

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

Hashem Causes Events to Occur in Order to Fulfill His Decrees For The World!

» Why Did the Shevatim Return to Egypt After Burying Yaakov?

The pasuk in this week's Parshah states (47:28): "And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years..." Rashi writes: "Why is this section 'stumah' (closed)? Because, as soon as Yaakov Avinu passed away, the eyes and the heart of Yisroel were 'closed' because of the misery of the slavery."

There is a well-known question on this Rashi. Chazal say (cited in Rashi, Shemos 6:15) that the bondage did not begin until all the Shevatim had died. If so, what does Rashi mean when he says that the "misery of slavery" began as soon as Yaakov passed away?

The Maagalei Tzedek of Dezh zy"א answers by citing the words of Chazal (in the Hagadah Shel Pesach): "And they descended to Egypt and they dwelled (*vayagar*) there (Devarim 26:5)." This teaches us that Yaakov did not descend to become sunk in Egypt; rather, he only temporarily dwelled there (as the word '*vayagar*' indicates dwelling temporarily, as a 'stranger'), as is stated (Bereishis 47:4): 'And they said to Pharaoh: We are coming to dwell (*lagur*) in the land...'"

If their stay in Egypt was meant to be temporary, we may ask why the Shevatim did not return to Eretz Yisroel. We can understand that while Yaakov was alive, they could not go back, as he was too elderly to make the trip (and, furthermore, Hashem had commanded Yaakov to go to Egypt). But now that Yaakov had died and all his sons had gone to bury him in the Me'aras Hamachpeilah, why did they return to Mitzrayim? Now that the famine was over, why didn't they remain in Eretz Yisroel?

The Maagalei Tzedek writes that it seems that Hashem caused this to happen. He "closed the eyes and hearts" of the Shevatim and made them forget that they had only planned on staying in Egypt temporarily because it had been decreed that their offspring should be enslaved there. Thus, the misery of slavery actually began now, after the Shevatim had their eyes closed and forgot about the plan to return to Eretz Yisroel. At this point, the decree of slavery began to take effect.

לעילוי נשמת
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This teaches us that Hashem causes events to transpire in this world in accordance with His will. Even when a person makes a mistake or forgets something, it is part of Hashem's plan. He causes this to happen so that His decrees will be fulfilled.

One should never think that an event occurred because he made a mistake and had he only done things differently, the outcome would have been different. Such thoughts are heretical because the opposite is the truth - Hashem caused the person to make the mistake because this outcome had to occur. In other words, the destined outcome was the cause of the mistake, and not the other way around.

» The Lesson of Yosef's Journey to His Brothers

This concept is seen from numerous incidents in the Torah and is an important lesson for all of us to internalize, especially in our confusing times.

The Ramban (Bereishis 37:13-15) says that the verse tells us that Yosef Hatzadik met a man who directed him to his brothers' location to teach us that he could have turned back after not finding them, but Hashem sent him someone to guide him to them. This teaches us that when something is decreed to occur it will inevitably occur. This is the intent of Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah 84:14), who say that the man who directed him was actually an angel, sent to help carry out the Divine decree.

When we examine the events leading to Klal Yisroel descending to Egypt, as well as all the challenges they faced there, we can clearly see that the entire experience was for them to be cleansed and purified, specifically in the area of *emunah* in Hashem.

The saga began when Yosef's brothers heard about his dreams of him ruling over them. It would seem that they should have accepted the dreams as a clear omen that this was Hashem's will, and that they had no way to change or alter such a Heavenly decree. However, they instead decided to attempt to annul the decree and tried to change the course of history.

In turn, Yaakov Avinu sent Yosef to check

up on his brothers in Shechem. All of this was done as part of the Divine plan to force the Jewish nation to descend to Egypt. Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni Vayeishev 37:14) state: “And he sent him from the valley of Chevron.’ He sent him from the deep guidance of the righteous man who is buried in Chevron, to fulfill what was said to Avrohom at the covenant between the pieces.”

Yosef became lost along the way, and Hashem sent him a guide to show him the direct path to his brothers, who wished to capture and kill him in order to end any chance of his dreams coming to fruition. When they saw him, they decided to murder him and throw him into a pit and claim a wild animal had killed him (Bereishis 37:20).

Hashem, however, wanted Yosef to have his dreams fulfilled and wanted him to become a ruler over them. At the last minute, He caused them to change their minds and decide that it was not worth it to kill him with their own hands. Instead, they decided to sell him in order to rid themselves of his presence and never see him again.

This last-minute change of heart, which Hashem caused the brothers to have, ultimately led to the dreams of Yosef being completely fulfilled. Hashem used their own actions as the means to cause the dreams to come to reality – the exact opposite of what their intentions were. With their own actions, they caused Yosef to eventually become the ruler over the entire Egypt.

Furthermore, the way Yosef was appointed ruler of Egypt was contrary to the normal way a king is crowned to rule over a nation. He was a slave, accused of a terrible crime, and he was also a foreigner from a nation that was held in low esteem by the Egyptians. Yet, when he became the ruler, his authority was accepted by all, with no rebels ever trying to unseat him.

He was a king with no limitations to his authority, as is stated (Tehilim 105:23-24): “He made him the master of his household and the ruler over all his possessions. To bind up his princes with his soul, and he made his elders wise.”

Even the elders accepted that he “made them wise”, and they accepted the sage words of a man much younger than themselves. His wisdom was accepted as authoritative, despite the fact that Chazal say that Egypt was a nation full of wise men, as Chazal say that Shlomo Hamelech was such a wise man that he was even wiser than the Egyptians.

>> Pharaoh Raised The Savior of The Jews in His Own Home!

We further see how one cannot do anything to stop a Heavenly decree from being fulfilled from Pharaoh’s attempt to drown every male baby in the sea (Shemos 1:15). Chazal say that Pharaoh only cared to kill the male babies because his stargazers had told him that a son would be born to the Jews who would save them and lead them out of slavery. Pharaoh wanted to overcome this decree by killing all the male babies and stopping the savior from being born.

In the end, Hashem orchestrated events to occur that led to Pharaoh actually raising the Jews’ savior in his own home. His daughter, Bisya, found baby Moshe in the sea. Even though she realized he was a Jewish child, she took him home with her, deciding that she would save this one baby from her father’s edict. Incredibly, Pharaoh agreed to allow her to raise this child in his home.

This was a great miracle in and of itself, as the Medrash states that 600,000 babies were thrown into the sea, at which point Pharaoh decided that the savior of the Jews must have already been drowned and there would be no harm in allowing this one baby to live.

It is truly amazing to see how Hashem caused events to occur. One may wonder: Wouldn’t it have been preferable for Moshe Rabenu to grow up in the holy and pure house of his parents? Why was it necessary for him to be raised specifically in the house of Pharaoh? The answer is that Hashem wanted to display the fact that one can make all kinds of plans and attempt to thwart His decree, but one can never succeed in doing so.

The verse (Shemos 1:8) states: “And a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Yosef.” The Kli Yakar asks how it is possible that Pharaoh did not know about Yosef. He answers that the intent is that Pharaoh did not learn the lessons of Yosef.

He states: “Did he not know what happened to Yosef? His brothers attempted with all their might to destroy him and annul his dreams, and none of the traps they set succeeded because Hashem’s will was for Yosef to become great and His will survives forever. Pharaoh also tried to stop the growth of the Jews, and made plans against them, and he did not succeed just like the brothers did not succeed. Whatever way he tried to harm Yisroel, the Egyptians were harmed in that exact way.”

“...This was Chazal’s intent in saying that Hashem heals with the same tool He uses to harm. They were saying that it is evident that the thing causing the harm is not the true cause, as the same thing is used to heal. Rather, all events are actually results of Hashem’s ultimate plan...”

We learn from the story of Yosef that Hashem's decree will always be fulfilled, no matter what one does to try to stop it.

We from all of this that everything that occurred, from the time of the sale of Yosef and his descent to Egypt and throughout the time the nation was enslaved there, was all a lesson with one particular goal in mind – to teach the nation to have firm *emunah* in Hashem.

» *Was Yosef Sold Because of His Dreams, Or Did He Have Dreams in Order to be Sold?*

The Medrash (Tanchuma Vayeishev 9) states: “Rav Yehoshua ben Levi says: Come and see that the ways of Hashem are not like the ways of man. A man gets hurt by iron and heals with a bandage. Hashem hurts and heals with the same medium. Yosef was sold because of a dream, and he only became king because of a dream.”

Here too, one could err and say that Yosef was sold as a slave because of his dream, and if he had not had his dream he would never have been sold. The truth is that it was decreed that Yosef be sold for a very beneficial reason. It had already been declared that Yaakov must descend to Egypt. The Gemara (Shabbos 89) states that he would have had to go down in iron chains. Hashem, however, caused Yosef to be sold in order to force Yaakov to go down to Egypt in fulfillment of the decree in a more comfortable manner.

The dreams were not a cause. They were simply a result of the decree. This was Chazal's intent in saying that Hashem heals with the same tool He uses to harm. They were saying that it is evident that the thing causing the harm is not the true cause, as the same thing is used to heal. Rather, all events are actually results of Hashem's ultimate plan.

We see from this that once Hashem has issued a decree, one cannot change it at all. If one is successful in anything, it is only because Hashem already decreed that he will succeed, and his actions are only a result of that Divine decree.

This is as the Mesilas Yesharim (Perek 21) writes: “The concept of *bitachon* is casting one's lot with Him in the realization that a person can never be deprived of what has been set aside for him, as Chazal have said that a man's entire sustenance is determined for him on Rosh Hashana and (Yoma 38B), ‘A man cannot touch even a hairsbreadth of what has been set aside for his neighbor.’ A man could sit idle and what was ordained for him would materialize, were it not for the penalty imposed upon all men: ‘With the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread’ (Bereishis 3:19).

“Because of this, by Divine decree, a man is required to exert himself somewhat for his sustenance. This is like a tax, which must be paid by every member of the human race and which cannot be evaded... But the exertion is

not what produces the results, but it is necessary. Once one has exerted himself, he has fulfilled his responsibilities and made room for the blessing of Heaven to rest upon him, and he need not consume his days in striving and exertion.”

The Mesilas Yesharim continues, “This makes a big difference in regards to how worried or calm a person will be. If one thinks *parnassah* comes from his efforts, he has good reason to worry. He needs to make calculations how to find success and constantly be nervous about whether he is doing the right things or not. But if a person knows for certain and fully believes that everything is from Hashem and he only needs to work in order to fulfill Hashem's decree, he can be calm and serene. He has no reason to be worried or panicked, as he only must do what he is obligated to do and he can then rely completely on Hashem.”

The Kovetz Igros (of the Chazon Ish) explains this concept succinctly: “At every opportunity, one should be accustomed to strengthen his belief that nothing happens in this world by chance, but only through Divine Providence. And one must fortify himself in prayer to annul the decree. Therefore, we look coldly at *hishtadlus*, since most of the time it is unclear what *hishtadlus* even does.”

Our duty is to strengthen our *emunah* and bring ourselves to fully believe that everything comes from Hashem. Once we recognize this, we will know that there is never any reason to be nervous or worried. We will realize that whatever occurs is part of His plan, and nothing we do could change that. While we will accept that we must do our *hishtadlus*, we will know that it doesn't really affect the outcome. It is not the cause of our success, even if it appears that way to the human eye. We will that, in truth, everything is a result of Hashem's decrees, and the outcome is not connected at all to our efforts.

It is up to us to bear in mind that He decrees how much one will have, and no amount of *hishtadlus* can add even a penny to what we are destined to receive. And if we reach this level of *emunah* and *bitachon*, we will merit untold blessing and Divine kindness.

In this vein, the Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoyada Yoma 38b) notes that Chazal use the expression, “No one can touch what is destined for his friend.” This indicates that not only can no one steal something destined for another, he cannot even touch it. He proceeds to relate a story: There was a spot where people would come for vacation in the summer. Everyone who came would bring a tent and attach it to the ground with spikes in the same spot. One year, a certain individual moved his tent over by one inch – and when he hammered his spike into the ground, he found a treasure trove of precious gems. Since this treasure was ordained to go to him and nobody else, no one else was ever able to even touch it.