

PRAYING with *Fire*

PRAYER POINTS

THE DARK BEFORE THE DAWN

Hashem has provided us with a preview of our Final Redemption, and that is our deliverance from Egypt. According to one Rabbi, the events of that epoch comprise a prototype for the Final Redemption, and in viewing those events, we can see how the deepening of our troubles puts into place the conditions of our salvation.

When Hashem sends Moshe to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, Moshe does not immediately effect a great liberation. Instead, Pharaoh makes the conditions of slavery harsher by refusing to supply the material to make bricks, while still requiring the same production quota. Why was the first step of redemption a worsening of the Hebrews' situation?

One Rabbi explains: From time to time, during the various exiles of Israel and the Jewish people, there have been periods of deep darkness, of exceedingly terrible suffering. And if we look back, we see that these usually took place right before periods of redemption. People refer to these times as the deeper darkness that comes before the dawn. But why should it be this way? Why should there be periods of such intense darkness before the dawn of redemption?

Hashem has given us the key. He has darkened our world, sending down so much suffering that we cannot help but see it everywhere we turn. The hardships are not punishment but are intended to impel us to pray...Especially now, Hashem is showing us that *tefillah* (prayer) is necessary to bring the *Geulah* (Final Redemption).

The hardships are to bring us to reach up to Hashem with higher levels of prayer and to reach out to our fellow man with higher levels of compassion.

POINTS TO PONDER

The redemption from Egypt is a prototype of the Final Redemption.

That period was marked by a “deeper darkness before the dawn.”

Hashem sometimes increases suffering to inspire us to pray, thereby increasing our deficiency in merit.

Psalm 111:9 He sent redemption to His people; He ordained His covenant for all time; His name is holy and awesome. (TNK)