



# OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI  
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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## **Thoughts on VAERA Year 24**

**by Dayan Abraham David**

Moshe had complained to Hashem that after his first visit to Paroah that Hashem had not saved the Bnei Yisrael. Instead, Paroah had increased their burdens and suffering. Now Hashem tells him to go and tell the Bnei Yisrael that the redemption is imminent and the process of salvation would now begin. Moshe goes to them but they do not listen to him, '*MiKotzer Ruach veAvodah kasha*,' because they were short of breath from the heavy work they had to do. Then Hashem sent him to Paroah to ask him again to free them. Moshe argues that since the Bnei Yisrael did not listen to him, why should Paroah, a king, especially since he is '*arel sefatim*', with a speech impediment. The obvious question is, this not a '*kal vachomer*', (all the more so), since the reason the Bnei Yisrael did not listen to Moshe was because they were breathless and overworked which would not apply to Paroah. The Ramban answers that Moshe misunderstood the reason for their not listening to him. He thought it was because of his speech impediment but the Torah tells us it was only because they were

overworked. There is another explanation, since we do find when Moshe first came to the People they believed him that G-d had heard their cry and would redeem them. As it says '*Vaya-ameen haam viyishmeu ki pakad Hashem et Bnei Yisrael*'. At that time Moshe had spoken to the Elders who were able to gather the people together to listen to Moshe and they believed that Hashem would redeem them. But they did not believe it would be through Moshe who was '*Arel sefatim*' and could not speak well. That is why the Elders did not accompany Moshe and Aaron to Paroah but had slipped away. But here, when Moshe spoke directly to the people, he could not get through because of their heavy work. Hence when Moshe was making the '*kal vachomer*' that Paroah would not listen to him because of his disability in speech, he was referring to the first time when his message had been accepted but not him as the redeemer. Hence, the '*kal vachomer*' is correct, if the Bene Yisrael had not accepted him as a '*Shaliah*' because of his impediment how much more so Paroah!

We could give another explanation weaned from the commentaries who explain '*kotzer Ruach*' and '*avodah kasha*' to mean not just in a physical sense but because of the influence

of their Egyptian masters who ruled over them in such a harsh way causing them to look only at the physical and the present and not to lift their hearts and minds into the realms of the spiritual above their present situation. The Ibn Ezra adds that because of the extra burdens added upon them and the length of the 'galut', exile, they lost their ability to think of hope and the redemption. The Orah Chayim gives a further insight. He explains that because they were not able to learn Torah they were not able to open their ears and hearts to Moshe's message. But had they learned Torah they would have been able to open their hearts and eyes to look further than their present situation: 'ki haTorah marchevet libo shel adam'. The Torah opens the hearts and minds of people to knowledge and understanding. With this we understand that surely Paroah, with his self-centred interest and his will not to recognise G-d, would not listen to Moshe's message especially with his speech impediment. Then G-d tells Moshe, 'I have made you a master over Paroah, and Aaron will speak on your behalf and I have commanded you to represent Me hence it does not matter how the Bnei Yisrael, because of no fault of their own, do not yet understand the power I have given you'.

According to the second explanation we see the importance of working with the Elders to get the message to the people and according to the third explanation we should not allow ourselves to be swayed by our present situation and the influences around us but should raise our hearts and minds through the learning of Torah.

## **TORAH GEMS**

Towards the end of the Parasha Moshe warns Paroah about the seventh plague: the 'barad'- the hailstones that would destroy the crops. He advises them to take in the cattle and humans so they should not be killed. The pasuk tells us '*Hayareh et devar Hashem meavdei Paroah henis et avadav ve-et Miknehu el habatim, ve asher lo sam libo il devar Hashem vaya'azov et avadav ve-et miknehu basadeh*'. Those who feared the word of G-d took in their servants and cattle into their homes and those who did not take notice of the words of Hashem, left them in the field. The Midrash adds, 'Which of the servants of Paroah was the one who feared the word of Hashem? This was 'Job', and the ones who did not take heed were Paroah and his people. How came only someone like Job who was a great zaddik took notice and not all the other wise people from among the servants of Paroah. They had already seen six plagues before this, how could they doubt the outcome, and risk all their animals and servants. Granted it might cause them some expense and inconvenience to take them indoors but it would be quite stupid not to do so? One does not have to be a great 'yareh' like Job to make such a simple reckoning. The Gemara in Sota tells us '*Ain adam over aveirah ela im ken nichnas bo ruach shtuf*'. A person does not transgress a sin until a spirit of stupidity enters him. What do our sages mean by this? We see many wise people sinning and in other areas they show great wisdom, how come? Our Rabbis tell us that wisdom is no guarantee

against sinning. For when it comes to the commands of Hashem and spiritual matters the '*yetzer harah*' fights rigorously against the mitzvah. The evil inclination of a person has the power to obscure the true judgement of a person, and to fool even the cleverest of us. We cannot rely on wisdom and cleverness in matters of choice; good and bad, right and wrong at the time of the test. It is only our fear of G-d and our study of the Torah that can make us see the truth and not be fooled by the '*yetzer harah*'. We see the necessity of fearing the word of G-d to reach what should have been a simple conclusion, to save their cattle and servants. For without that even the clever servants of Paroah made a foolish choice to save a few pennies or a small inconvenience, for when it comes to spiritual decisions we can be made foolish by the yetzer harah if we are not prepared for it.

The Torah is also a medicine against the '*yetzer harah*'. '*Barati yetzer harah vubarati Torah tablin lo*'. I have created the evil inclination and I have created the Torah a cure against it.

We must actively prepare ourselves with the study of Torah and '*yirat shamayim*' to think about the greatness and power of G-d and bring this to mind when we are tempted to sin. The Talmud in Brachot tells us, '*Leolam yargis yetzer hatov al yetzer harah im nizkoh mutav ve'im lo yikra keriyat shemah, ve'im lo yizkor yom hamita*'. Always set up the good inclination against the bad i.e. prepare yourself and strengthen the good inclination with good deeds. If it does not help then learn Torah which is an antidote for the evil inclination. If this does not seem to help then read the Shema

with '*kavannah*', this is '*yirat shamayim*'; thinking and accepting the yoke of heaven. If even this does not help then remember '*yom Hamita*' that since we will all have to leave this world and it might even be today it is not worth transgressing the word of G-d for momentary pleasures of the body. This will only help after the first two have been tried.

### **STORIES OF TZADDIKIM**

During the War, a young man, who had lost his family asked Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, (who was subsequently killed by the Germans), why such things happen. Rabbi Wasserman answered him with a parable about two men. One of them started to dig up the ground. The other told him he was ruining the ground, the man replied you have to wait and see. The man planted seeds in the ground and watered it until it grew into tall stalks. The other man said now I know why you did this, they have become these lovely long stalks. The man replied you still don't understand. The man cut the stalks and threw most of it away just leaving the seeds from the tops. He took the seeds and ground it into flour. The other man said now I understand, you have made lovely flour. The man said you don't understand and added water to the flour. The other man said you have ruined the flour. The man said wait and see. He put the dough into the oven and baked it. When it was baked he took it out the oven and gave it to the man too

eat. He then said now I have finished you will truly understand all that I have done. The man ate the bread and understood from the beginning until the end. Rabbi Wasserman said the same is true with Hashem and us, we are currently in the parable so until the story is finished we will not truly understand Hashem's ways but in the end when Hashem will reveal Himself then we will understand everything that has happened.

## ***Shabbat Shalom***

### ***HALACHOT - Tefillah***

1. A person who hears Kaddish or Kedushah etc may answer even if he is far away i.e. not in the place of the minyan as long as he is not separated from it by the presence of a non-Jew or something unclean (which would disqualify Tefillah in its proximity 'tzoah', excrement etc.) But the presence of a non-Jew in the room or prayer hall does not disturb the tzibur answering.
2. We do not answer Amen on a davar Shebe-Kedusha even on a live programme on the radio and television.
3. If up to four people who make up the minyan are still in the middle of the Amida and cannot answer, the remaining six may answer for Kaddish and Barechu but not for the repetition of the Amida which needs nine men to answer the Shaliah Tzibbur.  
A person asleep should be woken up to be counted in the minyan, we

should not rely on the poskim who count him in.

**We have a regular Youth  
Minyan organised by  
David Douer followed by a  
kiddush**

***Avot vu banim is one and a half  
hours after Shabbat  
Please try to attend***

***If you wish to sponsor a  
Kiddush***

***Please contact  
Nathaniel Bendayan  
07825 871749***

***For Seuda Shlishit  
or to rent the***

***Nancy Reuben Hall  
for a Simcha***

***Please contact  
Yanky David 07725 408724***

### ***SHABBAT TIMES***

Shabbat commences	3:49 pm
Shabbat terminates	5:04 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	3:35 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	3:30 pm
Shacharit Weekdays with netz	7:30 am
Shacharit Sundays with netz	7:30 am
Mincha	1:30 pm
Arbit	7:30 pm