

Parshas Vaeira

This week's Parsha is Vaeira, the beginning of the Jews leaving exile. The Parsha begins by recounting the hardship the Jews were under and that Hashem will fulfill his end of the promise to relieve the Jews of their difficulty. Rashi explains on the first pesukim the difference between the revelations to the forefathers and Moshe was that the forefathers were given the promise (in the form of the name Shin Daled Yud). In contrast, Moshe revealed the delivery of the promise.

One may ask if Moshe had run away from Pharaoh's house, why was he so concerned with his "father" listening to him? Meaning Moshe had a pass to enter the palace and demanded the Jews be let out of the land. Moshe was nevertheless concerned with "I have a blocked mouth" (6:12). The Torah immediately switches, and Hashem tells Moshe to go and demand from Pharaoh to let the Jews out; then, in Posuk 14, the Torah tells us who the heads of Reuvain and Shimon are, before going into the lineage of Levi. Once the origin is completed, the Torah returns to the topic at hand, that is, Moshe being instructed to command Pharaoh to release the Jews. Moshe then insists again that he has a blocked mouth (6:30). Rashi explains that because we took a break, we are reminded about the talking points.

But why the digression? Rashi explains that Reuvain and Shimon are mentioned here because even though Yakov chastised them at the end of Vayechi (Rashi on 6:14), they are mentioned here among the recounting

of Levi to show that they are distinguished and worthy of redemption.

But the pause to tell the lineage of Moshe is distinct. It is to tell us exactly what we don't answer above. One could say the release of the Jews was nepotistic if Moshe was using his connections to Pharaoh. The Torah reminds us that Moshe was born to Levi, which is unequivocally part of the Jews and is in the position he is in solely because Hashem was delivering on His promise. There is no mistaking that Pharaoh had any control over the matter (except optically because he was the enslaving ruler).

No part of the salvation is attributable to the "good deeds" or benevolence of an outside force. Hashem, Himself redeemed the Jews, which now makes Rashi clear in the beginning, as to why "Ushmi Lo Nodati" tells us the difference between the Forefathers and Moshe.

The tachlis is that Shemos is the foreshadowing to our own Mashiach, and redemption we must not forget, but rather beseech Hashem Himself to enact on His promise to redeem us speedily. Good Shabbos