

MASTERPLAN

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week's parsha, Beshalach, begins with the possuk (13:17) "Vayehee, and it was, when Paroah sent the nation". We've mentioned before that the word 'vayehee' connotes sorrow. Why is a term of sorrow used to introduce the ecstatic moment of our liberation!? Another question commonly asked is, why is Paroah, of all people given the credit for sending B'nei Yisroel?

The Ohr Gedalyahu quotes the medrash that the term 'beshalach', in addition to meaning 'sent', can also be defined as 'accompany'. The possuk now assumes a totally different meaning. In a spiritual sense, Paroah accompanied the nation. The Torah commands us to escort our guests and to escort the deceased. The Maharal explains that the purpose of this mitzvah is to create a lasting bond and connection between the two parties. Paroah's 'escorting us' meant that we were still carrying 'Paroah' along with us. We had yet to rid ourselves of the many negative influences manifested by Paroah himself.

With this, we can return to the questions we began with. We asked why is a term of sorrow used and why does it say that Paroah 'shalach'. The lasting effect of Paroah, which we carried along with us, darkened that bright moment of our liberation with a certain degree of vayehee, of sorrow. In a physical sense we left Mitzraim, but in a spiritual and emotional sense, Paroah was still with us. We were not yet truly free.

This also explains the continuation of the possuk. Hashem couldn't lead us through the land of the Plishtim, lest we'd want to return to Mitzraim! Only that lasting influence of Paroah would allow us to entertain the thought of return.

We now needed to encounter and grow through different experiences in order to cleanse ourselves from this influence and ready us to receive the Torah. One very vivid experience was our being pursued by the Mitzrim and the ultimate splitting of the Yam Suf.

The possuk (14:10) states that as Mitzraim were chasing B'nei Yisroel "u'Paroah hikreev", literally defined that Paroah drew close. The medrash explains that in fact, Paroah caused us to draw close! The fright of seeing Paroah and his whole army in hot pursuit caused us to draw close to Hashem through tfilah, prayer.

Rav Chatzkel Levinshtein zt"l explains that the purpose of Paroah chasing us was to bring us to this elevated level of tfilah. A topic we've discussed a number of times is our misunderstanding of true cause and effect. Often, when going through a difficult experience, we call out to Hashem to help us.

We superficially perceive that we are davening in order that Hashem will deliver us from that predicament. In fact, Hashem sent that event in order to raise our level of tfilah! It was our need for hisor'rus, spiritual arousal, that caused Hashem to send us that situation!

This explains a very basic question on tfilah raised by the Nefesh Hachaim. If we accept that all events which transpire in this world are merciful decrees of Hashem, how can we call out to Him to change these decrees? Aren't we like a patient who cries out for mercy to the doctor who insists that amputation is critical to stop the spread of infection?! According to Rav Chatzkel, there is no difficulty whatsoever! There was no need for the 'operation'! The true intention of scheduling the 'operation' was to cause us to pray! It was only intended to spur us to realize our latent potential, and to connect to our Creator on an even deeper and more intimate level!

Another way of viewing tfilah is suggested by the Sefer Halkarim. Granted, Hashem will only do what is best for a person, but what determines who that person is? As a person changes, that which is best for him also changes. One of the most dynamic ways of growing and developing oneself is through a vivid 'face to face' encounter with one's Creator. One should walk away a changed person with revamped priorities. As sincere tfilah changes our goals and attitudes, Hashem's decrees are 'updated' accordingly. The amputation is no longer necessary, the patient's test results have changed drastically!

An additional purge of the Paroah influence was achieved and internalized with our singing of "Az yashir"(15:1), the praise, sung for our deliverance. The Baal Haturim notes that the word 'az' (then), begins both Moshe's praise and Moshe's earlier complaint. "Uma'az Ba'ati el Paroah"(5:23), from the time that I came to Paroah, from then, he has worsened the fate of the nation. The medrash takes this a step further by relating that Moshe was saying, "I sinned with 'az', I'll now say shira with 'az'".

The Beis Halevi elucidates the deeper message of this medrash. If one finds himself in a difficult predicament and Hashem delivers him, he feels a sense of gratitude. If he's feeling thanks only for being saved, his gratitude is no greater than had he never been placed in that predicament.

The shira (song of praise) sung by Moshe and Bnei Yisroel was of a totally different nature. We weren't singing for simply having been redeemed. Our gratitude was for having been the medium through which Hashem's power and greatness were publicized. We rejoiced for the oppression, to the same degree that we rejoiced for the deliverance! Moshe chose the same word to stress his different view of the sequence of events. Whereas before I complained when the oppression augmented, I'm now singing praise for that initial worsening of our fate!

That recognition that every phase of every event we experience is an integral part of the masterplan, was a major step away from the Paroah that was shadowing us!

May we each, as individuals, and collectively, as a nation, properly view the events sent to us from above. May we use them as the vehicles of growth and self realization that they were intended to be. May we purge the traces of Paroah that linger in each and every one of us and merit the ultimate

and final redemption.

Good Shabbos.

Yisroel Ciner

Copyright © 1997 by [Rabbi Yisroel Ciner](#) and Project Genesis, Inc.

The author teaches at [Neveh Zion](#) in Telzstone (near Yerushalayim).
