

ASK! PLEASE...

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week's parsha of Va'aira continues with the transition from galus to geulah, exile to redemption. The only purpose of the galus was to lead toward geulah; the purpose of a seed being planted is to ultimately reap the harvest. This entire process had already been foretold to Avrohom as part of the covenant generations earlier. Furthermore, the very purpose of creation was the emergence of a people who would connect to Hashem by adhering to His will and word that would be transmitted to them. This would only take place as the redemption stage would move from Mitzrayim [Egypt] to the giving of the Torah at Sinai.

"And I have heard the cries of Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Israel] whom the Egyptians are enslaving and I have remembered My covenant. [6:5]"

The Sforno explains: A cause of the redemption was Hashem hearing their cries and prayers in their times of trouble.

This might appear a bit strange. What role did prayer play in a process that not only had been foretold but upon which the existence of the world depended on?

"And every shrub of the field was not yet on the earth and grass of the field had yet not sprouted for Hashem had not yet caused it to rain on the earth and there was no man to work the soil. [Breishis 2:5]"

Why was there no rain? Because there was no man to work the soil and there was no one to recognize the benefit of rains. When Adom came and understood that they were necessary he prayed for them, they descended and the trees and grass sprouted. [Rashi]

The world needed rain in order to exist. Hashem wanted to give this rain, as He wanted his creation to continue to exist. But that wasn't enough to bring the rains. Man needed to ask for it.

Why was this established as a principle upon which the world was created? It might mistakenly appear to some as a major ego issue...

We've mentioned many times that the root of the Hebrew word 'olam' [world] means hidden. The definition of the word 'olam' is thereby the place wherein Hashem hides Himself. It is the difficulties that one overcomes and the world-mask through which one's perception pierces, which brings a person from their personal galus to geulah.

Without feeling that something is lacking we don't reach out to connect. When that which is

recognizably lacking seems to appear on its own without having been requested, a person assumes a smug self-complacency. He feels no need to connect to a Force that is beyond him. He can live out his entire earthly existence without ever even touching upon the reason for which he was granted this earthly existence.

One of the greatest gifts that Hashem gives is the need and subsequent ability to call out and to connect to Him. The fulfillment of the purpose of creation is based on that.

This was made clear at crucial junctures. The vivid, vibrant, dazzlingly colorful canvas that we call the world was dull, drab and lifeless before prayer transformed it. It was one of the first lessons that Adom needed to be taught.

And at the time when the galus was about to begin its transformation into geulah; when that group of individuals was about to be transformed into a nation; when the world was about to take a major step forward toward realizing its purpose; at that point the lesson needed to be taught again. Everything would stop dead in its tracks. The spiritual creation of this new, Torah-revealed world would remain spiritually dull, drab and Torah-less unless and until man would call out to Hashem, realizing his dependence on Him and thus realizing the purpose of existence.

"And I have heard the cries of Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Israel] whom the Egyptians are enslaving and I have remembered My covenant. [6:5]"

Without that, it wouldn't have happened. And it is our calling out to Hashem for our personal and national, spiritual and material needs, which brings about the deliverance of the treasures that He is so eagerly awaiting to give us.

Good Shabbos,
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