

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Now the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt

שמות י"ג:י"ח

וַיֹּאבֶד אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָעָם דֶּרֶךְ הַמִּדְבָּר יַם־סוּף וְחֻמְשִׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Exodus 13:18

So God led the people round about, by way of the wilderness at the Sea of Reeds. Now the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt.

Rashi on Exodus 13:18:3

וְחֻמְשִׁים — The word חֻמְשִׁים means provided with weapons (Mekhilta). — [Because He led them by a circuitous route through the wilderness He brought it about that they went up from Egypt well-provided; for had He led them circuitously by the route of an inhabited district they would not have provided for themselves every thing that they needed, but only a part, like a person who is travelling from place to place and intends to purchase there whatever he will require. ...

Another explanation of חֻמְשִׁים is: only one out of five (חמשה) went forth from Egypt, and four parts of the people died during the three days of darkness because they were unworthy of being delivered (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on 10:22).

Ibn Ezra on Exodus 13:18:4

ARMED. Some say that *chamushim* (armed) means full of wealth, possessing all that they need. Now Scripture states, *neither had they prepared for themselves any victual* (Ex. 12:39). Furthermore, what reason is there to mention this now? The only meaning of *chamushim* is, girded with weapons for war. Compare, *chalutzim ta'avoru* (ye shall pass over armed) (Deut. 3:18), the meaning of which is: ye shall pass over with girded loins. The fact that Scripture in one place reads, *ve-attem ta'averu*

chamushim (but ye shall pass over before your brethren armed) (Josh. 1:14) and in another place refers to the Israelites as *chalutzim* (Deut. 3:18) is true witness to the aforementioned. What reason was there for them to carry food before their brethren? The reason Scripture at this point notes *that the children of Israel went up armed* is that it is previously stated, *Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt* (v. 17). **For the Israelites went out *with a high hand* (Ex. 14:8), with weapons of war and not like fleeing slaves.**

Ramban on Exodus 13:18:1

AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT UP ARMED OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. This means that even though G-d led them about by the way of the wilderness, they still feared lest the Philistines who dwelt in the nearby cities come upon them. Therefore they were armed, as are people who go out to war. **Some scholars say that Scripture is relating that they went out *with a high hand*, deeming themselves redeemed from bondage, and they did not leave like slaves escaping [from their master].**

Sforno on Exodus 13:18:2

וּמוֹשִׁים עִלּוּ, although they had left Egypt fully armed. They did not have the courage to face the Egyptians in combat in spite of their being armed. They felt too inexperienced to face trained warriors.

Chizkuni, Exodus 13:18:2

וּמוֹשִׁים, according to Rashi, the meaning of the word is: “armed.” **According to Rashi, the fear of the Israelites was not due to their not having arms with which to defend themselves.** They were well armed. You are not to wonder where the Israelites had taken all these arms from, arms which they used in the desert for several wars, starting immediately after they had crossed the sea of reeds and had been attacked by the Amalekites. They needed these arms again when they conquered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

An alternate explanation of the word: מוֹשִׁים. The word refers to provisions for the journey

Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot 13:18:1-3

. וחמושים עלו בני ישראל. , “the Israelites were armed when they came out of Egypt.” The plain meaning of the words is that when the Israelites left Egypt they were like the vanguard of an army preparing for battle. This was contrary to the rule that the Jewish people are not like the Gentile nations in that they have to make only the first motions of doing things in a regular manner before miraculous forces intervene to help them. **The answer is that G'd wants us to do whatever is possible in a natural way, following accepted norms. Anything beyond that we have to leave to celestial forces.** Solomon confirms this principle in Proverbs 21,31: “the horse is readied for the day of battle; but victory comes from the Lord.” In other words, men have to do their share before G'd will do His share. This is why it was essential that the Israelites take weapons with them when they left Egypt.

A Midrashic approach: (Tanchuma Beshalach 1) The word חמושים means “one out of five.” Four fifths of the Jewish people died during the plague of darkness so as not to give the Egyptians the satisfaction of knowing that these Israelites had not been found worthy of redemption. Some say that the word חמושים refers to one in fifty Israelites only being redeemed. Some even claim that only one out of 500 Israelites was found worthy of redemption. It may pay to make the following calculation. In 14,7 the Torah speaks of שלישים being on each of the chariots which pursued the Israelites. Some say this means that for every Israelite at least three Egyptians were in pursuit. Others claim that thirty Egyptians were in pursuit of each Israelite. Still others (all using the word שלישים) argue that 300 Egyptians pursued each Israelite (on each chariot?). The commentators who understood the word חמושים as referring to the number five also consider the word שלישים as referring to the number three. Those who consider the word חמושים as a reference to five hundred, obviously are the ones who also considered the word שלישים as referring to three hundred. The words על כלו at the end of 14,7 are understood as referring to “each Israelite,” not to “each chariot” According to the first opinion then there had been three million male adult Israelites in the service of the Egyptians prior to the plague of darkness. Assuming three hundred Egyptians pursued each Israelite the number of Egyptians drowned at the sea would have amounted to nine hundred million as they had thought that three million Jews had left their country (not knowing that

most had died). In fact we do find a Midrash Hagadol according to which when G'd descended to Egypt nine hundred million angels of destruction descended with Him. Most of the sages are agreed that the Egyptians who went in pursuit of the Israelites numbered ninety million regardless of whether they held that one out of five Israelites left Egypt or one out of fifty or one out of five hundred. They all arrived at the number by combining it with the word שלישים. It is agreed that G'd dispatched nine hundred million destructive angels against that force, i.e. one angel against one thousand Egyptians. This is the meaning of this Midrash. **You will observe that the word chamushim though read as if it were spelled חמשים, is actually spelled without the letter ו, i.e. חמשים "fifty."** This teaches that Torah which was given to the Jewish people on the fiftieth day after the Exodus was the purpose for which they left the bondage and Egypt. (compare Zohar volume 2 page 46). Furthermore, there is the fact that the Exodus has been mentioned in the written Torah a total of fifty times.

Torah Temimah on Torah, Exodus 13:18:1

וחמשים עלו. מלמד שהיו מזוינים בחמשה עשר מיני זיין. (ירושלמי שבת פ"ו ה"ז)

This teaches that they were armed with 15 different types of armaments

Targum Jerusalem, Exodus 13:18

And the Word of the Lord conducted the people by the way of the desert of the sea of Suph; **armed in good works went up the sons of Israel**, free from the land of Mizraim.

Targum Jonathan on Exodus 13:18

But the Lord led the people round by the way of the desert of the sea of Suph; and every one **of the sons of Israel, with five children**, went up from the land of Mizraim.