

So, Moshe took his wife and sons, mounted them on the donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. (4:20)

Rashi teaches that this was no ordinary donkey. It was the donkey that Avraham *Avinu* saddled for the *Akeidas*, Binding, of Yitzchak. It is also the donkey that *Moshiach Tziddkeinu* is destined to be revealed upon, as the *pasuk* in *Zecharyah* (9:9) says, *Ani v'rocheiv al ha'chamor*, "A humble man riding on a donkey." What is *Rashi* teaching us? What is to be gleaned from the fact that Moshe *Rabbeinu's* donkey was none other than the same donkey that Avraham saddled to go to the *Akeidah*? *Horav Chaim Stein, zl*, explains that we should understand this in the context of the long *galus*, exile, which we have endured. When we experience one trouble after devastating trouble, it destroys our ability to hope, to maintain the aspiration that one day this bitter *galus* will come to an end with the advent of *Moshiach* and the glorious Redemption. How do we keep the flame of hope burning? How do we keep it alive?

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that Hashem solved our problem with the idea that *refuah kodem l'makah*, cure precedes the illness. He showed us that the *refuah* comes through Avraham's extraordinary devotion and *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, his readiness to sacrifice his beloved son, Yitzchak. Hashem commanded and Avraham replied, *Hineni*, "Here I am." No questions; no excuses; just "Here I am." This unprecedented and unemulated *mesiras nefesh* serves as an enduring merit to ensure *Klal Yisrael's* survival through its long and torturous *galus*. It will not end earlier than when Hashem decides, but it will end. We see this from Moshe, who mounted his wife and sons on the very same donkey that Avraham had saddled years before him. *Galus Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exile, and its subsequent liberation serve as the paradigm for *galus* and *geulah*. Just as the first *geulah*, redemption, from Egypt occurred in the merit of Avraham's *mesiras nefesh*, so, too, will all subsequent *geulos* have the *Akeidas Yitzchak* as their foundation. This is the connection between the donkey which surfaced hundreds of years later to provide travel arrangements for Moshe's family. We should not lose hope, because the mechanism and merit for *Moshiach's* coming have been in place for thousands of years.

This exposition explains the relationship between the "three donkeys" which are one and the same. Why is it that, concerning Avraham, the Torah writes that he saddled the donkey, and, regarding Moshe, he mounted his family on the donkey, while concerning *Moshiach*, he is riding on the donkey? We suggest that Avraham and Moshe played ancillary roles with regard to the *geulah*. Avraham was the source of merit. Moshe facilitated the liberation, but it did not end with him. We experienced ensuing exiles, including the one which we are presently experiencing. It is only with the advent of *Moshiach* that we will finally see an end to our *tzaros*, troubles, speedily in our days.