

FUDGED PERCEPTION

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week we begin the Sefer [Book] of Shemos--the Sefer of Exile and Redemption. As such, it begins with Yaakov and his son's descent down to Mitzrayim [Egypt].

Upon the death of Yosef and his generation, the Paroah passed new decrees and the period of slavery began. The decrees reached their peak with the order that all newborn boys be thrown into the river.

"And a man went from the house of Levi and took a daughter of Levi. [2:1]"

Rashi explains that Amram, based on this decree of Paroah, separated from his wife. His daughter, Miriam, chastised him claiming that he, by preventing the lives of both boys and girls, was taking even harsher measures than Paroah who had only decreed against the boys. The result of this rebuke was the above-mentioned passuk [verse]. Amram, the man from the house of Levi, took back his wife Yocheved, a daughter of Levi.

The Talmud [Sotah 12B] teaches that Miriam actually had a prophecy at that time. She foretold that her mother would have a son who would be the redeemer of Israel.

A son was born and there was something remarkably special about him. Amram kissed his daughter Miriam on the head, exclaiming, "Your prophecy has been fulfilled." Then, in order to avoid detection and certain death by the hands of the Egyptians, the mother was forced to place him in a little ark at the edge of the river. At that point, Amram tapped Miriam on the head. "My daughter where is your prophecy?" he plaintively asked.

"Vataysatzav achoso [And his sister (Miriam) stood] mairachok [at a distance] ladai'ah [to know] mah [what] yai'a'se [would be done] lo [to him]. [2:4]"

Understood simply, Miriam stood at a distance to see what would be with her brother and her prophecy. However, the Talmud [Sotah 11A] takes it to a totally different level:

"Rav Yitzchak taught: This entire passuk [verse] is referring to the Shchinah [Hashem's Presence].

'Vataysatzav [And stood]'As it is written: 'And Hashem came and stood. [Samuel I 3:10]'

'Achoso [his sister]'As it is written: 'Say to (Hashem's) wisdom you are (as clear to me as) my sister. [Mishlei 7:3]'

'Mairachok [at a distance]'As it is written: 'From a distance Hashem appeared to me. [Yirmiyahu 31:2]'

'Ladai'ah [to know]'As it is written: 'For the Lord is a G-d of knowledge. [Samuel I 2:3]"

'Mah [what]'As it is written: 'What does Hashem your G-d ask of you but to fear Him. [Devarim 10:12]'

'Yai'a'se [would be done]'As it is written: 'The Lord, Hashem, won't do a thing without revealing His secret to His servants, the prophets. [Amos 3:7]'

'Lo [to him]'As it is written: 'And he called it: Hashem-shalom (peace). [Shoftim 6:24]"

I must admit that when I first saw this, my initial reaction was that any passuk could be similarly dissected finding an association to Hashem for each word. However, a glance into the Maharsha (commentator on the Talmud) quickly revealed to me the shallowness of my reaction vis-à-vis the depth and beauty of the Sages' perception and insight.

He explains that the passuk should have simply told us that Paroah's daughter found the baby and Miriam was there to call the mother when he refused to nurse from the Egyptian women. The Sages therefore understood that the message of the sister standing there actually contained a lot more than meets the eye...

Hashem's clear view of the events He orchestrates is diametrically opposed to our 'fudged' perception. As we mentioned above, Moshe being placed in the river was viewed as the annulment of Miriam's prophecy of his being the redeemer of Israel. In fact, it led to Paroah's daughter taking him, raising him in the palace and his being groomed as the redeemer.

All of this was because Hashem 'vataysatzav [stood]', Hashem came and 'stood' there in exile with us, as 'achoso,' a sister lovingly and protectively stands by her dear ones. With an understanding that was 'mairachok [at a distance],' far distant and far surpassing the understanding of man, this sister, this Lord of knowledge, was replete with 'ladai'ah [to know]' how to prepare the way for the redeemer.

Who would this redeemer be? The one who would be so abounding with fear of Hashem that he would turn to Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Israel] and ask them: 'Mah [what]' does Hashem your G-d ask of you but to fear Him?

But, even with Hashem's far understanding, nothing 'yai'a'se [would be done]' without Him revealing His secret to His servants, the prophets, as he did in this case to Miriam.

All of this was done for the sake of peace; that Bnei Yisroel would be peacefully redeemed from the slavery of Mitzrayim, under the heavenly supervision of the One called Hashem-Shalom.

May our fudged perception of the difficult current events here in Israel be illuminated by the clarity of understanding Hashem's guiding hand. May we witness and experience the secret of the ultimate redemption that He revealed to His prophets, speedily in our days.

Good Shabbos,

Yisroel Ciner

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The author teaches at Neveh Tzion in Telzstone (near Yerushalayim).
