

I HAVE A DREAM

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bo

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 314, Chumros In Halacha. Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Shimon Schwab Said: I Have A Dream

The Torah teaches that "G-d placed the favor of the people in the eyes of Egypt" [Shemos 11:3]. Prior to leaving Egypt, the Jews obtained gold and silver utensils and articles of clothing from their Egyptian neighbors. This was a fulfillment of a promise that G-d had made to Avraham "... and afterwards they will go out with great possessions" [Bereishis 15:14]. The fact that G-d placed the favor of the people in the eyes of the Egyptians to the extent that they were willing to give them their valuables -- never to see them again -- was indeed miraculous.

Perhaps there could have been a more congruous method of fulfilling G-d's promise to Avraham. Perhaps it would have made more sense if "G-d placed the FEAR of the people in the eyes of Egypt". After all that had transpired during the Ten Plagues, the Egyptians were now in awe of the Jews. Therefore, the more logical way for this event to occur would have been for the Egyptians to give the Jews their valuables out of mortal fear, rather than out of 'favor'.

Rabbi Baruch Leff comments that the fact that the wealth was transferred to the Jews in that way teaches us something about the Exodus. The Exodus from Egypt, our Sages tell us, was the paradigm for all future redemption. If we want to know how the future redemption will take place, we must examine the prototype of redemption that occurred in Egypt. In effect, this means that before we leave this last bitter exile, "G-d will place the favor of His nation into the eyes of the nations".

Before we leave, the nations must admire us. They will have warm feelings towards us. They will love us. That is because the prophet Isaiah said that the role of the Jewish people in the Exile is to be a "light unto the nations" [42:6]. This concept has unfortunately been borrowed and twisted and misconstrued in all different types of wrong ways. But the fact remains that Isaiah the prophet told us that we are supposed to be a "light unto the nations" - a shining example to the nations of what a human being is supposed to look like. The purpose of this world is to fill the world in its entirety with the Glory of G-d. Not only the Jews of the world, but all of humanity should come to the recognition that there is one G-d who created this world and takes an active role in this world. Jews are supposed to be the medium of that message.

The Netziv (1817-1893) writes that had we not sinned and had we remained in the Land of Israel and had we fulfilled our mission by living a proper life style in the Land of Israel, then we would have never had to go into Exile. Unfortunately, we did not do that and G-d had to send us into Exile. Our job in Exile is to be this shining example of what a person is supposed to be.

The pasuk [verse] says "And all the inhabitants of the land will see that the Name of G-d is written upon you, and they will fear you" [Devorim 28:10]. The Talmud teaches [Berochos 6a] that this refers to the Tephillin that are worn on the head. The Vilna Gaon comments that the Talmudic reference is the homiletic (Drush) teaching of the pasuk. But, the Vilna Gaon asks, what is the 'simple' (pshuto) interpretation of the pasuk? There is a principle in Biblical interpretation that a pasuk always has a simple interpretation [Shabbos 63a]. So what is the simple interpretation of this pasuk? The Gaon said that the simple interpretation of this pasuk is that when a Gentile sees a Jew, he should immediately recognize that the Name of G-d is written upon him. He should immediately realize, "This is a holy person".

We have not yet arrived at that point. The paradigm of the Exodus from Egypt is that until we reach the level of "the favor of the nation is in the eyes of Egypt", signifying that the Gentiles respect and admire and cherish us, unfortunately, we are not holding at the level of redemption. This is the ideal for which we must strive.

Unfortunately, if that indeed will be the standard, one must wonder how close the redemption is today. We look forward to the time when the recognized definition of a "Jew" will be a definition that will make us all proud.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.
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This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics

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