

SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS VO'EIRO 5775 BS"D

Ch. 6, v. 2: "Va'y'da'beir Elokim el Moshe va'yomer eilov ani Hashem" – And G-d spoke to Moshe and said to him I am Hashem – "Dibur" and "Elokim" are expressions of strictness. Immediately following we have "Va'yomer eilov ani Hashem," where "amiroh" and Hashem are expressions of mercy. This is exactly the point Hashem is making to Moshe. Moshe had just asked why Hashem had done "bad" to the nation, given the downward spiraling situation, with greater work being piled upon the bnei Yisroel. Hashem responded that the "harshness" is actually merciful as the salvation is at hand and the added harsh work brings to the conclusion of the slavery. One must realize that Hashem is Merciful. (Holy Shalo"h)

Ch. 6, v. 5: "V'gam ani shomati es naakas bnei Yisroel" – And also I have heard the pained voice of the bnei Yisroel – What does "v'gam" add? Even though the bnei Yisroel had descended to the 49th level of impurity, the numeric value of "v'gam," I have nevertheless hearkened to their cry. (Nachalas Zvi)

"V'gam" adds on that Hashem has also heard the prayers of each person's angel on high praying for relief. (Sefer Chasidim)

"V'gam," and also in spite of the bnei Yisroel only calling out to me in prayer because of their oppression, "asher Mitzrayim maavidim osom," and not earlier, I will still respond to them. (Arvei Nachal)

Ch. 6, v. 6: "V'hotzeisi es'chem" – And I will extract you – This will take place near the beginning of the plagues (as the bnei Yisroel no longer worked for Paroh from Rosh Hashonoh on), "v'hitzalti" with your leaving Egypt, "v'go'alti" with your being saved and the Egyptians drowning at Yam Suf, "v'lokachti es'chem li l'om" with the receiving of the Torah. (Sforno)

Ch. 6, v. 8: "V'nosati osoh lochem moroshoh" – And I will give it to you as an inheritance – A son inherits whether he is deserving or not. There are those who live in Eretz Yisroel and don't behave as Hashem wishes them to behave. Nevertheless they also receive an inheritance portion. (N'sivos Sholo-m)

The verse does not say "y'rushoh," an inheritance that one receives. Rather, it says "moroshoh," an inheritance that one leaves for another. This was the situation here, as the bnei Yisroel who left Egypt were not the ones who inherited the land. They died in the desert and were "morish" the land to the next generation. (Rabbeinu Bachyei)

Ch. 6, v. 12: "Hein bnei Yisroel lo shomu eilai v'eich yishmo'eini Paroh" – Behold the bnei Yisroel have not heard me so how will Paroh hear me – The verse in T'hilim 25:14 says, "Sode Hashem lirei'ov," the secret of Hashem is for those who fear Him. When Hashem gives a message to his holy ones who fear him it is a secret, not for the ears of others. This is because it is beyond the common man's comprehension. When Moshe gave over the message of the bnei Yisroel's imminent redemption, their grasping his message was unsuccessful given the gap between his lofty stature and the common folk, all the more so giving this message to Paroh will be unsuccessful. (Mo'ore Voshomesh)

Ch. 6, v. 15: "V'Shoul ben haCanaanis" – And Shoul the son of the Canaanite – This either means the son of Dinoh who was sired by Sh'chem the Canaanite (Rashi), or it is Zimri who will later behave immorally, as do the Canaanites, or it refers to Dinoh, who died before the bnei Yisroel went to Egypt, whom Shimon buried in Canaan. (Medrash Mishlei)

Ch. 6, v. 18: "Uvnie K'hos" – And the children of K'hos – His four sons and their offspring are mentioned, save the offspring of Chevron. This is because of Amrom's children, Moshe and

Aharon, the offspring of Yitzhor because of Korach, the offspring of Uziel because they removed the bodies of Nodov and Avihu from the Mishkon. There was no need to mention the offspring of Chevron as no activities about them are mentioned in the Torah. This also explains why here the sons of Moshe are not mentioned. (Chizkuni)

Ch. 7, v. 3: “Vaani aksheh es leiv Paroh” – And I will harden Paroh’s heart – This does not mean that Paroh would be left with no free will to release the bnei Yisroel. Rather, whenever a person starts having thoughts of contrition and repentance, Hashem sends heavenly help to bring one to repentance. Here it was removed. (Chofetz Chaim)

Ch. 7, v. 4: “V’lo yishma a’leichem Paroh v’hotzeisi es ami bnei Yisroel” – And Paroh will not hear you and I will take out My nation the bnei Yisroel – Hashem is telling Moshe that in the future, when Paroh will say that he will no longer listen to them and they should dare not come to him again, that is when Hashem will send the final plague of killing the firstborn and the exodus will take place. This explains how Moshe was able to respond to Paroh at that time that indeed he will not come back to him again. This is unusual, as Paroh might demand that they come back to stop the plague, as he was wont to change his mind so many times during the plagues. Given that Hashem told Moshe here that when Paroh says that there will be no more face to face audiences the final plague is at hand as is the exodus, this is very well understood. (Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh)

Ch. 7, v. 24: “Va’yach’p’ru kol Mitzrayim s’vivos ha’y’or mayim lishtos” – And all Egypt dug around the river for water to drink – A new translation for “va’yach’p’ru” – And they spied out for water, searching and searching. (N’tzi”v)

Ch. 8, v. 26: “Va’yetar el Hashem” – And he prayed to Hashem – The Chasam Sofer explains why here the word “va’yetar” is used, while by the prayer for the removal of frogs “va’yitzak” is used. The gemara Sukoh 14a tells us that the word form Ayin-Tof-Reish also has the meaning of a pitchfork. Just as a pitchfork turns hay over completely, so too, the prayers of the righteous can totally turn around an edict of bad to good. By the end of the plague of frogs there was no total relief, as when they died they were piled up. Upon their decomposition the Egyptians were left with piles of rotting stench, “vativash ho’oretz” (verse 10). Here by the plague of wild animals, they all left, and there was complete relief. I have difficulty understanding the use of “va’yetar” by the end of the plague of locust (10:18). Although they totally left Egypt, had they remained it would have been more advantageous for the Egyptians as per Rashi on 10:19 d.h. “lo nishar.” In this case total removal was not a total turn around. Even more perplexing is the use of this same word form by the plague of frogs itself, when Moshe said “l’mosai ATIR l’cho” (verse 5). Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Ch. 9, v. 2: "Ki im mo'ein atoh l'sha'lei'ach v'odcho machazik bom" - If you refuse to send and still hold onto them - What is added by "v'odcho machazik bom"? Why is this term not used by the warnings of any of the other plagues? The mishnoh Eiduyos 2:10 says that the Egyptians were judged with plagues for 12 months. The gemara R.H. 11a says that the servitude of our forefathers in Egypt came to a halt on Rosh Hashonoh. Armed with these 2 pieces of information we may assume (although contrary to some commentators such as Rabbeinu Bachyei in parshas Bo) that the fifth plague took place slightly before half a year after the onset of the plagues, as half the plagues would take place in half a year. This would bring us to the month of Tishrei since the plagues ended on the 15th of Nison and they had begun 12 months earlier in Nison as well. We can thus say that Moshe had up to this point only mentioned sending the bnei Yisroel away as free people. Obviously included in this would be the end of their servitude. However, here at the fifth plague, even if Paroh would not set them free, they would afterwards not be enslaved, only

stuck in Egypt. This is why Hashem told Moshe to warn Paroh regarding 2 matters, sending them away and forcing them to work as slaves. This is the intention of "v'odcho machazik bom." After this plague even if Paroh would not let them go free there would be no "machazik bom," as the servitude would end on Rosh Hashonoh. Earlier it was not mentioned since if he would not grant them total freedom he would still be enslaving them as well. (n.l.)

OROH V'SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS VO'EIRO

Ch. 6, v. 6,7: "V'hotzeisi, v'hitzalti, v'go'alti, v'lokachti" -

1) Rashi and Rashbam in the gemara P'sochim 99b say that these four expressions of redemption are the source for drinking four goblets of wine on the night of the Seder. This is stated in the Yerushalmi P'sochim (10:1) and in the M.R. Breishis (88:4) as the opinion of Rav Huna.

2) The above two sources also bring the opinion of Rav Shmuel bar Nachmeini that the four goblets correspond to the four times the word "kose" is mentioned in the butler's dream and Yosef's interpretation at the end of parshas Va'yaishev.

3) The above two sources also bring the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi that the four goblets correspond to the four bitter goblets of punishment that Hashem will mete out to the nations of idol worshipers (Yirmiyohu 25:15, 51:7, T'hilim 11:6, 75:9).

4) The above Yerushalmi also brings that the four goblets correspond to the four salvations mentioned in T'hilim: Hashem m'nos chelki v'CHOSI (16:5), KOSI r'voyoh (23:5), and KOS y'shuos (116:13). This last verse alludes to two goblets, as the word, "y'shuos," salvations, is plural.

5) The four goblets correspond to the four times the word "goviah" is mentioned in parshas Mikeitz (44:2, 12, 16, 17). "Gvi'i" in verse 2 is not included, but might allude to the fifth goblet of Eliyohu. (Tosfos Hasholeim)

Many commentaries question Rashi and the Rashbam who say that four "EXPRESSIONS" of redemption are mentioned. The M.R. and the Yerushalmi actually say "FOUR REDEMPTIONS" and leave out the words "expressions of." Rashi and Rashbam's source is the Yalkut Shimoni (Yirmiyohu #307) which clearly says "four expressions of redemption."

There are numerous explanations of four stages of redemption:

1) Ramban: a) no severe workload, b) no work at all, c) Hashem takes revenge on the Egyptians, d) bnei Yisroel become a chosen nation upon coming to Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah.

2) Sforno: a) no more servitude, b) coming to Raamses, which is beyond the border of Egypt, c) splitting of the sea, d) standing at Mt. Sinai.

3) Aderres Eliyohu (GR"A): a) no severe workload, b) no work at all, c) free of being slaves, d) standing at Mt. Sinai.

4) Eitz Yosef on M.R. Shmos: a) no severe workload, b) no more throwing Jewish children into river, c) no more slaughtering Jewish children for Paroh's baths, d) retracting edict of no more straw being supplied for brick making.

5) MESHECH CHOCHMOH: a) extraction of a nation from within a nation, b) being saved from the murderous Egyptians, c) not enslaved, d) becoming Hashem's chosen nation.

6) Torah T'mimoh: a) lightening of workload, b) no work at all, c) complete redemption and leaving Egypt, d) spiritual redemption.

Ch. 6, v. 14-16: "Ei'leh roshei veis avosom bnei Reuvein, Uvnei Shimon, V'ei'leh shmos bnei Levi" – The M.R. on parshas Noso 13:8 explains that the tribes of Reuvein, Shimon, and Levi were mentioned here to the exclusion of any other tribes, because these three tribes had mastery in Egypt. Rashi on Shmos 5:4 says that the tribe of Levi was not subject to slavery, as clearly indicated by Moshe and Aharon's ability to come and go to Paroh. In turn, the tribe of Levi did not merit having a parcel of land in Eretz Yisroel, but rather, were limited to have Levite cities spread out throughout the land. Reuvein also did not have a portion in Eretz Yisroel, but rather

received land on the Trans-Jordanian side. Although Shimon had a portion of land in Eretz Yisroel, this was limited, swallowed into Yehudoh's portion, as explained by the Ramban on Breishis 49:5 d.h. "Shimon v'Levi." As well, Shimon was subject to "vaafitzeim b'Yisroel" (Breishis 48:7), the members of Shimon's tribe were not able to reside within their allotted portion, as they became teachers, and as such, were spread out throughout the land. In which manner were the bnei Reuvein and bnei Shimon masters over others in Egypt? The MESHECH CHOCHMOH offers that they had sufficient wealth to purchase some of their fellow Jews from the Egyptians and use them as their own slaves.

This would explain the juxtaposition of verse 26, "Hu Aharon u'Moshe asher omar Hashem lo'hem hotziu es bnei Yisroel mei'erezt Mitzrayim al TZIVOSOM." After mentioning the tribes that had their brethren as slaves, Aharon and Moshe were commanded to bring the bnei Yisroel out of Egypt, "al tzivosom," – each as a self-sovereign tribe. As well, the gemara Yerushalmi R.H. 3:5 derives from the verse immediately before the counting of these three tribes, "va'y'tza'veim el bnei Yisroel v'el Paroh melech Mitzroyim l'hotzi es bnei Yisroel," that the bnei Yisroel should be commanded to let their slaves free. This is commonly understood as referring to a later time, when the bnei Yisroel would own slaves when they were themselves free people in Eretz Yisroel. Of course, there is some difficulty with this. Why would this law be mentioned now, when they were far from being owners of slaves, being enslaved themselves? However, if we say that some of the bnei Yisroel were slave owners in Egypt, this is very well understood. The MESHECH CHOCHMOH says that we can say that this was the intention of Yirmiyohu in 34:13,14, where the verse states that Hashem stipulated with our ancestors on the day they left Egypt to release their Hebrew slaves. I have much difficulty in understanding this, as the verse clearly states that the slaves should be sent away after 7 years. If Yirmiyohu is recounting the responsibility to send away those of their brethren whom they enslaved in Egypt, how does the seven-year time factor shine in?

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH most insightfully explains why Hashem allowed matters to evolve so that these three tribes had an easier life in Egypt than their brethren had. The Mechilta on parshas Bo, mesechta d'Pis'cha #5 says that in the merit of 4 matters the bnei Yisroel deserved to be redeemed from their exile in Egypt. They did not change their names, nor their language, they were conspicuous and visible, and they behaved as aliens and not as citizens, permanent inhabitants. The reason they were able to retain their national identity was because they held hope in leaving Egypt and residing again in Eretz Yisroel, as per the blessings accorded them by Yaakov, where we find that many of the blessings gravitated around geographic Eretz Yisroel (see Breishis 49:10,13,15,20).

Since Reuvein, Shimon, and Levi were rebuked at the time of the blessings, their outlook towards a far-off bright future in Eretz Yisroel was dissipated. Since they felt this way, had they also been subject to slavery without a hope for a positive national future, they might have ch"v merged with the Egyptians, totally losing their bnei Yisroel identity.

Ch. 7, v. 9: "Y'hi l'sanin" - It will become as a snake - the verse should seemingly have said "vihi l'sanin." The Baal Haturim says that the intention is that when Moshe will later throw down the staff in front of Paroh, he should verbalize the words, "Y'hi l'sanin" and the staff would then become activated through the power of Moshe's speech. The Meshech Chochmoh derives from this nuance that the intention is not that the staff will become a snake when you throw it in front of Paroh, but rather that right now when Hashem told this to Moshe, the nature of a snake entered the staff, and this allowed it to swallow Paroh's sorcerers' staffs while it was still a staff.

Ch. 9, v. 20: "Ha'yorei es dvar Hashem MEI'AVDEI Paroh" - Paroh commanded his Egyptian slaves to stop people from seeking refuge for their livestock. He wanted no one to show concern for the words of Moshe. If someone attempted to bring his cattle into his home for refuge, he might incur the wrath of Paroh's police force. We now interpret our verse to say, "He who feared

the word of Hashem, "MEI'AVDEI Paroh, MORE THAN HE FEARED THE SLAVES OF PAROH," brought his slaves and livestock to the safety of his home. (MESHECH CHOCHMOH)

CHAMISHOH MI YODEI'A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS VO'EIRO 5775 – BS"D

- 1) Ch. 6, v. 12: "Vaani aral s'fosoyim" – And I have clogged lips – Rashi explains that in response to Moshe's attempting to excuse himself for being reluctant to be Hashem's spokesman to Paroh because of his speech impairment, Hashem advised him that Aharon would accompany him and be the actual spokesman. If so, why was Moshe needed at all? Why not have Aharon do the task all on his own?
- 2) Ch. 6, v. 26: "Hu Aharon uMoshe" – They are Aharon and Moshe – Rashi explains the reversal of order in the next verse. Their order is interchangeable because they are equal. This is difficult to comprehend because one of the 13 tenets of our faith is that Moshe is unique among all the prophets, not only in his generation and the previous ones, but for all further generations as well.
- 3) Ch. 7, v. 17: "V'nehefchu l'dom" – And they will change into blood – We are well acquainted with the order of the plagues, "dom, tzfardei'a, kinim," etc. However, we find a different order in T'hilim 105. How are we to resolve this?
- 4) Ch. 8, v. 20: "Tishocheis ho'oretz mipnei ho'orove" – The earth WAS destroyed by the mixture of animals – Literally, "tishocheis" means "it WILL be destroyed," as there is no "Vov hamha'peich" here. Nevertheless, Rashi says that it means past tense, although he gives no explanation for this. How can we explain this word in context to be in the future tense?
- 5) Ch. 9, v. 26: "Rak b'erezt Goshen asher shom bnei Yisroel lo hoyoh borod" – Only in Goshen where the bnei Yisroel were present there was no hail – If a ben Yisroel was outside Goshen would it hail upon him?

ANSWERS:

#1

The gemara Brochos 6b says that if a person has fear of Heaven, his words are readily accepted. It follows that the greater level of fear of Heaven that a person has, the greater the likelihood of his words being accepted. Moshe, about whom the gemara Brochos 33b says had such an abundance of fear of Heaven that it was considered to him a minor matter, surely was the best man for the job. But because of his speech impediment Aharon was sent along. The above-mentioned gemara Brochos 6b brings as a proof for its statement the verse in Koheles 12:13, "Sof dovoR hakoL nishmO," in the end all will be heard, accepted, "es hoElokim y'ro," if the speaker has fear of Hashem. The final letters of "dovoR hakoL nishmO," spell "orel," the stopped-up lips of Moshe. Nevertheless, his words will be accepted. (K'dushas Zion of Bobov)

We might add that the final letters of the following three words, "eS hoElokiM y'rO," spell "emes." Because of Moshe's "yiras shomayim" even hard-hearted Paroh eventually saw the truth of his words. (Nirreh li)

#2

K'hilas Yitzchok answers that since Aharon was three years older than Moshe and had this extra time to develop even more in his spiritual stature, he was therefore less than Moshe subjectively, while at the same time being objectively his equal. This does very little to alleviate the problem. Perhaps at this point in time they were still equal.

#3

Rabbi Yehudoh Chosid writes that his father resolved this discrepancy by positing that the plagues visited the Egyptians twice, the first time following the order of the Torah, and the second following the order in T'hilim (not all plagues are mentioned there). He adds that the intention of Rabbi Yehudoh with the mnemonic "d'tzach adash b'achav" was to teach those who would bring their "bikurim" offerings, who are required to give thanks for Hashem's saving us from our adversaries, going all the way back to the history of our Patriarchs, that when they relate the plagues from which they were spared, that they mention them in the order of the Torah only.

#4

Perhaps the Torah is telling us that the destruction remained for so long that it effected them negatively far into the future, long after the plague was removed. (Nirreh li)

#5

Rabbeinu Menachem notes that our verse could have left out the word "rak." By stating "rak" the verse has two exclusions, "rak" and "lo." We have a rule that a double exclusion creates an inclusion, and we may derive from this that even areas outside Goshen where a ben Yisroel was present there was no hail.

Gri"z haLevi Brisker says that the hail did not come down indiscriminately, but rather, each piece of hail was a "smart bomb," precisely hitting a specific target. It would surely follow that no hail hit a "ben Yisroel."

s

FEEL FREE TO COPY AND/OR TO DISTRIBUTE. TO SUBSCRIBE FOR WEEKLY EMAIL PLEASE SEND ONE WORD REQUEST – SUBSCRIBE – TO sholom613@rogers.com