

Barchi Nafshi – Psalm 104

Presented by Michael Nicholls

Is this Psalm a copy of an ancient Egyptian prayer?

What is owed to the ode of Akhenaten to Aten?

We recite Barchi Nafshi on Rosh Chodesh & Shabbat afternoons in winter – but why?

We tend to gabble it.

Here is a chance to slow down & reflect

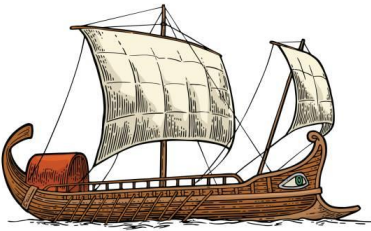
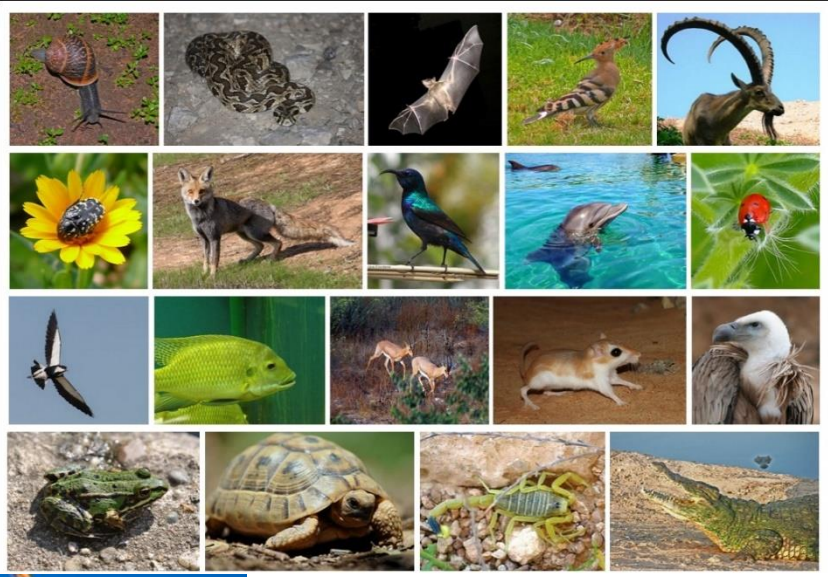
Appreciate the daily miracle of creation.

Monday 14:00 – 14:50

We recite Barchi Nafshi on Rosh Chodesh & Shabbat afternoons in winter.

We tend to gabble it. But here is a chance to slow down and reflect on its profound messages and its appreciation of the daily miracle of creation.

We will also investigate how similar it might be to a poem attributed to Egypt's revolutionary montheistic pharoach, Akhenaten.



Relates to the wonders of creation

Bereishit – Genesis Chapter 1

Same sequence of creation. But there are significant differences in approach.

Where else
does the Tenakh
relate to
creation?

Bereishit relates the sequence of events – how the world and cosmos came about. Whereas this psalm is more poetic and descriptive.

Job Chapters 38-39

Cannot ignore the similarity to Hymn to Aten



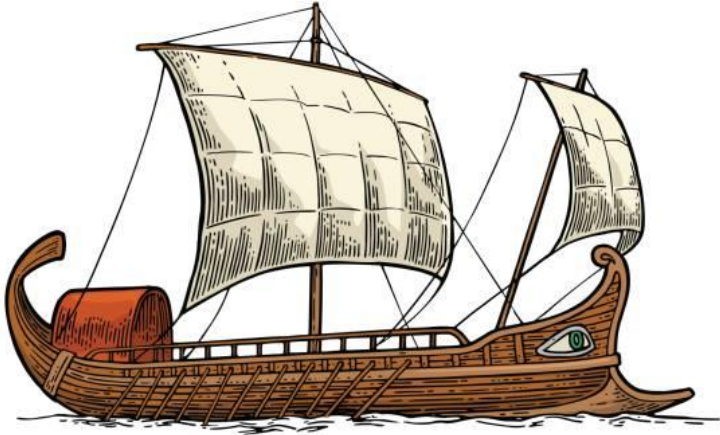
Akhenaten

(Amenhotep IV) 1352-1336

Changed the religion to monotheism, worship of Aten a sun god. Probably



Sesostris II	1880–1874	Jacob settled in Egypt (Genesis 47:9).
Sesostris III	1874–1855	Joseph probably Prime Minister in his reign and Jacob died.
Amenemhet IV	1808–1799	Joseph died during his reign in 1806.
Ahmosé	1550–1526	Ordered the death of the Hebrew boys (Exodus 1:15–16).
Amenhophis I	1526–1504	Or this was the Pharaoh responsible for the above.
Tuthmosis II	1497–1492	Moses fled from Egypt (Exodus 2:15).
Hatshepsut	1497–1457	Queen, co-regent with Tuthmosis III
Tuthmosis III	1479–1425	The Pharaoh of the oppression and/or the Exodus?
Amenophis (Amenhotep) II	1427–1400	Or the Pharaoh of the Exodus if we take an early date for the Exodus. Part co-regency with Tuthmosis III.
Tuthmosis IV	1400–1390	Joshua enters the Promised Land of Canaan.
Amenhotep III	1390–1352	See The Amarna Letters (page 94).
Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten)	1352–1336	As above. See page 43.
Tutankhamun	1336–1327	Items from his tomb illustrate many biblical objects.
Horemheb	1319–1292	The eventual successor to Tutankhamun
Ramesses II	1279–1213	The Pharaoh of the Exodus if we take a late date?
Siamun	978–959	Possibly the Pharaoh when Solomon sealed an alliance by marrying his daughter (1 Kings 3:1)
Shoshenq I*	945–924	Shishak who sacked the temple in Jerusalem in 925 (1 Kings 14:25).



Manmade ships
are seen as part
of God's
creations in the
sea.

אֲנִיּוֹת

Leviathan



Leviathan is also included...

Ugaritic (Lothan) was once a beloved of the deity El, a plaything.

Or leviathan might mean escorting dolphins near ships (JSB).

(Baba Batra 75, Job 21, Isaiah 27:1).

Enormous sea monster. God slew the female to stop the pair breeding & destroying the world.



Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord, My God, You are very great; You are clothed in glory and majesty, wrapped in a robe of light; You spread the heavens like a tent cloth. He sets the rafters of His lofts in the waters, makes the clouds His chariot, moves on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, fiery flames His servants. He established the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never totter. You made the deep cover it as a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. They fled at Your blast, rushed away at the sound of Your thunder, – mountains rising, valleys sinking – to the place You established for them. You set bounds they must not pass so that they never again cover the earth.	1-9	א בָּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מְאֹד הוֹד וְהִדָּר לְבָשֶׁת: ב עֹטָה אֹזֶר כְּשִׁלְמָה נֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּירִיעָה: ג הַמְקָרָה בַּמַּיִם עֲלִיּוֹתָיו הַשָּׁם עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ הַמְהַלֵּךְ עַל כַּנְּפֵי רוּחַ: ד עֹשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶיו רוּחוֹת מְשָׁרְתָיו אֵשׁ לֵהֵט: ה יָסַד אֶרֶץ עַל מְכוּנֶיהָ בַּל תִּמּוּט עוֹלָם וָעֶד: ו תִּהְיוּם כָּלבוּשׁ כְּסִיתוֹ עַל הָרִים יַעֲמִדוּ מַיִם: ז מִן גַּעֲרָתְךָ יְנוּסוּן מִן קוֹל רַעְמְךָ יִחַפְּזוּן: ח יַעֲלוּ הָרִים יִרְדּוּ בִקְעוֹת אֶל מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְדֹּת לָהֶם: ט גְּבוּל שִׁמְתָּ בַּל יַעֲבְרוּן בַּל יָשׁוּבוּן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ:
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You make springs gush forth in torrents; they make their way between the hills,	10-18	הַמִּשְׁלַח מֵעֵינַיִם בְּנַחְלִים בֵּין הָרִים יִהְיוּ:	י
giving drink to all the wild beasts; the wild asses slake their thirst.		יִשְׁקוּ כָּל חַיְתוֹ שָׂדֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּ פָּרָאִים צִמָּאִם:	יא
The birds of the sky dwell beside them and sing among the foliage.		עֲלֵיהֶם עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוֹן מִבֵּין עֵפְאִים יִתְנוּ קוֹל:	יב
You water the mountains from Your (His) lofts; the earth is sated from the fruit of Your work.		מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מֵעֲלִיּוֹתָיו מִפָּרִי מַעֲשֶׂיךָ תִּשְׂבַּע הָאָרֶץ:	יג
You make the grass grow for the cattle, and herbage for man's labour that he may get food out of the earth -		מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר לַבְּהֵמָה וְעֵשֶׂב לַעֲבֹדַת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:	יד
wine that cheers the hearts of men oil that makes the face shine, and bread that sustains man's life.		וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לִבָּב אָנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פָּנִים מִשְׁמֶן וְלֶחֶם לִבָּב אָנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד:	טו
The trees of the Lord drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon, His own planting,		יִשְׂבְּעוּ עֵצֵי יְהוָה אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע:	טז
where birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the junipers.		אֲשֶׁר שָׁם צִפּוֹרִים יִקְנְנוּ חֲסִידָה בְּרוֹשִׁים בֵּיתָה:	יז
The high mountains are for wild goats; the crags are a refuge for rock-badgers.		הָרִים הַגְּבֹהִים לִיעֲלִים סְלָעִים מַחְסֶה לְשֹׁפְנִים:	יח

He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows when to set.	עָשָׂה יָרֵחַ לְמוֹעֲדִים שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבוֹאוֹ:	יט
You bring on darkness and it is night, when all the beasts of the forests stir.	תָּנֹשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ וַיְהִי לַיְלָה בּוֹ תִרְמָשׁ כָּל חַיְתוֹ יַעַר:	כ
The lions roar for prey, seeking their food from God.	הַכִּפִּירִים שֹׁאֲגִים לַטֶּרֶף וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלִים:	כא
When the sun rises, they come home and couch in their dens.	תִּזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יֵאֲסֹפוּן וְאֵל מְעוֹנָתָם יִרְבְּצוּן:	כב
Man then goes out to his work, to his labour until the evening.	יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפֶּעַל וּלְעִבְדָתוֹ עַד עֶרֶב:	כג

How many are the things You have made, O Lord; You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is full of Your creations.	כד מָה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה כָּל־מַבְרָאֵי עֲשִׂיתָ מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיֶנְךָ :
There is the sea, vast and wide, with its creatures beyond number, living things, small and great.	כה זֶה הַיָּם גָּדוֹל וְרוֹחֵב יָדָיִם שָׁם רִמְשׁ וְאִין מִסְפָּר חַיּוֹת קָטָנוֹת עִם גְּדִלּוֹת :
There go the ships, and Leviathan that You formed to sport with.	כו שָׁם אָנִיּוֹת יִהְיֶה לְיָמֶיךָ זֶה יִצְרָתָ לְשִׁחָק בּוֹ :
All of them look to You to give them their food when it is due.	כז כָּל־מַבְרָאֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּן לְתֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ :
Give it to them, they gather it up; open Your hand, they are well satisfied;	כח תִּתֵּן לָהֶם יִלְקְטוּן תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׂבְּעוּן טוֹב :
hide Your face, they are terrified; take away their breath, they perish and turn again into dust;	כט תִּסְתִּיר פָּנֶיךָ יִבְהִלּוּ תִסָּף רוּחָם יִגְוְעוּן וְאֵל עֲפָרָם יִשׁוּבוּן :
send back Your breath, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.	ל תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן וּתַחֲדֹשׁ פְּנֵי אֲדָמָה :

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in His works!	יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם יִשְׂמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׁיו :	לא
He looks at the earth and it trembles; He touches the mountains and they smoke.	הַמַּבִּיט לָאָרֶץ וַתִּרְעַד יָגַע בְּהָרִים וַיַּעֲשֶׁנוּ :	לב
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; all my life I will chant hymns to my God.	אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה בְּחַיִּי אֶזְמָרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְעוֹדִי :	לג
May my prayer be pleasing to Him; I will rejoice in the Lord.	יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו שִׁיחֵי אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׂמַּח בַּיהוָה:	לד
May sinners disappear from the earth, and the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Halleluyah.	יִתְמוּ חַטָּאִים מִן הָאָרֶץ וּרְשָׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם בְּרָכִי נִפְשִׁי אֶת יְהוָה הַלְלוּיָהּ:	לה

	The Great Hymn to the Aten (Assmann trans.) https://www.thetorah.com/article/psalm-104-and-its-parallels-in-pharaoh-akhenatens-hymn
	Song 1: The Daily Circuit
Morning – beauty Aten Hymn 1–5	Beautifully you rise in heaven’s lightland, living Aten, who allots life. You have dawned on the eastern horizon and have filled every land with your beauty.
Noon – dominion Aten Hymn 6–12	You are beauteous, great, radiant, high over every land; your rays embrace the lands to the limit of all you have made. Being Re’, you reach their limits and bend them down for the son whom you love. Though you are far, your rays are on earth; though one sees you, your strides are hidden.
Night – chaos Aten Hymn 13–23	When you set in the western lightland , earth is in darkness in the condition of death. The sleepers are in their chambers, heads covered, one eye does not see the other, were they robbed of their gods under their heads, they don’t notice it. Every lion comes from its den, all the serpents bite. Darkness is a grave, Earth is in silence: Their creator has set in his lightland.
Morning – rebirth Aten Hymn 24–44	At dawn you have risen in the lightland and are as radiant as the sundisk of daytime. You dispel the dark, you cast your rays, the Two Lands are in festivity daily. Humans awake, they stand on their feet, you have roused them. They wash and dress, their arms in adoration of your appearance; the entire land sets out to work. all beasts browse on their herbs, trees, herbs are sprouting; birds fly from their nests , their wings raised in adoration of your ka. All flocks frisk on their feet, all that fly up and alight, they live when you dawn for them. Ships fare north, fare south as well, every road lies open when you rise. The fish in the river dart before you – Your rays are in the midst of the sea.
	Song 2: Creation
Cosmic creation – multitude and diversity Aten Hymn 63–76	How many are your deeds , though hidden from sight, O Sole God beside whom there is none! You made the earth following your heart when you were alone, with people, herds, and flocks; all upon earth that walks on legs, all on high that fly on wings, the foreign lands of Syria and Nubia, the land of Egypt. You set every man in his place, you supply his needs; everyone has his food , his lifetime is counted. Their tongues differ in speech, their characters likewise; their skins are distinct, for you distinguished the people.
The Two Niles Aten Hymn 77–90	You made the Nile in the netherworld, you bring him when you will, to nourish the people , for you made them for yourself. Lord of all, who toils for them, Lord of all lands who shines for them, Sundisk of daytime, great in glory! All distant lands, you keep them alive; you made a heavenly Nile descend for them. He makes waves on the mountains like the sea, to drench their fields with what they need. How efficient are your plans, O Lord of eternity! A Nile from heaven for foreign people and for the creatures in the desert that walk on legs, but for Egypt the Nile who comes from the netherworld.
	Song 3: Transformations: God, Nature, and the King
The Seasons Aten Hymn 91–95	Your rays nurse all fields, when you shine, they live and grow for you. You made the seasons to foster all you made, winter, to cool them, summer, that they taste you.
Transformations in Heaven and on Earth Aten Hymn 96–105	You made the sky far to shine therein, to see all that you make, while you are One, risen in your form of the living sundisk, shining and radiant, near and far. You make millions of forms from yourself alone, towns, villages, fields, road and river. All eyes behold you upon them, when you are above the earth as the disk of daytime.