



Parsha B'shalach / When He Let Go

Shemot 13:17- 17:16

Beit Emet Congregation ~ Vancouver, WA

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We begin this week's *parsha* by reading from the beginning of **Shemot / Exodus 13:17**, "**Va' hee b'shalach Pharaoh et ha'am**" in Hebrew, or "**And it came to be, when Pharaoh had let the people go**". **B'shalach** or to "**let go**" really has the connotation of "**sending away**" or "**expelling**". After the death of Mitzrayim's first-born, this is what Pharaoh actually did. He "**sent them out**". Now, "**b'shalach**" is spelled "**beit-shin-lamed-chet**". The numeric value of the letters in "**b'shalach**" is 340, which equals the word "**netzar**" which means to "**keep the Covenant**" or "**observe the Covenant**". So, in essence, Yahweh caused Pharaoh to send B'nei Yisra'el out from Mitzrayim so that they could "**observe**" or "**keep the Covenant**". Remember what Moshe kept telling Pharaoh; as he did back in **Shemot 7:16**; "**And you shall say to him, 'YHVH the Elohim of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, 'Let My people go, so that they serve Me in the wilderness,' but see, until now you have not listened!'**"

And, 340 is also the numeric value of the word "**netzar**" which means the "**Branch**" or "**offspring**". **Branch** is used allegorically for Messiah in Scripture. So this too can represent Messiah's presence in the wilderness; as well as the "**offspring**" of B'nei Yisra'el and the sojourners with them, who were counted as present with our forefathers at Sinai, as Moshe reminded the people in **Debarim/Deut. 29:10-15**; "**All of you are standing today before YHVH your Elohim: your leaders, your tribes, your elders and your officers, all the men of Yisra'el, your little ones, your wives, and your sojourner who is in the midst of your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water, so that you should enter into covenant with YHVH your Elohim, and into His oath, which YHVH your Elohim makes with you today, in order to establish you today as a people for Himself, and He Himself be your Elohim, as He has spoken to you, and as He has sworn to your fathers, to Avraham, to Yitsaq, and to Ya'aqob. And not with you alone I am making this covenant and this oath, but with him who stands here with us today before YHVH our Elohim, as well as with him who is not here with us today.**"

It's interesting to look at "**who**" sent away B'nei Yisra'el. The word "**Pharaoh**" is an interesting one. It is Egyptian in origin. But, as Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon points out, in the Coptic, or Egyptian, it is pronounced "**Pouro**". As Moshe wrote it, at Yahweh's word, it is spelled "**Pey-reish-ayin-hey**" and is from the root "**parah**" which means to "**uncover**" or "**expose**", as well as being a feminine word for "**hair**" or "**locks**" and also "**leader**". I know it seems a little confusing. But, think about it this way. The meanings of the letters goes along with these and even ties them together. "**Pey**" is "**mouth**" or "**to speak**", "**reish**" is "**head**" or "**leader**", "**ayin**" is the "**eye**" or "**to see**" and

“**hey**” is “**revelation**” or “**the Spirit**”. OK? Now, a “**head**” or “**leader’s**” life is “**uncovered**”, “**exposed**”, in the “**public eye**”. His “**hair**” or “**feminine covering**” is his wife. Remember, a wife is her husband’s spiritual or prayer covering. The letters explain the Leader’s function in leading. “**The speaking of the head (leader) is what he sees in revelation, or in the Spirit**”. A Pharaoh, or King, or Sovereign is to lead or make judgments by revelation of the Spirit. In the hardening of his heart and all the events leading to sending away the Children of Yisra’el, Pharaoh was in fact governing by Ruach Elohim (*Yah’s Spirit*), even though it was, at times, against his own desires. Yahweh brought it all about to show His sovereignty.

Then, we are told in the second part of **Shemot 13:17** that “**Elohim did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines though that was nearer, for Elohim said, “Lest the people regret when they see fighting, and return to Mitsrayim.”**” The phrase used here for the “**way of the land of the Philistines**” is “**derech erez Philist’im**”. “**Derech**” (*dalet-reish-kaf*) is literally the “**path**” or “**way**”. While it can mean a “**path**” as in a “**roadway**”, its principal meaning is like a life’s “**path**” or “**journey**”. While “**halach**” or “**halacha**” is your “**walk**”, “**derech**” is the “**path**” in which you walk your life’s journey. It represents your spiritual “**path**”, as in “**derech emet**” or “**path of truth**” or “**the way of truth**”. Now, “**eret**” (*aleph-reish-tzadee*) means “**land**” and also can refer to the “**earth**” or “**world**”. Then “**Philist’im**” (*Fey-lamed-shin-tav-yud-mem*) means literally “**sojourners**”, “**immigrants**” or “**wanderers**”. It’s interesting to note that the “**Philistines**” were ancient Egyptians that were “**sojourners**” and “**immigrants**” into Kena’an.

So, while Elohim could have brought them “*by the way of the immigrants, the nations, the world*”, He didn’t, even though it was closer. The way of the world is usually the shortcut. But, Yahweh said that the people would “**regret when they see fighting, and return to Mitsrayim.**” Regret, when they see fighting? But, as we’ll read in a few minutes, they “*came out*” armed, ready to fight. It wasn’t about war. You see, regret is a very interesting word choice here. In the Hebrew, it’s “**nach’am**” (*nun-chet-mem*) which is “**to regret**” or “**to be sorry**”. This is nearly the opposite of the word “**nachum**” (*spelled the same*), which is the Hebrew word for “**comfort**”. You see, this all about a spiritual fight. If the first people the Children of Israel were to encounter are just as evil as the Mitzrites, the world they left; they would see only more slavery ahead. As we’ll see in the weeks to come, they found plenty of reasons to want to return to Mitsrayim. The “**shortcut**” works in both directions. It’s also the fastest way back into bondage.

There’s perhaps another reason Yahweh didn’t lead them by the “**way of the land of the Philistines**”. Sefer Yasher, or the Book of Jasher, tells us in Chapter 75 about 30,000 men of the tribe of Ephraim that left Goshen prior to the “*exodus*” of Moshe. Jasher recounts a scenario of events, in 22 verses, that talk about these men stealing sheep from the shepherds of Gath, which was the area of Philistia, the Philistines, where Goliath would later come from. Jasher goes on to tell us that all of the 30,000 were slain, except ten men who escaped and returned to Egypt. And, this was because they left Egypt before the time Yahweh declared for their return. While Jasher has much to say on this subject; the book we have today, called Sefer Yasher, is not the book mentioned in the Scriptures. This particular version repeats many of the oral traditions from the “*commentaries*” written by Rabbi Moshe ben Maimonides (*Rambam*) and Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (*Rashi*) and is from a time at least 300 years after these rabbis lived. So, is it reliable Scripture? Not so much.

However, we do read of nine men of the sons of Ephraim, who went in the land of the Philistines, in Scripture. In fact, in **Dibre HaYammim Aleph / 1 Chronicles 7:20-22**, it is written; ***And the sons of Ephrayim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and El’ad. But the***

men of Gath who were born in that land slew them because they came down to take their livestock. And Ephrayim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him.

Now, some would have us believe that because of this account in Jasher, a book of questionable origin that reads contrary to Torah in many places, no one from B'nei Ephraim should go home to Israel before the "second exodus". To that I would only say that our "punishment and captivity" is over, scripturally; and that there are certainly B'nei Ephraim currently living in the Land, who have not been killed. Quite a few have done so for over 100 years. But, please remember, when you move to the Land, don't steal any Palestinian sheep. OK?

The numeric values for the words "**derech erez Philist'im**" or the "**way of the world of the stranger**" are as follows: "**Derech**" = 224 which equals "**ha tahorah**" or "**the pure**", "**eretz**" = 291 which equals "**v'ha nokree**" or "**for the adulteress**" and "**Philist'im**" = 860 which equals "**nach'tee**" or "**I have given**". So, what is Yahweh telling us, through this, about the "**way of the world of the stranger**"? He answers that with; "**The Pure, for the adulteress, I have given**".

Then, **Verse 18** tells us; **So, Elohim led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Sea of Reeds.** In Hebrew it reads, "**derech ha midbar Yam Suf**". Again we have "**derech**" or "**the path**". Then, we read "**ha midbar**", with "**ha**" or "**the**" and "**midbar**" or "**wilderness**". "**Midbar**" also means the "**mouth**" or "**instrument of speech**". This denotes "**a place that speaks**" or a "**place where Elohim speaks**" to His children. We've studied the word "**midbar**" in depth before. It's also where the word "**debar**" or "**the word**" comes from. It's fitting that in **Debarim (The Words)**, which the Greeks called Deuteronomy, It is in **Chapter 8** and **verse 3**, that Moshe reminds the people of what happened in this week's *parsha*. These are the words Yahshua quoted when tempted by ha satan; "**And He humbled you, and let you suffer hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, to make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of YHVH.**"

Now, "**Yam Suf**" or "**Sea of Reeds**" or "**Rushes**" in Hebraic thought is a metaphor for the "**lush and fruitful**" in a "**sea**" or "**ocean of peoples**". These "**lush, fruitful plants**" represent what sustains and has value. What's interesting is that you have this "**sea**" or "**ocean**" or "**vast numbers of peoples**". Then you have the "**reeds**" or "**rushes**" or "**those that provide nourishment and sustenance**" to the people. And it was out of these "**fruitful reeds and rushes**" in the waters that Moshe was taken and raised to become the instrument of Yahweh's deliverance of B'nei Yisra'el. He was the chosen from among the fruitful, or the chosen out of the chosen. So, Elohim chose to bring His chosen people unto Himself, by the way of His Word and the instrument of His deliverance.

Verse 18 also tells us; **And the children of Yisra'el went up armed from the land of Mitsrayim.** So, after the death of Egypt's first-born, they came with the wealth of Mitsrayim, following the Word of Yahweh and His deliverer Moshe. And, they came out of Mitsrayim "**armed**". This doesn't *just* mean with swords and spears and Glocks and AR-15's and stuff. The Hebrew word here is "**chamush**" (*chet-mem-shin*), which means "**equipped**", "**brave**" and "**ready for war**". This spelling of "*chet-mem-shin*" is pronounced several ways and with several meanings; but all the words have a connection. First, there's "**chamesh**", which is the Hebrew counting number "**five**", as in "**five sheqels**" or "**chamesh sheql'im**" (*the redemption price of the first-born*). Then, there is our word "**chamush**" which means "**brave**" or "**equipped for war**"; because the connotation is that of being "**arrayed for battle by fives**", which is why the King Jimmy translates it as "**harnessed**". Next, is the word "**chumash**" (*as in the Hebrew compilation of Torah plus*

commentaries); because it represents the “**Five Books of the Torah**”. And finally, we have the word “**chemesh**”, which means the “**belly**”, “**loins**” or “**womb**”. The picture here is of one’s “**loins being girded**”. So, whether they realized it, or not; Yahweh had equipped and girded them (*by miracles and judgments of Torah*) to enter the wilderness. They would be tested and they would fail. But, Yahweh prepared them and gave them what they needed to serve Him in the wilderness and enter their inheritance.

Now, as B’nei Yisra’el went up, out of Mitzrayim, they began their encampments in the wilderness. We read in **Shemot / Exodus 13:20**; ***And they departed from Sukkoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness.*** “**Sukkoth**”, or “**Tabernacles**” was their first stop on the way out of bondage. This was not the “**Sukkoth**” established by Ya’aqob in Kena’an, as this one is still well within Mitzrayim. As we’ve talked about before, this was the Bedouin city, of approx. 250,000 people, that was always on the move. It was here that the Israelites (*city dwellers who, as a people, forgot the ways of sojourning*) bought tents and learned how to be campers again. This too represents leaving the “**tabernacles**”, “**tents**” or “**worship**” of Mitzrayim. Remember that “*dwelling in tents*” is a Scriptural euphemism for “*learning*” their ways. The second encampment was “**Etham**”. Etham is an Egyptian word and, according to Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, means “**border of the sea**”. Its importance is that it bordered the Yam Suf, the Sea of Reeds, the Sea of Yahweh’s Deliverance.

When the Children of Yisra’el came out of bondage (*Mitzrayim*), they left the tabernacles of the pagan worship system and headed for the “**border of the sea**”; because they had to pass through the “**mikvah**” from the “**world**” into the “**Midbar**” (the “**wilderness**” or the “**Speaking Place**”). They needed to begin feeding on everything that proceeds from the “**Mouth of Elohim**”. And, they had to pass through the instrument of their deliverance in order to approach Yahweh at Har Sinai. It is the same for us. Yahweh’s Gift, the Pure, Yahshua given for the adulteress, is our redemption and deliverance. If we make *teshuva* and turn and pass through the “**Sea**”, the “**mikvah**” or “**immersion**”, then we can approach Yahweh and be fed with all that proceeds from His mouth. And, is our “**immersion**” into Messiah Yahshua somehow better than the one our forefathers passed through? We read in **Acts 19:1-6** what Sha’ul taught on this matter; ***And it came to be, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Sha’ul, having passed through the upper parts, came to Ephesos. And having found some taught ones, he said to them, “Did you receive the Set-apart Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Set-apart Spirit. And he said to them, “Into what then were you immersed?” And they said, “Into Yochanan’s immersion.” And Sha’ul said, “Yochanan indeed immersed with an immersion of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the One who is coming after him, that is, in Messiah Yahshua.” And when they heard this, they were immersed in the Name of the Master Yahshua. And when Sha’ul had laid hands on them, the Set-apart Spirit came upon them, and they were speaking in tongues and prophesying.***

Next, we read in **Shemot 13:21-22**; ***“And YHVH went before them by day in a column of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a column of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. The column of cloud did not cease by day, nor the column of fire by night, before the people.”*** This is important to remember as we’re going to be seeing this picture throughout the rest of Torah. I know we’ve looked at these before. But, let’s understand it now, as we begin to study again the first “**exodus**”, as it will help us understand the “**second greater exodus**”. The Hebrew word for “**column**” or “**pillar**” (depending on your translation) is “**awmood**” (*ayin-mem-vav-dalet*) which is from the root “**amad**”, meaning to “**stand firm**” or “**establish**”. The numeric value of “**awmood**” is 120 which equals “**ami**” or “**my people**”, “**Masada**” or “**the**

foundation" and "**va'eef d'noo**" or "**did redeem you**". Also, 120 also equals "**va'a latah**" or "**thick darkness**". Remember what we read about this darkness last week.

So Yahweh went before them in this "**pillar**". We'll read next week, that as Yahweh spoke to the Children of Israel at Sinai and they were afraid, Moshe drew near in **Shemot 20:20-21**; **And Moshe said to the people, "Do not fear, for Elohim has come to prove you, and in order that His fear be before you, so that you do not sin."** **So the people stood at a distance, but Moshe drew near the thick darkness where Elohim was.** In our time, our shepherd will seek us out in like manner. The prophet declares in **Yehezqel / Ezekiel 34:11-13**; **'For thus said the Master YHVH, "See, I Myself shall search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so I shall seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered in a day of cloud and thick darkness. And I shall bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the lands, and shall bring them to their own land. And I shall feed them on the mountains of Yisra'el, in the valleys, and in all the dwellings of the land.**

Now again, the word for "**cloud**" here is "**anan**" (*ayin-nun-nun*). This isn't a rain cloud; but, literally means to "**veil over**" or "**to obscure**". What's really interesting here is that its use in Scripture, including twice in **Yehezqel / Ezekiel 38**, is about "**armies**" that are referred to as *clouds* covering the "**land**" or "**earth**". They are also referred to as causing great darkness to cover the earth or land. The picture is that this "**pillar of cloud**" with Yahweh in it is made up of the "**armies of heaven**". Also of interest here is the numeric value of "**anan**" is 170 which equals "**I'Olam**" or "**forever**" and "**I'panah**" or "**before me**", as "**in front of my face**". 170 also equals "**la'milah'im**" or "**they were circumcised**". This is indeed quite an army, in that they are eternally before the Face of Elohim and they are circumcised, or of His Covenant. They are the "**Host of Heaven**". This is the "**pillar of cloud**" that obscured Him, that led them by day.

By night Yahweh was in a "**column of fire**" or "**awmood aish**" (*aleph-shin*). "**Aish**" is indeed "**fire**". Yahweh refers to Himself as a "**Consuming Fire**" many times in Scripture. This compares with the "**burning fire**" in our hearts for what we are passionate about. Elohim also speaks of the "**fire of His wrath**". Of course, "**fire**" or "**aish**" gives heat and light. Light is what is referred to here, in this verse. That is why another meaning for "**aish**" is "**splendor**" or "**brightness**". In numerous scriptures, Yahweh tells us that His word, Torah, is a light, a lamp. Yahshua said that He was the "**Light of the world**" in **Yochanan 8:12** and **9:5**. The numeric value of "**aish**" is 301, which equals "**Cha'rah**", "**He called**", "**ha Tsuwr**", "**the rock**" and "**raphana**", "**that heals you**". Yahweh indeed calls us from the "**fire**", from the "**brilliance**", that is His Word. He called Moshe from the bush that burned with fire and yet was not consumed. In this "**column of fire**" was the One who heals us. And also, "**the Rock**" was in the "**column of fire**". Over a dozen times in Scripture Yahweh is referred to as the "**Rock of Yisra'el**" and the "**Rock of our deliverance**". Almost as many times Yahshua is referred to as that same "**Rock**". This was the "**Rock**" that followed them in the wilderness to give B'nei Yisra'el water, living water. He'll be there for us as well. He's showing us this, right before our eyes. Think of this, man was made in the image of Elohim and Yahweh said through the prophet in **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 51:1**; "**Look to the rock you were hewn from,...**" look to Him.

If we can understand these two columns, or pillars, we will go a long way in understanding just how Torah applies to our lives. Think about it. The column of cloud suggests that the heavenlies and Yahweh are veiled and can't be seen. This is the picture at Rosh Chodesh, when the moon is veiled. But, there's the promise of its revealing. And, when it is darkest, the column of fire appears, bringing light and warmth. There are times when Yahweh obscures Himself and is hidden to us.

Then, at night, in our darkest hour, the Light breaks through and we know He's there. He was there all along. Judaism teaches that before the "**Creation**", Elohim withdrew Himself and darkness came into the expanse. It was then, that He introduced the "**Light**". If we're created in His Image, we are smaller lights. What would happen to the "**smaller light**" if it was placed before the Sun? 1) You wouldn't even see the smaller light. It couldn't shine. 2) It would actually burn up and die in the light and heat of the fire of the sun. If He hadn't concealed Himself, we would have all been consumed in the fire of His presence and become as the angels and we would have no free will at all. Think about this *in light of* what Yahshua said in **Mattityahu 5:14-17**; "***You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city to be hidden that is built on a mountain. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it shines on all those in the house. Let your light so shine before the sons of man, so that they see your good works and praise your Father who is in the heavens. Do not think that I came to loosen the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to loosen but to fulfill. For truly, I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall by no means pass from the Torah till everything is fulfilled.***

In light of the columns of cloud and fire, when our faith, our trust, is tested, we need to remember that it's still His leading that we follow. **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 4:2-6** speak to this in our future; ***In that day the Branch of YHVH shall be splendid and esteemed. And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for the escaped ones of Yisra'el. And it shall be that he who is left in Tsiyon and he who remains in Yerushalayim is called set-apart, everyone who is written among the living in Yerushalayim. When YHVH has washed away the filth of the daughters of Tsiyon, and rinsed away the blood of Yerushalayim from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, then YHVH shall create above every dwelling place of Mount Tsiyon, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for over all the esteem shall be a covering, and a booth for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.***

At the end of the day, isn't our biggest question really; "**Why?**" "**Why all of this?**" I mean, look at all the struggle in Torah; from an individual basis in **B'reshith**, from Adam, Cain and Hebel, then Noach and his sons, then to Avraham, Yishma'el and Yitzaq, then from Yitzaq, Ya'aqob and Esaw. Then, on to a national struggle that is played out in the remainder of Torah and the Prophets; even in the Brit Chadashah. First B'nei Yisra'el find themselves in bondage, abject slavery in Egypt. Then, just when they are released, they're driven to certain death, or at least recapture at the shore of the Yam Suf. Even when they are delivered from that mess and their pursuer is destroyed, they begin a 40 year struggle to find and earn their way home. They go from one disaster to another, even after they reach Eretz Yisra'el. It seems to never end. That's how life is, one struggle after another. For some, it's over money. With others, it's addictions or health or peace of mind.

In Hebraic thought, this process is described as "**emanations**" of darkness and light. The darkness, the seeming absence of Yahweh's presence is called "**tzimtzum**", which is the cloud or veil that obscures heaven and Elohim. It can be "**darkness**" that is felt, as Scripture describes it. But, Yahweh is there, in it. In **B'reshith/Genesis 15:12-13** this darkness falls upon Avraham and Yahweh is there speaking to him, even though he's seemingly unaware of it, at that time. ***And it came to be, when the sun was going down, and a deep sleep fell upon Avram, that see, a frightening great darkness fell upon him. And He said to Avram, "Know for certain that your seed are to be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.*** He's not just speaking to Avraham; He's telling him the future, the events we've been reading about.

Now, the emanations of light are called, in Hebrew thought, “*kav*”, which represent the light that “*pierces*” the darkness. It’s likened to a light bulb that is suddenly turned on and the darkness is just gone, that quick. This all began at “*Creation*”. **B’reshith 1:2-4** says; *And the earth came to be formless and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim was moving on the face of the waters. And Elohim said, “Let light come to be,” and light came to be. And Elohim saw the light, that it was good. And Elohim separated the light from the darkness.*

For years, I asked; “*What about us, today?*” I mean, Bible stories are a great read. I laughed, I cried, I was moved. But, is this our destiny? To struggle forever? Is true “*peace*” (*shalom*) just another version of “*nirvana*” or some “*pipe dream*”? Is the only way “*home*” death or the rapture? There is a promise in Torah that’s repeated throughout the “*Prophets*” and the “*Writings*”, as well as the Brit Chadashah of our return; the return of B’nei Yisra’el and those who “*sojourn*” with them.

We first read of it beginning in **Debarim (the Words) / Deuteronomy 29:1**; *These are the words of the covenant which YHVH commanded Moshe to make with the children of Yisra’el in the land of Mo’ab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.* This is the “*New Covenant*” or “*Renewed Covenant*” spoken of in **Yirmeyahu / Jeremiah 31:31** and is the subject of the “*New Testament*”. It’s the “*Covenant*” ratified in Yahshua’s Blood. We read on, in **Debarim 30:1-10**; *“And it shall be, when all these words come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you shall bring them back to your heart among all the nations where YHVH your Elohim drives you, and shall turn back to YHVH your Elohim and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your being, you and your children, then YHVH your Elohim shall turn back your captivity, and shall have compassion on you, and He shall turn back and gather you from all the peoples where YHVH your Elohim has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under the heavens, from there YHVH your Elohim does gather you, and from there He does take you. And YHVH your Elohim shall bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. And He shall do good to you, and increase you more than your fathers. And YHVH your Elohim shall circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your being, so that you might live, and YHVH your Elohim shall put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. And you shall turn back and obey the voice of YHVH and do all His commands which I command you today. And YHVH your Elohim shall make you have excess in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground for good. For YHVH turns back to rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of YHVH your Elohim, to guard His commands and His laws which are written in this Book of the Torah, if you turn back to YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your being.* The whole of Scripture is about Yahweh fulfilling this promise.

To quote Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum, “The promise is that at the end of the journey lies the ‘happy ending’ -- the Land flowing with milk and honey. But unlike in fairy tales, the path through the speaking, teaching Wilderness of reality is long and arduous, twisting and turning in frightening ways. Each twist and turn in the journey comes to teach a new aspect of faith in G-d: faith in the miracles that take place in and through the workings of nature (‘and they BELIEVED in HaShem and in Moses his servant’, Ex. 14:31); faith in the miracles through which we receive our livelihood (the root of the word MANNA is the same as EMUNAH, faith); faith in G-d’s miraculous power to

heal through our keeping the Torah ('I, HaShem am your healer' Ex. 15:26); faith in G-d's power to conquer the forces of evil ('and his hands were faith' Ex. 17:12).

Faith is the sustenance needed to survive in the wilderness of this world and to reach the promised 'inhabited land' (Ex. 16:35) that surely lies at the end of the road. The very twists and turns in the road are trials sent to bring us nearer to this sustaining faith. For that reason, it is not written (Ex. 14:10) that 'Pharaoh drew near' (KARAV, Pa'al verbal form [active]) to the Children of Israel, but rather, Pharaoh HIKRIV, Hif'il verbal form [causative] – 'Pharaoh BROUGHT closer'. I.e. Pharaoh brought the Children of Israel closer: his very onslaught and the fear it caused brought them closer to G-d, forcing them to turn to Him in prayer and faith."

Elohim further says in this week's parsha that He also judged the mighty ones of Egypt by the deliverance of B'nei Yisra'el from Mitsrayim. Some have suggested that He did so with the 10 plagues. I've been involved in several discussions where people have said that Egypt worshipped frogs and the like. I'm not so sure. And, I can't find where they thought of lice or gnats, or even flies as mighty ones. It doesn't fit that way. As we read about the first Passover in **Shemot / Exodus 12:12**, Yahweh says; **'And I shall pass through the land of Mitsrayim on that night, and shall smite all the first-born in the land of Mitsrayim, both man and beast. And on all the mighty ones of Mitsrayim I shall execute judgment. I am YHVH.** He says this after He describes the last plague. So, when then does He judge these false mighty ones?

Our parsha answers that in **Shemot 14:1-9**; **And YHVH spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Ba'al Tsephon – camp before it by the sea. For Pharaoh shall say of the children of Yisra'el, 'They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has closed them in.' And I shall harden the heart of Pharaoh, and he shall pursue them. But I am to be esteemed through Pharaoh and over all his army, and the Mitsrites shall know that I am YHVH."** And they did so. And it was reported to the sovereign of Mitsrayim that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people. And they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Yisra'el go from serving us?" So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him. And he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Mitsrayim with officers over all of them. And YHVH hardened the heart of Pharaoh sovereign of Mitsrayim, and he pursued the children of Yisra'el, but the children of Yisra'el went out defiantly. And the Mitsrites pursued them, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Ba'al Tsephon.

Remember that Yahweh brought B'nei Yisra'el to **Etham** (the border of the sea). But, He now brings them into the exact place He wants them in order to accomplish His purpose. They camp before (in the face of) "**Pi Hahiroth**" which literally translates in Egyptian as "**the mouth of the graves**". It is between "**Migdol**" and "**Ba'al Tsephon**". "**Migdol**" is another Egyptian word meaning "**high places**". This place is near the northern border of Mitsrayim and from here, the mighty ones of Egypt were supposed to be watching over Mitsrayim's northern border. When this word was brought into the Hebrew language, it was translated as "**tower**". "**Ba'al Tsephon**" means "**lord of the north**". Now, this lord of the north's name is "**typhon**" in Egyptian and is the oldest and mightiest of Egypt's mighty ones. It even pre-dates "**ra**", their sun deity. Are you seeing the picture? Yahweh brings it all together here, in the face of the graves (*Egypt's past*), in the face of all the mighty ones that are watching over Mitsrayim, even the mightiest one, the "**lord of the north**". He brings them all into judgment before B'nei Yisra'el. It's interesting to note here also that this northern border is the one that separates Kena'an (*Israel*) from Mitsrayim (*Egypt*). Here,

Yahweh destroys Pharaoh and the army of Mitzrayim in the face of those mighty ones, who are powerless against the Mighty One of Yisra'el. Yahweh used the very instrument of B'nei Yisra'el's deliverance, the Mikvah of the Sea, to judge Mitzrayim, its army, its sovereign and its mighty ones.

Remember, it was the blood of the lamb that covered and protected Yisra'el's first-born from the destroyer. By the water, Yahweh showed that they were set-apart and those who would destroy them were judged. And, Yahweh's Spirit led them home. **1 Yochanan 5:5-8** puts it this way; ***Who is the one who overcomes the world but he who believes that Yahshua is the Son of Elohim? This is the One that came by water and blood: Yahshua Messiah, not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the Truth. Because there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. And the three are in agreement.***

After Elohim delivers B'nei Yisra'el through the Sea, and after they sing the "Song of Deliverance" to Him; the Children of Yisra'el arrive at Marah. We read in **Shemot 15:23-26**; ***And they came to Marah, and they were unable to drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. So the name of it was called Marah. And the people grumbled against Moshe, saying, "What are we to drink?" Then he cried out to YHVH, and YHVH showed (yarah, yud-reish-hey – "taught") him a tree. And when he threw it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a law and a rightruling for them, and there He tried them. And He said, "If you diligently obey the voice of YHVH your Elohim and do what is right in His eyes, and shall listen to His commands and shall guard all His laws, I shall bring on you none of the diseases I brought on the Mitsrites, for I am YHVH who heals you."***

In past teachings we've examined this incident well. The spring at Marah still exists and the water is still bitter. The water contains minerals that kill parasites. The Egyptian today charge money for this water. Yahweh brought them to a place of healing from the diseases of the Mitsrites. But, the cure was bitter. Sometimes, the waters of healing taste bitter; but, what "tree" (that is taught) sweetens the bitterness of life? Torah, the Tree of Life.

We have already seen and learned so much in our annual journey through Torah. So far, we have seen the creation of the world and man. We have followed along since the destruction of the "great flood", to see how Yahweh created and called a people. We've seen Him deliver His "chosen" ones from bondage into freedom. Now, as we begin to study again the return of our fathers to their inheritance, Eretz Yisra'el, let's pray and earnestly seek to understand this story. Because, if we are a part of this "chosen generation", born for a time such as the end, we are going to live it out again. We don't have to make the same mistakes. It's an "open-book" test. Let us learn of our Husband and learn to be His Bride. Let us understand "the Promise". The twentieth chapter of **Yehezqel / Ezekiel** recounts, again, the setting apart of B'nei Yisra'el through the exodus and time in the wilderness, as well as the first occupation of the "Land". While it refers to the House of Yisra'el, it is very clear that it is speaking to all Yisra'el, as Yahweh describes Yisra'el's the deliverance, the giving of Torah, the entry into Eretz Yisra'el and the sins and scatterings of both houses.

This promise will be fulfilled just as Yahweh's other promises to Avraham, Yitsaq and Ya'aqob have been. We read in **Yehezqel 20:34-44**; ***And I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I shall bring you into the wilderness***

of the peoples, and shall enter into judgment with you face to face there. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Mitsrayim, so I shall enter into judgment with you,” declares the Master YHVH. “And I shall make you pass under the rod, and shall bring you into the bond of the covenant, and purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me. From the land where they sojourn I bring them out, but they shall not come into the land of Yisra’el. And you shall know that I am YHVH. As for you, O house of Yisra’el,” thus said the Master YHVH, “Go, serve each of you his idols, and afterwards, if you are not listening to Me. But do not profane My set-apart Name any more with your gifts and your idols. For on My set-apart mountain, on the mountain height of Yisra’el,” declares the Master YHVH, “there all the house of Yisra’el, all of them in the land, shall serve Me. There I shall accept them, and there I shall require your offerings and the first-fruits of your offerings, together with all your set-apart gifts. As a sweet fragrance I shall accept you when I bring you out from the peoples. And I shall gather you out of the lands where you have been scattered. And I shall be set-apart in you before the gentiles. And you shall know that I am YHVH, when I bring you into the land of Yisra’el, into the land for which I lifted My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. And there you shall remember your ways and all your deeds with which you were defiled. And you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you did. And you shall know that I am YHVH, when I have dealt with you for My Name’s sake, not according to your evil ways nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Yisra’el,” declares the Master YHVH.’ ”

As we continue, in the weeks ahead, to study this “**derech midbar**” this “**way of the wilderness**”, the “**way of His Word**”, let me challenge you to meditate on this “**Promise**” and to meditate further on our obligation of belief and obedience.

Baruch HaShem Yahweh !