

Inner Space

Excerpted and adapted from a shiur by HaRav Chaim Weg

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https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SHE82_004_Beshalach_Song_Book_The_Writing_of_Parshas_Shira_in_the_Sefer_Torah_and_Elsewhere.mp3

Then Moshe and B'nei Yisrael sang this song...

Shmos 15:1

Az Yashir is called a *shirah* (song). It must be written like brickwork (*"ariach al gabei leveinah"*), in which the lines alternate between having 1) a large space in the center and 2) two large spaces, one left of center and one right of center. According to the Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 275, from Shabbos 103b), if a *shirah* is written without the extra spaces, or if the rest of a sefer Torah is written in the form of a *shirah*, the sefer Torah is invalid. The Shulchan Aruch says it is customary to write Az Yashir in thirty lines. The first line is written normally, then the next twenty-nine alternate as above.

It appears that the difference between a *shirah* and the regular sections of the sefer Torah involves two halachos. The first is that *shirah* requires the large spaces, and the second is that those spaces do not render it invalid as they would in other parts of the Torah. If so, it would seem that if there is such a space within the parshah of the *shirah* but not in the *shirah* itself,[1] it may not invalidate the sefer Torah, because spaces do not invalidate a *shirah*.

[1] A possible example is the section after Az Yashir beginning with the words *"Ki va sus Paroh,"* which follows the *shirah* but is still in the parshah of Az Yashir (see Machatzis Hashekel O.C. 51).