

TORAHSCOPE: Shemot (Names)

by Mark Huey posted 28 December, 2007 www.outreachisrael.net

Exodus 1:1-6:1
Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

"Israel, Cry Out!"

"The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them'" (Exodus 3:7-9).

Shemot takes us from the death of Joseph to the time when the people of Israel begin to be delivered from the oppressing hand of the Egyptians. The principal figure in the narrative shifts from Joseph to a Levite named Moses, who will be called out by God to lead Israel out of Egypt.

In essence, much of this section reveals how Israel will be released from the bondage of physical human slavery, as their relationship to God is more clearly described and defined. This portion has a number of interesting vignettes that help Torah students better understand our Creator. For example, this is the section where Moses has his burning bush experience and we see God revealing His Divine Name. We begin discover that the Most High is a very personal God to His people, and that He talks to His servants and instructs them on what He wants them to do.

The God Who Sees and Listens

Rather than focus on the numerous commands given to Moses, two statements from *Shemot* reveal that our covenant-keeping God is intimately concerned about the condition of His people. In fact, He is watching and listening to the very groans and cries of His people:

"Now it came about in *the course of* those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of *their* bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice *of them*" (Exodus 2:23-25).

"The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings'" (Exodus 3:7).

Here, we are reminded that God is watching over His covenant people and listening to their concerns. Like a good shepherd minding his fold of sheep, the Holy One is overseeing His chosen flock. He is faithful to remember the promises made to the Patriarchs. This is very comforting to all those who worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As the Psalmist reminds us, the Holy One of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps:

"A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help *comes* from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever" (Psalm 121:1-8).

The Lord is always attentive to our pleadings. The question we must ask ourselves is simply this: **Are we crying out for His presence and deliverance as in days of old?**

The Cries of David

We know that the Holy Writ is replete with examples of the faithful who have cried out for help. Perhaps one of the most consistent “criers out” to the Most High is King David. Multiple times we are reminded in his psalms that he cried to God for guidance, mercy, and compassion. Are there some principles we should be learning about regarding our relationship with Him? Consider these Scriptures:

“Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, for to You I pray. In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; in the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch. For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You” (Psalm 5:2-4).

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears” (Psalm 18:6).

“Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, and be gracious to me and answer me. *When You said, ‘Seek My face,’* my heart said to You, ‘Your face, O LORD, I shall seek” (Psalm 27:7-8).

“The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are *open* to their cry. The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. *The righteous* cry, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles” (Psalm 34:15-17).

Here, in just four of the psalms attributed to King David, we can detect a pattern emerging from his communion with the Holy One of Israel. Over and over we are reminded that David cried out to God on a regular basis. We are told that in the morning, this was the way he approached his King and his God. David’s words remind us that he understood that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is indeed approachable through prayer and supplication. David knew that the Lord heard his pleas, and by some of the statements recorded in Psalms, we know that He spoke back to David:

“*When You said, ‘Seek My face,’* my heart said to You, ‘Your face, O LORD, I shall seek” (Psalm 27:8).

Here, David says that He requests him to “seek His face.” Of course, when David hears His voice, the response is an immediate affirmation of the request. Should not this be the kind of intimacy we should all be seeking?

Israel Today

From the testimony of the Ancient Israelites, we know that God hears our groans and our cries. But are we consistently offering them before the Father’s throne? If not, could it mean that our problems with bondage to the things of this world are not yet oppressive enough to prompt the pleadings?

We know that the whole Creation is groaning because of its slavery to corruption. In a like manner, we should be groaning for the redemption of our bodies that has been promised from the beginning. Consider the words of the Apostle Paul, who describes this reality:

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:20-23).

Paul was writing to Believers who had been redeemed by the power of the Spirit of God. Because of Yeshua’s atoning work, they were able to approach the Father much more easily and personally than the Ancient Israelites before them:

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these

are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:11-16).

Here, Paul reminds us that we have not received a spirit of slavery that leads to fear, but instead we have received a spirit of adoption that leads to hope. In this case, as redeemed souls we should now be crying out with even greater confidence than King David, because we have the Spirit of God witnessing that we are adopted children of the Holy One of Israel!

As children of God, how much more secure should we be that our groans and cries to our Father, the Great Shepherd, are heard? Today, it is our responsibility as God's people to be crying and groaning for the sake of Israel and the world. As fellow heirs with the Messiah, we can intercede just as Yeshua interceded in prayer:

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17, NIV).

May the Holy One encourage you in your walk as you approach Him and intercede to Him for those who do not yet know the spirit of adoption as described by Paul. Perhaps our groaning and cries will lead to another great deliverance for Israel, and indeed, the entire world. **Certainly, we can rest assured that our cries will be heard!**

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