

His Promise is the Present

PARSHA INSIGHTS - TZAV (5759)

SOME HAGADA INSIGHTS FOR SHABBOS HAGADOL

WHAT IS SAID IS DONE

The Torah obligation to relate the story of the *Yetzias Mitzraim* [Exodus from Egypt] in detail rests upon us on the first night of *Pesach* [Passover], *Nissan* 15, the anniversary of our departure from Egypt. We have often discussed the fact we left Egypt during the day of the fifteenth, but the “*seder*” [first Passover meal] happens the preceding night, the same time our ancestors partook of the *korban Pesach* [Passover offering], *matzah*, and the other required foods. The *Hagada* [book containing the order of the Passover *seder*] remarks: A person might have thought that the *mitzvah* [commandment] to discuss *Yetzias Mitzraim* already applies on the first day of the month of *Nissan*, instead of on the fifteenth. The *Hagada* then presents a thorough proof that this cannot be so. Rather, the responsibility to do it is on the fifteenth, the *seder* night.

Rav Moshe Feinstein wonders: why would we have even thought that the obligation to tell of *Yetzias Mitzraim* would apply on *Rosh Chodesh* [the new moon/start of the Hebrew month of] *Nissan*? The redemption occurred on *Nissan* 15. Who would entertain the possibility that we should discuss the departure from Egypt fifteen days before it actually occurred?

He answers that on the first of the month Hashem had already promised we would be delivered on the fifteenth. A Divine guarantee is viewed as if the prediction came true immediately. Anyone who does not look at it this way is considered to be lacking faith in Hashem. Consequently, the *Hagada* remarks that a person might have thought to begin the *mitzvah* of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzraim* [telling about the Exodus] on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* itself. After all, an assurance from Hashem is as good as fulfilled right away! However, you see in the *Hagada* that Torah *psukim* [verses] establish that it is Hashem’s will for us to relate the *Yetzias Mitzraim* on *Nissan* 15, and not to start on *Rosh Chodesh*. Rav Moshe terms this a “*gezairas hakasuv*” a scriptural ruling scrupulously observed.

Rav Moshe uses this concept to elucidate another issue in *Chumash* [the Five Books of the Torah]. In *Parshas Ki Sisa* (*Shmos* [Exodus] 32:7), Moshe was informed by Hashem that *Bnai Yisroel* [the Children of Israel] became corrupt by creating the golden calf. Moshe descended from *Har Sinai* [Mount Sinai], saw the *aigel* [calf] and the outrageous celebration in front of it, and then broke the *luchos* [tablets containing the Ten Utterances or Commandments]. (Various aspects of this explosive topic have been discussed at length in several *d’var Torah* [lesson] sheets.) Why did Moshe wait to shatter the *luchos* until he SAW the golden calf? If *Bnai Yisroel* were not worthy of these precious tablets, why not smash them sooner after hearing the tragic news of their sin?

☞ Read more on this subject by clicking the following link, or online at TorahMax.com under: “Sefer Devarim”, “Parshas Eikev”, “[Breaking News- Is Moses Angry?](#)”- R. Moshe Heigh.

Rav Moshe says he heard the following solution, **but it cannot be correct**. What the eye sees makes a much stronger impression than what the ear hears. Thus, Moshe was more moved by the SIGHT of the *aigel* than by the NEWS of its creation. That is supposedly why he delayed the breaking of the *luchos* until he witnessed the idolatrous feast. Rav Feinstein points out the faultiness of this explanation. We have already established that when a person HEARS something from Hashem, it is as if he SEES that event or object. Hashem’s word is immediately considered fulfilled. As soon as Moshe was informed of the golden calf, it was as if he had SEEN the golden calf. How can one claim that the sight of the image made more of an impact on Moshe *Rabainu* [Moses our teacher] than the news that it had been built? Thus, there had to be some other reason Moshe waited to smash the tablets until he saw the *aigel*. Rav Moshe mentions a famous interpretation, that the spectacle had to be in front of all of *Bnai Yisroel*. (We have mentioned in past weeks that the very last words of the Torah attest to the importance of shattering the *luchos* “in front of the eyes of Yisroel”. This was a significant part of Hashem’s “eulogy” for Moshe *Rabainu*, that he accomplished so much with this feat.) This impressed upon them that the *luchos* were not meant for a people unfaithful to the G-d who had brought them through so much to be His chosen nation.

In summary, when Hashem assures us of something, the matter is as good as concluded. When He brought Moshe the news of the *aigel*, he felt the shock as if he had actually seen it. Similarly, when He promised us, on

Rosh Chodesh Nissan 2448, that the redemption would occur later that month, it was as good as done. That is why the *Hagada* says, “One might have thought that the recounting of *Yetzias Mitzraim* should begin on Rosh Chodesh.” If we take this to heart, our faith in His guarantees of reward for *tzadikim* [righteous people] will be greatly strengthened. The tidings are the reality! Also, He has promised to take us out of our present *golus* [exile], just like He did from all the previous ones. May we rejoice in the knowledge that there is no doubt it will happen, hopefully very soon.

PREMEDITATED PERSECUTION

MIKRA BIKURIM AND THE HAGADA - You probably notice that a major segment of the *Hagada*, based on the *Sifri*, expounds verses from the Torah having to do with the Egyptian bondage and Exodus. These verses are taken from *Mikra Bikurim*, the portion read when a person brings his first fruits to the *kohen* [priest] in the *Bais Hamikdosh* [Temple]. It is a brief review of Jewish history, proving that we never would have possessed *Eretz Yisroel* [the Land of Israel] without Hashem’s intimate involvement in our destiny and in all world affairs. The text of this recitation forms the basis for a large part of the *Hagada*.

Let us investigate Rav Moshe Feinstein’s remarks on one aspect of this *Mikra Bikurim* and the *Hagada*’s interpretation of it. The one who presents his first fruits to the *kohen* mentions that while we resided in *Mitzraim* [Egypt], “The Egyptians dealt ill with us” (*Ki Savo* 26:6). The *Hagada* (*Sifri*) declares that this refers back to a verse which Paroh said to his nation in *Shmos* 1:10: “Come, let us deal wisely with them (with *Bnai Yisroel*, with the ‘Jewish problem,’ that they are multiplying and thriving in our country).”

Rav Moshe wonders: Why do *Chazal* [our Sages] proclaim that the SCHEME of Paroh was already considered “dealing ill” with *Bnai Yisroel*? At that point, no evil had been perpetrated against us yet! When the arrangements were just being made to persecute us, no suffering had been experienced by the Jews as of yet. What is the meaning of this phrase in the *Hagada*? The answer is that there are two types of crime, two ways to persecute a nation. One is not preceded by any planning. No calculations are made ahead of time; people simply decide to inflict suffering upon others. This is indeed horrible, but there is hope that it will subside. After all, there is no official agenda to harm anyone. On the other hand, PREMEDITATED persecution is totally different from this. A specific goal is in the minds of the sinister planners, a particular method will be employed, a definite procedure will be adhered to in carrying out the diabolical plot. It is clear from the above-mentioned *pasuk* [verse] in *Shmos* 1:10 that this was exactly what the Egyptians did to us. Therefore, says Rav Moshe, the reason our suffering was so great was because it was planned meticulously ahead of time. Many persecuting nations followed in the footsteps of the *Mitzri'im* [Egyptians], as we know so well.

May Hashem subdue all the forces of evil in the world. May the prayer at the end of the *Hagada* be witnessed by all of us, for the word of Hashem is as good as done! *L’shana haba’a bi’rushalaim* [Next year in Jerusalem!].

By Rabbi Moshe Heigh

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