

# Torah Talk—מאמרי תורה



*The Parasha Post of the Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital*

**Parashat Beshalach**  
**February 11, 2017**

**פרשת בשלח**  
**ט"ו בשבט תשע"ז**

Torah Reading: *Shemot* (Exodus) 13:17-17:16

After the Bnei Yisrael cross the Reed Sea in safety while Paro's army drowns, they sing praises to Hashem; in response to their complaints about a lack of food and water, Hashem gives them manna; they are then attacked by Amalek.

The *TaNaKH* (*Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim*—Bible, Prophets, Writings) contains ten songs. When we look at each song, without even reading the words, we can know whether it presents positive or negative content and themes. Positive songs, such as the Song of the Sea in today's *parasha*, are written with the words a certain shape, referred to as *לבנה על גבי אריח ואריח על גבי לבנה* – *levayna ahl gabbay ari'ach v'ari'ach ahl gabbay levayna* – a full brick sitting on a half-brick and a half-brick sitting on a full brick. On the next page is written the structure of the "Song of the Sea," found in every kosher *Sefer Torah* (Torah Scroll):

אָז יִשִּׁיר נַשֵּׂה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לֵה', וַיֹּאמְרוּ	לֵאמֹר,
אֲשִׁירָה לֵה' כִּי גָאָה גָאָה,	סוּס
עָזִי וְזַמְרַת־יָהּ וַיְהִי לִי	וּרְכַבֹּו רָנָה בַיָּם.
זֶה אֶ-לִי וְאַנְהוּ,	לִישׁוּעָה,
ה' אִישׁ גּוֹלְחַמָּה, ה'	אָבִי וְאַרְמֹנֹנָהוּ.
וַיִּנְבַּחַר	שָׁמוּ.
נִרְפַּבֹּת פְּרַעַה וְחִילוֹ יָרָה בַיָּם,	שְׁלֹשִׁי טַבְּעוֹ בַיָּם סוּף.
תַּהֲנוֹת יְכַסִּינֹו, יִרְדּוּ בְנִצּוֹלֹת כְּנוֹו	אָבוּ.
יְנַיִנְךָ ה' נֶאֱדָרִי בְּכַחַ,	ה' תִּרְעַץ אוֹיֵב.
וַיְבָרַב גְּאוּנְךָ תַּהֲרִס	קָנִיָּה,
וַיְבָרוּחַ	אֶפְיָךְ נַעֲרַנּוּ כַיָּם,
נֶצְבּוּ כְּנוֹו נָד	נֹזְלִים,
אָנִיר	אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֹּף אֲשִׁיג
אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלַל, תִּנְוֹלָאֲנוּ	נַפְשִׁי,
נְשַׁפֹּת	בְּרוּחֶךָ כְּסָנוּ יָם,
צָלְלוּ כַּעֲזוּפֹרֶת בְּנוֹיָם	אֲדִירִים.
כִּי	כְּנֹכַה נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ,
נוֹרָא תַּהֲלֹת, עֲשֵׂה	פָּלֵא.
נְחִית	בְּחֹסְדֶךָ עִם זֹו גְּאֵלְתָּ,
נִהַלְתָּ בְּעֲזָךְ אֵל נוֹה	קֹדֶשְׁךָ.
חֵיל	אֲחֹז יִשְׁבִּי פְּלִשְׁתָּ.
אָז נִבְהָלוּ אֱלוֹפֵי	אָדוּם,
נְנֹגוּ	כֹּל יִשְׁבִּי כְּנַעַן.
תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵינִקְתָּה	נִפְחַד,
עַד	עֵבֶר עֲמִידָה ה',
עַד יַעֲבֹר עִם זֹו	קָנִיתָ.
כֹּכּוֹן	לִשְׁבֹּתְךָ פְּעֵלְתָה ה',
כִּיקְדָּשׁ אֶ-דְּנִי, כּוֹנְנוּ	יְדִידָה.
ה' יְנַוֶּלְךָ לְעֵלָם וְעַד.	

Such a structure is solid; it is the way houses are built for maximum solidity and stability.

Conversely, songs with negative themes, such as the song in *Parashat Ha'azinu* are written in the shape of *לבנה על גבי לבנה ואריח על גבי אריח* – *levayna ahl gabbay levayna v'ariach ahl gabbay ar'iach* – a full brick on a full brick and a half-brick on a half-brick. Here is the text of the first part of the song in *Ha'azinu* as it appears in a kosher Torah scroll:

וַתִּשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־כִי:  
 תִּגַּל כַּטֵּל אִמְרֵתִי  
 וְכַרְבִּיבִים עָלַי־עָשׂוּב:  
 הָבִי גִדְל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ:  
 כִּי כָל־דָּרְכָיו מִשְׁפָּט  
 צַדִּיק וְיֵשֶׁר הוּא:  
 דֹּר עֲקֹשׁ וּפְתִלְתֵּל:  
 עִם נָבֵל וְלֹא חָכִים  
 הוּא עֲשָׂה וַיִּכְנָסֶה:

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְּרָה  
 יַעֲרֶף כַּמָּטֵר לְקֹחֵי  
 כְּשַׁעִירִם עָלֵי־דָשָׁא  
 כִּי יֵשֶׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא  
 הַצּוֹר תִּמְיִם פָּעֵלוּ  
 אֶל־ל אֶמוּנָה וְאִין עֹל  
 שְׁחַת לוֹ לֹא בְנִיּוֹ מוֹמָם  
 הִלֵּה תִגְמְלוּ־אֶת  
 הַלּוֹא הוּא אֲבִיד קִנְדֵּה

Imagine building such a structure with Legos: it would be easy to knock down, and the chinks in the wall would let in wind and other sorts of unwelcome intrusions.

Every song in the *TaNaKH* reflects one of these two structures. When you see an interwoven structure, you know that the theme is positive. When you see a broken, straight structure, you know that the content is negative. The message of these structures is that Hashem wants the themes of the positive songs to endure, but the themes of the negative songs to fall away and be forgotten.

This is but one of many ways not based on language that the Torah transmits messages to us, along with the meanings of the words themselves.

Shabbat Shalom.

For Discussion:

- Look at *haftarah* for this week (*Shoftim* – Judges 4:4-5:31). Is this a positive song or a negative one?
- What is the theme of the Song of the Sea? What is the theme of the Song of Devorah, the *haftarah* for this week?
- How are the two songs the same? How are they different?