total dedication and obedience to G-d Himself. Only when the believer is able to express his deepest inner will, the thirst to do G-d's will, is he truly free. He is no longer a servant whose inner will is suppressed and stifled by the "the yeast in the dough," and figuratively, the Yetzer Hara with its infinite array of desires and lusts that wrench one from submission to G-d's will.

## READING TORAH

Immediately following the splitting of the waters and the "Song of the Sea", a national event occurred, which reverberates in our collective experience to this very day. The People of Israel receive Torah, and share a collective learning experience. At this juncture, the Jews have traveled three days' distance from the site of their first revelation — the splitting of the sea — and they are thirsty. What they seek is more than physical sustenance. They beg for a continued revelation, an ongoing dialogue with G-d, and they are given certain Torah laws — *hok u'mishpat*. From that day forth, Jews do not allow an interval of three days to transpire between public readings of the

Torah, the reading of the torah has been for thousands years on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbat. This spiritual sustenance uplifted them, allowed them to face the trials and challenges that lay ahead.

## THE ANGEL OF ELOHIM

The Torah states; "The angel of Elohim who had been going in front of the children of Israel moved and went behind them ..." (Exodus 14:19) R' Noson asked R' Shimon: Everywhere else the angel is described as the angel of YHVH [the holy name employed to describe G-d's attribute of mercy]; why is he referred to here as the angel of Elohim? R' Shimon answered: Elohim always refers to G-d's attribute of justice; the Jews were being judged at that very moment whether to be destroyed along with Egyptians or saved. (Yalkut, Beshalach, 233).

The Torah says, "Then Moses and the children of Israel chose to sing this song to G-d ..." (Exodus 15:1) The verb "to sing" is spelled as *yashir*, which is the way to write the verb in the future tense according to the rules of Hebrew grammar. The Rabbis found a hint to the resurrection buried in this apparently inappropriate selection of the future tense to describe a past event. Taken literally, the text says that Moses and the children of Israel will sing this song in the future.

Our Sages interpret this as a prophecy; Moses and the children of Israel actually will sing this song at the time of the resurrection of the dead. Thus the song of our Parsha, a song of thanksgiving to G-d offered by the Jewish people for having been granted the miracle of the splitting of the sea is actually the song of the resurrection; the very same song that the people experiencing the resurrection will be inspired to sing (See Mechilta, Beshalach as quoted by Rashi).

Yochanan, talmid of Yeshua gives the same idea in his book "And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by G-d and sang the song of Moses the servant of G-d and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord G-d Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. (Rev 15:2-3). When G-d people will be with the Mashiach they will be rejoice and will sing the wonderful song of Moses to express their joy.

## BEAUTIFUL... OR TOO BAD?

A city council hired an artist to make a statue for the central park. The artist was offered a handsome sum of money for his work. He labored to create a marvelously lifelike image of a horse. It was such a perfect replica that passersby would hardly notice that it was statue. This became a point of contention for the city council that had commissioned the artist and promised him generous recompense for his craft. After all, as politicians, they wanted to gain some reflected glory for their efforts to beautify the park and all was going completely unnoticed. The artist, they complained, had done too good of a job. The horse was too real in appearance and casual observers were incapable telling the difference between it and the real thing. They complained to the artist threatening to halt his payment unless he made some correction. What was he to do? His statue was perfect. What improvement could he possibly make? After a short period of time he arrived at a solution. He went to the park with a hammer and chisel in hand and surgically he stuck at and knocked off the nose of his beautiful statue rendering it seriously and obviously flawed.

Soon small crowds gathered in the park and were seen taking serious notice of the statue. One was heard saying to another, "What a beautiful statue of a horse!" The other one answered, "Too bad the nose is broken!"

### BLASPHEMY

There is a fascinating discussion in the Talmud which perfectly illustrates the Jewish attitude to life. The sages engaged in a debate about whether the creation of man is worthwhile when evaluated from a human perspective or not. Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel debated the issue for two and a half years; the former maintained that it would have been better for man not to have been created than to be created, while the latter maintained that on balance it was worthwhile for man to have been created. A decision was eventually reached – it would have been better for man not to have been created, but now that he was created, he should search his deeds. Some say now that he was created he should develop sensitivity towards his actions. (Eruvin 13b) Thus after considerable debate our sages concluded that life itself was not worthwhile. What does this mean?

What are the factors that allow one to weigh such a question intelligently? To provide ourselves with perspective, first let us appreciate the full ramifications of the issue. Judaism teaches that the only creation G-d was interested in was man. Man was created for his own sake, whereas everything else that was created was only to allow man to succeed and flourish. If we conclude that the creation of man is not worthwhile, we are really saying that G-d was wasting His time in everything that He created. Isn't that blasphemy? Doesn't it contradict G-d's own judgment: And G-d saw all that He had made and behold it was very good.

### G-D CARES

A poor man was walking alongside the road carrying a heavy bundle. The town was far and the bundle was heavy, yet the poor man couldn't pay transportation and thus had no choice but to walk to his destination.

As he was walking, a rich man drove by in his carriage. He had pity on the poor man and offered him a lift, which the poor man happily accepted.

After a while, the rich man noticed that the poor man was still carrying his heavy bundle on his shoulder. "Why don't you put the bundle down?" he asked.

The poor man politely answered, "You kindly offered me a ride in your carriage, how can I also burden you with my bundle? This would be too much chutzpah on my part!" The rich man laughed and said, "It's all the same to me whether you put your bundle down or not. My carriage is carrying you and your bundle anyway. So you might as well take the load of your back and enjoy the ride!"

"The same," explained the Magid, "is with Shabbat. During the six days of the week, G-d carries us and supplies our needs. If He takes care of us all week, he certainly can supply our needs if we listen to His commandment and rest on Shabbat

### EDITOR

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# HAFTARAH

## Judges 4:4-5:31

**HAFTARAH:** The text of the Haftara is about Deborah one of the rare prophetess of the Bible: “At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel..” (Judges. 4:4).

**PARASHA:** In the parasha we have the description of another prophetess, Myriam. It is said: **And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the L-RD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”** (Exodus 15:21). Myriam was the first prophetess in Israel. G-d uses men and women to reveal his will to the humanity.

**HAFTARAH:** Exactly as Myriam was a great support for Moses, Deborah supported Barak, the chef of the army of Israel: **“Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day on which the L-RD has given Sisera into your hand. The L-RD is indeed going out before you.”** So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand warriors following him. **And the L-RD threw Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic before Barak; Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot, ..”** (Judges. 4:14-15).

**PARASHA:** When Moses got his victory over the Egyptian army he sang a song with miriam: **Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the L-RD: “I will sing to the L-RD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea** (Ex. 15:1).

**HAFTARAH:** When Barak got his victory over the army of Sisera, he sang a song with Deborah: **Then Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: “When locks are long in Israel, when the people offer themselves willingly— bless the L-RD! (Judges 5:1-2) “Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, utter a song! Arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam. (Judg. 5:12) “In ancient times the L-rd had connected with His work men of varied talents. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses with his meekness and wisdom, and Joshua with his varied capabilities were all enlisted in G-d’s service. The music of Myriam, the courage and piety of Deborah, the filial affection of Ruth, the obedience and faithfulness of Samuel—all were needed.”** (EGW). Today G-d uses also men and women of faith to lead his people, the key of success is always the same faith in Him

# BRIT HACHADASHA

## Eph 2:1-10

### SAVED BY FAITH

The Torah affirms **“The children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.”** (Ex 14:29) and the Midrash says, **“The heavenly angels marveled and said: ‘How can people who are idol worshippers walk on dry land in the midst of the sea?’ ”** (Exodus Rabba 26:4) In other words, the Israelites were not clearly deserving of such a great miracle as the splitting of the sea; the moral difference between them and the Egyptians was not sufficiently marked to justify saving one while drowning the other. Performing miracles for the undeserving is discriminatory and presents even G-d with moral difficulties. The Bible solves this difficulty saying that the great difference is their faith. G-d’s people have no more merits than other people, all of them are sinners and need Mashiach to be saved. Israel demonstrated their faith by the passover blood on the doors of their houses. Rabbi Shaul confirms this truth for each one of us, **“But because of his great love for us, G-d, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Mashiach even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And G-d raised us up with Mashiach and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Mashiach Yeshua, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Mashiach Yeshua. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of G-d not by works, so that no one can boast. (Eph 2:4-9).** G-d is love, it is an affirmation of the Bible and the exodus is a great illustration of this love of G-d for us and for everyone on the earth. He is full of mercy. His forgiveness is always available to us. Available—but not automatic—because forgiveness and salvation are reserved to everyone who has faith in G-d, in his love and in his Mashiach. The blood of the lamb put on the doors by the Israelites was a symbolic act of their faith in the blood of the Messiah **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.** Nobody can boast and says that he is righteous enough by himself to be saved. Let’s praise the L-rd for his gift of salvation.

