



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"ט טבת תשע"ח – שמות – 6th January 2017 - Volume 10 - Issue 24

## Saving Grace

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Now Yosef died, as well as all his brothers and all that generation. (Shemos 1:6)

I ALWAYS FIND it somewhat depressing. You can feel the storm coming already by the end of last week's parsha, with the death of Yosef. You can tell it's going to be downhill from there, and you find out just how quickly at the beginning of this week's parsha. All the "big guys" have died off, and the fledgling nation is left to tread Egyptian water on its own.

Fortunately, you don't have to read too much further to get some hope. Within a few lines, the Savior is born. True it will be another 80 years before he can be effective, but at least redemption is on its way. Although, that would have been a tough sale for those living through those 80 years, especially after Moshe Rabbeinu became an outlaw and was forced to skip the country and did not give any sign that he planned to come back.

Ya'akov Avinu died in 2255 from Creation. The last of his sons, Levi, died in 2331. The next year the oppression began in 2332. Moshe Rabbeinu was born in 2368, exactly 36 years after it did.

Considering Kabbalah says that Moshe was born with the Ohr HaGanuz, the Hidden Light of Creation, which Chanukah teaches us is represented by the number 36, that couldn't have been a coincidence.

Actually, Chanukah teaches that the Ohr HaGanuz is represented by two numbers, 25 and 36. The first number, 25, represents the light while it is still hidden in Creation, and the number 36 represents the light after it has been revealed. Moshe Rabbeinu's birth was a revelation of the light, as the Talmud explains:

It is written here, "And she saw that he was good" (Shemos 2:2), and there it is written, "God saw the light, that it was good" (Bereishis 1:4). (Sotah 12a)

As explained before (see the book, "The Equation of Light"), just as 11 must be added to 25 to arrive at 36, likewise "Da'as," G-dly Knowledge, represented by the number 11, must be added to a person to allow them to draw out the Ohr HaGanuz from Creation and reveal it. Moshe Rabbeinu's soul Kabbalah explains, originated from the level of Da'as, giving him tremendous access to the Ohr HaGanuz.

What did this mean to his life?

Weird stuff. Like being floated as a baby in a dangerous river, and still ending up safe in the arms of the daughter of the king who wants you dead. Like being raised in his palace like a son, while being be cared for by your own mother who is the sworn enemy of your adopted father. Like being sent to execution and having your neck turn to marble and breaking the executioner's sword instead of the other way around.

It meant fleeing and becoming king of a strange people along the way for a while before continuing on to Midian. It meant being shown a bush that burned but which was not consumed, and hearing God talk from it. It meant being able to do a whole host of other miracles, the greatest of which was actually entering Heaven and receiving Torah.

לעלוי נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

## The Challos and the meal

One needs to make the Hamotzei blessing over two challos on Shabbat and Yom Tov in commemoration of the double portion of manna that fell before Shabbat and Yom Tov. Both challahs should be whole and covered.

It is the custom to make a mark on one challah with the knife before reciting the brocho and later to cut the challah at that mark. Before eating the challah, one should ideally dip it in salt.

It meant becoming the channel for ALL of Torah, that which was known in Moshe Rabbeinu's time and that which would come out in every generation after his death. And, it meant that he will come back to finish the job he started, and which the nation was not ready for at the time. Moshe Rabbeinu will be the final Moshiach, and he will dazzle the world with the miracles he will perform as he carries out the Final Redemption.

But what about those 80 years of waiting for the rest of the nation? The Vilna Gaon explains what the Talmud means when it says that redemption has to come little by little. It's because the Jewish people do not merit a fast redemption, and to have one would mean breaking from either too much suffering, or too much good.

The Jewish people thought that Moshe Rabbeinu's arrival meant instant redemption. They were horrified to find out that it meant instant increase in slavery. Impossible slavery. Even Moshe Rabbeinu left disheartened, thinking he had failed.

Even after returning to actually redeem the Jewish people, it took a year of plagues before they finally went out. After the plagues began, the slavery did not stop immediately. By the time it did, most Jews had already lost their desire to go out, dying instead in the Plague of Darkness.

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת שמות

Candle Lighting	3.50pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.55pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.14pm
2nd Mincha	3.44pm
Shalosh Seudas	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.04pm
Ovos uBonim	6.04pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.55pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

It was not about showing off God's power, at least not primarily. The world did have to learn about God and His judgment, but the delay in redemption was for the sake of the Jewish people. They were not ready for redemption when Moshe Rabbeinu started it. They had to be ready for it by the time he finished it.

That took time.

And suffering.

And emunah, because the situation looked very ungeulah-like for a long time. People have their expectations about how redemption should unfold, or they at least hope it will unfold. No one enjoys suffering they didn't choose to undergo. Most are desperate to get rid of it any way they can, especially if they can't see how it is to their benefit.

We go to doctors expecting cures that instantly work 100 percent, and become despondent when they barely work at all. We employ technicians to immediately fix our appliances and are very disappointed when they can't. We expect results, good ones, and we expect them right away.

Like Eisav. As his name means, he wants everything ready-made for instant gratification. He doesn't want to wait for what he needs. "Hey Ya'akov, just pour that red food down my throat like now! I don't want to have to wait!"

Fast food is an example of this. It's such a part of our culture to be able to get a quick meal. You walk into a fast food place, place your order, and within minutes you have a full course meal at a "decent" price. We go online and accomplish in seconds what it used to take days, weeks, maybe even months to complete. Instant redemption on so many different levels!

The Torah says, "Woe, wait a minute. Slow down. You want to eat? Go wash your hands and make a brochah. Then sit down at a table in a dignified manner, and make a brochah over your food. When you are finished and satiated, make another couple of blessings to thank God for what you enjoyed, for your "redemption" from hunger."

The upshot of this? No matter how fast we want to be redeemed from any situation of need, we have to understand that a fast redemption may be detrimental to our long term well-being. Redemption comes, eventually, when it is to our benefit. Patience is more than a virtue, it is a saving grace.

Moshiach may have been with us for the last 80 years, and God may have been working with him to pave the road to the Final Redemption. But, for our own good, it has been taking place in stages, and so much of it out of our eyeshot. We can't necessarily prove it at this time, but we have to have faith that it is true if we want to be a part of it when it finally goes from hidden to revealed.

## **Burning Interests** **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

In Jewish history, there is a hardly an object more expounded upon than the burning bush. Its symbolism is analyzed, its significance expounded upon, and its impact is noted for generations. This week, rather than discuss the actual burning bush and its meaning, I'd like to view the event from a totally different approach — Moshe's.

The Torah tells us in Exodus 3:1- 4 that Moshe was shepherding the sheep of Yisro, his father-in-law, when, "an angel of G-d appeared to him in a blaze of fire from amidst the bush. Moshe saw the event and behold, the bush was burning in fire and yet the bush was not consumed.

Moshe said, 'I will turn from my course and see the marvelous sight — why does the bush not burn?' Hashem saw that Moshe turned from his path to see the sight and He called out to him from amidst the bush and said, 'Moshe Moshe...'" The conversation ultimately leads to our exodus from Egypt.

However, the entire narrative, from the moment that Moshe notices the burning bush until Hashem speaks to him from its midst, seems overstated. After Moshe sees the amazing sight, why does the Torah mention that Moshe says "I will go look at the amazing sight?" Further,

why does the Torah preface Hashem's charge to Moshe with the words, "Hashem saw that Moshe turned from his path to see the sight, and He called out to him from amidst the bush?" It seems that only after Hashem openly acknowledges Moshe's interest in the spectacle does he call out, "Moshe, Moshe," thus beginning the process of redemption.

The Torah, which never uses needless words, could have simply stated, "Moshe saw that the bush was burning and yet the bush was not consumed. Moshe turned to marvelous sight, and Hashem called out to him from amidst the bush and said, 'Moshe Moshe...'"

The Midrash Tanchuma expounds upon the verse, "Moshe turned from his path to see the sight." There is an argument whether he took three steps or just craned his neck. The Midrash continues. Hashem said, "you pained yourself to look, I swear you are worthy that I reveal myself to you."

The Medrash was definitely bothered by the extra wording regarding Moshe's decision to look and Hashem's open commendation of that decision. But it is still very difficult to understand. Moshe sees a spectacle of miraculous proportions and looks. Why is that such a meritorious act? Doesn't everyone run to a fire? Aren't there hoards that gather to witness amazing events?

In the early 1920's, Silas Hardoon, a Sephardic Jewish millionaire, made his fortune living in China. Childless, he began to give his money away to Chinese charities.

One night his father appeared in a dream and implored him to do something for his own people. Silas shrugged it off. After all, there were hardly any of his people in China. But the dreams persisted, and Silas decided to act.

The next day he spoke to Chacham Ibrahim, a Sephardic Rabbi who led the tiny Chinese Jewish community. The Chacham's advice sounded stranger than the dreams. He told Silas to build a beautiful synagogue in the center of Shanghai. It should contain more than 400 seats, a kitchen, and a dining room.

Mr. Hardoon followed the charge to the letter. He named the shul "Bais Aharon" in memory of his father. A few years later Mr. Hardoon died leaving barely a minyan to enjoy a magnificent edifice, leaving a community to question the necessity of the tremendous undertaking.

In 1940, Japanese counsel to Lithuania Sempo Sugihara issued thousands of visas for Kovno Jews to take refuge in Curaçao via Japan. Included in that group was the Mirrer Yeshiva. They arrived in Kobe but were transported to Shanghai where they remained for the entire war.

The Mirrer Yeshiva had a perfect home with a kitchen, study hall and dining room — Bais Aharon! The building had exactly enough seats to house all the students for five solid years of Torah study during the ravages of World War II. The dream of decades earlier combined with action, became a thriving reality.

Moshe our Teacher knew from the moment he spotted that bush that something very extraordinary was occurring.

He had two choices: approach the spectacle or walk on.

If he nears the bush he knew he would face an experience that would alter his life forever. Hashem knew that Moshe had this very difficult conflict. His approach would require commitment and self sacrifice.

He took three steps that changed the course of history. Hashem understood the very difficult decision Moshe had made and declared that such fortitude is worthy of the redeemer of my children.

In many aspects of our lives we encounter situations that may commit us to change. It may be a new charity we decide to let through our doors, or a new patient we decide to see, or even a new worthy cause we decide to entertain. They all require us to take three steps and look.

If we walk away, we may not just be ignoring a burning issue. We may be ignoring another burning bush