

עזרי מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ

PEREK SHIRA

*with a comprehensive treatise
and inspirational commentary
entitled*

The Song of Existence

By Shmuel Ben-Tzion Kraines
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*To order this Sefer, or to view free video presentations on Perek Shira, visit songofexistence.org
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נר מצוה ותורה אור

This Sefer is published on the occasion of my maternal grandfather's [יוסף חיים אלתר בן ניסל מאיר ע"ה] first Yartzeit, עליו השלום. May it be a source of eternal merit for him and my grandmother, as well as for my paternal grandparents and my wife's grandparents.



חווה לאה בת יוסף ליב

יוסף חיים אלתר בן ניסל מאיר



פרידה בת ישעיה

זכריה ליב בן יצחק טוביה



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חנה בת טוביה

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Rabbi Ze'ev Kraines

בס"ד
טז שבט תשע"ח

My dear son R' Shmuel Ben-tzion נ"י has worked with great devotion to produce this magnificent commentary on *Perek Shira* in memory of his grandparents and the grandparents of his wife Rivka תח'. It is being published to mark the first yahrtzeit of my father-in-law, Mr. Julius Chapman זצ"ל יוסף חיים אלטר בן ניסל מאיר זצ"ל

One can see the great effort that has gone into the clarification of every nuance of metaphor and allusion, as well as the perceptive guidance in how to “live the song” in our daily lives.

These insights have been carefully and faithfully sourced from classic and contemporary commentaries on the work and have been interpreted with precision and creativity. The song of Creation rises from its pages, inspiring all who will take its messages to heart.

May the publication of this sefer be a source of *zechus* for the *neshamos* of all of your grandparents and also bring *berachah* to you and Rivkah as you raise your precious children in the *derech HaTorah*.

With Love and Pride,

Rabbi Ze'ev Kraines

Ohr Somayach Sandton

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אשירה ואזמרה לאלוהי בעודי,
מגן הוא בעדי, מרים ראשי וכבודי,
אעבדהו ואכבדהו בכל עצמי וגידי,
אודה לו מאוד בכל מידה ממאודי.

ואנצח בזאת אותם המה יסודי,
סבי וסבתי, דידהו אשר דידי,
וכל זקני ושל זוגתי, לזכות ולזכרון תמידי,
מוסרם ומסורתם, שלהבת אש אודי.

ואודה להורי מאורי תמיד עומדים על צידי,
ולכבוד חמי וחמותי, ולאשתי בימי אשר עמדתי,
ולכל רבתי אשר מילאו ידי.
ולא אריך, כאן להאריך, ותו לא מידי.

PEREK SHIRA ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

<i>Parsha</i>	<i>Relevant Shira</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
בראשית	גן עדן, תנינים וליוותן ודגים	22, 86	Gan Eden , the Livyasan , the sea giants , and the fish are mentioned by the creation of the world.
נח	יונה, עבים	74, 36	Noach sent out the dove . The rainbow appeared in the cloud .
לך לך	כוכבים	35	Avraham was shown that his progeny would be as uncountable as the stars . He also was raised above their constellations dominion.
וירא	חמור	97	Avraham rode a donkey.
חיי שרה	זרזיר	106	Eliezer was like the hunting dog , performing his service loyally and restraining himself benefit. He didn't choose his own daughter for Yitzchak.
תולדות	טל, בהמה טמאה	40, 92	Dew : Part of the blessings of Yaakov and of Eisav. Non-Kosher animals : Eisav is symbolized as a pig. The large non-Kosher animals speak of hard work. The labor of Yaakov pays off. Eisav's stealing and trickery do not.
ויצא	ציפורת כרמים, טסיס	80, 69	The song of the ציפורת כרמים is "אשא עיני", which is what Yaakov prayed when fleeing. The Tasis sings the continuation of that prayer: "עזרי מעם ה'".
וישלח	שדות ומים	27	Fields : The Chori people were experts in discerning which soil was good for which crop (20:36, Rashi). The song of water is connected.
וישב	שמש וירח	33	In Yosef's dream, Yaakov and his wife were portrayed as the sun and the moon , since they likewise were luminaries that were servants of Hashem.
מקץ	פיל	101	The elephant's song is about the greatness of Hashem's deeds and the deep wisdom behind them. The good of Yosef's exile, persecution, and imprisonment was only realized this all resulted in his rise to power.
ויגש	תרנגולת	59	Even in famine, Hashem provided food for Yaakov's family and for the whole world, like the song of the hen .
ויחי	אריה	102	Yehuda is compared to a lion .
שמות	שרצים ואלים שבשרצים	108	The Jewish nation were despised and multiplied like vermin .
וארא	צפרדע, עכבר	100, 113	The second plague was that of frogs . Paroh admitted that Hashem was the righteous, and he was the wicked, like the song of the mouse .
בא	חסיל, כלבים	81, 115	The חרב [locusts] are identified as the " חסיל ". The dogs did not bark.
בשלח	ימים, שור	28, 98	The ox Its song is the beginning of the song of the sea .
יתרו	תרנגול	56	The rooster sings of the glory of Hashem and His Torah and is relevant to the giving of the Torah.
משפטים	זאב ושועל, חיות השדה	104, 99	The wolf and the fox sing of misconduct and its punishment. Wild animals of the field : זאב, כנ.
כי תשא	נחש	109	The snake sings of the Hashem's support of the fallen, even of those that sinned and were punished. This divine mercy was displayed in this Parsha, when he reduced the punishment after the sin of the Golden Calf.
תרומה	ציפור	65	The ציפור sings of the longing for the מזבח and the temple.
תצוה	שמים	19	The color of the מעיל -garb was תכלית , blue, like the sky . This is the color of royalty. [The 12 illuminating stones of the breastplate possibly correspond to the 12 constellations.]
ויקהל	אווז שבבית	76	Moshe congregated the nation and spoke to them aloud. This concept is part of the song of the goose .
פקודי	נמלה	112	The Jewish nation worked industriously like the ant to build the Mishkan. In this Parsha all was accounted for and nothing had been stolen, like the ant that does not steal from its fellow ant .

ויקרא	בהמה טהורה	90	Mentions Korbanos. These can only be brought from Kosher animals .
צו	חיטה	50	The flour offering was made of wheat .
שמיני	חולדה, רחמה	114,79	The חולדה-bird mentioned in the Parsha is the Rachama . חולד is the weasel .
תזריע	שבולל	111	The context of the song of the snail is how Dovid Hamelech prays against his enemies that slandered him that they should be like melting snails.
מצורע	סנונית, עגור	67, 64	The Senunis sings constantly. It symbolizes using one's ability to speak for good purposes. The Agur , too, sings of the correct usage of communication.
אחרי מות	דשאים	55	The foliage sings about the virtue of not interbreeding.
קדושים	פרד	96	In this Parsha, Hashem forbids interbreeding animals. The mule is such a product. Similarly, it also discussed forbidden marital relationships.
אמור	שעורה ושאר שיבילים, תמר	52, 47	The Omer offering mentioned in this Parsha was brought from barley . Other grains are conceptually connected. The Lulav is a palm branch.
בהר	ארץ	20	Behar begins with Shemitah, the recognition that all of the land is Hashem's.
בחוקותי	עצי השדה, זבוב	42, 84	In the blessings of this Parsha, even the barren trees will bear fruit. The curses warned stem from idleness from Torah study, symbolized by the fly .
במדבר	מדבר וציה	25	This Parsha is the beginning of the Sefer which discusses the numbers, organization, and events of the nation in the desert .
נשא	גפן	43	Even though wine, the grapevine's main product, can lead to disaster, as in the case of the Sota, it was nevertheless created for the sake of its good usage.
בהעלותך	שממית, פרוגיות	83, 78	This Parsha mentions trumpets, of which the spider sings. There is an opinion that the Progiyos are a type of Slav that fell in this Parsha.
שלה	רימון	46	The spies took back a pomegranate with them.
קורח	גהינום	24	Korach's congregation descended into the abyss of Gehinnom .
חוקת	ענני כבוד, עקרב	37, 110	The benefit of the clouds of glory was made evident when the nation was attacked upon the clouds temporary dissipation. The scorpion sings of kindness to all creatures. Similarly, Hashem allotted countries to the wicked Edom, Moav, and Amon, according to their rights.
בלק	זרזיר [שבועפות]	75	Bilaam declared that "בגוים לא יתחשב", that the Jewish nation will not be considered as one with the other nations, like the song of the starling .
פנחס	תאנה	45	Yehoshua was compared to a fig tree in that which he guarded Moshe's Torah teachings with constant diligence and was chosen to be his successor.
מטות	יום ולילה	32	The vow of a wife/daughter may only be annulled on that day . The nighttime is considered a separate time period.
מסעי	אווז הבר	77	The wild goose sings of the nation's wanderings in wilderness, recorded in this Parsha.
דברים	גמל	93	The camel sings of the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. Devarim is the Shabbos that precedes Tish'a B'av.
ואתחנן	רציפי, חסידה	71, 72	The Retzifi and the Stork sing the opening verses of the Haftorah of Shabbos Nachamu.
עקב	נהרות ומעינות, ירקות השדה	30, 54	Rivers and springs (ז, ח). Vegetables of the field (י, יא). Clouds are referred to by (יז, יא), "ועצר את השמים", meaning that Hashem would punish with withholding clouds and winds.
ראה	צבי, עורב	100,60	The deer and the raven are mentioned by the Kosher/non-Kosher animals.
שופטים	סוס	95	The king may not acquire horses more numerous than his cavalry's needs.
כי תצא	חתול	107	The cat sings of attacking enemies, like the beginning of this Parsha.
כי תבא	גשם	41	Rain is mentioned in the blessings of this Parsha.
נצבים	רוח וברקים	38	The winds sing of the ingathering of exiles mentioned in this Parsha (ג, ל). The lightning sings of the removal of fear from people's hearts, which is a concept mentioned in this Parsha. (כט, יח)
וילך	דוב	103	The Pasuk (לא, טז) "הנך שוכב עם אבותיך וקם" is a reference to the revival of the dead, of which the bear sings.
האזינו	נשר	62	Hashem is compared to the Nesher .
וזאת הברכה	תפוח	48	This Parsha is read on Simchas Torah. The beginning describes the selection of the Jewish nation from all other and their receiving of the Torah at the bottom of Har Sinai. Of this, the Tapuach sings.

PREFACE

The nature of this work: This composition explains the songs of Perek Shira by combining classical sources and commentaries with novel thought. This is not merely a random collection but rather an adapted selection fitting one theme of interpretation and a number of times unprecedented commentaries were originated. It was written in a concise and elucidated format while at the same time trying to bring out the music-like inspiration that each song is meant to instill in those that study them.

The theme of the commentary: I have entitled the commentary “The Song of Existence” since it shows how the beings sing by implication of their very nature, even without uttering a sound. After each song I wrote a section called “Living with Song”, explaining how to live according to the song, so that our actions “sing” similarly.¹ With the phrase “living with song”, I do not intend that one must necessarily be on the level of Dovid Hamelech who sang through all of his life’s experiences, but rather that by living virtuously, each Jew’s life is a song. This is explained further in “The Song of Man.” However, the deeper meaning of the theme phrase “living with song” is indeed that one should strive to serenade Hashem, as did Dovid Hamelech.

Sources used in this compilation: The foundation behind my selection and interpretation is that the song is apparent from what is essentially unique to the being and that it is implied by the straightforward meaning of the Pasuk sung. I have done my best to explain the songs the way I have determined to most fit this method of interpretation. I avoided including interpretations of “Drashos” and “Vortelach”, even if they may be true on a deeper level, since these do not fit into the purpose of this Sefer. When I wrote more than one commentary on one song, they often do not conflict, but rather reveal different aspects and layers of the song. Other times, two commentaries clearly do not agree, yet the general meaning of the song is still usually agreed upon.

This work is original in nature and the process of research was with direct usage of the classical sources. Nevertheless, in most songs I had to draw primarily upon commentaries that were recorded word-for-word in the invaluable compendium Perek Shira Hashalem by Rabbi Eliezer Korman of Bnei Brak, Tel. 036768761. His magnificent Sefer is a wide selection of commentaries from 123 Sefarim and also brings and classifies the more than 18 different versions of Perek Shira, published over the past few centuries. I received permission to draw from his collection. I am grateful to his son, my neighbor, who introduced it to me. I also used the compendium of sources called “הכל ישובח” by Rabbi Mordechai Gross Shlita. (Kiryat Sefer contact: 089740245.)

Most of the commentaries written on Perek Shira over the generations are almost unheard of although they were evidently great Talmidei Chachomim well versed in the revealed and hidden Torah. The more recognized names are R’ Moshe Mitrani (the Mabit in his sefer Beis Elokim), R’ Yaakov Emden (the Yaavetz in his commentary Zimras Haaretz), the Malbim and R’ Chaim Kanievsky Shlita (in his commentary Perek Bshir (בני ברק) which he published on the Shloshim of the passing of his father, the Steipler.)

Special thanks to Rabbi Eliezer Berman, Rabbi Daniel Friedman and to CHK who kindly assisted with the procuring of appropriate pictures. I am overall thankful to my father Shlita who helped me with this Sefer and with other writings.

Upon reaching completion of the commentary, I procured copies of the Perek Shira of Artsroll and of Feldheim. I added several points from these and credited in the footnotes, with permission.

¹ I recall once seeing this two-part commentary format in the work "שירה חדשה", albeit on a much smaller scale.

The compilers of Perek Shira: The Mabit writes that it can be assumed to have been written by Dovid Hamelech after the incident of with the frog quoted in the introduction of Perek Shira. The Yaavetz and Mesaprim Tehilos Hashem attribute it to Shlomo Hamelech, who could understand the language and song of the beings. The Sifsei Renanos suggests that both authored it and the compendium Hakol Yeshabucha brings a source from the Zohar¹ that seems to be saying this, that Dovid Hamelech understood the song of the world and Shlomo understood deeper and added to it. Other opinions write that it was authored by R' Chanina ben Dosa or R' Eliezer, but without providing proof.²

The singers of Perek Shira: Perek Shira Hashalem records numerous opinions as to how the creation actually sings its songs. Our commentary understands that from the behavior and appearance of the beings they show an aspect of Hashem's glory. This is their "song". This is the opinion of the Maharal³. Many others seem to understand this way. The Sefer Ha'ikarim writes that these beings each teach good character traits, Musar Haskel, and concepts of wisdom. These are their songs⁴. There are other major opinions as to who is singing. Many seem to write that the beings have an intelligence⁵ and choose to sing their songs to their Creator. Still others write that the angelic counterparts of each being sings its song. Refer to the appendix for elaboration on this matter.

Why only a selection of beings are included in Perek Shira: The Maharal Tzintz wrote that originally there were 1005 songs in Perek Shira. This is drawn from the Pasuk quoted in the introduction of Perek Shira which describes Shlomo Hamelech as having 1005 songs. The rest were apparently not transmitted throughout the generations.

Another approach may be that although many beings sing a similar message, there are specific beings that sing it the most. For example, the song of the date palm mentions also the cedar tree. Nonetheless, it is specifically the song of the date palm only because it most represents the righteous that it sings about.⁶ If this principle is true, all beings are implicitly included in Perek Shira.

The identity of the singers: In R' Shimshon Refael Hirsch's commentary of the Torah, regarding the non-Kosher birds he commented that we do not know their exact identity. He reasons that even the obviously translated ones, such as נשר being the eagle and עורב being the raven, are questioned by the Rishonim. All the more so regarding the more obscure ones. Therefore, he did not venture to identify them. This is the most honest way to proceed. However, for a commentary of Perek Shira, where the exact identity can change the meaning of the song and the lessons to be learned from it, it was necessary to write all of the possibilities and to try to discern, if possible, which is the most accurate.

There is a treatise called "המעריך" which is appended to the back of the Aruch and defines more words. The author knew many languages and used them to translate the foreign words of the Gemara with certainty. In his

¹ שמות דף יח ב.

² I recall once seeing that Dovid HaMelech wrote 147 chapters of Tehillim corresponding to the 147 years of Yaakov's life [of tribulation, trust and triumph]. Our version contains 150 but it has already been mentioned in the Gemara Brachos that two are joined, and so too possibly more. Another approach may be, based on this Mabit, that he indeed wrote 147, encountered the Tzfardeah and then wrote the original version of Perek Shira, Tehillim 148-150. However, this does not seem plausible.]

³ גבורות ה' ט"ה.

⁴ The Sefer Ha'ikarim says that one does not have to recite Perek Shira verbally but rather contemplate when he upon the beings and learn from them their songs. The phrase "אומר ..." means that it implies the moral lesson or wisdom of that Posuk. "כל האומר פרק שירה" he translates to mean to think, as in "אמרת אני בלבי".

⁵ It is difficult to understand that otherwise unintelligent beings comprehend that there is a creator intellectually. Perhaps this means that their spirit knows such and they themselves understand this basic concept. Humans as well possess an innate perception of Hashem.

⁶ A similar example can be found also by the song of the dove and, according to some, by the song of the Tzippor.

introduction he sharply criticized one who translates based on speculation and reasoning. He writes that such translations are “suspicious” and often proven to be mistaken.¹

In Perek Shira, there are many beings that are unheard of. The commentaries sometimes resort, therefore, to reasoning. Regarding such translations, one should realize that they are indications that help understand the song, but they are not certain. When a commentary writes a translation with definite knowledge or with a tradition, it seems that that translation should be considered more accurate than one that was derived from reasoning.

In many cases, exactness in translation is irrelevant to the essential meaning of the song.

The exact version of Perek Shira: Many versions of Perek Shira were published throughout the past few centuries. Perek Shira Hashalem records 18 versions, with their contents ranging from 61 to 93 songs. Their texts are mostly the same, but there are many individual differences. Not only are some songs present in only certain versions but the arrangement and order also differ. The Maharal Tzintz writes that there were initially 1005 songs in Shlomo Hamelech’s Perek Shira. The famed R’ Yaakov Emden (the Yaavetz, who edited the Talmud, the siddur and more) wrote how he found it impossible to ascertain the correct version from all of the different ones he saw. He, therefore, did his utmost to rearrange it in a way that he decided to most accurate and to “erase the extra and add the missing.” His refined version printed in his Siddur “Bais Yaakov” was widely accepted and seems to be the standard version available today.

Our commentary follows the version of the Yaavetz with the exception of the finale, “The Songs of Man and of the Angels.” However, nearing completion of the commentary, I realized that the Perek Shira Hashalem uses the version of the Siach Yitzchak and Shaar Shimon as the basis of his Sefer. He does so because this version is used by a number of commentaries and R’ Korman writes that it seems to have been the one in circulation at the time of the Rishonim. The Siddur Shaar Hashamayim, which was compiled by the Shla Hakadosh and his son, uses this version and declares it to be the most authentic one. I, therefore, included it in the appendix and compiled commentary to it there. Nevertheless, I used the version of the Yaavetz as the standard of this compilation for a number of reasons. Firstly, this is the version people are familiar with and it would be the most practical. Secondly, it, no less than the version of the Shaar Hashamayim, has been accepted by many commentaries who based their works upon it. Thirdly, seeing as it would appear to be the dominant version recited by most Jews, it would seem that the Heavens have placed their stamp upon it.

Sometimes I commented on more than one song at once. I did this either because the songs are two halves of one whole, such by the songs of the day and of the night, or else because, for whatever reason, I did not want to comment on one of the songs individually. I felt this did not detract from their message and effect.

When Perek Shira should be recited: There are a number of opinions when to recite it. The Mabit writes that it should be recited every morning when the experience of the world is most felt, and this is also the time that the beings say their Shira. The Knaf Renanim writes that the Acharonim included it in the Siddur to be recited daily. The *ה' מספרים תהילות ה'* writes that there is no set time when one has to say it, seeing as the wheat only sings at the beginning of Nisan.² The Eliyahu Raba reported the custom to divide its recital throughout the week.³ Thereby

¹ See there for more details.

² Refer to the appendix regarding how and when the beings say Shira.

³ He quoted the Derech Chachma who proves from the text of the introduction "כל האומר שירה בכל יום" that it should be recited every day. This he counters that the standard version reads "כל העוסק" which means he who involves himself with it. It is therefore enough to involve oneself a little a day and complete it over the week.

Perek Shira is indeed recited in its fullness, albeit over an extended period of time. The Shulchan Hatahor (ח,א) writes that it is a great Tikun to say at an Es Ratzon (time of favor).

The Sefer Yimtza Chaim (לר' חיים פלאג'י ס"ד) writes that Tehilim קמ"ח is “the source and the open root” to Perek Shira and commends reciting it beforehand. It may therefore be assumed that even by reciting the third Haleluka by itself, which is recited every morning in Pesukei Dezimra and mentions praise in general of all of creation, one fulfills the singing to some extent. Barchi Nafshi (ק"ד) is a similar composition. It should also be noted that according to the standard text of the introduction of Perek Shira “he who *involves* himself in Perek Shira every day...” it may be understood that it is sufficient to involve oneself in it even in thought and emulation and not necessarily by reciting it at all.¹

In conclusion: there are as many opinions as there are ways of serving Hashem and although its recital is ideal, seeing as it is not mentioned in the Mishna Berura, it remains a matter of custom and personal consideration.

General notes: References intertwine the commentary. Sometimes they refer to individual points and sometimes to the entire interpretation. In most cases it is evident what is from where but this was not always feasible and sometimes the reader has to refer to the source itself in order to discern what exactly was drawn from there. If it is written that an interpretation is “based” on a source, it can mean either mostly or partially.

It should be realized that the translations of some of the beings are not certain. However, in most cases the being is either as translated or something very close, which makes the doubt irrelevant.²

The commentary was formed over about a year, in weekly installments. It may therefore be more beneficial to read one song a week, on Shabbos. Given that there are 70 sections in my commentary, this would amount to completion of Perek Shira in a little more than a year. For the purpose of weekly study, I composed a second table of contents in which the songs of Perek Shira have been arranged according to the weekly Parsha. Each song has been slotted in the Parsha that it pertains to.

The rights of “The Song of Existence” are not reserved, but it may not be sold for profit. If you wish to aid in spreading this commentary, kindly pass it on whoever you think would peruse it and donate copies to local Shuls, Yeshivos, libraries, and seminaries. If you are interested in sponsoring its professional publication and distribution, even partially, please contact me. You will be rewarded with all of the promised blessings of one who involves himself with Perek Shira.

Hashem created man with mouths, saying: “If not for the Zemirots that man sings to Me I would not have created My world.” (אותיות דרבי עקיבא)

¹ Based partially on commentaries.

² See (צפרדע אבן עזרא שמות ז, כז) regarding the translation of צפרדע.

INTRODUCTION TO PEREK SHIRA

The following is the introduction of Perek Shira. It is included in almost all versions of Perek Shira, albeit with some variations. Translation and commentary have been added.

אמר רבי: כל העוסק בפרק שירה בעולם הזה זוכה ללמוד וללמד, לשמור ולעשות ולקיים, ותלמודו מתקיים בידו, וניצול מיצר הרע ומפגע רע ומחיבוט הקבר ומדינה של גהנום ומחבלי של משיח, ומאריך ימים, וזוכה לימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא.

Said Rebbi: Anyone who involves himself in [the study of] Perek Shira in this world merits to learn and to teach, to safeguard, to do and to fulfill, his learning is retained in his hand, he is saved from the Yetzer Hara, bad incidents, blows¹ of the grave, the judgment of Gehinnom and the birth-pangs of Mashiach, merits long life, and merits to the days of Mashiach and the life of the World to Come.

One of the main purposes of Creation was to be a source of praise for the Creator. One who is involved with Hashem's praise directly merits likewise to accomplish other ways in which Hashem's praise is revealed in the world, through the Torah and its fulfillment.

The many merits of success in Torah learning make it all the more worthwhile to invest time into its recital.

It is told about the Chasam Sofer that he would Daven lengthily. His peers commented that would it not be better to spend the time to engage in Torah study? He responded that we are taught that one who Davens lengthily will merit to a lengthened life. Then he will replenish the learning time. So too the investment in Perek Shira pays for itself.

תניא אמר רבי אליעזר כל האומר שירה זו בעולם הזה זוכה ואומרו לעולם הבא שנאמר אז ישיר משה שר לא נאמר אלא ישיר אותו לעתיד לבא.

"A Baraisa teaching: Said R' Eliezer: whoever says this song in this world merits to say it in the World to Come, as it is written, "אז ישיר משה" (lit. Then Moshe will sing), "שר" (sang) is not written but rather it means that he will sing it in the future."

The Shiras Yitzchak explains that even though the source of "אז ישיר" clearly refers to the Shiras Hayam and not to other songs, nevertheless the Zohar (בשלה נד) derives from the extra word "את" to include all other songs that are sung by those above and below. He explains this to mean that all songs have this merit as they are included in the Shiras Hayam and it is their root. [The Zohar there explains further that the reason Shiras Hayam has this merit is because it contains within it references to the past world, the World to Come, Kishrei Emuna (lit. "the ties of Emuna". The Masok Midrash writes the Sefiros are called Emuna. Through this the nation can strengthen itself in exile.) and the day of the Melech Hamashiach. It seems that the Shiras Yitzchak understands that the "את" comes to include all praises, even those that do not mention all of these four topics. It would appear though that all songs to Hashem describe His Sefiros. That which "Perek Shira" is specified is because it includes in its depths the songs of all of the higher and lower beings. It also has references to the perfected times of the future.]

One who squints through the haze of this world and sings to Hashem even while He is hidden and the time is imperfect for song, he will merit to rebirth in the time of song when all is clear and he can sing the song in all of its fullness. Also, only then will he be pure and truly worthy of singing it.

¹ When a person sins, he created destructive forces that beat his Nefesh-soul in the grave. This is part of the process of post-death atonement and cleansing.

תניא רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר כל העוסק בפרק שירה זה בכל יום מעיד אני עליו שהוא בן עולם הבא וניצול מפגע רע ומיצר הרע ומדין קשה ומשטן ומכל מיני משחית ומזיקין.

"A Baraisa teaching: Said R' Eliezer the Great: Whoever is involved in [the study of] this Perek Shira every day, I testify about him that he is a member of the World to Come and will be saved from any bad incident, the Yetzer Hara, harsh judgment, the Satan and all kinds of destroyers and damagers."

All negative occurrences and lure towards sin that frequent this world primarily in order to make people struggle to perform the will of Hashem and also to purify them and thereby increase their eternal reward. One who involves himself with the praise of Hashem every day, which is one of the purposes of creation and is utterly desired by Hashem, merits special favor and protection so that he will not be hindered from doing so.

גמור בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך לדעת דרכי ולשמור דלתות היכלי ותורתי ולשמור מצוותי וחוקי. נצור תורתי בלבבך ונגד עיניך תהיה יראתי. שמור פיהך ולשוניך מכל חטא ואשמה ואני אהיה עמך בכל מקום שתלך ואלמדך שכל ובינה מכל דבר. והוי יודע שכל מה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא לא בראו אלא לכבודו. שנאמר "כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו יצרתיו ו אף עשיתיו."

"Learn with all of your heart and with all of your soul to know My ways and to be diligent at the doors of My sanctuary and My Torah, and to keep my Mitzvos and statutes. Protect the Torah in your heart and against your eyes let My awe be. Protect your mouth from any sin and guilt and I will be with you every place you go and I will teach you insight and understanding from every matter. And you should know that all that Hashem created, He did not create it except for His honor, as it is written, " כל הנקרא בשמי " כל הנקרא בשמי " (All that is called in My name and that for My glory I created, I fashioned it and also made it)."

This paragraph seems to imply clearly that one is to contemplate the nature of the world through the lens of the Torah in order to perceive the glory of the Creator which each element contributes. The glory can and should be found seeing as the whole world was created for His glory. The implication is that we can derive what their songs are simply by contemplating upon them.

אמרו חז"ל על דויד מלך ישראל בשעה שסיים ספר תהילים זחה דעתו עליו ואמר לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא, "יש בריה שבראת בעולמך שאומרת שירות ותשבחות יותר ממני?" באותה שעה נזדמן לו צפרדעה אחת ואמרה לו, "דויד, אל תזוז דעתך עליך שאני אומרת שירות ותשבחות יותר ממך. ולא עוד אלא כל שירה שאני אומרת ממשתל עליה שלושת אלפים משלים. שנאמר "וידבר שלושת אלפים משל ויהי שירו חמישה ואלף. ולא עוד אלא שאני עוסקת במצוה גדולה. וזו היא מצוה גדולה שאני עוסקת בה. יש בשפת הים מין אחד שאין פרנסתו כי אם מן המים, ובשעה שהוא רעב נוטלני ואוכלני. זו היא המצוה. לקיים מה שנאמר: "אם רעב שונאך האכילהו לחם, ואם צמא השקהו מים, כי גחלים אתה חותה על ראשו, וה' ישלם לך". אל תקרי "ישלם" לך אלא "ישלמנו" לך.

"The Sages of blessed memory said of Dovid, king of Yisrael, at the time he completed the book of Tehillim he felt prideful (lit. his mind became aloof) and he said before Hashem, "Is there a creature that you created in Your world that says songs and praises more than me?" At that time a frog happened before him and said to him, "Dovid, do not feel prideful, for I say more songs and praises than you. And not only that but every song which I sing I analogize 3000 parables about it, as it is written: " וידבר שלושת אלפים " [He spoke three thousand parables and his song was 1005]. And not only that, but I am involved in a great Mitzva. This is the Mitzva which I am involved in: On the seashore there is a species whose sustenance is only from the water and at a time that it is hungry it takes me and eats me. This is the Mitzva. This is to fulfill that which it is written " אם רעב שונאך האכילהו לחם, ואם צמא השקהו מים, כי גחלים אתה חותה על ראשו, וה' ישלם לך " [If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread and if he is thirsty give him water to drink, for coals you are pouring on his head and Hashem will pay you.] Do not read "ישלם לך" [will pay you] but rather "ישלמנו לך" [will make him at peace with you]."

This section is puzzling. It would seem that frog is commending itself for its self-sacrifice to feed the creature as a deed of kindness but then goes on to say that it is thereby pouring coals on its head, which implies it is actually not doing a kindness at all. It is also not understood how it is pouring coals and damaging the creature, nor how Hashem makes it at peace with it. Is it not just eaten and then ceases to exist?

I came across a parallel quotation from the Zohar (פנחס רלב) quoted by the commentaries by the song of the frog. There the frog also has two boastings: one that it gave its life to smite the Egyptians (by leaping into the ovens and into their bodies), and secondly that it praises Hashem constantly. I would like to explain that these are essentially identical recordings and the one of Perek Shira bears an analogy to the sacrifice of frogs in Egypt. The creature of the land that feeds only from the water mentioned in Perek Shira is a reference to the crocodile. The crocodile is also the icon of Paroh as termed by Yirmiyahu Hanavi.¹ In addition to being part of the crocodile's diet, the frog hints to that which it functioned as Hashem's agent and gave up its life to enter Egypt and thereby poured coals of one of the ten decimating plagues upon their heads which lead eventually to the Egyptians making peace with Hashem's nation.

The song of Dovid Hamelech is of course incomparably higher, sung with free choice and coming from a Tzelem Elokim, but it is limited to the dimensions of humanity. A person's song only bears true value if he sings with understanding and that understanding permeates his self and his deeds. He is also limited to the physical capability to sing only part of the time. Thirdly, he can only sing words but usually is not allowed to give up his very life for Hashem. This is not so with the mindless beings of the universe.

The frog appeared to Dovid Hamelech as a representative of all creation that sing to Hashem with their mere existence and in particular with its non-stopping croaking day and night, and its ability to give its very life for the Creator, something with Dovid Hamelech was not able to do. This was humbling especially as it was coming from a vile and almost useless part of creation.

It would seem that Dovid Hamelech was being told not to feel haughtiness for his accomplishment of fully expressing humanity's praise to Hashem. His songs were limited to the stature of the mortal man that composed them and sings them, as great as he may be. However, the static invariable songs of non-thinking beings of existence which lack an independent mind and identity of their own are expressing at all times the full will and wonder of the Living God, unlimited to the stature of man.

The Mabit writes that after this incident Dovid Hamelech composed Perek Shira. This was how he could tap into this non-human aspect of song, by studying it, singing it and living it.

¹ The translation of the words "התנים הגדול אשר בנאור", the great Tanim in the Nile river, is not straightforward, but some translate it to mean crocodile. It would seemingly be the largest sea-giant in the Nile. See further in the appendix.

THE STANDARD VERSION OF PEREK SHIRA¹

פרק א

שמים אומרים: השמים מספרים כבוד אל ומעשה ידיו מגיד הקריע.
ארץ אומרת: לה' הארץ ומלוואה תבל וישבי בה. **ואומר:** מכנף הארץ זמרת שמענו צבי לצדיק (ואמר רזי לי רזי לי אוי לי בגדים בגדו ובגד בוגדים בגדו).
גן עדן אומר: עורי צפון ובואי תימן הפיחי גני יזלו בשמיו יבא דודי לגנו ויאכל פרי מגדיו.
גיהנם אומר: כי השביע נפש שקקה ונפש רעבה מלא טוב.
מדבר אומר: יששום מדבר וציה ותגל ערבה ותפרח פחבצלת.
שדות אומרים: ה' בחקמה יסד ארץ כונן שמים בתבונה.
מים אומרים: לקול תתו המון מים בשמים ויעל נשאים מקצה ארץ.
ימים אומרים: מקלות מים רבים אדירים משברי ים אדיר במרום ה'.
נהרות אומרים: נהרות ימתאו כף יחד הרים ירננו.
מענות אומרים: ושרים פחללים כל מעיני בה.

פרק ב

יום אומר: יום ליום יביע אומר ולילה ולילה יתוה דעת.
לילה אומר: להגיד בבקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות.
שמש אומר: שמש ירח עמד זבלה לאור חצייה יהלכו לנגה ברק חניטה.
ירח אומרת: עשה ירח למועדים שמש ידע מבואו.
כוכבים אומרים: אתה הוא ה' לבדך אתה עשית את השמים שמי השמים וכל צבאם הארץ וכל אשר עליה הימים וכל אשר בהם ואתה מחיה את כלם וצבא השמים לה משתחווים.
עבים אומרים: ישת חשך סתרו סביבותיו ספתו חשכת מים עבי שחקים.
ענני כבוד אומרים: אף ברי יטריח עב יפיץ ענן אורו.
רוח אומר: אומר לצפון תני ולתימן אל תכלאי הביאי בני מרחוק ובנותי מקצה הארץ.
ברקים אומרים: ברקים למטר עשה מוצא רוח מאוצרותיו.
טל אומר: אהיה כטל לישראל יפרח פשושנה ונד שרשיו פלכנון.
גשמים אומרים: גשם נדבות תניף אלהים נחלתה ונלואה אתה כוננתה.

פרק ג

אילנות שבשדה אומרים: אז ירננו עצי היער מלפני ה' כי בא לשפוט את הארץ.
גפן אומרת: כה אומר ה' פאשר ימצא התירוש באשכול ואמר אל תשחיתוהו כי ברכה בו פן אעשה למען עבדי לבלתי השחית הכל.
תאנה אומרת: נצר תאנה יאכל פריה (ושמר אדניו יכבד).
רמון אומר: כפלה הרמון רקתה מבעד לצמתה.
תמר אומר: צדיק פתמר יפרח כארז פלכנון ישגה.
תפוח אומר: כתפוח בעצי היער פן דודי בין הבנים בצלו חמדתי וישבתי ופריו מתוק לחכי.
שבלת חטים אומרת: שיר המעלות ממעמקים קראתיה ה'.

¹ This is the version of the Yaavetz's Siddur "Bais Yaakov". It appears to be the most accepted version of "Perek Shira" today. See further in the preface about other versions.

שְׁבֵלֶת שְׁעוּרִים אוֹמֶרֶת: תִּפְלֶה לְעֵנִי כִּי יַעֲטֹף וְלִפְנֵי ה' יִשְׁפֹּף שִׁיחוֹ.
שָׂאֵר הַשְּׁבוּלִים אוֹמְרִים: לִבְשׁוֹ כָּרִים הֵצֵאן וְעִמְקִים יַעֲטֹפוּ כָּר יִתְרוּעְעוּ אֵף יִשְׁירוּ.
יִרְקוֹת שְׁבִשְׁדָּה אוֹמְרִים: תִּלְמִיָּה רִוּה נַחַת גְּדוּדֶיהָ בְּרִכְיִים תִּמְלַגְגֶּנָּה צִמְחָה תִּבְרָה.
דְּשָׁאִים אוֹמְרִים: יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו.

פרק ד

תִּרְנָגוּל אוֹמֵר: בְּשַׁעָה שְׂבָא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֵצֶל הַצְּדִיקִים בְּגֵן עֵדֶן זוֹלָפִים כָּל אֵילָנֵי גֵן עֵדֶן בְּשָׂמִים וּמְרֻנָּים
וּמִשְׁבָּחִים וְאֵז גַּם הוּא מִתְעוֹרֵר וּמִשְׁבָּח.
בְּקוֹל רֵאשׁוֹן אוֹמֵר: שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רֵאשִׁיכֶם וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד. מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד ה' עֲזִיז וְגִבּוֹר
ה' גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה.
בְּקוֹל שְׁנֵי אוֹמְרִים: שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רֵאשִׁיכֶם וּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד. מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד ה' צְבָאוֹת הוּא
מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סֵלָה.
בְּקוֹל שְׁלִישֵׁי אוֹמְרִים: עֲמְדוּ צְדִיקִים וְעֹסְקוּ בַּתּוֹרָה כְּדֵי שְׂיִהְיֶה שְׁכֻרְכֶם כְּפוּל לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.
בְּקוֹל רְבִיעֵי אוֹמְרִים: לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוֹנִיתִי ה'.
בְּקוֹל חֲמִישֵׁי אוֹמְרִים: עַד מָתִי עֵצֶל תִּשְׁכַּב מָתִי תִקּוּם מִשְׁנָתְךָ.
בְּקוֹל שִׁישֵׁי אוֹמְרִים: אֵל תִּתְּנֵה שְׁנָה פֶּן תִּנְרָשׁ פִּקְח עֵינָיִךְ שִׁבְעַת לַחֲמַיִם.
בְּקוֹל שְׁבִיעֵי אוֹמְרִים: עַתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת לֵה' הַפְּרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ.
תִּרְנָגְלַת אוֹמֶרֶת: נָתַן לַחֲמַיִם לְכָל בֶּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם תִּסְדּוּ.
יוֹנָה אוֹמֶרֶת: כְּסוּס עֲגוּר כֵּן אֲצַפְצֵף אֶהְיֶה כִּיּוֹנָה דָּלוּ עֵינַי לְמָרוֹם אֲדֹנִי עֲשִׂקָה לִי עֲרִבְנִי.
אוֹמֶרֶת יוֹנָה לְפָנֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם יְהִיוּ מְזוֹנוֹתֵי מְרוֹרִים כְּזִית בְּגִדָּה וְאֵל יְהִיוּ מִתּוֹקִים כְּדָבָשׁ עַל
יְדֵי בֶּשָׂר וְדָם.
נִשְׂר אוֹמֵר: וְאַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַקִּיצָה לְפָקֹד כָּל הַגּוֹיִם אֵל תַּחֲזֵן כָּל בְּגָדֵי אֲנֹן סֵלָה.
עֲגוּר אוֹמֵר: הוֹדוּ לֵה' בְּכִנּוֹר בִּנְבֵל עֲשׂוֹר זִמְרוּ לוֹ.
צִפּוֹר אוֹמֵר: גַּם צִפּוֹר מִצֵּאָה בֵּית וְדִרּוֹר קֵן לָהּ אֲשֶׁר שָׁמָּה אֶפְרָחֶיהָ אֶת מְזִבְחוֹתֶיהָ ה' צְבָאוֹת מִלְכִּי וְאֱלֹהֵי.
סְנוּנִית אוֹמֶרֶת: לִמְעַן יִזְמְרָךְ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יָדָם ה' אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אוֹדְךָ.
טַסִּית אוֹמֶרֶת: עֲזָרִי מִעַם ה' עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִים וְאַרְץ.
צִיָּה אוֹמֶרֶת: אוֹר נִרְעַ לְצַדִּיק וְלִישָׁרִי לֵב שְׁמָחָה.
רְצִפִּי אוֹמֵר: נִחְמָו נִחְמָו עָמִי יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.
חִסְדֵּיהָ אוֹמֶרֶת: דִּבְרוּ עַל לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַיִם וְקִרְאוּ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי מְלָאָה צְבָאָה כִּי נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָה כִּי לִקְחָה מִיָּד ה' כְּפָלִים בְּכָל
חֲטָאתֶיהָ.
עוֹרֵב אוֹמֵר: מִי יִכִּין לְעַרֵב צִידוֹ כִּי יִלְדִּיו אֵל אֵל יִשְׁוּעוּ (יִתְּעוּ לְבָלִי אֶכֶל).
זִרְזִיר אוֹמֵר: וְנוֹדַע בְּגוֹיִם זֶרַעַם וְצִאֲצִאִיהֶם בַּתּוֹךְ הָעַמִּים כָּל רֵאשִׁיכֶם יִפְרֹסוּ כִּי הֵם זֶרַע בְּרָךְ ה'.
אֹז שְׁבִיבִית אוֹמֶרֶת: הוֹדוּ לֵה' קִרְאוּ בְּשִׁמּוֹ הוֹדִיעוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו: שִׁירוּ לוֹ זִמְרוּ לוֹ שִׁיחוּ בְּכָל נִפְלְאוֹתָיו.
אֹז הַבֵּר הַמְּשׁוֹטְטֵת בַּמִּדְבָּר כְּשֶׁרֹאָה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה אוֹמֶרֶת: קוֹל קוֹרָא בַּמִּדְבָּר פָּנוּ דְרָךְ יִישָׁרוּ
בַּעֲרִבָה מִסֵּלָה לְאֱלֹקֵינוּ וְעַל מְצִיאוֹת מְזוֹנוֹתֶיהָ בַּמִּדְבָּר אוֹמֶרֶת: אֲרוּר הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּאֲדָם בְּרוּךְ הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח
כִּי וְהִנֵּה יִי מִבְּטָחוֹ.
פְּרוּגִיּוֹת אוֹמְרִים: בְּטָחוּ בֵּה' עַדִּי עַד כִּי בִּיהָ ה' צוּר עוֹלָמִים.
רַחֲמָה אוֹמֶרֶת: אֲשַׁרְקָה לָהֶם וְאֶקְבָּצֶם כִּי פְדִיתִים וְרָבוּ כְּמוֹ רָבוּ.
צִפְרֵת כְּרָמִים אוֹמֶרֶת: אֲשָׂא עֵינֵי אֵל הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי.
חִסִּיל אוֹמֵר: ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֶתָּה אֲרוֹמְמָה אוֹדָה שְׁמָךְ כִּי עֲשִׂיתָ פֶלֶא עֲצוֹת מִרְחוֹק אֲמוּנָה אֲמֹן.
שׁוּמְמִית אוֹמֶרֶת: הִלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי שְׁמֵעַ הִלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה.
זְבוּב אוֹמֵר: בְּשַׁעָה שְׂאִין יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה קוֹל אִמֵּר קִרְא וְאִמֵּר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל הַבֶּשָׂר חֲצִיר וְכָל חֲסִדוֹ כְּצִיץ

השֹׁדָה. יָבֵשׁ חָצִיר נָבֵל צִיץ ודָבָר אֲלֵקִינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם. בּוֹרָא נִיב שְׁפָתַי שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם לְרַחוּק וְלִקְרוֹב אָמַר ה' וְרָפְאֵתִיו.

תַּנְיִינִים אוֹמְרִים: הִלְלוּ אֶת ה' מִן הָאָרֶץ תַּנְיִינִים וְכָל תְּהוֹמוֹת.

לוֹיֵתָן אוֹמֵר: הוֹדוּ לָהּ כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.

דָּגִים אוֹמְרִים: קוֹל ה' עַל הַמַּיִם אֶל הַכְּבוֹד הַרְעִים ה' עַל מַיִם רַבִּים.

צִפְרָדֵּעַ אוֹמֵרֶת: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

פרק ה

בַּהֲמָה דָּקָה טְהוֹרָה אוֹמֵרֶת: מִי כַמֶּכָּה בְּאֵלֶם ה' מִי כַמֶּכָּה נֶאֱדָר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ נוֹרָא תְהִלַּת עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא.

בַּהֲמָה גֹּסֶה טְהוֹרָה אוֹמֵרֶת: הִרְנִינוּ לֵאלֹהִים עוֹנָנוּ הִרְעִינוּ לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.

בַּהֲמָה דָּקָה טְמֵאָה אוֹמֵרֶת: הִיטִיבָה ה' לְטוֹבִים וְלִישָׁרִים בְּלִבּוֹתָם.

בַּהֲמָה גֹּסֶה טְמֵאָה אוֹמֵרֶת: יִגִּיעַ פִּפְיָהּ כִּי תֹאכַל אֲשֶׁרֶיהָ וְטוֹב לָהּ.

גַּמֵּל אוֹמֵר: ה' מִמָּרוֹם יִשְׁאָג וּמִמַּעוֹן קָדְשׁוֹ יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ שְׁאָג יִשְׁאָג עַל גִּוְהוֹ.

סוֹס אוֹמֵר: הִנֵּה כְעֵינִי עֹבְדִים אֶל יָד אֲדוֹנֵיהֶם כְּעֵינִי שְׁפָחָה אֶל יָד גְּבוּרָתָהּ כִּן עֵינֵינוּ אֶל ה' אֲלֵקִינוּ עַד שְׁיַחְנֵנוּ.

פֶּרֶד אוֹמֵר: יוֹדוּהָ ה' כָּל מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ כִּי שְׁמָעוּ אֶמְרֵי פִיהָ.

חֲמור אוֹמֵר: לָהּ ה' הִגְדִּלָהּ וְהִגְבִּירָהּ וְהִתְפָּאֲרָתָהּ וְהִנְצִחַתָּהּ וְהַיְהוּדָהּ כִּי כָל בְּשָׂמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ לָהּ ה' הַמְמַלְכָהּ וְהַמְתַּנְשָׂא לְכָל לְרֹאשׁ.

שׁוֹר אוֹמֵר: אֲזַי יִשְׁיֵר מִשָּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לָהּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹאמַר אֲשִׁירָהּ לָהּ כִּי גָאָה גָאָה סוֹס וְרִכְבּוֹ רָמָה בָּיִם.

חִיּוֹת הַשֹּׁדָה אוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ הַטוֹב וְהַמְטִיב.

צִבִּי אוֹמֵר: וְאֲנִי אֲשִׁיר עֲזָה וְאַרְנָן לְבַקֵּר חֲסִדָּהּ כִּי הִיִּתָּ מְשֻׁגָּב לִי וּמְנוּס בְּיוֹם צָר לִי.

פִּיל אוֹמֵר: מֶה גָדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיהָ ה' מֶאֱדָ עֲמָקוֹ מִחֲשֻׁבְתֶּיהָ.

אַרְיֵה אוֹמֵר: ה' בְּגִבּוֹר יֵצֵא כְּאִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת יַעִיר קִנְיָהּ יִרְעֵה אֶף יִצְרִיחַ עַל אִיָּבּוֹ וְתִגְבֹּר.

דָּב אוֹמֵר: יִשְׂאוּ מִדְּבַר וְעָרְיוּ חֲצִרִים תִּשָּׁב קֶדֶר יִרְנֻ יִשְׁבִּי סֶלַע מִרֹאשׁ הָרִים יִצְוּחוּ יִשְׁיִמוּ לָהּ כְּבוֹד וְתִהְלָתוֹ בְּאֵיִם יִגִּידוּ.

זֶאֵב אוֹמֵר: עַל כָּל דְּבַר-פֶּשַׁע עַל שׁוֹר עַל חֲמור עַל שָׂה עַל שְׁלֵמָה עַל כָּל אֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר כִּי הוּא זֶה עַד הָאֱלֹהִים יָבֹא דָבָר וְשִׁנִּיהֶם אֲשֶׁר יִרְשִׁיעַן אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁלַם שְׁנִים לְרַעְהוֹ.

שׁוּעַל אוֹמֵר: הוּא בָנָה בֵּיתוֹ בְּלֹא צִדָּק וְעֲלִיּוֹתָיו בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט בִּרְעוּהוּ יַעֲבֹד חֲנָם וּפָעֵלוֹ לֹא יִתֵּן לוֹ.

זְרָזִיר אוֹמֵר: רַנְּנוּ צְדִיקִים בָּהּ לִישָׁרִים נֶאֱוָה תְהִלָּהּ.

חֲתוּל אוֹמֵר: אֲרִדּוּף אוֹיְבֵי וְאֲשִׁיגֶם וְלֹא אֲשׁוּב עַד כְּלוּתָם.

פרק ו

שִׁרְצִים אוֹמְרִים: יִשְׁמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֲשִׂיוּ בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן יִגִּילוּ בְּמַלְכָּם. (נ"א יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו.)

אֵלִים שִׁבְשֻׁרְצִים אוֹמְרִים: אֲשַׁתָּהּ כְּגֹפֶן פָּרִיָּה בִּירְכָתִי בֵּיתָהּ בְּנִיָּה כְּשִׁתְּלִי יִיתִים סָבִיב לְשִׁחְתָּהּ.

נָחַשׁ אוֹמֵר: סוּמָהּ ה' לְכָל הַנִּפְלִים וְזוֹקָף לְכָל הַכַּפּוּפִים.

עֲקָרָב אוֹמֵר: טוֹב ה' לְכָל וְרַחֲמֵיו עַל כָּל-מַעֲשָׁיו.

שִׁבְלִיל אוֹמֵר: כְּמוֹ שִׁבְלִיל תִּמְסַּי יִהְיֶה נִפְלֵ אִשְׁתּוֹ בַּל חָזוּ שְׁמִשׁ.

נִמְלָה אוֹמֵרֶת: לָהּ אֵל נִמְלָה עֲצָל רָאָה דְרָכֶיהָ וְחָכָם.

עֲכָבֵר אוֹמֵר: וְאַתָּה צְדִיק עַל כָּל הַבָּא עָלַי כִּי אֶמֶת עֲשִׂיתָ וְאֲנִי הִרְשַׁעְתִּי.

חִלְדָּה אוֹמֵרֶת: כָּל הַנִּשְׁמָה תְהִלָּל יָהּ הִלְלוּיָהּ.

כָּלְבִים אוֹמְרִים: בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ וְנִכְרַעַה נִכְרַכָּה לִפְנֵי ה' עֲשֵׂנוּ.

The Song of the Heavens

The heavens say:

**The Heavens
tell God's
honor, and the
sky relates His
handiwork.**



שָׁמַיִם אוֹמְרִים:

**הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים
כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה
יָדָיו מִגִּיד
הֶרְקִיעַ.**

(תהילים יט, ב)

Hashem created all to reveal His glory to us. The ultimate realization of God will be in the World to Come, where the soul will thereby derive endless pleasure, yet even in this world Hashem is revealed to us somewhat. The glorious heavens speak of the glory of their Creator.

The sun shining by day, benefitting indiscriminately all flora and fauna paints the sky with God's kindness. So too, the soft glowing moon at night, accompanied by hosts of endless stars, softening the effect of the dark night, paint the other half of the sky. The endless space and countless stars sing of the honor of the Creator.¹

Kabbalistically, the colors each carry a different meaning. Blue is the color of מלכות, majesty.² Hashem's throne of glory is blue. The sky is meant to remind us of God, Who is always there, above us. In truth He is everywhere, but we perceive Him as being above us as in the sense of his ruling over us and being beyond us. Perhaps this explains the choice of wording "מספרים", which has the same root as the word "ספיר", blue sapphire, the material of Hashem's throne. This is the glory the endless, lofty, blue sky tells us of.

Another interpretation of "ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע" is that the constellations, situated in the heavens, tell of Hashem's doings with His world, through the language of astrology. Furthermore, the clouds, or lack thereof, tell of His desire to soon bestow us with life-giving rain.³

Living with Song

The heavens and earth are also analogies for the human soul and body (Kikar La'aden). Although man was created from the earth, his soul is from the breath of Hashem Himself. This means that when we praise Hashem with our mouths it is as if the heavens and the earth were praising Him. This is a profound contemplation. In Osios d'Rabbi Akiva it is written: Hashem created us with mouths saying, "If not for the zemiros that man sings to Me I would not have created My world." When doing so we live the song of the heavens.

The loftiness of the heavens should be the background music of Jewish life. We are to pray with majesty, live with dignity and sanctify ourselves accordingly. Even the corners of our garments are to bear reminders of the heavens where resides the sapphire-blue throne of glory.

¹ Based on Rashi and Mesaprim Tehilos Hashem.

² Maharal.

³ Based on Malbim.

The Song of the Elephant



פִּיל אָמַר: מַה גָּדֹלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה' מְאֹד עֲמֻקּוֹ מַחְשַׁבְתֶּיךָ.
(תהילים צב, ו)

The elephant says: **How great are Your deeds, Hashem!**
Very deep are Your thoughts.

The elephant is the most wondrous of creatures. Its very name "פִּיל" (*pil*) is related to the word "פֶּלֶא" (*peleh*), meaning wonder. Its huge size, elongated trunk, and overlarge ears are unique in the animal kingdom. It is an imposing mass of tough flesh armed with spear-like ivory tusks, yet it feeds on nothing more than simple vegetation.

In fact, due to its unusual characteristics, our Sages teach that, in some instances, one who sees an elephant must recite the blessing "*Meshaneh HaBerios*", meaning, "Blessed is He who makes diverse creatures," as its unique nature displays the breadth and genius of Hashem's kaleidoscopic creative powers.

The sheer size of the elephant is a display of the greatness of Hashem's "great deeds". Hashem's "deep thoughts" are manifest in the elephant's extreme features, which are perfectly adapted for survival. Its titanic size renders it invulnerable to predators. If it would have been a carnivore, it is unlikely that it would be able to hunt enough meat to sustain its colossal body. If it was not equipped with its characteristic trunk, it would have needed a giraffe-like neck to reach the ground to feed. But a neck so long would have made it vulnerable to the jaws of other mighty and aggressive creatures. Indeed, all of its features were fashioned with Divine wisdom deeper than we can comprehend.

Thus, the wondrous elephant in its entirety is a song to its Creator: "How great are Your deeds, Hashem! Very deep are Your thoughts."

Living with Song

The elephant's song is excerpted from *Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabbos* — *A Psalm of Song for the Shabbos day*. This chapter of Tehillim alludes to the World to Come, an era of complete Shabbos rest for the Universe. Only then, when the world reaches its final state of perfection, will we be clearly able to perceive the true intent of Hashem's great deeds.

Yet, even in the obscurity of our present world, the elephant's song is a call to realize that the grandeur and purposefulness of all Hashem's deeds are beyond our scope of understanding.

Man must sing from whichever vantage point he resides. The strong and wealthy thank Hashem for every element of goodness they have been given and for the success granted to their endeavors. The weak and poor thank him for sustaining them and protecting them from toppling.

Standing in the orchestra of the world, do not crane your neck to try read the music notes of your neighbor. Your instrument and part are uniquely significant. Rejoice in your lot and play your part wholeheartedly. The Master Composer has arranged a song perfect beyond comprehension.

The Song of the Dogs



קְלָבִים אוֹמְרִים: בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעַה נִבְרָכָה לְפָנֵי ה' עֲשֵׂנוּ. (תהלים צה, ו)

The dogs say: **Come let us prostrate ourselves and kneel, let us bow before Hashem our Maker.**

The dog recognizes the good its master gives it and constantly subjugates itself to its master's will, doing whatever it can for him. There is a parable: throw a dog a bone and it will lick the dust of your feet.¹ All the more so we should recognize all of the good that Hashem does for us, a lot more than throwing us bones, and we should serve him loyally and willingly to the best of our ability.²

In the commentary of the Mabit, he orders the bowing in this verse in progression. First "נשתחוה" which means to prostrate with outstretched hands and feet, representing total submission. Then one merits to stand and "ונכרעה" which means to kneel on one's knees. Then "נברכה לפני ה' אלוהינו" which is bowing while standing. This is the highest level when one merits לשחר פניו (to greet His face. I.e. by first relating to Hashem with total subjugation and even at times degradation, one eventually merits to serve Him upright with the pride of a minister of the King.)

Living with Song

We are not adjured to be superhuman. Our service to Hashem is a natural expression of gratitude and admittance of our subjugation to Him. "הוא אביך קנך הוא עשך ויכוננך". [He is our Father and Creator, Who made us and established us to be His nation.] He took us out of bondage and granted us the bounty of the world. Moreover, all of this is nothing compared to which He has in store for us eternally. If a dog can be loyal to its master only because of a dry bone its master casts to it, all the more so we, the wise, righteous, and responsible, should prostrate ourselves in devoted divine service performed as a labor of love and passion.

The slave of a king is a king. A dog will be loyal even to the lowliest of masters. We should surely submit ourselves totally to the will of the Living God whom we are dependent upon entirely. It is the only greatness that we can achieve.

¹ זוהר ויקרא סג.

² Sefer Ha'ikarim, R' Chaim Kanievsky, and others.

CONCLUSION OF PEREK SHIRA

רבי ישעיה תלמידו של רבי חנינא בן דוסא התענה חמש ושמונים תעניות. אמר כלבים שכתוב בהם "והכלבים עזי נפש לא ידעו שבעה" יזכו לומר שירה? וענה לו מלאך מן השמים ואמר לו, "ישעיה, עד מתי אתה מתענה על זה הדבר? שבועה מלפני המקום ברוך הוא, מיום שעילה סוד לחבקוק הנביא לא גילה דבר זה לשום בריה בעולם, אלא בשביל שתלמידו של אדם גדול אתה שלחוני מן השמים לזדקק אליך ואמרו כלבים כתיב בהם "ולכל ישראל לא יחרוץ כלב לשונו" ולא עוד אלא שזכו לעבד עורות מצואתם שכותבין בהם תפילין ומזוזות וספר תורה על כן זכו לומר שירה. ומה ששאלת חזור לאחריך ואל תוסיף בדבר הזה עוד, כמו שכתוב "שומר פיו ולשונו שומר מצרות נפשו". ברוך ה' לעולם אמן ואמן. ברוך ה' מציון שוכן ירושלים הללוקה. ברוך ה' אלוהים אלוהי ישראל עושה נפלאות לבדו. וברוך שם כבודו לעולם וימלא כבודו את כל הארץ אמן ואמן.

R' Yeshaya, the disciple of R' Chanina Ben Dosa, fasted 85 fasts. He said, "Dogs, about whom it is written, "And the dogs are brazen-spirited; they do not know satiation", they should merit to say Shira? An angel answered him from the heavens and said to him, "Yeshaya, until when shall you fast over this matter. It is an oath from before Hashem [regarding that which] from the day that He revealed His secret to Chavakuk the prophet He did not reveal this matter to any person in the world. However, since you are the disciple of a great man, I have been sent from the heavens to answer [lit. engage] you. They [assumedly the heavenly court] said: It is written about dogs that "And to all of Yisrael the dog will not bark its tongue". And not only that, but they also merited that hides be treated using their excrement, upon which are written Tefillin, Mezuzos, and Sifrei Torah, they therefore merited to say Shira. And that regarding that which you asked, return backward and do not continue onwards about this matter, as it is written: "One who protects his mouth and tongue protects himself from troubles." Blessed is Hashem forever, Amen and Amen. Blessed is Hashem from Tzzyon, Who dwells in Yerushalayim, Hallelukah! Blessed is Hashem, God, the God of Yisrael, Who does wonders alone. And blessed is the name of his glory forever and may his glory fill the world, Amen and Amen.

This section requires much explanation. What bothered R' Yeshaya about the dogs that he deemed them the only creature in the world unworthy of saying Shira? Which secret of Chavakuk was he answered with?

The following is based mostly on the Chasam Sofer.¹ Shira is sung only upon experiencing fullness and satiation. The wicked are never satisfied and cannot express song. The song of the dog was particularly difficult to comprehend. It sings of humility, bowing with devotion to its master, while in truth it is a creature of brazenness, barking with impudence and refusing to be satisfied, wanting to eat more than necessary.² About the dog, it was even commented that he eats that which is repulsive, vomits it and may come to eat it again.³ Kabbalistically the dog is one of the symbols of the forces of evil. It seems unfair that the wicked connect with song to the Creator when they are wholly unworthy of doing so. This was especially bothersome for the disciple of Chanina ben Dosa

¹ דרשות ת', וא', דרוש לפרשת בשלה תקע"א.

² ישמח משה.

³ It is possible that Hashem gave the dog the nature to eat more than it has to because it is termed by the Talmud as the poorest of animals. This would seem to be because it is too domesticated to hunt animals in the wild and yet farmers will not take in stray dogs and feed them the way they would happily take in stray sheep. For this reason, Hashem made it that its food can sit in its stomach for three days and it could also be for this reason that it eats more than it needs at the time of eating, storing for later because it does not know when its next meal is. This is similar to the way the wicked want to eat and drink in this world as much as they can because they do not know if they will at all merit to do so in the World to Come.

who did just the opposite. To him a Kav of carobs a week was enough, meaning he did not desire anything else.¹ On a deeper level, he was really asking "רשע וטוב לו, צדיק ורע לו?", how do bad things happen to good people and vice-versa? This fundamental question was asked by many of the Neviim since Moshe Rabbeinu but it was raised most phenomenally by Chavakuk Hanavi when he drew a circle in the ground and refused to budge from it until his question was answered regarding the conquerors of the Jewish nation. Hashem then revealed the matter to him, how the conquerors and oppressors would, in turn, be conquered and oppressed. Now R' Yeshaya was asking how the wicked even merit to spiritual goodness, to sing to the Living God.

Hashem answered him that the force of evil symbolized by the dog is like a fire that consumes only if it finds what to feed on. So too, the force of evil feeds only when it finds impurities. Their deficiency is not intrinsically their own but rather because of us. When the Jewish nation left Egypt they were a holy nation and therefore the dogs did not bark at them. [Alternatively, the Yismach Moshe explains this part differently, that the dog merited to sing of subjugation to Hashem because it showed it when the nation left Egypt and it was silent before Hashem's presence.] The usage of their excrement to remove the hairs from hides follows the same idea. Specifically, the most impure part of the dog, its excrement, is used to remove the hair, which is similarly a kabbalistic symbol of "Mosaros" and represents the impurity of the force of evil. Only the pure parchment remains and upon it, holy Torah can be written. Hence there is no intrinsic deficiency in the dog itself and it is fitting to sing.

He was told not to repeat the question because it was answered sufficiently in a limited fashion and to seek to understand more of this fundamental of faith is a dangerous region of contemplation and therefore forbidden.²

The Yaavetz suggests that it is possible that R' Yeshaya is a Gilgul of the Navi Yeshaya. This is because the name is not found elsewhere in all Talmudic literature and it was Yeshaya Hanavi who said the prophecy that the dogs do not know satiation. I would like to explain as follows. Yeshaya Hanavi had one sin in which he called himself and his nation impure of mouth and unfitting to witness the song of the angels' Kedushah. This sin was atoned when he was killed by being smitten on the mouth. So too R' Yeshaya declared the dogs unfit to sing with their insatiable mouths. For this reason, he fasted 85 fasts, which is the Gematria of "פה", mouth.³ This could also be the hidden intent of "חזור לאחוריק", that he should turn towards the previous Gilgul and see that it was a sin to say so and not repeat the matter. It is noteworthy that it was Yeshaya Hanavi himself who was adjured to bid Chavakuk to stand and question where was the justice for the wicked⁴, the precursor for R' Yeshaya's question. All of this is merely suggested.

¹ בשם רבו ההפלאה.

² See further in the Chasam Sofer for more allegorical commentary on the matter.

³ This Gematria is found in Shir HaChaim. Others explained the number of the fasts differently.

⁴ (ישעיה, כא, ו)

The Songs of Man and the Angels

שמע ישראל, ה' אלוהינו, ה' אחד. (דברים ו, ד)
Hear Yisrael, Hashem is our God, Hashem is one!

קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות מלוא כל הארץ כבודו. (ישעיה ו, ב)
Holy! Holy! Holy! Is Hashem Lord of Legions. The whole earth is filled with his glory.

The ¹מספרים תהילות ה', written by a Talmid of the Rama Mipano, writes that although the song of man is not included in any of the versions of Perek Shira, it is clear that he too has a song: "שמע ישראל וכו'". He derives it from the Talmud² which declares the Jewish nation to be dearer to Hashem than the angels for three reasons: 1) They sing Shira to Him always [i.e. whenever they desire]. 2) They recite Hashem's name in their Shira "שמע ישראל" after two words of the Shira while the angels have to wait until reciting three words in their Shira of "קדוש קדוש וכו'". 3) Because they may not sing Shira above until Yisrael sings it below. Upon this is based the commentary below.³

Much of what I am writing about these two songs is not fully backed by sources and proofs. It is mostly novel and constructed by one who is unversed with Kabbalistic thought. Nevertheless, I offer it as a logically sound explanation of these songs and the reader may research the matter himself. The same is true regarding some other parts of this compilation.

It needs to be understood why these two songs were not included in Perek Shira. The absence of the Malachim's song is understandable because Perek Shira refers only to the physical beings of the world.⁴ It can also be understood why the song of man was not included based on the opinions quoted in the introduction who write that Perek Shira is how the world displays Hashem's glory constantly and is perceived by man. Man does not necessarily always nullify himself to Hashem only will. Furthermore, he sings his song directly and it is not merely displayed in order to be perceived by others.⁵

Thus, even though I will now cite and explain the songs of man and the angels, I am purposefully bringing them separately, because even these songs are of fundamental importance to the Creator and to His creation, they are not part of "Perek Shira".

The Sifsei Renanos quotes the Midrash Raba⁶ saying that when Mordechai was riding on the royal horse and triumphant over Haman he began to praise Hashem. There it describes various people who joined the praise. The praise should have been concluded by Mordechai himself except that he was busy saying Shma. This the Sifsei Renanos brings as a proof that the Shma is the song of man and upon the triumph of the righteous man over the wicked, he chose to sing his Shira. This is also found by Yaakov Avinu who did not kiss Yosef when he met him after years of separation because it was the time for him to sing the song of man: the Shma.

Man plays the main role of all beings of Hashem's universe and his song speaks of the essence of all existence. It speaks of total subjugation to the Creator. All parts of man's service to Hashem can be summed up as an expression of His unity. Humbleness, awe of Heaven and the performance of Hashem's will with love implies His oneness. Trusting in Him, rejoicing will all He does and thanking Him implies there is none but Him. By learning His Torah, one knows His "mind" and becomes united with Him. The sole purpose of man is to nullify himself and the world to the will of the One and thereby reveal Hashem's glory in His world, the ultimate goodness.

¹ מאמר פתיחה, טו.

² חולין צא.

³ See Endnotes for a discussion regarding the relationship between the "Kadosh" and "Baruch" of the Malachim and "Shma Yisrael".

⁴ See Perek Bshir B.B. on Gan Eden and Gehinnom.

⁵ As noted, this depends on the opinions quoted in the introduction about how the songs are actually sung.

⁶ ויקרא כח, ו.

To do the will of Hashem is natural for man, as it is written that Hashem created man “straight”, except that man sought many calculations. The standard setup of man is to do the will of Hashem and that is his natural desire. If he does not do so, he feels his conscience tug uncomfortably. That which is undesired by the soul is naturally repulsive to an untainted spirit. Therefore, his constant existence is a song of the acknowledgment of the unity of Hashem. Even if man chooses to sin he is then punished appropriately and the justice that is meted out is no less a revelation of Hashem’s oneness. Man’s existence sings of the unity of Hashem Who is both kind and just.¹

The Pasuk “...קדוש קדוש קדוש” is translated by Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel to mean that Hashem is holy three-fold: “קדיש בשמי מרומא עלאה בית שכינתיה, קדיש על ארעא עובד גבורתיה, קדיש לעלם ולעלמי עלמא, ה' צבאות, מליא כל ארעא זיו יקריה.” [Holy in the heavens of the highest height, the place of His Presence, holy on earth where He performs His mightiness, holy forever and ever, Hashem, Lord of Legions, the earth is filled with the radiance of His honor]. On a simple level, this can be explained as follows: The concept of holiness is related to kingship because holy means sacred and separate. Therefore, wherever He is holy there is a full, unadulterated expression of His will, which is kingship in the fullest sense. I heard similarly from R’ Brazil Shlita. He then added another explanation of the holiness-kingship correlation: Hashem is holy *above* His kingship.²

It is noteworthy that the Malachim sing with their wings and for this reason, they have six wings, corresponding to the six days of the week. This requires understanding. According to the theme of this compilation, that the beings with their very existence are singing to their Creator, this can be understood. With their wings that they fly to do the will of their Creator constantly, their essence, they sing that Hashem’s holy kingship extends through all expanses and permeates all planes.

Living with Song

Man is the conductor of the symphony orchestra of the all of the myriad elements of the universe. The song is divine; the music fills the heavens and the earth. The tone is undying and the reward is beyond conception.

The whole world is at your disposal. For you alone the universe was created with all it contains. You stand, the conductor, before this titanic attentive orchestra. The effect of your every action, word, and thought reverberates through the worlds and expresses through them song. Even the innumerable angelic legions resound mightily through endless space with a thundering chorus of harmony to your song. You are the conductor, the universe your orchestra, and Hashem is the sole audience. What will you sing to the Living God?

Realize the significance of yourself and your deeds. But more importantly, realize the song of beauty that emerges from you and encompasses all the beings of the universe, no matter what your current situation and even when you are not trying your utmost to do so. The song of your very existence is constant and its beauty is flawless. Your entire life is a song to the Creator.

Sing with your existence. Live with song.

¹ Here I have explained that the song of Man is a natural expression of his existence. I have written so in order to keep the meaning of the song parallel to that of songs of Perek Shira. However, as noted at the beginning of this section, one can explain otherwise, that the song of man is not from his mere existence but rather only when he on his own right actively expresses the praise of his Creator. The primary expression of his song is “שמע ישראל”. I understand that both of these understandings – that the song is either passive or active – are true on two depths of meaning. A person sings with his existence, but his full expression of song is when he actually sings – and the angels and all of creation sing with him.

² Perhaps the Targum is translating the three words “קדוש קדוש קדוש” based on the continuation of the verse. “Master of Legions” is a reference to His holy kingship over the heavenly angelic legions [see *מדרש רבה בא* for basis], “The earth is filled...” is His holy kingship over the earth. The four-letter name of Hashem implies that He Was, Is and Will be, which refers to the third holiness, His eternal holy kingship.

THE VERSION OF THE SIACH YITZCHAK AND THE SHAAR SHIMON

A summary of the differences: The following ten songs of the standard version do not appear in the version of the Siach Yitzchak and the Shaar Shimon:

יום, לילה, טסית, צפרדע, דוב, תרנגולת, דשאין, מים, בהמה גסה/דקה טמאה, זרזיר (של הפסוק "רננו").

The following are mentioned in the Siach Yitzchak and Shaar Shimon as being part of Perek Shira only according to some: **ברקים, בהמה דקה גדולה, שבלול.**

These two are added: **איזון וסירסור.**

There are other differences in the text of the songs which I detailed and commented on below.

Possible reasons for the omissions of certain songs:

יום ולילה: Day and night are not really beings but rather time periods.

טסית: There is no animal that has the exact name “Tasis”, except possibly the peacock, according to one version.

צפרדע: Perhaps this was omitted because its song is already mentioned in the introduction of Perek Shira. Although the words “ברוך שם וכו'” are not mentioned there, it can still be understood in accordance with the version of a commentaries that the song of the צפרדע is “אם רעב שונאך וכו'”, the song mentioned in the introduction.

תרנגולת: It is a difficulty that the female sings differently to the male – unique in Perek Shira. For this reason the Yaavetz wished to interpret it to be the תרנגולת דאגמא – a different species of chicken. Its omission in the Siach Yitzchak version is therefore understood. Nevertheless, I offered an explanation in the main text. It should also be noted that the male rooster’s song is not about its essential existence as a chicken but rather only about its daily crowing.

דוב: Perhaps the Shaar Shimon did not agree that the Pesukim ascribed to the bear apply to it.

דשאין ומים: דשאין, meaning “foliage” or “grasses”, is recorded in the standard version of the Yaavetz as singing “יהי כבוד ה' לעולם וכו'”. This was actually originated by Yaavetz himself, who writes that he found this verse written Perek Shira out of place and he matched it with “דשאין” as an attempt to maintain the verse in Perek Shira as “יהי כבוד” was sung by the ministering angel of the world when the “דשאים” were created. However, it should be noted that many beings have sung songs in history which were not necessarily recorded in Perek Shira. The Yaavetz therefore intends this as a reasonable presumption, but it is not included with certainty. He himself concludes “והמעין המשכיל יבחר הטוב בעיניו והישר” [The intelligent researcher can choose which version is correct in his eyes]. Seeing as his basis for this insertion of “דשאים” is that this is the most likely match to the song “יהי כבוד”, it would follow that it is unnecessary for the Siach Yitzchak to write so, too, because his version reads that “יהי כבוד” is the song of the שרצים or the מעיינות.

In Midrash Raba¹, it states that Hashem created everything for the sake of His honor. On the third day He created דשאין ואלינות. The דשאין praise Hashem because it says “יתרועעו אף ישירו” and אלינות praise Him because it says

¹ שמות רבה, פרשה יז, א

"אז ירננו עצי היער". Later on, it says that מים was created on the third day, as well. Then He gathered it together from atop of the land and from there its praise rises, as it says, "מקולות מים אדירים". There is an implication here that the song of the דשאין is the same as that of שאר השבלים, namely: "יתרועעו אף ישירו". Indeed, the versions "שיר חנוכה" and "שער רחמים" record it to be the song of both. If so, it could be that דשאין was omitted from Perek Shira because it is included in the song of שאר השבלים. Even though the Siach Yitzchak and Shaar Shimon do not mention דשאין at all, its song is recorded under the title "שאר השבלים". It is likewise possible that many beings are not mentioned in Perek Shira because they are included in the songs of other beings that express the song more. However, there is no real evidence from this Midrash, which is merely citing a proof that the דשאין praise Hashem, and not saying what their song is.

There is another implication from this Midrash that מים does not have its own song, but rather it expresses song in the form of the sea, with the verse "מקולות מים אדירים". This omission of מים is also logical, as it is not really a being, but rather an element of physicality.

זרזיר: The Zarzir is not fully named as it is in Mishlei: "זרזיר מתנים". On the other hand, it would be fitting the Zarzir be mentioned in Perek Shira as the other three "small and wise" creatures mentioned there in Mishlei [the ant, the locust and the spider] do have songs in Perek Shira.

ברקים (omitted in some versions): This may be because these versions define it as an effect or event, but not as a being.

בהמה גדולה טהורה (omitted in some versions): According to one of the versions quoted by the Shaar Shimon, the בהמה גסה טמאה is similarly omitted. This is quite reasonable as all of large domestic animals, kosher or not, are already recorded in Perek Shira. It is for this reason that sheep, goats and swine are not listed individually. The version of the Yaavetz, which includes these songs, would seem to understand that the categories as a whole sing a chorus of general concept different to that of the individual songs.

The additions of איזון and סירסור: The verse of the איזון is the same as that of the similarly spelled אוז. The implication is that one was misspelled by a printer. The song of the Sirsur, "הטוב והמטיב לטובים" does not sound like a complete song and it would seem to be a fragment of a different unknown phrase of praise. It therefore is reasonable why that the standard version omits these.

The order of Perek Shira according to the Siach Yitzchak and Shaar Shimon: [The underlined songs differ from the standard text, as detailed below.]

פרק ראשון: שמים, ארץ, מדבר, ציה, תנינים, לויתן, דגים, ימים, נהרות, מעיינות, שרצים, אלים שבערצים.

פרק שני: שמש, ירח, כוכבים, עבים, רוח, ענני כבוד, ברקים, טל, גשמים, גן עדן, גיהנם.

פרק שלישי: נחש, עקרב, חולדה, עכבר, חתול, נמלה, תרנגול, יונה, עגור, אוז, אוז הבר.

פרק רביעי: צפור, איזון, רציפי, חסידה, זרזיר, ציפורת, צבי, חיות השדה, פרוגית, חסיל, סירסור.

פרק חמישי: עורב, נשר, סנונית, שממית, זבוב, רחמה, שדות, גפן, תאנה, רימון, תמר, תפוח, כל עצי השדה, שבולת חטים, שבולת

שעורים, שאר השבולים, ירקות שבעדה, שבלול.

פרק שישי: בהמה דקה טהורה, בהמה טמאה, בהמה גדולה טהורה, גמל, סוס, פרד, חמור, שור, פיל, אריה, זאב, שועל, כלבים.

ארץ - Earth: Quotes the second-mentioned verse in full: ואומר רזי לי רזי לי אוי. - From the end of the Earth songs we have heard, an establishment for the righteous. לי בוגדים בגדו ובגד בוגדים בגדו.

And it says “The secret is mine, the secret is mine. Woe is me for traitors betrayed and the betrayal of traitors they betrayed.”

See the classical commentaries for variations of the exact meaning of this prophecy but the general meaning is agreed upon, that the hidden time of redemption will eventually arrive but before then there will be much oppression in exile. This is all part of the earth’s song. Although throughout history Hashem’s plan and glory are unclear, at the end justice will have been fully meted out.

מדבר - Desert: Adds verse יִשְׂאוּ מְדָבָר וְעִרְיֵי חֲצָרִים תִּשְׁבֵּן קֶדָר יִרְוֶנּוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי סֹלַע מִרְאֵשׁ הָרִים יִצְוָחוּ. יִשִּׁימוּ לֵה' כְּבוֹד וְתִהְיֶילֶתוּ בְּאֵיִם יִגְדּוּ. (ישעיה מב, יא-יב) [The desert and its cities will raise (their voices and also) Kedar who dwell in fenced areas. The dwellers of stone will exult (i.e. the revival of the dead from their stone graves. –Targum), from the mountain-tops they will call. They will attribute honor to Hashem and His praise in the islands they will relate.]

This describes the revival of the desert not only with the metaphorical rose-like sprouting but also with a depiction of it being inhabited in the Messianic age and the joy that will be expressed through it.

צִיָּה - Wasteland: Additional preceding verse: גַּם צִיפּוֹר מִצֵּאָה בֵּיתָּהּ, וְדְרוֹר קֵן לָהּ, אֲשֶׁר שֶׁתָּה אֶפְרוּחֶיהָ אֶת מִזְבְּחֹתֶיךָ ה' צְבָאוֹת (תהלים פד, ד) [The bird too found a home and the Dror-bird a nest for herself, that she placed her chicks with your altars, Hashem Lord of Legions, my King, and my God!]

This verse fits with the opinion that the Tziya is a bird. It means that like all bird it finds for itself a nest in its habitat, even though it lives in the wasteland. It hints to that which a Jew, even if his residence is in a spiritual desert, he should find an additional house (i.e. shul) to dedicate to prayer. This is the reference to Hashem’s altars being no less than the bird’s nest. (Based on Mabit.)

נָהָרֹת - Rivers: Additional verse: נִשְׂאוּ נָהָרֹת ה' נִשְׂאוּ נָהָרֹת קוֹלָם יִשְׂאוּ נָהָרֹת דְּכִים. (שם, צג, ג)

“The rivers raised, Hashem, the rivers raised their voices, they will raise their waves.”

This verse is interpreted by the Targum to be a description of the rivers praising Hashem with the voice of their flowing. “נִשְׂאוּ נָהָרֹת דְּכִים” means that they will receive their reward for their praises. If this translation was joined together with the interpretation of many commentaries that this verse refers to the enemies of Yisrael that are like rivers rising against them it would imply they will be rewarded for meting out this divine punishment.

מַעְיִנוֹת - Springs: (תהלים קד, לא) יִהְיֶה כְּבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם, יִשְׂמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו. [Let the glory of Hashem be forever; may Hashem rejoice with His creations.] Following this, the verse of the standard text is also written: “according to some versions”. The constantly flowing spring, defying friction and gravity, gloriously bringing forth from the earth a fountain of life, sings of eternal glory and is an expression of joy.

שְׂרָצִים – Vermin: (תהלים קד, לא) יִהְיֶה כְּבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם, יִשְׂמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו. [Let the glory of Hashem be forever; may Hashem rejoice with His creations.] Explained in the standard version.

אֱלִים שְׁבִשְׂרָצִים – Large vermin: (תהילים קמט, ב) יִשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעוֹשֵׁיוּ בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן יִגִּילוּ בְּמֶלְכָם. [Yisrael shall rejoice in its Maker; the children of Zion shall delight in its King.] Following this, the verse of the standard version is also written: “According to some versions.” The אֱלִים שְׁבִשְׂרָצִים sing of the same concept mentioned in the standard version. The Jewish nation rejoiced upon their Maker as He formed them in the iron forge of Egypt.

שֶׁמֶשׁ - Sun: Additional verse: קוּמִי אוֹרִי כִּי בָא אוֹרְךָ וְכְבוֹד ה' עָלֶיךָ זָרַח (ישעיה ס, א) [Rise my light for your light has come and the glory of Hashem has shone upon you.] This verse is a message of hope and consolation for the exiled Jewish nation that they will rise again. The sun sings this message. It sets at night and leaves darkness and

gloom, offering no sign of ever returning, and then it rises again in full undiminished glory. This is a song of hope that we will once again emerge from the long night of exile.

והמשכילים יזהירו כזוהר הרקיע ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד. (דניאל יב, ג) - **Stars:** Additional preceding verse: [The enlightened will shine like the sheen of the sky and those that make the public righteous will be like stars forever.] The enlightened are those that occupied themselves with Torah and Mitzvos (Rashi) and purified themselves from the evil inclination and they therefore shine like the pure sky. (Malbim.) The **מצדיקי הרבים** refers to those that teach children Torah and those who reprimand the nation (רס"ג). The stars are relatively small in their light but they last forever. They sing of the reward of those that shine the light of Torah and that even though they are not always honored in this world, such as teachers of children and those that reprimand others, they will merit to shine endlessly.

לקול תתו המון מים בשמים, ויעלה נשיאים מקצה הארץ, ברקים למטר עשה, מוצא רוח מאוצרותיו. - **ענני כבוד** (ירמיה נא, טז) - **Clouds of Glory:** [To the sound of His placing of bountiful waters in the heavens the clouds are raised from the ends of the Earth. Lighting He made for rains, He takes out wind from His storehouses.] The Sifsei Renanos explains this song to be figurative. The clouds of glory descended upon Har Sinai for the giving of the Torah. The water is a classical reference to the Torah, the **"נשיאים"** are princes, descendants of Avraham who was so called (Hashem made Moshe's face look like Avraham's so the angels would recall how they ate at his tent and this humbleness led to their acquiescence to the giving of the Torah) and the lightning of the rain is a reference to the Torah of fire and water. Then Hashem brought out the **רוח** of the Torah from His storehouses.

ברקים - **Lightning:** This song only exists according to an alternative version.

טל - **Dew:** Adds an additional verse which is also the song of Gan Eden (**עורי צפון...**). This may be because dew hints to the Dew of Tchiyas Hameisim of the future when the revived body will enjoy Gan Eden. This point has to be researched further.

עכבר - **Mouse:** **כי דליתני ולא שמחת אויבי לי.** (תהילים ל, ב) [I will exalt you Hashem for you have raised me up and did not cause my enemies to rejoice over me.] The mouse is extremely swift, nimble and flexible. It can fit into the smallest crevices and thereby escape capture. It speaks of one who is in truth outmatched by a foe but who is nevertheless raised from the hands of danger by Hashem through the dexterousness and speed He granted to it. The damaging mouse is analogical for wickedness and it sings about one who has sinned manifold, and nevertheless when Hashem deems fit to save him for his punishers he will then declare Hashem to be superior to him, as He is greater than those that are greater than the wicked and furthermore desires in the wicked's repentance. [The verse of the standard text is printed after this in parentheses.]

חתול - **Cat:** Adds a preceding verse: **אם תגביה כנשר ואם בין כוכבים שים קנך משם אורידך נאום ה'.** [If you will rise up like an Neshet and if amongst the stars you shall place your nest, from there I will bring you down, the word of Hashem.] and then, **"וכשמגיע אומר"** [and when it reaches it says] and then records the verse of the standard version. It also offers another version that reverses these two verses. It sings of the downfall of the enemies of Yisrael. In the first verse, the prophecy of Ovadya about the downfall of the escalating Edom, it declares that even if it raises itself up like the highest flying king of birds to be the ruler of the globe, Hashem remains Above and will bring him down at will.

It is necessary to understand how the songs of the mouse and the cat correlate. The mouse seems to be raised by Hashem and then in the cat's song, it seems that its rising was contrary to Hashem's will. This can be explained based on that which the mouse represents Edom and the cat Yisrael [see commentaries]. When Yisrael does not do the will of Hashem then the mouse, Edom, indeed rises according to Hashem will and we are lowered ה"ו. However, when we do the will of Hashem the rule of Edom now assumes the form of cruel oppression and no matter how high they are they will invariably fall.

נמלה - The ant: (תהילים קלה, כו) [He gives sustenance to all flesh for His kindness is forever.] [The Sofei Teivos of נמל is נמל, the root of נמלה. See commentary of Siach Yitzchak about Agur who brings that one should have in mind with every Shira where the name of the singer is hinted to in the song.] The ant will not steal the load of food dropped by another. This expresses the precept of trust in Hashem that He gives sustenance to all flesh in His kindness and that theft and trickery are not only forbidden but also foolish. Honesty is one of the basic tenets of our faith.

אוז - Goose: Sings only: שירו לו זמרו לו שיחו בכל נפלאותיו. It is essentially the same as the standard text.

אוז הבר - Wild goose: Alternative verse: [Trust in Hashem forever and ever, for with name “Kah” Hashem is the strength of the worlds. The Radak says that עד עדי refers to both worlds. Kah is the name of Hashem that implies that He gives life to the worlds.] Fattened wild geese are prepared for the feast of the righteous in the future. They therefore sing of trust in Hashem and His promise of reward in the World to Come. The Gemara (מנחות כט:) interprets the phrase כי בי-ה' צור עולמים to mean that with “י” and “ה” He fashioned This World and The World to Come respectively. Regarding these, it sings to trust in Hashem. (Siach Yitzchak)

אזון - Izun [unidentified]: According to an alternative version it says the song of the goose mentioned above.

רציפי - Rtzifi: This song only exists according to an alternative version.

צבי - Deer: Addition of preceding sentence (unknown source): אור לטובים אודה למטיב על יושר [A light to the good; I shall thank He who does good with uprightness]. The additional song would seem to carry the same message as the standard version. When the light returns and there is light for the good ones, i.e. the harmless deer, then I will thank the Benevolent one for His uprightness.

פרוגית - Progis: (תהלים קלה, ד) [They will thank you- all the kings of the land, for they heard the expressions of your mouth.] This is alternative version of the verse of the standard version. There are a number of opinions about the identity of Progis, including “duck”, “chicks”, “a small bird”, “צפור”, “דרור”, and according to the tradition of the שער שמעון: a species of quail. The Sifsei Renanos, out of his own reasoning, translates that it is the “quail”. One explanation of their song “יודוך” [based on the Sifsei Renanos] is that the Progis was a small delectable bird that was served as a dessert at the banquets of the wealthy. They experience the abundance of delicacies Hashem granted His world in His kindness, though some are enjoyed but by few. According to the translation “quail”, their song in particular resonated when the Jews were in the wilderness and were provided every evening with fat quail. They were treated like kings because they abided to the words of the mouth of Hashem.¹ More similar to the Sifsei Renanos: the kings of the world acknowledged Hashem when they heard the extent of His word, that the Jewish nation receive fattened quail in the wilderness.

¹ The Zimras Hashamayim V’Haaretz has a slight twist. He explains that the “kings of the land” are those that control themselves with dignity and discipline. They are worthy of the delicacies that the Holy One provided.

סירסור - Sirsur (according to an alternative version only) [unidentified]: הטוב והמטיב למטיב [Who is good and does good to the good-doer.] It can be noted that a Sarsur is a middleman who receives good and does good.

עורב - Raven: Adds two more Pesukim: נותן לבהמה לחמה, לבני עורב אשר יקראו. (תהילים, קמז, ט) קול קורא במדבר פנו [He gives to animals their sustenance; to the chicks of ravens that call out. A voice calls in the wilderness, "Clear a path for God! Straighten through the planes a pathway to our God.] According to this version, in the second verse, the raven answers the question posed in the first verse: who will feed the offspring of the raven? It sings that Hashem gives animals their sustenance because they are His creatures in need, so too He gives to the raven chicks even though they signify cruelty. The third verse is interpreted by the זמרת השמים והארץ to mean that the raven gives hope and promise that in the same way that Hashem has mercy upon this impure bird which is icon of cruelty, so too He will certainly have mercy upon Yisrael and ultimately redeem them, as the Navi proclaims in the third verse: "...קול קורא במדבר" [It can be further suggested that the generations that actively caused the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash did so by being as black as a raven with sin.]

Their descendants, even though they share somewhat the blame as they have not yet refined their behavior entirely to merit redemption, but they do not necessarily perform wickedness to the extent that deserves destruction and exile. It took a lot of sin to cause the destruction but it does not necessarily take so much to continue it. We are therefore like the children of ravens and Hashem has mercy upon us in this aspect, and He sustains us and will eventually redeem us keeping also this in mind.

כל עצי השדה – All of the trees of the field: The song is essentially the same except that the Pasuk of Tehilim is quoted instead of the one in Divrei Hayamim. There are two important differences: Firstly, the verse of Tehillim specifies "**כל עצי היער**" which implies the inclusion of non-fruit-bearing trees. Secondly, in the standard version, the song of the trees, in general, comes before the specific ones and seems to imply that it includes all trees. However, in this version, the song of "all of the trees" appears only after the specified trees and this implies more that it is coming to include fruitless trees. The Mabit writes that this is the song only of the non-fruit-bearing trees.¹

Originally all trees were designed to produce fruits of some sort. These fruit-factories are expressions of blatant divine kindness because fruits are beautiful, delectable and unnecessary for the survival of man. When Adam sinned and brought a curse to the world, many trees became barren. Their primary function was removed and their new main purpose was to be their wood for construction and for fire-wood. The kindness of fruit was limited until man would again deserve it in its fullness and they will bear fruit once again [ספרא בחוקות י', ו]. The equating of all trees is referred to as Hashem's justice. Even now, one who listens to the rustle of the trees can hear a prelude of their song that is yet to be. (Based also on Yitzchak Y'ranen and others.)

According to this commentary, the section "Living with Song" of the trees would be as follows:

"Praiseworthy is he who eats the fruits of his labors." – but not everybody does. "It is not for you to complete the labor, nor are you a free man to relieve yourself of your task." (Pirkei Avos). We can only try but only God can grant success. Man asks himself, "Are failed efforts in vain?"

¹ Refer to the appendix in the study of this song, regarding that which the Mabit had a different version reading "שאר עצי השדה". However, this same commentary can also be applied to the version of the Siach Yitzchak and Shaar Shimon, although this is not certain.

APPENDIX: STUDIES

DISCUSSION WHO ARE THE SINGERS OF PEREK SHIRA

In the preface, I wrote how my selected commentary follows the opinions that the beings' existence implies a song to its Creator. It should be noted that there are sources from which it seems that the sound the creature makes is its song, such as by the commentary we brought by the song of the frog. However, this would seem to be an impossibility by some of the inanimate singers such as the desert. Rather it would seem that their very existence implies their songs.

It can be noted that in some versions of Perek Shira the songs begin "...מה הוא אומר?" This version seems to suggest as posited, that we look at the being and ask, "What is it saying?" We contemplate and draw from it an aspect of Hashem's praise.

A further proof for our understanding may be drawn from the citation in the Tana's introduction to Perek Shira "גמור בכל לבבך...ואלמדך שכל ובינה מכל דבר. והוי יודע... עשיתי". This piece seems out of place and can only mean one thing: one who is attached to Hashem and His Torah will be taught wisdom from every matter from which he will then learn of the glory of Hashem because of which He created His universe. However, it should be noted that in a minority of versions this piece is omitted from the text.

These two proofs might be defended by the opposing opinions by explaining that indeed the creature actually vocalizes its song, or its angel does, but the song itself is what glory that being brings the Creator.

There is a proof the Pi Eliyahu brings from the Gemara in Chulin (סד:) that asserts that "תכבדני...בת יענה" [The Bas Yaana will honor me.] cannot be referring to the egg of an ostrich because "ביצה בת מימר שירה היא?" ["Is an ostrich egg capable of singing?"]. From this, he proves that it is not merely the angelic counterpart of the being singing, which would be equally possible by the egg, but rather the actual being sings. However, perhaps there is room to counter this proof. One can explain as our interpretation, and one can even add that the angelic counterpart vocalizes the song apparent from the being's existence, however, there is no significant Godly glory that human intelligence can discern from an egg, especially in contrast to the praise of a mature bird. On the contrary, the Posuk did not mention song at all but rather "תכבדני" - honor. From that which the Gemora equates honoring with singing, it implies that its glorious existence is the song.

Subsequently I saw that the Yaavetz dealt with this proof and wrote that the song of the Bas Yaana is contextually incomparable to that of Perek Shira as the passage of the Bas Yaana is asking rhetorically if the bird could actually thank and honor Hashem for that which He gives it sustenance whereas Perek Shira is the essential songs of the beings. The matter remains disputed. What my insignificant opinion would like to suggest is that all fifteen opinions quoted in Perek Shira Hashalem are true. [The Shaar Shimon writes partially like this.] They sing with their existence. Their angels vocalize their songs. Many have mouths and they themselves express their songs. Even those that do not orally vocalize may be understood to express their songs particularly with other sounds or with motions. Man completes the songs by reciting them, understanding them and living them.

INTERPERETATION OF THE VERSES OF THE SONG OF THE FLY

Text of the song of the fly: (refer to the main section above for a full interpretation of the song.)

זבוב אומר, בְּשָׁעָה שְׁאִין יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה: "קוֹל אֹמֵר קְרָא וְאָמַר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל הַבֶּשֶׂר חֲצִיר וְכָל חֲסִדוֹ
כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה." (ישעיה מ, ו) "יָבֵשׁ חֲצִיר נָבֵל צִיץ וְדָבָר אֱלֹקֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם." (שם, ח) בּוֹרָא נִיב שְׁפָתַיִם שְׁלוֹם
לְרַחוּק וּלְקְרוֹב אָמַר ה' וַיִּרְפָּאֵתוֹ. (שם נז, יט)

The fly says, at a time when Yisrael are not involved in Torah study: A voice says "Call!" and it [my spirit] said, "What shall I call?" [The voice responded, call:] "All of flesh is like shrubbery (approximate translation of Chatzir) and all of its kindness like the sprouts of the field." The shrubbery will have dried up and the sprout will have withered, but the word of our God will stand forever. "I will create speech of lips, "Peace unto the far and the near", says Hashem, "and I have healed him."

According to Rashi and others, when the prophet Yeshaya is asked by Hashem to call out announce to the nation its redemption from the Babylonian exile, Hashem prefaces with the above introduction: humans are mortal and their accomplishments and kindnesses are like fragile sprouts that wither away and are unreliable, but the word of the immortal Hashem is wholly trustworthy and it foretells of national salvation.

Later on, the latter-mentioned prophecy above declares that Hashem will create new speech said to those that return to Him. Instead of previous taunts by tormentors, from now on others will wish the Jewish nation only peace and wellbeing. The meaning of peace to the near and to the far means that there will be wishes of peace equally to those that are veteran observers of Torah from their youth and to those who are new to Torah and Mitzvos. Peace is the blessing of those that study and fulfill the Torah. This the prophet contrasts with the lot of the wicked, who know no peace.¹

In this interpretation, there are primarily verses depicting the frail man's frail word and contrasting it with the eternal word of the Eternal. This is the song of the fly: only the Torah is of true value. The Yetzer Hara who flies excitedly from filth to filth yields nothing and leaves a gaping hole of ignorance in which sins foster and fester. All earthly accomplishments of the flesh are petty and even for what they are worth they wither away. Conversely, the Torah - the word of Hashem Himself - will endure forever.

However, perhaps there is a further depth to the song. In the above interpretation, the frailness of man's word is due solely to his own intrinsic frailty. However, the Targum, as well as the Malbim, attribute the deficiency of man specifically to be as a result of wickedness, which seems to denote a different intent to that of Rashi.

Furthermore, compare that which this song of Perek Shira speaks of the inability to "call" about the redemption as long as the Torah is not properly learnt, to that which in the Song of the Wild Goose when the Torah is being learnt the voice calls out for the redemption. The connection is implicated even stronger by that which the song of the wild goose is the prophecy that directly precedes the one of the song of the fly. Therefore, I wish to suggest a deeper intent of the verses as they may have been understood by the compiler of Perek Shira.

Just like the "voice the calls in the wilderness" of the wild geese song refers to the voice reciting words of the Torah, so too the in the song of the fly the voice says to "קרא!" – to recite.² Then the prophet says, "A voice says to call, and I say, "What shall I call?" I.e., how can I call for the redemption when the voice of Torah is not sounded? The accomplishments of man, when the Torah is absent, are like withering shrubbery. Only the word of Hashem lasts forever, and only when it is studied will the redemption be announced. According to this

¹ Based on Rashi.

² The word "קול" remains the same in its meaning, as does the simple intent of "קרא". I am adding a deeper inference to "קרא".

interpretation, the verses from "כל הבשר" until "ודבר אלוֹקֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם" are all part of the prophet's objection to announce the redemption as long as the Torah is not being studied. The Malbim understood partially along these lines.

THE IDENTITY OF THE TZIYA

In the main text, I followed the understanding the majority of commentaries that "צִיָּה" is the wasteland or a bird that lives there. However, the Knaif Renanim ventures to interpret it to be the "Storm-bird". The basis for this is that "צִיָּה" can mean a ship, and the storm-bird can aptly be labeled so. This bird flies constantly over the face of the sea. When it shows itself to sailors, it foretells them of an impending storm.¹ This allows them time to prepare themselves to keep the ship afloat throughout the storm, as well as to pray for their survival.

The sages call the sailors "most of them are righteous", because the constant perils of the seas makes them lock their hearts in faith with their Father in heaven. The bird therefore sings "A light will be sown for the righteous, and for the straight of heart: happiness." Its appearance is a "light" to the righteous sailors which they "sow" with their efforts of prayer and expertise to survive the storm. It brings "happiness" to the "straight of heart" because their hearts become straightened by the fears of sea travel.

The term "straight of heart" refers to a higher caliber of people than the "righteous". A righteous person does what is right, even if inside he struggles to do so. For him there is "light" – hope and inspiration – but not yet happiness. The straight of heart, however, can merit to feeling happiness and serenity even in times of travail.²

The song can be lived by one reacting fittingly when forewarned of a possible danger. Instead of being upset about the danger itself, one should be grateful that Hashem did the kindness of warning him before the occurrence so that he can prepare himself to avoid disaster, with both physical and spiritual preparations.

THE IDENTITY OF THE TREES OF THE FIELD

There are two almost identical Pesukim about עֲצֵי הַיַּעַר. The standard version quotes the Pasuk from Divrei Hayamim which terms them "עֲצֵי הַיַּעַר" whereas the text of Siach Yitzchak and Shaar Shimon cites the Pasuk in Tehillim which calls them "כָּל עֲצֵי הַיַּעַר". This is significant because the Sifsei Renanos cites here the Midrash (ויקרא רבה ל, ד) that עֲצֵי הַיַּעַר are the fruit-bearing trees and כָּל עֲצֵי הַיַּעַר comes to include also the non-bearing trees. If not for the word "כָּל" there seems to be no reason to understand the song to refer to the non-fruit bearing trees specifically. The Mabif does have the verse of Divrei Hayamim and writes that it is referring to the non-bearing ones but that is only because his version of Perek Shira read "שָׂאֵר אֵילָנוֹת שְׂבִשְׂדָּה" [other trees of the field] (*Sifsei Renanos*).

However, one may explain that seeing as the two passages are parallel, one reveals the other, and the passage of Divrei Hayamim also refers to all trees including the non-bearing ones. It is also possible to say that it is the song specifically of non-bearing trees which bearing no specific fruit to sing about sing this song which applies more to them. In our standard text it is difficult to explain it so as "שָׂאֵר אֵילָנוֹת שְׂבִשְׂדָּה" does not imply non-fruit-bearing trees. See further in the commentary on this song in the Appendix.

¹ The Knaif Renanim quotes this description from the Lashon Limudim. He writes that this bird is well known.

² The difference between צַדִּיק and יָשָׁר in regards to this song was drawn from "The Song of the Universe" by Rabbi Nosson Sherman with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

THE IDENTITY OF THE TAPUACH

The Tapuach is popularly translated as “apple”. The Radak in his Sefer Hasharashim writes that its translation is well-known, and comments no further. Apparently, it was obvious to him that it is the apple.

However, the matter is not so straightforward. The Talmud (שבת פז.) writes about the verse "כתפוח בעצי היער וכי", that the Jewish nation are compared to the Tapuach, because just like the Tapuach produces its fruit before its leaves, so too, the Jewish nation preceded “We will do” to “We will hear”. Rabbeinu Tam (Tosafos ad loc.) questions that according to this, the Tapuach cannot be referring to the apple-tree, which grows in the same manner as other trees. Rather, he explains that it is the Esrog¹, which stays on the tree from year to year. When its second year begins, it is there before the leaves sprout.² He supports this view by quoting the Targum of the verse "וריה אפיק כתפוחים" which translates Tapuach to be the Esrog.³

The truth is that the Pasuk itself seems to imply that it is not the apple-tree. The Midrash explains that nations is saying here that in the intense summer heat, the nations fled from the thinly shade of the Tapuach, and instead sought shelter under other thickly shady trees. The apple-tree would appear to have an average amount of shade. However, if the Tapuach is the Esrog, the description is appropriate. Elsewhere the Midrash describes the Tapuach as being an "עץ שפל" [a lowly tree]. This fits well with the Esrog and not as well with the apple-tree.



This picture is of a crab-apple tree. These wild apples are very sour. Note that the trees pictured on the left do not have significant shade. Their apples are very round. On the other hand, other pictures of other crab-apple trees that I have seen look like regular apple trees. This matter requires further research.

The Pasuk of Shir Hashirim seems in a way to imply the crab-apple tree. Crab-apples are mentioned in חזר as כלאים, which appears to be a contraction of חזר יער, "חזר" being the Aramaic for תפוח. The Pasuk says "כתפוח בעצי היער". Admittedly, this is not a proof, as regular apples grow in the forest as well.

Perhaps regular apples were similar to this, but changed over time through grafting.

The Esrog of today seems more readily to fit the description of being a lowly tree with little shade.

However, there is an immediate difficulty with the translation of “Esrog”. The Pasuk explicitly states that "ופריו מתוק לחכי", and it would seem incorrect to describe the Esrog as “sweet”.

This can be readily understood based on the Pasuk itself. It states that we chose Hashem’s shade even though it seemed uncomfortable for the other nations who did not want to restrict not to murder and steal etc. So too,

¹ Gan Eden is described as "שדה תפוחים". If one says that the Tapuach is the Esrog, and couple this with opinion of the Zohar that the עץ הדעת טוב ורע was the Esrog, it may be that it named so after this important tree.

² Here the Talmud writes "פריו קודם לעליו". The Maharzu questions that in the Midrash it specifies "ניצו קודם לעליו". נץ is the first stage of the fruit. This does not imply like Rabbeinu Tam, who understands it to refer to the second year of the Esrog’s growth. The Midrash itself does not contradict the Talmud, which is referring to the fruit in general and not its specific stage of growth.

³ I do not know why Rabbeinu Tam did not quote the Targum of the verse he is discussing "כתפוח בעצי היער", which also translates it as Esrog. Perhaps the reason is because his proof is two-fold. The verse "וריה אפיק" implies that it is not the apple, which is not famous for its scent, but rather, the Esrog. The verse "כתפוח בעצי היער", on the other hand, implies in its simple meaning that it is not referring to the Esrog, which does not have a sweet taste. Cf. Maharzu who writes similarly. Cf. Tzlach who answers the question on Tosafos differently.

the fruit was sweet "לחכי", to our palate, but not to the non-Jews who expected instant gratification in this world. This would seem to be explicit in the Midrash (אות יא) where it infers from "ופריו מתוק לחכי" that his fruit was sweet to my palate, but to the other nations it was as bitter as לענה [a type of particularly bitter herb. See Sefer HaAruch.]. The fruit itself, the Esrog, is not so sweet, but because we love it, it is sweet to the palate.¹ [If the Tapuach is the crab-apple – which I don't think is so – this Midrash may be interpreted to mean that it is a sweet-sour fruit that can be enjoyed by some yet bitter to others.]

Those that translate Tapuach to be "apple" would explain that even though Hashem's Torah was truly sweet, it is only so for those who wish to live sanctified lives, but for the non-Jews, the laws are bitterly restrictive.

The popular opinion that it is an apple-tree is not baseless. The Zohar² notes four ways in which the Tapuach bears features of Hashem: It can heal ailments, it can grow in three colors like the three colors the represent Hashem's three main attributes [לבן, אדום, וירוק], it has a faint scent, and it has a sweet taste. This description seems to point to the sweet-tasting apple.

The three colors would apparently refer to light yellow, which is whitish, red and green, which are לבן, אדום, וירוק. The Esrog, on the other hand, is yellow or green. However, I once heard R' Berkowitz Shlita comment that if the Esrog would be left on the tree during the winter, it would turn orange. This means that one can find on an Esrog tree a unique display of three colors: bright yellow, green, and orange.

The Zohar writes that it has a faint scent – ריח דקיק מכל שאר אילנות. Compare this to the Yalkut which writes about the Tapuach that "ריחו טוב מכל האילנות", implying that its scent is not fainter, but rather better. It would seem that the Zohar translates it to be the faint-smelling apple, whereas the Yalkut may hold like the Targum that it is the stronger smelling Esrog.

The proof that Rabbeinu Tam brought from Gemara Shabbos that it must be an Esrog if it is so that its fruit precedes its leaves would seem to be strong. However, it has already been noted that in the Midrash the wording is that the Tapuach "fruit-bud" precedes its flowers. The Midrash would not to be like Rabbeinu Tam's interpretation which understands the Pasuk to be describing a year-old Esrog. The Ben Yehoyada explains that this description can indeed fit the apple, for although the leaves begin to sprout first, the fruit begins to grow before the leaves have completed their growth. It would seem, therefore, that the only definite source in Chazal that it is the Esrog is the Targum. Moreover, it should be noted that the Targum to Kesuvim is a Midrashic work of unknown origin. It is possible that Tapuach ordinarily means "apple", but the Targum is expounding a deeper meaning.

In (יא, ב) מסכת תרומה, the Mishna refers to "יין תפוחים" and implies that this was a common product of fruit. It would seem likely to be the well-known cider, which is an alcoholic drink produced from apples. One would have to research to confirm that Esrog wine was not a common beverage in the times of the Mishna. I have not heard so.

The Targum of the כפתורים of the Menora is חזור. The Gemara defines this more clearly as תפוחי ברתיים³. This the Aruch notes refers to fruit that is more wide than tall. If the Tapuach is an Esrog, it is difficult that it is chosen to describe a shape. Esrogim have varying shapes. Even if it referring to specific Esrog species, the Targum on the Pasuk should have specified so.

¹ One may venture to say that the Esrog, which is a spiritually significant fruit, used to be sweeter, but it lost it at the time of the spiritual devastation which occurred when the Bais Hamikdash was destroy. However, this would seem to be incorrect, since we find that the seven species of the land have maintained their unique sweetness to a significant degree.

² אחרי מות עד. ובפירוש הסולם שם. הובא בשפתי רננות.

³ There are a few versions of this word.

In Shir Hashirim, there is a Pasuk "תחת התפוח עוררתיו". The Midrash explains it to be a reference to Har Sinai, shaped like a Tapuach. Perhaps it does not mean that Har Sinai itself was shaped like a Tapuach. It would seem more fitting to describe this shape to be like the flat/round-bottomed apple, than after the Esrog, which does not seem even seem to have a set shape to it.

The Shiras Yitzchak speculates that it would seem that the author of Perek Shira, who writes simply "Tapuach" is referring to the popular translation. This is not so simple, as tradition has it that it was authored by Dovid Hamelech and Shlomo Hamelech, who may have identified the word to singularly mean "Esrog". Furthermore, it would seem logical that the author of Perek Shira named each singer after the word used to describe it in the song.

However, it should be pointed out never do we find that Chazal refer to the Esrog as a Tapuach. This is remarkable, as the Esrog is mentioned countless times by Chazal. Furthermore, when Tapuach is mentioned in the Neviim, the Targum [Yonasan] translates it to be the "חזור", with no mention of the Esrog. It is noteworthy, however, that the words "חזור" and "הדר" have the same meaning and also have the same letter-type structure, implying that it is the "פרי עץ הדר" – the Esrog. Nevertheless, that which the popular tradition already from the time of the Rishonim seems to identify it as an apple is somewhat a proof. Moreover, it is a firm tradition backed by the custom of placing a chopped apple in the Charoses in remembrance of the Tapuach.

In conclusion, there are sources in Chazal that the Tapuach can be translated to mean either "apple-tree" or "Esrog-tree".¹ However, the majority of sources mentioned here seem to point more towards "apple-tree".

THE IDENTITY OF THE NESHER

The following points are drawn from the Sichas Chulin. The Nesher is popularly identified as the eagle, and there are sources for this in early commentaries. There is one significant difficulty with this translation. The Gemara writes that the Nesher has all of the four signs non-kosher birds. One of these signs is the absence of an extra toe that kosher birds possess. The eagle's toes resemble those of the kosher birds. The Sichas Chulin therefore ventures to say that it is a species of vulture which can be understood to fit the classification. Here, too, the identification is not so straightforward, and he concludes that one has to take into account that the tradition of identifying the non-kosher birds became unclear over the centuries. He adds that their nature may also have changed somewhat. Although evolution is a fabricated theory, illogical and lacking any evidence, minor variations within a species is quite logical. That is to say, changes of climate and diet can cause slight alteration of the length of a bird's toes.

It makes more sense that the king of birds is the majestic eagle. Not for naught does this bird appeared on the emblems of many kingdoms, such as Germany, America and Mexico. The vulture, on the other hand, is considered to be a lowly and vile creature. It does not even kill living beings, but rather eats carcasses. However, in further consideration, this can be understood. The way of a king is not to hunt for himself, but rather other hunt for him and he eats from their efforts.

I spoke with the author of Sichas Chulin on the phone and he explained to me at length why he thought his translation to be more accurate. There is a species of vulture which is known to take its young upon its back. This is not certain by the eagle. The vulture's wingspan can reach three meters, much greater than that of the eagle. He described the majesty of a vulture taking off. He said that that which the eagle is the symbol of mighty nations can be understood because it represents their military might. However, the vulture represents kingship amongst birds, which is more than might.²

¹ Perhaps the word "Tapuach", which means "swollen", refers to any swollen fruit, including that apple and citrus fruits.

² On a related note, he commented that the lion, too, is the symbol of kingship only because he is also merciful to his family, even though the tiger may be physically mightier than it. This is from the Sefer Habris.

THE IDENTITY OF THE AGUR

1) A type of swallow: In the pasuk of Yirmiya (ז, ח) the Targum¹ translates it as “Senunisa” (Senunis – swallow, as per the translation of Radak into Italian “Rondine” and who sources it in R’ Hai Gaon’s translation into Arabic.) Rashi in Yeshaya (יד, לה) also translates it so [and who also quotes the Targum of the Sis-bird "כרוכיא" and translates it as גרוא"ה which is “crane” in French, unlike the second translation of Agur below]. However, this opinion is difficult because the Senunis has a different song in Perek Shira. The Sifsei Renanos and the Yaavetz therefore suggest that one of them is the pure Senunis and one the impure.

The Shiras Yitzchak brings this opinion and writes that the Senunis is the Kosher one fit for a Metzora and the Agur is the non-Kosher one. [In my minor opinion the opposite would seem to be true because in many versions the Agur is listed amongst the Kosher birds and the Senunis amongst the non-Kosher ones. I do not know why it is necessary to divide the Senunis into two large groups, pure and impure. There are many species of swallow and perhaps the Agur is one of them that makes a wide variety of tones.] The Sifsei Renanos posits that the word Agur is related to the term (ה, תהילים סא) "אגורה באהלך ימים" which means to dwell in a tent and writes that this bird seems therefore to be referring to the swallow that dwells in the walls of people’s houses in the summer.

This can bear further meaning that they therefore sing that we the people should praise Hashem, as they go into our very houses. It should be noted that in most versions of Perek Shira the Agur is listed in the midst of the Kosher domestic birds. Other birds are mentioned only later. Its early mention also suggests that it is a common bird. This does not seem to refer to the crane or the parrot, but rather to a species of swallow. It would seem that this particular swallow is migratory and is capable of many pitches of sweet sounds.

2) The crane: The Agur is referred to in Yirmiya (ז, ח) as part of a list of migratory birds. This fits the modern Hebrew translation of Agur, the crane, which is a migratory bird. In Yeshaya (יד, לה) it is also possibly referred to: "כסוס עגור כן אצפצף אהגה כיונה דלו עיני למרום ה' עשקה לי ערבני". The verse is referring to one making weak meaningless sounds like a very ill person. There are two major translations. One is that like a Sus-bird and an Agur it will chirp [and will coo like a dove]. The other, of the Targum, is that like a horse it will neigh. According to the second translation the word “Agur” does not mean a bird but rather it refers to a neigh or some other shrill sound. It is therefore likely that the bird Agur is called so because of the shrill sounds that it makes.²

Someone sent me the following quotation from Wikipedia: Cranes are highly vocal and have a large vocabulary of specialized calls. The vocabulary begins soon after hatching with low, purring contact calls for maintaining contact with their parents, as well as food begging calls. Other calls used as chicks include alarm calls and "flight intention" calls, both of which are maintained into adulthood. The cranes' duet calls are most impressive. They can be used for individual recognition.

It definitely seems to be a bird capable of many sounds but not necessarily is it as melodious as the harp and lyre. However, it should be noted that there are many other verses that refer to the harp and lyre. What is unique about this one is that it refers to a ten-stringed instrument and also specifies thanking and praiseful music. The crane is unique in its many types of sounds and teaches that one should laud Hashem with all aspects of praise.

¹ In a cursory reading. However, see further what is brought from R’ Yosef Kara.

² Perhaps one of the reasons it sings about praising with the harp because its body and long curving neck form a harp-like shape.

I found a source for this translation in the commentary of R' Yosef Kara to the above Pesukim, where he translates the Sis to be the swallow and the Agur to be the crane. It would seem based on this that the Targum was not particular about the order it translated these two birds. In this case Rashi could agree with this translation but the Radak explicitly argues, translating the Agur as the swallow or the parrot. One can support the view that the Agur is the crane because “crane” in French is “grue” which is the same word structure as Agur. Furthermore, the Senunis has already been mentioned in Perek Shira.

4) The parrot: There is an alternative translation of the Radak, the Yaavetz and others that the Agur is the parrot. According to this, perhaps the name is related to the word אגור, meaning “to store within” because it memorizes sentences. The Birkas Shir suggests along these lines. The Shiras Yitzchak wrote that it is called Agur because it dwells in the home. However, I find this commentary a little difficult as the parrot is not famous for melodious harp-like singing. However, it is indeed capable of a wide variety of sound, as much as a human being.

THE IDENTITY OF THE TZIPPOR

The Radak writes that although Chazal translate “Tzipor” to refer to birds in general¹, it appears to him that on the simple plane of understanding it refers specifically to the common “פשרא” which is the sparrow in Italian. It is noteworthy that the word “Tzipor” itself is phonetically similar to “sparrow”. The Ramban writes similarly that refers to a bird that sings in the morning and that the word צפור stems from the word צפרא, which is morning in Aramaic.² The Radak cites the Pasuk "גם צפור" as a proof that it does not refer to all birds but rather to one species in particular because the Pasuk goes on to mention also the Dror-bird. If “Tzipor” meant all birds then the Dror is already included. The Radak in his ספר השרשים writes that Tzipor refers generally to all birds except for the Pasuk "גם צפור". He also writes there that the Dror bird is the swallow.

This view that the Tzipor is a specific bird is implicit from the Yalkut Shimoni quoted by the Birkas Shir in our compilation above. It would also appear from Perek Shira itself that is referring to a specific bird because it is not mentioned first or last in the order of birds as it should have been if it refers to all birds in general. However, it should be remembered that the versions of Perek Shira were somewhat distorted over the millennia and although we have to particularly authentic ones it is difficult to say with confidence that all details are accurate. Furthermore, according to the opinion that Tzipor refers to only Kosher birds, it is indeed fittingly in place after the Kosher birds of Perek Shira in some versions. This would admittedly only be true if we identify the Agur to be the Kosher swallow.

It would appear difficult, though, that the song is attributed only to the Tzipor and not to the Dror. Perhaps it would be incongruent with the rest of Perek Shira to mention both. A better answer is that the Radak writes in his Sefer of Shoroshim [word-roots] that birds are called Tzipporim because many of them that are sparrows.³ Perek Shira therefore mentions the majority species, the sparrow. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to me that Perek Shira declares this to be only the song of the sparrow and not of the Dror too. We would have to explain that although Tzipor is a specific bird, Dror is a reference to birds in general which are called “free” and in this case the whole Pasuk is talking about the sparrow. Alternatively, perhaps Dror refers to the same class of birds as Tzipor. However, the matter is not straightforward, nor does it fit with the Radak’s own translation of Dror in his ספר השרשים: “swallow”.

Perhaps there is room to suggest that here too that both “Tzipor” and “Dror” are terms that refer to all birds collectively. This supposition can be supported by the Targum here, which translated Tzipor to be the dove and Dror to be the turtledove. This is obviously a contextual translation as they are not translated so elsewhere. Here the context is based on the rest of the Pasuk where it poetically describes these bird laying their chicks upon the Altars. This the Targum understands to refer to the bird-offerings of the dove and turtledove species. With the destruction they on their own right fly into the Bais Hamikdash and nest on the Altars, as if it were offering their

¹ The Radak cites an additional dispute amongst Chazal if “Tzipor” refers to all birds or only to the Kosher ones.

² It is difficult to explain that it refers to all birds that sing in the morning since the Pasuk does not discuss singing, but rather nesting.

³ See the language of the Radak inside.

offspring there. This is said as a prayer that we too should be allowed to do so. It would seem from this that Tzippor and Dror cannot refer to a specific species that are not the dove and turtledove, but rather they refer to all birds.

This translation of the Targum of the Tzippor in the Pasuk would not be a fitting translation for the Tzippor of Perek Shira for two reasons: 1) Perek Shira should have specified which bird. 2) The dove already sings in Perek Shira. However, from the Targum, we can support our understanding that both Tzippor and Dror refer to all birds in general. The double mention of the bird in the Pasuk creates the basis to understand that it is referring to two different birds. With this, we can understand how in this Pasuk as well the translation of Tzippor could be the bird in general, but the matter can use further research.¹

Regardless of our tentative supposition that “Dror”, too, refers to all birds, “Tzippor” certainly can mean all birds, and Perek Shira could be expressing the song of all of them.

There is one very reasonable indication the Tzippor refers to a specific bird by that name as opposed to all birds. “צפור” is singular. If it was referring to all birds, it should have said “ציפורים”. This is the way it calls the plural of שרצים, חיות השדה, and so on. All singular terms in Perek Shira refer to specific species. There are some exceptions which can be explained. In this respect, Tzippor would definitely seem more to refer to a specific species, such as the sparrow. If so, the Dror would have to be another name for the sparrow. The Tiferes Yisrael does indeed translate it so in משניות נגעים, albeit this does not fit with the abovementioned translation of the Radak: swallow.

The defense of the alternative option, that Tzippor refers to all birds, is that Perek Shira wished to keep congruent with the language of the Pasuk “גם צפור”. There is already record of this method by the song of the desert, where it is called “מדבר” the way it is written in the Pasuk, even though the plural “מדברות” would seem more accurate in comparison to “שדות” and other similar entries.²

In conclusion, as mentioned in our commentary, there are two possible translations of Tzippor in the Pasuk “גם צפור”: That of Chazal in general that it refers to all birds, and that of the Radak that it refers to the sparrow.

THE IDENTITY OF THE TASIS

1) Tzippor Dror (lit. “free-bird”): A number of major commentaries translate Tasis to be a wild bird that cannot be domesticated (e.g. sparrow). It shies away from humans and is not fed by them but rather constantly flies in the air (Yaavetz). [Aristotle wrote about it that is a weak-legged bird that walks slowly. The Jewish nation is likewise “weak on the ground” but rely on their father in heaven. (Kol Rina.) The basis for this interpretation seems to be only the actual name “טסית” which means to fly. If a bird is called so it means that it is particularly flighty. This commentary of the Yaavetz seems to translate דרור differently to Rashi and the Radak, as noted in “The Identity of the Progiyos”.

2) Bird of prey: R’ Chaim Kanievsky Shlita quotes the Targum Yerushalmi (בראשית טו, יא) which translates “עיט”, a bird of prey, as “טייסא”. It not clear to me if R’ Chaim understands all עיט’s to be birds of prey or if it can be a generic term for all birds. He then quotes Yirmiya (יב, ט) on the Pasuk which talks about the “עיט הצבוע”, the colored bird which is attacked by other birds. There Rashi brings two explanations. One [which also written by Mahari Kara] is that it refers to the bird of prey when it is covered in the blood of the prey and therefore mistaken

¹ See also the Ibn Ezra who does not comment anything on the word Tzippor, only mentioning that the Dror is a specific bird. This implies that he understood that Tzippor refers to all birds, or he was not sure.

² It should be noted that some see מדבר as a specific reference to the desert our ancestors wandered in for 40 years.

by other birds as the prey and they assault it. The second interpretation of Rashi is that it is colored bird hated by other birds who attack it. [R' Chaim seems to be quoting the second commentary of Rashi but this is difficult as if so it should have been referred to in Perek Shira as "the colored Tasis". Rather it would seem better to translate it like the first commentary of Rashi and the blood-staining applies to all the Tasis species.] The bird sings that its help comes from Hashem to save it and from it we learn to yearn for His salvation.

The word "עֵיט" is interpreted by Rashi in Bereishis (ad loc.) to mean a bird that flies and swoops to carcasses. This seems to refer specifically to the vulture or a bird like it. The version of Perek Shira in the introduction of the Mabit reads a different verse, the one that precedes that of the standard text: שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשֶׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת [A song of ascents, I raise my eyes from the mountains, from where shall come my help?]. This fits perfectly for the vulture which raises its eyes from on high to find prey in the endless planes. However, it has to be researched if what Rashi describes is true about the vulture.

I find this interpretation of Tasis to be difficult since if it is a bird of prey it would be more accurate to refer to its Hebrew name "עֵיט". Even if it was called in Aramaic it should have been טִיִּסָּא. It would seem that R' Chaim understands "טַסִּית" to be another form of "טִיִּסָּא", the closest match for this name in Torah literature.

3) Peacock: Some versions of Perek Shira include that which (בראשית א, כא) "כל עוף כנף" is translated by Targum Yehonasan as "טַסִּית". The source for this translation is that the Midrash (בר"ר ז, ד) explains "כל עוף" to refer to the "טווס" – peacock. However, our version of Targum Yehonasan is "כל עוף דְּטִיס בגדפין" and R' Korman notes that these versions seem to have had a typing error in their Targum Yehonasan. The structure, though, is still close.

The simplest way to explain its song is to assume it to be the colored bird referred to in the Rashi quoted by R' Chaim Kanievsky. This possibility can be supported by that which the Tagum Sheini of Ester describes on the throne of Shlomo Hamelech two creatures on each step, one being a predator and one being its prey. On one step are the Nesher and the peacock. This would have to be researched further. It should also be noted that it would seem from Rashi in (בראשית טו, יא) that "עֵיט" refers to a bird of prey.

In the main section of our commentary I offered another explanation of how "עֵזְרִי..." could be the song of the peacock. It would be ideal to translate it so, since we have a tradition that Perek Shira was composed by Dovid Hamelech and Shlomo Hamelech. On Shlomo Hamelech throne, there was a peacock. It is difficult to conceive that he would omit this uniquely spectacular bird from Perek Shira.

The version of Perek Shira in the introduction of the Mabit reads a different verse, the one that precedes that of the standard text: שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשֶׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יבֵּא עֲזָרִי [A song of ascents, I raise my eyes from the mountains, from whence shall come my help?] This fits well with the peacock. It could be explained the same way as I did in the standard text. The "raising of eyes" is most appropriate since the colored patterns on its tail-feathers are eye-shapes. The Aruch describes them so.

I still find it difficult that it was not called by its standard name "טווס". The Hebrew of it is "תוכי" – by Shlomo Hamelech's exotic imports. Perhaps it is the word in another dialect. Again, according to one version of Targum Yehonasan - if it is not a typing error – this dialect has a source. If it is a typing error, this difficulty remains.

THE IDENTITY OF THE PROGIYOS

The Aruch writes “Baby chickens. Some say: small birds”. R’ Chaim Kanievsky Shlita understood the latter to refer to the *צפור דורור*, a specific small species of bird. Rashi in *בבא מציעא כד*: writes that they are *גוזלות* [baby birds]. This possibly is a different understanding of the Aruch’s second translation, understanding small birds to mean young birds. The Shaar Shimon, a respected early commentary to Perek Shira, has a tradition that it is one of the four species of quail mentioned in Yoma (עה:). “Ducks” is from the Yaavetz and the Masa Dirushalayim.

The Aruch quotes two sources where Progiyos are found. One in Bava Metzia (כד:), where it tells of an Amora who found slaughtered Progiyos and was told that he could keep them. The second is *בראשית רבה* (י"ז ד"ה אעשה) where the Midrash brings a story about R’ Yossi Haglili’s wife as an example of an *אשה רעה*. What is important to our discussion is the first half, that when he came home with his student R’ Elazar Ben Azarya, his wife stormed out the house with her eyes down. He saw a pot and asked her what was in it. She said *פרפא* [and left. *פרפא* is usually called *פרפרת* which is usually a simple appetizer – see Aruch.]. He opened it and found *פרגיא* [Progiyos]. “R’ Elazar knew what he heard”. He asked R’ Yossi why she had said *פרפא* when it was really *פרגיא*. He told him that it was *מעשה נסים*. [The commentaries explain that he deflected the question because of embarrassment that his wife hated him, or out of respect for R’ Elazar.] They ate. See there for the good outcome for R’ Yossi and the bittersweet outcome of his wife.

There appears to be a great difficulty here. If Progiyos are quail, they are an exceptionally fancy and presumably expensive food. In the desert, the Slav was the lowest and smallest of the four quails mentioned in the Gemara, yet it was fantastically rich and fatty (ע' יומא עה:). Why would the icon of a bad wife cook such a lavish meal for her husband? If they are ducks, it is understandable. She said it was something else cheap that sounded similar to annoy him. If they are chicks or baby birds, it is somewhat difficult still. To be satiated on chicks is presumably expensive because they are so small. However, it could be that it was affordable. But if it is one of the Gemara’s quail it seems very difficult.¹ One could answer that there were only two or three of the small quail in the pot. The smallest of quails are tiny. In the desert, it was a generous meal only because there were uncountable flocks of them.

Another clue to identify the “Progiyos” is that it is written in plural. This point is noted by the Yaavetz. For this reason he explained that it came to include also the domesticated as well as the wild duck. His commentary, though, he writes only *אולי* – perhaps. He explains that there is a doubt in the Gemara if the wild duck is Kosher or not, i.e., whether or not it is a *טורף* [roughly translated as predator]. The song includes the wild duck to express that it, too, is Kosher, as it does not prey on other beings, but rather eats vegetation and trusts on Hashem. It is not clear to me what was the Yaavetz’s exact source to translate it so.

I thought to explain the plural language differently. Firstly, I want to note that there are many other beings in Perek Shira that are referred to in the plural, however, it is always for good reason. Stars, for example, always appear in numbers. Even plural singer that do not appear in numbers necessarily, such as dogs, are referred to in the plural because their song refers to plural singers. In the case of the dogs, their song is “Come, let us...” However, it should be noted that about half of the versions of Perek Shira read *פרגית* [or *פרעית*] – in singular.

Here we can explain that it is plural because they are the chick, which born in litters and insignificant by themselves. Alternatively, it could be small birds or a small species of quail, which were classically eaten as a fancy desert. These were small and always appeared in numbers.²

¹ I thought to say that it really was *מעשה נסים*. We find Amoraim who had quail brought to them daily by miracle, there in Yoma. However, this is a little difficult in the Midrash. Why is it an example of a bad wife if she honestly made him *פרפא*? It is not dishonorable for him to eat a simple meal during the week. It seems from the Midrash that R’ Yosi was trying to hide what his wife said from R’ Elazar. I also thought to say that it was bad of her to overspend. This does not seem to be the main point R’ Elazar criticized her for, rather he said, “She does not honor you appropriately.”

² Refer to *בבא מציעא כד*. and to *מדרש רבה י"ז* where they appear as a food, in plural.

There is a difficulty in translating it to be “chicks” in that no version places this song next to that of the chickens. However, it could be that it was placed here because of the precept of trust that it sings about, similar to the previous song of the wild goose. Still, this remains to me somewhat difficult. It is also difficult that it is the only baby form of a being mentioned. Admittedly, It is already a point of difficulty that the rooster and hen are both mentioned. That, however, is easier to explain. But baby chickens are not truly unique creatures. They are quite similar to chicks of other birds. Therefore, I would prefer to translate it as "גוזלות", chicks of any type, like Rash in Bava Metzieh, which fits with the second translation of the Aruch, “small birds”, meaning baby birds. For this reason it is listed in some versions after the birds. But in the majority of versions the order is no proof of this matter, as the birds are not all together like they are in the Yaavetz’s order.

An additional clue is that if it was referring to a known bird, like the צפור דרור, as implied by R’ Chaim, or to the duck, it would have seemed more accurate to call it by the more well-known names: “צפור דרור” and “בר אווזא”. The Yaavetz seems to answer this difficulty because he writes "לועזין אותן בר אווזא", implying that בר אווזא is a colloquial equivalent of פרוגית. It is easier to understand why it does not say "אפרוחים" – chicks – as this word include other the chicks of other species of birds and not just of chickens.¹ If it were a small species of quail, it remains a little difficult, as it would be better to write one of the four names of שליו listed in יומא עה. However, it could be that the Shaar Shimon’s tradition did not reveal which of the four species of quail it was. It there called it be the colloquial name of a certain known bird that traditionally is a type of שליו. In truth, though, this clue fits best if they were chicks in general, or small birds.

To translate it as a צפור דרור also seems to be a little difficult for another reason. The Aruch specified "צפרים קטנים". It would seem better to understand this to imply all small birds. Otherwise, he should have written "צפור דרור". However, this difficulty can be resolved, as perhaps the Aruch did not know which צפרים קטנים it was referring to. This translation may simply have been drawn from the context of the two above cited quotations. Alternatively, it could be R’ Chaim argues slightly and holds that the פרוגית is a certain species of דרור צפור.

It should be noted that the Radak in his ספר השרשים identifies the דרור bird as the swallow. It is called “free” because it nests freely even in people’s houses. Rashi on Mishlei (כו, ב) says the same. [This is contrary to the modern Hebrew translation “sparrow”.] If this is unanimous, the דרור already appears in Perek Shira as סנונית. However, note that the Yaavetz translates the Tasis as צפור דרור, so it would seem that the Yaavetz translated the word differently. Alternatively, I noticed that both examples that the Radak brings are Pesukim which also list the "צפור". It is possible that דרור by itself could refer to all such types of bird. However, Rashi and the Radak quote the language of the Gemara in Beitza which refers to all דרור birds. There is therefore a dispute between them and the Yaavetz who is like R’ Chaim.

An additional point: it seems more likely that people ate quail than the צפור דרור, and it is described as a food in the two above cited quotations. This could be researched.

Seeing as the שער שמעון has a tradition that it is one of the four species of quail of the Torah [listed in Yoma עה:], and it fits well with all of the above points, it seems best to translate it so. The Aruch, too, when he cited the translation צפרים קטנים, could fit with this. It could be a small quail, and the Aruch’s quoted translator did not know which kind of small bird it was. [I would rather say that it was the שליו, the smallest one, that the nation ate in the dessert. However, the matter remains undetermined.]

It should be noted that he the בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו quote the שער שמעון that translates it as “quail” and then also quotes the Yaavetz that is the duck – and equates them. In other words, he writes that the duck is a type of שליו.

Another element that may aid in the identification is that there are alternative versions of the song. The earlier versions mostly record the song to be "יודוך ה' כל מלכי ארץ כי שמעו אמרי פיה". This I commented on in the section “The Version of the Siach Yitzchak and the Shaar Shimon”. There I explained, based partially on the Sifsei

¹ אפרוחים would seem to be a construct of אי פרה, meaning “does not fly”.

Renanos, that it is clearly a bird that is eaten as a delicacy by kings. This would fit well with the translation “quail” and “baby birds” but not so well with the other translations.

There was also an older version of the Mabit and others that the singer is the "פרעית". This may have been a typing error. If not, the root of the word is "פרע", which the Radak in his *ספר השרשים* translates to mean "מרי, ריחוק" [rebel/distance/negate], as well as “to reveal”. This could be an appropriate name for hatchlings which break free of their eggs and reveal themselves. The word would perhaps also fit with R' Chaim's translation, as the דרור rebels in the sense that it “does not accept mastery over itself.

If we understand the translation of the Aruch “small birds” to include all small birds, it could be all of the commentaries all fit into this definition. Quail may refer to the small species of them. Ducks, too, are small versions of geese [ע' שירת יצחק]. If so, this is a unique grouping in Perek Shira. Usually the beings are not grouped according to their size.

The Shaar Shimon had a tradition that seems to be therefore the most authentic translation. However, it does not parallel with the commentaries of the Aruch and Rashi, who are founding מפרשים. Perhaps the Aruch and Rashi were basing their translations only on contextual deduction, and “baby chickens” may have come solely based on the Arabic name for it that he then quotes.

In conclusion, I was able to ascertain little, but certain translations seem more likely.¹

THE IDENTITY OF THE TANINIM

For the song of the תנינים, I have used the translation “sea-giants”. The Re'em writes that the Tanim of land is the נחש – snake and the Tanim of the sea is a fish. It would seem to be used only in connotation of large creatures and therefore I would venture to associate its root with that of "איתן" – giant. R' Hirsch writes that it is related to the word "נון", which is Aramaic for fish, because of its high rate of propagation. Perhaps this is a basis for that which the Sages explain that it is the referring in Bereishis to the male and female Livyasan which Hashem had to kill the female and castrate the male lest they propagate and destroy the world due to their size. However, the Livyasan is already mentioned in Perek Shira. Furthermore, the Pasuk specifies התנינים הגדולים, implying that the Livyasan is only a member of the class of תנינים. In my commentary I translated it as “sea-giants” because of the Pasuk which is quotes: “Taninim and all of the depths”. Here it would seem to mean “sea-giants”.

THE IDENTITY OF THE VERMIN

The difference between אלים שברצים and אלים שבשרצים is not totally clear. The majority opinion is the אלים שבשרצים are the larger variety of them. The Yaavetz wrote that אלים שבשרצים [mice and possibly rats] based on the following Midrash:

It is written about the Jewish nation in Egypt "וישרצו", meaning that they multiplied like vermin. The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni (שמות א, ט) records two opinions regarding which vermin the propagation is compared to. One says like גדולים שבשרצים [the larger vermin, which is the עכבר - mouse. It may also refer to the rat.], which bears

¹ ועיין משנת ר' אהרן ח"א עמ' נ"ג, שאין להרבות לדקדק יותר מדי, וגם שזה לא מברר הספק, ובפרט בדברים שאינם להלכה. אך נפשי חשקה, וכל ספק אשר תפסתי לא יכולתי לשלחה כל היום, והוכרחתי לכתוב הספקות, ואולי יבא אחרי מי שיוסיף מקור ויברר, ועוד, שזה נוגע להלכה, כי על האדם לשיר להאחד, וצריך לדעת מה לכוון. וה' יאיר עינינו.

six offspring at a time. The other opinion says like the קטנים שבשרצים [the small of the vermin], the scorpion, which bears sixty at a time.

It is puzzling that the scorpion is referred to as the small among the vermin when there are many smaller insects. It would seem that the category of vermin in this quotation refers only to the larger animal-like variety and not to the insect swarms. It may be suggested that even though insects propagate more their song is not about one's wife being fruitful because they do not resemble human beings at all and it may be that they cannot be described as being "husband and wife". Mice are on the other hand similar in their general biological framework to humans and this is one of the reasons why they are used in laboratory experiments.

It still does not sit well with me why smaller animal-like vermin do not sing this song of propagation and for that reason, I would prefer to suggest that the term "אלים שבשרצים" includes all large vermin, barring only insects and it follows not one but both of the opinions in the Yalkut Shimoni. For this reason, it does not say "גדולים שבשרצים". The general meaning of the song would remain the same. I would also like to suggest a third definition of "אילים" "שרצים" that it means the species that propagate greatly.

In the commentary of R' Daniel Worenklein¹, he notes that there is a specific reference to the wife in this song because in the families of insects the queen is the main insect and it propagates greatly. See there further. This seems to translate "אלים שבשרצים" to refer to insects. However, one has to also account for the Midrash about the propagation in Egypt being from as little as a mouse – six at a time – to as much a scorpion – sixty at a time. Perhaps the term "שרצים" does not usually refer to insects. Only if one specifies them does it do so, as in Perek Shira where they are called "אלים שבשרצים".

ENDNOTES

1: Song as a form of prayer: Perek Shira is a composition of praise. However, it can be suggested that it can also be recited as a form of prayer. One can pray in his mind that each particular expression of Hashem's kindness and greatness revealed through Perek Shira be fulfilled regarding one's particular need. This is because prayer, too, is a form of song. A prayer implies that the way of Hashem is indeed to answer the supplicant and perform that particular deed of kindness, for if not so, that supplicant would not be praying. It is for this reason that "תפלה" is the same Gematriah as "שירה".

2: The Neshet: That which the Neshet is merciless to its foes and kind to its young is a fundamental principle regarding correct interpersonal behavior. Sometimes being cruel is a good trait. In the modern court judges take into account the claims of psychology that a criminal is not wholly responsible for his behavior because it can be blamed on a host of influences out of his control. This misgiven mercy to the evil is actually cruelty to the innocent public. Because of the leniency in today's courts, criminals are not as afraid to commit crimes. Only a high degree of fear of judgment is enough to deter someone from giving in to his urge and acting on the spur of the moment to commit a heinous misdeed. Hereby the court which is merciful to the cruel is in the end being cruel to the merciful, as predicted by the sages. It is similarly mistaken to be overly merciful to one's children. Disciplinary measures in education are essential for the child's emotional health. The Torah taught that children are not to be spared the rod. Whether the rod is literal or perhaps allegorical is irrelevant; children need discipline, rules and four walls of an unbending system of values. If they are brought up without being disciplined they will not be able to be self-disciplined and will invariably fail throughout their adult lives according to the measure that self-discipline is lacking. R' Hirsh wrote a golden formula for parenting: to have as little as possible rules but to stand behind them without compromise. Misplaced mercy can be more destructive than misplaced cruelty. Generally, a parent is, of course, to be merciful but when disciplining he has to be unbending and unapologetic. This is the nicest one can be to his children. (Based on R' Yaakovzon.)

3: The Goose: Regarding the interpretation that its song represents the figurative song of the Torah: It should be noted that the exact meaning of Pasuk "הכמות בחוץ תרונה", quoted in a footnote in the commentary, is disputed in the Gemara (מועד קטן טז:). [This was cited in the commentary of R' Daniel Worenklein, Feldheim Publishers, quoted with permission.]

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There the primary opinion, that of Rebbe, is that ideally the Torah should be taught to disciples in private quarters, modestly. Only when a Drasha is given to the masses is it necessary and fitting for it to be taught publically. R' Chiya taught students in public because of the Pasuk "הַכְמוֹת בַּחוּץ תְּרוּנָה". Rebbe rebuked him, explaining that this Pasuk means that "if one learns Torah inside, the Torah announces about him outside." [R' Worenklein explains this to mean that even Torah taught privately will affect the public outside.] It is unclear if R' Chiya was convinced. The goose is only mentioned in the above-cited quotation from Berachos, as a symbol of the Rosh Yeshiva that gives the Drasha. This implies like R' Chiya, that the teaching outside is literal, but is only referring to a Rosh Yeshiva giving a Drasha, which Rebbe factually agrees with. This is surely the main meaning of the song. However, it is possible that it also refers to all students of the Torah whose learning "sounds" throughout the world, through the inherent spiritual power of the Torah itself. If so, it fits also with the translation of Rebbe.

Regarding the interpretation the its song represents literal song: It can be suggested that the three categories of music classified by the Zimras Hashamayim Vhaaretz, namely, body, intellect and soul, correspond to the three cultural families of the world: Cham [meaning "hot"], Yefes [meaning "beauty"], and Shem [meaning "name"]. Cham is the body-lust heat. Yefes is the beauty of the intellect. Shem is the spiritual essence behind each element of the world, which is the name that it is called.

4: The Horse: The commentary *Knaf Renanim* hears another meaning in this song. The Talmud records six characteristics of the horse: 1) It eats a lot, 2) it excretes little, 3) it loves licentiousness, 4) it loves battle, 5) it disdains sleep, and 6) it is גס רוח (haughty). These traits stem from its mighty and fiery nature. Yet even this creature can be led by a child and it turns to its master for its sustenance. This paradox of the horse implies that no matter how wild is one's nature, he should bend it in order to serve his Master. Slaves maintain this level of servitude only when the master watches them. We, however, are watched constantly by our Master and should serve Him in all situations equally.

The *Yashir Moshe* finds a third level of meaning in the song. The above quoted Talmud adds further that some count a seventh characteristic of the horse: it tries to kill its master in battle. The *Yashir Moshe* explains this to mean that the horse is loyal as long it is reliant on the master to feed it. However, in a battle, when food is scarce and its work is great its loyalty ends and it attempts to do away with its master. We, too, emulate the positive aspect of the horse that our dependency upon Hashem for all that He gives us necessitates that we serve Him loyally. However, we do not share the seventh, negative trait because there is no time when we are not receivers of Hashem's constant kindnesses.

5: Man and the Angels: It was explained in the main text that the song of the Malachim is their Kedusha that was witnessed by Yeshaya. Yechezkel described in much more detail a different vision in which the Malachim said: "ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו" [Blessed is/be the glory of Hashem from His place]. These are both included in the daily Kedusha ceremony. The relationship between these two phrases needs to be understood. It cannot be that ברוך כבוד is a stand-alone Shira because that would mean that the Malachim say Hashem's name after only two words, as opposed to the usual three. It is also evident in the Kedusha that "Baruch Kvod" is said in response to "Kadosh." However, it is also difficult to understand that it is merely the second sentence in their two-sentence Kedusha because the prophecy of Yechezkel implies that that was all that they said. Rather it would seem that it a response which is actually the same vision looked at from a different angle. Yeshaya saw the essential Kedusha and was therefore brief, in the same way that the third Bracha of the Shemoneh Esrei which describes Hashem's Kedusha is the briefest. This is a description of the holiness of Hashem's kingship and influence to His world He totally controls. Yechezkel was not describing the Shira to Hashem Himself but rather to the glory that emanated from Him. This is revealed in the kindness He outpours, albeit without profaning His holiness. This they express when they conclude that He is blessed "from His place," He Himself remains unchanged and unchangeable and so too His blessing is rooted in this unchangeable holiness.

Perhaps one may suggest that the Shema of Yisrael can be interpreted to parallel the Kedusha of the Malachim. Hashem is His essential Name on high. אלוהינו is His kingship on earth. Hashem Echad is explained by Rashi to refer to His unity as it is perfectly revealed in the future. Then that which He was, is and will be will be eternally revealed. Then we exclaim "ברוך" שם which parallels the "ברוך כבוד", although we do not say "ממקומו" because we do not have the angels' perception of His place of Holiness, but He is rather perceived by His kingship. After writing this I saw quoted the commentary of the Gra to the Kedusha in Yeshaya and he writes that the three "Kadosh"s of the Malachim correspond to the three paragraphs of Shma of Yisrael. This matter therefore requires further study and the above is merely a suggestion. However, this is a side point and the general meaning of the song still resonates clearly.

שירת הארץ

השירה זאת בעזרת ה' כתבתי בסוף ימי בחרותי. היא לא חלק מפרק שירה או מפרשיו בכלל, אך היא שייכת לפרק שירה כי היא מבוססת על גבורות ה' אשר המה בארץ, כמתורגם: קדיש בארעא עובד גבורתיה. על כן אותיותיה הפוכות, מת' עד א', כדברי האוה"ח הק' ריש בראשית. ובכל שורה מיוסדים פסוקים בהם מופיעה הארץ. היות שארוכה היא, וגם לא ראוי לשורר על חטא ועונש בשבת יום מזמור ושיר, רגיל הייתי לדלג מאות ע' עד ס', ומח' עד ג'. ולסיים לך וכו' מי ימלל וכו'. ישנה נגינה המתאמת לשיעוריה.

תהילות לאל עליון, שירה עד תימיון, כימי השמים על הארץ.
תחת כסא כבודו, אבה לגמול חסדו, בראשית ברא השמים והארץ.
שוכן עד, אדיר, נאור, אמר יהי אור, וימלא כבודו את כל הארץ.
שטח רקיע בתוך המים, וישכב נבלי שמים, נוטה שמים ויוסד ארץ.

רחום מגביל עולם, ישאו ימים קולם, בל ישובון לכסות הארץ.
רוכב בערבות, מאורות לו משתחוות, יפיץ קדים עלי ארץ.
קנה בנועם חסדו, דגי ים וכנפי הודו, שירו לה' כל הארץ.
קרוץ חומר דימה לו, על מעשה ידיו המשילו, פרו ורבו ומילאו את הארץ.

צפה כל הבריאה, והנה טוב מאוד ראה, הודו על שמים וארץ.
צור פעלו תמים, שבת לעולמים, ויכולו השמים והארץ.
פרוזדור וטרקלין הכין יה, כל הנשמה תהלל יה, מיני שים אדם עלי ארץ.
פרי כל עץ טוב ברא לו, וממוות הבדילו, אלה תולדות השמים והארץ.

עזן לו נטע, בכל זאת אדם חטא, שחה נפשו דבקה לארץ.
עצת ה' היא תקום, יישר כל עקום, וייראו אותו כל אפסי ארץ.
סרו אנוש מדרכם, שהטביעה החכם, והמים היו מבול על הארץ.
סברו פלג ועמו, למרוד בצבאות שמו, הפיצם ה' על פני כל הארץ.

נוצר חסד לאלפים, בחר לו אב אלופים, ויאמר לך לך אל הארץ.
נסאו עד ידע בו, ירא אלוהים בכל לבבו, מעלה נשיאים מקצה ארץ.
ממנו יצר עם, קמו מצרים להטביעם, אך יש אלוהים שופטים בארץ.
מופתים ואותות שלח בם, שלחו הסגולה מקרבם, נטית ימינך תבלעמו ארץ.

לריח שמניו טובים, הלכו אחריו אהובים, וקול התור נשמע בארץ.
לקראת כלתו בא, מלך דגול מרבבה, יראה ושקטה ארץ.
כבודו קולות וברקים, חיכו ממתקים, תשמע אמרי פי הארץ.
כה אמר בוראיך, אנכי ה' אלוהיך, אשר הוצאתיך מהארץ.

יסר ועינה בנו, לימדו והכינו, צדיקים יירשו ארץ.
 יושבי כנען נבהלו, וכלבם כולם נפלו, והיה כי תבואו אל הארץ.
 טיהרו בני ישראל, ארץ צבי לעבודת אל, הוא האלוהים בשמים ובארץ.
 טירת כסף ירושלים, בנו לאלוהים חיים, יפה נוף משוש כל הארץ.

חזקו ובצור דבקו, אבל בניהם התרחקו, חיללו משכן שמך לארץ.
 חטא אום נערץ, גן נעול נפרץ, טבעו שעריה בארץ.
 זדים בני בליעל, ששו למעול במ מעל, מילאו מחשכי ארץ.
 זרע קודש לעפר שחו, עוד באלוהיהם בטחו, אשר בידו מחקרי ארץ.

ולמלאות שבעים פקדם, רבות מחשבות בלב אדם, אך כבר רצתה שבתותיה הארץ.
 ואף גם זאת בהיותם, לא מאסתים לכלותם, וקיבצתים מירכתי ארץ.
 הקריבו שוב אל האדון, אבל בליבם אנשי זדון, העל זאת לא תרגז ארץ.
 השליכם ארצה כנאומי, עד ידעו כי אחד שמו, והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ.

דלים ופזורים, עוד נאנחים עם העיברים, גר אנוכי בארץ.
 דמיהם ודמעותם, נבלעים באדמתם, עד מתי תאבל ארץ.
 גיבור כובש כמוותר, כבוד המסתתר, ואחוזתך אפסי ארץ,
 גם על עמך שא עיניך, והושיעה ימיניך, קומה אלוהים שפטה הארץ.

ברוך ה' לעולם, אלוהי ישראל וגואלם, מודעת זאת בכל הארץ.
 בעל גבורות מי כמוך, אין עוד מלבדך, עליון על כל הארץ.
 אחד גדול ונורא, מחיה מתים בגבורה, זמירות שמענו מכנף הארץ.
 אז אלוהים ה' שמו, אל בנין ציון ישיב עמו, ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ.

ברוך רחמנא דסייען