

# Hallel: Echoes of Creation and Exodus



## I. Just the Right Balance of Hallel: Not too much, not too little...

### Source 1

<p><u>Shabbat 118b</u></p> <p>R' Yose said: may my portion be among those who complete the Hallel every day. Is this so? But the master has said: One who recites the Hallel every day is thereby belittling and blaspheming God. In regard to what do we say this? With regard to Pesukei Dizimra</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שבת קי"ח ב:</u></p> <p>א"ר יוסי יהא חלקי מגומרי הלל בכל יום. איני? והאמר מר: הקורא הלל בכל יום הרי זה מחרף ומגדף. כי קאמרינן בפסוקי דזמרא</p>
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### Source 2

<p><u>Megillah 18a</u></p> <p>Beyond this it is forbidden to declare the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He. For R. Elazar said: What is it that is written, "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or make all his praise heard" (Psalms 106:2)? For whom is it fitting to express the mighty acts of the Lord? For one who can make all his praise heard.</p> <p><b>Rabbah b. Bar Hannah said in the name of R. Yohanan: One who tells of the praises of the Holy One, blessed be He, in excess is uprooted from the world,</b> as it says, "Will it be told Him if I speak? If a man says it, he will be swallowed" (Job 37:20). R. Judah a man of Kefar Gibboraya, and some say, of Kefar Gibbor Hayil, expounded: What is it that is written, "For You silence is praise" (Psalms 65:2)? The cure for everything is silence. When</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מגילה י"ח א</u></p> <p>מכאן ואילך אסור לספר בשבחו של הקב"ה דא"ר אלעזר מאי דכתיב (תהלים קו, ב) מי ימלל גבורות ה' ישמיע כל תהלתו למי נאה למלל גבורות ה' למי שיכול להשמיע כל תהלתו אמר רבה בר בר חנה א"ר יוחנן המספר בשבחו של הקב"ה יותר מדאי נעקר מן העולם שנאמר (איוב לז, כ) היסופר לו כי אדבר אם אמר איש כי יבלע דרש ר' יהודה איש כפר גבוריא ואמרי לה איש כפר גבור חיל מאי דכתיב (תהלים סה, ב) לך דומיה תהלה סמא דכולה משתוקא כי אתא רב דימי אמר אמרי במערבא מלה בסלע משתוקא בתריין:</p>
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<p>R. Dimi came, he said: In the West they say: “A word is worth a sela, silence two selas.”</p>	
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**II. Yetziyat Mitzrayim: The Foundation for Hallel**

**Source 3**

<p><u>Pesachim 117a</u></p> <p>Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: The song in the Torah, i.e., the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15:1–19), Moses and the Jewish people recited it when they ascended from the sea. The Gemara asks: And who said this hallel mentioned in the mishna, Psalms 113–118? The Gemara answers: The Prophets among them established this hallel for the Jewish people, that they should recite it on every appropriate occasion; and for every trouble, may it not come upon them, they recite the supplications included in hallel. When they are redeemed, they recite it over their redemption, as hallel includes expressions of gratitude for the redemption.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>פסחים קיז ע"א</u></p> <p>אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל שיר שבתורה  משה וישראל אמרוהו בשעה שעלו מן הים  והלל זה מי אמרו נביאים שביניהן תקנו  להן לישראל שיהו אומרים אותו על כל  פרק ופרק ועל כל צרה וצרה שלא תבא  עליהן ולכשנגאלין אומרים אותו על  גאולתן</p>
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**Source 4**

<p><u>Exodus 15:2-3</u></p> <p>Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said: I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שמות טו: ב-ג</u></p> <p>אָז יִשְׁרַע־מִשֶּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה  הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְאֹמְרֵי הַיָּם  כִּי־גָאֵה גָאֵה סוּס וְרֹכְבּוֹ רָמָה בַיָּם:</p>
<p>The LORD is my strength and might; He is become my deliverance. <b>This is my God and I</b></p>	<p>עָזִי וְזִמְרַת לִי הִיא וַיִּהְיֶה־לִּי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה אֱלֹהֵי  וַאֲנִי־הוּא אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאֵרֶמְמָנָהוּ:</p>

will enshrine Him; The God of my father, and I will exalt Him.	
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**Source 5**

<p><u>Rashi Exodus 15:2</u>          THIS IS MY GOD — In His glory did He reveal Himself to them and they pointed to Him — as it were — with the finger exclaiming “This is my God!” (<u>Shir HaShirim Rabbah 3:15</u>) A maid servant beheld at the Red Sea what even the prophets never saw (<u>Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 15:2:2</u>)</p>	<p>זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכִבוֹדוֹ נִגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם וְהָיוּ מִרְאִין אוֹתוֹ בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ, רָאֵתָה שְׂפָתָהּ עַל הַיָּם מַה שְּׁלֹא רָאוּ נְבִיאִים (מְכִילְתָּא):</p>
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**Source 6**

Passover Haggadah

In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt, as it is stated (Exodus 13:8); "For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt." Not only our ancestors did the Holy One, blessed be He, redeem, but rather also us [together] with them did he redeem, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 6:23); "And He took us out from there, in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers."

**Source 6**

Yosef Yerushalmi, Zakhor, p. 21

“For the rabbis the Bible was not only a repository of past history, but a revealed pattern of the whole of history, and they had learned their scriptures well...they had learned that the true pulse of history often beat beneath its manifest surfaces, an invisible history that was more real than what the world, deceived by the more strident outwards rhythms of power, could recognize.”

**Source 7**

<p>Assuredly, a time is coming—declares the LORD—when it shall no more be said, “As the LORD lives who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt,” but rather, “As the LORD lives who brought the Israelites out of the northland, and out of all the lands to which He</p>	<p>יִרְמִיחוּ פֶּרֶק טז          יָד לִכְן הִנְהוּ יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם-ה' וְלֹא יֵאמַר עוֹד חַי-ה' אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: טו כִּי אִם-חַי-ה' אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ צִפּוֹן וּמְכֹל הָאָרְצוֹת אֲשֶׁר</p>
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had banished them.” For I will bring them back to their land, which I gave to their fathers.

הֲדִיחֶם שְׁמָה וְהִשְׁבוּתֵימ עַל-אֲדָמָתָם אֲשֶׁר  
נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתָם

## Source 8

Avivah Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*

“The dialectic proposed here emerges into song. In the reading that we have been exploring, it is while in the suspense and anxiety of the crossing that Moses suddenly finds it in his heart to sing. The meeting of terror and joy, destruction and birth, takes the people beyond the normal places of speech. It takes them, we have suggested, into silence. Moses silences the people’s cries, God silence Moses’ cries.

**The *mysterium tremendum* that is the entry into the Sea, the tearing apart of the Sea, the birth of fearful energies held in tension as Israel crosses-- this reduces the people to speechlessness. And it is from the heart of that silence that Moses conceives of a Song.** What is uncontainable and inexpressible, he puts to words that are written in the Torah. What remains unwritten, of course, is the melody that gives voice to the mystery.”

**Mary Oliver, *A Thousand Mornings***

“I Happened To Be Standing” by Mary Oliver

I don’t know where prayers go,  
or what they do.  
Do cats pray, while they sleep  
half-asleep in the sun?  
Does the opossum pray as it  
crosses the street?  
The sunflowers? The old black oak  
growing older every year?  
I know I can walk through the world,  
along the shore or under the trees,  
with my mind filled with things  
of little importance, in full  
self-attendance. A condition I can’t really  
call being alive.  
Is a prayer a gift, or a petition,  
or does it matter?  
The sunflowers blaze, maybe that’s their way.  
Maybe the cats are sound asleep. Maybe not.

While I was thinking this I happened to be standing  
just outside my door, with my notebook open,  
which is the way I begin every morning.  
Then a wren in the privet began to sing.  
He was positively drenched in enthusiasm,  
I don't know why. And yet, why not.  
I wouldn't persuade you from whatever you believe  
or whatever you don't. That's your business.  
But I thought, of the wren's singing, what could this be  
if it isn't a prayer?  
So I just listened, my pen in the air.

### III. Tracing the Strands of Creation and Exodus

#### Psalms 113

<p>Hallelujah. O servants of the LORD, give praise; praise the name of the LORD.  Let the name of the LORD be blessed now and forever.  From east to west the name of the LORD is praised.  The LORD is exalted above all nations; His glory is above the heavens.  Who is like the LORD our God, who, enthroned on high,  sees what is below, in heaven and on earth?  He raises the poor from the dust, lifts up the needy from the refuse heap  to set them with the great, with the great men of His people.  He sets the childless woman among her household as a happy mother of children.  Hallelujah.</p>	<p>(א) הַלְלוּ יְהוָה   הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה' הַלְלוּ אֶת־  שְׁמֵה'  (ב) יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:  (ג) מִמְזֶרֶח־שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד־מְבֹאֵוּ מְהִלָּל שֵׁם ה'  (ד) רַם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם   ה' עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם  כְּבוֹדוֹ:  (ה) מִי כֵה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְגַבִּיהִי לְשָׁבֶת:  (ו) הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרַאֲוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:  (ז) מְקִימֵי מַעַפֵּר דָּגַל מְאַשְׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן:  (ח) לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם־נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ:  (ט) מוֹשִׁיבֵי   עֲקָרַת הַבַּיִת אִם־הַבְּנִים שְׂמִיחָה  הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה:</p>
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**Psalms 114**

<p>(1) When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,          (2) Judah became His holy one, Israel, His dominion.          (3) The sea saw them and fled, Jordan ran backward,          (4) mountains skipped like rams, hills like sheep.          (5) What alarmed you, O sea, that you fled, Jordan, that you ran backward,          (6) mountains, that you skipped like rams, hills, like sheep?          (7) Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,          (8) who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flinty rock into a fountain.</p>	<p>(א) בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לְעֹז:          (ב) הִיִּתְהַ יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשֻׁלֹתָיו:          (ג) הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנָס הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר:          (ד) הַהַרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבַעוֹת כְּבָנִי-צֶאֱן:          (ה) מִהֲלָלָה הַיָּם כִּי תָנוּס הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסַּב לְאַחֹר:          (ו) הַהַרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבַעוֹת כְּבָנִי-צֶאֱן:          (ז) מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אֲרֶץ מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:          (ח) הַדּוֹפְקֵי הַצּוּר אָגַם-מַיִם חֲלָמִישׁ לְמַעַיְנוֹ-מַיִם:</p>
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**Excerpt from Psalms 115**

<p>May you be blessed by the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth.          The heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth He gave over to man.          The dead cannot praise the LORD, nor any who go down into silence.          But we will bless the LORD now and forever.          Hallelujah.</p>	<p>בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה / עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:          הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיהוָה / וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי-אָדָם:          לֹא הַמֵּתִים יִהְלְלוּ-יְהוָה / וְלֹא כָל-יֹרְדֵי דוּמָה:          וְאֲנַחְנוּ   נִבְרָךְ יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה:</p>
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