ANONYMOUS JEWS PRODUCE REDEEMERS

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

> *This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 374, Bathing on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Good Shabbos!*

Anonymous Jews Can Produce Redeemers

Megillas Rus begins with the narration that a man from Bethlehem in Yehudah went to live in the fields of Moav, because of the famine in Eretz Yisrael. Chazal, our Sages, criticize this person for abandoning his people in their time of need and fleeing with his family to Moav.

When the Megillah first tells us of this person's departure, he is mentioned anonymously ('a man'). However, we do not remain guessing about his identity for very long. In the very next verse we are told that "The name of the man is Elimelech".

The question can be asked, why not write this story more 'economically' and tell us the name of the man and what he did in one pasuk? Why the mystery in the first pasuk, followed immediately by the revelation of his identity in the second pasuk?

It is interesting that the very same type of sentence construction occurs in a different place in the Torah: "And a man went from the House of Levi and he married the daughter of Levi" [Shemos 2:1]. The Torah later identifies these mysterious individuals as Amram and Yocheved, the parents of Moshe. So, again, why the initial anonymity? Why not say straight out "And Amram went and married Yocheved"?

The Baal HaTurim in Shemos points out that these two places are the only times in Tanach where the Torah uses the expression "And a man went" (vayelech ish). The Baal HaTurim comments that the pasuk "A man went from the Tribe of Levi" brought about the first redeemer (Moshe) and the pasuk "A man went from Bethlehem Yehudah" led to the final redeemer (Moshiach - who will descend from King David, a descendent of Rus).

The Shemen HaTov elaborates on this Baal HaTurim. The person who produces the Redeemer can be an anonymous person. One does not need to be the great leader of his generation -- an Amram

or an Elimelech -- to produce the Redeemer. Any Jew is capable of producing a child who will be the greatest personage in his generation and in fact a Redeemer.

One does not necessarily need to be great himself or have superior lineage or wealth or power. Any anonymous Jew can potentially produce the future leader of the Jewish people.

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