



MORDEKAI'S DRASH — B' SHALLACH

Torah: *B'shallach* (When he let go), *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 13.17-17.16

Haftarah: *Shoftim* (Judges) 4.4-5.31

Suggested **Messianic Writings** reading: Revelation 19.1-20.6

Shalom,

As we begin this week's parashah, Israel has finally been given "permission" from Pharaoh to leave Egypt, and so they headed out into the wilderness, following the column of cloud by day and the column of fire by night. One commentator I read had done a crunch on the numbers of people that left Egypt. Back in *Sh'mot* 12.37, we are told that 600,000 men left Egypt, not counting children. What we have to read in between the lines is that no women were counted either, nor were the elderly. The Hebrew rule of census taking was to count the men of military age, which would have been from around 20 to 50 years of age. If each of those men had a wife (some didn't, and some had more than one), that moves the total to 1.2 million. If we give a *low* estimate of 2 children per family (most families would have more), the number is doubled to 2.4 million. And this number does *not* include the mixed crowd that left Egypt with them. Plus they had the livestock to take with them – sheep, goats, cattle. They also carried their personal possessions, now including what they had been given by the Egyptians, and some short-term food and water provisions. All told, this particular writer figured the crowd that left Egypt may have been roughly the size of the population of the state of Oregon, which was estimated to be nearly 3.8 million people in 2008. That's a pretty good sized crowd to hit the road all at one time, not to mention they were traveling by foot and herding livestock.

The route that HaShem sent Egypt on was not the most direct route – known at the time as *The Way of the Philistines* – a north-south route which ran along the Mediterranean Sea, because HaShem knew the people were not yet ready for any military fighting, which was sure to happen if they passed through the land of the Philistines. Instead, he took them on a longer, "roundabout route," through the desert by the Sea of Suf (יַם סוּף, *yahm soof*; *yahm* means "sea," *soof* means "reeds, papyrus;" the "Sea of Reeds"). When the King James Bible was translated, the translators erroneously changed the term *Reed* to *Red*. This created some controversy as to the route of the Israelites. Most Bibles translate this verse (13.18) as HaShem taking them by "the way of the wilderness". What many Bible scholars have apparently missed, overlooked, or ignored is that there was an east-west trade route from Egypt actually known as "The Way of the Wilderness". This phrase referred to a distinct route, and was not just a general direction. The original plan was for Israel to move directly to inherit the Promised Land, the wandering about part did not happen until they failed to do that. Part of this route confusion came about some 1700 years ago, following the Council of Nicaea where Constantine and company opted to de-Judaize the church of her Jewish roots. Some time after this, Constantine and his mother visited the Holy Land, decided where important locations were in the life of the Messiah, and built churches over them. They also decided where Mt Sinai was, a location that is pretty improbable for the actual route of the Exodus. There certainly was no biblical or historical teaching that prompted Constantine to pick the area in the wilderness of the Sinai. But this was Constantine, the Emperor, so the Church followed suit. The Jews themselves had no firm tradition regarding the location of Mt. Sinai. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* notes that there is no Jewish tradition of the geographical location of Mt. Sinai; it seems that its exact location was obscure already in the time of the monarchy of Constantine, but the KJV translators went along with Constantine's opinions, and a whole new route has been erroneously taught in much of the Church through the centuries. The Red Sea was not what Israel crossed. You'll have to study this on a map to get a clearer understanding.

If you look at maps of ancient Egypt that have the routes marked, you will see the two major routes out of Egypt – one turns to the north, the other runs east. HaShem had taken Israel into a difficult location to begin this journey, so that they could cross the parted Sea and so that Pharaoh could see the Hand of G-d in action one more time. Then they would have hit a major route. The Constantine location of Mt Sinai is way down south on the Sinai Peninsula, and is thus an unlikely site.

Moshe also took the bones of *Yosef* (Joseph) along, for Yosef had commanded this a few centuries earlier. Yosef had been buried according to Egyptian custom, which means that he had been mummified. Yosef's mummy traveled with Israel for a long time, for we do not read of the actual burial until sometime after *Y'hoshua* (Joshua) had had his many military victories entering the Promised Land. This is in *Y'hoshua* 24.32. Hebraic writing is not always necessary chronological, so this burial may or may not have been after the death of *Y'hoshua*, which is recorded in *Y'hoshua* 24.29.

I wrote a few parashiot back that at the time of Yosef, the Pharaoh in control was not actually Egyptian, but was of some sort of Arabic descendancy. There was a period of time when the actual Egyptian monarchs had been dethroned for a season by raiding bands of Arabs. At the time, there was not yet a “Jewish-Arabic” problem, and so Yosef would have been a “cousin” to the Pharaoh he stood before, and thus would have been received a little more kindly into the throne room, and later easily placed into power as the second highest leader over the land. It was Yosef who took the livestock and crops and land, and eventually the independence, of the actual Egyptian population in payment for the grain that had been stockpiled to sell back to them. During this time of the famine, the family of Yosef – *Ya’akov* (Jacob) and sons – had been prospering, while the native Egyptian was suffering and impoverished. The strife that exists between Egypt and Israel to this day is rooted in this shift of wealth, along with the events of the Exodus itself. This is *a different struggle than exists between Jew and Arab*, which is the Isaac and Ishmael struggle, but both struggles continue to this day. But it is all based upon the ancient battle between the forces of darkness versus the Light of the Living Uncreated G-d.

Sh’mot 15 is the song of Moshe. It begins with most translations saying something like “Moshe and the people of Israel *sang* this song...” The ArtScroll Commentary notes that the Hebrew for *sang* here is actually in the future tense, and literally means, “Moshe and the people of Israel *will sing* this song...” The Jewish Sages derived from this verse that “God will bring the dead back to life in Messianic times – and then they *will* sing God’s praises once again” (Rashi, quoted in ArtScroll Commentary). As Messianic believers, we know this occurs in *Yokhanan’s* (John’s) vision in Revelation 15.3, “And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb...” The combined song of Moshe, the great prophet of the Tanakh, with the song of the “Greater Moshe,” Yeshua, the Lamb of G-d.

Sh’mot 15.2 is the only verse in the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, found in each of the three separate sections – here (Torah); *Yeshayahu* (Isaiah) 12.2 (*Nevi’im*/Prophets); and *Tehillim* (Psalms) 118.14 (*Ketuvim*/Writings): “Yah is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”

And so the great song will ring through the ages (Revelation 15.3-4): "Great and wonderful are the things you have done, ADONAI, God of heaven's armies! Just and true are your ways, king of the nations! ADONAI, who will not fear and glorify your name because you alone are holy? All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed." Sh’mot 15.18 is certainly a line to be included in that eternal praise: “ADONAI will reign forever and ever.”

שְׁאֲלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)