

Parshat Vayechi: Redemption Revealed

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

As Yaakov Avinu approaches the end of his life, he gathers his sons around him. According to the *Medrash*, he wanted to reveal when *Moshiach* would come, but Hashem prevented it. Instead, Yaakov gives a blessing to each of his sons with insights that will help each develop his potential.

Why did Hashem prevent Yaakov from revealing the end? Rabbi Tauber, quoting the Lubavitcher Rebbe, suggests that this knowledge would be counterproductive and a source of despair for *Bnei Yisroel* who would view their enslavement and salvation as only as small step in a 3,500 year exile. In addition, to be fully involved in the process of redemption, it is imperative that we engage in positive deeds as a constant preparation for redemption rather than as steps toward a guaranteed result. Hashem wants us to demonstrate absolute faith in His promise, a burning desire for that coming era, even in the darkest times. That era is not meant to be a cure all but rather a spiritually perfected world when God's presence will be recognized. What Hashem wanted, was for *Bnei Yisroel* to acquire the desire for redemption from Yaakov, that would strengthen them during the many years they would spend in exile.

When Yaakov blesses his sons, his words are meant to encourage and unite them in working on their relationship with Hashem, thereby hastening *Moshiach*, writes *Ohe! Moshe*. Exile itself then becomes a beacon in anticipating the redemption, firm in the knowledge that it will come. Further, redemption itself is about the primacy of the knowledge of Hashem, even more than just having our problems disappear.

Herein lies an important distinction between secular thinking and Jewish thinking, writes *Mesillot Bilvovom*. In the secular world, when several options are discussed, and one option is chosen, the other options are cast aside. In Jewish law, all opinions remain cited and are considered to have spiritual truth, even

though only one opinion becomes accepted practice. When Yaakov wanted to reveal the end of days, that truth was somehow encrypted in the blessing to his sons.

The *Tosher Rebbe*, based on the *Baal Shem Tov*, writes that Yaakov was not trying to reveal a date of the redemption. Rather, he wanted to give *Bnei Yisroel* the tools through which they could hasten the redemption. But Hashem did not want this to be openly revealed either. Instead, within the blessings, Yaakov made allusions to the redemption process that may be cosmic, personal, or both. Let us begin by scrutinizing Yaakov's blessing to Dan.

"*Dan yadin*/will avenge his people... Dan will be a serpent on a highway, a viper by the path, that bites a horse's heels so its rider falls backwards." Then Yaakov concludes with an unusual exclamation: "For Your salvation do I long, Hashem!" First, the doubling of Dan, as a name and as a verb, alludes to the dual nature of salvation, national and personal. Our commentators suggest that Samson, from the Tribe of Dan, could have been *Moshiach*. Although he failed in that role, he did save *Bnei Yisroel* from continued Philistine persecution. When he was finally captured, blinded, and brought out for public humiliation, Samson cried out for Hashem to grant him one final revenge. With renewed power, he shattered the pillars of their temple, killing thousands of Philistines. Just as Samson cried out to Hashem and hoped for salvation in the darkness of his blinded condition, so should we all, both as a nation and as individuals, call out in our darkness and always retain hope for God's salvation. As the *Tosher Rebbe* reminds us, one of the pivotal questions we will be asked when our souls ascends is, "Did you long for the salvation," for just as you believe in God, so must you believe in the words of His prophets who predict the salvation.

According to The Song of the Universe, the verse the rooster sings is, "For Your salvation do I yearn, Hashem." Rabbi Schorr points out, the rooster crows at the moment of deepest

darkness, just before dawn breaks through. Even though the world is dark and corrupt, we must always know in the deepest recesses of our heart, that light will again come.

The *Misellat Bilvavom* writes that the seeds of salvation are often watered with our tears. Just as a seed must disintegrate before it begins to sprout, so must we not descend to despair when we seem to be disintegrating into nothingness, for it is from this seemingly rotting earth that the sprout of David is beginning to grow to bring our salvation. One must go through that terribly challenging phase to experience the growth that follows. One must continue to strengthen one's heart until salvation comes. Like a farmer who has planted the seeds, writes Rabbi Eisenberger, we must have faith that the good will yet grow. Citing Rav Y. Kaminetsky, Rabbi Frand explains that Yaakov brought cedar trees with him when he and his family descended to Egypt, trees that would form the planks of the *Mishkan* that *Bnei Yisroel* would build upon their redemption. The trees would provide hope and be a tangible reminder of the promise of redemption.

We say in our daily prayer, "*Ki l'yeshuascha kivinu kol hayom*." The yearning itself brings salvation. But in addition to the yearning, we have to build ourselves up to be ready for redemption, writes the *Tosher Rebbe*. We must create within ourselves a place where God's Presence can reside. Perhaps we can devote more time to *Torah* study, or focus more intently on our prayers, or be more involved in acts of *chesed*.

The challenges we face are only to prepare us for the ultimate redemption, says the *Sefas Emes*. It is all Hashem Who "brings death and restores life, and makes salvation sprout." In the future, we will see all the good and all that we thought was bad were in reality different aspects of goodness. If you can keep your mind focused on that ultimate truth, you are already living a life of redemption.



Responsibility of A Professional to his Client

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dayan Shlomo Cohen

A contract worker, a professional who is hired to complete a job for a client, carries the halachic responsibility of a paid guardian. For example, an accountant who is hired by a client to prepare his accounts and errs in the process, can be held liable for damages. A lawyer who gives the wrong advice to his client can be held responsible for any losses he caused. A paid guardian is not only responsible for negligence but is expected to take extra care. If he doesn't, he wouldn't be paid for his work and would be responsible to pay for both direct and indirect damages caused. According to most poskim he won't be held responsible for preventing future gains, but some hold that even in such a case, he's responsible for any type of loss and would be obligated to pay damages.

Let's say a takeover bid was made for a company. A businessman came and bought the company based on the profits that were

declared the past few years. Afterwards it was found that the actual profit was double the amount the accountant declared, which meant the price the buyer paid was much less than what the company was actually worth. The accountant caused a loss to his client here. Once the mistake is proven, it has to be fixed. The buyer now has to pay more for the company. But if he refuses, according to law, he can't be forced and the accountant who made the mistake is liable for the loss.

What about when the professional isn't being paid and he causes a loss? If he's an expert, he's not held responsible for the negligence because we presume, says the Gemara, that experts don't make mistakes and it was the bad luck of his employer. If he wasn't an expert, then he's considered an unpaid guardian and he would be responsible for any damage caused by his negligence. The Gemara gives an example of a shochet. If he's

being paid for slaughtering and while working, he makes a mistake causing tremendous loss, he's certainly responsible. But if he took extra care and an accident happened causing loss, he's not held responsible. If he's not being paid, if he's an expert, he's exempt from damages caused by his mistake. If he's not an expert he's obligated to pay. The same would apply to any other similar type of work arrangement.

There's a concept in *halacha* of *hamotzi m'chavero* – if you want to make someone pay then you have to prove that they have to pay. If there's a doubt about whether the perpetrator is exempt from damage or not, depending on if he's an expert or not, we don't say *hamotzi m'chavero*. The volunteer would have to prove that he's an expert if he wants to be exempt from paying compensation for the damage he caused.

Tehillim 28

David's Prayer in the Eye of the Storm

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

"Of David. To You, Hashem I call. My Rock..." There's something very truthful about a person who has been persecuted. King Shaul was a *tzadik* and a great king but like all great people they are often surrounded by people who might have other motivations. When David was surrounded by people who besmirched him, he turned to Hashem.

Rav F. Meltzer points out that the first five verses of this chapter are a prayer and verses 6-9 are a thanksgiving for prayers answered. The mizmor is written in first person singular except for the last two verses which are plural because what happens to David Hamelech will happen to the nation.

Zur is translated as -my rock. But it also comes from the word *zurah*- a form and a *tzayar*- a sculptor. We are a chelek Elokai m'maal- a chip off the rock. David refers to

Hashem as *tzuri* not only because He is strong and can be relied upon, but because we were formed by Him and are a part of Him.

"Don't be silent lest you remain silent and I will be likened to those who descend into the Pit." Rav Hirsh explains- Those who go into the grave refers to those who go to *gehinom* from where their souls will no longer rise up. If a person has no connection to Hashem, he has no meaning in his life, he remains empty, no different than a beast. Whether you will remain mortal or immortal depends on whether you developed your soul. *David Hemelech* says- If Hashem doesn't hear me, if He doesn't accept my prayers and puts a disconnect between me and Him, I may as well be dead.

"Listen to the voice of my pleading, when I cry out to you, when I raise my hand ..." Rav Hirsh and Malbim explain, save me not only when I

cry out but when I am at the point of hopelessness, when I can no longer articulate my pain, when all I can do is lift my hand.

"Hashem is strength to them and He is the stronghold of the salvations of His anointed." *Redak* explains-It's great that you saved me, but it's not about me anymore, but rather lomo-to them to the nation, Hashem is their strength. *Metzudas David* notes, Hashem is the strength of the nation, but also the fortress of salvation to me (David Hamelech), and to whoever His anointed one is up to the days of *Mashiach*.

"Save your nation, bless your portion, shepherd them and lift them up forever." *Ibn Ezra* explains, *David Hamelech* asks Hashem- Lift up the Jewish people to a high place where they will no longer be able to be harmed anymore in this world and the next.