



SHOSHANA JUDELMAN

TORAH TIDBITS CONTRIBUTOR

Va'eira: Warmed by the Fire

This time of year affects me strongly. When the days are darker and colder, the world feels even more confusing and chaotic and it pushes me to search for comfort and warmth on a soul level.

In the parsha, Am Yisrael is suffering in Galus Mitzrayim, the paradigm for all Galus, including ours. By definition, Galus manifests as feelings of separateness, overwhelm, hopelessness and despair, G-d forbid.

Geulah is the realm of light, connection and hope, of feeling like an essential piece of the puzzle. Being fully seen. And loved.

For Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim, Geulah is just around the corner. Hashem has already appointed their Redeemer, Moshe Rabbeinu, at the Burning Bush. And, although there are more stages of growth to pass through, Redemption has already begun.

The Seforim HaKedoshim say that the Burning Bush was an aspect of Ohr HaGanuz, the transformational light from the beginning of Creation. The light, Chazal tell us, by which a person can “see from one end of the world to the other.” The light of clarity, connection and healing.

The Torah tells us that the fire in the burning bush was אש בלבת, as a blazing fire, and Rashi uses the term לבו של אש to explain. This can be translated as “the heart of the fire,” but also as “his heart of fire.”

The Burning Bush essentially represents the

way that Hashem’s light can burn in our own hearts.

I love the image of Moshe Rabbeinu’s heart being set ablaze during this interaction with Hashem. This fire, the Ohr HaGanuz, penetrated his heart and enabled him to see Bnei Yisrael differently, with eyes of compassion and love. He internalized the fire and it accelerated his transformation to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, *Eved Hashem* and *Goel Yisrael*.

There is a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu in every Jew. Each of us has the potential to burn with love and dedication to Am Yisrael and to yearn with fiery passion for attachment to Our Creator. But how do we stoke the spark into a heart of fire?

The Zohar tells us that:

וּבְכָל אֶתֶר דְּלֻעָאן בְּאוֹרֵי תֵּתָא בְּלִילִיָּא, חֵד חוּטָא נִפְיָק
יִמְהוּמָא אֹר גְּנִיז, וְאַתְמָשִׁיד עַל אֵינֶן דְּלֻעָאן בָּהּ

Whenever the Torah is studied by night, a little thread of Ohr HaGanuz is drawn down upon those studying.

“Night” is another name for Galus, a time of insecurity and darkness, and Torah is the light that guides us through. With our regular eyes it might look like the world is going off the rails. But the Ohr HaGanuz that shines through Torah and the words of the Tzadikim can penetrate our hearts and strengthen us to expand how we see the world and ourselves. In the loving light of the Ohr HaGanuz, we can glimpse the Infinite and connect ourselves to Eternity.

The awareness of what is possible increases its potency. If we open our hearts to it.

The Shpoler Zeide, R' Aryeh Leib of Shpola, once said that when he was 3 years old, "the Baal Shem Tov placed his holy hand on my heart, and from that time onward, I have felt warm." (HaYom Yom 14 Teves)

May Hashem bless us to find the Seforim and teachers that warm our neshomos and empower us to look with deeper eyes, to seek the parts of Torah that ignite our hearts, and to grasp the threads of light that pull us towards Geulah. ■

Shoshana Judelman is passionate about learning and growing through Chassidus. She gives shiurim to women in many communities around Israel, including Efrat, Elazar, Raanana and Jerusalem as well as at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya. Shoshana also guides groups at Yad Vashem and leads journeys to Poland and other countries around Europe for JRoots.

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info@keteradvisors.com