



Netzavim-Vayelech 5769

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

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On the Parashah

How will the Redemption from Exile occur?

[Tal Chermon pp. 348-350]

The later authorities disagree about this question. Some explain that the Redemption will come from Hashem and not through our own hands. We must sit, do nothing and wait until Hashem saves us. The Satmar Rebbe even explains that any act on our part to hasten the Redemption is considered a rebellion, expressing a lack of faith in and denial of Hashem. Any success (such as declaring the State of Israel, winning the wars, etc.) is an "act of Satan." Chabad expresses this idea in a less harsh manner: we did not go to into the Exile willingly, and we will not leave it on our own initiative (Sichot of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, 3 Tammuz 5714). This does not mean that it is forbidden for an individual to make aliyah, but only that it is not the proper path for the entire Nation of Israel. Other Sages, however, hold that Hashem redeems us through our own hands and actions. Hashem uses us as emissaries to redeem His Nation.

A second dispute which is related to the first is whether or not the Redemption is dependent on our repentance. According to all opinions, the Nation of Israel will repent in the time of the Redemption. The question is, however, whether repentance is a pre-condition for Redemption or whether Redemption can occur before the complete repentance of the Nation of Israel (see the dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua – Sanhedrin 97b. And see Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1, p. 191).

When we look into our Torah portion, we see that chapter 30 describes the process of Redemption and repentance:

Verses 1-2 – "And you will take it to heart...and you will return unto Hashem, your G-d, and obey His voice according to all that I command you" – repentance.

3-4 - "And then Hashem, your G-d, will return your captivity...and gather you...If your dispersed will be at the ends of heaven..." – Redemption.

5 - And Hashem, your G-d, will bring you to the Land...and you will possess it, and He will do good to you and multiply you..." – Redemption.

6 - "And Hashem your G-d, will circumcise your heart to love Hashem" – repentance.

7- "And Hashem, your G-d, will put all these curses on your enemies" – Redemption.

8 – "And you will return and obey the voice of Hashem and perform all His commandments" – repentance.

9 – "And Hashem will make you abundant in all your handiwork...for good" – Redemption.

10 – If you will listen...if you return to Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and all your soul" – repentance.

There seems to be an intermingling of Redemption and repentance. What we see is in fact three things: 1. Gradual repentance. 2. Gradual Redemption. 3. The processes of Repentance and Redemption in stages one after the other (Akeidat Yitzchak – Sha'ar Ha-Meah).

The stages of Redemption are: Gathering of the Exiles and the Return to Zion (3-4), possession of and building the Land (5), military-political success (7) and economic success (9).

The stages of Repentance are: Beginning with the second stage: "And Hashem your G-d, will circumcise you heart to love Hashem" – removing the obstacles and the confusion from our hearts or, in the words of Onkelos (Aramaic translation), the "foolishness of the heart." We have to understand that this Divine act is accomplished through human beings. Just as it is clear to us that the guarantee of economic success does not contradict our going out to the field to work in order to help fulfill Hashem's promise, so too do we have to realize that the same is true of spiritual repentance. It is accomplished by educators, by people convincing others and speaking with others in their own language and style. It is impossible to approach a Charedei Jew from Hungary in the same way in which one approaches a so-called "secular" Jew. There is a style for the fathers and there is a style for the sons: "And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the sons and the heart of the sons to their fathers" (Malachi 3:24). The fathers must understand the holiness that is in the sons, no less than the sons must

understand the value of the fathers. It once happened that a Rabbi visited a community outside of Israel and saw a poster which read: "And he will turn the heart of the sons to their fathers." He asked: "Where is the other part of the verse?" They responded to him: "Why is it needed? The fathers are fine, the hearts of the sons are what must change." But the prophet Malachi seems to think otherwise. He sets the turning of the fathers' hearts to the sons first, for as a result of this the sons will turn to the fathers. Nonetheless, the repentance described in this stage is not performed to fulfill the mitzvot but rather to come closer to faith in Hashem. The next stage is fulfilling the mitzvot (v. 8) – only after respect and love are entrenched in one's heart does the learning and fulfillment come (Orot Ha-Teshuvah, Tosafot Ha-Teshuvah 8). And the last stage – love of Hashem, returning to Hashem "with all your heart and all your soul," means a supreme cleaving to the Divine. And what about the first stage? It seems to contradiction what we have said since at the beginning it says "and you will return unto Hashem, your G-d, and obey His voice according to all that I command you." The difference is that the first stage is repentance unto Hashem, while the last stage is repentance to Hashem. Repentance unto Hashem is repentance out of fear. There is suffering in Exile. Israel therefore learns the lesson of blessing and curse. This, however, is physical, outer repentance caused by external factors. This is the return to Israel because the King's decrees are as harsh as Haman's, as the Gemara explains (Sanhedrin 97b). This is action without understanding, and perhaps without faith. "Unto Hashem," but not any further. The Nation of Israel returns to its language and Land without truly understanding the meaning of its actions (Orot Ha-Teshuvah 17, 2. And see Le-Netivot Yisrael p. 15 and "Ha-Medinah Ke-Hitkayamat Chazon Ha-Geulah," p. 188-190).

Only at the end of the processes of Redemption and repentance does the Nation of Israel reach complete repentance, repentance to Hashem, repentance out of love and repentance out of cleaving to Hashem.

Rav Aviner on...

Addiction and Free Choice

[From "Maayanei Ha-Yeshua" – Parashat Ki Tetze 5769]

Concern: My name is Rivka. I have experienced extremely hard times, including the loss of a loved one. I now have a terrible addiction, which I do not want to detail. I have been to all types of treatments, but they have not helped. I am not sure I even have any hope. I am completely in despair.

Answer: The common denominator of all types of treatments for addictions, such as for drugs, alcohol or gambling, is that the treatment is not in place of the will to be cured. First and foremost, you must change your outlook on yourself and on life.

Western Culture is a culture of benefit and over-indulgence, i.e. one should give into his inclination whatever they might be. You should change your spiritual direction,

and believe in yourself that you have the strength to overcome this inclination, you have free choice and with great effort you can get out of this and return to the light.

Look how much the Torah emphasizes how Rivka Imenu, for whom you were named, received a distorted education from all directions: her father, brother, and locale – and she was able to escape it. Betuel (her father) was a murderer and tried to poison Eliezer (Targum Yonatan on Bereshit 24:33). Lavan was a murderer and wanted to murder Yaakov Avinu (Midrash Ha-Gadol on Bereshit 31:22). Both of them were idol worshippers (Rashi on Ber, 24:31, 31:19). And Lavan had chutzpa to speak before his father (Rashi on Bereshit 24:50). Lavan was greedy and when he saw the jewelry which Eliezer brought, he ran to his father (Bereshit 24:30 with Rashi). Lavan was called "Doubly Evil" (Sanhedrin 105a).

In contrast, Rivka was completely kind (Rashi on Bereshit 24:14), modest, and pure. This teaches you that there is free choice. It is possible to free yourself from the evil inclination and to climb higher. This is unlike the expression of weakness in Western Culture: "This is how I am. Accept me for me." Look at the determination of Rivka: "And they called Rivka and asked her: Do you want to go with this man (Eliezer)? And she said: "I will go!" (Bereshit 24:28) – Even if you don't want me to go (Rashi). It is true that a person lives with a body and he is limited by it but the soul is always free. It is an unparalleled Divine wonder. We have the power to overcome all obstacles.

Be strong and courageous.



Text Message Responsa

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

Q: I was davening Minchah and was called for Magen David Adom (as a first responder). I missed Minchah. Do I have to daven the Shemoneh Esrei of Maariv twice to make up for missing it?

A: No. One who is involved in one mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah.

Q: Did Herzl prepare a plan for all of Am Yisrael to convert to Christianity?

A: Certainly not. See the book "Herzl: A New Reading" by Dr. Weiss, p. 65.

Q: If I am sweating, isn't it shaming my Tzitzit, and it would be preferable to remove them?

A: It is not shaming them. You should wear Tzitzit all of the time: in the army, during war, etc.

Q: During the seven festive days on our marriage, it is permissible to attend another wedding or is it "mixing one joy with another" (which Halachah says should not be done)?

A: It is permissible. This principle is not stated in this case.

Q: There is a person who is publicizing in the newspapers that he is the Messiah?

A: Nonsense.

Q: Is it permissible to put things in your Tefillin bag other than your Tefillin?

A: It is forbidden unless you bought it with this intention.

Q: Why don't yeshiva students from "Black-Hat" yeshivot go to the army?

A: Patience, in the end everyone will go.

Q: Should I sign the Halachic Donor Card?

A: It is a great mitzvah. It saves lives.

Q: Is it permissible to enter the Temple Mount?

A: There are signs of the Chief Rabbinate there which prohibit it.

Q: Theoretically, is it better to be a secular Jew who lives in Israel and works to build it than an observant Jew who lives outside of Israel and is not concerned about it?

A: Theoretically, no, a person is judged by the majority of his actions, but the Master of the Universe is the only True Judge.

Q: Is it permissible to whistle on Shabbat?

A: Yes, it is not from an instrument.

Q: What should one do for a Shabbat Brit Milah if many people will violate Shabbat to travel to participate?

A: Postpone it until Sunday. Yalkut Yosef.

Q: Is it permissible to buy my father a pack of cigarettes if he asks me?

A: Yes, there is no issue of "Do not place a stumbling block before the blind" for one pack, but smoking is a general bad character trait. Rambam, Hilchot Deot, chap. 4.

Q: Is it permissible for a bride and groom to dance together in front of everyone?

A: Certainly not, public acts of affection are forbidden. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:11.

Q: Is it worthwhile to visit "Kivrei Tzaddikim" (graves of the righteous)?

A: It is preferable to perform acts of kindness and learn Torah.

Q: Should one wear Techelet on his Tzitzit?

A: If your Rabbi says that you should, you should. If your Rabbi says that you should not, you should not. If you do not have a Rabbi, follow the majority of Rabbis who do not wear it.

Q: Should I recite Shehechyanu on an expensive electric appliance?

A: Yes. If it is used by one than one person, the blessing is "Ha-Tov Ve-Ha-Meitiv."

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

Maran Ha-Rav Kook

Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv and Maran Ha-Rav's Honor

Ha-Rav Yosef Buxbaum, the editor of the journal "Moriah," had a very close relationship with our Rabbi, following the lead of his Rav, Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Our Rabbi would give him letters which great Rabbis wrote to Maran Ha-Rav Kook in order to publish them in "Moriah." Ha-Rav Buxbaum would often visit our Rabbi. And when a baby boy was born to him, he asked our Rabbi to serve as the cochain at the Pidyon Ha-Ben.

It once happened that one of the editors of the "Otzar Mefarshei Ha-Talmud" (Treasury of Talmudic Commentators) included a ruling of Maran Ha-Rav Kook, but another editor removed it. Ha-Rav Buxbaum asked him why he removed the ruling: was it because he raised a difficulty with it and it required further study? He answered: "I didn't even look into the issue. I just think that a ruling of Ha-Rav Kook is not appropriate for 'Otzar Mefarsehi Ha-Talmud.'" Ha-Rav Buxbaum said to him: "From this moment, you are fired!" The editor did not accept his decision, and they went to Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. Ha-Rav Elyashiv was shocked and said to the editor: "Did you know Ha-Rav Kook?! You should know – he was holy. He did not belong to our generation, and in his generation, they did not properly understand him. Reb Yosef was certainly permitted to fire you. I would have done the same thing." (Ha-Rav Yosef Buxbaum ztz"l)

Ha-Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer

Our Rabbi related that Maran Ha-Rav would go to relax on Mt. Carmel in Haifa because of his physical condition. Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rosh Yeshiva of Eitz Chaim, once happened to meet him there. When he returned, he said: I merited seeing a Jew who does not have a moment devoid of holiness.

Our Rabbi related that Ha-Rav Meltzer said: If only our Neilah prayer was like Maran Ha-Rav's Minchah on a Friday.

Zichron Moshe

Our Rabbi would not pass through the "Zichron Moshe" neighborhood since they had burned an effigy of Maran Ha-Rav there in the past. (Choveret Avanim Levavot, p. 24).

Maran Ha-Rav's Room

On one of the summer days in 5708, during the war of Independence, only two students – Ha-Rav Yosef Kapach and Ha-Rav Glazer – were learning in the old building of the Yeshiva, together with our Rabbi, who did not refrain from coming to the Yeshiva even during times of danger. A large bomb hit the Yeshiva and its surrounding area and two women were killed in the Yeshiva's courtyard. Our Rabbi brought the two students with him into Maran Ha-Rav's room, pointed to his chair and announced: "In merit of the one who sat in this chair nothing will happen here!" (Ha-Rav Yosef Kapach)



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Visiting Two Graves

Q: Is there a prohibition or recommendation not to visit another grave if one is at a cemetery for another funeral?

A: People say that it should not be done but there is in fact no problem.

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

"And may we find favor and good understanding in the eyes of God and man."

Both of them are needed. "This without that is not sufficient" (Niddah 70b). On the one hand, if a person only tries to find favor in the eyes of people, in a superficial, sociable manner, and he forgets the absolute Divine truth, in the end his life will be devoid of true content. On the other hand, if he only operates based on what he believes to be the opinion of Hashem, but people do not approve of him, this is also a bad sign, because he does not know how to point the way to the truth. Obviously

what is explicit in Halachah does not require the approval of people. But for a person who chooses a path for himself to follow in life, it is incumbent upon him to be extremely particular that people do not speak ill of him. Our Sages say that if a "Ben Torah" (a Jew who lives according to the dictates of the Torah) does not speak pleasantly and does not conduct business honestly, people say about him: "Woe to him who learned Torah. Woe to his father who taught him Torah. This man who learned Torah, look how corrupt are his deeds and how ugly his ways" – This is the definition of desecrating God's Name. But if he speaks pleasantly with people and conducts business honestly, people say about him: "Fortunate is his father who taught him Torah. Fortunate is his teacher who taught him Torah. Woe to people who have not learned Torah. This man learned Torah, look how fine are his deeds and how proper his ways" - This is the definition of sanctifying God's Name (Yoma 86a).

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

