



Special Song

The last of the 613 mitzvot is found at the end of *parashat Vayelech*. “*Ve’ata kitvu lachem et hashira hazot ve’lamdah et Beni Yisrael sima be’fithem* – So now, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the Children of Israel, place it in their mouth.” (*Devarim 31:19*) The Talmud (*Nedarim 38a*) teaches that this is a mandate to write one’s own *sefer* Torah. It is curious that the Torah is referred to here as a song. This begs the question – Perhaps the command is to only write the song, not the whole Torah? And if this is a commandment to write a *sefer* Torah, why are we not told explicitly to write a Torah, but to write this song?

The Rambam notes that since it is forbidden to write sections of the Torah, the mitzvah is clearly to write the entire Torah, including this song. The Beit Yosef explains that since the *Shira* was sung at the end of the five Books of the Torah it is understood that one should write the entire Torah up until the very end.

Rav Shach, *z”l* in *Bezot Ani Boteach* explains beautifully that the Torah is the song of our lives. Both on an individual level, as well as on a collective one. We are all faced with numerous challenges and difficulties that make it very difficult to continuously sing a song to Hashem. However,

Torah is the one song that is eternal. The Torah gives us strength to persevere, to continue to believe and to continue to sing. Song reflects the emotion one feels as he understands the cherished value of life and the joy of living. *Dovid Hamelech* encapsulates this so beautifully when he says, “*Chesed u’mishpat ashira* – Of kindness and justice do I sing.” (*Tehillim 101:1*) Whether we experience the beneficence or the judgement of the *Ribono shel Olam*, we can continuously be in a state of song. One who lives a Torah-directed life understands that all Hashem does is for the good, and specifically for our personal good, to become the best version of ourselves. Therefore, if we live with complete dedication to Torah, whatever the situation, we can live with the capacity to sing to Hashem unceasingly.

Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* offers an additional profound insight. The Gemara (*Chagigah 12b*) teaches that Hashem extends graciousness during the day to one who learns Torah at night. This is based on the verse, “*Yomam yetzaveh Hashem chasdo* – In the day, Hashem will command His lovingkindness,” because “*u’balayla shiro imi* – even by night His song is with me” (*Tehillim 42:9*). There are some songs that are sung **to** Hashem, like *Shirat Hayam*, “*Ashira LaHashem* – I will sing to Hashem.” However, there are other songs that are sung **with** Hashem, “*imi*,” this is the song of the Torah. When

we study Torah, we are “singing” with Hashem! Rav Yerucham Levovitz would often marvel how the Rambam, in his explanation on the Mishnah, begins by stating, “*Amar Hashem Yitbarach*,” instead of the classic, “It is written in the Torah.” Torah is interactive, it is constant give and take between us and Hashem. What could be more inspiring than singing “with Hashem” every time we are involved in learning Torah! It is truly the most breath-taking experience. ■

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