

Try Counting To 10 When You Start With 15 - Henry Ehreich (reprinted)

יג תשרי תשע"ז – 15th October 2016 – שבת פ' האזינו

One would automatically assume that the Shiroh in this week's Parsha is the third Shiroh in the Torah. Nothing is ever as straight forward as it seems! We can, in fact, enumerate a total of five Shiros in the Torah and fifteen in Tenach. They are as follows:

1. The Shiroh of Odom Horishon, which, we are told, is Tehillim 92, better known to us as "Mizmor Shir Leyom Hashabbos".
2. The Shiroh of B'nei Yisroel on the night of leaving Egypt. (see Yeshiyah 30:29) "Hashir Yi'heye Lochem K'leil Hiskadesh Chag".
3. The Shiroh of Moshe at the Yam Suf (Parshas Beshalach – Shemos 15:1-19) "Oz Yoshir Moshe U'vneh Yisroel Es Hashira Hazos".
4. The Shiroh of Miriam's well (Parshas Chukas – Bamidbor 21:17-20) "Oz Yoshir Yisroel Es Hashiroh Hazos".
5. The Shiroh of Moshe prior to his death (Parshas Ha'azinu – Devorim 32:1-43) "Ha'azinu Hashomayim Va'adeberoh".
6. The Shiroh of Yehoshua (Yehoshua 10:12) "Oz Yedaber Yehoshua La'Hashem"
7. The Shiroh of Devorah (Shoftim 5:1-31) "Vatoshar Devorah U'Borok Ben Avinoam".
8. The Shiroh of Channah (Shmuel Aleph 2:1-10 "Vatispallel Channah Vatomar".
9. The Song of Dovid Hamelech (Shmuel Beis 22 and, with minor differences, Tehillim 18) "Vayedaber Dovid La'Hashem es Divrei Hashiroh Hazos".
10. The Shiroh of Shlomo Hamelech – the book of Shir Hashirim
11. The Shiroh of Shlomo Hamelech (Melochim Aleph 8:12-53 "Oz Omar Shlomo Hashem Omar".
12. The Song of Shlomo Hamelech (Tehillim 30) – "Mizmor Shir Chanukas Habayis L'Dovid".
13. The Shiroh of Chizkiyohu (Yishayohu 38:9-20 – "Michtov Lechizkiyohu Melech Yehudoh".
14. The Song of Yehoshofot (Divrei Hayomim Beis 20:21 – "Vayivoetz El Ho'om Vaya'amed Meshorsim La'hashem".
15. The Shiroh to be sung with the coming of Moshiach (Yirmiyohu 42:10-30, 48:20) – "Shiru Lashem Shir Chodosh".

The Ba'al Haturim in Beshalach at the Shiroh states that there are, in fact, only ten Shiros as is alluded to by the word (י-ישייר) which indicates ten songs. So how do we square that statement with the fifteen Shiros enumerated above? The Ba'al Haturim omits 1. 2. 11. 12. and 14. There is also an uncertainty regarding the inclusion of Shir Hashirim. The Targum on the first chapter of Shir Hashirim states "this one is more praiseworthy than them all". One can understand this to mean that Shir Hashirim is one of the ten; on the other hand one can understand that this one is more praiseworthy than any on the ten, implying that it is not included. In this case, the song of Shlomo Hamelech in Melochim Aleph chapter 8 must be substituted.

There is a Piyut – ly Pasros – in Shacharis for the seventh and eighth day of Pesach which some Shuls recite after "Al Horishonim" which lists the ten songs and omits 1. 6. 8. 10. and 13. in the list above. For alternative lists consult the Mechilta and the Targum in Shir Hashirim.

In the Shiroh of Ha'azinu we read: "Hashem will see and grow angry from the provocation of His sons and daughters. He will say 'I shall hide my face from them and see what there end will be; for they are a generation of capriciousness, children without trust' 32:19-20.

One night Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld was walking down one of the alleyways of the old city of Yerushalayim when he was approached by a certain Zionist leader by the name of Ben Hillel, who had been raised as an orthodox Jew before he became 'secularised' and rejected religion, and who now served as chairman of the Zionist National Council. He greeted the Rav and said to him, "Rav Chaim, you are known to be a wise man, full of understanding and keen insight. Can't you see, with all your wisdom that the future belongs to the new modern generation who have turned away from all those outdated obsolete laws and traditions? In another twenty or thirty years your kind of people, with their old fashioned views will disappear completely. Do you really delude yourself into thinking that your grandchildren will follow in your path? They, too, will have to attend regular schools, if they don't want to lag behind!"

Rav Yosef Chaim was taken aback by the man's chutzpah, but did not hesitate with his response, uttered with equal conviction and confidence. "And are you so sure that your children will follow your ways? On the contrary, I am quite certain that your grandchildren will end up going to Yeshivos and rejecting all of your barren, false ideologies! I tell you that your descendants will one day open their eyes and realise the hollowness and shallowness of your new, 'modern' beliefs that you have invented." He continued: "It is stated clearly in the Torah 'Hashem' in the verse noted above. This is G-d's attribute of mercy. Why does it not say 'Elokim', the attribute of justice in the context? The answer is that G-d will be angered with Jews adopting new ideologies (V. 17) He will not lash out, rather he will employ mercy and grant a reprieve, 'He will hide his face from them'. This is because the turning away is only a lapse and will not last. They will search for their roots and will return to Hashem."

Ben Hillel had nothing further to say and appeared chastised by Rav Chaim's words and went on his way. The Rav's grandson who had witnessed the scene asked: "But grandfather in the light of the decline in observance and mass deflections from Torah, do you really believe what you told the man? Do you really believe that grandchildren will return to their traditions?" Rav Chaim replied: "Of course I do!" And, of course, he did live to see the advent of the Teshuvah movement when the mass return to the traditions of the forefathers became a prominent phenomenon.

Dedicated to the memory of Yettel bas Hachover Chaim who passed away on 11 Tish'rei 5763