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12 MIN. before shkia

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RABBI DANIEL COREN

The Path to Da'as

The Torah describes the redemption from Mitzrayim using four languages of *geulah*, and then adds a fifth:

“והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ” — I will bring you to the land.

At first glance, this seems like a straightforward promise. Yet we know that most of the generation standing at *Yetzias Mitzrayim* never entered Eretz Yisrael. How, then, could Hashem say this?

The Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh answers with a remarkable insight. If we look carefully at the *pasuk*, the fifth language of redemption is different from the others. It comes with a condition:

“ידעתם כי אני ה' המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים”

And you shall know that I am Hashem Who takes you out from under the *sivlos* (burdens) of Mitzrayim.

Entry into the land was not just a physical destination. It required *da'as*, a profound level of clarity. Without that *da'as*, the promise could not be fully realized.

WHAT IS DA'AS?

Da'as is not simple knowledge. The first time the Torah uses the word *da'as* is by Adam and Chava, where it refers to an intimate, experiential connection. *Da'as* means clarity so real that it is felt, not just understood.

That is why the *Navi* describes the future *geulah* with the words

“ומלאה הארץ דעה את ה'” — The world will be filled with *da'as* of Hashem.

In the times of Mashiach, Hashem's existence won't just be believed—it will be experienced.

The generation of the *Midbar* was offered that opportunity, but they did not reach that level of *da'as*. And so, the והבאתי of תנאי was not met.

SIVLOS MITZRAYIM – THE NECESSARY LOAD

The phrase “סבלות מצרים” deepens this idea. *Sivlos* does not only mean suffering; it means a load, a burden. The burden itself is what creates the capacity for *da'as*.

This idea appears throughout Torah history:

At *Bris Bein HaBesarim*, Hashem tells Avraham “ידוע תדע”—true *da'as* will come only through exile.

Chazal say the four exiles are hinted to in “תהו ובהו” at the time of creation.

The *Nesivos Shalom* explains that the purpose of creation is להטיב, to give ultimate good. But to receive that good, we must first build the vessel. That vessel is forged through darkness, exile, and burden.

Da'as does not emerge despite the *sivlos*—it emerges because of them.

YOSEF AND THE CLARITY OF PURPOSE

This understanding sheds light on Yosef's words to his brothers at the end of *Parshas Vayechi*:

“ועתה אל תעצבו... כי למחיה שלחתי”

Yosef fully recognized that his brothers acted through free will and were responsible for their choices. Yet he also understood that the outcome was entirely part of Hashem's plan. That is why he repeatedly says “שלחתי,” Hashem sent me.

Yosef carried the burden with clarity. He understood that suffering was not random; it was purposeful.

We see this same clarity in the *Haftorah*, with David HaMelech and Shimi ben Geira.

When Shimi cursed David, David said, “Hashem told him to curse.” Yet at the end of his life, David instructs Shlomo to deal with Shimi appropriately. This wasn't revenge, it was responsibility. David held both truths at once: human accountability and Divine orchestration.

THE HUMAN SEARCH FOR MEANING

Interestingly, this truth echoes even in modern thought. In the early 1900s, three Jewish psychologists debated what drives humanity:

Freud said pleasure.

Adler said power.

Viktor Frankl said meaning.

All three were right. Rav Noach Weinberg taught that pleasure, power, and purpose are all levels of *ta'anug*. But the highest is purpose, meaning that is earned through struggle. Frankl didn't just theorize this; he lived it in the concentration camps.

THE MESSAGE

The lesson that emerges is clear and deeply comforting:

Darkness and exile are not failures. They are the path to *da'as*.

The *sivlos* we carry are the very loads that prepare us for clarity, connection, and ultimate redemption.

And until the world reaches that *da'as*—ה' ומלאה הארץ דעה את ה'—we continue the journey, carrying the burden that will one day become the vessel for light.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR

in R' Coren's office every Sunday at 8:00 PM

TORAH TAVLIN

The Flame of Enthusiasm

The Torah points out: “*He is Aharon, and He is Moshe*” that Hashem told to go to Pharaoh.” Well, isn't this obvious? Do you know any other Aharon and Moshe that the Torah could be speaking about?

R' Simcha Sheps *z"l* has a beautiful explanation. He says that the Torah says (*Bamidbar* 8:3), “ויעש כן אהרן,” and Rashi says that Aharon was appreciated for his enthusiasm. He lit the menorah the first time and the thousandth time with the same excitement and joy! He was praised for not changing (שלא שינה) and losing his passion and love for this mitzvah.

So too with Aharon and Moshe here. They went to Pharaoh ten times to carry out their sa-

cred mission to free the Jews from Egypt. Each time, Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to let them go.

Under normal circumstances, when you do something over and over and it doesn't work, you become disheartened. You lose your *cheshek* to keep trying. From here, we see how one must view every mitzvah that he does. This is a *shlichus* from Hashem! This is MY mission! We should imagine Hashem Himself telling us to give *tzeddakah*, or keep Shabbos, or eat kosher. We must live our lives with a passion because that is the only way to be a true servant of Hashem.

R' Avraham Chaim Feuer *shlit'a* says that the numerical value of the word “ישראל” is 541.

The numerical value of “אש,” which is fire, is 301. If you take the fire out of a Jew, which means you deduct 301 from 541, you are left with 240. 240 is the gematria of “עמלק”! In fact, this was exactly what Amalek did to us. “אשר קרר בדרך” means that he cooled us off. He made us cold. He took out the fire that was burning inside us after we experienced the extraordinary miracles of *Kriyas Yam Suf* and *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

The root of “התלהבות,” which means enthusiasm, is “להב,” a flame. If the flame of Torah is not ignited within us, we can live as frum Jews but totally miss the point. We must always be filled with a fire of excitement and passion to do the will of Hashem.

RABBI YY JACOBSON



True Freedom

G-d spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and He commanded them to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, to let the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

G-d is charging Moses with two directives: command the people of Israel, and then command Pharaoh, the king. However, the verse is ambiguous: What did G-d command Moses to instruct the people? The message for Pharaoh is clear: Let the children of Israel out of Egypt. But what is it that Moses is supposed to command the people themselves?

The Jerusalem Talmud says something profoundly enigmatic:

G-d instructed Moses to command the Jewish people the laws of freeing slaves.

The Talmud is referring to a law recorded later in Exodus: If a Jew sells himself as a slave, the owner must let him go after six years. He is forbidden to hold onto the slave for longer. This was the law Moses was to share with the Israelites while they were in Egyptian bondage.

But what does the commandment to the Jewish people that they free their slaves one day in the future have to do with the mission to Pharaoh to set the Hebrews free from bondage?

Who is free?

The answer to this question is simple and moving and is vital to the understanding of liberty in Judaism.

Before Pharaoh can liberate the Jewish slaves, they must be ready to become free. You can take a man out of slavery, but it may prove more challenging to take slavery out of a man. Externally, you may be free; internally, you may still be enslaved.

What is the first and foremost symptom of being free? That you learn to confer freedom upon others.

The dictator, the control freak, or the abusive spouse or parent does not know how to give others freedom. They feel compelled to force others into the mold that they have created for them. Uncomfortable in their own skin, they are afraid that someone will overshadow them, expose their weaknesses, usurp their position, or make them feel extra in this world. Outwardly, they attempt to appear powerful, but inwardly, their power is a symptom of inner misery, insecurity, and confinement.

When I do not confront the parts in me that are wounded, my animal-soul consciousness, which has developed myriads of coping mechanisms, emotions, drives, instincts, and belief systems to keep it safe and in control, will be running my inner operating system. Without even noticing it, I am trying to control the people around me through all types of creative and sometimes brilliant ways so that I can feel superficially safe and comfortable. My relationships and emotions are shaped by my internal wounds and terror—the need to survive in a scary and unsafe world.

In such a situation, how can I give up control? How can I celebrate otherness? How can I remain vulnerable, present, regulated, feeling your heartbeat with no agenda, when I need to put my heart on lockdown in order to survive or I need to control you?

I am simply not capable of truly celebrating another person's life and individuality because I am desperate each moment for emotional oxygen; all I can think of is how to remain protected in a world that is danger-

ous. I may be aware of this, but I do feel the anxiety of manipulation.

Who is powerful? He who truly knows how to empower and trust. Who is free? He who can free others. Who is a leader? He who creates other leaders.

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power," Abraham Lincoln said. Ask yourself: Do you know how to celebrate internally the presence and heartbeat of the other? Can you enjoy the soaring success of your loved ones and constituents? Do you encourage them to spread their wings and maximize their potential? Can you allow others to shine?

Pharaoh may set you free physically. But former slaves can become present tyrants. People who were abused sometimes become abusers themselves. It is what they know about life; it is the paradigm they were raised with. They grew up in abuse and slavery, so they continue the cycle with others.

The first mitzvah the Jews had to hear from Moses before even he could go to Pharaoh to let them go free was: One day you will be free. Remember that freedom is a gift; use it to free others.

As it turns out, this is a remarkable Talmudic insight. The first commandment ever given to the Jewish people was: Don't internalize what the Egyptians have done to you. Find the spark of freedom, the inner Divine core, that no trauma can tarnish or paralyze. That part has remained free, and you will cherish conferring it upon others.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

MONDAY & THURSDAY Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)

SHABBOS Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)

PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.

UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ

Mizmor Shir L'yom HaShabbos

It says in the *Kisvei ha'Ari z"l* that singing melodies is mainly on Shabbos because on Shabbos, the worlds are elevated to a higher level. And the elevation of a soul is via song and melody.

==== Sefer *Hamamorim* 5672, *Perek* 403 [*Parshas V'eirah* 5775]

On Shabbos, the worlds are elevated. The *neshamos* are ele-

vated out of *Gehinnom*. The *neshamos* in *Gan Eden Hatachton* and in *Gan Eden Ha'elyon* are elevated and are at a higher level, which brings the *neshamos* to a higher level of pleasure. Therefore, on Shabbos, when we eat and experience *oneg Shabbos* with our bodies, we also sing melodies to bring pleasure, through song, to our *neshomos* that are elevated.



RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



A Renter's Requirement to Affix a Mezuzah

The Torah tells us that one who owns a house is required to affix a *mezuzah* on all the doorposts of the house, which must be done as soon as one moves in. What about if one is only renting? The Torah mandates: "You shall affix a *mezuzah* on the doorposts of your house." Does a rented home qualify as "your" house or not? The answer actually depends on where the house is located!

The Gemara in *Menachos* tells us that one who lives in Eretz Yisroel must affix a *mezuzah* immediately upon moving into a new home, whether he owns the home or it is merely rented. However, in the Diaspora, it depends. One who bought a house is required to put the *mezuzah* immediately, but if it is a rental, one has until 30 days to put up the *mezuzah*.

There is a difference of opinion among the *Rishonim* as to how to understand the exemption of a renter for the first 30 days and why he is required to put up a *mezuzah* after 30 days.

One way of understanding is that a rented house is not really considered "your" house, and *min haTorah*, one is not required to affix a *mezuzah* at all. But once one lives there for a period of 30 days, it looks like it is his house, and people will think that he is living in the house and not fulfilling the mitzvah of putting up a *mezuzah*. Therefore, the *Chachamim* mandated that after 30 days, one must affix a *mezuzah*.

Other *Rishonim* explain that a rented home is, in fact, considered "your" home, and after 30 days, one is required to have a *mezuzah min haTorah*. However, until 30 days, it is not certain that the person is there to stay and, in addition, one is not really fully settled until 30 days. Therefore, we do not consider him there permanently until he is there for 30 days. We find a precedent to this concept in other areas

of halacha (in regard to taxes and certain *tzeddakos*), that until one lives in a place for 30 days, he is not considered a full-fledged resident of that town. Therefore, one is not required to affix a *mezuzah* until 30 days, when we know that he is there to stay.

However, in Eretz Yisroel, there are different regulations, and even a renter is required to affix a *mezuzah* immediately. The Gemara explains that the reason for this is to facilitate *yishuv Eretz Yisroel*, the establishment of people living and settling in Eretz Yisroel. Rashi there explains that if we require one to immediately affix a *mezuzah*, he will think twice before packing out, since halacha requires one to leave the *mezuzos* behind. Additionally, if one does move out, the house will be easily taken by others since it is fully loaded with kosher *mezuzos*.

The *Sfas Emes* raises some issues with this explanation and offers another interpretation. As we mentioned previously, a *mezuzah* is a *shmirah*, a safeguard for a home. When there is no *mezuzah*, there is room for mishaps and destruction to occur. The *Chachamim* therefore mandated that one must immediately affix a *mezuzah* to ensure that every house in Eretz Yisroel will be safe and sound. The *Sefer Hachinuch* adds another point. As we mentioned, one reason for the exemption during the first 30 days is due to its lack of permanency. However, in Eretz Yisroel, where we hope that one will settle, the permanent status is immediate. May we merit to live there permanently, speedily in our days!

IN CONCLUSION

One who rents a home outside of Eretz Yisroel has a grace period of 30 days to put up the *mezuzos*, but in Eretz Yisroel, or if one buys a home anywhere, *mezuzos* must be put up immediately.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara
Currently: מסכת יומא
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei
Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently : הלכות ניבוד אב ואם

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Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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RABBI SHRAGA FREEDMAN



The Flood Beneath the Foundation

Rabbi Shloime Tauber shared a remarkable story about his father, Rabbi Yisrael Tauber, a beloved *maggid shiur* in Monsey, New York, who inspired thousands through his teachings and writings.

In his younger years, Rabbi Tauber invested in real estate and purchased a three-story office building that provided a steady source of income. One day, an Italian non-Jewish neighbor approached him with an offer far above the market value. It was a golden opportunity. The deal was signed, and closing was set for three months later.

But a few weeks before closing, disaster struck. Tenants on the ground floor called frantically; the building was flooded with two feet of water. An engineer discovered the cause: a natural spring ran beneath the property, rising every few years and flooding the lower level. It was a recurring, costly problem.

Now, Rabbi Tauber faced a serious moral dilemma. Should he disclose the issue and risk losing the sale or stay silent and walk away with a large profit?

He didn't turn to a lawyer — he turned to a *dayan*.

"What is the halachah?" he asked. "Do I have to tell him? What does Hashem want me to do?"

The *dayan* replied, "According to halachah, you must tell him. Deceiving a non-Jew is also forbidden, *gezel akum assur*."

So Rabbi Tauber called his lawyer and arranged a meeting with the buyer. Sitting across the table, he said calmly, "We are Jews, and we must do what's right. There's a recurring flooding issue beneath the building. If you'd like, I'll return your deposit and cancel the deal, but the choice is yours."

The buyer stormed out to consult his lawyer. When he returned, he said sharply, "I still want the building. You're not pushing me out."

Rabbi Tauber smiled gently. "The decision is entirely yours."

He had his lawyer draft a statement confirming that the buyer had been fully informed, and the sale went through.

A year later, the buyer called requesting a meeting. "Mr. Tauber," he said, "I owe you an apology, to you and to the Jewish people. I didn't believe you. I thought you were trying to back out for more money. But last week, the tenants called; the ground floor flooded again. You were completely honest. **I can't believe there are people so truthful and decent.**" He then handed Rabbi Tauber an expensive bottle of kosher wine in gratitude.

RABBI JARED VIDERS



The Blessing of Normalcy

This week's thought emerges from the stranger I met ever-so-briefly at the end of my driveway Thursday morning. While I was leaving for shul, the garbage man (or "sanitation worker," as he might prefer to be called) remarked, "What a nice day it is." An unexpectedly upbeat comment from a man collecting trash at 6:30 AM in dark, damp, 37-degree temperatures. How strong could this guy's Java possibly be to maintain (and express) such a positive perspective under such seemingly dismal conditions?

The answer, obviously enough, was the fact that this morning's balmy weather was a marked departure from the single-digit freeze wave that had gripped Monsey for the last two weeks.

Call it the theory of relativity. Call it the power of contrast. Thirty-seven degrees is a whole lot more pleasant when one can still feel yesterday's wind chill in their bones.

Indeed, we have all experienced that surge of contentedness that invariably accompanies the removal of aggravation.

In this week's Torah portion, can you imagine the euphoric relief of the Egyptian population when the frogs finally stopped their incessant, nationwide croaking? I envision that first frog-free morning and its impact on the Egyptians. "Yeah, sure is a lot of traffic in Cairo today, but at least there are no frogs!" "Yeah, the price of hummus is going through the roof, but anything's better than those slimy toads everywhere."

And that morning after the swarm of wild beasts departed, wouldn't life as "normal" be a reason to smile? After all, no wild boars breathing down my neck. No deadly scorpions or Siberian tigers on the prowl. Just normal is just great.

"Therefore, say to the Children of Israel: 'I am G-d, and **I shall take you out** from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me for a people, and I shall be a G-d to you; and you shall know that I am the Lord your G-d Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt.'" [6:6-7]

These four expressions of liberation correspond to the four cups of wine we consume at the Pesach Seder.

Rabbeinu Bachya explains that the very first expression, "I shall take you out," signifies G-d's removal of the Jews from the burdens of slavery even though they would remain as the Egyptians' chattel for another six months.

What kind of half-baked, watered-down notion of freedom is this?! We are not free to flee Egyptian borders and are already hoisting wine in celebration?!

The answer could be that relatively-speaking, the cessation from back-breaking servitude was indeed a watershed transformation in the lives of the Jewish people. This initial stage of redemption was euphoric to the extent that it marked a radical departure from the bitterness of decades upon decades of physical and emotional burdens. Are we home free? For sure not. Do we have what to rejoice over? 100%.

Carrying this notion into our everyday lives, on those days when we "can't complain," take a moment to appreciate how beautiful the view is from emotional and physical sea level. The mere fact that you are not in the hospital. That you have a closet full of clothes. The mere fact that so many things are not going wrong. The myriad number of hassles you don't have to contend with. These milestones are all too often lost in the shuffle of everyday life. When we take them to heart, our capacity for gratefulness and positivity will undoubtedly be closer at hand.



הרב בן ציון סנה

פרשיות אלו מסוגלות לאפשר לנו לצאת מכל הצרות והמצרים שיש כל אחד ואחד, ולכן צריכים להכניס כאן את האמונה "וידעתם כי אני ד'."

מישהו אחד מבני ברק היתה לו סדרת פגישות בחיפה, והרכב שלו היה במוסך, והיה לו תיק מפואר והיה שם גם הפלאפון, והנה הוא עולה על מונית, מגיע לחיפה ויורד מהמונית, הוא הולך לפגישה ורוצה לצלצל, והוא תופס שכשירד מן המונית, הוא שכח את התיק במונית, ואינו יודע מי הוא הנהג ואיפה יחפש. הוא מתחיל להסתובב, ואינו יודע מה לעשות. הוא מחפש טלפון ומצלצל הביתה, ולא מרימים. הוא לא יודע מה לעשות עד שהחליט שהוא הולך לקחת מונית, ולחזור הביתה. כבר עבר שלוש רבעי יום,

האברך מגיע לבני ברק ויורד, והוא מוצא את הנהג שלקח אותו לחיפה בבוקר. הנהג שואל אותו "אתה אבדת תיק?" והוא אומר "בוודאי". ואיך שהוא לוקח את התיק הוא חושב לעצמו בשביל דקה אחד ששכחתי את התיק כבר הלכו לי כל הפגישות. מה אעשה? איזו בושות! כל אחד חיכה ואחרי שלא הגעתי גידו לי אתה לא בן אדם, אמרו לך להיות בשעה זו וזו, ולא הגעת, האם ככה יכולים לעשות אתך עסק?

הוא פותח את התיק ומוציא את הטלפון, והוא רואה שיש חמש הודעות קוליות. הוא מתחיל לשמוע הודעה א': "כאן מדבר המלמד של בנך אתה יודע ישיצאנו היום לטיול ואני צריך לדבר אתך". עוד לפני שעבר להודעה השניה כבר יצא הלב מה. כבר יכול להיות עם בני? והנה הודעה ב': "כאן מדבר המלמד כבר עבר שעתיים לא מוציאים את הבן שלך. אנא תרים טלפון". הודעה ג: מהמטטרה: אבא איפה אתה? אנחנו מחפשים את הבן". הודעה ד': "ב"ה מצאנו את הבן שנפל מהר, והנה אנחנו בדרך לביה"ח. מקוים לבשורות טובות". הודעה ה': "ב"ה תפרו אותו ועברו סדרת בדיקות. מקוים שיחזור בהקדם הביתה". ואז אשתו מתקשרת אליו איפה אתה? בואו ונחשוב: האיש היה עצבני כל היום, למה שכח לשניה את התיק וכל הפגישות הדחופות התבטלו. אבל תחשוב: אם היית מקבל טלפון הזה היית מסוגל לעמוד אחרי הטלפון הראשון? ממילא הכל היה מתבטל. לבסוף קיבלת הכל בפעם אחד.

מספרים שהיה איזו סבתא שכל יום היא היתה מיעצת לקודשא בריך הוא כל מיני הצעות איך לעזור לה, וביום אחד הגיעה עזרה ממקום שהיא בכלל לא חשבה עליו. אמרה להקב"ה, "על עצה כזאת לא חשבתי". נכון שאלו סיפורי סבתא, אבל כל אחד צריך להתבונן איך הקב"ה ימלא את כל מחסורו. אם כן, אל תתן לקב"ה עצות; הוא יסתדר לבד. רק מלא את עצמך בשמחה וביטחון. וכמו שהתולדות פרשת בשלח אומר, וז"ל: שמעתי ממורי מי שרוצה לפטור מהצר והמצר והוא נוסע אחריו. משל לאשה יולדת שהלכה למקום אחר להיפטר מחבלי הלידה, והצער הולך אחריה, והעצה היעוצה היא שכל אחד יתפלל להש"י ויפטר מהצער, וז"ש "מן המיצר קראתי יה ענני במרחב יה" (תהלים קי"ח) ודפח"ח. וז"ש "והנה מצרים נוסע אחריהם" אז הבינו זה, לכך "ויצעק בני ישראל אל ה'".

הקב"ה נקרא מקום. כי אם אדם אומר במקום הזה יהיה יותר טוב, אומרים לו: "בן אדם – הקב"ה נמצא בכל מקום, ואם כן אין במקום אחר משהו יותר טוב, שלא יהא לברך חלוק על המקום אלא ב"כל מקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא", תעמוד ותדע שאיפה שאתה נמצא, הקב"ה שומע אותך בכל מצב.



RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER

Gan HaTorah MIRACLE WITHIN A MIRACLE

"ויהי ברד ואש מתלקחת בתוך הברד, כבד מאוד אשר לא היה כמותו בכל מצרים מאז היתה לגוי"

"There was hail, and fire blazing inside the hail, very heavy, such as had never been in the entire land of Mitzrayim, from the time it became a nation." Rashi tells us that there was fire blazing inside the hail. This was a miracle within a miracle. The fire and hail were intermingled, and although the hail is made of water, and fire and water by nature do not coexist, yet to perform the will of their Creator, they made peace between themselves. What exactly was the miracle within a miracle, and why did Hakadosh Boruch Hu create this miracle within a miracle?

The Midrash says that the fire in the middle of the hail can be compared to two parts of the same army that are rivals of each other. When the king needs them to go to battle for him, they make peace and go do the king's bidding. So too here, **the hail and fire made peace with each other and worked in tandem to fulfill ratzon Hashem.** Hakadosh Boruch Hu performed this miracle to be *meramez* that here Klal Yisroel were *zoche* to this *makkah* through two *middos*, *middas harachamim* and *middas hadin*. The *din* turned to *rachamim* for Klal Yisroel; the Mitzriyim were afflicted, and Klal Yisroel were not. It is known that fire represents *din*, and water represents *rachamim*. They were working in tandem here. The fire and water made peace Above, representing that *middas hadin and middas harachamim* were working together. (חכמת התורה)

There is something that we call nature. It is the system that Hakadosh Boruch Hu placed in this world, and there are basic laws that it follows. Hakadosh Boruch Hu created those laws, and He can go outside of those laws whenever He chooses. Fire and ice do not mix according to the laws of nature. However, when it comes to Hakadosh Boruch Hu, there are no restrictions of nature. The fire and ice came together for *ratzon Hashem*, which superseded their natural tendencies.

The first miracle that occurred was that there was hail and fire that fell upon the land of Mitzrayim, which was contrary to nature. Then, on top of that, the hail and fire fell together, the fire within the hail, and they worked in tandem and not against each other. This was a sign that Hakadosh Boruch Hu does not work within the confines of nature.

There is also a deeper lesson that can be learned from here. Fire represents *middas hadin*, and water represents *middas harachamim*. Many in the world believed that they were two separate powers, from two separate sources. In fact, we all know, that it is all one; it is all from Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Hakadosh Boruch Hu can unleash *middas hadin* at the same time as *middas harachamim*. While here, by the *makkah* of *Barad*, this was just a *remez*, at *Krias Yam Suf*, this became clear to all. While Hakadosh Boruch Hu was employing *middas harachamim* and saving Klal Yisroel, simultaneously, He was employing *middas hadin* and killing the Mitzriyim. Hakadosh Boruch Hu was showing Klal Yisroel His great love for them, that although the *middas hadin* was alive and active, He treated them with *middas harachamim* and saved them. We must reciprocate that love for Hakadosh Boruch Hu and seek to truly be one with Him.

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Part 2

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ערב ר"ח שבת

יום א' פרשת בא Sunday, January 18

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12:30 pm יחל -	Tent ד
1:00 pm	Tent ג
1:30 pm	Tent ב
2:00 pm	20 Upstairs
2:30 pm	Tent ב
3:00 pm	20 Upstairs
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Thursday Night Mishmar with R' Yitz Rosenberg




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מנחה עם קריאת ויחל

Thursday, January 15th
Thursday, January 22nd
Monday, January 26th
Thursday, January 29th
Thursday, February 5th
Monday, February 9th
Thursday, February 12th

4:15 PM | TENT D

RABBI DON JARASHOW

Eye of the Storm

Apple, Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, Samsung—every major tech giant pours billions into capturing your attention within seconds. With attention spans down to eight seconds, ads must hook instantly. The formula is simple: Catch the eye fast, then keep it.

But this isn't new. This strategy is as old as Creation itself, dating back to the *Nachash HaKadmoni*. In Mesivta, my 11th-grade rebbe, Rav Abba Levitan shlita, often taught that the *yetzer hara's* greatest strength lies in the "now." When an *aveirah* appears, the *yetzer hara* pulls you toward what's immediate, right in front of you, available *this very second*.

JUST ONCE

The Satan whispers, "Just once. Just a second. Then stop." But once he has you for that moment, you're *chapped*, caught in the lion's den. And as we all know, once you're in, getting out is far harder.

During *Shovavim* especially, we must strengthen ourselves against the nonstop battles with the Satan. The real *nisayon* is that first second. After that, the temptation fades quickly. It's like seeing a piece of cake; the hardest moment is the first glance. Walk past it, and suddenly, you're fine. The same is true with the *yetzer hara*. Recognize the challenge in that first second, hold strong, and you own the battle.

With foresight, it can feel as simple as walking past that cake.

MAKKAS TZFARDEIAH

This week's *parshah* gives a vivid example during the second *makkah*, *Tzfardeiah*. The *passuk* says (*Shemos* 8:2):

ויט אהרן את־ידו על מימי מצרים ותעל הצפרדע ותכס את־ארץ מצרים.

Rashi, quoting *Sanhedrin* 67, explains that the plague began with one frog. When the Mitzrim hit it, it split into two. Hit again, four. And so on, until Egypt swarmed with frogs.

The Steipler Gaon asks: Why didn't they stop hitting it? After 100 frogs, after 1,000, why continue? This was a self-inflicted plague.

He explains that the Mitzrim were so consumed by stubbornness and anger toward Hashem and the Jews that they ignored the obvious miracle. Their rage blinded them. Once emotionally hooked, they couldn't step back, even as they destroyed themselves. Had they paused for even a moment, they could have spared themselves immense suffering. But once they surrendered to that first impulse, they were trapped.

Reb Shimshon Pincus adds that this trait fueled all the *makkos*. Had Pharaoh set aside arrogance at Moshe's first warning, Egypt could have avoided catastrophe.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

Rav Eliyahu Dessler, author of *Michtav*

M'Eliyahu, embodied self-discipline. He taught that true greatness, *shleimus ha'adam*, comes from resisting immediate desires and living with intention.

At the start of World War II, Rav Dessler was in London, but his wife and daughter were trapped in Poland. For six years, he lived with fear, prayer, and uncertainty. Communication was nearly impossible. When a long-awaited letter finally arrived with photos of his daughter, his neighbor found him sitting calmly, the envelope unopened.

Rav Dessler explained, "When something pulls at me with all my soul, that's when I'm most vulnerable. So I wait. Ten minutes. I regain control. Then I open it."

Try it. The next time a *nisayon* hits, pause and say, "One second." That single second places you in the eye of the storm, where everything is calm, where clarity returns, where you choose your response instead of reacting impulsively.

Use reminders: "mail" for Rav Dessler's restraint, "frog" for the Mitzrim's stubbornness, "Apple" for the billions spent to capture a single moment of attention.

By pausing, you regain control. The storm passes more gently, and you emerge richer—not in money, but in character, growth, and *shleimus ha'adam*. In that moment, you become the true billionaire.



RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Moshe Was Human



Surprisingly, the Torah in *Parashat Vaeira* interrupts the story of the Exodus from Egypt with a genealogical record of the first three tribes of Israel, Reuben, Shimon, and Levi. It lists the names of the first several generations that descended from these three sons of Yaakov. Once the Torah reaches Moshe and Aharon, members of the tribe of Levi, this section ends, and the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* resumes.

The commentators offered different explanations for why the Torah found it necessary to list the names of the descendants of these tribes. A particularly insightful approach was taken by Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (Frankfurt, Germany, 1808-1888), whose *yahrtzeit* is observed around the time this *parasha* is read, on 27 Tevet. He explains that Moshe's singular, exceptional stature of greatness gave rise to the concern that people would look to him as a type of divine being. We know of other religions that elevated their leaders to G-d-like status, Heaven forbid, finding it necessary to claim that the founder of their faith was more than just a human. Judaism, however, rejects such a notion outright. Of course, we admire and revere our spiritual heroes, but we firmly believe that they were human beings, sharing the same physical properties as the rest of us. At no point did Judaism ever embrace the notion that a human being can be a divine being.

And for this reason, Rav Hirsch writes, the Torah elaborates on Moshe's family background. It wants to emphasize that Moshe, like us, was produced by a father and a mother who got married, and that he had siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and a large extended family. Before Moshe confronted Pharaoh to bring the ten plagues and put the miraculous process of the Exodus into motion, it was necessary for the Torah to emphasize that Moshe was human, no less human than anyone else, a member of a family.

Rav Hirsch's explanation brings to mind a brilliant insight of the Hatam Sofer (Rav Moshe Sofer, Pressburg, 1762-1839) to explain an otherwise perplexing comment of the Midrash. When the time came for Moshe to pass away, G-d said to him, "*Hen karevu yamecha la'muf*" – "Behold, the time of your death is approaching" (*Devarim* 31:14). The Midrash relates that Moshe responded by questioning why G-d used the word "*hen*" in this context, in informing him of his imminent death. Moshe had used this same word earlier in describing G-d's unlimited power and dominion over the Earth: "*Hen l'Hashem Elokecha ha'Shamayim u'shmeih ha'Shamayim*" – "Behold, G-d owns the heavens and the upper heavens..." (*Devarim* 10:14). Why, Moshe asked, would G-d use the word that he had invoked in praising Him to announce that he would soon leave this world? The Midrash does not tell us how G-d responded to Moshe's complaint, why He chose to use the word "*hen*" when informing Moshe that he would soon pass away.

The Hatam Sofer explained that G-d used this word precisely because Moshe's death served to preserve the belief in G-d's exclusive, absolute dominion over the Earth. Moshe's passing was, of course, a painful loss, but it was a crucial reminder that he was only human, that despite his unparalleled stature of greatness, he was not a divine being. And thus, G-d informed Moshe about his imminent passing with the word "*hen*," hearkening to Moshe's pronouncement of G-d's unlimited rule over the Earth, a tenet of faith that was reinforced by Moshe's death, as his mortality demonstrated that he was human, and not divine.

ZERA SHIMSHON

Free Food

והדגה אשר ב'אור מתה (ז' כא')

And the fish that were in the Nile died (7:21).

The Medrash (*Shmos Rabba* 9:9) says that the Jewish people became rich from the Plague of Blood. This came about because the Jews were the only ones who had access to fresh drinking water, which they subsequently sold to the Egyptians.

The *Zera Shimshon* asks how Chazal saw this in the aforementioned *passuk*.

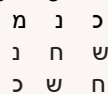
The *Zera Shimshon* explains that the Egyptians allowed the Jewish people to catch and eat fish free of charge. This is clearly seen from the *passuk* where the Jewish people complained about the *mann* in the desert, saying (*Bamidbar* 11:5), "*We remember the fish we ate in Egypt free of charge.*" Now that the fish died, the Jewish people just lost their source of free nourishment, and they would now have to spend money they did not have to buy food.

The *Zera Shimshon* learns that the Medrash understood that if the Jewish people just lost their source of free food, Hashem had to have brought a remedy along with this loss. This must have been from the fact that they were now able to sell the most precious and most necessary commodity, water, at a tidy profit. This being the case, they were no longer in need of free food since they now had the means with which to acquire food.

The *Zera Shimshon* points out that looking through the *pesukim* of the ten plagues, there were three about which Moshe Rabbeinu did not issue a warning before their coming: כנב, lice, שח, boils, חשך, darkness.

The *Zera Shimshon* explains the reason for this in the following manner.

The *Yalkut Reuvaini (Va'eira)* quotes the *Sefer HaPliah* that these three plagues happened together. When Egypt was plagued with lice, it also came along with boils and darkness. (*It would seem that lice was the primary plague, and the other accompanying plagues did not come with the same force that they came with when they served as the primary plagues.*) As well, when Egypt was plagued with boils, it was accompanied by (a lesser degree of) lice and darkness, etc. This is seen in the following diagram:



All these plagues can be read regularly (*right to left*) and can also be read from the bottom up. This indicates that they are interconnected.

For this reason, Moshe Rabbeinu did not warn Pharaoh before the arrival of these plagues, since had he warned Pharaoh about lice, Pharaoh would have said that Moshe was wrong, since it wasn't only lice that came, but rather, lice, boils, and darkness. As well, he could not warn Pharaoh about the other two plagues that would be accompanying the lice, since it was not yet the main moment for them. This is why no warning preceded these plagues.

SHIUR
SCHEDULE

ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR

BY RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM BURGER

THURSDAY 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM (20 Upstairs)

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HEBREW ACADEMY OF CLEVELAND

True Yiras Shamayim

הירא את דבר השם...

Who among the servants of Pharaoh feared the word of G-d (9:20)

The Torah tells us that the G-d-fearing Egyptians brought their animals indoors for fear of the hail that would strike the country. Chazal derive from here *Tov she'b'nechashim ratzutz es mocho*, "The best of snakes, smash his head." (In other words, there is no such thing as a good snake.) Chazal base this statement on the fact that when Pharaoh required horses and chariots, he had to obtain these horses from someone. Since all of Egypt's animals had been killed, from where could Pharaoh have gotten the animals? Apparently, the G-d-fearing Egyptians who had saved their animals by listening to Hashem later contributed to Pharaoh's war machine. The G-d-fearing Egyptians were far from G-d-fearing – once the danger had passed. Chazal are teaching us that a snake remains a snake. Even if the snake earns the appellation of *yarei es dvar Hashem*, how is it possible for him to sustain this trait? If he fears G-d,

he obviously fears acting like a snake. This is what Chazal are teaching us: a snake is a snake. The finest, most G-d-fearing snake remains a snake. His *frumkeit* will not prevail over his basic nature.

Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, *shlita*, supplements this with an insightful lesson. As long as the basic nature of the snake (or anyone for that matter) is not expunged, it will remain an inherent dormant part of the subject, even if it is supposedly concealed by *yiras Shamayim*! True *yiras Shamayim* is not an external quality. It is real, it is intrinsic, being part and parcel of the subject's character, personality, and essence. Unless the person/subject is able to transform their essence completely, such that the *yiras Shamayim* extirpates any and every vestige of serpentine tendency from within, they remain a *nachash*, snake. Therefore, the only antidote to his poison is to smash his head.

Yiras Shamayim should change the person. It is a transformative quality that is not merely superficial (for example, the person merely puts on frum "airs"). If he does not in-

trinsically change, his *frumkeit* is to no avail. It is not real. Sadly, we may observe individuals who manifest external signs of being devout and G-d-fearing, yet, when "push comes to shove" under pressure, they suddenly resort to acting in a manner totally unbecoming of anyone of such a lofty spiritual connection. This is an indication that what you see is all that there is. Covert *yiras Shamayim* sadly has no internal influence on the person.

Rav Ezrachi supports this from the fact that the G-d-fearing Egyptians, when confronted with the dilemma of listening to Pharaoh or saving their animals, did what was right and brought their animals inside. They demonstrated (what was supposedly) their *yiras Shamayim*, which transcended their fear of Pharaoh and of public opinion, but it was not inherent. It had not transformed their essential natures, for, when Pharaoh needed chariots to chase the fleeing Jews, these G-d fearing Egyptians were prepared to give him their horses. I guess they were not that G-d-fearing after all. Their *yiras Shamayim* was superficial. It had not become part of their psyches.

RABBI YOCHANAN ZWEIG

Oh, Really

"...and the staff of Aharon swallowed their staffs" (7:12)

Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon to appear before Pharaoh. Hashem informed them that Pharaoh would demand that they provide a "*mofes*," "wonder," to validate their claims that they were messengers of a higher authority. Aharon cast down his staff, and it turned into a snake. Pharaoh summoned his sorcerers, who replicated Aharon's actions. The Torah relates that "Aharon's staff swallowed their staffs." What is the conflict being waged between Aharon and the sorcerers? What message is Aharon sending Pharaoh and his sorcerers?

The Talmud refers to this episode as a "miracle within a miracle." Rashi explains that Aharon's staff swallowed the sorcerers' staffs after it transformed back into a staff.

The Maharsha has difficulty with Rashi's interpretation, specifically with why, according to Rashi, this was a "miracle within a miracle." The snake changing back to a staff was the first miracle, and the staff subsequently swallowing the sorcerers' staffs was the second miracle. Should this not be described as a

"miracle after a miracle"?

The Maharsha suggests that the miracle was that the staff of Aharon did not expand after swallowing all the other staffs. This is the Talmud's interpretation of a "miracle within a miracle." The Maharsha's interpretation not only disagrees with Rashi's comments, which make no allusion to this miracle, but is not hinted at in the Talmud, either.

It appears that Hashem was performing a powerful miracle for Pharaoh's sake. If the purpose was to impress Pharaoh, why did Aharon's staff swallow the sorcerers' staffs, implying that all the staffs transformed back from being snakes? A staff swallowing a living creature would make a greater impression. Would it not have been a greater miracle for Aharon's staff to swallow their snakes? If, in fact, Aharon's staff did swallow their snakes, and the Torah only refers to their snakes as staffs because that is what they originally were, then it is possible that Aharon's staff never transformed back from being a snake, either.

How would the Talmud know that the miracle was that Aharon's snake in staff form swallowed the staffs of the sorcerers? The Midrash states that the ten plagues that Hash-

em miraculously brought upon the Egyptians corresponded to the ten utterances through which Hashem created the world.

What emerges from the Midrash is the understanding that a miracle is not an illusion or a change in man's perception. Rather, a miracle that involves a transformation in the nature of an object actually creates the change, a new act of creation. A staff that becomes a snake actually becomes a snake. Sorcery can make a staff display snake-like qualities, but the "snake" is actually a staff. Aharon's snake reverting to being a staff is itself a new miracle. The staff being capable of swallowing the Egyptians' staffs is the second miracle. This is truly a miracle within a miracle. The Torah identifies the Egyptians' snakes as staffs, for that is all they ever were. Their display of snake-like qualities was only an illusion. Pharaoh and his sorcerers were being taught that their abilities were only illusory, having no basis in reality. Only the Creator of the world, Who is the ongoing source for all existence, has the ability to recreate that which already exists and give it a new reality.





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JOKES

Yaakov bought a new fridge for his house. To get rid of his old fridge, he put it in his front yard and hung a sign on it saying: "Free to give away."

For three days, the fridge sat there without even one person looking twice at it.

He eventually decided that people were too untrusting of this deal. It looked too good to be true, so he changed the sign to read: "Fridge for sale, \$50."

The next day, someone stole it.

A young boy enters a barber shop, and the barber whispers to his customer, "This is the dumbest kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you."

The barber puts a dollar bill in one hand and two quarters in the other, then calls the boy over and asks, "Which do you want, son?"

The boy takes the quarters and leaves.

"What did I tell you?" said the barber. "That kid never learns!"

Later, when the customer leaves, he sees the same young boy coming out of the ice cream store.

"Hey, son! May I ask you a question? Why did you take the quarters instead of the dollar bill?"

The boy licked his cone and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game is over!"

Shloimy was fishing with a friend when he noticed the local game warden approaching. He quickly threw his fishing rod to the ground and began to run. When he was a good distance from the fishing spot, the game warden caught up with him. "Okay," shouted the game warden, "Where's your fishing license?" Shloimy hesitated for a moment, then reached for his wallet and pulled out his fishing license. The game warden scrutinized it carefully and saw that it was in order. "Say, why did you run from me? Your license is okay." Shloimy smiled innocently and explained, "But my friend's isn't!"



Brought to you by Uncle Benjy, author of *Laughter is the best medicine: Kosher and Jewish jokes for the whole family*, volumes one and two, and *Jewish Joke Book for Kids*, volumes one and two, available on Amazon.

RABBI SIMCHAH GOFFMAN OH.EDU

Kinder Torah THE BEST YOU

"Shalom, Yoni! How was school today?"

"Not so good."

"Oy vey, Yoni. I am sorry to hear that. What happened?"

"Do you remember the test that I studied so hard for last week?"

"The one on *Chumash Parashas Va'eira*?"

"Yes, that's the one. I studied and reviewed my hardest, at least seven hours."

"That's great, Yoni."

"It might sound great, but I only got a 75 on the test. I was so disappointed. My friend Sruli told me that he only studied for two hours, and he got a 95. What can I do, Abba? I'll never be as good as Sruli."

"Yoni, dear, I understand how you feel. Come, let me give you a big hug. Everyone wants to get the best grade in the class. However, you should know something. You did just fine. I'll even bring you a proof from this week's *parasha*."

"Really? Show me, Abba."

"Look at this verse, 'This was Aharon and Moshe ...' (*Shemos* 6:26).

The Torah is listing all of the sons and grandsons of Yaakov Avinu. Rashi takes note that the Torah mentions Aharon's name before Moshe. This is not unusual. In many places, Moshe is mentioned first, and in many places, Aharon is mentioned first. Why? To teach us that they carried equal weight (as far as their spiritual level)."

"That is surprising. Our teacher said that Moshe was the Prince of all prophets, the only one who spoke with Hashem face to face. How could Aharon be on the same level?"

"Excellent, Yoni. Rav Moshe Feinstein is astounded by the very same question. See, you know the Chumash better than you think."

"Thank you, Abba. What is Rav Moshe's answer?"

"He explains that Aharon performed his service to Hashem perfectly. All of his days, he did what Hashem asked of him to the best of his abilities. One cannot do any better than that. His younger brother Moshe had greater abilities; therefore, more was demanded of him. Moshe did indeed do more than Aharon, however, they were equal in the sense that they both served Hashem with all of their *koach* (strength)."

"I see, Abba."

"Therefore, I am telling you, Yoni dear, that you are the best. If you studied your hardest for that test, then you got 100%! You used all of your *koach*. You can't do any better than that."

"Abba, that makes me feel good. However, the other boys get all the glory."

"My dear Yoni, listen to what Rav Moshe says. After 120 years, in the *Olam HaEmes* (World of Truth), we will see that our world is upside down. Some of those who are on top over here are low over there. And some of the people who are perceived as low over here are on top over there."

"Why, Abba?"

"Those who tried their hardest are really on top. They may not have scored the highest on the test, but they really got 100% in their *avodas Hashem*. Others who scored very well on test may be very intelligent. They may not need to use all of their abilities to get a perfect grade. Therefore, they are not serving Hashem with 100% of their abilities. In the *Olam HaEmes*, they did not get a 100%. Therefore, they are not on top."

"Amazing, Abba. So I really did get 100%."

"Beyond the shadow of a doubt, Yoni. You really are the best, and I'm very proud of you."

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