

Parshas Beshalach – Pinchos Cooper (*reprint*)

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In this week's Parsha we read of the splitting of the Yam Suf and the Shiras Hayom that Moshe and the Bnei Yisroel sang in praise of Hashem's miracles.

The structure of the Shira is as follows:

The first part of the Shira tells of the miracles of how Hashem drowned the Egyptians and their horses and destroyed their chariots etc. This seems to be complete with the verse *Mi Komocho bo'eylim Hashem* etc.

We then move on to describe the next planned stage of the story of Bnei Yisrael, namely the conquest of the Land of Cana'an, and the terror felt by the peoples of that land at the prospect of being defeated and dispossessed.

The final part mentions the final piece of the plan, namely "*Mikedash Hashem konenu yodecha*", the building of the *Beis Hamikdash* which would usher in the end of history, *Hashem Yimloch leolom vo'ed*. "*Hashem will rule forever*. Why that did not happen is another story, but that appears to be the end of the Shira.

Except that it isn't.

If you look in the *Sefer Tora* you will see that there is a final verse written in the style of the song, with gaps between phrases etc, not in the regular prose style. This is the verse "*Ki vo sus Par'o*". This verse seems to just re-cap what was discussed at the beginning without apparently adding anything, just saying "*When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen came into the sea, Hashem returned the waters of the sea over them, and the Bnei Yisroel walked on the dry land in the midst of the sea*". We know this from the beginning, why tag it on at the end?

*Rabbenu Avrohom Ibn Ezra* suggests that the additional verse tells of the miracle that two things occurred at the same time in the sea, namely that at the same time as the Jews were walking on dry land in the middle of the sea, the Egyptians were being drowned up at the other end.

This may explain what the verse comes to add, but still does not explain why it comes at the end when its place should surely be at the beginning?

The *Maharal* answers with a thunderbolt and says that it actually does come at the beginning! The *Tora* is written in sentences that proceed in a linear fashion. One sentence begins a segment, the next verses continue until the final verse completes the *Parsha*. The *Shira*, however, says the *Maharal* is different, it goes in a circle. Praise of Hashem does not have a beginning and an end, it goes on forever. We cannot ever complete the praise of Hashem and cannot ever stop praising Him. Thus when we come to the end of the *Shira* "*Hashem yimloch leolom vo'ed*" we must immediately go back to the beginning and start again

How do we begin again? The final verse of the *Shira* is actually the beginning and not the end. It restarts the *Shira* with the introduction, when the Jews saw the Egyptians were drowned and the Jews crossed on dry land in the midst of the sea, then "*Oz yoshev Moshe uvnei Yisroel*", then the song of praise began, and so on until we get to the final verse, which takes us in a circle back to the beginning. The praise due to Hashem does not have a beginning and an end, it goes on forever.

May we all live to see the miracles waiting to be performed by Hashem in the near future.