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SHEVII SHEL PESAH

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Editors Notes

It didn't work ! Or did it?

During one of our classes in the weeks prior to Pesach, we were discussing the shiur or the amount of matzah one is required to eat at each of three points in the Seder. The first is our initial taste of matzah for the holiday meal, the second is for the Maror/ charoset sandwich we eat in remembrance of Hillel who was the true inventor of the sandwich and finally, the last is when we conclude our meal in eating the afikoman. Although the calculation of the minimum amount varies from as little as a sixth of a large round matzah (or less) to as high as a whole round matzah for each of the three times with some doubling the first or last portion, many hold that we should eat half the big round matzah each time. Now half a big round matzah is plenty of matzah. Someone asked how does someone get that down?

I suggested as I had seen in one of the books that with each bite one contemplate that the matzah was an amazing heavenly medicine designed to cure our physical and spiritual maladies. As I quoted, imagine being given a cure all elixir, an elixir which could fix anything? Would one not cherish every sip? This is how we should think of the matzah.

I think everyone at the class enjoyed and internalized that answer and committed to holding on to this thought during their own upcoming Seders. I know I did.

But I tried it on Friday night and again Saturday night and it didn't work. Or maybe???

Last Wednesday night after a cancelled flight to Fort Lauderdale, replaced with a delayed flight and a day of non stop holiday shopping, I was sure I was coming down with something. I called my local

Florida internist/cardiologist who, determined to keep the Rabbi healthy for the holiday prescribed lots of drugs. But like the matzah, the drugs didn't help. And if my stomach had anything to say, well let's leave it at that.

I made it through Friday, burning the bread and continuing with more chores until minutes before mincha. Then at the Seder it hit me. As the family ate the festive meal so well prepared by M wife and daughters, I was forced to complete the Seder on my own and sneak away to bed. I thought a good nights sleep will help. No sunrise minyan for me.

But things got gradually worse on Shabbat. I could barely eat or drink a thing. When it came time to return for Mincha, although I was scheduled to teach, I asked my sons and sons in law to apologize, prayed and fell asleep. In what felt to be a minute later, they returned and I struggled to pull myself from bed. Part of me pressed me to go back to sleep in need of preserving my health, but the other part of me pondered the possible Refuah affects of the matzah as the medicine wasn't helping much and more so recounted all the spiritual connections we make at the Seder. How could I give this up? My mom and my kids would be so disappointed. And even a mini Seder is better than no Seder. So with that I got ready, prayed, and watched the kids lead the Seder. It was a pleasure hearing from a table full of very wise men and women that night.

When the egg was eaten in memory of the korban hagigah, I apologized. I ate the afikoman, the remaining matzah, although I now used the smallest allowable portion. I drank the last two cups (grape juice), and completed the hagadah. Satisfied that I did the best I could, I rose to recite the blessing on the Omer beginning the 49 day count down to receiving the Torah. I bid everyone an enjoyable Seder and good night and ran off to bed where I have pretty much remained for the past forty eight hours and counting.

Laying here and reading, I wondered, what happened? The matzah didn't seem to work nor did the medicine.

And I accepted that evidently whatever I've got has to run its course. But did I really need to come all the way to Miami to get sick?

Then a friend pointed out that had I stayed home and had we organized a Seder for 100 and had I become sick in New York, we really would have had a problem. In New York this year there was no plan B or they would have used plan B in making a Seder without me. So it was very fortunate that I wasn't in New York.

I was supposed to fly home tomorrow morning - Tuesday - for 48 hours to check in on things in the office, but I guess Hashem didn't want that either. But couldn't he have found an easier way?

And I realized that in life we often rush things. We are afraid to let things take their course. Especially in these days, milliseconds are often excruciatingly long.

The thought of rushing often relates to the Exodus from Egypt. Hashem rushed us out, lest we fall into the lowest level of tumah or defilement of Egypt and never get out. But Rabbi Abittan taught that when we are rushed into something, we often rush right out. Something like easy come, easy go. The way of growth is gradual and in stages. Perhaps that's why as soon as the Seder ends we begin counting the Omer. It's 49 steps of daily spiritual growth towards coming to Sinai and receiving the Torah. The Seder is a blast of energy, but for almost all of us, that blast is too much to take all at once and we need to divide it into 49 separate parts to be taken daily and to build one level onto the next. We need to take those steps through the desert to contemplate and acclimate each step.

G-D willing, by the time we cross the sea on Thursday morning - shevii shel Pesach - the seventh of Passover when we celebrate the splitting of the sea and the real emancipation from Egypt- I'll be up and at em. And I'll have had some time to contemplate. And each of these forty nine days I will have a special kavana or focus on the daily growth.

Yes, each bite of matzah is a cure. I just needed to let it take its course.

**Tizku LeShanim Rabot
Chag Sameyach
Shabbat Shalom
Happy Holiday.**

David Bibi

Op-Ed: It's time for a Palestinian State Daniel Greenfield

The only legitimate Palestinian state is a Hamas terror state, because it is the will of the Palestinian Arab people. That's the two-state-solution. A Palestinian state has never existed during any period in human history. Let's change that.

The United States has spent billions of dollars trying to create a Palestinian state. It's time that we finally got our money's worth.

We've been putting money in the broken Palestinian slot machine in the metaphorical Palestinian casino (the real one was shot up when terrorists turned it into a base) for decades. It's time to finally get our Palestinian jackpot.

But to make it happen, we need to be realistic.

Forget the peace process. Forget negotiations. They've never worked before. They're not going to now. And there's nothing to negotiate anyway.

There are almost a million Jews living on territory claimed by the PLO. Removing them would be the single greatest act of ethnic cleansing against an indigenous population today. It would also be impossible.

But the same people who insist that the United States, a country of 318 million, can't deport 11 million illegal aliens, think that Israel will somehow deport 1/8th of its own population if they just chant loudly enough about "occupation" outside Jewish businesses in London or San Francisco.

Ethnically cleansing 8,000 Jews from Gaza/Gush Katif led to nationwide civil disobedience, riots and, eventually, the fall of a political party and three straight terms for Prime Minister Netanyahu. Now imagine trying to deport 800,000 people from their homes simply because they're Jewish.

And it wouldn't just be the Jews alone being rounded up into trucks, buses and maybe boxcars.

Abbas has no political authority to form a Palestinian state, a Palestinian shawarma stand or a Palestinian anything.

52 percent of Arabs in East Jerusalem would rather be Israeli citizens than live under the PLO. Are we support to deport 100,000 Arabs from Jerusalem to make way for this imaginary "Palestinian" state?

How much ethnic cleansing do we have to do to make the Islamic colonial fantasy of Palestine real? It's not going to happen.

Let's create a real Palestinian state instead. And I don't mean the PLO's President for Life Mahmoud Abbas going down to the UN to give another speech. Abbas is on his 11th year of a 4-year term. The US spent \$4.5 billion promoting "Palestinian democracy" and the last PLO election was ten years ago.

Hamas won. It would win today all over again.

Current polling shows that 2/3 of "Palestinians" want Abbas to resign. Abbas has no political authority to form a Palestinian state, a Palestinian shawarma stand or a Palestinian anything.

If there's going to be a Palestinian state, it has to be based on the will of the people. That means it will be a Hamas state. A Palestinian state that is not based on the will of its people has no legitimacy. The only legitimate Palestinian state is therefore a Hamas terror state.

And that's the only kind of state you can have when 2/3 of "Palestinians" support stabbing Israeli civilians, 89% want to live under an Islamic State run by Sharia law, 84% want to stone adulterers to death and 66% support killing any Muslim who leaves Islam.

Only an Islamic terror state can truly represent the homicidal aspirations of the Palestinian people. Is this some sort of sick joke? Yes it is. But it's not my sick joke. It's the sick joke that is Palestine. Now let's begin the process of turning this sick twisted joke into its own state.

The first thing to do is dismantle the UNRWA, a UN agency specifically dedicated to catering to "Palestinians". The UNRWA is one of the key elements of the Palestinian welfare state. And the US kicks in around \$300 million to the organization which fulfills many of the functions of a state. But a state doesn't need its own refugee agency. And a Hamas terror state doesn't need a further \$350 million dollars in US foreign aid to promote "democracy" and improve its infrastructure and institutions.

This is going to be a problem because the imaginary Palestinian state also has a fantasy economy. The largest employer in the Palestinian Authority is the Palestinian Authority. Most of its money comes from America, Europe, Israel and, for some inconceivable reason, Japan.

The terror state gets its electricity from Israel. It gets its water and internet through Israel. So let's get a clear look at what a real Palestinian state would look like. It would be Gaza writ large. But without the UNRWA and the rest of the NGOs lining up to provide jobs and social services. It would be an "open air prison", as anti-Israel activists screech of Gaza, but a prison created and maintained by the inmates. It would be constantly at war with Israel and the rest of the world.

The way it is now.

The economy will be a thinly disguised feudal system of Islamists with engineering degrees in mansions paying starvation wages to laborers to harvest olives to be shipped to China. There will be shopping malls for some and little shacks on the edges full of smugglers, drug labs and brothels for everyone else.

That's the Islamist dream.

Palestine's political system will consist of Hamas and more Hamas. Or maybe once the Hamas alliance with ISIS in the Sinai lapses, there will finally be a democratic election between Hamas and ISIS to decide just how horrible of a place the misshapen slices of Gaza and the West Bank under terrorist occupation will become. Nothing will function except the religious police and the gallows in the dusty squares.

There will be wars every two years. That will be just long enough to rebuild the hospitals, mosques and schools that were being used as launch sites in the last wars. In between the big wars, the terrorist groups, Hamas factions, ISIS, Islamic Jihad and anybody else, will fight each other in the streets.

It will be glorious.

Imagine the last few decades of terror, bombings, missile strikes, firefights, corruption, thievery and utter dysfunction made into a permanent state of affairs. That's Palestine. That's the two-state solution. Just don't ask what it solves except the Middle East's severe shortage of terrorist states and terrorists.

If you will it, it is no dream. This nightmare already exists and it can be a real country. It already has an anthem, a flag, no elections and no reason to exist except killing everyone else. It's a foreign aid funded ISIS with more olive harvests and a more robust campus presence.

Everyone talks about creating a Palestinian state, but no one actually wants to do it.

It's time for Palestine to stop being a pipe dream full of pipe bombs that we spend billions of dollars on. Just pull out a seat at the UN, hold democratic elections and then step away from the explosions.

A real two-state solution is just that simple. And it can happen tomorrow.

Let's stop fantasizing about peace. Peace and Palestine go together like oil and water. This is what a real Palestinian state would look like. And the moment it comes into being, any possibility of peace dies.

Summary of the Perasha

The Essential Nature of Shevi'i Shel Pesach A Seventh Day That Is Kodesh

Mr. Martin Kaufman was educated at Yeshiva University and New York University's Graduate School of Business Administration. Was Chairman and CEO of Philipp Brothers, formerly one of the world's largest commodity trading companies. He is a global consultant to entities in the financial and natural resource sectors all over the world. Mr. Kaufman has lectured extensively in numerous Adult Education programs for many years and presently gives shiurim in the New York City area. He has also served on two boards of Yeshiva University, amongst many other Boards. Mr. Kaufman lives in Manhattan with his wife and three children.

The seventh day of Pesach is different than all other days of chag in Judaism, as is shown by its being the only one on which we do not recite shehechyanu. While Shemini Atseret is in certain senses a holiday of its own, the 7th day of Pesach is completely subsumed within the holiday that came before it (which we colloquially call Pesach, as I will for the rest of this essay, but is really Chag HaMatsot). What we need to understand is what the Torah intended by establishing this seventh day as a day of Mikra Kodesh, holy assembly, of prohibition from creative labor, and of atsereta word whose definition will help us understand the day.

Connection to Keri'at Yam Suf?

Before we try to tease out the meaning of the day from its halachic ramifications, I want to note a difference of opinion as to whether the seventh day of Pesach is, as a holiday, linked to the most well-known event that happened on that day, the Splitting of the Sea. Sforno to Devarim 16:8 seems to say that the day was rendered a holiday by virtue of the Jews'

having gathered together to sing a song to God; if not for that, the day wouldn't be special, as the seventh day of Sukkot isn't.

I note that Sforno concentrates on the Jews' reaction to the Splitting of the Sea, rather than the event itself, which perhaps anticipated the problem that Meshech Chochmah had with seeing the seventh day of Pesach as an outgrowth of that event. Commenting on Shemot 12:15, Meshech Chochmah writes that God wanted to prevent the impression that Jews celebrate their enemies' downfall—we always prefer that the enemies come to accept the truth of our view of the world and, even when they don't, we take little joy in their suffering the consequences. To forestall that, God commanded us to make the seventh day a holiday even before we left Egypt.

Meshech Chochmah is certainly right that the commandment to sanctify the seventh day as well as the first predated the Splitting of the Sea, although some have argued that these earlier commands were given because God knew the future. Without entertaining that debate here, I think the halachot of the seventh day point us in a productive direction, one that will let us also see how the Splitting of the Sea fits with the overall theme of the day.

Teaching About the Earlier Days

Mechilta de-Rabi Yishmael to Bo, Massechta de-Pischa 8 famously notes that in Shemot, the Torah speaks of eating matsah seven days, whereas in Devarim, the Torah tells us to eat matsah for six days, and have an atseret on the seventh day. Mechilta says the seventh day was excluded from the group in one place to teach us a halachah about itself and the group as a whole, that the eating of matsah is not a mitzvah (other than the first night, for which a separate verse establishes a specific obligation). I note that many authorities understand this to mean only that there is no specific obligation to eat matsah on those days, but that any time a Jew eats matsah on Pesach, that's a mitzvah.

For our purposes, it is an example of the seventh day being one that reveals something about the previous six—we might have thought that the matsah holiday required a certain amount of matsah eating each day, but the verses' treatment of the seventh day teaches us that that's not true.

Similarly, Chagigah 18a offers several derivations of a prohibition of creative labor for chol haMoed, the intermediate days of Pesach and Sukkot, a few of which depend on the seventh day's status. In the most striking example, the Gemara cites a baraita

that says just like the seventh day is an atseret, meaning that it is “held back” from creative labor, so, too, the prior six. What’s so surprising is that the Gemara’s next words are “if so, just like the seventh is held back from all creative labor, so, too, the previous six? That’s why the verse says ‘and the seventh day an atseret’...”

That discussion sparked a lengthy and unresolved debate about whether the prohibition of creative labor on chol haMoed is a Biblical or rabbinic prohibition, which we don’t have the space to entertain here. What I wanted to note was that, again, the Gemara assumes that the seventh day teaches us about the previous six, seeing that seventh day as both “of” the previous ones while also separate from them.

Closing the Chagigah

Another comment in the Mechilta (same reference as above, but section 7) notes that Shemot 13:6 refers to the seventh day as a hag, from which it derives the permissibility of offering the chagigah all seven days of Pesach, not just the first day. [I once made the mistake of wishing R. Amital, a”h, Chag Sameach on Chanukkah, and he corrected me, noting that chag only means a day of bringing a chagigah]. Ramban to that verse notes that to a certain extent the seventh day is more of a chag than the first one, since after the seventh day, the Jew can’t bring that holiday’s chagigah anymore, whereas the first day still leaves six more days when the sacrifice can be brought. Malbim took that a step further, seeing the seventh day as principally focused on the sacrifice, since, again, there was no time after that for it (like Election Day—you can put in a ballot earlier, but not later, so the seventh day was Chagigah Day).

Atseret—The Key to the Day

The last, and best, clue to the nature of the day is the Torah’s referring to it as an atseret, in Devarim 16:8, a word the Torah also uses regarding Shemini Atseret, the day after the seven days of Sukkot. Rashi in Devarim defines the words as “hold yourself back from creative labor,” but then offers a second reading, a day of gathering to eat and drink (in Vayikra, where the Torah speaks of Shemini Atseret, he offers a different definition, which sheds interesting light on that holiday, but that’s not for here).

Notably, in Devarim the Torah refers to an atseret laShem Elokechah, a held-back day for God, whereas in Vayikra it speaks of atseret tihyeh lachem, it shall be a held-back day for you. Maharsha to Pesachim 68b notes that that could theoretically

have led to the claim that the two days differ from each other in the nature of their atseret, but the Gemara doesn’t see it that way.

Instead, Pesachim 68b records a difference of opinion about holidays in general, based on these verses. R. Eliezer says that one has to observe holidays as either all for God or all for physical celebration, by eating and drinking. He seems to have read the two verses as offering options. R. Yehoshua, on the other hand, saw the verses as calling for a divided day, half to God, half to celebration by eating and drinking. (This is the way Rambam in Laws of Yom Tov 6:19 sets up the proper schedule for holidays—going to prayers early, having a brief break for some food, and then returning to the Beit Midrash to study Torah until midday, praying minchah, and then returning home for eating and drinking until the day is over.)

The Nineteenth Century

I have reviewed these sources because I think they show that R. Samson Raphael Hirsch’s explanation of atseret, which he offers in Vaykra 23:36 and bases on his linguistic understanding of the word atseret, has deep roots in the halachot we have seen. R. Hirsch developed his own understanding of how to define Hebrew words, based on which he said that atseret means to concentrate, strengthen, and guard together. To him, an atseret day was a day to take the lessons of an earlier holiday and fortify them—rather than being a day of new content, it was a day to solidify what had already been learned.

This fits nicely with what we’ve already seen—the matsah experience of the seventh day taught us about the role of matsah during the rest of the holiday, the refraining from creative labor on the seventh day helped us better understand the attitude towards creative labor on the previous days, and the offering of the chagigah showed us this was the day to be sure to complete the holiday’s experience.

It also fits nicely with the history, in that the Splitting of the Sea was a solidifying and completing of the Exodus—as the verse notes, after the Sea, the Jews of that generation never saw the Egyptians again. In addition, that was the moment when the people learned fear of God and full faith in both God and Moshe. So the seventh day of Pesach, in the year of the Exodus, performed a function similar to what it does throughout history—deepens and solidifies the experience of the holiday thus far.

Shavuot as an Atseret

R. Zadok haCohen adds an interesting element to this idea, which is strengthened by Chazal's referring to Shavuot as atseret. Ramban and others explain that as indicating that Shavuot is linked to Pesach, and finishes up some of Pesach's outstanding business (such as the Giving of the Torah finishing up the Exodus, and/or the offering of the shetei halechem as finishing up the Omer—as I hope to discuss in my consideration of the Counting of the Omer, in the next essay).

R. Zadok, in Peri Zaddik to Shemot, notes that the Ari had a similar idea to what R. Hirsch said, although he said it in a Kabbalistic way. As R. Zadok puts it, the Ari saw Shemini Atseret as the kelitah, the absorption, of the sanctity of the holiday (which, speaking non-Kabbalistically, is exactly what R. Hirsch said). Where it gets interesting is that R. Zadok suggests that from God's perspective, that's what the seventh day of Pesach was, the absorption of the sanctity generated by the previous holiday. From the Jews' human experience, though, the full absorption only came with the Giving of the Torah at Sinai.

That is a powerful and stimulating idea, that the Exodus could have been completed at the Splitting of the Sea, had the Jews only been able to experience it fully. They might have seen the event, learned the lessons, and be fully freed of Egypt and all that was wrong with it. Instead, they needed the further event of the Giving of the Torah to absorb those lessons, leaving us with a bifurcated atseret for Pesach—a seventh day which has some of the atseret aspects, and then, later, another day that fully completes the process.

All of which leaves us with an understanding of the seventh day that is, I think, clear in the sources, but not always well known. The seventh day of Pesach—a day to absorb, to solidify, to understand, and to entrench within us the lessons of the great holiday, the day of our freedom, the day we are supposed to remember all the days of our lives.

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The 7th of Pesach, The Crossing of the Sea and the Song of the Sea

Even if we were all wise, all understanding and knowledgeable of the Torah, it is still a mitzvah to relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt. (Pesach Haggadah)

The intent of the Haggadah is not just the story itself. The story is already well-known to all and is written down in many places. It doesn't require so much wisdom just to tell the story.

Rather, the point is that one is obliged to tell the story in such a way that he himself feels, and makes others feel that they are indeed in the process of leaving Egypt and getting ready to go through the Sea. One must feel the joy and the freedom in his soul as if he is really leaving Egypt for good.

(R' Tzaddok HaCohen of Lublin, Sefer Pri Tzaddik)

Pesach is an auspicious time for Parnossa (Livelihood). Israel went out of Egypt into the desolate desert of Sinai with no visible means of sustenance. They went only with their faith in Hashem intact. And he did in fact sustain them. For this reason the world is judged at Pesach on the grain. (Mishnah Rosh HaShanah 1:1) This is also in line with the saying of the Rabbis, "A person's Parnossa is as difficult as the splitting of the Red Sea." (Tractate Pesachim 118a) (Chiddushei HaRim)

The Song of the Sea is A Lesson in How to be Always Joyous

"Then Moshe and B'nai Yisrael sang this Song (of the Sea) etc. (Oz Yashir Moshe . . .)" (Shemos 15:1)

There is an remarkable Midrash in Shemos Rabboh which will help us to understand the extraordinary nature of the Shira (inspired Song of praise) that B'nai Yisrael sang at the Sea. Here is the Midrash:

"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." (Proverbs 31, from Eishes Chayil) From the day that Hashem created the world, until the day that Israel stood at the banks of the Sea, nobody ever sang Shira (inspired Song of praise) for Hashem. He created Adam, but he never sang Shira. He saved Avraham from the fiery furnace, and from the warring Kings, but he didn't sing Shira. He spared Yitzchok from the knife of the Akeida and he didn't sing Shira. Yaacov was saved from Esav's angel, from Esav himself, and from the men of Shechem and still he didn't sing Shira. When Yisrael came to the Sea and it split for them, they immediately sang Shira to Hashem, as it is written, "(Oz Yashir Moshe . . .) Then Moshe and B'nai Yisrael sang this Song (of the Sea) etc. "She opens her mouth with wisdom. . . ." Said Hashem, "This is what I have waited for!" For the word Oz denotes only joy as it is written, "(Oz) Then our mouths will be filled with laughter." (Psalms 126:2) (Midrash Shemos Rabboh 23:4)

This Midrash requires some explanation. The common translation of the word "Oz" is "then". The Midrash precedes itself with a verse in order to define the word "Oz".

What wisdom can there be in just opening the mouth? A parable can help us. When a person appears before a King and wants to thank him for some favor he received, he doesn't just open his mouth and say the first words that come into his head. Just the opposite is true. The person will carefully prepare his words first, deciding what he wants to say; all in deference to the honor of the King. Then he will rehearse the speech until he is able to express himself intelligently and fluently before the monarch. This is the way of a person who feels indebted to the King and must show his gratitude and honor.

The Song (Shira) of B'nai Yisrael was qualitatively different. When the source of the Shira is a deep, abounding love for the King and a realization that the King has showed him special favor, then there is no holding back, no time to prepare one's thoughts. The words gush forth unrestrained with a sense of urgency in an attempt to capture the moment of enlightenment and elation.

So too with B'nai Yisrael. When they came through the Sea they immediately broke into Shira (Song); they opened their mouths and spontaneously began to sing. Even though it was spontaneous, the Midrash testifies, "She opens her mouth with wisdom. . ." The song that came forth was full of wisdom, perfectly and eloquently expressed by each member of B'nai Yisrael. So profound and recondite was the Shira, that it was included in the Torah.

Still, the source of B'nai Yisrael's great inspiration needs to be more carefully examined. The end of the Midrash provides a clue. "For the word Oz denotes only joy as it is written, "(Oz) Then our mouths will be filled with laughter." (Psalms 126:2) The Shira of B'nai Yisrael was inspired by complete, flawless joy. The word "Oz" is now more accurately translated as "because" instead of "then". B'nai Yisrael sang their Shira because of the great joy they experienced after crossing the Sea.

Nevertheless, the Avos did sing Shira! Adam sang "Mizmor Shir L'yom HaShabbos. . ." (Psalms 92). Avraham sang "Maskil L'Eitan HaEzrachi. . ." (Psalms 89). Yaacov sang the 15 Chapters of "Shir HaMa'alos" (Psalms 120-134) (see Midrash Bereishis Rabboh 74:8) Why does the Midrash say that no one sang Shira until B'nai Yisrael sang at the Sea?

The Shira of the Avos was not like that of B'nai Yisrael. The joy when they sang their Shira was different. The Avos experienced an obstacle or difficulty (Tzara), and Hashem provided them with relief. Nevertheless, they knew that the difficulties they experienced would be experienced later by their progeny. (Ma'aseh Avos Siman l'Banim) They weren't fully able to rejoice over the relief when they knew that the difficulty and its full consequences were still to be felt. When B'nai Yisrael came through the Sea they experienced a complete simchah. They fully understood the experience of servitude in Egypt and all of its ramifications. They understood that the period of servitude was an integral part of the redemption. Experiencing the full providence of Hashem and vanquishing any doubts as to His utter kindness, is a source of profound joy. It is the ultimate joy known to a living person.

This explains the doubled use of Go'oh Go'oih (Hashem is most exalted) (Shemos 15:2, from the Shira). One time refers to the Exodus and its accompanying freedom. The other refers to the period of the servitude. Even for that, they understood that Hashem is to be exalted. As it is written, "Hodu L'Hashem Ki Tov, Ki L'olam Chasdo". Praise Hashem for He is good, His Kindness is forever. (Psalms 136:1, also in Shabbos morning prayers)

R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, the Apter Rov said that the purpose of the creation is that man should be happy with Hashem and at peace with His ways. The Shira of B'nai Yisrael was rooted in abundant and profound joy. It is the joy a Jew knows when he is happy and satisfied with Hashem. It means he understands that everything, no matter how it appears on the surface, is from Hashem and it is absolute Chesed. That is the level B'nai Yisrael reached at the Sea. They understood the whole episode of their enslavement in Egypt and the ensuing Exodus in context and it now made perfect sense.

This explains the saying of Chazal, "Anyone who says Shira every day, will merit to say it before Hashem in the world to come." (Tractate Sanhedrin 91b) One who is able to say Shira every day the way B'nai Yisrael said it at the Sea, is one who already understands that everything comes from Hashem and it is all Chesed. This is the truth that everyone will understand in the world to come. Happy is the one who is capable of this understanding while still in this physical world.

This is the significance of Shira that Hashem declared, "This is what I have waited for!"

(Based on Tiferes Tzion on Midrash Rabboh; Nesivos Shalom on Shevi'i Shel Pesach; Noam Elimelech, Parshas Beshalach; Divrei Yisrael (Modjitz), Parshas Beshalach)

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER ZT'L

"This is my G-d and I will adorn Him" 15:2

The word "this" denotes clarity of perception and True Knowledge, as if they were viewing the Shechinah and pointing to it with the finger, for such was the elevated level of knowledge of Hashem which they gained at that wondrous spectacle of the splitting of the Sea.

"This is my G-d." The word for G-d here is the Alef and Lamed (Kel), which denotes "strength" (as in Beresheet 31:29). 1) He alone is my G-d of strength 2) and He is for me alone ("My G-d").

Therefore I pledge my gratitude and love to Him "and I will adorn Him". I will praise and glorify Him in such manner to demonstrate that He alone is beautiful, and beside love of Him nothing else deserves to be loved as beautiful. And only that which has connection with His Torah and with His service is beautiful.

The only beautiful men are those who are faithful to His Torah.

Therefore I will adorn His Mitzvot; a beautiful Lulav, beautiful Sisit, a beautiful Sefer Torah. We do not adorn Him (i.e. give Him beauty) but we thereby demonstrate that we recognize His beauty, because we constantly consider His ways of kindness and wisdom and we see how beautiful are His attributes.

This is the vow which our nation made at the Sea. And now this vow is being fulfilled by the genuine Jewish nation to this day.

"Abba Shaul says: 'I will adorn him'; this means to be similar to Him (Anvehu: I will adorn Him; Ani V'Hu: I and He). Just as He is gracious and merciful" (ibid.). Just as we adorn Him by beautifying His service ("a beautiful Lulav, Sisit, Torah...so even more do we honor Him by following His ways and emulating His attributes.

Thus the blessings of the marriage rite begin with "that He created everything for His glory" (Ketubot 8A).

Rashi explains: "The gathering (of the wedding guests) to do kindness (to the groom & bride) is a memorial to the kindness of Hashem to Adam (at his marriage) and therefore this gathering is a glory to Hashem."

Because of His great kindness at the Rending of the Sea of Suf, we undertake a national obligation to publicize His attributes of kindness by practicing them in our own lives. Thus we adorn Him by imitating Him, which is the most genuine and effective of all forms of glory which could be rendered to Him. We shall adorn Him by resembling Him (Ani V'Hu).

"Holy shall you be, for I Hashem your G-d am holy" (Vayikra 19:2)

Quoted from "A NATION IS BORN" by Rabbi Miller ZT'L

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