

Va'ayra 5772

BS"D Shemot and Va'ayra

Part A:

If a single parasha of the Torah contained a full accounting of the past, together with an informative explanation of the present and a definitive projection for the future, it would be deemed a most remarkable source of wisdom. How more so if the past, present and future are encapsulated in a mere two words!

I will return to this.

Several questions regarding our parasha:

1- Moshe Rabbeinu is bitter at the results of his meeting with Paro. He expresses his feelings by protesting to HaShem about Paro's refusal to permit the Jews to stop working for three days in order to sacrifice to HaShem. How odd! Did not HaShem forewarn Moshe that Paro would not agree to Moshe's request?

2- Why was Paro so obstinate? Didn't he realize that even slaves cannot work 24/7 and produce satisfactory results?

And more. After being warned by Moshe of the approaching locust plague, Paro's own advisors said to him (Shemot 10:7) "Egypt is lost"; and yet Paro refused to acknowledge defeat.

3- HaShem informed Moshe that He would "harden Paro's heart". But is freedom of choice not a basic tenet in HaShem's relationship with all human beings?

I submit:

The pasuk relates Moshe's complaint to HaShem (Shemot 5:23)



*From the time I came to Paro to **speak in Your name**, he has brought trouble on this people, and You have not rescued Your people."*

There are two critical (Hebrew) words in Moshe's statement.

Moshe did not just say: "*From the time I came to Paro to speak... he has brought trouble on this people, and You have not rescued Your people.*"

Rather he said: *From the time I came to Paro to speak **in Your name**, he has brought trouble on this people, and You have not rescued Your people.*"

Had Moshe come before Paro as a labor representative requesting a rest day or three for the workers, Paro might have considered the request. However, Moshe immediately raised the issue to a theological level, claiming that he was the messenger of the Almighty God of Israel. Paro, as Egypt's most eminent religious authority, could never acquiesce to a request brought in the name of a foreign deity.

His stubbornness turned into a matter of principle, and principles are guarded and not compromised.

Paro's expected reaction was to increase the burden on the Jewish slaves, by not supplying them with raw material, as a way of displaying his disregard for the God in whose name Moshe appeared.

In this situation, HaShem did not harden Paro's heart by denying him freedom of decision – it was unnecessary. Paro's ideological and religious compulsions did not permit him even a symbolic compromise with the truculent Moshe and Aharon.

Herein lies OUR past, present and future.

In the **past**, our slave experience was based on Paro's unwillingness to recognize the Jewish God.

In the **present** Medina of Israel, official Israel refuses to state that the authentic claim of Am Yisrael over the land is HaShem's promise to our forefathers that this land belongs solely to the Jewish nation forever. The majority of our ministers and members of Knesset have a positive feeling towards Torah Judaism; yet they oppose every piece of legislation that could be interpreted as being pro-religious. For in their minds, if the Medina is perceived to have a religious orientation by basing our presence here on a theological premise, there could no longer be a chance for a peace settlement. By maintaining the conflict as a political, as opposed to a theological, one there could be a chance of everlasting peace of "Paradise" in the Holy Land.

The motivations of the past and present are indeed embedded in the two Hebrew words:

 *to speak in Your name*

But so too are the secrets of the future.

I have often quoted the prophet Yechezkel and others who prophesied that, in the future, the descendants of Asav (today's Christian Europeans and their derivatives) will join with the descendants of Yishmael (the Moslems and their derivatives) in the final military conflict to destroy the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, in Eretz Yisrael. And here both enemies will be destroyed by the "out-stretched hand" of the Almighty.

What a bizarre prophecy! What could ever bring these two disparate gentile peoples to agree upon anything, much less a coordinated military expedition?

The answer again lies in the two Hebrew words that translate ***to speak in Your name.***

Medinat Yisrael will have no choice but to admit that our only

claim to the Holy Land is HaShem's promise to our forefathers as cited in the Torah.

And when we declare in the great international halls of the world that we are indeed God's chosen people and we come in His name, it will serve as a call to arms to the gentile religions to unite against the God of Israel.

Here we have the whole story of mankind encapsulated in two words of the Torah: *"to speak in Your name"*.

Part B:

Did you ever wonder why Paro never tried to do away with Moshe and Aharon? It appears from the Torah that Moshe and Aharon had the "run of the palace." They would come and go freely without ever being touched or even threatened.

At a time and place where human life had no value, the two holy men not only accused, threatened and imperiled the entire Egyptian nation, they even proved time and again that their threats were real as they were turned into the horrible realities of Egyptian life. Yet they walked without fear in situations where lesser crimes were punished by death.

I believe that in the year when Moshe and Aharon were appearing before Paro, their lives were threatened every time they approached the palace gates. They were hounded day and night by Paro's KGB and Gestapo, but HaShem created conditions that protected them (although the Torah does not relate this aspect of the episode).

Why should I think so? Because this was always HaShem's way.

- The Midrash relates that Nimrod threw Avraham Aveinu into a fiery furnace, but Avraham emerged unscathed.
- Ya'akov escaped from the evil designs of Lavan.
- David was saved from the hands of Achish King of Gat (Shmuel, chap. 21).

- Chananya, Mishael and Azarya were thrown into a fiery furnace by Nevuchadnezer, King of Bavel, and they walked around as if they were sunning themselves.
- Daniel emerged from the lion's den unscathed.

But you might be surprised to learn that the greatest miracles of all are happening right now, before our very eyes, in our Holy Land.

How long were Avraham, Chanaya, Mishael and Azarya in their fiery furnaces? Five minutes? An hour?

David was in the town of Gat for a few days.

Daniel was with the ferocious lions for one night.

Moshe and Aharon were under siege for one year.

However, the Jewish yishuv in Eretz Yisrael has been in the lion's den for over 100 years and the Medina has been in the fiery furnace for the last 62 years. Not only have we survived, but we are thriving in today's world where the greatest nations are in downhill spirals.

Just to mention one incident: Several months ago, it was announced that substantial gas and oil sources were discovered in Israel. However, the estimates have now reached legendary proportions, with the natural gas finds described as the largest in the world in the last decade.

I have often written in these weekly messages that, based on the words of the prophets, we in Eretz Yisrael are destined to be materially the wealthiest nation in the world, to be followed by a return of the entire Jewish people to the Torah.

The gifts of HaShem will free us from our dependence on gentile "friends" and from the good will of Jewish communities in the galut who will be sending their "shnorrers" here for financial assistance.

In our parasha, HaShem tells Moshe (Shemot chap. 6):



I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with ...mighty acts of judgment

And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD'.

It has come to pass in our days. HaShem has handpicked everyone in Eretz Yisrael to turn the dream into reality.

Indeed, how fortunate we are!

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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