

Hashem shall reign for all eternity. (15:18)

Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman, zl, cites a debate in *Chazal* (*Berachos* 40B) concerning the necessity to proclaim *Malchus Hashem*, as Monarch, when reciting a *b'rachah*. *Rav* posits that it is sufficient to vocalize the word Hashem as *Adon*, Master, G-d; it is not necessary to include the words, *Melech Olam*. Rabbi Yochanan contends that any *b'rachah* that does not include *Melech Olam* in its text is not a blessing. The *halachah* follows Rabbi Yochanan (*Orach Chaim* 214).

In *Meseches B'rachos* (7B), *Chazal* teach that Avraham *Avinu* was the first person to refer to Hashem as *Adon*; Leah *Imeinu* was the first person to pay gratitude to Hashem. Apparently, the “first” time an action is undertaken it is definitive and sets the tone and standard for those to follow. With this idea in mind, *Rav Heyman* observes that the first time Hashem is referred to as *Melech* is in the *Shiras Ha'Yam*, sung by Moshe *Rabbeinu* and *Klal Yisrael*. Apparently, the concept of Hashem as *Melech* was not revealed until *Krias Yam Suf*, the Splitting of the Red Sea. The question which must be clarified is: What about *Krias Yam Suf* set the scene for Hashem to be revealed as *Melech*?

The *Malbim* (*HaTorah V'HaMitzvah* commentary to *Shemos* 15:18) writes that we define *malchus*, monarchy, with regard to Hashem according to the Almighty's ability to guide the world providentially, without following the natural order of nature. Hashem does what He wants. This is what a monarch does. Hashem had already demonstrated His power to do as He pleased during the ten plagues, when He suspended the laws of nature. As a result, *Rav Heyman* posits that, during *Krias Yam Suf*, when the Heavenly angels presented a debate: *Halalu ovdei avodah zarah, v'halalu ovdei avodah zarah*; “Both the Jews and the Egyptians had absconded to idol worship. What made the Jews any better than the Egyptians? Both deserved to die – or neither deserved to die. Hashem responded, “The Jews live, and the Egyptians drown.” Hashem manifests His power of monarchy by doing what He wants. He understood the idol worship which was part and parcel of the Egyptian mindset, while the idol worship manifest by the Jewish People was a product of their exposure to a harmful spiritual influence.

Perhaps this is why Moshe sang *Shirah* specifically following the Splitting of the Red Sea. Earlier, our quintessential leader had lamented the fact that after he had gone to Pharaoh and asked for the Jews to be liberated, Pharaoh made things worse for the Jewish slaves. Moshe wondered whether perhaps he should leave things the way they are and not risk that Pharaoh might ratchet up the affliction. Now, as Moshe stood at the banks of the Red Sea, having witnessed the salvation of the Jews and the decimation of the Egyptians, he understood that, had Pharaoh not increased the Jews' affliction, they would not have achieved such a miraculous salvation. Hence, he sang *Shirah*, a song, a composition of varied notes – some high and some low – in which every note is critical to the overall harmony. Indeed, a song is a metaphor for balance and the importance of every component working together with the others. In a musical composition, much like in life or in a community, each element, no matter how seemingly small or insignificant, plays a crucial role. Moshe saw how the preceding events of Egypt all led up to the moment in which *Klal*

Yisrael would experience the greatest miracle of all. Thus, everything that had occurred in the past, every affliction, every beating, all became part of the finished score.

Perhaps this is why the last *mitzvah* of the Torah is the *mitzvah* to write a *Sefer Torah*. *Kisvu lachem es ha'shirah ha'zos*; "So now, write this song for yourselves" (*Devarim* 31:19). The Torah is referred to as a song. I have always wondered why the *mitzvah* to write a *Sefer Torah* is the last *mitzvah* of the Torah. Should it not have been the first *mitzvah*? One does not purchase his school books at the end of the school year. Writing the Torah should be the opening *mitzvah* of *Sefer Bereishis*. I think the answer is that we could certainly have written a book in the beginning. The Torah is a *shirah*, a perfect harmonious blend of peaks and valleys, highs and lows – like life itself. The Torah is our guide for life. In order for Torah to be a *shirah*, we must experience it, from cover to cover, the entire history of ups and downs, afflictions and salvations, pain and deliverance, from the travails of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs, to the Egyptian bondage and ultimate liberation, to the triumphs and tribulations of our forty-year trek in the wilderness. Only then will we view Torah as a *Shirah*. It all fits in – nothing is missing.

Arturo Toscanini was one of the foremost conductors of the twentieth century. He was known for his meticulous attention to detail and insistence on perfection in musical performances. One evening, Toscanini was speaking with his biographer over the phone. He mentioned a particular musical performance (Beethoven's Ninth Symphony) that he had conducted many years earlier. His biographer, not believing that Toscanini could still remember all the details of a concert held so long ago, questioned him about the performance.

Toscanini was so sure of himself that he challenged his biographer to test him. He told him to pick up the score of the piece and follow along, as he would go over every note in the score. The biographer was bowled over, as Toscanini recalled every note without any sheet of music in front of him. At one point, Toscanini stopped the biographer and pointed out a single missed note in the edition used by the biographer. This had to be a mistake in the score. It was discovered later on that, indeed, the music publisher or editor who had prepared the score missed that solitary note.

In another version of the story, Toscanini and his biographer were listening to a rendition of the symphony. At the end of the performance, Toscanini asked his biographer, "Did you notice anything unusual about what we just heard?" The man replied that he did not. Indeed, he felt the rendition was exceptional and very stirring. Toscanini disagreed, claiming that fourteen violinists should have been playing, but he had heard only thirteen. "One violin is missing. I am certain of this," he said. The next day, the biographer discovered, to his amazement, that, indeed, one of the violinists had called in sick!

Everyone has his place. Every occurrence is by design. In order to create a perfect *shirah*, each of the highs and lows must be in its appropriate place. Then we have a perfect musical score.