

GENESIS OF EXODUS

by Rabbi Label Lam

And it happened during those many days that the King of Egypt died and the Children of Israel groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to G-d.. G-d heard their moaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchok, and with Yakov. G-d saw the Children of Israel and G-d knew. (Shemos 23-25)

Here the Children of Israel find themselves in the depth of a long and brutal exile and because of the pain and suffering they groan and cry. Suddenly they attract the attention of The Almighty and wake up the promises to patriarchs. This precise point signals the the beginning of the end of the exile and therefore we need to know, "What happened here? How did they do it?"

Why does the verse tell us that "G-d saw..."? HASHEM sees everything. Why are we told that HASHEM knew if HASHEM already knows everything? Rashi comments, that "HASHEM focused on them and He did not hide his eyes from them." That helps somewhat to explain the not knowing.

The Sefas Emes references a most fascinating Midrash on the verse that supplies some new information, "G-d knew that they had done Teshuvah (repentance). Only they did not know, this one about this that one. Only G-d knew!" The new simple explanation is that only G-d knew that all of them had done Teshuvah privately, independently, and simultaneously. The Sefas Emes adds, "Maybe they themselves were not able to express their thoughts articulately...there are incomplete thought fragments that no one else is able understand except for The Creator Blessed is He, because He inspects the heart and the kidneys."

What had G-d come to know? He had deciphered a hidden language of the heart and kidneys that even the person himself does not understand clearly what he is saying. Like a parent that hears distress in a child's cry and knows that this is no ordinary formalistic attention getting whimper. Here too we have on open display a certain type of wordless cry, a groan that is included amongst the thirteen expressions of prayer. Not only is it included in prayer but it may be a superior form of prayer. As the Talmud states, "That person that prays with crying and weeping until he is not able to express verbally. This is a complete prayer that comes from the heart and it does not go unanswered."

The original spark the triggered the grand exodus from Egypt was a very private, and, to the human

mind. an inarticulate cry. There are many who cry for whatever reason. Are all those emotional moments also a form of Tefilla too? There may be one extra point that make this cry so effective.

I once heard a story about a young boy who came running into his house all upset and crying hysterically. He was sobbing uncontrollably. He was barely able to explain to his father what he was so upset about. Someone had taken his toy or excluded him from a game. He could hardly control his grief. His father listened carefully and then handed him a Sefer Tehillim. The child still quite upset looked at his father with wonderment, as if to say, "What's this for?" The wise father explained to him, "As long as you're already crying, you might as well pray!"

The Talmud says that there are tears that are compared to smoke and tears that are like seeds. Tears that are like smoke dissipate and disappear without a trace. Tears that are like seeds fall to the ground and create everlasting results. One can write the most articulate and brilliantly crafted letter in the universe, put it into an envelope, put a stamp on it and a return address and still it will never hit the mark unless there is an address. Crying is one thing. Crying to HASHEM is potent form of prayer that may be the **genesis of exodus!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.