

**In this week's Torah portion we read about the splitting of the Yam Suf, the Sea of Reeds, and Shirat HaYam, the Song of the Sea. The song begins, Az Yashir Moshe u'Vnei Yisrael et haShira HaZot L'Hashem VeYomru Leimor—Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and they spoke, saying. Why is the word leimor included? At first glance the word appears to be extra.**

**One approach to understanding the meaning of a word is to look at the way that it is used in other instances in the Torah. When Hashem instructs Moshe to transmit a halacha, a Jewish law, to the rest of the Jewish people the Torah says, V'yidabeir Hashem el Moshe leimor—Hashem spoke to Moshe saying. Based on this verse in the Torah, and several other uses of the word leimor, it appears as though the word is used to imply leimor l'acheirim—say to others. However, the use of leimor at the beginning of Shirat HaYam does not appear to be for the sake of others. Rather, the Shira is an expression of gratitude toward Hashem for creating the miracle of splitting the Sea of Reeds and saving the Jewish People from the attack of the Egyptian chariots. Therefore, what is the meaning of the word leimor in the context of the Shira?**

**Rabbi Ephy Greene answers this question by referencing a Midrash Rabba on the verse, Vayidor Yaakov Neder Leimor—And Jacob uttered a vow saying (Bereishit 28:20). In this verse Yaakov vows that if Hashem will protect him in his travels then Hashem will be my G-d. Once again, the use of the word leimor in this context does not seem to fit the usual meaning of “say to others.” Rather, Rabbi Greene explains the meaning as leimor ledorot, a transmission for future generations. This means that Yaakov's action during his time of distress is meant to teach future generations how to react when placed in a similar situation. We too should vow to perform positive deeds when faced with a challenge, and in the merit of those deeds Hashem should protect us. This can be seen especially during the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur when we take it upon ourselves to improve our deeds and service of Hashem.**

**Rav Herschel Shachter connects this interpretation of leimor to the use of the word in Shirat HaYam. Here too the word leimor implies a lesson that is transmitted to future generations. Therefore, just as the Jewish people reacted to the miracle of the Yam Suf through song, we too should sing praise to Hashem when we experience miracles. One might then think that Shirat HaYam would be reserved for special occasions that commemorate miracles, such as the holidays of Purim and Chanukah, or perhaps just the Shabbat where we read Parshat Beshalach. To the contrary, the Rabbis instituted this song of praise into our daily prayer service! The lesson is that when we recite the Shira we should recognize that our daily lives are filled with innumerable miracles. Shira helps us internalize that with Hashem's help and guidance we are able to overcome our challenges. May we take this lesson of Shirat HaYam and sing out a heartfelt praise and thanks to Hashem not only this Shabbat, but every day of our lives.**

**-Shabbat Shalom  
-Mrs. Nikki Friedman**