

Parshas Vayechi

Bringing the Redemption—in the Ultimate Way

Yaakov desired to reveal the time of the final redemption to his sons right before his passing. What benefit, however, would there have been for them to be informed of such a far-off date in the future? This Sicha uncovers Yaakov’s intention during this moment and the secret to Moshiach’s arrival.

Before Yaakov passes away, he calls to his sons, wishing to tell them of what lay ahead in future times.

Text 1

Then Yaakov called for his sons and said, “Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days.

Bereishis 49:1

This revelation though is not documented in the subsequent verses. Instead, the Torah records Yaakov’s rebuke and blessings to each of the twelve tribes.

The Talmud explains that though, Yaakov wished to reveal to his sons the date of Moshiach’s arrival, the Almighty prevented him from doing so.

Text 2

R. Shimon ben Lakish said: And Yaakov called unto his sons, and said: “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you [that which shall befall you in the end of days].” Yaakov wished to reveal to his sons the ‘End of the Days,’ whereupon the Shechinah departed from him. Said he, “Perhaps, Heaven forbid! There is one unfit among my children, like Avraham, from whom there issued Yishmael, or like my father

Yitzchak, from whom there issued Esav.” [But] his sons answered him, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our G-d the Lord is One: just as there is only One in your heart, so is there in our heart only One.”

Talmud, Pesachim 56a

The Almighty caused that the Divine Presence should depart from him, thereby preventing him from revealing the time of the messianic era.

Why now?

This seems curious though; it is obvious that Yaakov had some purpose in informing his children the time of Moshiach’s arrival.

Clearly, he believed that telling them when Moshiach arrive would positively impact them. It is therefore important to understand the gain of disclosing this information.

On the contrary, it seems disadvantageous to reveal the time of Moshiach:

If Yaakov would have told his sons a far-off date when Moshiach would arrive, that the redemption would not come for thousands of years, not only would be of no benefit to them, but it would as well cause them to be dejected.

Righteous recipients

There are commentators who explain, that although one usually would be concerned about the negative fallout of revealing such information, Yaakov was not.

Yaakov was not apprehensive to reveal this information since he was imparting this information to his *children*. He was sure that because they were pious, knowing that the time for Moshiach was far off would not negatively impact their service of G-d.

Text 3

For they were *tzadikim*, and he felt secure regarding them, that although it [the appointed time for Moshiach] was a long way's ahead in the future, they would not turn away from G-d.

Yefei Tohar, Bereishis Rabba, Vayechi

Nonetheless, the Almighty did not wish for them to be privy to this revelation. For, though they themselves may have been righteous, perhaps they would inform others who were not as worthy. Those after them would indeed be adversely impacted with this information.

For this reason Yaakov was prevented from sharing the time of the End of Days, even to his children.

This answer though, is not satisfactory for various reasons:

- 1) The concern that when a few people know a secret they spread it to others is commonplace. If so, how could Yaakov have felt secure in relating this prophecy, when there was a fairly large suspicion that this secret would spread to others?
- 2) The explanation above does not answer the primary question on Yaakov's actions; it only negates the concern of having the news spread to others. It

does not, however, explain the advantage of revealing the date of Moshiach's arrival.

The Divine Presence is concealed

There are two opinions that our Rabbis bring, in regard to what transpired during the moment that Yaakov wanted express this revelation.

The Medrash describes the incident as follows:

Text 4

[Yaakov] was prepared to reveal to them the appointed time of the redemption, and it was concealed from him.

Bereishis Rabba 98:2

In the Medrash's view, not only was Yaakov unable to reveal the date, but the time became concealed from *Yaakov* as well.

The Talmud¹ says though, "The Divine Presence departed from him." This suggests, that the time of the redemption was not hidden from Yaakov himself, only the ability to make this date known to his sons.

When the Divine Presence departed from Yaakov, he understood that the G-d did not wish this information to be revealed, and therefore refrained from doing so.

According to the first explanation though, the time for Moshiach's arrival was actually hidden from Yaakov as well.

This is perplexing; why did G-d cause that the date should be hidden from Yaakov as well?

¹ *Ibid.*

All for the good

It is understood that Yaakov's desire to reveal the time of Moshiach's arrival was for a specific benefit that would have come thereby.

It is likewise clear that the reason Yaakov was *prevented* from doing so, was also due to an advantage that results by refraining from sharing this information.

Both Yaakov's wish to *reveal* to date of Moshiach's arrival, and the *prevention* of it contained the capacity to bring about some sort of positive result for the Jewish people. It was for these reasons that Yaakov wished to reveal the date and the Almighty concealed it.

This is understood because of the distinct character of the patriarchs.

The patriarchs were individuals who were completely nullified to G-d's will:

Text 5

"The Patriarchs are truly the chariot," for all their organs were completely holy and detached from mundane matters, serving as a vehicle solely for the Supreme Will alone throughout their lives.

Tanya, Ch. 23

That said, if Yaakov wished to reveal the time of Moshiach's arrival, it is understood that this was the desire of G-d (until the moment that the Divine Presence left him).

The fact that the Almighty prevented Yaakov from revealing this time demonstrated, that at that specific moment, it was to the Jewish people's advantage *not* to hear when Moshiach's arrival would be. However, in

potential, both scenarios contained positive elements.

The difference of opinion above regarding *how* Moshiach's arrival date was prevented from being told to Yaakov's sons, reflects on whom would be benefitting from concealing the redemption.

- 1) If the appointed time was hidden from Yaakov as well, it is understood that for Yaakov too, there was an advantage of no longer knowing this prophecy.
- 2) If this secret was only kept from Yaakov's *sons*, and remained with Yaakov, the benefit that existed in this concealment related only to them.

The redemption is near

These ideas are clarified through the elucidation of the Zohar² on the verses that the Jewish people sang as they left the land of Egypt.

Text 6

You will bring them and implant them on the mount of Your heritage, the foundation of Your dwelling-place that You, G-d, have made—the Sanctuary, my Lord, that Your hands established.

Shemosh 15:17

The above verse describes the final redemption of the Jewish people though they were sung at the exodus from Egypt.

The Zohar relates, that were the Israelites meritorious, the eternal redemption would have arrived at the exodus from Egypt.

² 3:221a.

This is expressed in the words of the verse, “the Sanctuary, my Lord, that *Your* hands established.” The verse expresses that the Temple will be built with G-d’s own hands.

Were Israel to have merited, the First Temple would have been built by G-d Himself, and consequently not be destroyed.

When Yaakov wished to reveal to his children the time of the redemption, he did not wish to express a far off date which would cause them to be disheartened, rather, he wished to tell them that if they were meritorious, this could occur when they would leave Egypt!

Though his children knew that the Almighty would take them out of Egypt after 400 years of slavery—as promised to Avraham—they were not aware that this exodus could be the final, *eternal* redemption.

It was this point that Yaakov desired to reveal:

Being that this redemption would occur in the relatively near future, revealing the appointed time of the final redemption would not bring hopelessness in the Jewish people’s service of G-d.

On the contrary, hearing that the coming of Moshiach could be in the near future, it would encourage Yaakov’s sons to remain worthy and not to sin, in order to be deserving of Moshiach’s arrival!

The difficulties posed above are therefore answered:

- 1) Yaakov was not concerned with the Jewish people facing hopelessness, because, on the contrary, he was telling them that there was a prospect that it will be after a relatively short time.
- 2) Not only was Yaakov not *worried* that his sons would tell anyone else, he was

hoping that they would. He wanted the Jewish people to know that the redemption could be immanent so that they would be worthy of the redemption.

- 3) There is a clear advantage in Yaakov telling his children this news, since this would cause his children and those following them to merit that the redemption from Egypt be the ultimate redemption.

Not close enough

Nonetheless, this explanation is not a sufficient answer.

For, at the time that Yaakov passed away, there still were close to 200 years remaining until the Jewish people were to leave Egypt.

Due to this, Yaakov’s children would surely realize that they themselves would not experience it.

What then is gained by Yaakov informing his children of the relatively close proximity of the time of the redemption, when it was an event that they would not experience?

Speeding it up

When Yaakov desired to inform them that the final redemption, he did not only wish to tell them that it could happen at the end of the 210 years, but he was hoping that they would hasten its arrival.

Text 7

R. Alexandri said: R. Yehoshua ben Levi pointed out a contradiction. It is written³, in its time [will the Mosiach come], whilst it is also written⁴, I [the Lord] will hasten it! — If they are worthy, I

³ Daniel 7:13.

⁴ *Ibid.*

will hasten it: if not, [he will come] at the due time.

Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a

The allotted time for the exile was not set in stone, and was able to be shortened, were the Jews to have been meritorious. Had the children of Yaakov known that Moshiach's arrival was imminent, they would have done everything possible to hasten his arrival.

Though the Egyptian servitude was originally intended to last 400 years, as the Almighty informed Avraham, in the end, it endured for only 210.

One of the explanations⁵ for the shorter period of the exile, is that it was due of the harsh conditions of the Egyptian servitude.

Being that the enslavement was more painful than had been originally ordained, the exile too, lasted considerably shorter than that which was formerly destined.

In a similar manner, were the Jewish people to have acted in a more deserving manner, this too would have shortened the exile.

When Yaakov wished to tell his children that the redemption from Egypt could very well be the final exodus, he was hoping that his children would act in a worthy manner and thus merit to this redemption themselves.

G-d's Plan

As explained, Yaakov's intention in wishing to reveal the appointed time of the redemption was one that could serve as a catalyst to bring the final redemption considerably closer than what happened in actuality.

Through Yaakov informing his children of the redemption, the Jewish people would have gone directly into a redemptive state, instead of the thousands of years of painful Jewish history.

Yet, though Yaakov had positive intentions, it is clear that the Almighty still did not allow him to reveal this time to them.

Instead, G-d prevented him from revealing the time for Moshiach's arrival, either by means of the Divine Presence leaving Yaakov or through the actual date being hidden from him as well.

The reason that G-d held Yaakov back from revealing the date of Moshiach's arrival is because He wanted the Jewish people to merit the Messianic time on their own accord.

Would the Jewish people have known the date of Moshiach's arrival, this knowledge would serve as the impetus for their service of G-d, and not be meritorious in their own right.

The idea that a person's own service is of paramount importance is illustrated through the following Talmudic adage:

Text 8

A person desires one portion of his own, rather than nine portions of his fellow.

Talmud, Bava Metziah 38a

In order for it to be said that an individual is truly accomplishing anything, it must be specifically when he achieves on his own.

True, all of a person's success is impossible without G-d's assistance, yet, there can be variant ways that G-d's interventions manifests:

⁵ Shach, Shemos 3:7.

- A) The individual is assisted by the Almighty *during* their actual service of G-d to enable greater success. An example of such an assistance are the days of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, where a person has a G-dly inspiration in his service of G-d.
- B) One receives inspiration from G-d, which *motivates* him to accomplish his G-dly service *afterwards*, yet the actual service which follows is through his own efforts.

This is the reason that Yaakov was not given permission to reveal Moshiach's appointed time to his sons.

Yaakov's intent in revealing this secret was for them to quicken and strengthen their efforts in becoming "worthy" for the redemption, and thus hasten its coming.

G-d, however, removed the Divine Presence from Yaakov. The Almighty wished that redemption should come through their own efforts and not through external intervention.

A deeper dimension

On a deeper level, the reason that Yaakov was prevented from revealing the date of the redemption was because in order for a *true* redemption to come about, it must come through their own efforts.

It is for this reason that the redemption can be brought about only during a time of concealment of G-dliness and through the Jewish people's *own* service. This type of service is *imperative* in causing an *everlasting* redemption.

In order for the redemption to be eternal, the manner of service in which the Jewish people *bring about* this redemption must be transcend vicissitudes as well.

When a person's service of the Almighty comes through some divine assistance, and not through his own toil, his service cannot be everlasting.

For, the moment that the inspiration leaves, the person will plunge from the level that he attained—G-d forbid.

Specifically when his service of G-d comes through his own arousal, can it be an everlasting service and consequently cause an everlasting redemption.

The other way around

According to this new viewpoint, what could have possibly have been Yaakov's reasoning in wishing to reveal the time of Moshiach's coming?

Were Yaakov to have made known the appointed time of Moshiach's arrival, not only would it not have *helped* bring about the ultimate redemption, but on the contrary, it would have impeded the arrival of the true and ultimate redemption!

According to Chassidus thought though, this can be understood.

It is known that Yaakov's spiritual level was that of the world of *Atzilus*—a spiritual plane which is completely in tune with divine unity. This same level will be the reality of the world during messianic times.

Since Yaakov was holding in a post-messianic state—revealing the time of Moshiach's arrival would have been for him, merely an *additional* level in his G-dly service and would not have caused hard as he had nothing further to accomplish.

Misunderstanding their level

Yaakov wished to reveal the time of the messianic era to his children as well.

Yaakov assumed that his children too, were holding at the same spiritual level that he was.

However, when, as a result of his attempt, the Divine Presence left him, Yaakov realized that the level of his children was not the same as his own.

Resolving the two scenarios

According to the above, it is understood the two opinions as to whether the appointed time of the redemption was hidden from Yaakov as well, or only from his children.

According to the Medrash, the time of the redemption was hidden from Yaakov as well, so that he could relate to his children's manner of serving G-d.

G-d wished for him to be able to appreciate this type of personal service, and thus be able to teach his children the benefits serving G-d in a state of G-dly concealment.

The view of the Talmud however, is that this information was not hidden from Yaakov himself. Since, for Yaakov, whose divine service was already complete, the benefits of the concealment of G-dliness wasn't necessary.

Revealing the redemption

Although the Almighty prevented Yaakov from revealing the time of Moshiach—being that Yaakov was a conduit for G-dly expression—and he wished to *reveal* it—on some level, it must have been congruous with G-d's will as well.

In addition, since a *tzadik's* words come into fulfillment in some way. It is clear therefore that Yaakov's desire to reveal the time of Moshiach somehow positively influenced the world.

Furthermore, since Yaakov's desire is written clearly in the Torah—stemming from the word

"hora-ah" (instruction)—there must be something for us to learn from this as well:

Yaakov's wish to reveal the date of the redemption affected within all of the Jewish people the ability to have this revelation of the redemption to some degree.

This enables each Jewish person to reach a level of the redemption where they are free from the exile and the evil inclination.

The lesson

The above imparts a message for each Jewish person.

Every person must desire to reveal the time of redemption. When we know that Moshiach is on his way, this itself gives us extra energies in our service of G-d.

When another Jew is told that "Moshiach is coming," or that "We want Moshiach now," it causes him too to add extra care to the way he conducts himself and to act in a way that will not hold back the redemption G-d forbid.

In our days specifically, we know that all the appointed times of Moshiach have already past. Now all we must do is return to the Almighty.

With one turn to the Almighty, it will bring about immediate redemption. As it says, "In one moment...and immediately they will be redeemed."

(Based on Likutei Sichos 20, Vayechi 1, reworked by Rabbi Dovid Markel.

To see other projects and to partner in our work, see: www.Neirot.com.)