



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Va'era

January 24, 2020

A Taste of Torah

Personal Redemption

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

As the Torah details the instructions given to Moshe and Aharon for their mission to order Pharaoh to free the Jewish People, the verse says (Va'era 6:13), "Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding the Children of Israel and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." From the simple reading of this verse, it seems that both Pharaoh and the Children of Israel were commanded to let the Children of Israel leave Egypt. What do the Children of Israel have to do with allowing themselves to go free?

Earlier in the parsha, after Hashem gives His promise to take the Jews out of Egypt, the verse concludes (ibid.:7), "And you shall know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt." The Seforno explains those words to be a command: "Recognize and contemplate that everything I have said will come true, because it is Me Who watches over and orchestrates every detail of your lives, and, therefore, there is no doubt that I will do everything I said I would do."

The next verse continues "I shall bring you to the land," meaning, explains the Seforno, that if you truly believe everything will occur, then you will be worthy of entering the Land of Israel. However, as the Torah (ibid.:9) continues, the Jews were unable to listen properly due to the harsh labor they were subjected to. Therefore, says the Seforno, the generation that left Egypt did not merit to enter the Land. Their children were given the Land of Israel, but they themselves, who were

lacking in their trust in G-d, were not. Here, says Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz (1873-1936) (Da'as Chochma Vol. 6), lies the secret to redemption. We generally think that the Exodus was solely dependent on Pharaoh, and it was he who needed convincing to set the Jews free. However, the Seforno's interpretation of these verses teaches that the source of redemption actually starts from the Jewish People themselves. Hashem promises redemption even to those undeserving in order that the belief in His promise will serve as a merit for the redemption itself. Only when one has trust and faith that the promise will be fulfilled can the process actually occur.

In fact, this path of relying on faith as the merit for the redemption began long before. When Hashem promised Avraham that he would become a great nation, the verse says (Bereishis 15:6), "He trusted in Hashem, and it was considered for him a righteousness." Similarly, says Rabbi Levovitz, when Hashem promised the Patriarchs that He would redeem their children, they believed with all their hearts that it would, indeed, come to pass. Even though they themselves did not live to witness the Exodus, it was in the merit of their faith that it actually happened.

This is the meaning of Hashem's command to the Children of Israel to set themselves free. The Jewish People needed additional merits to be deserving of the actual redemption. Only if they would demonstrate complete trust and faith in the promised redemption could it then become a reality.

In truth, this idea is part of the basis

continued on back

Stories for the Soul

Miraculous Test

During the Polish uprising against Czarist Russia in the first half of the 19th century, a certain Jewish merchant was captured by the Polish rebels for allegedly not supplying the rebels with the grain and wine they had demanded, and he was promptly sentenced to be executed.

Rabbi Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowicz (1801-1866), the first Radomsker Rebbe, was apprised of the dire situation and assured those present that the Jew would be spared. The man's relatives begged the rebel leader to spare his life, and the leader agreed on the condition that the family pay a very heavy fine. The monies were raised and paid, and the man's life was saved. When the Rebbe was told the good news, he responded that the money would be returned, as well. Sure enough, sometime later when the rebels were defeated, the money was returned by the Russian government, a highly unlikely occurrence.

When the followers of Reb Shlomo told him that his words had been fulfilled and expressed their awe at the miracle apparently wrought by their Rebbe, he responded angrily that he had no interest in hearing stories of miracles, and sent them away.

Some time later, the followers again approached Reb Shlomo and asked him to explain his response. After all, it was clear that the Rebbe had twice predicted a most unlikely turn of events, and his words had been accurate.

Reb Shlomo explained that sometimes, Hashem allows a miracle

continued on back

Kollel Happenings

THE LEGAL & HALACHIC STATUS OF CRYPTOCURRENCY AT FEB. 5 T4T

Join Micah Schwalb, Esq., Founding Partner at Roenbaugh Schwalb, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they examine this cryptic conundrum. Feb. 5th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Lost Patriarchs | 4) War strategy |
| 2) Staff swallower | 5) Quite a handful |
| 3) Dust protection | 6) For G-d's sake, make peace |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk - Part IX

During World War I, Dvinsk, which had a fortress, was the target of German bombardment. Many residents fled the city, but Reb Meir Simcha remained in the city with those who did not leave.

At one point, when others begged him to leave the dangerous confines of the city, he replied that as long as there would be nine people in the city, he would be the tenth.

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

for the Ten Plagues. As discussed, only through trust and faith would the Jewish People merit redemption. However, the conditions of the exile in Egypt made it difficult to have such trust. Therefore, Hashem sent the miracles of the plagues as a glimmer of hope to strengthen their trust in Him, thus making them worthy of redemption.

The Final Redemption in the End of Days will follow a similar pattern. The

verse states (Micha 7:15), "Like those days of leaving the Land of Egypt, I will show them wonders." The miracles of the Final Redemption will be like those of the Exodus from Egypt. There will be miracles just as there were during the Exodus from Egypt, and the purpose of these wonders is to provide a ray of hope to strengthen our trust in Hashem. It is only through our trust and faith that we will be worthy of that redemption.

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

to occur through a person as a test to see if the person will remain humble. If the miracle-worker becomes haughty, he has failed the test.

One of Reb Shlomo's grandsons saw an allusion to this idea in a verse in this week's parsha. Hashem instructs Moshe and Aharon (Va'era 7:9), "When Pharaoh will speak to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aharon, 'Take your staff and cast

it before Pharaoh,' and it will turn into a snake." What is meant by 'Show a miracle for yourselves'? The answer is that Pharaoh was hoping that even when Moshe and Aharon would display a miracle, they would credit themselves for having performed the wonder, and would thus be unworthy to continue being G-d's conduit to bring future miracles and the ultimate Exodus.

Parsha Quizzers - Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1) Lost Patriarchs 6:9 s.v. vilo | 4) War strategy 8:17 s.v. es he'arov |
| 2) Staff swallower 7:12 s.v. vayivla | 5) Quite a handful 9:8 s.v. uzatko |
| 3) Dust protection 8:12 s.v. emor | 6) For G-d's sake, make peace 9:24 s.v. mistakachas |