

א ביסל תורה!

January 24, 2025

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

כ"ד טבת תשפ"ה · וארא

The Power of Our Tears

By Daniel Zilber '26

When Hashem sends משה down to free בני ישראל from their slavery, He tells him that now that He has heard the cries of the Jewish people, He has remembered his ברית and will free them, וגם אני, שִׁמְעֵתִי אֶת-נַאֲקַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מִצְרִים מַעֲבָדִים אֹתָם וְאָזְכֹּר: "אֶת-בְּרִיתִי: - "I have now heard the moaning of the Israelites because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant" (6:5). This פסוק raises two questions: Why did Hashem only hear the cries of בני ישראל now, they've already been slaves for many years? And what does it mean for Hashem to "remember" His ברית, how can Hashem forget anything?

רש"י interprets this פסוק as meaning that since Hashem had at one point made the ברית, he must fulfill it. A part of this ברית was that Hashem will judge the nation whom בני ישראל serve, and now that they are being tortured, Hashem sees this as the time to fulfill the ברית. רש"י answers both questions. Until now בני ישראל were just slaves in מצרים however, now they are crying out to Hashem because they are being tortured and killed. Additionally, when the פסוק says "remembered" it means that now that they are brutally enslaved and tortured, it is now time to follow through with the ברית since now the מצרים will be judged for what they've done. Additionally, the next פסוק says "וידע אלקים" which רש"י interprets to mean that Hashem put His heart and eyes onto בני ישראל, which also shows that Hashem knew it was the right time to redeem them.

אבן עזרא offers an approach which helps understand this פסוק. In פרשת שמות (2:23-24) very similar וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן-הָעֶבְדָּה וַיִּזְעָקוּ...וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹקִים, אֶת-נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם אֶת-יִצְחָק וְאֶת-יַעֲקֹב: "The people of Israel groaned because of there work and cried out...God heard their moaning, and God remembered the covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." On these פסוקים, אבן עזרא says that בני ישראל had been worshipping the Egyptian idols, so because of their sin Hashem made them serve cruel masters. However, now they have done so Hashem felt it was the right time to redeem them.

אור החיים puts an emphasis on the words "וגם אני" to portray Hashem's trait of רחמים, mercy. Hashem is showing that it doesn't necessarily take verbal תפילות in order to reach Him. בני ישראל just had to cry out in order for Him to feel their pain. The גמרא in בבא גמרא in שער תפילה (דף נט.) says that even while the gates of prayer, are closed, the שער דמעות, the gates of tears, are still open. On this גמרא, מאירי says that even though most תפילות aren't able to be answered, when a תפילה comes from the depths of your heart, and you can no longer hold back your tears, that's when your תפילות are most pure.

The message to be learned from this פסוק is about how powerful our cries can be. According to אור החיים בני ישראל didn't even need to daven to Hashem in order for Him to hear their tears. Nowadays, כלל ישראל find themselves in such great pain that everybody is constantly davening for the best outcome. However, we must also find a way to elevate

our תפילות, to bring out our tears, and this way, Hashem will hear our cries.

Keeping Promises

By Becca Gold '26

In פרשת וארא, ה' speaks to משה many times, but before this, He introduces to משה one of His names. However, there is something strange about how He does this. Immediately after telling משה about one of His names, ה' says that He did not use this name with the אבות: "וַיֹּדְבֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה'": "and G-d spoke to משה and said to him, 'I am ה' (using G-d's four letter name)," "וַיֵּרָא אֶל-אַבְרָהָם אֶל-יִצְחָק" "and I appeared to אברהם, יצחק, and יעקב as קל שקי, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name ה' (again by his four letter name)" (שמות ו-ג). This is very strange. Why would ה' tell משה this, and even more so, why does ה' tell משה His name, but none of the אבות?

It is important to create a distinction between ה' names, since the אבות did know ה', but they knew him by קל שקי. The question still stands, though, of why ה' only revealed this name to משה.

First of all, the use of "נודעתי" "make myself known" instead of "הודעתי" "I was known" means that it was not about the אבות not knowing about this name of ה', rather, ה' specifically did not let them know about it. This could mean that ה' hid it from them because they were not worthy of hearing His name, but maybe there was a different reason.

חזקוני explains that the אבות knew ה' as "קל שקי" because He had made promises to them that had not been kept yet, and they had believed ה' without proof; however, His name יקוק is also about keeping

promises. This is backed up by the next פסוק, which חזקוני discusses, "וְגַם הִקְמַתִי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם" which should not be translated as "I have also kept my promise with them," rather as "I have established a covenant with them," but it is still in effect. ה' has now decided it is time to fulfill His covenant, as בני ישראל's outcry is justified. רש"י agrees with this answer. Now that it is time to fulfill the covenant, משה needs to know this information, which is why he is being told.

It also seems ה' is telling משה this because there is a lesson for everyone. I think this comes to teach us the importance of both names, and fulfilling promises. There are many places throughout תנ"ך that we can see the importance of names, and which specific names are used in what circumstances. This is another one of those, where ה' is being extremely careful about who uses, and even knows, which of His names. From the caution ה' uses with His names here, we can learn about the importance of fulfilling promises.

It is important, firstly, to only make promises that are almost certainly able to be kept. One should not make promises all the time, not realizing the significance of those words. It should also be considered that once a promise is made, it is equally - if not more important - to keep said promise. ה' would not even let the אבות use his eternal name, יקוק, because of an unfulfilled promise; even more so we should be extremely careful to keep our promises.



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A BISL TORAH

is published weekly
at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts

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