

חמודי שי על התורה והמועדים

Chamudei Shai on the Torah and Holidays

by Dr. Joseph Geliebter

Topics Covered

I

- ▶ *In this Parasha, Hashem tests the Jewish people to see if they will heed the voice of their leader*
- ▶ *Moshe is the father of all prophets. Therefore, Hashem tested the Jewish people to see if they would follow his words*
- ▶ *This power of obedience to the leader must be present in every individual*
- ▶ *This influence benefits all generations*
- ▶ *"And they will also believe in you forever"*

II

- ▶ *The reason for instituting the "Az Yashir" in Pesukei Dezimra*
- ▶ *We say "kol haneshamah" ("Let every soul praise G-d") twice, and "Hashem yimloch" ("G-d will reign") twice*
- ▶ *A profound and novel reason for saying "Hashem malchusei," the Aramaic translation of "Hashem yimloch"*

Parashas Beshalach

I

A test for Israel: will they accept Moshe as their leader without skepticism?

It is written in our holy Torah, in our *parasha*:

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָשׁוּבוּ וְיַחֲנוּ לִפְנֵי פִי הַחִירֹת בְּיַם מִגְדֹּל וּבֵין הַיָּם לַפְּנֵי בְּעַל צַפֹּן וַנִּקְחוּ תַחֲנוּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

שמות יד:א-ב

"And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pi-Hachiros, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-Zephon; you shall encamp opposite it by the sea.'

(Shemos 14:1-2)

The *Sefas Emes* (5638/1878) writes: "There is room to delve into this." The children of Israel followed the [pillar of] cloud, so why did Hashem command Moshe Rabbeinu to turn back? Why not allow the people to continue following the cloud in the direction Hashem was leading them, as they always did?

The *Sefas Emes* answers, that at this point Hashem did not show them the way through the cloud. He was testing the Jewish people's faith in Moshe Rabbeinu. Would they follow their leader?

I would add that this is somewhat akin to following a general. Moshe was their general, their leader, and they needed to be tested to determine whether they would accept his leadership or question it. Even a command to turn back and go towards the enemy.

Topics Covered

▶ *"Hashem yimloch" does not refer only to the future but to all times*

▶ *This is explained as being akin to the custom of reading the Torah twice in Hebrew and once in "targum" ("[Aramaic translation])*

▶ *We demonstrate that we're paying attention to what we mean when we declare "Hashem yimloch" as an eternal truth, past, present, and future*

Hashem's command to the Jewish people to turn back establishes Moshe Rabbeinu as their leader

Through this command, Hashem ensures that the nation of Israel believes in the leadership of Moshe as the new prophet and Hashem's messenger. This point is of unparalleled importance for the Jewish people as a new nation—not only for the generation of the desert but for all future generations, that they continue to believe that **"Moshe is true, and his Torah is true - משה אמת ותורתו אמת"**. Here, they will reach the point of **"And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant"** - ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו.

One of the thirteen principles of faith is the unique stature of Moshe's prophecy. This is an inseparable part of our belief in the Torah and Hashem, because it fulfills such a critical role. **Moshe is the archetype of the prophet, the perfect prophet through whom we come to know Hashem.** He is Hashem's emissary, speaking with Hashem face-to-face.

I would add that there has never been a prophet like Moshe Rabbeinu—not before him, not after him, and not at the same time as him. He is a leader of supreme importance. Therefore, the Jewish people must undergo this test of faith in Moshe. He is Hashem's representative, and we must trust him and follow his guidance and instructions. We must obey his every word.

Moshe is the father of all prophets, forever across all generations

Many times during the generation of the desert we see instances where the children of Israel challenged Moshe's actions. There were rebellions with severe consequences, even though the majority of the people did accept him as their leader. Who can imagine what might have happened if there had been a full-scale rebellion attempting to depose Moshe completely, G-d forbid? In all of these rebellions and conflicts, Moshe handled the situations very well. He exercised the patience of "the humblest of all men on the face of the earth," as the holy man that he was.

Faith in Hashem through Moshe

In *Meloh Ha'omer* by the Maharal Tzintz of sainted memory, s.v. ויאמינו, "And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant," he writes:

It is stated in the Midrash (Yalkut Kama), "If they believed in Moshe, how much more so in Hashem?! If so, why does it say, "and in Moshe"...?" However, we find in the Talmud (Bava Metzia 94b) that when the letter 'vav' ('and') is written, it implies both together and each one separately. Therefore, one could have said that it means either/or - that they believed either in Moshe or in Hashem.

According to this, the Midrash is troubled: It's impossible to say it means either/or, because if they believed in Moshe, how much more so in Hashem?! Thus, why does it specifically say, "and in Moshe"? It should have said "[They believed in Hashem] and Moshe"! One cannot say they believed in either one, since if they believed in Moshe, how much more so in Hashem! Therefore, it means both [were believed in].

Or one may say: Certainly, it is difficult - if they believed in Moshe, how much more so in Hashem? Rather, in truth, their entire belief in Hashem was through Moshe, because the capacity of their intellect was too limited to grasp and understand [Divine] visions, as explicitly stated in the verses that everything was through Moshe. Therefore, since their belief was totally dependent on Moshe, even if it said only "they believed in Hashem," we would know they believed in Moshe, without whom they could not attain belief. So, what is the purpose of the additional words "and in Moshe"? [This is the meaning behind the question of the Midrash "What is the purpose of the additional words of, 'and in Moshe.'"]

In my humble opinion, one can bring proof for the second approach of the Gaon of Plotzk mentioned above, that Moshe is the means for belief in Hashem, for we find that after they did not see Moshe as expected for only one day, and were without him just for a few hours, they already committed the terrible sin of the golden calf. Without Moshe, they lacked the level of faith they had when in his presence. This demonstrates that their faith was entirely reliant on Moshe Rabbeinu.

This is why it says, **"And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant,"** just before the "Az

Yashir," and before the giving of the Torah too it says, **"They will also believe in you forever!"** This is all to teach us that Moshe is the pillar of faith for the generation of the desert and for all subsequent generations until the coming of the Redeemer.



II

Incorporating "Az Yashir" in Pesukei Dezimra

In this week's *parasha*, we read the *Shirah* "Az Yashir." Interestingly, this song has been incorporated into the daily prayer service as part of Pesukei Dezimra.

Many of the Rishonim (Medieval commentators) and later commentators have asked why "Az Yashir" is included in Pesukei Dezimra. The primary components of Pesukei Dezimra are the "Ashrei" and "Hallelukah" psalms of Dovid Hamelech's *Tehillim* (Psalms), until "Let every soul praise Hashem, Hallelukah." We recite this verse twice, as it marks the original conclusion of Pesukei Dezimra. It is understandable why, in later generations, we added "Blessed is Hashem forever, Amen and Amen," as these are verses of praise. However, we then include the passage "And He established the covenant,"

which ends with "in the midst of the sea on dry land," and proceed to "Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang" - "Az Yashir Moshe."

How does "Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang" relate to Pesukei Dezimra?

In Pesukei Dezimra, we recite the verse "Let every soul" twice, and in "Az Yashir," the phrase "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" is also repeated twice

"Az Yashir Moshe" became the new ending of Pesukei Dezimra. Therefore, as explained by the commentators on the siddur, we repeat the verse **"Hashem shall reign forever and ever,"** ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד. Just as we repeat **"Let every soul praise Hashem, Hallelukah"** כל הנשמה תהלל י-ה to mark the end of the "Hallelukah" psalms in Pesukei Dezimra, so do we repeat "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" - ה' ימלוך" - "לעולם ועד" to mark the new conclusion of Pesukei Dezimra.

"Ki va sus Paro"—A proof for the continuation of Pesukei Dezimra

However, I have a question with this approach: If "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" marks the

conclusion of the *Shirah* and the Pesukei Dezimra, why do we go back and continue with the next verse, "**For the horse of Pharaoh came**"... "**כי בה סוס פרעה**" which appears to be part of the Shirah? A novel idea occurred to me, and I believe it has merit. (The relevance of the verses "For the horse of Pharaoh came" to Pesukei Dezimra in general will be explained in *Parashas Yisro*.)

In the Pesukei Dezimra that we say every day, we proclaim, "Hashem is King, Hashem was King, Hashem shall reign forever and ever." However, on the High Holy Days, in the "*piyyut*," ("hymn") "Yadiru Bekol," we go beyond this, proclaiming, "Hashem is King" as praised from one group of angels and spiritual beings, "Hashem was King" as praised from another group of angles and spiritual beings, and then "Hashem shall reign" as praised from both groups together. We then combine all these praises into one, proclaiming, "Hashem is King, Hashem was King, Hashem shall reign forever and ever."

Certainly, in the daily prayer, and even more so in this piyyut, "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" refers to the future. But is this the original intent of the verse in "Az Yashir"?

To remove all doubt, it should be known that the proclamation "Hashem is King, Hashem was King,

Hashem shall reign forever and ever" of the prayers and piyyutim is not a biblical verse but rather a composition from several verses, including "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" from our *parasha*. This composition is ancient and holy, composed in the early generations through divine inspiration. Certainly, according to this formulation, "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" refers to the future.

However, the meaning of the verse "Hashem shall reign forever and ever" in our *parasha*, on its own, is not limited to the future but proclaims that Hashem is king at *all* times! That is why Targum Onkelos translates it as, "Hashem's sovereignty endures forever and for all eternity," - "ה' מלכותיה קאים לעלם, - "ולעלמי עלמייא", meaning that Hashem's kingship is eternal. Refer also to the Ramban's commentary there.

In "Az Yashir" within Pesukei Dezimra, after "Hashem shall reign forever and ever," all siddurim add the translation in Aramaic, "Hashem's sovereignty endures forever and for all eternity." How did the translation enter the liturgy?

The reason for saying "Hashem yimloch" in Aramaic

I thought of a novel idea to answer this question: In "Az Yashir," the verse "*Hashem yimloch le'olam*

va'ed" ("Hashem will reign forever and ever"), is repeated, "*Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed*," and then followed by the Aramaic translation, "*Hashem malchusei ka'im le'alam ul'almei almaya*" ("Hashem's kingdom stands forever and for all eternity"). Now, generally we do not incorporate Aramaic into the prayers, particularly when davening "*beyechidus*" ("privately," without a quorum).

There is an entire discussion about whether it is permissible to include Aramaic in the liturgy, based on a Tosafos regarding whether angels understand Aramaic. When praying privately, we require assistance of angels to raise our prayers to Heaven, and this raises the question of whether Aramaic is suitable when davening privately. There is disagreement about it.

I want to propose distinctions between the "Hashem yimloch" of "Az Yashir" and the "Hashem yimloch" of the "Hashem melech, Hashem molach, Hashem yimloch" composition.

We need to distinguish between the "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" of "Az Yashir" and the "Hashem yimloch" of the "Hashem Melech" composition, which has a future-oriented meaning. We therefore bring in Onkelos's translation to

explain that the meaning of "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" is identical to the meaning of "Amein yehei shmei rabba mevorach le'alam ul'almei almaya" ("Amen, may His great name be blessed forever and for all eternity"). Onkelos thus translates: "Hashem malchusei ka'im," - "Hashem's kingdom stands", "le'alam ul'almei almaya," "always and forever." The meaning is not only that Hashem will reign in the future, but that He reigns forever, always. Past, present, and future. All the time. To make this point, we must translate the declaration and emphasize that "Hashem malchusei ka'im le'alam ul'almei almaya."

I want to suggest the novel idea that "Hashem will reign forever and ever" is not the conclusion of Pesukei

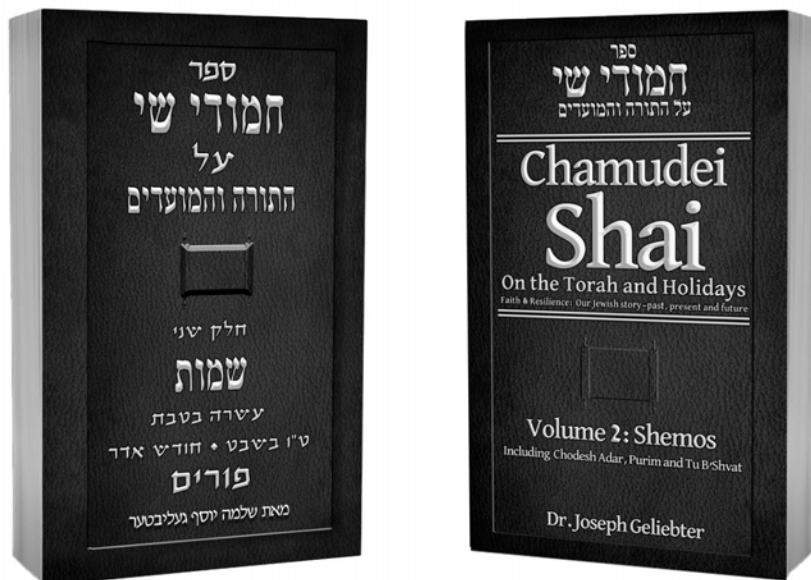
Dezimra, as others have labored to explain in answer to the question of why we repeat "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed." Rather, it is part of a deliberative effort we make to explain that "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" **does not mean only in the future but at all times**; we explain this through "שניים מקרא ואחד" - two readings of the text and one reading of the Aramaic translation.

Like "Shnayim Mikra Ve'echad Targum" ("Two readings of the text and one of the translation")

When praying *beyechidus* (privately), one cannot, strictly speaking, recite the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy – "Hashem, Hashem, Kel

rachum vechanun" and so on— which one recites when praying with a quorum. But there are several ways to enable the recitation of the Thirteen Attributes even when praying privately, such as reading them with cantillation, like in the Torah reading. Similarly, when we say "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed," we are not concluding *Pesukei Dezimra* but rather reciting it in the manner of "*shnayim mikra ve'echad targum*", as if reading it from the Torah.

I shared this idea with a great Torah scholar, and he told me, "You need a source to say something like this." When I shared it with another Torah scholar, he remarked, "You intuited the understanding of the Arizal." Blessed is Hashem that I intuited this correctly.



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