

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Beshalach 5785

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A song for now and for the future.

אָז יִשְׂרָאֵל-מִשָּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לָהּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאָמֵר  
גָּאָה גָּאָה סוּס וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בַיָּם  
אֲשִׁירָהּ לָהּ כִּי-

“Then, Moshe and Bnei Yisroel will sing, this song, to Hashem, as they said, saying: ‘I will sing to Hashem, because He has surely triumphed; horse and rider elevated in the Sea.’” (Shmos 15:1).

This great song is not to be taken literally. Like the other “songs” in the Torah, it is written as both literal and parable. The literal translation, though, serves the parable. An example is in this verse is the word “רָמָה.” Many translate it as “cast into” or “hurled into.” That is a translation that is trying to make sense of the verse, literally. However, literally, the word means “rise up.” At first blush “Horse and rider rose up into the sea” does not appear to mean anything. Therefore, translators made the word mean hurled. It has the connotation of “raising up.” The horses and the riders were thrown up and into the sea. However, that will lead to an interpretation that before the horse and rider even reached the sea they were lifted up – off the ground – and thrown into the waters.

Just earlier, the Torah wrote, “And Hashem strengthened the will of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, and he chased after Bnei Yisroel; and Bnei Yisroel had departed with an uplifted hand.” (Ibid 14:8). That pasuk connects how Bnei Yisroel left to why Pharaoh gave chase. They left with an uplifted hand. This can mean they raised their hands – in unison – to the heavens, in thanks to Hashem. It’s not hard to imagine the masses leaving and their hands held high. Also, they were basically, thrown out. Hashem told Moshe before Makos Bechoros that “he will surely drive you out from this place.” (Ibid 11:1). That pasuk should be translated as “it will drive you out” – Egypt will. Not “he” Pharaoh. In fact, Pharaoh does not drive them out. It is the people of Egypt that try to drive Bnei Yisroel out. (Ibid 12:33). Pharaoh, for his own part, only said, “Go worship...and make blessing for me, too.” (12:32). When Pharaoh saw that they did not return after what he gave permission for – only a three-day journey to worship Hashem – he realized they went out “with an uplifted hand.” They were thrown out, never to return. Also, it was Hashem’s hand that was lifted. It was lifted and threatening ever more makos and that forced Egypt to expel Bnei Yisroel. However, with Bnei Yisroel gone (and Pharaoh felt that Hashem and the threat of further strikes left, too) Pharaoh decided to give chase.

“But the person, either citizen or stranger, who acts high-handedly...shall be cut off.” (Bamidbar 15:30). Further, it means similar to by the acts of one’s own hands. (Devarim 32:27). And Moshe recounts, “And they traveled from Ramses in the first month...Bnei Yisroel left with a raised hand, to the eyes of all Egyptians.” (Bamidbar 33:3). It was not raised hands (plural). It is a raised hand (singular). This is how Egypt perceived them leaving. They were either all united as one, like one raised hand. Or they

left when Egypt drove them out with a unified raised hand. It can also mean that it seemed like they left on their own. Despite the history of bondage, when Bnei Yisroel walked out, they did so as if under their own free will. Egypt could do nothing to stop them.

Further, “And Miriam responded for them, a song for Hashem, because He surely triumphed; horse and rider elevated in the Sea.” The end of the pasuk is the same wording as our pasuk. Given this context and explanation, the phrase, “He has surely triumphed; horse and rider elevated in the Sea” is the title and subject of the songs that both Moshe and Miriam sang. If a raised hand means either the Egyptians driving the people out, or the threat of further plagues, and/or the people giving praise to Hashem, then simply “raised” indicates elevating something.

“And Egypt pursued them, and came after them, every of Pharaoh’s horses, riders, and chariot, into the sea.” (Shmos 14:23). A chariot is an inanimate object. It is not a living thing and, certainly, does not have a soul. The horses and the riders were living creatures. They died for Hashem’s triumph. That is how the song is named. Hashem’s great triumph is because of the horse and rider that perished, therein. The word “rama” raised up is a nod to how Bnei Yisroel left and why Pharaoh pursued them. It is the purpose.

The word in the pasuk is also רָמָה in the sea. They were elevated in the sea. They had mundane purpose. That is, they were simply the horses and rides of Pharaoh. Pharaoh was a doomed monarch. His leadership would be over. His country in ruins, his entire workforce decimated. Yet, the horse and rider served a purpose. They showed Hashem’s glory, and for that, they died and perished for an elevated purpose.

The words also signify how they entered the sea. “Horse and rider.” The horse is put first. The horse being put first makes sense in the context of “horse, rider, and chariot.” That is two reasons. First, when looking at an approaching chariot, the horse, then the riders, then the chariot are noticed, in order. Second, it is by quantity. Four horses, two riders, one chariot. The pasuk and song title does not mention the chariot so neither of the reasons fit with why horse is put first. The rider – human – should be put first.

There is another reason the pasuk – the title of the song – puts the horse first. Just as the horse is driven by the rider, the rider was also driven by his own will. רָמָה “uplifted” refers to their will. They did it with their own will. They rode mechanically into the sea. Horse and rider with equal mindset. Thus, “*horse and rider – in the same mindset – willed themselves into the sea.*” They also elevated themselves – for Hashem’s Glory – in the Sea.

The beginning of the pasuk means a song will be sung, in the future. Just as the crossing of the Yam Suf completed geulas Mitzrayim, the actual journey from Avraham to his children living in peace in the Land, still has yet to be fulfilled. No song is recorded when Bnei Yisroel actually left Mitzrayim. Not until their enemy was completely neutralized did they even think of singing a song. Since the global task is not over, the song was not yet sung. “And they said, ‘we will sing a song to Hashem.’” In the future, the geula will be complete, and that song will be sung properly.