

## Miriam (answered) spoke up to them, “Sing to Hashem for He is exalted above the arrogant, having hurled the horse with its rider into the sea.” (15:21)

*Va'taan la'hem Miriam*, “Miriam answered them.” Every answer is preempted by a question. What question was asked that required Miriam *HaNeviah's* response? Furthermore, if Miriam was speaking to the women, it should have said *la'hen*, in the female form – not *la'hem*, which is masculine. Last, Miriam's choice of miracles to extol Him begs elucidation. *Sus v'rochvo ramah, ba'yam*, “The horse and rider were hurled into the sea.” So many other miracles occurred. Why underscore this one?

*Horav Y. Chashin* explains that Miriam was, indeed, responding to a fundamental question. Ostensibly, the purpose of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exodus, was *Kabbolas HaTorah*, receiving the Torah, and, ultimately, the people's entry into *Eretz Yisrael*. The Exodus served as the precursor for a higher, loftier goal. When Miriam organized the women, encouraging them to pay their respects to Hashem through the medium of *shirah* adopted by the men, the women asked a powerful question. Since the Exodus occurred in order to enable the nation to receive the Torah, how should the women, who do not have a *mitzvah* to learn Torah, react? Furthermore, women are exempt from a number of *mitzvos asei*, positive *mitzvos*. The reason that women are exempt from these time-bound *mitzvos* is that their responsibility to their homes, to raising the next generation of committed Torah Jews, overrides the obligation to perform time-bound *mitzvos*. If this is the case, what was the reason they went out to sing *shirah*?

Miriam replied with a question of her own: “The horse with its rider were thrown into the sea.” Why hold the horse in contempt, when in fact, the rider was the enemy who pursued the Jews with malicious intent to kill them? Miriam answered them, saying the horse assisted its rider in carrying out his nefarious mission. Thus, we blame the horse in its role as an accessory. If an accessory to evil is culpable for its master's actions, how much more so should women who assist their husbands and sons in learning Torah, who raise their children to be G-d-fearing, committed Jews, who are the *akeros habayis*, backbone and centerpiece of the Jewish home, deserve their just reward for maintaining and strengthening the vibrant Jewish spirit! This is why Miriam used the masculine form, *lahem*; she was giving the rationale for the women's song: *lahem*, the men. Without the women's continuing support and encouragement, the men would have great difficulty functioning as Torah Jews.

*Rebbetzin Vichna Kaplan, a"h*, was the founder of the first full-day Bais Yaakov High School for girls in America. She inspired a generation of young women, infusing them with the spirit of *Yisrael Sabba*. They, in turn, continued to forge ahead with this spirit by marrying men who shared their beliefs: love for Hashem, His Torah and His People. Indeed, no less than the *gadol hador*, preeminent Torah giant of his generation, *Horav Aharon Kotler, zl*, acknowledged this verity when he stated that, if not for Bais Yaakov, the *yeshivos* would be forced to close. It would be

counterproductive to nurture *bnei Torah* if they would not have *nashim k'sheiros*, women who act appropriately, who recognize the centrality of Torah in a Jew's life and adhere to the moral and ethics of the Torah.