



# OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI  
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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## ***Thoughts on LECH LECHA***

**Year 24**

**by Dayan Abraham David**

At the Brit Ben Habetarim G-d tells Abram that before his children would inherit the Land of Israel they would have to go through an exile where they would be afflicted and in servitude, and G-d would punish the nation afflicting them and they would then leave with great wealth. *'Ki ger yehehe zaracha b'aretz lo lahem ve avdum ve anu otam vegam et hagoy asher yavdu dan anochi veachre kenyetzu berchush gadol.*

There is an argument among the Meforshim why the nation that would subjugate and afflict them should be punished since this was a decree from G-d that this should happen to the Bnei Yisrael.

The Rambam explains in Hilchot Teshubah that even though G-d has made a decree against someone to be afflicted or hurt or killed He has not decreed who the person is to do it this is left to the choice of the person who takes upon himself to do the damage. That is why the person who has chosen to harm and damage the one decreed upon, will receive his punishment for choosing to do the damage to him. Even though Yisrael may deserve a punishment the one who does the

wicked act of harming Yisrael deserves being punished himself for his wicked choice.

The Ramban even though agreeing basically with the Rambam that when a decree goes out on Rosh Hashana in heaven for a person to be killed or hurt, the one who carries this out will be punished for he has done a wicked act of his own accord to hurt another, since he does not know G-d's judgement on that person he has no right to interfere. But he disagrees with the Rambam in his explanation here for the exile of Bnei Yisrael since it was decreed publicly by a prophet the one who carries it out cannot be punished for carrying out the King's command even though he was not asked to specifically carry it out.

The Egyptians and other nations in the Tanach like Nebuchadnezzar were punished because they went far beyond in cruelty and wickedness to Am Yisrael beyond the punishment decreed upon the Bnei Yisrael from Heaven and that is why the Egyptians were punished and had to compensate the Bnei Yisrael with wealth as well.

The Ramban gives a further reason for the nation being punished because G-d also takes into account the intentions and reasons of those nations who do bad to us even if it was decreed for they do it for their

own wicked reasons, a craving for power and feelings of hatred.

The Or Hachayim adds on another dimension to this, that the nations of the world who hurt and afflict us do so because we are different to them and separate from them through our keeping Torah and mitzvot, and because we are special in our service to G-d, Am Segullah. They cannot claim that they are bad to us because they fulfil the tochachot of the Torah when we do not keep the mitzvot or for the specific decrees made for our exile which is really for our correction. For in fact by their cruelty and affliction they deprive us from keeping the Torah and mitzvot and it becomes obvious that their intentions are to make us desist from being a special people to Hashem by decreeing against our keeping of Torah and mitzvot. Their hatred is a hatred of our religion. May G-d speedily bring our exile to an end and His Name be One among all the nations. *'Vahaya Hashem laMelech al kol haretz vu shmo echad'*.

## **TORAH GEMS**

When Abram went down to Egypt because of the famine and asked Sarah to say she was his sister and not his wife for fear they would kill him to take his wife. The Ramban criticises Abraham Abinu for putting his wife, the Tzadeket, into such a predicament and says that is why his children went into exile in Egypt. The difficulty with the Ramban's statement is that it does not follow any of the explanations given in Gemara Nedarim as to why the Jewish people went down to exile in Misraim.

(1) Because he conscripted Torah Scholars to aid him in the war against the four kings.

(2) Because he asked for confirmation for Hashem's promise 'Bame Eda Ki Erashena.

(3) Because he distanced people from being able to enter under the wings of the "Shechina" by giving the captured people back to Sodom.

So how come the Ramban's gives another reason. We can explain that the Ramban is coming to explain why Hashem made it happen in Misraim and not in any other place. In fact the Zohar asks this question. How could Abram attempt to save his life and accept reward at the expense of his wife? The Zohar offers an explanation (page 52 Vayikra), that Abram could see a Malach protecting Sarah but no Malach on himself. The Maharal questions the Ramban and disagrees with him, if Abram sinned and was punished for passing off Sara as his sister, why did Abram do the same again with Abimelech, and Yitzhak with Rifka when they went to Eretz Philistine and Abimelech? Perhaps we can explain that the Ramban criticises Abram for asking his Tzadeket Sara to say she was his sister, for if she did so and was taken by the Egyptians as a wife it would be as if she was going willingly and would become '*asur*' to Abram. As we see, when Esther was taken by force to the King she was considered '*Anusa*', under duress, and could go back to Mordechai. But when she was advised by Mordechai to go to the King to beseech on behalf of Klal Yisrael this would be considered willingly and she would be '*mezid*' and she would become '*asur*' to Mordechai as it says '*Ka-asher avaditi avaditi*'. This was not acceptable. But when Abram went to Abimelech he did not ask Sara to say she was his sister. He did it himself, so she was considered

'anusa' and she would not be 'asur' to Abram. And so it was with Yitzhak who told those who asked him but did not ask Rifka to do so. One of the difficulties we need to understand is how Abram, so easily accepted wealth from Pharaoh without worrying about Pharaoh saying '*Ane heesharti et Abram*' and refused the King of Sodom who offered him all the captured wealth so that he could not say, 'I made Abram rich'. What's the difference? We could say that the wealth he received from Pharaoh would hardly be missed by Pharaoh since his was a large and rich kingdom whereas the King of Sodom, who had become impoverished from the war, would remember forever what he had given Abram since he would feel the loss. The Emet L'Yacov brings the Pasuk in Mishlei (10:22) '*Birchat Hashem he Teasher velo Yosef etsev ima*', the blessings of Hashem make riches and there is no sadness with it. Hence Abram refused and awaited G-d's beracha through other ways. We could add that there was no fear Pharaoh would boast of making Abram rich, since he would embarrass himself by bringing to attention the circumstances and reasons he had for compensating Abram for taking his wife and being plagued for it. Another factor was that his was a kingdom across the desert whereas Sodom was in the land of Canaan where Abram dwelt and where he would carry on his work to influence people to the service of G-d. It was important to him to show them that his blessings came directly from G-d and not through the wicked King of Sodom. According to our Midrashim Abraham Abinu chose '*Mitzriam*' as '*Maase abot siman lebanim*'. Abram, our forefather was paving the way

for the future of the Bnei Yisrael. They too would go down to Egypt because of a famine and would be mistreated by the Egyptians. G-d would bring plagues on them as he did with Pharaoh and they would be sent away with great wealth as happened with Abram, so he easily accepted from Pharaoh as a sign for the future.

## **STORIES OF TZADDIKIM**

After a Chinuch Atzmai meeting, Rabbi Yaacov Kamenetzky and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein stood outside a waiting car discussing who would sit alone in the back seat. Rav Yaakov took the front seat. After Rav Moshe left the car, Rav Yaacov explained to the driver, "Before we entered the car we were discussing who would be dropped off first so the one who was leaving first would sit at the back since we did not want to leave you alone at the wheel, making you look like a chauffeur. Of course that is not the case. We appreciate your importance and did not want to compromise your dignity."

(taken from "Growth Through the Torah")

## **Shabbat Shalom**

### **HALACHOT**

- 1) A Beth Hakeneset (Synagogue) and a Beth Hamdirash (place of study Torah) are called '*Mikdash Meaat*' a mini Beth Hamikdash, hence the Mitzvah of fearing our Holy Temple would apply to them. It would be a Mitzvah to behave in awe and respect in our place of worship.
- 2) The Zohar tells us about severe punishments for speaking '*Debarem Batelim*', i.e. subjects of no consequence or necessity

- in a Beth Hakeneset. Even subjects of Parnassah (livelihood) and child talk should not be spoken there.
- 3) One may not eat or drink in a Beth Hakeneset or stroll there at all, unless he is learning or reciting Tehellim there and needs to drink to be able to carry on.
  - 4) Those who study in a Beth Hamidrash (place of learning) may eat and drink there and even take a nap so as to facilitate their learning there. But in a Synagogue, if you see someone drowsing off, it is a Mitzvah to awaken him especially during praying or a 'drasha' which would be doubly wrong.
  - 5) One should not enter a Beth Hakeneset or Beth Hamidrash to call someone, or for his own needs to pick up something, he should sit down for a while and say a pasuk or learn first. If there were two entrances he should not make a short cut unless he sits or learns there, as above.
  - 6) If a person has a choice to pray in a small Synagogue or one where there is a big congregation, he should pray in the bigger congregation for all three Tefilliot. When the Beth Hakeneset is farther away from his home, he is rewarded for walking there. A Beth Hakeneset which is fixed and prayers are recited there all year round is more 'Mekudash', Holy, than one which is not.

**A big mazal tov to  
Silas and Lisa Raymond  
on the occasion of  
their dear son  
Nati's  
bar mitzvah  
and to all the family**

***If you wish to sponsor a  
Kiddush  
Please contact  
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825  
871749  
For Seuda Shlishit  
or to rent the  
Nancy Reuben Hall  
for a Simcha  
Please contact  
Yanky David 07725 408724***

**We have a regular Youth  
Minyan organised by Jason  
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses  
followed by a kiddush**

### **SHABBAT TIMES**

Shabbat commences	5:43 pm
Shabbat terminates	6:48 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	5:30 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	5:20 pm
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Mincha	1:30 pm
Arbit	7:30 pm