

Az Yashir

אָז יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשֶּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר: אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה
כִּי גָאָה גָאָה סוּס וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בַיָּם: עֲזִי וְזַמְרַת יְהוָה וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה אֱלֹהֵי
וְאֲנוּהוּ אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאֲרַמְּנֶהוּ: יְיָ אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְיָ שְׁמוֹ: מִרְכַּבַת פָּרְעָה וַחִילוֹ יָרָה
בַיָּם, וּמִבְּחַר שְׁלֹשֵׁי טַבָּעוֹ בַיָּם סוּף: תְּהַמַּת יִכְסִּימוּ יָרְדוּ בַמְּצוּלָת כָּמוֹ אָבֶן:
יְמִינָה יְיָ נֶאֱדָרִי בַכַּחַ, יְמִינָה יְיָ תִרְעֵץ אוֹיֵב: וּבִרְבֵּ גְאוּנָה תִהְרַס קַמְיָה תִשְׁלַח
חֲרֹנֶה יֵאֱכָלְמוּ כֶקֶשׁ: וּבְרוּחַ אֶפְיָה נַעֲרָמוּ מַיִם נִצְבּוּ כָמוֹ גֵּד נִזְלִים, קָפְאוּ תְהַמַּת
בְּלֵב יָם: אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֲרֹדֶף אֲשִׁיג אֶחְלַק שְׁלָל תִּמְלֹאמוּ נַפְשֵׁי, אָרִיק חֲרָבִי
תִּזְרִישְׁמוּ יְדֵי: נִשְׁפָּתָ בְּרוּחָה כֶסֶמוּ יָם, צָלְלוּ כַעֲפוּפֶרֶת בְּמַיִם אֲדִירִים: מִי כָמֹכָה
בְּאֵלִם יְיָ, מִי כָמֹכָה נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ, נוֹרָא תְהִלַּת עֲשֵׂה פְּלֵא*.

Az ya-shir mo-she u-v'nei yis-ra-el et ha-shi-ra ha-zot la-do-nai va-yom-ru lei-mor: a-shi-ra
la-do-nai ki ga-o ga-a, sus v'rokh-vo ra-ma va-yam. O-zi v'zim-rat ya va-y'hi li li-shu-a zeh
ei-li v'an-vei-hu e-lo-hei a-vi va-a'ro-m'men'hu. A-do-nai ish mil-kha-ma, a-do-nai sh'mo.
Mar-k'vot par-o v'khei-lo ya-ra va-yam u-mi-v'khar sha-li-shav tu-b'u v'yam suf. T'ho-mot
y'khas-yu-mu, yar-du vim-tzo-lot k'mo a-ven. Y'min-kha a-do-nai ne-da-ri ba-ko-akh,
y'min-kha a-do-nai tir-atz o-yeiv. U-v'rov g'o-n'kha ta-ha-ros ka-me-kha t'sha-lakh kha-ro-
n'kha yokh-lei-mo ka-kash. U-v'ru-akh a-pe-kha ne-eir-mu ma-yim nitz-vu kh'mo neid
noz-lim, kaf-u t'ho-mot b'lev yam. A-mar o-yeiv eir-dof a-sig a-kha-leik sha-lal tim-la-ei-mo
naf-shi, a-rik khar-bi to-ri-shei-mo ya-di. Na-shaf-ta v'ru-kha-kha ki-sa-mo yam, tza'llu
ka-o-fe-ret b'ma-yim a-di-rim. Mi kha-mo-kha ba-ei-lim a-do-nai, mi ka-mo-kha ne'dar
ba-ko-desh, no-ra t'hi-lot o-sei fe-le.

Then Moses and the Children of Israel sang this song to Adonai, and they spoke saying: I will sing to Adonai for God is most high, horse and its rider God threw into the sea. My strength and my song of praise is God and God is my salvation. This is my God and I will glorify God [by dedicating my mind and body as a place for God], the God of my parents, and I will hold God high. Adonai is a warrior, Adonai is God's name. Pharaoh's chariots and army God threw into the sea; and the select of his officers were entangled in the Sea of Reeds. Deep waters covered them; they descended into the depths like stone. Your right hand, Adonai, endowed with strength; Your right hand, Adonai, smashes the enemy. In Your expansive majesty, You destroy those who rise up against You. You send Your anger, it consumes them like straw. And with the wind from Your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing water upright as a wall, the depths congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said: I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide loot, my desires will be gratified. I will draw my sword, my hand will dispossess them. You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them. The mighty ones sank like lead in waters. Who is like You among the gods, Adonai; who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome [in virtues eliciting] praise, doing wonders.

D'rash

Then Moses and the Children of Israel sang this song to Adonai—They knew that although their own will had brought them into the sea, it was God's will that they traversed it successfully, while the Egyptians were drowned. And they spoke saying: I will sing to Adonai for God is most high, horse and rider God threw into the sea—The events of the day made clear that not the Israelites but God had vanquished the Egyptians. My strength and my song of praise is God, and I will glorify God [by dedicating my mind

and body as a place for God], the God of my parents, and I will hold God high—*The courage of the people was extraordinary, but even the least of them could see that the outstretched arm of God was miraculous, producing a result that all would have declaimed as impossible if asked beforehand. Adonai is a warrior, Adonai is God's name*—*Our God has arranged the workings of the world so that those who suffer injustice, oppression, and poverty may ally themselves with the Freedom-Fighter of human liberation. Pharaoh's chariots and army, God threw into the sea; and the select of his officers were entangled in the Sea of Reeds. Deep waters covered them, they descended into the depths like stone*—*The price of liberty, not only release from bondage but freedom to choose service to the One God, was set not by the Almighty but by those who sought to thwart God's providence for Am Yisrael. Your right hand, Adonai, endowed with strength; Your right hand, Adonai, smashes the enemy*—*This allegorical symbol of strength reminds us that the Creator has arranged for the ultimate denouement of all evil-doing. In Your expansive majesty, You destroy those who rise up against You*—*Our sensitivities and sensibilities notwithstanding, the inescapable lesson of history is that the price of radical evil is utter destruction, and usually sooner than later. You send Your anger, it consumes them like straw*—*Evil-doing, containing as it does the seeds of its own destruction, is highly volatile and reactive when confronted with countervailing power, since those who practice it rely on passivity, acquiescence, and intimidation to succeed. And with the wind from Your nostrils, the waters were piled up, the flowing water upright as a wall, the depths congealed in the heart of the sea*—*The triumph of God's glorious goodness over evil, the unstoppable alliance of human and divine forces, has no limits in method or outcome—the miraculous can become momentarily commonplace, the wondrous temporarily workaday. The enemy said: I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide loot, my desires will be gratified*—*The delusion of evil-doers is that they are the masters of their personal destiny and human history, that ultimate victory will be theirs, blinded as they are by their arrogance to the verity of God's immanent and transcendent dominion in human affairs. I will draw my sword, my hand will dispossess them*—*The enemy of Am Yisrael fatally errs in the conviction that victory follows inevitably from military might, ignoring the effect of the spirit and the love of God. You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them. The mighty ones sank like lead in waters*—*How quickly do the tales of their strength and power recede, to be replaced with long-lived revulsion at their tyranny and inhumanity. Who is like You among the gods, Adonai; who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome [in virtues eliciting] praise, doing wonders*—*When we strip the scales from our eyes, calculating from our experience the quotient of Divine Intelligence, we confront the supranatural—not the magic and mumbo-jumbo of the Wizard of Oz, but the certainty that deep in the infrastructure of Creation dwells our Loving Parent, to whom we are inextricably connected in ways that are not inherently unknowable yet to us shall always remain unknown.*

Iyun Tefilla

LOCOMOTION

If I say
 Anveihu, **
 Do I become
 The space through
 Which You move?
 A room
 For Your Shekhina
 Here on earth?
 No, not a room,
 But a ring of steel,
 A whirling wheel,
 And You
 The bounding pistons,
 Rocking gears!
 Roll on
 Freedom train!
 To hasten toward

A kindness
We fly across
The land,
The freight we haul
Is mitzvahs
By the ton.
Drive!
Drive the world
Toward freedom!
Drive the world
To know:
Being free
Means setting free.

* Exodus 15:1-11. ** A reference to God as the "force that moves me." (S.R. Hirsch)

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