**Shoshanat Yaakov: The Song that Never Ends**

**Pre-Purim Learnathon 5781**

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*This shir has been dedicated by Congregation Bnai Torah in memory of Paul Forman, Pesach David ben Avraham z"l.*

1. **Purim Liturgy, Asher Hani (piyyut after Megillah)**

שׁוֹשַׁנַּת יַעֲקֹב צָהֲלָה וְשָׂמֵחָה בִּרְאוֹתָם יַחַד תְּכֵלֶת מָרְדְּכָי: תְּשׁוּעָתָם הָיִיתָ לָנֶצַח. וְתִקְוָתָם בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר: לְהוֹדִיעַ שֶׁכָּל קֹוֶיךָ לֹא יֵבֹשׁוּ. וְלֹא יִכָּלְמוּ לָנֶצַח כָּל הַחוֹסִים בָּךְ:

The Rose of Yaakov rang joyously when they saw together the *tcheilet* of Mordechai. You were their salvation forever and their hope in every generation. To declare, that all who hope to you will never be ashamed, and those who take shelter in You will never be humiliated.

1. **Megilat Esther 8:15 (JPS Tanakh 1985)**

וּמָרְדֳּכַ֞י יָצָ֣א ׀ מִלִּפְנֵ֣י הַמֶּ֗לֶךְ בִּלְב֤וּשׁ מַלְכוּת֙ תְּכֵ֣לֶת וָח֔וּר וַעֲטֶ֤רֶת זָהָב֙ גְּדוֹלָ֔ה וְתַכְרִ֥יךְ בּ֖וּץ וְאַרְגָּמָ֑ן וְהָעִ֣יר שׁוּשָׁ֔ן צָהֲלָ֖ה וְשָׂמֵֽחָה׃

Mordecai left the king’s presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a magnificent crown of gold and a mantle of fine linen and purple wool. And the city of Shushan rang with joyous cries.

**Faith in the Divine Plan**

1. **Megillat Esther 4:13-14 (JPS Tanakh 1985)**

(יג) וַיֹּ֥אמֶר מָרְדֳּכַ֖י לְהָשִׁ֣יב אֶל־אֶסְתֵּ֑ר אַל־תְּדַמִּ֣י בְנַפְשֵׁ֔ךְ לְהִמָּלֵ֥ט בֵּית־הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ מִכָּל־הַיְּהוּדִֽים:(יד) כִּ֣י אִם־הַחֲרֵ֣שׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי֘ בָּעֵ֣ת הַזֹּאת֒ רֶ֣וַח וְהַצָּלָ֞ה יַעֲמ֤וֹד לַיְּהוּדִים֙ מִמָּק֣וֹם אַחֵ֔ר וְאַ֥תְּ וּבֵית־אָבִ֖יךְ תֹּאבֵ֑דוּ וּמִ֣י יוֹדֵ֔עַ אִם־לְעֵ֣ת כָּזֹ֔את הִגַּ֖עַתְּ לַמַּלְכֽוּת:

Mordecai had this message delivered to Esther: “Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king’s palace. On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, while you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you have attained to royal position for just such a crisis.”

1. **Rabbi Meir Leibush Wisser (19th Century Ukraine),** Malbim on Esther ibid.

ע"פ זאת חוה לאסתר דעת, כי אחר שכל מציאותה במעלה הזו להיות בבית המלכות, אינה בעבור עצמה רק בעבור הצלת היהודים, ובע"כ הזמין ה' גם סבות אחרות רחוקות שבאם תפשע אסתר ותחשוך מלהציל עם ה' יצילם ע"י הסבות האחרות, ממילא צריך לה לחשוב כי מציאותה בגדולה וכבוד הוא רק בעבור שיהיה על ידה ההצלה בעת ההיא המוגבל שהיא עתה, ואם תעבור העת ההיא ולא תתאזר חיל להציל בין כך יגיעו הסבות האחרות, כי לא יעזוב ה' נחלתו ביד אשה אחת שי"ל בחירה לטוב ורע, ובהכרח יש עוד סבות ואז לא יצטרך לך…

Based on this, Mordechai voiced [his] wisdom to Esther, that since her entire prominent status of being in the palace, was not for herself but to save the Jewish people. And Hashem certainly had prepare other distant causes, and if Esther would be negligent and refrain from saving Hashem’s nation He would save them through another source. It follows that here great and honourable status was only so that salvation could take place through her at this limited time. If the time passed, and she didn’t adorn strength to save- either way the other sources [of salvation] would arrive. For Hashem wouldn’t leave his flock in the hand of one woman who can choose between good and evil. It had to be that there were other sources [of salvation] and then he would no longer need her…

1. **Esther 9:24-27 (JPS Tanakh 1985)**

(כד) כִּי֩ הָמָ֨ן בֶּֽן־הַמְּדָ֜תָא הָֽאֲגָגִ֗י צֹרֵר֙ כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִ֔ים חָשַׁ֥ב עַל־הַיְּהוּדִ֖ים לְאַבְּדָ֑ם וְהִפִּ֥יל פּוּר֙ ה֣וּא הַגּוֹרָ֔ל לְהֻמָּ֖ם וּֽלְאַבְּדָֽם: (כה) וּבְבֹאָהּ֘ לִפְנֵ֣י הַמֶּלֶךְ֒ אָמַ֣ר עִם־הַסֵּ֔פֶר יָשׁ֞וּב מַחֲשַׁבְתּ֧וֹ הָרָעָ֛ה אֲשֶׁר־חָשַׁ֥ב עַל־הַיְּהוּדִ֖ים עַל־ רֹאשׁ֑וֹ וְתָל֥וּ אֹת֛וֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָ֖יו עַל־הָעֵֽץ: (כו) עַל־כֵּ֡ן קָֽרְאוּ֩ לַיָּמִ֨ים הָאֵ֤לֶּה פוּרִים֙ עַל־שֵׁ֣ם הַפּ֔וּר עַל־כֵּ֕ן עַל־כָּל־דִּבְרֵ֖י הָאִגֶּ֣רֶת **הַזֹּ֑את וּמָֽה־רָא֣וּ עַל־כָּ֔כָה וּמָ֥ה הִגִּ֖יעַ אֲלֵיהֶֽם**:(כז) קִיְּמ֣וּ וקבל [וְקִבְּל֣וּ] הַיְּהוּדִים֩ ׀ עֲלֵיהֶ֨ם ׀ וְעַל־זַרְעָ֜ם וְעַ֨ל כָּל־הַנִּלְוִ֤ים עֲלֵיהֶם֙ וְלֹ֣א יַעֲב֔וֹר לִהְי֣וֹת עֹשִׂ֗ים אֵ֣ת שְׁנֵ֤י הַיָּמִים֙ הָאֵ֔לֶּה כִּכְתָבָ֖ם וְכִזְמַנָּ֑ם בְּכָל־שָׁנָ֖ה וְשָׁנָֽה׃

The Jews accordingly assumed as an obligation that which they had begun to practice and which Mordecai prescribed for them. For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of all the Jews, had plotted to destroy the Jews, and had cast pur—that is, the lot—with intent to crush and exterminate them. But when [Esther] came before the king, he commanded: “With the promulgation of this decree, let the evil plot, which he devised against the Jews, recoil on his own head!” So they impaled him and his sons on the stake. For that reason these days were named Purim, after pur. In view, then, of all the instructions in the said letter **and of what they had experienced in that matter and what had befallen them**, the Jews undertook and irrevocably obligated themselves and their descendants, and all who might join them, to observe these two days in the manner prescribed and at the proper time each year.

1. **Talmud, Megillah 19a (William Davidson Edition)**

רַב הוּנָא אָמַר מֵהָכָא "וּמָה רָאוּ עַל כָּכָה וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם"

* מַאן דְּאָמַר כּוּלָּהּ **מָה רָאָה** אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ שֶׁנִּשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּכֵלִים שֶׁל בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ **עַל כָּכָה** מִשּׁוּם דְּחַשֵּׁיב שִׁבְעִים שְׁנִין וְלָא אִיפְּרוּק **וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם** דִּקְטַל וַשְׁתִּי
* וּמַאן דְּאָמַר מֵאִישׁ יְהוּדִי **מָה רָאָה** מָרְדְּכַי דְּאִיקַּנִּי בְּהָמָן **עַל כָּכָה** דְּשַׁוִּי נַפְשֵׁיהּ עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה **וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם** דְּאִתְרְחִישׁ נִיסָּא
* וּמַאן דְּאָמַר מֵאַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה **מָה רָאָה** הָמָן שֶׁנִּתְקַנֵּא בְּכׇל הַיְּהוּדִים **עַל כָּכָה** מִשּׁוּם דְּמָרְדְּכַי לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה **וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם** וְתָלוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת בָּנָיו עַל הָעֵץ
* וּמַאן דְּאָמַר מִבַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא **מָה רָאָה** אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ לְהָבִיא אֶת סֵפֶר הַזִּכְרוֹנוֹת **עַל כָּכָה** דְּזַמֵּינְתֵּיהּ אֶסְתֵּר לְהָמָן בַּהֲדֵיהּ **וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם** דְּאִתְרְחִישׁ נִיסָּא

Rav Huna said: The four Sages derived their respective opinions from here: “Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they saw concerning this matter, and that which had befallen them, the Jews ordained...that they would keep these two days” (Esther 9:26–27).

* Rav Huna continued: The one who said that the Megilla must be read in its entirety explains the verse as follows: **“They saw”** refers to **what Ahasuerus saw**, in that he used the vessels of the Temple. “**Concerning this matter”** was because he had calculated seventy years from the Babylonian exile and the Jews were still not redeemed. **“And that which had befallen them”** is referring to the fact that he had killed Vashti.
* And the one who said that the Megilla needs to be read from “There was a certain Jew” interprets this verse as follows: **That which Mordecai** **“saw”** in that he acted so zealously concerning Haman. **“Concerning this matter”** was because Haman had made himself an object of idol worship. **“And that which had befallen them”** is referring to the fact that a miracle took place.
* And the one who said that it needs to be read from “After these things” interprets the verse in this way: **That which Haman** **“saw”** in that he became incensed with all the Jews. **“Concerning this matter”** was because “Mordecai did not bow down, nor prostrate himself before him” (Esther 3:2). **“And that which had befallen them”** is referring to the fact that “he and his sons were hanged on the gallows” (Esther 9:25).
* And the one who said that the Megilla must be read from “On that night” offers the following explanation: **That which Ahasuerus “saw”** in that he commanded to bring the book of chronicles before him. **“Concerning this matter”** was because Esther had invited Haman along with him to the banquet she made. **“And that which had befallen them”** is referring to the fact that a miracle took place

1. **Rabbi Moses Maimonides (12th century Egypt), Short List of Commandments**

אלא כך אנו אומרין, שהנביאים עם בית דין תקנו וצוו לקרות המגלה בעונתה כדי להזכיר שבחיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ותשועות שעשה לנו והיה קרוב לשועינו, כדי לברכו ולהללו **וכדי להודיע לדורות הבאים שאמת מה שהבטיחנו בתורה כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרובים אליו כה' אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו.**

Rather, this is what we say, that the prophets with the court instituted and commanded to read the Megillah at its time to mention the praises of Hashem, and the salvation He has done for us, and that He was near to our cries, in order to bless him, and praise him, **and to tell the future generations that what the Torah promised: “For who is a great nation that has a G-d close to it like Hashem our G-d whenever we call to Him” (Devarim 4:7), it is true.**

***Techeilet Vision***

1. **Bamidbar Rabbah Chapter 14**

דָּבָר אַחֵר, מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד, אָמַר חִזְקִיָּה מַה נִּשְׁתַּנֵּית תְּכֵלֶת מִשְּׁאָר מִינֵי צִבְעוֹנִין שֶׁצִּוָּה הָאֱלֹקִים לִהְיוֹת בַּצִּיצִית, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁתְּכֵלֶת דּוֹמָה לַעֲשָׂבִים, וְהָעֲשָׂבִים דּוֹמִים לַיָּם, וְהַיָּם דּוֹמֶה לָרָקִיעַ, וְהָרָקִיעַ דּוֹמֶה לַקֶּשֶׁת, וְהַקֶּשֶׁת דּוֹמֶה לֶעָנָן, וְהֶעָנָן דּוֹמֶה לַכִּסֵּא, וְהַכִּסֵּא דּוֹמֶה לַכָּבוֹד, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר )[יחזקאל א, כח](file:///C:\Ezekiel.1.28) ( כְּמַרְאֵה הַקֶּשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בֶּעָנָן וגו', וְחָלַק לִירֵאָיו תְּכֵלֶת, שֶׁהוּא מֵעֵין כְּבוֹדוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר )[במדבר טו, לח](file:///C:\Numbers.15.38)( וְנָתְנוּ עַל צִיצִת הַכָּנָף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת, הֱוֵי: וְיָבוֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד, שֶׁהוּא חוֹלֵק כָּבוֹד לִירֵאָיו.

Another idea: “The King of honour” (Tehillim 24), Chizkiyah said: How does *tcheilet* differ from all other colours such that G-d commanded it to be in *tzitzit?* Because, *tcheilet* is similar to grass, and grass is similar to the sea, and the sea is similar to the sky, and the sky is similar to the rainbow, and the rainbow is similar to the cloud, and the cloud is similar to the throne, and the throne is similar to “Honour”, as it says: “Like the appearance of the rainbow which will be in the cloud…(Ezekiel 1:28), and He gave out *tcheilet* to those who fear Him, which is representative of His Honour, as it says (Bamidbar 15:38) “And they shall put on the corner of the tzitzit a strand of *tcheilet*”, hence: “And the King of Honour shall come”, in that He gives out honour to those who fear Him.

**An Eternal Salvation**

1. **Rabbi Yehudah Aryeb Leib Alter (19th century Poland), Sfat Emet on Purim**

תשועתם היית לנצח ותקותם בכל דור ודור. כי התשועה בפורים הי' לדורות עולם. כמו שהגזירה הי' להשמיד כל היהודים. ממילא גם הנס הי' לכל הדורות. והרי קיום כל זרע ישראל הכל ע"י נס הזה. ואיתא כי הגזירה הי' גם בשמים כן על בנ"י. והקב"ה עשה זה הנס בלי זכות ישראל. רק מצד שאנחנו עמו וחוסים בו תמיד. לכן עליו להושיע לנו בעת צרה. ולכן זה היו"ט נותן כח ועוז ותקוה לבנ"י בגלות לבטוח בו מצד שמיוחדים אנחנו אליו… ואיתא כי פורים כמו יום הכפורים וביוה"כ באין למעלה מהטבע ע"י ביטול הגוף אכילה ושתיה ועניתם עי"ז באים לעלמא דחירות. ויש בו סליחת עונות. כמו כן בפורים ע"י משתה ושמחה יכולין לבוא ג"כ לזה בעזר עליון שלא מצד מעשינו:

You were their salvation forever- For the salvation of Purim was for all generations. Just as the decree was to annihilate all the Jews- it follows that the miracle was for all generations. The survival of all Jewish offspring was all through this miracle. It states that there was even a decree in heaven against the children of Israel. And Hashem **performed this miracle without the merit of Israel**. Only because we are his nation and constantly take shelter in Him. Therefore, it’s upon Him to save us at a time of distress**. Therefore, this holiday gives strength and hope to the children of Israel in exile to have confidence in Him since we are special to him.**

It states that Purim is like Yom Kippur and on Yom Kippur we ascend above nature through the nullification of the body from eating and drinking, and affliction- through this we ascend to the world of freedom in which there is the forgiveness of sin. So too, on Purim, through feasting and happiness we can also come to this, with the help of G-d, not through our actions…

1. **Rav Simcha Mordechai Ziskind (19th century Lithuania), Chochma Umusar 2:143**

"שושנת יעקב צהלה ושמחה בראותם יחד כו' תשועתם היית לנצח". פי' תשועתם אז לא הי' רק לדורם אבל לנצח. ומבאר אח"כ למה? - כי הבינו מזה - "ותקותם בכל דור ודור", פי' דורות הבאים יראו כי אין לאדם רק לקוות ולהתפלל אליך. כי מי שראה העת צרה ליעקב, בעת שנלקחה הדסה הצדקת להערל הטמא אחשורוש, מי פלל אז שזה לתשועת כלל ישראל בעוד שש שנים? וזאת "להודיע שכל קויך לא יבושו ולא יכלמו" כו'. פי' "כל" אף יחידים. סוף דבר לא כאשר אנו מורגלים לשיר שושנת יעקב דוקא בפורים, **אבל לפי דברינו יש לשיר אותו בכל יום.**

“You were their salvation forever”, meaning, their salvation then was not only for their generation but forever. And it explains afterward, why- for they understood from this “[You] are their hope in every generation”, meaning the future generations will see that a person can only hope and pray to You. For one who saw the time of distress of Jacob, when Hadassah the righteous was kidnapped by Achashveirosh the impure and uncircumcised, who thought then that this would be a salvation for the Jewish people in just six years…this is “to show that all who hope to You will not be ashamed or humiliated…”, all meaning even individuals. **In the end, it shouldn’t be as we are accustomed to singing Shoshanat Yaakov specifically on Purm, but according to our suggestion it should be sung every day.**