



*Yeshivat Ma'alot*

*Parashat Vaera*

*Rav Yehoshua Weitzman shlit"a*

ישיבת מעלות

פרשת וארא

רב יהושע ויצמן שליט"א

*Arba Leshonot Geulah- The Keys to Freedom*

In the end of last week's parasha, the Torah speaks of obstacles in the process of the redemption of Bnei Yisrael. The difficult situation causes Moshe to turn to Hashem in exasperation and say<sup>1</sup> "Why have you done evil to these people (Bnei Yisrael), why have You sent me." In response, Hashem, in the beginning of this week's parasha, reveals Himself to Moshe and tells him what to say to the nation. Within Hashem's message are found the four expressions of redemption<sup>2</sup>: "I will draw (*hotzeiti*) them out from the bondage of Egypt, and I will save (*hitzalti*) them from their slave labor, and I will redeem (*ga'alti*) them with an outstretched arm and with great wonders, and I will take (*lakachti*) them to be a nation and I will be their Lord and you shall know that I am Hashem who takes you out of the suffering of Egypt." When Moshe approaches Bnei Yisrael, they do not listen to him because of "short wind and difficult labor". When Moshe is commanded to speak to Pharaoh, he argues with Hashem that if Bnei Yisrael didn't listen to him, why would Pharaoh all of a sudden listen to what he has to say. As a final commandment, Hashem tells Moshe to take Aharon and to go speak both to Bnei Yisrael and Pharaoh<sup>3</sup>. There are three different insights into these p'sukim.

What does Hashem command Moshe and Aharon to say once they reach the royal palace, what magic words are they going to declare to Pharaoh that will convince him to release an entire nation of slaves? What words can these leaders say to a nation that has been enslaved and downtrodden for over two hundred years, how can they rekindle a spark of hope in their hearts? Rashi comments that Hashem doesn't tell the leaders *what* to say but rather *how* to say it. He explains that Hashem tells Moshe and Aharon to have patience and understanding, to internalize Bnei Yisrael's situation and realize why they might have difficulty accepting the message of freedom.

The Holy Zohar<sup>4</sup> in the name of Rebbe Yossi gives insight into the order of the "arba'a leshonot geulah", four expressions of redemption. Hashem's promise to take Bnei Yisrael to be His nation is what seems to be the most important part of this series of promises, yet why does it appear last? Rather than in the height of their slavery such a relationship with Hashem seemed far fetched and not realistic to Bnei

<sup>1</sup> Shemot 5, 22

<sup>2</sup> Shemot 6, 6-7

<sup>3</sup> Shemot 6, 13

<sup>4</sup> Vol. 2: 24, 2

Yisrael. They thought to themselves that they would be slaves for eternity and that there was no possible way to be set free. Therefore the first thing that Hashem promised was that He would draw them out of bondage; this was the only thing that mattered to them. But even if they were freed it was still possible that the Egyptians would pursue after, and harm them. For this reason the next promise that Hashem made was that He would save them. Yet with all this said and done, Bnei Yisrael could have still feared that they would not be released from the land of Egypt. Consequently Hashem reassured them that He would redeem them. And even with the redemption, who's to say that Bnei Yisrael would be Hashem's destined nation. Therefore Hashem's final promise was that He would take them to be His nation.

The Holy Zohar teaches an important foundation in understanding the process of geulah. When Moshe came to Bnei Yisrael, he presented his message based on what was important to them, not based on the final goal of the geulah. There are two factors that make up the geulah. 1) Removing the yoke of bondage from Bnei Yisrael. This was accomplished when Moshe confronted Pharaoh and demanded that Bnei Yisrael be freed. 2) Bnei Yisrael being willing to leave slavery in Egypt. They needed to prepare themselves and take an active role in their deliverance from bondage. The Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato explains<sup>5</sup> that one who wants to influence can only influence based on the amount that the person on the receiving end is able to receive. This is true of all things in the world. Hashem, who controls heaven and earth, has it in His ability to shower infinite abundance upon man, yet it is necessary for man to have the proper vessels, the capacity, to receive it. Therefore Hashem sends abundance proportional to the amount that mankind is able to accept. The same is true with regard to Hashem taking Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt; Bnei Yisrael had to make themselves ready for the unbelievable act of leaving slavery and coming to Eretz Yisrael.

A question arises when speaking about the “arba’ a leshonot geulah”. It seems that they “go to waste” when Bnei Yisrael doesn’t listen to Moshe. It is similar to a baby. When in its’ mother’s womb, it is learning Torah, yet before it is born an angel hits the baby and it forgets all that it has learned. If so, what’s the point of it learning? When standing at the threshold of a great era or period, it is important that one sets for himself goals and aspirations, even if currently he his not able to reach them. Having an ideal makes it possible for a person to build proper vessels, one step at a time. The preparation which precedes the great ideal is a slow process. This is why Chazal teach us that the redemption of Klal Yisrael is something that comes about “kima kima”, slowly slowly. By taking a long time, the process allows for Am Yisrael to internalize and prepare itself for the great light of the Geulah. The Geulah isn’t just a physical act of being removed from bondage; the spirit and souls of the people must also be prepared.

When a child learns Torah, he is reminded of what he learned in his mother’s womb, yet now he is doing it from his own will. He learns at the level which is appropriate for where it is at. When Klal Yisrael will proceed along the path of Geulah, they will reach places which are familiar to them. They will remember what they heard in Egypt “and I will take to be My nation”, yet now they will be ready to live out this promise. There is no need to fear big promises and ideals, even if they are

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<sup>5</sup> Adir Bamarom p. 93

not able to be lived out at the moment- they by themselves influence reality and the world.

As related earlier, the Torah says Hashem commanded Moshe to Bnei Yisrael and to Pharaoh. Towards Bnei Yisrael, Moshe was commanded to be patient, as explained above. The Midrash<sup>6</sup> says that the only use that a non fruit bearing tree has is if it is cut and its wood is used to build or burnt for heat. The Matnot Kehuna explains that this is a reference to Pharaoh, who was only worthy of being struck down. This was the intention of Hashem when he commanded Moshe to confront Pharaoh.

There are those who say that peace needs to be made with enemies. The only result of this is that brothers turn to be enemies. Towards enemies people try to be forgiving and understanding yet towards brothers people act hostile and vicious. This is not the type of leadership that the Torah teaches us. Towards enemies, the only answer is to be unforgiving. Yet towards brothers one must act the opposite; how did they end up in the situation that they are currently in, how can I be thoughtful and caring, how can I lend a helping hand.

Let us offer a tefilah that we may merit to see the “arba’ a leshonot geulah” of our generation come true as we herald the coming of Mashiach and the ultimate Geulah!

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<sup>6</sup> Shemot Rabbah 6,5