



Acharei Mot–Kedoshim 5769

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## Is This the Redemption?

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Tazria- Metzora 5769 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Question: I'm sick of this country! This isn't the country we were waiting for. Even the army is no longer the "Israel Defense Forces," but an operation based on alien ideologies that contribute nothing to the inhabitants' security. A third of our youth dodge the draft – and not just the Charedim – and they're right.

Answer: I don't believe you really think it is fair for some to be killed as soldiers while others enjoy life. I don't believe you really think we could survive even a moment without the army. And altogether, I don't believe that you've really never heard that the redemption is meant to come gradually. Certainly you heard it, but perhaps you forgot:

“One time, Rabbi Chiya the Great and Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta were strolling through the Arbel Valley as morning approached, and they saw the breaking of dawn. Rabbi Chiya said to Rabbi Shimon, ‘Such is Israel's redemption. At first it is gradual, but the further it moves along, the faster it is.’” (Jerusalem Talmud, at the beginning of Berachot).

Countless times I have passed through that area, during the seven years I lived on Kibbutz Lavi in the Lower Galilee, and now, as well, that my daughter lives there in Kfar Zeitim, near the Sea of Galilee. Were Rabbi Chiya to see all of this, he would burst with pleasure and pride at how gloriously Eretz Yisrael is being rebuilt and how plentifully it is bearing its fruits. Indeed, this is one of the points that distinguish the intelligent from the unintelligent: the understanding that there are phenomena that do not occur all at once but involve a prolonged, painful, gradual process.

To what may this be compared? To sunrise. The sun doesn't suddenly appear out of total darkness. Rather, first comes dawn, the brightening of the east, sunrise, and at noon the sun appears in all its might. It is the same with the start of redemption. Light and darkness intermingle. There are ups and downs, crises and setbacks, difficulties and complications.

And why is that? Would it be too hard for G-d to bring redemption all at once, instantaneously? Certainly not, but such is G-d's will, that we should be partners in redemption, and such is the nature of people, that they are not angels but just people with weaknesses, mistakes and oversights.

Therefore, if we see problems along the way, we mustn't despair. We mustn't think we have erred in our direction. All the questions only prove that our country does not constitute the complete redemption but only its first flowerings. Or, more precisely, we are already at an advanced stage of our redemption process.

One might say: "I can agree to the redemption's proceeding gradually, but not to its regressing and to our losing what we have already gained." If so, however, my response is that G-d does not need your consent. Moreover, you've forgotten that the Jerusalem Talmud brings as a first example of gradual redemption, the Purim miracle, which began with Mordechai's exposing the plot against King Achashverosh. Yet one can ask: Wasn't that success followed by a decree to exterminate all the Jews, men, women and children?

The commentary on Sefer Charedim provides an answer to this: The "gradualness" referred to relates to the increase in light, yet it is also possible that within this process there will be times of great darkness.

You've also forgotten that when Moshe came to redeem Israel, at first the situation deteriorated and Pharaoh hardened his decrees, as Ramban explains at the end of Shemot.

The rule is this: the redemption is not a sudden burst of light like the moon at midday, but light and darkness in coexistence. We rejoice over that light on Israel Independence Day, and we weep over that darkness on Tisha B'Av, and struggle to rectify it.

Therefore, in the Pesach Haggadah, we seek a "day that is neither day nor night." We certainly long for a situation of total day, but we know that there is an intermediate situation of neither day nor night, and even for that we cannot possibly offer enough thanks, in comparison to the previous situation that was total darkness. The source is the Prophets, from Zechariah 14:7: "There shall be one day which shall be known as Hashem's, not day, and not night, but it shall come to pass that at evening time there shall be light." It shall not be entirely like the future redemption, nor as difficult as the exile (Rashi, Radak).

Don't worry. We are not stuck half-way through. "Shall I bring her there but not assist in the birth? Shall I begin to assist her but stop? – the word of G-d" (Isaiah 66:9). Rashi explains: "Shall I bring the woman to the birthing stone but not open her womb to remove her fetus? Shall I start something without being able to finish?" Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook writes [with Rav Aviner's comments in square brackets], "In the end of days, a silent movement has arisen [the Zionist Movement, quietly working to influence hearts and minds] full of strengths and desires, full of contradictions and contrasts, full of light and darkness, and seeking to reach the shore of Jewish salvation. It represents a small light from the light of the Messiah [yet compared to the darkness of the exile, it is an enormous light]" (Orot, Yisrael U-Techiyato 20).

Is this the country we have been waiting for?

Absolutely! It's not yet total light, but it has a lot of light, and it is getting brighter.



## **Text Message Respona**



Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Q: On Erev Pesach during the time for Birchat Ha-Chama (the blessing for the sun), I recited the blessing but did not look at the sun out of a lack of knowledge that this is what I should do? Did I fulfill my obligation?

A: Yes, after the fact.

Q: Is it permissible to get a haircut and shave on Yom Ha-Atzmaut?

A: Yes, it is a holiday. Respona of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Nissim (former Chief Sefardic Rabbi of Israel).

Q: When should one get a haircut and shave for Yom Ha-Atzmaut?

A: Before Maariv.

Q: Is it permissible to get married on Yom Ha-Atzmaut?

A: Same answer as for getting a haircut and shaving.

Q: Should we recite Hallel on Yom Ha-Atzmaut? With a blessing?

A: Yes (Ruling of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel) with a blessing (Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren).

Q: Should we recite Hallel on the night of Yom Ha-Atzmaut?

A: This is the opinion of Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren, but the majority does not do so.

Q: Is it permissible to listen to music on Yom Ha-Atzmaut?

A: Yes, it is a holiday.

Q: Do our Sages have the authority today to establish new holidays? What is the source?

A: Yes. Shut Chatam Sofer, Yoreh Deah 333. Orach Chaim 208.

Q: Why should we celebrate Yom Ha-Atzmaut when there is so much darkness in our State?

A: We give thanks to Hashem for the light in the State. We cry on Tisha Be-Av for the darkness which still remains from the Exile.

Q: Where is it possible to find halachic respona regarding Yom Ha-Atzmaut?

A: The book "Hilchot Yom Ha-Atzmaut Ve-Yom Yerushalayim" of Ha-Rav Nachum Rakover.

Q: I am a manager in an international business company. I have a meeting tomorrow with a non-Jewish CEO of an Italian company to close a deal of great importance to my company. Is it permissible for me to shave during Sefirat Ha-Omer before the meeting so that I do not endanger the deal by appearing unkempt?

A: It is permissible.

Q: Is it permissible to shave in honor of Shabbat during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: No, but some authorities are lenient.

Q: Is it permissible to listen to music during Sefirat Ha-Omer? What about seeing a movie?

A: Music is forbidden. A movie is permissible if it is serious, kosher and contains appropriate content.

Q: Does a page with B"H in the corner have to be placed in the Genizah?

A: No. It is only an abbreviation.

Q: A couple that lives together is willing to be unofficially married (with being registered with the state). Is this permissible?

A: Private marriages are forbidden according to the Halachah based on the ruling of the Chief Rabbinate and according to the law.

Q: Is it obligatory to write B"H or BS"D at the top of each page?

A: No.

Q: Does one have to observe the mitzvot in space? Shabbat?

A: Yes according to the time and place of the point of departure.

## Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### Our Rabbi & Yom Ha-Atzmaut

Our Rabbi greatly valued going out into the streets of the city and participating in the dancing with "Amcha" (literally "your people," an affectionate term for "the masses"). At the end of the celebration he would go to dance in front of the President's House in order to express his full identification with the Jewish governing body of the State.

On the night of Yom Ha-Atzmaut, our Rabbi would dance from the Yeshiva to Beit Ha-Nasi [the President's House]. Even though the President was not awake at this late hour, our Rabbi would take this same path indefatigably each and every year. The students pointed out to him that each time that they arrived at Beit Ha-Nasi, the President was sleeping and did not come out to them! To this our Rabbi responded: "What does it matter to me if he is awake or asleep? We are honoring the Kingship, since we have a President!" Furthermore, he always asked the guards to deliver his blessing and the yeshiva's blessing to the President. He did not pay heed to the fatigue of those around him, rather he emulated the exuberance of Eliyahu the Prophet who would gird his loins and run before the chariot of Achav until they reach Yizre'el, in order to honor of the Kingship (see Melachim 1 18:46 and Menachot 98a).

In the first years after the establishment of the State no party for Yom Ha-Atzmaut was held in the yeshiva. Our Rabbi said: "I am going out to the street to ask people why they are dancing, to initiate conversation, to create a connection with our people. A year does not go by without people returning to faith. This is an evening to be spent with the entirety of Israel." Our Rabbi eventually agreed to have a party in the yeshiva only on the condition that afterwards they would go out and dance together with everyone.

*From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon,  
entitled Shir Ha-Ma'alot*

Psalm recited before Birkat Ha-Mazon on Shabbat and Holidays  
Shir Ha-Ma'alot - A Song of Ascents (Psalm 126)

There are those who explain this Psalm homiletically as a conversation between Jews who live in the Land of Israel and Jews who live in the Exile.

The Jews in Exile say: "A song of ascents. When Hashem will bring the exiles back to Zion, we will be like dreamers." We sing and dream for the very day when the Master of the Universe will return us to Zion.

The Israelis respond to them: But this is occurring now. It is already possible to sing. Blessed is Hashem, we are full of rejoicing, "Now, our mouth is filled with laughter, and our tongue with song."

The Jews in Exile comment: Surely, we have heard on the television and radio outside of the Land that the non-Jews praise the great achievements of the State of Israel, "Then it was said among the nations, 'Hashem has done great things with these people.'"

The Israelis smile: You are telling us? We know. "Hashem has done great things for us, and we rejoice."

The Jews in Exile begin to be convinced: "We should return from our captivity, Hashem, like streams gushing through the Negev." If so, we ask the Master of the Universe to bring us back to the Land with a sudden miracle, like the streams of the Negev which were dry from water and suddenly a mighty stream flows. We are waiting for that moment.

That is not the way it is! Respond the Israelis: The Redemption comes little by little, sowing is laborious, difficult and backbreaking: "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy."

If so, respond the Jews in Exile: We do not concur, we are scared of the difficulties and hardships. "One goes out weeping when burdened with the full measure of seeds." – This is not for us.

Don't exaggerate, smile the Israelis, it is not so tragic. In total, it is sufficiently pleasant here. "He shall surely come in joy, bearing his harvested sheaves."

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