



Parashat Acharei Mot 5771 - #184

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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On Pesach...

The Redemption from Egypt and Today's Redemption

[Opening words from Ha-Rav's radio program]

1. Similarity and Difference

We are fortunate that we have merited the Redemption from Egypt and the Redemption we are currently experiencing. There is both a similarity and a difference between these two Redemptions, as our revered teacher Ha-Rav Kook explained in the article "The Pesach of Egypt and the Future Pesach" which appears in the book "Maamrei Ha-Re'iyah" (pp. 164-166). The similarity is the great wonder with which each of the Redemptions occurred. In Egypt, we were slaves, downtrodden and persecuted, and we were instantly transformed into an exalted, strong and courageous Nation. This is an historical wonder which had no parallel until now. We were in Exile, a Nation scattered and separated among the nations, downtrodden, expelled, suffering pogroms, persecutions and the Holocaust. There are no words to describe the suffering we experienced. And, once again, we were suddenly transformed: a free Nation in our Land, a courageous Nation, a wealthy Nation, a Nation of Torah – an unbelievable wonder. This is the similarity. But there is also a difference. The Redemption from Egypt was performed "in haste" (Devarim 16:3). The Gemara in Berachot (9a) emphasizes that we were redeemed in an instant, a miracle of miracles. But the prophet Yeshayahu (52:11) writes regarding the Redemption of our time: It will not occur in haste. It will occur slowly, with difficulties, problems and complications. Our Redemption even goes backwards at times, occurs slowly, is not a miracle of miracles, and is accomplished through natural means. Nature moves at its own pace, without revealed miracles.

2. Which Redemption is Greater?

It would seem that the Redemption from Egypt was greater, what with its revealed miracles and wonders. After all, our current Redemption seems like a pauper riding on a horse. Our Sages teach, however, that this is not so. They say that the future Redemption is much greater than the Redemption of Egypt. The Mishnah in Berachot 1:5 relates that Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah said: I am like a man of 70 years, but I never merited proving why one is obligated to mention the Exodus at night until Ben Zoma explained: It says in the Torah (Devarim 16:3), "In order that you shall

remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt, all the days of your life" – "The days of your life" refers to the days; "All the days of your life" refers to the nights. Ben Zoma's proof is from the word "all." The Sages disagree and say that the extra word "all" refers to something else: "'The days of your life' refers to this world; 'All the days of your life' indicates the time of the Messiah." According to their opinion, we mention the Exodus from Egypt in this time and in the days of the Messiah, but not at night. Ben Zoma says to the Rabbis: But the prophet Yirmiyahu says: "Therefore, behold, days are coming, says Hashem, when they will no longer say, 'As Hashem lives, who brought the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As Hashem lives, Who raised and returned the seed of the house of Israel from out of the northern lands and from every country into which I had driven them, and they will dwell on their own Land'" (Yirmiyahu 23:7-8). We thus learn that in the days of the Messiah, we will not recall the Exodus, because the future Redemption will be so great that its light will outshine the miracle of the Exodus. The Rabbis answer that these verses from Yirmiyahu do not mean that the remembrance of the Exodus will be forgotten, but the great miracle of liberation from the oppression of the kingdoms of the world will be the main remembrance, and the Exodus will be the secondary one (Bereachot 12b). Ben Zoma and the Sages therefore both agree that the future Redemption will be greater than the Redemption from Egypt. The only dispute is whether the Exodus from Egypt will be mentioned in the days of the Messiah.

3. The Future Redemption

Why is the Future Redemption so much greater than the Redemption from Egypt? – After all, the Exodus from Egypt is the Miracle of Miracles, whereas the current Redemption is through a natural process. This recalls the letter of Ha-Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlap to Maran Ha-Rav Kook, found in the book "Hed Harim", which reads: I am disappointed by the Zionist movement. I greatly value the building of the Land and the return to Zion but we lost out on the miracle of miracles on account of them, since a person receives from heaven what he expects. Now that we have toiled to build the Land, we have lost out on the strength of miracles and only receive only weakness. But – Ha-Rav Charlap says – I have seen that his honor does not agree. Maran Ha-Rav Kook responds to him in his letters (Igrot vol. 3, p. 20): His honor must be very careful regarding this thought that you had. The Redemption which comes "Kim'a Kim'a - slowly, slowly" is the strength of fortitude and not weakness. In truth, miracles show us that Hashem has the ability to perform anything beyond nature. But the Redemption through nature – through man - is greater. Hashem is not under "pressure." Hashem does not want to transverse nature. This is the strength of fortitude. Hashem performed the Redemption from Egypt and we were like babies for which everything was done. Now, we are no longer babies. The Master of the Universe brings the Redemption through us. There are therefore difficulties and complications. This does not mean that it is not the Redemption, but that this is the Redemption through natural means. It is not that we are not on the right path. We are on the right path, but we are not at the end.

Rav Aviner on...

"I hereby forgive..." [regarding the Jewish bedtime prayer]

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Metzora 5771 – translated by R. Blumberg]

"Master of the Universe, I hereby forgive..." even though I may not be required to do so. All the same, I forgive. And even though nobody asked my forgiveness, I still forgive. And even though they are continuing to bother me, I still forgive. And even though I am no saint, but just a simple Jew, I still want to forgive them, so I do it. After all, You, Hashem, forgive me so much, so I should be forgiving as well.

"I hereby forgive everyone who angered and provoked me." Maybe I shouldn't have gotten angry. Maybe I didn't have to feel provoked. Yet even if I was justified in how I felt, I still won't think too deeply about it. I want to live a simple, pure, clean and wholesome life, without resentment in my heart. Therefore, I forgive.

"Or whoever sinned against me". It's a pity for him that he sinned. Poor fellow. Yet apparently I deserved it. Nothing happens by accident. It was from G-d. That fellow was just an emissary for evil. Had it not been him, it would have been someone else. G-d has a lot of emissaries. Obviously, that does not free from responsibility the person who sinned against me, but that doesn't concern me. Let him make his own calculations directly with G-d. For my part, I forgive him.

"Whether he hurt me physically" – Obviously my body is very precious to me. I know that in the world to come I won't need it, but here I need it a lot. Yet I won't let myself fall into a psychological trauma over what he did. Therefore, I forgive him.

"Or monetarily" – Money is not important. It's not the end of the world. G-d will fill in what I am missing – if He so wishes. Therefore, I forgive.

"Or he insulted my honor" – That really hurts! I'm not one who chases after honor, but it hurts me when I get insulted. Yet for me it's all the more a matter of honor not to pay attention to every insult. What is "honor" anyway? The main thing is G-d's honor. And it shows my respect for G-d's honor that I am forgiving. Therefore, I forgive.

"Or harmed anything I own" – If G-d so wishes, He will make up my loss many times over. I forgive. I love saying those words, "I forgive".

"Whether he did it inadvertently" – Maybe the person who hurt me was just unfortunate, and had no intention of hurting me. I forgive him. Every single moment, I am ready to be forgiving.

"Or intentionally" – I don't understand how people can have intentions like these. Therefore, I don't want to have such intentions myself. That's not the sort of thing that gives me satisfaction. That's why I forgive him.

"Or accidentally" – Sure, he should have been more careful, but I forgive him. Master of the Universe, I forgive him! It doesn't involve forcing myself. It comes naturally to me. I forgive him.

"Or brazenly" – What kind of a person is this? But I don't care. I forgive him. I'm happy with that. What a wonderful gift you gave me, G-d, that I am capable of forgiving and forgetting, and saying joyfully within myself, "I forgive him."

"Whether he committed it in word" – Words can sometimes be so aggravating! But for me it's an opportunity! More, G-d, more! I forgive him!

"Or in deed" – What an unfortunate soul to occupy himself with such things! How I pity him! I therefore forgive him. How happy I am to say, "I forgive him."

"Whether in the present incarnation" – I don't know what happened to me in previous incarnations, but in this incarnation I want to be clean and pure, without resentment. G-d, You put everything in order, so I probably deserve this hurt for some reason, as King David said, "G-d told him, 'Curse David'" (Shmuel 2 16:10). As for me, I forgive him. It's so good for me to say those words! It's not just my private affair. It touches on the entire Jewish People. Every sin weighs on the Jewish People. Therefore, once again, "I forgive him!"

"Let no one be punished because of me" – I don't need it. It's better for me to remain innocent and pure in this sense. It's good for me that I forgive and forget. It brings me the greatest happiness. G-d, if You wish to punish him, do so, but it won't be because of me. Maybe I'll be happy when it happens, but it won't be because of me. And maybe I won't be happy. Whatever happens, I forgive him totally.

I'm no deep thinker. There's no room in my brain for dissonant emotions, and no room for resentment either. It's tiring and burdensome. It leaves one feeling sullied. Yes, I forgive him.

Not only do I forgive everyone who sinned against me in the past. In keeping with the custom of Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook, I also forgive everyone who will sin against me in the future.

I derive my happiness from elsewhere. For example, "Happy are those who dwell in Your house" (Tehillim 84:5). Or, for example, "Happy are those who follow the path of perfection" (ibid. 119:1). I will not agree to leave even a drop of resentment in me. It bothers me. The purer I make myself, the happier I am. Whoever hurts me is, himself, the unfortunate one. G-d will have mercy on him, for I, for my part, forgive him. And even if he hurt me, let him not be punished because of me. It's sad that he should be punished – but there's no need for me

to explain at length. I love fine fragrances. I love the fine fragrance of Eden. I love Eden. So

I forgive him. Then I go to sleep thinking about Eden.

How good it is that I am forgiving. When I forgive, I feel a lightening. I ascend like a breath of fresh air. Until then I had a stone on my heart and I felt heavy. Now I am light. I feel integrity. I sing.

What a wonderful prayer: "I hereby forgive!" I cannot tear myself away from it! I would say it all night. So I'll say it until I fall asleep...

Kitzur Tefilat Amecha - #50-51

[adapted by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon from Rav Aviner's three-volume commentary on the siddur "Tefilat Amecha"]

#50

In the first blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei we say that Hashem is “Our G-d and G-d of our fathers.” This doesn’t seem to be a logical order. Why do we first say He is Our G-d? First Hashem was our fathers’ G-d. Then He became our G-d.

In reality, though, the Amida is in the correct order. The Avot were, of course, holy individuals. But they are the Avot, fathers of Our Nation, because of their children - Bnei Yisrael. The Maharal notes that it doesn’t say in the Torah the Avraham was a Tzadik. This is because if we, his children, don’t live up to being Tzadikim, people might think Hashem’s choice no longer applies. But Hashem’s love of us, and choice of us, is forever. It doesn’t depend on anything. Just like we are our parents’ children, and they love us forever, no matter what we may do - we are Hashem’s children and the Chosen People forever, no matter what we do. Even if we are punished, that tie can never be broken. So the Torah doesn’t say that Hashem chose Avraham because he was a Tzadik. It says He chose Avraham. Period. And this special love and being His special people was passed to Yitzchak and then to Yaakov and then to Yaakov’s children. And it goes to us today. We are His special, individual Nation, and we have this relationship forever. Therefore, in the Amida we first say Hashem is our G-d, and only then do we mention the Avot.

#51

In the first blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei when we say that Hashem is the G-d of our fathers, we also mention Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov individually. Each one of them had special talents and their own ways of relating to Hashem. Avraham Avinu was very public, outgoing and forceful. He was the one who went to Eretz Yisrael, conquered it, fought in wars, dug wells and publicly proclaimed Hashem’s Name. Yitzchak was more private and quiet. He even called the wells he re-dug by the names Avraham had given them. Yaakov was unblemished, complete and sat in tents. The Midrash says in the morning he sat in Avraham’s tent. In the afternoon he sat in Yitzchak’s tent. He learned from both of them and thus had the positive attributes of both his father and grandfather. Thus, all three of the Avot were somewhat different. We see from them that there are different positive approaches to serving Hashem.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Women and Aliyah to the Torah

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to receive an Aliyah to the Torah?

A: The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 282:3) rules that she may not.

Women's Tefillah Group

Q: May women organize a Women's Tefillah Group with a Torah reading?

A: No. There is no such concept, it is a new creation. We may not invent Halachot. See what Ha-Rav Herschel Schachter wrote: that there are 12 prohibitions violated by acting in this way (Be-Ikvei Ha-Tzon pp. 21-37. See also Ha-Rav Soloveitchik in Mi-Penini Ha-Rav pp. 67-68).

Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

Coercion and Education

The most extreme expression of not coercing a child is the Halachah that if a child is eating non-kosher food, the Beit Din is not commanded to separate him (Yevamot 114a).

We obviously should not understand this statement to mean that there should be anarchy in the child's life. Rather it teaches that while a Beit Din is not commanded to interfere, a father is certainly obligated to educate the child (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 343:1). We thus learn that there is a difference between coercion and education. Education is built upon love, trust and a close connection. Coercion is general, education is personal. We do not educate uniformly – not even children from the same family. Hashem therefore ordered it so that all the children in one family are not born at the same time to allow each one to slowly develop his character.

It is certainly true that a father and mother possess an awesome responsibility to educate their child, and the Beit Din must also be concerned that the parent's obligation is fulfilled (Mishnah Berurah ibid.). But it must not be done through coercion, since we do not gain anything from acting in this way. We must gently guide every child toward the good, each according to his ability.

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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

