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GUEST DVAR TORAH
FOR SHABBAT SHIRA

Shabbat Shira: The Song of Women and the Path to Redemption

Shabbat Shira, the Shabbat of Song, marks one of the most powerful moments in our collective memory: the splitting of the sea. After fear, uncertainty, and generations of bondage, Am Yisrael finally stands on dry land, watching the waters fall behind them and the past literally collapse. The response

is instinctive — they sing. Moshe and Bnei Yisrael lift their voices together in gratitude and awe. But the Torah doesn't stop there. Almost immediately, the women enter the scene, led by Miriam the prophetess, coming forward with drums, song, and dance. Their song isn't just a response — it's a statement.

Chazal teach us that the women carried their drums with them through the desert, even during slavery. While still in Egypt, before redemption was visible or guaranteed, they believed it would come. They prepared instruments for a celebration they had not yet seen. That detail says everything. It shows that the women didn't just respond to redemption — they believed in it before it happened. Their faith wasn't passive. It was active. It helped shape the redemption itself.

This is why Shabbat Shira speaks so deeply to women across generations. The men sing after the miracle. The women sing from a place of faith that comes before it. Miriam's song isn't only about relief or victory — it's about trust. A deep, quiet trust that carried the people long before the sea ever split.

And honestly, that feels very familiar. We live in a generation that knows uncertainty well. The final redemption, the Geulah, is

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something we talk about all the time, pray for every day, and still struggle to picture clearly. It feels close and far at the same time. And in that space, the role of women hasn't really changed: to hold faith when clarity is missing, to sing before the ending is written, to keep the rhythm for a future that's still unfolding.

Music has always carried this kind of faith. Song goes past logic and speaks straight to the soul. When words feel small, melody holds what we can't explain. That's why song is always part of redemption stories — past and future. Shirat HaYam wasn't a performance. It was an outpouring. The song itself became part of the miracle.

In my own journey as a Jewish Orthodox singer, performing exclusively for women, I feel this connection deeply. Each month on Rosh Chodesh, I lead a musical Hallel for women, and together we bring something ancient back to life. Hallel is a prayer of praise connected to miracles — both the ones we've already seen and the ones we're still waiting for. When women come together to sing Hallel, we're not only thanking Hashem for what's been — we're making space for what's still becoming.

These gatherings are an open invitation. An invitation to step into Miriam's circle. To bring your voice — whether strong or quiet — your faith, your questions, your hope. You don't need certainty. You don't need clarity. You just need a heart that's willing to sing toward something bigger than itself.

And you are personally invited to join us every month for this uplifting event.

Just as Miriam gathered the women at the sea, women today gather through song, rhythm, shared breath, and shared voice. These moments are quiet acts of redemption.

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They strengthen emunah, restore hope, and remind us that we're not just waiting for Geulah to arrive — we're part of it.

Shabbat Shira teaches us that redemption doesn't only come through splitting seas and open miracles. It comes through faith that prepares drums in advance. Through voices that refuse to go silent. Through women who keep singing even when the path ahead isn't clear.

The final Geulah will come, the prophets tell us, with song. And if history teaches us anything, the women will already be singing — not because everything is resolved, but because they believe it will be.

Just as they always have. ■

Ricka Razel (Van Leeuwen) is an acclaimed singer, songwriter, and musician. She performs regularly for women and leads Hallel every Rosh Chodesh.