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PARSHAS VAEIRA



HARAV YISROEL BROG, SHLITA | ROSH HAYESHIVA, YESHIVAS TIFERES AVIGDOR

WHAT CAUSED THE REDEMPTION?

In the *passuk* Hashem says: “And also I heard the cries of *Bnei Yisrael*, from what the Egyptians are subjugating them to.”¹ They were crying from the slavery of the Egyptians. It says in the *passuk* that Hashem told Moshe, *וְאִזְכַּר אֶת בְּרִיתִי*, “I remembered My covenant, My promise that I made.”

Now if you look at such a *passuk*, what would it seem like from this *passuk*? It would seem that the reason Hashem remembered His promise, His covenant, is because Hashem heard the cries of *Bnei Yisrael*. Isn’t that what it sounds like? “I heard their cries, *ve’ezkor*, and that made Me remember My covenant.” But Rashi comes and says just the opposite. Rashi says that because I made a covenant and a promise to the *Avos* that I have to fulfill now, therefore I heard and listened to the cries of *Bnei Yisrael*.² *Moradig! Punkt fakhert!* You see from here that it was the remembrance of the *bris* that was the reason why Hashem heard the cries.

My Rabbi, the Brisker Rav’s son, Rav Meir Soleveitchik, asked the question: Why did Hashem need that? Why do you have to explain a reason why Hashem heard and accepted the cries of the *Bnei Yisrael*? What do you mean? Hashem said to Avraham straight out that they’re going to go into slavery. They’re going to be afflicted for x number of years. They’re going to go into all kinds of servitude and then I’m going to judge the Egyptians and take the Yidden out. So if the time came for them to get out, if the time was up, *that’s* the reason why Hashem decided to fulfill His promise! If I make a promise to you, then the promise alone is what obligates me to fulfill my commitment to you. I don’t need to say, “because I made a promise, therefore I heard the cries of the *Bnei Yisrael* and therefore I’m taking them out.”

Now you might say that maybe they were supposed to be in slavery for 400 years and it was only 210 years at this point. *Nu. Chazal* tell us that the fact that Hashem turned up the heat and Pharaoh worked them very rough, so the difficulties that they

¹: שמות ז, ה: *וְיִגְמַשְׁעֵתִי אֶת נַאֲקָת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מָצָרָם מִעֲבָדִים אַתָּם וְאִזְכַּר אֶת בְּרִיתִי*.

²: שם: “*וְגַם אָמַר* - *כְּמַי שָׁגַבְתִּי וְהַנְּדַבֵּת הַבָּרִית שֵׁעֲלֵי קְלִים* *לְפִיכְךָ שָׁמְעֵתִי אֶת נַאֲקָת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּאָקִים*” *אֲשֶׁר מִעֲבָדִים אַתָּם וְאִזְכּוּ*” - *אָזְהָר הַבָּרִית בֵּין הַבָּרִתָּם אָמְרָתִי לוֹ וְגַם אֶת הָגּוֹן אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָּן אַנְכִי*.

endured and the magnification of the *tzarah* was actually equivalent to the 400 years. So if the 400 years were up - whether 400 actual years or the equivalent - so either way, they should get out right then.

SOMETIMES WE NEED SPECIAL RACHAMIM

The Rabbi said a *moradige yesod* in *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and a *moradige yesod* in life. He said that even though the *shibud* was already complete - they had completed their sentence - that wasn't enough to get them out. They needed special *chessed* and special *rachamim* in order to be redeemed.

Now the question is, why? Why was that? The Ramban in *Parshas Shemos* (2:25) discusses this and why it seems from the Torah there are many reasons why Hashem redeemed *Klal Yisrael*.³ It says Hashem heard their cries. It says Hashem remembered His covenant. It says Hashem saw the pains they were going through. It says all kinds of things, and after that, the Ramban says that because they cried out to Hashem, Hashem was *mekabel* their *tefilah*. It was *rachamim*.

The Ramban clarifies for us that even though the *galus* was up and the time was up, they weren't yet deserving to be redeemed. It was only due to a conjunction of all these reasons and their outcries to Hashem that Hashem was *mekabel* their *tefilah berachamim*.

Now what does that mean to say? The Rabbi explained that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* employs a very unique *middah* of *rachamim*, and that *middah* of *rachamim* is that it accepts the call, the cry, of someone who is *mispalel be'emes* to be spared, even though it's *sh'elo min hadin*. Even though the time is not up.

It means sometimes a person can have a decree and when that decree is over and all the ducks line up and everything fits into place, the decree goes away. But sometimes there's a decree upon a person or upon *Klal Yisrael* and the hope is that at the time when that decree is about to be over, *Klal Yisrael* will have risen, or the person will have risen to where he needs to be in order to move on in life. But what if not? What if not? Does he remain with the *tzarah* forever and ever? So it says that Hashem has a unique *middah* of *rachmanus*. Do you know what that's called? *Chanun*. The Tosfos in

³ וַיַּעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פֶּרֶשׁ רַבִּי אַבְרָהָם, כִּי אֶחָד מִאַבְרָהָם, שֶׁהָיָה מִאַבְרָהָם שָׁלָשׁ לְקֹם בְּגִיאָה, נִזְעַט אֶל-הָלָהִים בְּעֵד בְּפָטָר. וּרְשָׁי"פְּ רַשְׁי" (ש"י על שמות ב':כ") וַיַּעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים, נִמְנָה עַלְיָהִם לְבָב וְלְאַלְמָנָה עַמְּדָה. וְכַאֲמָתָן. הָיָה עַל דָּרְךָ הַפְּשָׁלָשׁ, כִּי בְּתַחְלָה הָהִיא מִסְתִּיר פְּנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ וְהַיָּה שְׁמַע אַלְמָנָה אֶת קְרָבָתָם וְרֹא אֶת קְרָבָתָם, וְאֶת קְרָבָתָם לְהַקְרֵב שְׁמַע אַלְמָנָה. וְאֶת קְרָבָתָם פְּנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ וְעַד קְרָבָתָם יְדֵעָת מִזְבֵּחַ וְכֵל הַעֲשָׂה לְקֹם וְאֶת לְהַזְרֵר לְקֹם. וְאֶת רָאשָׁתָם, וְאֶת קְרָבָתָם לְהַקְרֵב שְׁמַע אַלְמָנָה, כִּי רְבָתָם, וְיִזְלַּחֲעַד אֶל-הָלָהִים, "יִזְלַּחֲעַד אֶל-הָלָהִים", כִּי דִעְתִּית אֶת מִקְאָבֵי" (שמות ג':ז), כִּי עַל פְּנֵי שְׁלֹשֶׁלֶם הַקְרֵב שְׁגָדָר צְלָחָם לְאֵל הָיָה רְאֵיָה שְׁלֹשֶׁלֶם, כִּי מִזְקָנָאֵל, מִזְקָנָאֵל כִּי חַזְקָנָאֵל, אֶלָּא מִפְנֵי הַעֲקָה קָבֵל תְּפִלָּם כְּרָמִים: וְעַל פְּנֵי קָרְבָּן אֶת קְרָבָתָם: שְׁבַעֲתָבָת הַקָּה סְזָדָה מִסְתָּרָה, לְמַרְמֵר פְּנֵי שְׁלֹשֶׁלֶם לְמַמְרֵר שְׁלֹשֶׁלֶם לְאֵל דִּעְתָּה, עַל פְּנֵי בְּקָרְבָּן שְׁלֹשֶׁלֶם תְּזִיעָה בְּרָצָה רְצָחָן תְּפִלָּה" (ג), וְלֹכֶד יְאִיר הַכְּנָבָב בְּהָאָחָר שְׁאָר בְּקָרְבָּן "יִשְׁמַע אֶל-הָלָהִים", "יִזְלַּחֲעַד אֶל-הָלָהִים". וְנִתְפָּרַשׁ פְּסָתוֹק הַהָּר בְּמַדְרָשָׁה שֶׁל רַבִּי נְחוּזָה בְּן הַקְרֵב (ספר הבהיר אות ע), וְתַבְּרֵהוּ מִשְׁמָן.

Rosh Hashanah explains that the *middah* of *chanun* is that Hashem is gracious. When He sees a person in a *sha'as hadechak*, in a very tight spot, Hashem will redeem the one who cries out to Him. He quotes a *passuk*. That *middah* is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is a *ba'al koach*. Hashem is the boss and Hashem is able to have *rachmanus* on someone who cries out to Him, even though it's *shelo kedin*, even though it goes against the rules. It says in the *passuk* elsewhere⁴ by orphans and poor people that Hashem says "If they will cry out to Me, I will hear." You know why? Not because they're deserving, but because "ki *chanun ani*," I am *chanun*.

Nu. Even though somebody comes to collect his debts from a poor person, someone who's entitled to collect. Let's say, a poor person borrowed money. Now the lender can get his money back and he pressures the *ani* who cries out to Hashem. Hashem says "I will hear the cries of the poor person, because I am a *chanun*."

The Rabbi explained that in this *passuk*, Hashem is enumerating to Moshe what the reasons are that Klal Yisrael is now going to be redeemed from Mitzrayim. The promise that Hashem made to Avraham was not sufficient, because they weren't deserving. Like the Ramban says, even though the time was up, they weren't *ra'ui*. Therefore, the *passuk* says there are two reasons why they got out. Number one, "Shamati, I heard the cries of Bnei Yisrael," and when the cries of Bnei Yisrael are heard, that motivates Hashem to exercise the *middah*, the attribute of *chanun*. Then the *passuk* gives another reason: that the Mitzrim are working them very hard and we could consider it, Hashem says, like it's equivalent to 400 years. You have to make the math align. You can't get out before your time, but Hashem is good at math. Hashem can turn 210 into 400.

Now that's a tremendous insight. Tremendous! Many times I talk to people and you see their *tzaros*. They're having hardships. I used to see this often when people became *ba'alei teshuvah*. Many people were under the impression that when they're going to become *ba'alei teshuvah*, they're going to experience a life of bliss, and it's going to be smooth sailing for them and everything is going to be hunky dory. And I saw the strangest thing happen. One phenomenon I noticed, which I felt terrible about: whenever I was *mekarev* a person, they often experienced difficult challenges. It happened so often that after a while I wanted to give them a disclaimer up front: "I think you're going to experience a downfall in your *parnasa*." Many were very successful people before becoming frum. But after they became *frum*, somehow they got clobbered. That was one thing. When they accepted *mitzvos*, they started to experience all kinds of

⁴ שמות כב כ-כו: "יל-אלמגנה יתתומ, לא-עהה תעבה, אט-כען צעקה אל-שמע אט-מען צעקה: ו/orה אפי, ו/orגתני אתכם בפרק ו/orי קשיכם אלמנות, ובכיניכם יתמים: אט-כען מלחה אט-עמי, אט-הען עמך לא-תקהה לה, קנסעה לא-תקישימן עליי, שער: אט-קובל תקובל, שלמתה רעך עד-בא השעטש תשייבנו לו. כן כי הוא קסותהן לבדה הוא שמלתוי לערוי בפה ישקב וכו' כי ישעך אל-וישמעתני כי חפוץ אני."

difficulties that weren't foreseeable and I didn't understand why it was like that.

ONE MITZVAH DONE WITH TZA'AR IS WORTH MORE

I once heard from Rav Yisroel Elya Weintraub (1932-2010), a great tzaddik from Bnei Brak; he said that here is a person who is missing from his life years and years of *shemiras Shabbos*. He is missing the mitzvah of *talmud Torah* for years and years. He is missing unbelievable mitzvos. Now he becomes *frum*. Boruch Hashem! Now, when you become *frum*, you don't recoup all the lack of fulfillment of mitzvos that you didn't do for the last ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years. You don't get it back. It comes out that somebody who becomes *frum* is going to suffer. You know what Hashem does? Rav Yisroel Elya said that Hashem 'turns up the heat.' It says *tov echad b'tza'ar*, doing one mitzvah with *tza'ar*, is worth more than a thousand without *tza'ar*.⁵ You know what Hashem does? Hashem all of a sudden makes difficulties crop up in the fulfillment of the mitzvos, and then that one *shemiras Shabbos* is now worth a thousand! When they learn Torah, it doesn't go easy. Not because they're stupid. They may be very bright. But Hashem makes them toil and work harder until they could understand the Torah, in order to give them the *schar* of a lot of *talmud Torah*. Do you hear this idea? Unbelievable!

I'll never forget this story. There was a man, a stubborn man, who had a very difficult time committing to putting on *tefillin*. He thought about it. He thought about it again and again. Months went by. I don't remember anymore exactly how long it took him. One day he tells me, "Okay, tell me what date I should start to put on *tefillin*." He was talking about it and talking about it. I told him, "I want you to know that forewarned is forearmed. Expect a major challenge in your mitzvah of *tefillin*." He said, "What's the big deal with *tefillin*? You wrap it on your hand. You put it on your head. What's the big deal?" He made a plan. He's coming out to the yeshivah. He's going to put it on with me. He learned the *halachos*, to a small degree but enough to know how to put on the *tefillin*. He was a man who took pride in doing things right, and he was preparing for that big day. Sunday. Sunday arrived. He spoke to me on Motzei Shabbos. He said, "You're going to be waiting for me?" I said, "I'll be there. I'll put the red carpet out for you. I'm waiting for you." He said he'll be there 45 minutes before *davening*.

⁵ על פי אבות דרבי נתן ג: - ר' שמעאל ברבי יוסי אומר: אם למדת תורה בילדותך, אל תאמר איין לומד בזקנותך - אלא לומד תורה, כי אין יודע איזה ייכש. אם למדת תורה בשעת העשר, אל תשב לך בשעת השען. אם למדת תורה בשעת שביעת, אל תשוב לך בשעת רעבה. אם למדת תורה בשעת הרוח, אל תשוב לך בשעת הדחק. לפ' שטוב לו לאדם דבר אחד בצער ממאה ברורה". ומוסופר על המשגיח דшибת ברנוביץ, רבי ישראל יעקב לובנטס'צ'יל ה"ד, שאמר באחת מחתונות מה שמשוו בשם החף ח"י: כי מה שאמרו "פה פה עטח את עתך בצער" (ענין ספר חוץ ח"ט) - הילכות לשון הרע א' (ז) כי היהת המדה הנכונה בימי ח'צ'יל. אבל אם בminimum קר אמר ח'צ'יל בימי דושתת כל מדה 'פי אלף עבדה וההתאמות' יתרה כדי להתגבר ולעמוד בסכון. ובימים יפה פעם חחתת בצער מלך פעים שלא בצער.

Half an hour before *davening* the man doesn't show up. Fifteen minutes before *davening* he's a no show. He didn't show up even on time. Then I'm waiting for him to come late. No, he doesn't show up. A whole *davening*. My *davening* was ruined that day. *Mamash* I was very, very dejected. I didn't know if I should call him, or should I not call him? Could I say to the guy, "How did you mess up?" Finally I got the guts and I called him.

His wife answered the phone. I said, "Mrs. So and So" - I said it very nicely instead of screaming at her: "*Where in the world was your dud of a husband!?*" "What happened?" I asked gently. "We missed your husband." And she said, "He woke up very early, and as he went down the stairs, his back gave out and he collapsed on the floor. He was writhing in pain like you can't imagine. He said you had told him to expect something, but this was bad. He decided he's going to crawl to his car and he crawled to the garage and couldn't pull himself up to get in the car. He remained there. That's where I found him. He feels awful. He is so upset. He can't move his neck. He can't move his back. He can't move his hands." I said, "Tell him that I'm coming to the house and I'm going to put those *tefillin* on him. If it's the last thing he does in his life, he's putting on those *tefillin* today, no matter what."

It took at least a half hour to travel to the house. I traveled to his home. At that time, he had already crawled up the stairs. It was lunchtime already, and the guy was laying there very disappointed. I said, "This is going to be the best *hanachas tefillin* I've ever seen in my life." I said, "It's going to be a little painful. You have to move your head a little bit. Move your hands." We washed his hands and then we proceeded to put on the *tefillin*.

Now this guy had arms like you've never seen in your life. I'm not kidding. His hands were the size of an average person's thigh. That's the kind of hands he had. He was a professional bodybuilder. You think you could pick up 50 pounds? Big *shpritz*. This guy could benchpress 550 pounds! I am not even kidding. When he became *frum*, he couldn't find a jacket to fit him. They don't make jackets like that in the *frum* stores. They also don't make it in not-*frum* stores. I told him, "You can wear a pair of pants on your hands, maybe. I don't know what you're going to do." He had such a problem with shirts. He couldn't figure out how to get his shirt up to get on his *tefillin*. I told him, "You have to cover your *tefillin* with your shirt."

The guy lay there in bed and we figured out how to get those *tefillin* on. We put the *tefillin* on, and he was in excruciating pain. I told him, "Now the pains are going to dissipate because you passed the test. You'll be fine now."

What happened? I'll tell you what happened. Hashem wanted to give him a chance to put on *tefillin* a thousand times in one day. Hashem wanted to see the *mesiras nefesh* that he was willing to do.

MITZRAYIM IS THE PROTOTYPE OF ALL YESURIM

Hashem told us when the Yidden were in Mitzrayim they weren't getting out that easy. Not even because they cried and because they suffered. They had to go through *teshuva* also. *Teshuva* was another factor, but it also wasn't enough. You know what another factor was? They needed mitzvos. They couldn't get out. The *passuk* says in *Yechezkel*: Hashem says, "I came down and looked at Klal Yisroel and saw them naked and bereft of mitzvos."⁶ *Nu*. "How are you going to get out?" Hashem says. You don't have any mitzvos. Hashem gives them *dam Pesach* and *dam milah*, two mitzvos that are done with blood. It's not *pashut*. I tell people you have to learn a lesson from this, because Mitzrayim is the prototype of every type of *yesurim* you're going to have in your life.

Examples. Here is a person waiting for a *shidduch*. A young man is desperate for a *shidduch*. A young lady is desperate for *shidduch*. And they're crying to Hashem and they say to me, "I guess my time has not yet come." You know what I say back? "I highly doubt it. At 28 or 26 or 25 your time has come. Your years of waiting are up." "Where's my *shidduch*?" "You've got to cry. Have you cried?" Some of them tell me, "I have cried." I say, "Have you *davened* or cried? You've got to cry. You need some *tza'akah* over here. How many times did you cry? Ten, fifty, a hundred?" "What's the magic number?" "*Tza'akah* is how many? 265. Remember that magic number 265. Did you try crying 265 times for *shidduch*? Now we're going to go for 265." Then people have called me and said, "I cried 265 times," and I say to them, "Now, what *zechusim* do you have? Do you have any *zechusim*?" And they say, "What does that mean?" I say, "For the Yidden to get out of Mitzrayim, they had to have the *zechus* of *milah* and *Pesach*. Do you have the *zechusim* of any mitzvos?" And they say, "What should I do?" I say, "Why don't you try giving *tzedakah* for the *hatzos kollel*? That's a powerful, powerful *zechus*. You try the night *kollel*. You get 30 Yidden learning all night long for you. That's some *zechus haTorah*. There are a lot of people who trust in that *zechus* and they want to get out just with that *zechus* alone, so you can try it. If it doesn't work, you'll have to add a little *tza'akah* here. *Teshuvah* never hurts. *Teshuvah* is also good."

You have to study the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and say to Hashem, "You want me to get married." It's like a *bris*. If Hashem creates a person, Hashem wants that person to get married. Otherwise, He

⁶ היזקאל ט, ז: "רבבה צמח נשלה נטףיך ותרבּי ותגָּדְלָי ותבָּאָי בעדי עד"ם שדים נלכו ושרוך צפם ואת ערמ"ה עיריה"

would have made you into a porcupine. He didn't have to make you a human being. He didn't have to make you a female, or a male. Hashem made you and that has to give you the strength to know: He wants to bring your personal *geulah*. But knowing that is not enough. Sometimes it's not. And then you're *zocheh* to the *geulah*.

TESHUVAH IS ALWAYS GOOD

If you would have asked me, I would have told you *Klal Yisrael* are good people. They cried enough. They suffered enough. Isn't that enough? No, it's not enough. You've got to strengthen your *eisek b'mitzvos*, and once you've fulfilled all the conditions, then you can get out. It's the same thing if you're waiting for a child. People wait for children, and they try *Bonei Olam*, a wonderful, wonderful organization, tremendous! What they offer is a tremendous *chessed*, but what they offer is not Hashem. I've spoken to, I can't tell you how many people, who have gone that route and it didn't take. It didn't work.

I remember meeting one of the first people who I worked with years and years ago. This was a guy who once picked me up. I was walking on the street, in another city, another state. The guy pulled up with this big, huge truck. He said, "Hey, Rabbi, would you like a ride?" I said, "Sure. Why not?" I got into the truck. We started to *shmooze*. I asked him, "What's going on in your life?" He tells me that he's trying to have kids, this and that. I told the guy, "Did you ever try IVF?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Really?" He said, "You want to know how many times? Eighteen." I said, "What!?" He said, "Eighteen times I'm going for my nineteenth. I'm ready to spend my \$200,000." I told the guy, "I'm going to give you cheap advice." I said to him, "I have a cheaper way. You're spending a fortune, \$200,000! I have a better *eitzah* for you." I said, "How scrupulous are you with the laws of *taharas hamishpachah*?" "Nu, nu," was the answer. I said, "How old are you?" He was 36. I said, "You do *taharas hamishpachah* in the way you're supposed to, and I mean in the way you're supposed to. Don't look online. Don't look in a book. You go to the *rebbetzin* in this town." I named the *rebbetzin*. "Tell your wife to go to her immediately." "We have an appointment for IVF." I said, "Flush that IVF in the toilet. You don't need this nonsense. Now you're trying Hashem. You tried the IVF eighteen times. It's enough. Try my way. It's free."

And she went to the *rebbetzin*. I told him, "Do it immediately." I got out of the truck. I remember, I'm sitting like a tiny guy, looking up at the guy at his big seat up there. I said to the guy, "By the way, how old is your wife?" He said, "She's 43, maybe that's a little too old." I said, "No, it's not too old. The Torah doesn't say it's too old." I said, "Get working on it and *hatzlachah*."

That was in the summer. I happened to be in that state, in various cities, for some *kiruv* for about a week and a half or two weeks. The day I'm leaving, I meet this guy. It was on the second day of my stay in that city that I met him. On the day when I was leaving, this guy knocked on the door in the house where I was staying. He said, "Can I speak to you?" I said, "Yes, you can." He said, "I'm here to thank you, and I would like to know if you would be my rabbi." He said, "It finally worked." I said, "That fast?" "That day she went to study with the *rebbetzin*, and that day she got cracking on the business." Hakadosh Baruch Hu arranged it. Unbelievable. *Yeshuas Hashem keheref ayin*.

But you've got to have the mitzvos – all the IVF in the world, all the prayers, all the charity – you've got to have the mitzvos sometimes. So prepare yourself, *tefilah*, mitzvos, *bitachon*, *teshuvah*, and then you will be *zocheh* to *geulah*.

❖ IN SUMMARY ❖

The *parsha* says that *Klal Yisrael* were redeemed in the merit of their crying out to Hashem, and in the merit of the *bris* that Hashem made with the *Avos*. *Chazal* also say that Pharoah made *Klal Yisrael* work extra hard under extremely difficult conditions, cramming the 400 years of suffering into 210 years, bringing forward the time of the *geulah*. In addition, even though the years of suffering were complete, *Klal Yisrael* needed special *chessed* and *rachamim* in order to be redeemed. The *Ramban* however says that *Geulas Mitzrayim* came due to a combination of all these factors: Several factors were present; the *galus* was over but they weren't yet deserving of the *geulah*; finally, Hashem answered *Klal Yisrael's* *tefilah* with *rachamim*. We are sometimes faced with very difficult challenges. This is especially noticeable when we have struggled to rise or do *teshuvah* and suddenly we are challenged. How can we overcome our personal *galus* and reach our *geulah*? We can combine the *eitzos* of *Chazal* and make a perfect recipe with the most kosher ingredients: sincere *tefilah*, doing *mitzvos*, *bitachon*, and, *teshuvah*. This week, (*bli neder*), I will see how I could work on asking Hashem for a *yeshuah* that I need by combining several beneficial factors.

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