

Moreover, I have heard the groans of Bnei Yisrael whom Egypt enslaves. (6:5)

Upon reading the text, one would think that the use of the word "*Ani*", "I (heard)" indicates that it was only Hashem who heard *Bnei Yisrael* cry. If they had been groaning, why was it only Hashem who heard? The **Noam Elimelech** explains that the groaning essentially had three manifestations. The first type of cry emanated from the common Jew who had been subjected to back-breaking labor, to the affliction of the Egyptians throwing their baby boys into the Nile River. While most of the people cried over the demeaning and cruel slavery to which they were subjected, there were those, such as the tribe of Levi, upon whom no decree of hard labor had been issued. They lamented their lack of freedom. Their state of enslavement to Pharaoh was reason enough for them to mourn. Among the *Leviim*, a select group of individuals bemoaned their fate for a different reason. These were the *tzaddikim*, righteous Jews, who could not tolerate the effect of the slavery on their spirituality. The suffering of their *neshamos* was greater than the physical hurt they endured. Their minds were not free to think; their hearts could not properly perform the *mitzvos* of the heart; their mouths could not express prayer for spiritual redemption, since they were compelled to pray for an end to the physical domination of the Egyptians. In short, these three areas of complaint represent the three perspectives of the Egyptian exile.

The *Noam Elimelech* uses this concept to explain the three types of redemption which the *Hagaddah* suggests. We thank Hashem for bringing us out of slavery to freedom, from darkness to great light; and from servitude to redemption. Each Jew reflected upon his own personal liberation. The Jew who suffered harsh labor, toiling with brick and mortar, was grateful for his release from slavery to freedom. The *Levi* who was not subjected to labor thanked Hashem for redeeming him from his servitude. The *tzaddik* who until now had bemoaned the darkness to which his *neshamah* was relegated, thanked Hashem for the new light.

The ***Ohaiv Yisrael*** supplements the words of the *Noam Elimelech*. While he agrees that the outcry took on three forms, this was only in the beginning of the analysis. After awhile, the Jews realized that it was not proper to bewail only their physical affliction. They should aspire to greater heights and cry out against the spiritual darkness that had enveloped their lives. They should cry about the spiritual muck in which their *neshamos* were submerged. Subsequently, while they overtly lamented their miserable conditions, they also harbored an inner hurt, an intimate sorrow for their spiritual devastation. This affliction was not public. Its cry was unheard by all--except Hashem. Only the Almighty, Who knows and is sensitive to our internal emotions, heard this covert cry.