

תלמוד-תורה ביחד ממרחק
TORAH-STUDY TOGETHER FROM AFAR
 January 30, 2021



"The answers we receive, the interpretations we develop, are all dependent on the questions we ask; the experiences we bring; and the preferences we have."

– Amy-Jill Levine & Marc Zvi Brettler

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

Parashah Stats

<u>Weekly Portion:</u>	<i>b'Shallach</i>
<u>Consists of:</u>	Exodus 13:17-17:16
<u>Sequence—</u>	
<u>in annual Torah cycle:</u>	16 th of 54
<u>in Book of Exodus:</u>	4 th of 11



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

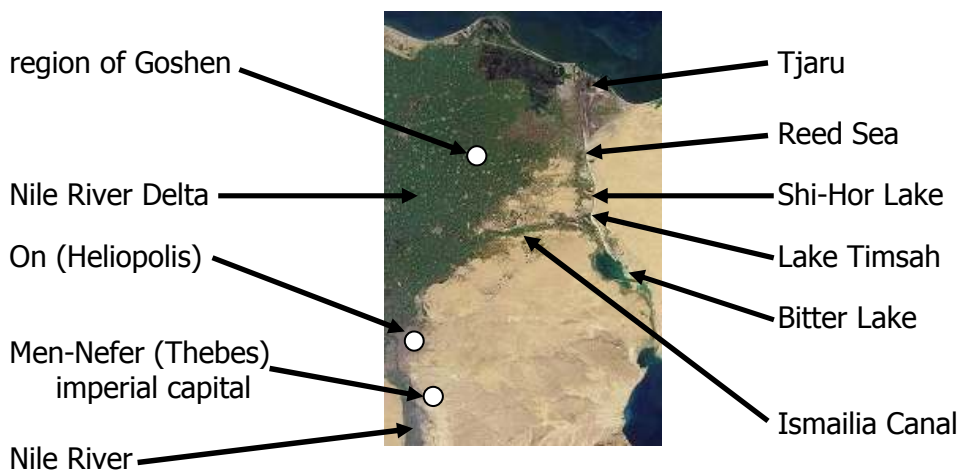
Exodus 14:1-13

Context: *Exodus, second of the Five Books of the Torah, is an account of how God liberated the Israelites from Egypt and entered into a Covenant with us at Mount Sinai, and a record of the legislations they undertook for the conduct of the society they were to establish in the Promised Land.*

Content: *This week's portion describes the initial stage of the journey out of Egypt.*

1] - Then The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: [2] - "Speak to the Israelites, instructing them to turn back and encamp before Fi-haCherot, between Migdol and the Sea— make camp on the Sea before Ba'al Tzafon.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר
 דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּשׁוּבוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ
 לִפְנֵי פִי הַחֵירוֹת בֵּין מִגְדֹּל וּבֵין
 הַיָּם לִפְנֵי בַעַל צַפּוֹן נַכְחוּ תַחֲנוּ
 עַל-הַיָּם:



- more over

3] - “When Pharaoh says of the Israelites ‘they are confused, the wilderness has closed in on them!’, [4] - I will provoke Pharaoh’s arrogant spirit so that he takes chase after them— and thereby will I get glory over Pharaoh and his hosts; then **all Egypt shall know** that I am The Eternal One!” So that is what they did.

וְאָמַר פַּרְעֹה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְכִּים
 הֵם בְּאַרְץ סָגֹר עָלֵיהֶם הַמִּדְבָּר
 וְחִזְקוֹתַי אֶת-לֵב-פַּרְעֹה וְרִדְף
 אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֶכְבְּדָה בְּפַרְעֹה וּבְכָל-
 חֵילוֹ וְיִדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוָה
 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן :

וְיִדְעוּ / וְיִדְעָתֶם “knowing” in the Plagues/Exodus narrative

Pharaoh / Egypt / the Egyptians will know _____ 4x

Israel / the Israelites will know _____ 5x

A) Song at the Sea (Exodus 15:14-15) –

The peoples hear; they tremble. agony grips the residents of Philistia;
 The Moabite tribes are gripped by trembling; all the dwellers in Canaan are dismayed.

B) Moses’s first negotiation (Exodus 32:12) –

Let not the Egyptians say, “it was with evil intent that their God delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and wipe them off the face of the earth.”

C) Moses’s second negotiation (Numbers 14:13-15) –

The Egyptians will report it to the residents of this land, . . . who have heard that You, O Eternal One, are in the midst of this people; that You, Yourself appear in plain sight when Your Presence abides in their midst in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night.

D) The prophecy of Bil’am (Numbers 24:17-24) –

A star rises from Jacob, a scepter comes forth from Israel,
 To smash the brow of Mo’av, the legacy of the descendants of Seth.
 Edom will become their property, the land of Sei’ir will be their possession.
 A leading nation is ‘Amaleiq— but their fate is to perish forever.

E) Moses’s last word (Deuteronomy 33:26-29) –

O happy, Israel, who is like you— a people delivered by The Eternal,
 the One Who is your protecting Shield and your Sword triumphant!
Your foes shall come cringing before you, for you **to tread upon their necks**.

The victorious king, poised to execute or to spare a conquered enemy prostrate at (and beneath) his feet

Palace of Tiglat-Pileser III, Nimrud (Iraq)

“The Eternal One said to our king: ‘sit at My Right Hand, until I have made your enemies your footstool.’”

Psalm 110:1



- more over

5] - Now when it was reported to the **Emperor** of Egypt that the people had fled, [6] - Pharaoh and his courtiers changed their minds regarding the people, so that they said: “What have we done, by releasing the Israelites from service to us?”

וַיִּגְדּוּ לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם כִּי בָרַח הָעָם
וַיִּקְפְּדוּ לִבְבַּר פְּרַעֲה וַעֲבָדוּ אֶל-הָעָם
וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵה-זֹּאת עָשִׂינוּ כִּי-שָׁלַחְנוּ
אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲבָדֵנוּ

וַיִּגְדּוּ לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם - איקטורין (אגענטען) שלח עמהם

F) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) - “Now when it was reported to the Emperor of Egypt” – he had sent along with them *iqtorin* [actor publicus = “state agents”] (*agenten*).
וכיון שהגיעו לשלשת ימים שקבעו לילך ולשוב וראו שאינן חוזרין למצרים באו והגידו לפרעה ביום הרביעי

And when they had arrived at the three days’ journey that had been appointed for them to go [ref. Exodus 3:18, 5:3, 8:23 - and granted in 12:31 **כְּדִבְרֵיכֶם** אֶת-יְהוָה וְלָכֹו עֲבָדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה וְלָכֹו עֲבָדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה וְלָכֹו עֲבָדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה], and then to return— but saw that they were not in fact returning to Egypt— on the fourth day [these agents] **rushed back to report it to Pharaoh.**

7] - So he **harnessed up his chariot**, taking with him his people and six hundred picked chariots— and, indeed, all the chariotry of Egypt with a third-man in each one of them.

וַיֹּאסֶר אֶת-רֶכֶבוֹ וְאֶת-עַמּוֹ לָקַח
עִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח שֵׁשׁ-מֵאוֹת רֶכֶב בָּחוּר
וְכָל רֶכֶב מִצְרַיִם וְשָׁלְשִׁים עַל-כָּלֹו

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pharaoh – Exodus 14:7</u> וַיֹּאסֶר אֶת-רֶכֶבוֹ “he harnessed up his chariot” (as opposed to V / הִפְעִיל / causative active וַיֹּאסֶר “he had it harnessed up”)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Joseph – Genesis 46:29</u> וַיֹּאסֶר יוֹסֵף מְרֻכְבָּתוֹ “he harnessed up his chariot” (as opposed to V / הִפְעִיל / causative active וַיֹּאסֶר “he had it harnessed up”)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Bil’am – Numbers 22:21</u> וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת-אֲתָנּוֹ “he saddled up his jenny-ass” (as opposed to V / הִפְעִיל / causative active וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ “he had it saddled”)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Abraham – Genesis 22:3</u> וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת-חֲמֹרוֹ “he saddled up his donkey” (as opposed to V / הִפְעִיל / causative active וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ “he had it saddled”)</p>

אר"ש בן יוחאי אהבה מקלקלת את השורה ושנאה מקלקלת את השורה

G) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 55:8 - Rabbi Shim'on ben-Yochai has said that love overrules pride of office, and that **hatred overrules pride of office.**

8] - Now because Pharaoh’s temperament was constitutionally stubborn, he took off in pursuit after the Israelites even though the Israelites had left blameless. [9] - So the Egyptians pursued after them— all the cavalry and chariotry and horses and soldiers of Pharaoh— overtaking them camped by the Sea by Pi-haChiot before Ba'al Tzafon.

וַיַּחֲזֹק יְהוָה אֶת-לֵב פְּרַעֲה מִלָּד
מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִצְאִים בְּיַד רָמָה
וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁיִגּוּ
אוֹתָם חֲנִים עַל-הֵימָּם כָּל-סוּס
רֶכֶב פְּרַעֲה וּפָרָשָׁיו וַחֲיִלוֹ עַל-פִּי
הַחִירָת לִפְנֵי בַעַל צַפֹּן

10] - Now when Pharaoh approached, the Israelites **raised** their eyes, and beheld the Egyptians coming after them. **Becoming greatly afraid**, the Israelites **called out to the Eternal One**. [11] - Then **they demanded** of Moses: “Was it for lack of graves in Egypt, that you have brought us out to die here in the desert? What is this you have done to us, by bringing us out of Egypt? [12] - Isn't this precisely what we told you back in Egypt, telling you: ‘**leave us be, and let us serve the Egyptians**’— for better we should serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the desert!”

וּפְרָעָה הִקְרִיב וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי-
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-עֵינֵיהֶם וַהֲנִה
מִצְרַיִם נֹסַע אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ
מְאֹד וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-
יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הַמִּבְלִי
אֵין-קִבְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם לְקַחְתָּנוּ
לְמוֹת בַּמִּדְבָּר מֵה-זֹאת עֲשִׂיתָ
לָנוּ לְהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם הֲלֹא-זֶה
הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְנוּ אֵלֶיךָ
בְּמִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר חֲדַל מִמֶּנּוּ
וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֶת-מִצְרַיִם כִּי טוֹב לָנוּ
עֲבַד אֶת-מִצְרַיִם מִמָּתְנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר

H) Exodus 6:6-8 -	
I will bring you out	וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם
and I will rescue you	וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם
and I will redeem you	וְגִאֲלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם
and I will take you to Me	וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי
and I will bring you to the land	וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הָאָרֶץ

13] - But Moses replied to the people: “Fear not! **Stand by, and behold** the redemption which The Eternal One will do for you this day. For whereas **you have beheld** the Egyptians here this day, you will never **see them** again forever!”

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אַל-
תִּירָאוּ הֲתִיַצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת
יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי
אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתֶם אֶת-מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם
לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד-עוֹלָם

Two Quirkily Interrelated Verbs	
נ-צ-ב	י-צ-ב
נָצַב II / נִפְעַל / simple passive - “positioned; posted; put in place”	הִתְיַצַּב VII / הִתְפַּעַל / reflexive - “position yourself; take your post; station yourself ; take a stand; stand by [and watch].”
הִצַּב V / הִפְעִיל / causative active - “post; position; set up; establish”	
הוֹצַב VI / הִפְעַל / causative passive - “positioned; posted; set up; established”	
מַצַּב noun (m) - “position; configuration; situation”	
מִצְבָּה noun (f) - “marker; monument; memorial; tombstone”	

A Conundrum: Who's Got the Power to Govern Destiny?

<p>I) God gives credit to Pharaoh: וַיְהִי בְּשַׁלַּח פְּרָעָה אֶת-הָעָם Now it happened, once Pharaoh had released the people.... Exodus 13:17</p>	<p>J) Moses gives credit to God: הִתְיַצְּבוּ וּרְאוּ יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה “Stand by, and behold the victory of The Eternal One!” Exodus 14:13</p>	<p>K) God gives the choice to Israel: מַה-תִּצְעַק אֵלַי דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ “Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites that they are to move forward!” Exodus 14:15</p>
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Lawrence S. Kushner (1943-),
 URJ “Ten Minutes of Torah,” 1997 –

Why does Moses want the people to stand around and appreciate God's work,

while God seems to prefer for the people to act?

Which shows greater faith:

- to admire the work of God,

or

- to step forward into the Sea?

14:13	רָאוּ	behold	ר-א-ה	“to see, to observe, to behold”
14:10	וַיִּירָאוּ	they became greatly afraid	א-ר-י	“to fear; to revere, to be awed by”