Points to Ponder

Voera 5781

**וְלָֽקַחְתִּ֨י אֶתְכֶ֥ם לִי֙ לְעָ֔ם  And I will take them as a nation for me(6:7)** - The people were able to listen and hear Aharon before and now were not able to hear Moshe. What changed? **Rav Eliyashiv ztl**. explained that when Moshe came with a message of obligation (V’Lakachtee Eschem Lee L’Am V’Hayeesee Lachem L’Elokim) it became too hard for them to listen.

**מִקֹּ֣צֶר ר֔וּחַ וּמֵֽעֲבֹדָ֖ה קָשָֽׁה But they could not listen to Moshe, for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage. (6:9)** - **Rav Amital ztl.** Explained that in order for words of Torah to penetrate, we need openness. We can listen to sichot and learn tremendous amounts, but we still need Divine assistance for the message to pervade us and to allow us to grow. We pray to God daily (in the "U-va le-Tziyyon" prayer), "Hu yiftach libbenu be-Torato, ve-yasem be-libbenu ahavato ve-yirato…" - "May He open our hearts with His Torah, and place in our hearts love and fear of Him…" Not only do we need to be open to have God's words penetrate our heart, but we need to open our hearts to call out to Him in sincerity.

**דֶּ֚רֶךְ שְׁל֣שֶׁת יָמִ֔ים נֵלֵ֖ךְ בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר Let us go 3 days in the desert (8:23)** - Why is it Mutar to lie to Pharaoh? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that giving a slave his religion is the same as giving him his freedom. This is why we note that Hashem wants us to be His servant and not a servant to other servants.

**וּמשֶׁה֙ בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִ֣ים שָׁנָ֔ה Moshe was 80 years old (7:7)** - Why do we need to know how old Moshe and Aharon were? **Rav Sorotzkin ztl.** explained that in the eye of the Torah there is never any time for retirement.

**וַתַּ֨עַל֙ הַצּפַרְדֵּ֔עַ The Tzefardeiya arose (8:2)** - The commentaries explain that a single frog emerged but the more that the people hit them, the more that they multiplied/ Why would someone bother to continue beating something that became worse each time that it was beaten? The **Steipler ztl** explained that this demonstrates the power of anger to us. The more we take our anger out, the worse off we become and the more destructive the activities we engage in are for us.

 **וַיְהִ֗י שְׁחִין֙ אֲבַעְבֻּעֹ֔ת פֹּרֵ֕חַ בָּֽאָדָ֖ם וּבַבְּהֵמָֽה: Shechin..on the people and the animals (9:10)** - While able to understand why the people got the Makkah what did the animals do? **Rav Yehuda Hertzl Henkin ztl** explained that in both of these Makos Pharaoh had just noted that his heart became “Kaveid” which comes from the word “Kavod” or “Honor”. Rav Henkin suggests that Haashem wanted Pharaoh and the Mitzriyim to know that they might think that they are so special but they are not anymore important in Hashem’s eyes than the animals.

**הַיָּרֵא֙ אֶת־דְּבַ֣ר ה מֵֽעַבְדֵ֖י פַּרְעֹ֑ה He who demonstrated a Fear of Heaven from among the servants of Pharaoh (9:20)** - Which Egyptians had Yiras Shomayim? **Rav Dovid Povarsky ztl.** explained that to see things straight is not a challenge. Even the Egyptians were able to see THAT. The bigger challenge is to know what to DO because of it. The Egyptians couldn’t understand that, and in our Galus, we cannot either.

Haftara:

 **בְּקַבְּצִ֣י | אֶת־בֵּ֣ית יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל מִן־הָֽעַמִּים֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר נָפֹ֣צוּ בָ֔ם וְנִקְדַּ֥שְׁתִּי בָ֖ם לְעֵינֵ֣י הַגּוֹיִ֑ם There will no longer be a silon mam’ir for Bnei Yisrael and a painful thorn, and they will know that I am Hashem… when I gather the House of Israel from the nations of their dispersions. I will be sanctified before the nations, and they will live in their Land which I gave to my servant Yaakov. (Yechezkel 28:24-25)** - **Rav Yosef Carmel Shlita** noted that this Nevuah contrasts with that of Yirmiyahu offered at the same time. In regard to the prophecy we began with, the two see things similarly, as Yirmiyahu uses similar imagery of planting vineyards and living in security (Yirmiyahu 31:4, 32:37). Yechezkel also uses very strong and rare language to get his idea across. According to **Targum Yonatan**, the word silon means a corrupt king and Rashi explains that mam’ir means a painful affliction (as is used in regard to tzara’at (see Vayikra 13:51). Targum Yonatan explains shatim as marauders who plunder, and **Rashi** explains that it means those who degrade their victims. To summarize the approaches of both, in the future, Bnei Yisrael will escape exceptional oppression and will be fortunate to live in security in their Land. Rav Carmel added that we have witnessed our populace becoming among the most affluent in the world. While some 75 years ago, we were viewed as thorns in the eyes of the nations and like lepers, we have now been able to turn things around. We stand out among our neighbors as a uniquely talented nation, and those who still try to oppress us have themselves experienced great destruction. The interest of so many nations to get to see and take part in our success is part of the prophecy of Yechezkel and Yirmiyahu. May we succeed in being a light unto the nations.