Points to Ponder

Voera 5783

**לָכֵ֞ן אֱמֹ֥ר לִבְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵל֘ Therefore tell Bnei Yisrael that I am Hashem (6:5) - Rav Aharon Kotler** noted that based on the expansion of the פסוקים it seems that the main purpose of the slavery and the redemption was so that we would know and accept that He is Hashem and that He selected us through the process of מתן תורה. Rav Aharon explained that clarity in purpose comes through adversity in getting to it. Awareness is often achieved in measure to the suffering one experiences in learning the lessons. Hence the goal of recognizing our special relationship with Hashem and our achievement of that goal through מתן תורה as the end of the שיעבוד.

**וְהֵֽבֵאתִ֤י אֶתְכֶם֙ אֶל־הָאָ֔רֶץ And I will bring you (6:8)** – There is a difference of opinion among the Tannaim as to whether we should have a fifth cup at the seder in recognition of this additional language of freedom. **Rav Schachter** explained (I believe in the name of the Netziv) that since the Jewish people have been exiled from Eretz Yisrael, we do not drink this 5th cup. When the final Geulah arrives with the coming of Eliyahu HaNavi we will have a fifth cup and that is the origin of calling this the cup of Eliyahu.

**וְלֹ֤א שָֽׁמְעוּ֙ אֶל־משֶׁ֔ה מִקֹּ֣צֶר ר֔וּחַ וּמֵֽעֲבֹדָ֖ה קָשָֽׁהThey didn’t hear Moshe because of their shortness of spirit and hard work (6:9)** - What was missing from their אמונה that created this inability to listen? **Rav Yaakov Ruderman** explained that פרעה only believed in a אלקים that the Zohar explains refers to טבע or nature. When Moshe used a new attribute of Hashem — הויה — פרעה refused to recognize that name. Rav Ruderman added that this was the issue here too. פרעה had so broken the Jewish people that they could only consider טבע and the idea of something and someone above its rules was beyond their comprehension due to their shallowness as a result of the hard work and broken spirit.

**וּמשֶׁה֙ בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִ֣ים שָׁנָ֔ה וְאַ֣הֲרֹ֔ן בֶּן־שָׁל֥שׁ וּשְׁמֹנִ֖ים שָׁנָ֑ה Moshe was 80 and Aharon was 83 (7:7) -** Why do we need to know their ages right now? **Rav Shimon Schwab** explained that part of their message to פרעה was that he thought he had control through his rules but he did not. They told him that he commanded that all male children should be thrown into the יאור and here they were very much alive. Aharon was born three years prior to that when he had tried to have the babies murdered via the midwives and that decree too, was worthless. In the end, it is the decree of Hashem and only His that endures.

**וְעָלוּ֙ וּבָ֣אוּ בְּבֵיתֶ֔ךָ וּבַֽחֲדַ֥ר מִשְׁכָּֽבְךָ֖ וְעַל־מִטָּתֶ֑ךָ וּבְבֵ֤ית עֲבָדֶ֨יךָ֙ They will come into your house and that of your servants (7:28) - Rashi** notes that since פרעה began the idea of the שיבוד he was to suffer he punishment first. **Rav Yerucham Levovitz** highlighted the major difference between Hashem’s justice and that of a human. Most humans will forget about some small side issue in favor of the greater issue but when it comes to Hashem, EVERY SINGLE point makes a difference include who suffers even a second longer.

**אֶצְבַּ֥ע אֱלֹק֖ים הִ֑וא וַיֶּֽחֱזַ֤ק לֵֽב־פַּרְעֹה֙  It is the finger of Hashem (8:15)** - If he trusted them up until this point, why doesn’t פרעה trust the חרטומים that the hand of Hashem is at work here? It is not as if his heart was being hardened against his will yet? **Rav Shimon Sofer, Eroli Rav**, explained that פרעה thought that they were just covering for their own ineptitude having come face to face with a better magician in Moshe. In order to save themselves from embarrassment, he reasoned, they concocted the story of the finger of Hashem but it was not true. Hence he didn’t believe their rationalization and didn’t accept it.

**כְּצֵאתִי֙ אֶת־הָעִ֔יר אֶפְרֹ֥שׂ אֶת־כַּפַּ֖י When I leave the city (9:29)-** It is fascinating that this time משה needed to leave the city because of the עבודה זרה there but in previous מכות he didn’t. Why the change? **Rav Moshe Feinstein** explained that as opposed to previous misgivings, this time פרעה turned toward Teshuva. He even said that Hashem was right and he was wrong. Moshe wanted to be clear that this was only a turn but that פרעה was FAR from done with the תשובה process. He was still in the midst of עבודה זרה and not prepared to do anything about it.

**Haftara**

**וְיָ֣דְע֔וּ כִּ֛י אֲנִ֥י ה' They will know that I am Hashem (Yechezkel 28:26) - Rav David Feinstein** noted that it is this פסוק that highlights the connection to our Parsha. This Possuk states that when Hashem executes judgements, we will know that he is also the Hashem of mercy. The same was learned by פרעה who noted at the end of the פרשה that Hashem is the righteous one— using the very name that he denied.