

## פרשת ויקרא-פסח

"blessed is he who kept his pledge to Israel; blessed is he!"

We bless Hashem for keeping his promise of redeeming the Jews and sending them out with great wealth.

"ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך" - Hashem told Avraham Avinu "know with certainty that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not their own" Hashem told Avraham that his children will be slaves for 400 years, but afterwards they would leave with great wealth. However the actual length of the exile in Egypt was 210 years, not 400! How can it be that Hashem said 400 years, but the exile was only 210 years?! We bless Hashem for "keeping his promise", but we find that the actual sentence was **not** as long as he promised?!

One explanation is that the Shechinah of Hashem was together with the Jews in their exile, as it says "עמו אני בצרה" - "I am with you in the suffering". Since the Shechinah was with us, it "shared the load" of work with us, and thereby decreased the length of the exile by expediting the work that needed to be accomplished. The result of this was 400 years of work being accomplished in 210 years. This explains what is written (further in this paragraph of the Hagadah), "שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב את הקץ" - "Hashem calculated the end". The word קץ (end) equals 190- showing us that Hashem accounted for the 190 year deduction of exile by joining us in the work.

There is still a point that needs to be clarified. Hashem's seal is truth and therefore the fact that the exile may be shortened must be hinted to somewhere in the Pesukim. Hashem told Avraham **ידע תדע** "you shall surly know" that your children will be in exile etc. This is a double terminology and can therefore be understood as two different "options". ידע - know that it can be 400 years , or תדע – also know that it can be shorter. In the words of the Pasuk it is hinted to the fact that the exile may be shorter than 400 years. However this answer works only in conjunction with one opinion in the Gemarah. This opinion holds that when the Torah uses a double terminology, it does so to teach us something. There is however an opinion that says that the Torah sometimes speaks as man does, and since a man sometimes repeats words for emphasis, so does the Torah. Therefore the word is not considered "extra" and cannot

be used to teach us a novel point. If the Halacha accords with the latter opinion, than we “lose” our proof. The fact that the Galut can be shorter than 400 years stems from the double terminology of ידע תדע, but if we do not learn anything from the “extra” word than there is no source!

This Machloket is seen in the case of a slave who had worked for his master, and finished his term. The Torah instructs the owner to send off the slave with gifts upon his release. The Pasuk says "הענק תעניק" - “you shall surely give him severance gifts” -a double term of severance- according to the opinion that says that the Torah “speaks like man” nothing is learnt from these words. However according to the other opinion, we have an extra word to teach us a lesson. That lesson is; that a master may feel that he must send his slave with gifts **only** when the slave had brought him blessing, and he watched his assets increase during his tenure as a slave. If the owner feels that the slave has **not** brought him blessing, and he did not see any increases during his servitude than perhaps the owner does **not** have to send him away with gifts and may let him leave empty handed! The extra word תעניק teaches that this is not so, no matter how the owner feels about his slave, and whether or not he saw blessing from him he still **must** give him gifts.

The outcome of the Machloket is, if a master has the option to deny the slave of gifts upon freedom. According to the opinion that says that the Torah speaks like man, there is no extra word to teach us an owner must give his slave gifts no matter what, and therefore he has the option not to. According to the other opinion, the extra word teaches מכל מקום - **in any event** the slave must receive gifts upon his leaving his master.

The רמבם says that the Halacha is מכל מקום that an owner must send off his slave with gifts no matter what kind of results the slave brought him. This is learnt from the Pesukim we are discussing. Hashem told Avraham that his children will go into exile in a strange land, and afterwards "וְגַם אֶת הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּן אֹנִי" - "I will **judge** them". Meaning Hashem will punish the Egyptians for enslaving the Jews, and **even so** "וְצָאוּ" - "they will leave with **great wealth**". The Egyptians will send off the Jews who had served them - with great wealth and gifts, **even though** they obviously saw no blessing from the Jews and got punished on their account. The order of the words of the Pesukim shows us the Halacha follows the opinion that says a master must send off his slave with gifts **no matter what**. Therefore this teaches us that the Torah does **not** speak like man, and the extra word תענק is used to teach us this lesson. Therefore by ידע תדע as well - the word תדע is considered extra, and therefore can be understood to hint to a possible early exit. So in the “flow” of the Pasuk itself, Hashem hints to

Avraham- through the fact that they will receive great wealth **even though** the Egyptians got punished- that the words are indeed considered “available” to be expanded upon, and that enables him to understand that ידע תדע can be understood to hint to the Jews leaving earlier than 400 years.

Another explanation to why we came out “early” is that the Jews multiplied greatly and had many children as it says "ובני ישראל פרו..."-“the Jews were fruitful etc.”. This caused there to be more Jews “than expected”, and they had more people working, thereby accomplishing the 400 year workload at a faster pace. The result of this was “finishing the Job” 190 years early.

The Jews were destined to 400 years of normal labor. However the Egyptians intensified the labor, and made it “backbreaking” as it says "וימררו את חייהם.... בפרך"-“they embittered their lives... with backbreaking labor”. They worked the Jews from early in the morning until late at night. This resulted in the Jews working a lot of “overtime”, and as a result they finished the 400 years of normal labor in 210 years. This is hinted in the טעמים (cantorial notes) of the words of the Pasuk. The טעמים of "וימררו את חייהם" “they embittered their lives” - are קדמא ואזלא-which literally means “precede and go out”, showing that it was precisely because of the bitter labor that the Jews were able to “precede “and leave early! The Apter Rav adds that the words קדמא ואזלא themselves hint to the length of years saved because of the bitter work,- קדמא=145 and ואזלא=45 totaling 190. The bitter backbreaking work caused the Jews to leave 190 years early.

This explains why we dip the Maror in Haroset even though the Maror represents bitterness, and the Haroset represents sweetness. The Maror- the bitter work was actually a source of sweetness to us, since it resulted in our early exit from Egypt! This also explains why later on in the Hagadah it says that Raban Gamliel says: “whoever doesn’t say these three things does not fulfill his obligation of the night, and that is Pesah, Matzah, and Maror”. Why are they in this the order? Pesah represents the Korban Pesah which represents freedom from the exile, and Matzah also signifies freedom, since it reminds us of the haste in which we left, Maror represents the bitterness of the work. Why is it mentioned third, this does not seem to be in order. It should mention first the bitter labor, **than** the freedom from it? We now understand that the Maror- the bitter labor- was **part of** the redemption, in that it hastened the freedom

of the Jews by 190 years! This is why it is mentioned along with the other signs of freedom.

Another explanation of how the Jews left early is that the Jews had tremendous אחדות-togetherness and camaraderie. This resulted in each Jew feeling the pain of his fellow and “sharing his burden” with him. It is as if a man is trying to lift a heavy box by himself then suddenly his friend comes to assist him, this makes his load significantly lighter. So too the Jews shared each other’s load by feeling each other’s pain. This was considered as if they were actually helping one another, and thereby shortened the sentence by accomplishing 400 years of work in 210 years. Since each Jew had the “help” of his friend enabling him to do more.

This stands in stark contrast to a different part of the Hagadah. The והיא שעמדה speaks of the attempts of people to destroy us throughout the generations, but Hashem has saved us. Who were these people that tried to destroy us? They were our fellow Jews! The Jews that would be "מוסר"-to hand over the Jews to the kingdom, and inform on their brethren. In every generation there are Jews like this who want to destroy their own nation, but Hashem saves us from their hands. As the Hagadah continues "צא ולמד..."-"go and learn what Lavan tried to do to Yaakov" Lavan was the father in law of Yaakov, and he tried to attack him. We see even from back then there was people on the “inside” trying to destroy us.

The Jews in the exile of Egypt were loyal to one another, and no one betrayed his fellow. This is shown when they exited Egypt; the Pasuk says "לא יחרץ כלב"-“no dog barked” at the Jews. It is written that one who misuses his tongue by speaking negatively about his fellow, ends up coming back reincarnated as a dog, because dogs bark a lot and this person also used his mouth a lot for the wrong reasons! Therefore a person who speaks negatively about another Jew is looked upon as a “dog”. The Pasuk can be understood, that amongst the Jews there were no “dogs” that barked, meaning there were no Jews who spoke negatively about their fellow Jew.

This explains what is meant when it says that the sea split because of the רכוש-wealth of the Jews, implying that the wealth of the Jews caused the sea to split. What is so special about the wealth that the sea split primarily in its merit?? The wealth was obtained by the Jews by asking the Egyptians for loans. The Jewish people borrowed the gold, silver, and money of the Egyptians and told them that they would return it to them in three days. In reality the Jews knew that they would be keeping the wealth, however not one Jew “squealed” to the Egyptians and informed them that the Jews were planning on leaving for good (this would have given the informer great honor and

wealth from the Egyptians). When the sea “saw” the wealth- and the method it was obtained- and that no one betrayed his friend, it split in this honor.

The first one into the sea was Nachshon ben Aminadav. The water reached up to his nostrils, than it split (as it says "כי באו מים עד נפש"). There is a story in the Gemarah Masechet Shabbat of Yosef ben Simai, who was a wealthy man with connections in the government. One Shabbat his house went on fire and all his belongings were burning. The local authorities sent Goyim to extinguish the flames in order to save his possessions. However Yosef did not allow them do so, and instead watched his possessions burn. Soon after, it began to rain and the rain put out the fire and saved his possessions. After Shabbat he rewarded each of the firemen with two coins, and the chief with 50 coins. When the Rabbis heard about this they told him “you did not have to do this” meaning; you did not have to let your possessions burn, and you could have allowed the non-Jews to put out the fire(they came on their own and Yosef did not instruct them to extinguish the fire, therefore it was Halachicly permissible). It is written that Yosef ben Simai was a Gilgul (reincarnation) of Nachshon, and his mission on this world was to complete the goal of Nachshon.

There are four parts that man is made up of fire, water, wind, and dust. (We see fire and water in the body having a naturally high temperature of 98 degree heat and inner fluids and moisture). The first two elements fire and water are the elements used in our pursuing the Misvot, and refraining from Averot. The fire should be used for the drive that we have to do the Misvot and give us zeal and excitement to serve Hashem. The water is used to “cool us down” when we have a desire to do something wrong. It is crucial that we maintain the proper balance of fire and water. We must not let our passions, be fueled by our inner fire and we must not let ourselves be “cooled down” by our inner water, causing us to be lazy when it comes to serving Hashem.

The Zohar says that Gehinom consists of six months of ice, and six months of fire. This is to punish the person for misusing his water “coolant” at the times he was supposed to be using his inner fire, and for using his fire for his passions and lusts instead of activating his inner water to “cool him down”. The Job of a Jew is to master these elements, and use them properly. This is why a G-d fearing Jew is called ירא שמים (heaven fearing). The word שמים is comprised of the words אש-מים fire and water, showing that these are the elements that he has mastered.

There is a story in the Gemarah of Amram Hasidah. One time he had some ransomed girls staying in his attic. A heavy ladder was needed in order to access the

attic. In the middle of the night Amram Hasidah found himself seized with a burning desire to go up to the girls. He lifted the ladder by himself to the attic (even though it normally took 4 people to lift the ladder) on his way up the steps of the ladder he started to shout נורא בי עמרם-נורא בי עמרם-there is a fire in me (Amram), there is a fire in me (Amram)!! All of his neighbors came running in to see what was going on, and where the fire was. They found R' Amram standing midway up the ladder "frozen" in his place. It was apparent to all what actually had happened, and that the fire was really "inside" R' Amram. The rabbis told him; why have you embarrassed us?! He responded; it is better to be embarrassed for one moment in this world, than to be embarrassed in the next world! This story is an example of the Yezer Hara trying to ignite ones inner fire to sin, but Amram used his water to counteract it.

When Avraham Avinu was on the way to sacrifice his son, the Yezer Hara appeared as a river blocking his path. He was trying to "cool down" the zealotness of Avraham in his following the command of Hashem. However Avraham persisted and his inner fire kept him going and the river dried up.

The test of the Akeidah was actually more difficult for Avraham than Yishak, since Yishak represented דין-judgment and Avraham represented רחמים-kindness. It was totally against his nature to slaughter his son. This was going "against his grain" as the Pasuk says "והאלקים נסה את אברהם" represents דין-judgment (the opposite of רחמים of kindness which Avraham represented) this was a test specifically for Avraham.

In the merit of Avraham's persistence on performing the command of Hashem, and using his inner fire properly the water of the sea split. (The same word used by Avraham ויבקע עצי עולה he **split** the wood and by the sea splitting it says ויבקעו המים the water **split**.)

Nachshon had used his inner fire to have the courage to jump into the water first, however he still needed to prove that he also mastered his element of water by **not acting** at a time when other's would. This explains why he came back as a Gilgul in Yosef ben Simai. Yosef ben Simai was tested when his house was burning, and he **restrained** himself through the element of water. He did not put out the fire, nor did he let others do so for him. He realized that this was precisely the reason he was brought down to this world, in order to show that he had control over his "water" as well! In addition, in his previous Gilgul of Nachshon he was מקדש שם שמים (sanctified Hashem's name) with his body by jumping in the water. This time he was מקדש שם שמים with his money, by letting his money burn in honor of Hashem, since some people value their money **more** than their bodies, it was necessary to show that he

would give up both body and money for his love of Hashem. Since he passed his test, Hashem sent down rain (element of **water**) to save his possessions from **fire**! (In addition, it says that the sea split when it saw the coffin of Yosef. Yosef also **controlled** his inner fire and passion with the wife of Potifar. He used his water to put out his fire, and because of this, the **water** of the sea split in his honor).

We all have the capability of controlling our fire and water, and using our elements properly. We must beg Hashem for his help in conquering our Yeser Hara and overcoming our desires and to give us the drive and fire to serve him properly. Amen!