

Let My teachings descend like the rain, may My utterance flow like the dew. (32:1)

The Torah is compared to rain which descends from the heavens, reviving the seeds buried within the earth. The **Sefas Emes** notes a relationship between *adamah*, earth, and rain *vis-à-vis* Adam *HaRishon*, primordial man, his offspring, and the Torah which is compared to rain. The earth filled with seed is potential vegetation, grass, etc. It is only when rain descends on the *adamah* that this potential is released and the seeds begin to sprout and produce. Likewise, *adam*, man, created from *adamah*, is filled with tremendous potential. Will he realize his potential, or will it continue to lay dormant? *Torah She'Baal Peh*, the Oral Torah, represents the concept of *Chayei Olam nota b'socheinu*, "Eternal life 'planted' in our midst." With the proper rain – the pure teachings of the Torah – new spiritual life can emerge. The word "pure" prefaces teachings, because, while there is a lot of Torah out there, unless it is pure and unadulterated Torah, taught by a bonafide Torah teacher who exemplifies the Torah's perspective, it is regrettably missing its life-sustaining properties.

Yeshayah *HaNavi* says, *Ki kaasher yeireid ha'geshem v'ha'sheleg, min ha'Shomayim, v'shamah lo yashuv, ki im hirvah es ha'aretz v'holidah v'hitzmichah... kein yiheyeh Devari*, "Like the rain and the snow that come down from the heavens and will not return until they have soaked the earth and brought forth its bounty and made it grow... so will be My words" (*Yeshayah* 55:10,11). Hashem's word descends to the Jewish People like rain and snow, benefitting the people just as its counterparts enhance the earth's ability to produce its bounty.

In Moshe *Rabbeinu's* homily to the people, he compares the Torah to various forms of rain: rain, dew, storm winds, light rain drops, drizzle. *Sefas Emes* explains the connotation to Torah. Some types of rain soften the earth; other rains, such as drizzle, are particularly good for the grass, since they soak the ground and slowly seep into the earth; heavy showers improve certain types of grass. Likewise, there are parts of the Torah which, like hard rain, address the heart of man, softening it, transforming "stone" into a soft, putty-like substance which allows it to absorb the Torah's teachings and lessons. Other parts of the Torah are similar to drizzle, which slowly penetrates the heart's core. There is Torah which is geared to the entire collective of the Jewish People, and there is Torah which addresses the life of the individual. In conclusion, at each and every stage of a person's life, there is a portion or passage of the Torah that is specifically designed to attend to and treat his problem.

In *Sefer Tehillim* 19:8, David *HaMelech* says, *Toras Hashem temimah*, "Hashem's Torah is complete/perfect." This *pasuk* describes the all-encompassing nature of the Torah. The *Sefas Emes* quotes the *pasuk* in *Shiras Haazinu* (*Devarim* 32:4), *Hatzur tamim paalo*, "The Rock, Whose works are complete." He interprets the Rock as a reference to Hashem Who used the Torah, which is referred to as complete (*tamim* – *temimah*) to culminate His word of (*paalo*) Creation. Since the Torah preceded the Creation of the world, and, in effect, is the source for Creation, every

facet of the world – both physical and spiritual – has its origins in the Torah. The Torah also goes by the term *aish*, fire, and is known as *Toras chesed*, Torah of kindness, and *Toras emes*, Torah of truth. Thus, each character trait of man in some way finds its corresponding part in the Torah.

Torah is also compared to water. *Chazal* teach that the rain designated for the world – which is determined on *Rosh Hashanah* – will fall in consonance with man's actions during the year: If they are righteous and, thus, deserving, the rain will fall where it is needed at a propitious time and engender prosperity in the world. If not, the rain will fall in the desert where it is not needed, where it brings no benefit. The same idea holds true with regard to the spiritual *shefah*, flow, of Torah. In accordance with its recipient's preparation, the Torah will come at a time and place where it can be of greatest spiritual benefit. Regrettably, one who is undeserving will see the spiritual flow in others. He will just stand there and wonder, "Why not me too?"

With the above idea in place, I think we can now explain why the Torah is referred to as a *shirah*, song. In *Parashas Vayeilech* (*Devarim* 31:19), the Torah commands us with *mitzvah* 613: the *mitzvah* of writing a *Sefer Torah*. *V'atah kisvu lachem es haShirah ha'zos, v'lamdah es Bnei Yisrael, simah b'fihem*. "So now, write this song for yourselves, teach it to *Bnei Yisrael*, and place it in their mouth." *Chazal* derive from here that every Jew is commanded to write a Torah scroll – a *mitzvah* that can be fulfilled by writing a single letter. Since the lack of even one letter invalidates the Torah, writing or correcting one letter is tantamount to completing the entire scroll. Why is the Torah called a song?

A song is a musical score of high and low notes perfectly coordinated in harmony with one another. Each individual note in its own right may seem inconsistent with the next, but in context of the greater song, it all meshes together, with the "highs" and "lows," all becoming "straight" in a perfect blend of harmony. The word *shirah* may be derived from *yashar*, which means straight. A song reflects the coalescing of various notes in such a manner that they become a perfect score. *Shirah* is the expression of seeing the "straight" in what appears misshapen. This can only be done through the lens of Torah. A Jew who enjoys such a relationship with the Torah "sings" through life. Regardless of how it might appear to the uninitiated, he is acutely aware and believes with all his heart that his life is a perfect score.