

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmani zy" a, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



אמרות שמשון

What the Purpose Was in Strengthening the Heart of Pharaoh

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל פְּרֹעֹה כִּי אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת לְבוֹ וְאֵת לֵב עֶבְדִּיו לְמַעַן שְׁתִּי אֶתֵּן אֵלָה בְּקַרְבּוֹ... וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאדְהֶרן אֶל פְּרֹעֹה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים עַד מָתִי מֵאַנְתָּ לְעַנְתָּ מִפְּנֵי שְׁלַח עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי. כִּי אִם מֵאַן אֶתָּה לְשַׁלַּח אֶת עַמִּי הֲנִנִּי מִבֵּית מִחֹר אֲרָבָה בְּגִבְלָךְ.

(י"א-ד)

Hashem said to Moshe, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn so that I shall place these signs of Mine in his midst... Moshe and Aharon came to Pharaoh and said to him, "So said Hashem, God of the Hebrews: Until when will you refuse to be humbled before Me? Send out My people that they may serve Me! For if you refuse to send forth My people, behold, tomorrow I shall bring a locust-swarm into your border".

The Midrash in Parshas Va'eira (ש"מ"ר י"א) discusses a transformation that occurred by the plague of 'Boils', which became the status quo throughout the remainder of the Plagues. וַיַּחֲזֶק ה' אֶת לֵב פְּרֹעֹה. כִּיֹּן שְׂרָאָה הִקְבָּהּ שְׁלֹא חֹזֵר בּו מֵה' מִכּוֹת. ראשונות מכאן ואילך אמר הקב"ה אפילו אם ירצה לשוב אני מחזק לבו כדי שאפרע כל הדין ממנו, כאשר דבר ה' אל משה, שכן כתיב ואני אקשה את לב פרעה. Hashem strengthened the heart of Pharaoh. Once Hashem saw that Pharaoh did not repent as a result of the first five plagues, Hashem said, "Even if he will want to repent, I am strengthening his heart in order to exact the full measure of justice from him".

We need to understand why even after strengthening Pharaoh's heart, Hashem still sent Moshe to warn Pharaoh that he must let the Jews go free; wasn't Pharaoh now actually incapable of setting them free out of his own free will, being that his heart was hardened? Was the forewarning nothing more than a laughing matter? Furthermore, it's hard to comprehend why indeed Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart and took away his voluntary ability to choose to do good; if someone sins many times, is he no longer given the chance and opportunity to repent?

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The Gemara in Sanhedrin (ק"ע"ב) tells us, כשם שנותן הקב"ה כח,

Just as Hashem gives the wicked the capacity to receive their punishment, however immense it might be, so does Hashem give the righteous the capacity to receive their reward, however enormous it may be.

When Hashem punishes a sinner for his wrongdoings, it is only so that the sinner should realize that he did wrong, and consequently repent out of his own free will. Therefore, Hashem will only punish a sinner with a punishment that he can withstand, for if the punishment will be too harsh for him to endure, it would essentially be forcing the sinner to repent, and would thus defeat the purpose of the punishment, which is to get the sinner to repent out of his own free will.

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Accordingly we can explain, that when the Passuk says, Hashem strengthened the heart of Pharaoh, it isn't referring to Hashem strengthening Pharaoh's heart in order to take away his ability to choose to do good, for Hashem never takes away the free will from a sinner, and no matter how much one sins he always retains the ability to choose to repent and do good. Rather, when Hashem strengthened Pharaoh's heart, it was only so that he should be able to deal with the harsh punishments that he would inevitably receive if he would not choose to do good.

The first five Plagues - Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild Beasts and the Cattle Epidemic - were relatively lighter punishments, and thus Pharaoh was able to bear them even without any particular support; therefore, there was no need to strengthen his heart during that period. It was only at the onset of the last five Plagues - Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness and the Slaying of the Firstborn - which were a lot more severe, and would thus naturally be much harder for Pharaoh to bear, that Hashem needed to strengthen Pharaoh's heart so that he should be able to endure the Plagues, which were intended to bring him to his senses and generate within him feelings of repentance.

But certainly, even after strengthening Pharaoh's heart, Hashem did not take away his ability to choose to do good, and we can therefore understand why, even after strengthening his heart, Hashem still sent Moshe to warn Pharaoh to set the Jews free, so that he won't need to endure and suffer through the harsh Plagues.

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The bride the Zera Shimshon "married"

The following touching anecdote was sent to us by Mrs. T.D. from Jerusalem:

At the company where I have been working for over ten years, I have a co-worker who had already reached the age of forty and, for some reason, she still hadn't been successful in meeting the right match for her. For years we dedicated ourselves together to look for ideas, trying to find the way in which she could get married. All the time she strengthened her faith in Hashem, and she did not lose hope. However, the difficulty was great, and only increased with time. She rarely received candidate proposals, and even when they did, the matter did not progress.

In the year 2020, a friend from the United States told me about the *segula* of the study of the **Zera Shimshon**. Thanks to her effusive recommendation, in my family we began to study it constantly. One day I suggested to my friend that, since she had many brothers, maybe she could buy several books of the **Zera Shimshon** and give them to them so that they could study it steadily; that way, the merit would be accredited to her and she would see her salvation soon. I stressed to her that it was essential that the study be constant, not temporary; the main thing is that the study be fix. She replied, "Why do I have to send it to my brothers? I'm going to study it myself!" Sure enough, she bought the book and began to study it every day for a few minutes.

About four weeks later, said friend called me and,

with much emotion in her voice, she notified me that she was seeing progress, that she could see light at the end of the tunnel. There was a proposal that was making progress.

Two months later she got engaged at a good time and to success.

As the wedding took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of participants was very limited; even so, I was one of the few guests. In the middle of the wedding, the bride came up to me and said, "Thanks to you I have had my salvation." Another of the guests present heard this and, totally amazed, asked how was I related to the salvation of the bride. The bride told her that I had made the connection between her and the "matchmaker", the **Zera Shimshon**. Because from the moment she had started to study the **Zera Shimshon** she saw that everything "started to move". Extraordinarily, the proposal of that candidate - who was now her husband - came up, and ever since they met everything went smoothly. Everything progressed wonderfully just since she had started studying the **Zera Shimshon**.

The bride added that she lived in an apartment with other young women her age who were also single. When she moved out of that apartment, she left them also the book of the **Zera Shimshon** so that they would also become constant in her study and each one of them would see her salvation soon.

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