

Parashat Bo, 5784, 2024:

The Exodus You Never Knew

Rabbi David Etengoff

ה' יעזור וירחם על אחינו, כל בני ישראל בארץ ישראל ובכל חלקי הארץ

Two *pasukim* in our *parasha* tell the story of our people's departure from *Eretz Mitzrayim*:

It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, and it came to pass in that very day, that all the legions of Hashem went out of the land of Egypt. (12:41, all Tanach translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*)

It came to pass on that very day, that Hashem took the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their legions. (12:51)

At first glance, with the exception of the phrase, "It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years," it seems that 12:51 is a repetition of 12:41 and adds little to our understanding of the Exodus. We know, however, that this cannot be the case, since one of the fundamental principles of Torah exegesis is that each *pasuk* has an essential purpose and teaches something no other verse imparts.

As such, in order to comprehend the deeper meaning of these *pasukim*, we need to examine another text in Parashat Yitro, in the prologue to the *Asseret HaDibrot*: "You [the Jewish people] have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me." (19:6) A mesmerizing *Targum Yonatan* on this verse goes far beyond an Aramaic translation in that it is, by all accounts, a "midrashic text" in and of itself:

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on the clouds, as if you were on the wings of eagles, from Pilusin [town in southern Egypt]. And I brought you to the place of the Beit HaMikdash to offer your korban Pesach there. And on that same night, I brought you back to Pilusin, and from there, brought you to the place of My Torah [Har Sinai]. (Translation my own)

Looking back at our *parasha's* original two verses, we note that 12:41 states, “all the legions of Hashem went out of the land of Egypt,” whereas in 12:51 we find, “Hashem took the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their legions.” I maintain that in 12:41, our ancestors went out of Egypt in a naturalistic manner, that is, on foot, namely, a *yetziah gufanit*—physical departure. I believe this is supported by the latter part of the *Targum Yonatan* passage: “And on that same night, I brought you back to Pilusin, and from there, brought you to the place of My Torah.” What was that “same night?” The night of the 15th of Nissan, *Lail Pesach*, and from Pilusin, He ultimately brought us to *Har Sinai*.

In stark contrast, Hashem is the active agent in 12:51, that is, He is the subject, and we were the objects. Consequently, this departure was unique in that it was a *yetziah ruchanit*—a spiritual departure, above and beyond the physical realm, planned and executed by the Almighty. This is supported by the first part of the *Targum Yonatan* passage: “I bore you on the clouds, as if you were on the wings of eagles from Pilusin. And I brought you to the place of the *Beit HaMikdash* to offer your *korban Pesach* there.” When did *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* do this amazing miracle? On *Erev Pesach*, at the precise time we were obligated to bring the *korban Pesach*! After so doing, then and only then, did He bring us back to *Mitzrayim*, and the rest of Jewish history, began to unfold.

Just as our redemption from Egypt was a physical and spiritual journey, so may *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* bring us *Mashiach Tzidkeinu* and redeem us from *galut*, soon, and in our days.
V'chane yihi ratzon.

Shabbat Shalom

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>

Please contact me at rdbe718@gmail.com to be added to my weekly email list.

*** My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpvd>

*** I have posted 164 of Rabbi Soloveitchik's English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link: [The Rav](#)