

That you may know that I am Hashem. (10:2)

We live in an era which may be characterized as “inexplicable.” When we look around the world and we open our minds to confront reality, it is obvious that *Klal Yisrael* – both as a nation in general and the individual Jew in particular – is not winning a popularity contest. Indeed, this is the way it was in Egypt. The Egyptians despised the Jews. Yet, they were not prepared to let us leave their country. “Good riddance” was not enough for them. Their deep-rooted hatred for us and for everything that we represented stoked their desire to keep us as slaves, make our lives miserable, and remind us at every juncture that we belonged to them.

Hashem employed ten plagues as a form of punishment to encourage Pharaoh to release us. When these messages did not work, because Hashem did not want them to work, the Almighty simply took us out of Egypt. The time had come, and nothing within Pharaoh’s power could prevent the redemption of the Jews from Egypt from occurring. Did it have to happen this way? It is not as if this was the only time our People had experienced hardship and exile. *Galus Bavel*, the Babylonian exile, some nine centuries after the Egyptian exodus, was certainly no picnic. Yet, Hashem took us out by “encouraging” Koresh, King of Persia, to issue a proclamation throughout his kingdom to allow the Jews to return home. Moreover, he opened up his coffers and offered them financial assistance in rebuilding the *Bais HaMikdash*. Would it have been so bad if Hashem would have, likewise, manipulated Pharaoh’s mind in our favor?

Obviously, Koresh’s positive thinking was the result of Divine machination. Why did Hashem not employ the same maneuvering to ease the Jews out of Egypt?

In **Rav Avraham Pam’s**, **zl**, “Parsha Thoughts,” redacted by *Rav Shalom Smith*, the *Rosh Yeshivah* quotes *Horav Shlomo Kluger, zl*, who writes in his *Imrei Shefer* that, had the liberation from Egypt occurred in some positive way, with Pharaoh acting as the great liberator, friend of the Jews, it would have created a situation in which we would remain indebted to him forever. Despite all of the evil and cruelty that he and his henchmen committed against us, we are a unique people for whom *hakoras hatov*, gratitude, courses through our veins. It is an inherent part of our psyche. Thus, our deep sense of gratitude would have made us feel beholden to Pharaoh. Hashem would never have accepted this approach. There is no way that we could ever feel anything positive about that evil person and his perverted nation.

Hashem took us out of Egypt so that we would be a nation for Him. If we maintain any sort of allegiance to anyone else – for whatever reason – it detracts from our service to Hashem, because we no longer recognize Him as our Savior. Thus, the more Pharaoh was afflicted with plagues, the greater was his obstinacy until the final *makkah*, the smiting of the firstborn, overwhelmed him.

This is the idea behind *zeichar l’yetzias Mitzrayim*, a remembrance of the redemption from Egypt. We must constantly reiterate the fact that what we are is all due to the fact that Hashem took us out of Egypt. We owe Him – and only Him. The redemption of the nation from its Babylonian exile was

quite different. First, it involved only a limited number of Jews. Even though we returned home, we still remained under gentile domination. The Second *Bais HaMikdash* was an impressive and inspiring sight to behold. Nonetheless, it paled in comparison to its predecessor. Therefore, since the redemption was not that compelling, it was permissible to also maintain a sense of gratitude to Koresh to some degree.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* continues by drawing a parallel between *geulas Mitzrayim* and our Final Redemption, which will be heralded by *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. Egypt serves as the prototype *geulah* for us. Just as there were no benevolent nations at that time who were prepared to help us, likewise, we will be redeemed in the End of Days by Hashem – Alone. We will not need all of the great talkers/ politicians who, when they need our votes, assert, “Israel, Israel!” When the truth becomes clear, we will see that we have only Hashem to thank – no one else.

With this insight, we are able to gain a better understanding of the implacable hatred that exists in today’s world toward the Jews and their country. Hashem does not want us to harbor any feelings of gratitude toward the gentile nations. They never really cared for us. They supported us only because they needed our support. We are, otherwise, inexplicably reviled. Now, we have an explanation; Hashem want us to ingrain in our minds that, *Ein lanu l’hishaein ela al Avinu she’ba Shomayim*. “We have no One other upon whom to rely other than our Father in Heaven.”

This is what is alluded to by the *pasuk’s* conclusion, “That you may know that I am Hashem.” We must know that it is only Hashem Who redeems us – no one else. Our gratitude must be focused on the True Source of our redemption: Hashem.