

The  
**CHASSIDUS**  
**PERSPECTIVE**  
 with Reb Yoel Kahn

Prepared by  
 Rabbi Shraga Dovid Homnick



To view the video with subtitles, visit:  
[MerkazAnash.com/shemos5775](http://MerkazAnash.com/shemos5775)



To listen on the phone, call:  
 CONNECTION 347-498-0008, option 7

## NOT JUST AWARE

"These are the names of the Jewish people arriving in Egypt," our *parsha* begins. The present tense which connotes a fresh arrival is explained by the *Midrash* to be in reference to the fact that a new stage of Egyptian travails began with *Yosef's* death. A subsequent verse reporting the demise of *Yosef's* entire generation, continues the *Midrash*, is indicative of even further deterioration. There were thus three stages: The era of freedom when *Yaakov* arrived, the troubles which began with *Yosef's* death, and the enslavement which ensued with the decease of the rest.

### THE LARGER GAP

It would appear reasonable to regard the final phase as the worst, in view of the fact that the Jews only underwent horrible subjugation at that point, peaking with *Miriam's* birth. Yet the *Torah* does not highlight this development, choosing only to mark the transition from the initial state to the second, suggesting that it is of greater significance.

The *Rebbe* solves this question by dwelling on the spiritual distinction between *Eretz Yisroel* and *Mitzrayim*.

The *Torah* notes *Eretz Yisroel* for its rainfall, while Egypt relied entirely on the waters of the Nile. Since rain embodies man's powerlessness and dependence on *Hashem's* benevolence, Egypt's conspicuous self-reliance indicated its disconnect from G-dliness. *Yaakov*, however, descended to *Mitzrayim* and blessed Pharaoh that the Nile's waters rise towards him, not

as a boon to the local idolatrous regard for the river but rather to demonstrate that it too was impacted by holiness, that this bastion of nature was answerable to Heaven.

---

"Both he who possess proofs and he who lacks them are in fact equal in their disconnect from the actual matter. To be persuaded of something is to be detached from it, bereft of the straightforwardness of plainly seeing it."

---

### EXPERIENCE VS. AWARENESS

Therefore, throughout the first phase of the Jewish sojourn in Egypt, despite the absence of rain typical of *Eretz Yisroel* (how other countries with rain are also inferior is explored elsewhere), the fact that the Nile was under *Yaakov's* sway meant that things hadn't devolved too badly. The presence of *Yaakov*, as well as *Yosef* who was both physically responsible for his father's arrival and a spiritual conduit for his blessings, ensured that *Hashem's* presence remained revealed. When *Yosef* passed away, that revelation faded and the Jews underwent a marked decline, yet that generation still remained aware of his impact, preserving that legacy to a certain degree. After they all died out as well, however, a new generation arose which "did not know *Yosef*" altogether.

There were thus three successive stages of a spiritual slump: Experience, awareness and lack of awareness. The first shift to a state of no rain and a lack of direct dependence on G-d was fairly drastic, but was mitigated by the ability to behold the outcome of the blessing bestowed upon the Nile River. Once *Yaakov* and *Yosef* had passed on, that experiential

ability died with them, but an awareness of holiness's role remained. Upon the death of the entire generation, that information vanished and with that the last vestiges of spiritual awareness.

All of this would only appear to reemphasize the question of why the second phase receives more attention than the third which is when all evidence was actually lost.

“*Shmos* tells the story of exile, but when G-dliness is embraced even within those limitations, it is transformed into a tale of redemption, even surpassing the pre-exile heights.”

## A TALE OF REDEMPTION

The first *yerida* occurs in *sefer Breishis*, while *sefer Shmos* opens with the second. *Breishis* is “*Sefer Hayashar*,” telling of the just, like the *avos* and *Yosef*, while *Shmos* is about the decline into a state of exile. At the same time though, it is the book of redemption. *Breishis* speaks of the ‘*yesharim*’ going about their consistently luminous lives, unimpacted by the world. *Shmos* tells the story of exile, but when G-dliness is embraced even within those limitations, it is transformed into a tale of redemption,

even surpassing the pre-exile heights.

For further learning see לקו"ש חלק ו' שמות ג'

## AWARE BUT DISCONNECTED

Ultimately, however, there is only a need for evidence when something isn't readily subject to being directly experienced, which means that both he who possess proofs and he who lacks them are in fact equal in their disconnect from the actual matter. To be persuaded of something is to be detached from it, bereft of the straightforwardness of plainly seeing it.

While *Yaakov* and *Yosef* had preserved the ability to experience G-dliness, even under Egyptian conditions, the dramatic shift to a mere awareness with their passing was only a small step removed from total ignorance. *Yaakov's* descent from *Eretz Yisroel* in *parshas Vayigash* spelled the loss a sense of dependence on *Hashem*, but the blessing's effect on the Nile meant that they hadn't fallen too far. Once that disappeared as well, as our *parsha* indicates, it no longer mattered whether some measure of awareness remained or not.

In honor of the engagement of

Hatomim Shalom Lipszyc to Rochel Leah Cohen

Dedicated by Rabbi Shmuel and Mrs. Lipszyc

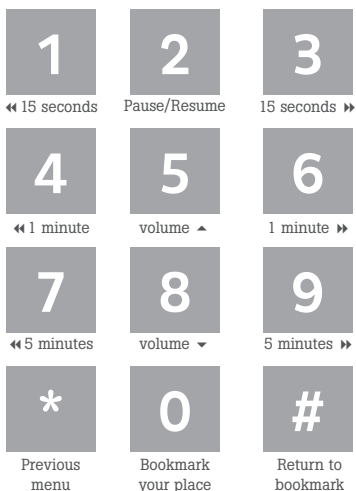


merkazanash.com  
info@merkazanash.com  
347.471.1770

Connection  
Insight without a website.



◀ controls ▶



347-498-0008