YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**Geulat Yisrael**

**Rav Moshe Taragin**

**Shiur #02: How Do We Know this is Redemption?**

Redemption can be very, very confusing. On his deathbed, Yaakov wanted to provide a detailed roadmap of Jewish redemption: when it would happen, how it would unfold, and what omens would assure us that redemption was at hand. Recognizing the dangers of uncontained redemptive fervor, however, Hashem withdrew Yaakov's prophetic visions and denied his descendants this important information.

It is difficult enough to redeem history. It is even more challenging redeeming it while blindfolded.

So our generation faces a haunting question: How do we know? How do we know that this process stems from the intervening hand of God? How do we know that the springtime of *geula* has begun? No one knows how long it will last or what arc it will follow, but we have a profound sense that history has shifted and that we are living in the final era of Jewish history. How do we know this is real and not a façade or, even worse, an illusion? In 1952, the Satmar Rebbe authored a scathing work, known as *Vayo'el Moshe*, in which he lodged this very claim. The Zionist return wasn’t the hand of God, but the deception of Satan. The Jewish people were being misled into attempting an illegal and unwanted redemption whose time hadn’t yet truly arrived. How do we know?

My *rebbe*, Harav Yehuda Amital, assured us that this question was posed at an earlier point in history as well – by Shimshon's parents. In *Shoftim* 13, an angel came twice with the information that the child they would bear would rescue the Jews from Midyan. They received detailed instructions about raising him as a *nazir*, their *korban* offering was engulfed in a heavenly fire, and they witnessed the angel ascending to Heaven. The distrustful father-to-be, Manoach, continued to worry that perhaps they would perish prior to the unfolding of these prophecies, but his wife reassured him: *Had God desired our demise, He would not have invested in these miracles*. The grand miracles they witnessed proved that this prophecy was legitimate and this future assured. God doesn’t toy with human beings; the impressive miracles they experienced confirmed that they had been chosen.

Sometimes ideological debates are resolved in the *beit midrash* or around the discussion table. Other times, history resolves our ideological debates for us. The State of Israel had very humble beginnings. In 1948, around 600,000 Jews gathered in a fledgling state that was quickly invaded by numerous Arab legions. In its incipient decade, the Jewish state suffered diplomatic isolation and economic hardship. Under those meager conditions, the question "How do we know that this is real?” felt very legitimate. In the 70 years since, however, our small state has witnessed uncountable miracles. Israel has miraculously morphed into a superpower in almost every imaginable sector – economically, militarily, culturally, technologically, and academically, just to name a few. We have drained the swamps and converted the desert into a flowering bloom, and have begun to export water and water management capabilities to the parched lands in our region. Torah is flourishing in a manner that it hasn’t in over 3000 years. All this while absorbing Jews from across the globe and from across diverse demographic “lines.” It pays to listen to Shimshon's mother: God would not perform all these miracles as a delusion. This is real, and it is happening!