

# SIX COMES BEFORE SEVEN

*by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner*

This week we read the double parsha of Vayakhel-Pekudei. Vayakhel begins with Moshe gathering Bnei Yisroel (Children of Israel) in order to command them to observe the Shabbos. "Shaishes yamim tai'a'seh m'lacha (Six days your work will be done) u'va'yom ha'sh'vi'i ... Shabbos... la'Hashem (and the seventh day... Shabbos for Hashem) [35:2]."

The term "tai'a'seh (will be done)" as opposed to "ta'a'seh (you will do)" is very revealing. Our work does not 'get done'... We need to do it! What does the Torah teach us by using the term "tai'a'seh"?

A person who is convinced that all of his earnings come directly from the time and efforts he invests, has a hard time observing, or at least enjoying, Shabbos. How can he sit out the day? How can he miss the opportunities that might come his way? Thank G-d Wall Street takes the day off, but he's still stifling his 'enormous potential'!

On the other hand, a person who recognizes that his livelihood is set and given by Hashem is comfortably able to fully enjoy his Shabbos. Imagine a worker who's advised to take off a day. Don't call the office. Don't even think about work. Just have a total vacation. He's worried. Will he fall behind? Will the boss be upset? Will the other workers hold it against him? He can't really enjoy the day. He's afraid of the repercussions. Unless, of course, it was his boss who gave him this advice. He's off! Not a worry on his mind! He can enjoy a day of true oneg (enjoyment).

"Six days tai'a'seh m'lacha!" Your work will be done! Efforts must be expended but the results come from Hashem. He, the ultimate Boss, commands you to take the day off and to not even think about your business. "Tai'a'seh" - your work will be done. Nothing will be lost - one can only gain by conforming to the will of the Creator.

The Chofetz Chaim would often say that, not only is nothing lost by observing Shabbos but rather, Shabbos is the true source of all bracha (blessing). The story is told that the Chofetz Chaim visited the city of Chernikov. A wealthy Jew lived there whose factory was open on Shabbos employing a number of other Jews. In response to the Chofetz Chaim's request that he close his factory on Shabbos, the man haughtily replied "I earn 4,000 rubles a day!. Do you really think that I'd give up such a sum of money every week for Shabbos?!" The Chofetz Chaim explained that his view of the situation was greatly mistaken. Observing Shabbos wouldn't cause a loss at all. On the contrary, he warned, continuing to desecrate the Shabbos could cause him to lose far more than 4,000 ruble. Why, the Chofetz Chaim asked, does the Torah bother to mention working six days when it wants to

command us to observe the seventh? He explained that the Torah is informing us that, if you want to be successful during the week's work days, be sure to observe the seventh as Shabbos. If the seventh is not observed then you will find yourself without anything to do during the six. To this, the man scornfully replied, "Does the Rabbi think that a possuk (verse) from the Torah is going to close down my factory for twenty four hours a week?!".

A short time after this conversation the Bolsheviks took over Russia and the factory was 'liberated'. The owner managed to escape with his life but with nothing else. He penned a letter to the Chofetz Chaim stating: "I now see that your words were correct. A single possuk of the Torah certainly has the strength to close an entire factory."

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The parsha of Pekudei concludes the Sefer of Shemos. The Ramban writes that Shemos is the Sefer of exile and redemption. As such, the Sefer ends with the Shechina (Hashem's holy presence) filling the Mishkan - the true redemption - our close unity with Hashem. In fact, the word 'Mishkan' is defined as dwelling - Hashem's 'dwelling' amongst us.

We are commanded to believe in and long for the ultimate redemption. This can be very difficult. The whole concept seems so foreign to the modern world in which we live. It's hard to imagine tuning our radios to Traffic Watch and hearing that there's more than the usual congestion on the Van Wyck Expressway due to the Messiah's arrival. Perhaps, as involved as we are in our lives, we are not sure if we want to hear that he has arrived...

Rav Nachum of Chernoble visited a far flung village. At midnight he arose to say the Tikkun Chatzos (prayers for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim). His host, awakened by his sobbing cries, rushed to see what had happened to his guest. Rav Nachum explained that he was crying in prayer for the coming of the Moshiach. Seeing the look of shock on his host's face, he asked "Don't you want the Moshiach to come and take us all to Yerushalayim with him?". "I'll have to ask my wife", his host responded.

A short while later he returned with the verdict. "My wife says we can't leave the roosters and goats and they can't make the trip to Yerushalayim. We can't go."

"What will be when thieves come and steal your property and your very lives will be in danger?!", Rav Nachum asked. "I'll have to ask my wife", was again his response.

He returned a few moments later. "My wife said to ask you to pray that the Moshiach should come and take the thieves with him to Yerushalayim."

Such advice we can relate to! Let's now see if we can relate to the belief and yearning for the geulah (redemption) which are of the basic tenets of Judaism.

The possuk (verse) states in T'hilim: "Ki im Hashem ha'chesed (with Hashem is kindness) v'harbey imo f'dus (and redemption is abundantly with Him) v'hoo yifdeh es Yisroel mi'kol a'vonosov (and he

will redeem Yisroel with all of their sins) [130:7-8]."

There are three factors which withhold a person from helping another: 1) An unwillingness to give, 2) An inability to give and 3) An undeserving recipient.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the possuk comes to strengthen us in our hopes for the redemption. We know that Hashem is the very source of chessed (kindness). The Ramcha"l writes that the purpose of the world's creation was Hashem's desire to dispense tov (good) to others. It's therefore inconceivable that a lack of chessed would hold back the redemption - the ultimate realization of this world's direction and intent. "Ki im Hashem ha'chesed (with Hashem is kindness). He has an infinite willingness to give.

The idea of geulah (redemption) seems so disjoint to the world in which we live. We are compared to the dust and we are compared to the stars. Unlike other nations who have steady, natural rises, we have shooting meteoric ascents from the dust to the stars. Our nation began with Avrohom Avinu and Sarah Imenu. Both were unable to have children. At the point when it seemed that there would be no continuity for our nation, with Avrohom one hundred years old and Sarah ninety, only then was Yitzchak born. The root of the name Yitzchak (tzachak) means laughter. The reaction when a seemingly impossible series of events come about. Our history is one of Yitzchak.

We then descended to Mitzraim where we were torturously enslaved for two hundred and ten years. We were in the most downtrodden, oppressed and humiliated state to which a nation could be subjected. No single slave had ever escaped from Mitzraim. If, one year before the geulah, one would have said that our whole nation would leave with Paroah's urging, it would have been considered preposterous. Yitzchak... One year later we are standing by the foot of Mount Sinai being transformed into the Chosen Nation.

Achashverosh was an absolute dictator controlling all of world Jewry. His second in command, Haman, strove for the destruction of every last Jew. Letters were sent with the irreversible seal of the king's ring. The thirteenth of Adar was set as the date of total annihilation. If, right then, someone would have said that the thirteenth of Adar will be the day that the Jews would rout their enemies it again would have been considered ludicrous. Yitzchak... We just celebrated the holiday of Purim. Mordechai became second in command and hung Haman on the very gallows that Haman had personally and painstakingly prepared for him.

In the Amidah prayer we speak of the 'sprouting' of the geulah. As a seed first decomposes and only then germinates, so too our geulah comes from the most hopeless and improbable of situations. Yitzchak... V'harbey imo f'dus (and redemption is abundantly with Him). He has an infinite ability to give.

The Medrash in Shir HaShirim relates that when Moshe informed Bnei Yisroel of the imminent geulah they responded that they didn't have ma'asim tovim (good acts) to deserve this geulah. Moshe explained that when the time of geula arrives, Hashem doesn't look at our actions. V'hoo yifdeh es

Yisroel mi'kol a'vonosov (and he will redeem Yisroel with all of their sins). When the proper time arrives, even an undeserving recipient will receive.

Yitzchak... It is actually in the future tense. He will laugh. So will we. Bimhaira b'yamainu (speedily in our days) Amein.

Chazak, chazak v'nischazek. Have a wonderful Shabbos,

A joyous Purim and a great Shabbos,

Thank you.

Yisroel Ciner

***This is dedicated to the memory and z'chus/t (merit) of Miriam bas Shmuel a"h, the mother of a dear talmid and friend, who passed from this world this past Shabbos, the 9th of Adar. TNZB"H.***

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