

Parshas Va'era

Keeping in line with last week's theme, I want to read the pesukim of this week's parsha in the context of our time, showing how, in the current era that we live in, as tricky as it may be, we should be hopeful of the outcome, the arrival of Mashiach.

I firmly believe that the pesukim and the cycle of history are reflexive of one another. This means that although we should derive halachic conclusions from the pesukim, and technically, we do, the purpose of the narratives could be viewed as a script for how the world works and our place in the world in the cycle of history.

There has been relative tranquillity for Jews over the past years since the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel, especially for Jews who live in Canada and the USA. The idea of a pogrom attack mentality may have become a distant memory. But, rooted deep in the psyche of our surroundings is the astounding rotten hate for Jews that surfaces every few years in abundance, as we have seen now since October 7. I am not going to profess any solution of what to do about it other than what we can do as individuals, which will affect the collective Jewish community, and that is to remain steadfast to the Torah and its ways.

At the beginning of the Parsha, Hashem speaks to Moshe and Aaron, to which Rashi comments: The language used in the Posuk is firm because Hashem was reprimanding Moshe for having questioned Hashem's motives for asking in the previous Parsha, "Why have you caused the people to be mistreated" (5:22). Hashem is answering

this by explaining how grand a response to exile will unfold.

Hashem begins by saying how differently He revealed Himself to the forefathers compared to the deluge and awesomeness that will unfold due to the redemption. The Parsha is called Va'eirah, which means "I appeared" (in the posuk, Hashem is saying how He appeared in one 'limited' form to forefathers). Still, the nuance here is that the appearance made due to the redemption will be so grand it will influence history forever. Additionally, Rashi explains that the "I appeared" means Hashem made promises He will fulfill. So, this is technically both a response to Moshe and a message for the future. In the same way, Hashem promised the forefathers that redemption would arrive, so He promised our redemption, too.

Then what happens after Hashem explains that He will redeem them? Moshe tells Hashem that people don't respond because of their situation (6:9). When you are in a moment of hurt, it is difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Still, more contemporaneously, when going about your regular business, you don't necessarily accept that change is abound. We typically go to work and plan for the weeks ahead entirely. Hashem responds in 6:10-11 with the command of Moshe to circumvent the desire of the Jews and demand immediate release from Egypt. To which Moshe responds in 6:12 that since he is disabled (the Torah is a book of empathy and supports the underdog), on which Rashi explains that Aral Sefasaim means blocked speech, which means he had a speech impediment, but also can mean Moshe exerting his humility, or that he isn't confident in what to say. About which

Hashem says, in 6:13, with the command again to do what Hashem says and demand the Jews be released.

Hashem didn't want questions; he gave specific instructions, even though it made complete sense that a) given the Jews' predicament, they wouldn't listen to a saviour and 2) why would this 'outsider' Moshe be listened to? Hashem's response remains to listen to Me and my command: Don't bring your calculations into the mix because, sensibly, that would stop anything from getting done. Suppose you're about to embark on a long journey for the reward at the end. In that case, you can logically convince yourself out of it because of how arduous it is from the outset, but, as the Hasidic masters explain, lechatchila ariber, push forward, and.get.it.done.

To support this notion that Moshe was proposing that he wasn't suited to lead, the second Aliya specifically deals with that. Rashi explains the lineage of Moshe is laid out, so there is no question about who he is, the task he had, and the mission he needed to accomplish, even though he was technically not enslaved. Salvation arrives in the blink of an eye from an unexpected source who has credibility. Because it could have been rejected that Moshe deserved to be the leader. But as we explained last year, it had to be an outsider who remained steadfast on the mission without ulterior motives, except to listen to the Command of Hashem, precisely what the redemption was. Otherwise, for all logic and situational circumstances, the Jews wouldn't have been redeemed.

In our times, logically, the world is entirely against Israel; logically, we should throw in the towel and cave. As I saw in a (clearly

antisemitic) article this week, it posed the question of what will happen to the Jews when Israel inevitably ceases to exist. But no, we have hope and "Vaeira," we have the promise of Hashem, so circumstance or not, we will be redeemed, even if, at the moment, it seems that all hope is lost.

On that note, may this Shabbos be the last in Golus, and may the final redemption happen Now!