

## *Saving Only Yourself is Not an Option!*

When Moses and Aaron come to Pharaoh for the first time, with G-d's message (-Exodus 5:1), "Send out My people," Pharaoh responds (-ibid 5:4), "Why, Moses and Aaron, do you disturb the people from their work? Go to your own labors," upon which our sages (-Rashi, ibid) extrapolate, "Go to your own labors: Go to your work that you have to do in your houses." But (Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi and) the labor of the Egyptian bondage was not incumbent upon the tribe of Levi." Nachmanides (-[Link](#)) explains (-ibid): "It is customary among all people to have wise men who teach them their laws. Therefore, Pharaoh did not impose slavery upon the tribe of Levi, who were the teachers (of Torah) and the elders of the children of Israel." Hence, Pharaoh was telling Moses and Aaron to go back to learning Torah and to teaching the Torah to the Jewish people.

In other words, Pharaoh was telling Moses and Aaron, "It's enough that you are free from Egyptian slavery, can learn Torah by yourselves, and teach Torah to Israel! Why are you mixing into the private lives of the other Jewish people, bringing them to not behave in accordance with the 'Ways of the Land'?"

The Zohar (-Vol I, 125a) states that the wisdom of Egypt was, "greater than of that of the entire world," hence, we must say that Pharaoh's demand of Moses and Aaron is logical and acceptable. Being that (-Rashi, ibid 18:9), "Until now, no slave had been able to escape from Egypt," so, within the laws of nature, there was no hope for Israel to leave Egypt. Furthermore, it was G-d who decreed (-Genesis 15:13) that Israel be slaves in Egypt for, "Four Hundred Years!" hence, Pharaoh logical and acceptable claims to Moses and Aaron are, "Why are you looking to change the ways of nature, and the way of G-d (Who choose that Israel be Egyptian slaves for 400 years)?"

Therefore, the Torah is telling us, that albeit this is a logical and acceptable claim, nevertheless, we must recognize that this is but the claim of Pharaoh, and that were we to have accepted it, we would have forfeited the entire exodus altogether! Israel left Egypt after 210 years, and even then (but over half of the predestined 400 years!), the exodus had to be, "in haste". Were Israel to have stayed even *one more 'blink-of-an-eye' moment* in Egypt, Israel would have been submerged into the ultimate depths of impurities, to the point of no return, G-d forbid! Therefore, even though natural wisdom and logic demands that Israel simply accept the claims of Pharaoh, nevertheless, Israel is not confined to the Order of Nature. Hence, even though, within the realm of nature it has been decreed and destined for Israel to be enslaved for 400 years, the redemption was factually long before this, in a fashion of (-Shir Hashirim Rabba, Portion 2:8), "He (G-d) leaps over calculations and over terminuses and intercalations!"

The Lesson: As in Moses' and Aaron's behavior, even though they were learning Torah, and even teaching Torah to others, could have easily said, "I, my soul, have saved," and could have sufficed in their service to G-d with this, without concerning themselves of their fellow Jew's behavior, whether they are occupied with doing mitzvot, or just pursuing the physical, void of spiritual and G-dly intentions,

Note: Pursuit of the physical, void of G-dly purpose and intention is as building the pyramids of *Pithom* and *Ramses* (-[Link](#)), which (-Sotah 11a): "Why was it called *Pithom*? (Because) the opening of the abyss (*pi tehom*) swallowed (each building they constructed) *one by one*, and it sunk into the ground... Why was it called *Ramses*? (It is an appellation indicating that as the buildings were constructed) they collapsed (*mitroses*) one by one and needed to be rebuilt."

and nevertheless, being that this is the logic of Pharaoh, a Jew mustn't heed this logic. When one witnesses his fellow's house burning, he doesn't question whether it is or isn't his business, but immediately throws himself into saving his fellow and their physical possessions. How much more so must one's actions be as such when it comes to his fellow's spiritual welfare, to save him from the 'nether-pit'!

## Love Your Fellow Jew:

- The *Baal Shem Tov* (-[Link](#)) teaches that the obligation to love a fellow Jew applies even to a Jew who he doesn't know!
- Rabbi Dovber, the *Maggid of Mezerich* (-[Link](#)) wished upon himself that he would kiss a *Torah Scroll* with the same love and endearment that his teacher, the *Baal Shem Tov*, had for every Jew.
- The *Maggid* added, that was the *Baal Shem Tov* to have known, while he was in this physical world, how much he was accomplishing and building through his approaching and bringing close all Jews, as he knows now, in the afterlife, he would have done it all in an absolutely even superior fashion!
- Love Your Fellow Jew must express itself that even when one is fortunate enough to, "Go to your own labors," of Torah-study and Prayer, nevertheless, he must bring this blessed, "Labor," to his fellow Jew, as well.
- And he must know not to push this off for even, "one more 'blink-of-an-eye moment'," lest he lose the opportunity to bring complete redemption to his fellow.

The Torah tells us that the entire Jewish people are but one complete being, and hence, what lacks in one causes a lacking in all, including those who live but spiritual lives in the Study-halls and Prayer-halls. More than this, the verse tells us (-Deuteronomy 29:9-10), "You are all standing this day before the L-rd, your G-d the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers... Your woodcutters and your water-drawers." When an army stands before its king, if a simple ranking soldier is not dressed polished and befitting, the claim is not made upon the simple soldier, but of his high-ranking superior, for not training the simple soldier! So too, when standing before G-d, the demands are not upon the, "woodcutters and water-drawers," for their lacking, but primarily of the, "leaders, elders and officers," for not taking care of them!