

Messianic Rabbi: When the Father Says, 'No, You Do It'

As a result of damage caused by Hurricane Sally, over the past eight months I have had the pleasure of my two youngest grandchildren living in my home. They are wonderful, intelligent and energetic children filled with curiosity.

The youngest is learning to dress himself and at times has difficulty putting his socks on so they are not bunched up or twisted. However, the dressing task that he finds most challenging is removing a pull-over shirt. So, nearly every night he comes up to me and asks me to remove his shirt.

The first few times I helped him to take the shirt off, but after showing him that he could do it himself several times, when he asks me to take his shirt off now, I say, "No, you do it."

I know that you may be reading this and wondering, "What does this have to do with me?" After all, if you are reading this today, chances are you are already able to dress yourself. Please stick with me because while this article isn't being written so that the readers will learn to dress themselves, it is being written because I believe that G-D is saying the words, "No, you can do it" to many of us in the body of Messiah. But we are not hearing Him, and because we are not hearing Him, we become just as frustrated as my grandson does when I won't help him with his shirt.

To demonstrate my point, let's look at a few verses from Exodus 14:10-12 (TLV):

When Pharaoh drew near, Bnei-Yisrael lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them! So they were terrified, and Bnei-Yisrael cried out to Adonai.

They said to Moses, "Have you taken us away to die in the wilderness because there were no graves in Egypt? Why have you dealt this way with us, to bring us out of Egypt? Did we not say to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone, so that we may serve the Egyptians?' It was better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness!"

To set the stage for these verses, here is what is happening. The children of Israel are leaving Egypt. This is the morning after the Passover; the final plague has taken place. The Israelites have packed up their homes and are marching out of Egypt when suddenly they look up to see the Egyptian army following them.

The children of Israel are extremely young in their faith in G-D, so they turn to Moses in the same way my grandson would turn to me in a moment of difficulty or personal crisis. They were terrified and wanted to go back to the way things were in Egypt.

In Exodus 14:13-14, we read Moses' response to the people:

But Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid! Stand still, and see the salvation of Adonai, which He will perform for you today. You have seen the Egyptians today, but you will never see them again, ever! Adonai will fight for you, while you hold your peace."

Look at those words. They seem so full of faith. Don't be afraid, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Adonai will fight for you. Moses isn't cowering in fear, and he doesn't want to run back to Egypt. But, Moses also doesn't want to do anything himself.

Moses isn't an immature believer in G-D. Moses had spent more than 40 years in a personal relationship with the G-D of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That is why G-D chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Yet, even with all of his

experience in faith through all of the plagues of Egypt, when difficulty arose, Moses told the people, "Let's all stand here and watch G-D do something."

The next words in Exodus sounds exactly like what I say to my grandson when he asks me to do something that he can do himself.

Exodus 14:15 says, "Then Adonai said to Moses, 'Why are you crying to Me? Tell Bnei-Yisrael to go forward. Lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it. Then Bnei-Yisrael will go into the midst of the sea on dry ground.'"

G-D responds to Moses in the same way I tell my grandson to change his own shirt: "Why are you crying out to me? Lift your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it." G-D had already taught Moses how to walk in faith and trust. G-D had already taught Moses how to walk in the miraculous. We often say G-D parted the Red Sea, but the Scripture says Moses did it.

When I read this narrative from Exodus, it causes me to wonder how many times G-D looks into my eyes in the same way I look into my grandson's eyes and say, "No, do it yourself." It also makes me wonder how often I tell those around me to stand and watch what G-D is going to do, while my Father is standing, waiting to see what I am going to do. {eo}

Rabbi Eric Tokajer is the author of *Overcoming Fearlessness, What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?, With Me in Paradise, Transient Singularity, OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry, #ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians and Galatians in Context.*

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