

VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English



בס"ד

The Powerful Force of Crying Out to Hashem on Rosh Hashanah!

» The Connection Between Rosh Hashanah and Yetzias Mitzrayim

In the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah we recite: "And Hashem our G-d gave us this Day of Remembrance, a day of blowing (the shofar) that is called holy, a remembrance of the exodus from Egypt."

We may wonder what the connection is between Rosh Hashanah and the exodus from Egypt. We know that the *Shalosh Regalim* were all enacted to remember different aspect of the exodus. However, Rosh Hashanah was established as the anniversary of the world's creation. What is the relation between that and the *yetzias Mitzrayim*? (This question was already asked by the Rishonim, see *Shibolei Haleket*, Siman 286.)

We can begin answering this question by citing the verse (Devarim 32:48) that speaks of the *petirah* of Moshe Rabenu. The *pasuk* states: "And Hashem spoke to Moshe on that very day, saying..." Rashi explains: "In three places the verse employs the phrase: "On that very day" (which has the meaning, "at the strongest light of the day")."

First, regarding Noach, the verse states, "On that very day Noach entered (the *teiva*)", which means that the people of his generation said they would not let him enter the *teiva* and would break it open! Hashem said: "I will have Noach enter at midday, and let anyone who has the power to prevent it, come and prevent it!"

The second is that regarding when Klal Yisroel left Egypt, the verse states, "On that very day, Hashem brought them out (of Egypt)." The Egyptians said that they would not let them leave and would kill them. Hashem said: "I will bring them out in the middle of the day, and let anyone who has power to prevent it, come and prevent it!"

Likewise, here, regarding Moshe's death, the verse states: "On that very day." The children of Yisroel said, "The man who brought us out of Egypt, divided the sea for us, brought the manna down for us, made flocks of birds fly over to us, brought up the well for us, and gave us the Torah-we will not let him die!"

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Hashem said: "I will have Moshe ascend the mountain in the middle of the day!"

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l asks: We can understand that the generation of Noach and the Egyptians erred and thought they had the power to stop Noach from entering the *teiva* and the nation from leaving Egypt. But how could Klal Yisroel think they had the power to stop Moshe from dying?

» The Power of Crying Out From The Depth Of The Heart

When Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe in the spectacle of the burning bush, He said (Shemos 3:9): "And now, behold, the cry (*tze'aka*) of the children of Yisroel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression that the Egyptians are oppressing them."

The Zohar Hakadosh states (Chelek Bais, 20) that there are ten different terms used to describe prayer. He says that "*tze'aka*" (crying out) is the highest form of the ten. This is because "*tze'aka*" is done in the heart, as it states (Eichah 2:18): "Their heart cried out (*tza'ak*) to Hashem."

The Zohar adds that "*tze'aka*" and "*ze'aka*" (another word for crying out) are similar, and both are a higher form of prayer than "*tefillah*" (praying) and "*anacha*" (groaning).

The Zohar continues to say that "*tze'aka*" has the power to tear up a bitter decree and to overrule the trait of strict judgment, as is stated (Tehilim 107:6): "And they cried out to Hashem in their distress; from their straits, He rescued them."

From all of this we see the great power of "*tze'aka*", crying out to Hashem from the heart, which is only done in a time of distress and pain that causes the heart to scream to Hashem. When one cries out to Hashem in this manner, He will rescue him.

The Malbim uses this concept to explain the chapter in Tehilim (107) that speaks of the four types of people who are obligated to praise Hashem. He notes that the word "*tze'aka*" is used for two of them – those

who traveled through a desert and those who crossed the sea - while the word “ze’aka” is used for the other two – those who were healed from a sickness and those who came out of prison.

Additionally, in the two instances where the word “tze’aka” is used, the verse say that they were saved (*yatzileim*) from their straits, or they emerged (*yotzi’eim*) from their straits – both of which indicate that the suffering is completely over. However, in the instances where the word “ze’aka” is used, it says only that they were helped (*yoshe’eim*), seeming to indicate that the suffering was not removed completely.

The Malbim explains that the prayers of those who are deathly ill or who are languishing in prison are only the lower level of “ze’aka”. This is because when one is ill his prayer to Hashem may not be from the depth of his heart because he still has some hope that he can be saved by expert doctors and medicines. Since his prayer is not on the highest level of “tze’aka”, his salvation is not fully complete, and is only on the level of “yoshe’eim.”

Similarly, when someone is in jail, even though he cries out to Hashem he still places some hope in his lawyers and communal activists to help him and find a way to have him freed. Therefore, his prayer is not on the highest level and neither is his salvation.

However, one who wanders in the desert is all alone and is hungry and thirsty. He is surrounded merely by sand, wild beasts and emptiness. And knows that no one can help him besides Hashem. Therefore, he cries out to Hashem with a full heart. Since his prayer is on the level of “tze’aka”, he merits the full salvation of “yotzi’eim.”

The same is true of one who sails the sea. He is all alone as the waters assail and batter him, and he knows that only Hashem can help him survive. He cries out to Him with a “tze’aka” from the depth of his heart – and therefore merits full salvation.

» The Supernatural Power of Tefillah on Rosh Hashanah

We can understand the great power of prayer on Rosh Hashanah from the Gemara (Bava Metzia 106A) that says that when a sharecropper does not plant the type of crop that he told the owner he would plant, and then the crop that he planted is smitten by blight, even if all the

surrounding fields are also smitten, he may not pay a reduced fee for the land.

The Gemara explains that the owner can claim, "I prayed at the beginning of the year that Hashem would protect the type of crop that I wanted you to plant there. Had you planted the type of crop for which I prayed, then Hashem would have listened to my prayers. Now that you planted a different crop, my prayers were meaningless."

We see how the prayers uttered at the beginning of the year are so potent that the owner can be confident they will be heard to such an extent that they can change the course of nature.

» If We Are Aroused by Fear, We Are Assured of Being Found Worthy in Judgment

On Rosh Hashanah, it is natural for a person to be afraid of the judgment. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing. On the contrary, this fear can help him daven from the depths of his heart and merit a good judgment.

This is seen from the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (16B) that states that every year which begins poor will end rich. Rashi explains: What is meant by beginning “poor”? This means that everyone begins the year on Rosh Hashanah by making themselves poor by lowering themselves before Hashem with heartfelt prayers and supplications. This is stated in the verse (Mishlei 18:23): “The poor people recite supplications.”

Rav Chaim Friedlander zt”l notes in a letter that he wrote towards the end of his life that Rashi does not speak of people who act “like they are poor.” Rather, he says that they actually “make themselves poor.” This means that one must realize that he really is poor and has no merits of his own. He must know that all that he has is merely a gift from Hashem, who is now judging whether to continue providing you with His kindness or not.

When one has this fear – this realization that he deserves nothing and only will have anything if Hashem deigns to give it to him as a gift – he will emerge “rich” – meaning that Hashem will decide to continue to provide for him for another year.

This idea is also found in the Rabenu Yona (Avos 2:13). Rabenu Yona writes that one should utter his prayers like a pauper that is supplicating and asking for what he needs – not like someone who is asking for something he doesn’t really need who isn’t begging with a lowly heart

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and broken spirit.

Every man must make requests for himself because everyone needs mercy. Hashem withholds His anger and has compassion to people – not because of their virtue. One must supplicate to Him for perhaps Hashem will stop holding back evil that is caused by one’s sins. For miracles do not occur all the time.

We perhaps may say that this is the explanation of Rashi’s words in regards to Moshe’s death. Had the nation cried out with a broken heart that it was impossible that the man who took them out of Egypt and split the sea and gave them the Torah could be taken from the world they would have had the power to rescind a decree, and even to stop death. However, since Hashem had already ruled that Moshe would not be allowed to enter the land, He “hid his face” and hid the fact that Moshe was destined to die from the nation so that they would not cry out for him.

The Torah stresses with the words “on that exact day” that Moshe was taken on that day, with the nation having no power to stop it through prayer.

>> *Why is a Poor Man Not Embarrassed to Knock on The Door?*

We recite in Selichos: “Lo b’chesed v’lo b’ma’asim ba’anu l’fanecha. We do not come before you with acts of kindness or good deeds. K’dalim u’k’rashim dafaknu dalasecha. We knock on Your door like paupers and beggars.”

Rav Naftali Trop zt”l asked: How are we to understand these words? We ask Hashem to forgive our iniquities and grant us a good year, yet we say that we have no merits and are simply beggars!? Wouldn’t it make more sense to come before Hashem with some claim of merit and tell Him that we tried to daven properly, to learn properly and act properly? Even if we didn’t always succeed, and our prayers, actions and learning were often lacking, we certainly can say that we tried our best and deserve something in return for that. Why would we openly say that we are coming to Hashem emptyhanded?

He answered that are two distinct types of beggars. One is a poor man who makes his living by collecting alms from door to door. Some people feel bad, respond generously and give him a respectable donation. Others slam the door in his face and give him nothing. He accepts his humiliation in silence and continues on his way.

The other type of beggar is in an even worse strait. He is a ‘dal v’rosh’ and literally does not have a penny to his name. He has been lost in the forest for days and is crying out with desperate pleas for assistance. This destitute pauper has gone days without eating. He is literally starving when he knocks on a door and is depending on getting something to stave off a death from hunger. Imagine his reaction when there is no answer to his

knocking. He knocks again and hears a voice from inside telling him to come back later because they are not available now.

How will he respond? He will stamp his feet and cry out? Please have mercy on me! Open the door! I am about to die from starvation! He has no intention of moving on to the next house. He knows that his only chance of survival lies inside this house, and if he is not granted the sustenance, he immediately needs he will surely die. He will continue to bang on the door with as much strength as can muster until someone opens it. When someone unremittently knocks on a door in this way, it is certain that it will eventually be opened.”

This is how we approach Hashem. We cry to him, “We are starving spiritually! We have been lost in the physical world for the past year and are ‘dalim v’rashim’ who have nothing!” Therefore, we knock on the Heavenly gates with all our strength and cry to Hashem, telling him that if He does not help us, we will surely perish!

When we cry in this manner, Rav Naftali concluded, the gates of Heaven will surely be opened for us, and our prayers to Hashem will be heard and accepted.

>> *The Power Of “Tze’aka” Was Revealed During The Exodus From Egypt*

With all that we have stated, it is readily understandable that Rosh Hashanah is connected to the exodus from Egypt. The verse (Shemos 2:23) tells that while in Egypt: “The children of Yisroel groaned from the hard work and they cried out (tze’aka) their prayer ascended to G-d.”

The main cause for their crying was that they knew that Hashem had decreed at the covenant with Avrohom Avinu (Bereishis 15:13) that they would be enslaved for 400 years. They knew they had hundreds of years of slavery left to go, and they therefore cried out from the depths of their hearts. Hashem responded that: “The tze’aka of the children of Yisroel has reached Me.”

The Zohar says: Because of this Hashem was “chisheiv es haketz” (counted the end of the years). This means that he deducted the numerical value of “ketz”, which is 190 years, thus deducting the years of bondage to 210 years. All of this was due to the power of their prayers.

The same is true of Rosh Hashanah. We know that the books of life and death are open before Hashem. We cry out to Him that just as the power of our tze’aka caused the decree of bondage in Egypt to be rescinded and changed, so too on Rosh Hashanah we cry out from our hearts that the strict decrees should be changed and we should be uplifted from our status as “paupers” and turned into “rich” men through His kindness. We thus pray on Rosh Hashanah in the same way that the nation prayed in Egypt, and in this way the two are connected to each other.