

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

LONGING FOR REDEMPTION

“And I will bring you out, and I will rescue you, and I will redeem you and I will take you...” (6:6-8)

The Jewish People have experienced four great exiles: Babylon; Persia and Medea; Greece, and our current and longest exile — that of Rome and its cultural heirs.

These four exiles are hinted to in the verse in this week’s Torah portion, *“And I will bring you out, and I will rescue you, and I will redeem you and I will take you...”*

The matrix and seed of these four exiles is that of Egypt.

We say in the *Kedusha* prayer (*Nusach Sefarad*) *“I have redeemed you — the last as the first.”* As our final redemption nears, it mirrors more and more that first redemption from Egypt three and a half thousand years ago.

The greatest strength that the Jewish People has in exile is the longing for redemption. As the Jewish People cried out to G-d under the crushing oppression of Egypt, so we too must cry out, *“G-d, we long for Your salvation!”*, however far we feel from meriting that deliverance.

We are currently in the month of Tevet.

Each of the twelve months of the Jewish Year corresponds to one of the Twelve Tribes. The Vilna Gaon, the Arizal and others parallel the Hebrew months with the order of the encampment of the tribes as they journeyed through the desert. According to this calculation, our current month, Tevet, corresponds to the tribe of Dan.

We are a lot like Dan.

All the Tribes were holy but they were not on the same level. Dan is known as the *yarud sh’bshvatim* – the lowest of the Tribes. It was the tribe in which idol worship was so rampant that the Clouds of Glory which escorted the Jewish People through the desert would not accompany them. In the Book of Devarim (29:17), when Moshe warns of the possibility of *“a man or a woman or a family or a tribe turning away from G-d”*, our Sages understand that the Torah is referring to the tribe of Dan.

And even at the height of the revelation at the splitting of the sea, where the lowliest servant saw more than what was revealed to the prophet Yechezkel ben Buzi when G-d showed him the mystical secrets of the interface between this world and the realities beyond this world, even then, Dan carried idols with them into the sea.

Yet, despite this, there are only two tribes in Yaakov’s blessings who are referred to as *“Gur Aryeh”* (lion cub): Dan, and Yehuda the tribe of the Kings of Yisrael. Yehuda is known as *“Gur Aryeh Yehuda”*, and Dan as *“Dan Gur Aryeh”*. What is the connection between Yehuda, whose very name contains the ineffable four-letter Name of G-d, and Dan, the most distant from that loftiness?

In the middle of Yaakov’s blessing to Dan at the end of

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PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

GITTIN 30 - 36

“Whoever marries does so according to the agreement of the Rabbis, and the Rabbis dissolved the marriage from him.”

This statement is taught in our *daf* to explain how a get that was given to an agent to deliver and was nullified by the husband in the presence of Beit Din is still considered to be valid, and therefore the wife who receives it will not be married. This explains the opinion of Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, who says that a husband who transgresses the decree of Rabban Gamliel Hazaken in the *mishna* on 32a that forbids nullifying a get that has been sent with an agent, even in the presence of a Beit Din — “cannot nullify it or add onto his condition.” As a result, they are not married.

The commentaries explain that Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel’s reason for “dissolving” the marriage if this occurs is because we look at every marriage as being made *conditionally* . If the Rabbis agree to it, it is a marriage; if not, it is not. Therefore, the *gemara* explains that if the husband nullifies the get in this proscribed way, we view it as if the Rabbis did not agree with this marriage from the very beginning. In other words, since the marriage is conditional on the Rabbis agreeing to it, in the event that a husband acts in this manner, the Rabbis do not agree to the marriage and the “condition” necessary for the marriage to be valid is not fulfilled. In this sense, the marriage is not really “dissolved”; rather, the marriage never really took place. (Rashi)

If the marriage never took place, we would expect the money the man gave her initially for marriage to return to him at the end. However, Rashi writes in this same *sugya* , that when the Rabbis don’t agree to the marriage the initial money is now considered to be a *gift* for her, and not as money for *kiddushin* which would now return to him. Why is the money a gift for her to keep? Since the Rabbis declared that the condition wasn’t fulfilled and that the marriage never happened, shouldn’t she need to return the money?

One explanation is that the “trigger” which sets off the disqualified marriage is the mere statement of the husband to nullify the get. Only words. No action. The power of these words is enough to undo the power of his *words* of marriage that he originally spoke to the woman (and invoke the Rabbis not wanting the marriage and therefore not fulfilling the condition of their consent), but the words are not “strong enough” to undo the *action* of his originally giving her the money. She therefore keeps the money and it is considered as a gift. (See Maharitz Chiyut who discusses this subject at length).

• Gittin 33a

“What is the meaning of the word ‘pruzbul’? An enactment for the benefit of the ‘buli’ and the ‘buti’.” (Gemara)

The *mishna* on *daf* 34b states that Hillel and his Beit Din introduced a halachic device called “pruzbul”, which causes loans to remain intact and not be erased in the Shemita year. This is one of a number of decrees taught in our *perek* that

Continued on page eight

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

ZION GATE — THE BIG KEY

When Rabbi Mordechai Weingarten heard a knock at the door of his home in the courtyard of the Ohr HaChaim Synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem he could hardly have imagined who was seeking entry.

As the last official *muchtar* , district head, of the



Old City, he was the liaison between the British Mandate officials and the Jews. As the British evacuated the Walled City, a British officer had come to present the rabbi with an old, rusty foot-long key to Zion gate as a gift from England to the Jewish People.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Did G-d ever appear to Avraham and say "I am G-d"?
2. What cause did the forefathers have to question G-d?
3. How was Moshe commanded to act towards Pharaoh?
4. How long did Levi live?
5. Who was Aharon's wife? Who was her father? Who was her brother?
6. Why are Yitro and Yosef both referred to as "Putiel"?
7. After which plague did G-d begin to "harden Pharaoh's heart"?
8. Why did Pharaoh go to the Nile every morning?
9. Give two reasons why the blood was chosen as the first plague.
10. How long did the plague of blood last?
11. Why did the frogs affect Pharaoh's house first?
12. What did Moshe mean when he told Pharaoh that the frogs would be "in you and in your nation"?
13. What are "chamarim"?
14. Why didn't Moshe strike the dust to initiate the plague of lice?
15. Why were the Egyptian sorcerers unable to bring lice?
16. What were the Egyptians likely to do if they saw the Jews slaughtering lambs?
17. Why didn't the wild beasts die as the frogs had?
18. The *dever* killed "all the cattle of Egypt." Later, boils afflicted their cattle. How can this be?
19. Why did Moshe pray only after leaving the city?
20. What was miraculous about the way the hail stopped falling?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 6:9 - Yes.
2. 6:9 - Although G-d swore to give them the Land, they never actually had control over it.
3. 6:13 - With the respect due a king.
4. 6:16 - 137 years.
5. 6:23 - Elisheva, daughter of Aminadav, sister of Nachshon.
6. 6:25 - Yitro fattened (*pittem*) cows for idol worship. Yosef scoffed (*pitpet*) at his evil inclination.
7. 7:3 - After the sixth plague — *shechin*.
8. 7:15 - To relieve himself. Pharaoh pretended to be a god who did not need to attend to his bodily functions. Therefore, he secretly used the Nile for this purpose.
9. a. 7:17 - Because the Nile was an Egyptian god.
b. 8:17 - Because an invading army first attacks the enemy's water supply, and G-d did the same.
10. 7:25 - Seven days.
11. 7:28 - Pharaoh himself advised the enslavement of the Jewish People.
12. 7:29 - He warned that the frogs would enter their intestines and croak.
13. 8:10 - Piles.
14. 8:12 - Because the dust protected Moshe by hiding the body of the Egyptian that Moshe killed.
15. 8:14 - The Egyptian sorcerers' magic had no power over anything smaller than a barley kernel.
16. 8:22 - Stone the Jews.
17. 8:27 - So the Egyptians would not benefit from their hides.
18. 9:10 - In the plague of *dever* only the cattle *in the fields* died. The plague of *shechin* affected the surviving cattle.
19. 9:29 - Because the city was full of idols.
20. 9:33 - The hailstones stopped in mid-air and didn't fall to the ground.

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Abarbanel

ON THE PARSHA

BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Vaera

Two Aspects of the Plagues

In his analysis of the ten plagues that afflicted the Egyptians, Abarbanel provides two different perspectives on the exact nature of the plagues. Firstly, he emphasizes that they were all based on natural phenomena. Since the prevailing belief in the ancient world was that nature was controlled by the four elements of water, earth, air and fire, each of the plagues could be connected to one of the four to demonstrate G-d's control over all the forces of nature. Furthermore, Abarbanel demonstrates that each of the plagues set the stage, in a natural and physical sense, for the plague immediately following. This also demonstrates G-d's manipulation of natural phenomena to afflict the Egyptians. The second perspective, which is shared by other commentators as well, is that each of the plagues was a punishment, measure for measure, for what the Egyptians had done to the *Bnei Yisrael*. This is another important and significant demonstration of G-d's Divine Providence.

The first five plagues were based in the first two elements: water and earth. The waters of Egypt turned to blood, and the frogs emerged from the Nile river.

The dust of the earth then swarmed with lice, followed by swarms of dangerous animals that covered the ground. The fifth plague was the epidemic that struck their domesticated animals, which were nourished by the vegetation of the earth.

The last five plagues were based on the elements of air and fire. The plague of boils came about when Moshe threw handfuls of soot from a fiery furnace heavenward. The plague of hail was a miraculous combination of ice and fire striking the earth together. The locusts arrived in Egypt due to a strong easterly wind. The plague of darkness was also related to air. Normally, darkness is something that is not felt, just like air. Here, however, G-d created a thick, substantive darkness that would not allow even the smallest ray of sunlight to penetrate. Finally, the first-born Egyptians died from the sudden appearance of foul and unbreathable air.

Each of the plagues created natural conditions that helped bring about the following plague. The bloody water of the Nile which killed off the fish, allowed the frogs to proliferate. Similarly the eventual putrefaction of the dead frogs contaminated the ground, which created ideal conditions for both the lice and the assortment of dangerous vermin and other animals that

followed. These conditions also killed off the vegetation necessary for the domesticated animals and contributed to the epidemic that killed them. Even though these putrid environmental conditions did not result in an epidemic that affected people, they were sufficient to contribute to the outbreak of boils. The atmosphere was also profoundly affected by the conditions on the earth. The drastic increase in humidity contributed to the hail, and the ensuing change in atmospheric conditions caused a shift in the direction of the wind, resulting in the plague of locusts. The wind from the west which drove away the locusts was exceedingly powerful and moisture-laden. The searing heat of Egypt, however, prevented the clouds from disgorging their moisture. The result was the incredibly thick and murky darkness. Finally, this darkness contributed to the foul conditions which resulted in the deaths of the first-born Egyptians.

Abarbanel's second perspective is the "measure for measure" punishment of the Egyptians. The infant Hebrew boys were thrown into the Nile; the Nile becomes a source of death instead of life, for the Egyptians. The Hebrew mothers wailed and cried out at the loss of their sons; Egypt suffered from the cacophony of thousands of screeching frogs. The Hebrews were forced to make bricks from the dirt of the ground; the dirt of the ground swarms with lice. The Egyptians invaded their homes and took their children as their personal slaves; swarms of dangerous animals invaded the homes of the Egyptians. The Egyptians confiscated their herds and flocks; Egyptian herds and flocks perished in the epidemic. The Egyptians embarrassed and humiliated them and prevented them from having children; the Egyptians suffered humiliating boils and would not go near each other. The Egyptians humiliated and terrified the Hebrews with screams, shouts and physical abuse from fists and rocks; the Egyptians were terrified by the fire, thunder and lightning that accompanied the pelting, pain-inflicting hail. The Egyptians confiscated their crops; the locusts destroyed the crops of the Egyptians. The Egyptian exile is compared to darkness, while the redemption is compared to light; the Egyptians suffered through a unique darkness of their own. Finally, the Egyptians inflicted broad all-encompassing evils on the Hebrews, who are referred to as G-d's "first-born" (Shemot 4:22); the killing of the Egyptian first-born was also all-encompassing and not a single household escaped the punishment.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to inform the Jewish People that He is going to take them out of Egypt. However, the Jewish People do not listen. G-d commands Moshe to go to Pharaoh and ask him to free the Jewish People. Although Aharon shows Pharaoh a sign by turning a staff into a snake, Pharaoh's magicians copy the sign, emboldening Pharaoh to refuse the request. G-d punishes the Egyptians and sends plagues of blood and frogs, but the magicians copy these mira-

cles on a smaller scale, again encouraging Pharaoh to be obstinate. After the plague of lice, Pharaoh's magicians concede that only G-d could be performing these miracles. Only the Egyptians, and not the Jews in Goshen, suffer during the plagues. The onslaught continues with wild animals, pestilence, boils and fiery hail. However, despite Moshe's offers to end the plagues if Pharaoh will let the Jewish People leave, Pharaoh continues to harden his heart and refuses.

ANIMAL TALK

From: Saul

*Dear Rabbi,
Do animals talk? Has G-d gifted the power of speech to animals? We read stories such as Bilaam's talking donkey and about King Solomon knowing the language of the animals. We also read in Perek Shira that they sing praises to G-d. Is this to be taken literally?*

Dear Saul,

Animals do not "talk", nor do they have the "power of speech" per se, but they certainly do communicate.

For one, they communicate with each other through bodily reactions such as hair bristling or emitting various scents, and also through body language via various bodily movements or actions. They also communicate via sounds which convey a large variety of messages concerning mating, food supply, danger, etc.

However, from a Torah point of view, this is not considered language or speech, which is viewed as a special power or faculty that arises from the uniquely human soul that is lacking in animals.

This is based on the fact that the verse (Gen. 1:20) describing the creation of all living things refers to their vital force only as *nefesh* (animal soul), while human beings are described (Gen. 2:7) as having not only a *nefesh*, but also *ruach* (spirit) and *neshama* (intelligent soul).

That being said, many animals have an "extra-sensory perception", which gives them a heightened awareness above that of humans.

This is true on a physical plane such as animals sensing oncoming earthquakes, avalanches, storms or other natural phenomena. And while humans may not be directly aware of what's happening, animals communicate these pending occurrences through their behavior to those who "know" their language.

So too on a spiritual plane, animals have a heightened sense of awareness which enables them to detect spiritual forces that humans are generally not aware of. One example of this is Bilaam's donkey where even before it speaks it was aware of the presence of the angel in its path, while the "prophet" had no idea of its presence and beat his "dumb" donkey for stubbornly stop-

ping in its tracks. Similarly, the Talmud (Bava Kama 60b) asserts that dogs sense and react to the presence of the angel of death.

The Maharal explains (Be'er Hagolah, 5 p. 98) that it is the very mental superiority of humans over animals which makes them less aware than animals of these subtle physical and spiritual phenomena. Their heightened intellect dulls or masks the intuitive sense. But just as animal behavior can communicate pending physical events, so too those who know how to read animals' interactions with spiritual forces can receive prescience regarding events on the spiritual plane.

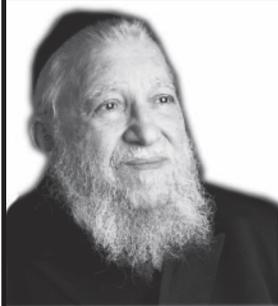
Generally, this is what is meant by Solomon or others understanding the language of the animals. Similarly, Jewish mystical sources, based on Scriptural verses, are replete with the idea, explanation why, and examples of, animals — and particularly birds — communicating messages or portents from the spiritual realm.

Regarding the other examples you bring, in the case of Bilaam's donkey speaking, it seems that the animal actually did miraculously speak human language. But this is viewed as an exception. In fact, this "mouth of the donkey" (referring to the ability of Bilaam's donkey to speak) is described in Talmudic sources (Avot 5:6) as a special formulation from the inception of Creation.

In the case of Perek Shira, which identifies specific verses that are "sung" by various aspects of Creation to the Creator, this is not to be taken literally. Firstly, it includes the songs not only of animals but even of plants and inanimate objects which certainly do not communicate verbally or audibly. Secondly, many of the verses attributed as being "sung" are not from the Torah but rather from other parts of Scripture which certainly post-date the creations that "sing" them.

Rather, the understanding is that the actual existence of Creation is a symphony resounding with G-dliness within which each part of Creation contributes its own unique melody. The nature and qualities of each part of Creation correspond to, are incorporated within, and are reflected by the specific verse ascribed to it. In this way, each part of Creation (just by "being") and its respective verse (through language) harmoniously reverberate in duet their singular praise of the Creator.

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Rav Bulman *zt"l*
on the
Torah Portion of the Week

THE MERCIFUL ONE DESIRES THE HEART

With these three simple words, “*Rachamana liba ba’ei*, the Merciful One desires the heart (Zohar),” our Sages teach us what G-d truly wants from our prayers, and that is why prayer is defined as “the service of the heart” (Masechet Ta’anit 2a).

Prayer is a bond of love between us and G-d. The smartest, most skilled individual is therefore not always the one who offers G-d the best prayer. The magical ingredient of prayer is one that only G-d can measure — heart.

Sometimes the simplest and least noticed person is the one who awakens G-d’s mercy with a sincere, humble prayer. Here is a story that illustrates the great power behind the prayers of the simple and unknown among us.

Staying Connected

This story illustrates both the power of prayer and the phenomenon of the “*pintele yid*”, that inextinguishable spark burning deep within the heart of a Jew.

Dave Freidman (not his real name) was a young Jewish businessman who spent his days in the trendy South Beach shopping mall of Miami where he owned a store. One day, Dave passed a doorway and noticed a mezuzah upon

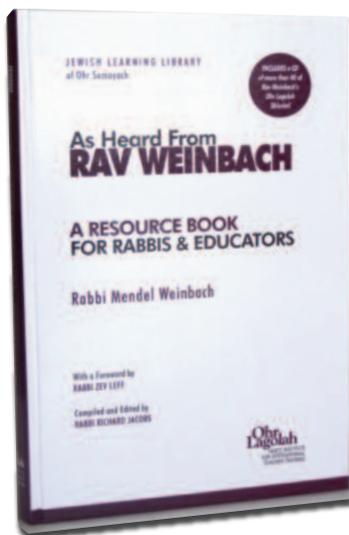
it. Without knowing why, he walked over to the entrance and placed his hand upon the mezuzah and he began to pray.

Now, David had always been troubled by his deceased mother’s request that he marry a Jewish girl. He cared little for religion. Why should he limit himself so? Besides, South Beach was far from the best place to find a Jewish girl, even if he had the slightest interest in doing so.

Yet, at this moment, with his hand upon the mezuzah, David said, “G-d, if you help me find a Jewish girl I will marry her.”

A few days later David met a nice young woman who had come to the mall to do some shopping. They chatted, enjoyed each other’s company, and agreed to meet later at a café, where it emerged from their conversation that she was Jewish! Dave remembered his prayer, wondering if this was in fact G-d’s answer to his prayer. Not long after, they decided to marry. Their first child was a girl named after Dave’s mother.

Only G-d can measure the true value of our prayers. If your words are sincere He will certainly listen.



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COOKING FOR FRIENDS, DAY AFTER DAY

New York City is awash with preparations for Pesach. Here, there and everywhere, people are busily cleaning their houses, removing every trace of bread and other *chametz* (leavened products) from their homes, cars and places of business. The ovens in all the *matza* bakeries are burning throughout the night, baking big batches of the celebratory crispy crackers, and arrangements for the two *Sedarim* (night-time Pesach meals) are being made. Monica is particularly excited, as she is hosting her friends for the “second Seder” — and she loves being the hostess.

The first Seder is at Rachel’s house. All the friends have a splendid time eating their *matza* (and other festive delights), reading the Haggada and singing Pesach songs. No doubt the four cups of wine didn’t hurt. After eating the *afikoman*, the final piece of *matza* for the evening, the friends return home to their respective homes, satisfied with the night’s proceedings. The first Seder was a rip-roaring success. Monica also enjoyed herself, but her competitive nature also had her worried. Would her meal live up to Rachel’s? When she arrived home she opened the fridge and surveyed the offerings she had prepared. “It’s just not enough,” she thought to herself, “I’m going to have to make another few dishes!”

Monica knows that while cooking on Shabbat is not allowed in Jewish law — it is a productive, creative activity which is forbidden on Shabbat by the Torah — on festivals cooking is perfectly okay as long as it’s for the purpose of the festival. She also knows that one can’t cook (or make other preparations) on a festival for a following weekday. The whole idea of being able to cook on a festival is that cooked food is a vital part of adding to the joyous atmosphere of the festival.

So, being as the second Seder needs to be as joyous as the first (and more so, if our zealous hostess has anything to do with it!), Monica surmises that she can cook on the first day of Pesach for the second day. Importantly, one may only cook from an existing flame, since producing fire is not allowed even on Yom Tov (transferring fire is also okay). Luckily, she has a candle burning. Just as she is about to transfer the fire to the gas oven, she has a thought, “I’m not 100% certain and therefore I must ask the Rabbi of the shul for a ruling.” It was late already, so she waited for the following morning.

When she went to shul the following morning she approached the Rabbi after davening and asked him if she could cook more food that day for the second night’s Seder. The Rabbi opened the Shulchan Aruch — the authoritative book of Jewish law — and, much to her chagrin, cited the following:

“It is forbidden to bake or to cook or to slaughter (an animal) on a festival for the next day, even if (that day) is Shabbat or a festival.” (Orach Chaim 503:1)

Even though it is very hard for her to hold herself back, being a G-d-fearing Jew, she holds back. It turns out, unsurpris-

ingly, that she had more than enough food already, and the second Seder was a rousing triumph for our holy hostess. But let’s return to the Shulchan Aruch. Why should it be forbidden to prepare on day one of a festival for day two? The whole reason, we explained, that cooking on a festival for a weekday was forbidden was because only cooking for festival-related joy is permitted! But day two also needs to be joyous!

The answer lies in understanding why it is that we have two days of Pesach, or of any festival for that matter (apart from Rosh Hashana, perhaps, but that’s a discussion for another time.) The Torah mandates one day of Pesach; meaning just one Seder. In Israel, to this day, there is just one day. One Seder. In days of yore, the day of Pesach would be determined by the Sages in Jerusalem according to when the new moon was — and there were two potential days it could be. Originally, a message was transmitted to Jews outside of Israel by a series of bonfires, but when this system was sabotaged it was necessary to institute a decree to keep both potential days. Nowadays, even though the day of Pesach is pre-calculated, the original decree to keep two days remained and we lack the technical means to repeal this ancient decree, and so we continue to keep two days outside of Israel.

Armed with this knowledge, we can understand why preparing from day one to day two of a festival is not allowed. Only one of the two days is the “real” Pesach, and if it’s the first day, and the second day is “really” not a festival, then it would turn out that cooking on day one for day two is really the same as cooking on a festival for a weekday, which is not allowed!

One last twist, however. It’s a shame that Monica was in a hurry when she asked the Rabbi her question, and didn’t have a chance to learn from him what is written a little further in the Shulchan Aruch. Because it goes on to discuss a way around the problem. As long as a person is cooking for day one, it is allowable to cook extra food, for two reasons: 1) perhaps he will need the food for some unexpected guests; or 2) having extra food in the pot may improve the food cooking for day one itself! So if Monica could cook something to eat on day one, let’s say for lunch, she could cook a little extra for the second Seder at the same time. There are a few other provisos, but it’s perfectly possible to do.

A little knowledge is good. But it can also be a dangerous thing. Knowing just a little is liable to lead someone up the garden path. But the more a person learns, knows and understands, the more he is able to determine the correct response to any situation. And until then, when you’re not sure, you can always turn to your local Orthodox Rabbi for his advice.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

LONGING FOR REDEMPTION *continued from page one*

the Book of Genesis, he suddenly says, “*For Your salvation I long, G-d!*” What is the meaning of this interjection that ostensibly has nothing to do with what precedes it?

The Midrash describes Dan as a bitter people. They know how pathetic idol worship is and they long to escape from it. They long with all their heart to be saved. “*For Your salvation I long, G-d!*” It is this longing that makes them a significant and irreplaceable part of the Jewish People.

The Jewish People are compared to the body of a man. As each generation passes, we descend to a lower level. Our generation is called the “*Ikveta d’Mashicha*”. *Ikveta* is connected to the word in Hebrew for a “heel” — *ekev*. We are the generation of the heel. The lowest part of the body.

When we look at ourselves and see how pathetic are most of our thoughts and aspirations, polluted by the exile in a world that has lost all connection to propriety, all we can cry out is “*For Your salvation I long, G-d!*”

But that is our strength. We know who we are. We know where we are. And we long to escape. It is that longing that will surely bring Mashiach very soon.

“*I have redeemed you — the last as the first.*”

- Sources: *Sefer Yetzira*; *Tur Orach Chaim* 417; *Bamidbar* 2; *Pesikta d’Rav Kahana* 3:12; *Midrash Tanchuma Ki Tissa* 13; thanks to Rabbi Doniel Baron

TALMUD Tips

continued from page two

were made for “*tikun olam*” — “fixing the world” in the sense that society will function in a smooth and healthy manner. The rich will be willing to lend, and the poor will be able to find lenders, since the fear of the debt being cancelled by the Shemita year is not a factor.

Regarding the word “*pruzbul*”, Rashi explains that “*pruz*” means “*takana*” or a positive enactment; *buli* refers to the wealthy people who lend; and *buti* refers to the impoverished ones who borrow.

However, the word used for this enactment is not “*pruzbulibuti*” which would make reference to both the wealthy and the poor; rather, it mentions only *buli* — the

wealthy. Where is the reference to the poor found in the word “*pruzbul*”?

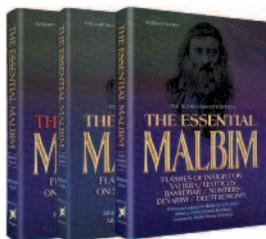
One answer is that the letters *tet* and *lamed* are interchangeable according to a particular linguistic system in kabbalistic teachings. Therefore the *lamed* in the word refers to *both* types of people. However, *buli* is the preferred word to appear in the word “*pruzbul*” since the rich people (*buli*) are the ones who need to actually write the *pruzbul* in order to insure that they can collect their loans even after Shemita. (Maharsha)

• *Gittin* 36b

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