

AVODAH OF THIS GENERATION

How Will We Get Out Of This Exile?

The purpose of *yetzias* Mitzrayim (leaving Egypt) was not yet complete when they left Egypt. Their *Geulah* wasn't complete yet, because the Egyptians would still chase after them and they knew that they were still in danger. Only later, at the splitting of the sea when the water came crashing down on the Egyptians and killing them, was Egypt finally over for them, and their *Geulah* was now complete.

The Ohr HaChaim (Shemos 14:10) said that in Egypt, the depravity of the country had reached such a low that the Jewish people were steeped in the "49th gate of impurity", and had the Jewish people remained even one more moment in Egypt, they would have descended into the "50th gate of impurity" (*shaar haNun d'tumah*) which is impossible to come out of. In the final *Galus*, the Jewish people will enter into the 50th gate of impurity (as we can see before our own eyes today, with the abysmally low spiritual situation of the people in the final generation). The Ohr HaChaim also describes the "50th gate of impurity" beliefs that are heretical to the Torah, and denial of G-d and the Torah.

It is clear that we were able to leave the 49th gate of impurity in Egypt only because we kept three things – we didn't change our names, our style of dress, and our language. However, in order to go free from the 50th

gate of impurity in the final days, the Ohr HaChaim says that even this isn't enough. The only way, he says, is through the power of the Torah!

Truthfully, this is a very deep matter. What did the Ohr HaChaim mean, that only through the power of the Torah we can go out of the 50th gate of impurity? Don't we see (*Rachmana Litzlan*) that people can learn Torah yet still be involved with the 50th gate of impurity at the same time? "The words of Torah do not become *tamei*", the Torah can never become impure, but this does not mean necessarily that one who just learns Torah will free his soul from the bad influences of today...

We must know that the root of the *Geulah* was told to us at Keriyas Yam Suf, when Moshe entreated Hashem about what to do, and Hashem said, "Why do you scream out to me? Now, it is *b'Atika talya milsa*" (Rashi, citing Zohar Beshalach 52b) – it now depends on "*Atik*" [we shall soon explain what this is]. That is the inner power that our soul can use to be able to be redeemed from the *shaar haNun* which we are found in today. The Torah has in it 49 reasons to declare something *tahor* (pure) and 49 reasons to make something *tamei* (defiled), as a hint that the Torah takes a person out of the 49 first levels of *tumah*. But what is the power of Torah that takes a person out of the 50th level of *tumah*, which we are found in today? It is hidden within the depths of the Torah. If

a person doesn't reveal it, though, and he lets it stay hidden in him without accessing it, then the 50th level of *tumah* will certainly be in control over him, *Rachmana Litzlan*.

The final generation is not like the previous generations. The Meor Einayim in parshas Chukas writes that in the final generations, there will be a more inner revelation of the Torah. It is clear that this is the remedy which Hashem has made available for the spiritual diseases of our times, and only through this, will the Jewish people come out of the 50th level of *tumah* that rules over the entire world today.

Holiness Vs. Impurity Today

What is the difference between the 49 gates of *tumah* that the people sank to in Egypt, with the 50th gate of *tumah* that we are in today? The Mesillas Yesharim says that the purpose of our existence is to get close to Hashem and to be *davuk* (attached) in Hashem, to break the barriers in between us and Hashem, until we are drawn after Him like a magnet that is pulled towards an iron stone.

There is a rule of *Zeh l'umas zeh*, that there is an equal counterbalance between *kedushah* and *tumah*. Just as in *kedushah* there exists an ability to be drawn after closeness with Hashem, so is there an ability, *Rachmana Litzlan*, the ability in the side of *tumah* to become attached with evil. As the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 17a) says, "Since

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he is attached to the sin very much, it is like heresy.”

There are two equally powerful inclinations in our times, a desire for closeness with Hashem like never before as well as a desire to become connected with evil, and the only way to separate from these magnetic attractions towards evil can only be through the power of *mesirus nefesh* (sacrificing for Hashem).

The innermost level of the *kelipah* (the power of evil) has such a strong pull that it is naturally impossible to be saved from it! There was a story where Reb Noson went to go see his rebbi Rebbi Nachman of Breslev, and along the way, Reb Nosson saw something indecent. When he came to his rebbi, Rebbi Nachman immediately said to him, “There is a *kelipah* that counters the *kedushah* called *Arich*, and it is the *Arich d’kelipah*, and it is impossible to be saved from it.” [Unless a person has *mesirus nefesh*, which will be explained soon].

That is what dominates today – it is all the darkness of the *kelipah*. A person is pulled after this *kelipah* like a magnet. And when a person is being controlled by the *kelipah* after he connects himself to it, his feelings become dulled and he doesn’t even feel like he’s being pulled after it. The person has become attached to the *kelipah* [instead of *d’veykus* in Hashem, the person is having *d’veykus* in the *kelipah*], *Rachmana Litzlan*].

But Hashem provided the remedy for this already from before, through the words of the sefarim *hakedoshim* [the Ohr HaChaim and Meor Einayim in the name of the Baal Shem Tov] which revealed to us the secret of an inner level of Torah that can take us out from all of this. It is a *pnimiyus*, an inner level of Torah, which is not only for people are on a high *madreigah* (level) but something which is absolutely necessary for

anyone today, if he is to survive. This is not something that depends on a person’s *madreigah*. Compare this to a person who becomes a *ger* (convert) in between Pesach and Shavuos. Since Shavuos comes after Pesach, does that mean he is not obligated in Shavuos because he didn’t have a Pesach yet? Of course not, because it is now the time to observe Shavuos no matter what level he is on right now. The Torah applies to a person no matter what his level is. Since we are in a time where the innermost level of the *kelipah* is out in full force, that means that we also have an equally powerful light of *kedushah* that Hashem has given us which can counter it: The *shaar haNun d’kedushah*, the 50th level of holiness.

Yes, there are different kinds of *yetzer hora* today as we there always was, there are struggles and challenges, and any oived Hashem today faces all kinds of hardships today when trying to serve Hashem faithfully. Sometimes there are successes and sometimes there are failures. But that was all the way things looked until now, in which we only had to deal with 49 levels of *tumah*. In the times we are in now, and as time continues, the *tumah* in our world today is a *kelipah* that one cannot naturally be saved from, and there is only one way of advice: to live with the reality of Hashem Echad at the forefront of our minds. The Arizal said that when saying Shema, by the word *Echad*, one should have the intention that he will give up his life for Hashem. The purpose of everything is Hashem *Echad*, and we are now in a time where we must reveal Hashem *Echad*. The *avodah* today is, “The earlier ones were *moser nefesh* (they gave up their lives) *al kiddush Hashem*.” (Berachos 20a). When the *kelipah* is in control as in today’s times, there is no advice other than to live with Hashem *Echad* at all times.

Understanding The Situation

This is not a *vort* (insight) or some nice food for thought. We must know the situation very well. (If someone wants to bake *matzah*, he must know the *halachos* so that he doesn’t come turn the *matzah* into *chametz*. But if he is baking the *matzos* after *chatzos* of Erev Pesach, he has to be so careful not only so that he can make *matzah*, but so that he won’t transgress the sin of baking *chametz*. So too, if we want to know how to serve the Creator now, the first thing we must know is the situation we are in, where we are found, and what kind of *kelipah* exists today.)

Maybe a person will ask: But there are no prophets today to tell it to us! But it has already been written in the sefarim, and it has been received by all of Klal Yisrael in the words of *Raboseinu*. There is nothing new here, it has all been written and even explained already. The words have been written down in the *sefarim* for all the generations to come, and they are in the words of the Ohr HaChaim and Baal Shem Tov, and other tzaddikim. The *kelipah* which we are found in today is the *shaar haNun d’tumah*, and it is clear that from then onward, more than 200 years later, the *kelipah* continues to get stronger, and anyone today can see how far it has reached. But it is also clear that Hashem sent us a *kedushah* in a time where we need it, to counter the evil of the *kelipah* (as the Meor Einayim said in the name of the Baal Shem).

It is wonderful to improve our *midos*, our *emunah*, our Torah learning, and anything else that’s holy and pure. But for us, who live in the final generation, all of that advice alone will not help us. Only if we have *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem, if we are willing to give up our lives for Hashem, can we come out

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of the *kelipah* that is the *shaar haNun*. But if not, then *Rachmana Litzlan*, even a *ben aliyah* today faces the *Olam HaTemuros*, the world of exchanges, with all of its tests that are impossible to be saved from – these are not difficult tests, but impossible tests.

Now we will say this in clearer terms. The *kelipah* that is the *shaar haNun d'tumah* is really above logical comprehension. We cannot simply understand it or feel it. A person is drawn after it magnetically, without even being aware of it. There is no one today isn't pulled after it. A person might say, "I checked myself and I don't seem to have the problem." But this is only because he doesn't recognize the pull. The *shaar haNun d'tumah* pulls everyone towards it, unless a person has lives with a very deep attachment to Hashem in his heart. Just as there is a 50th level of *kedushah*, so there is a 50th level of *tumah* to counter it. This is not a question of danger, but a question of death.

The confusion today about basic concepts, as well as the general lack of *ruchniyus* today, has created a big error, in which a person seems to everyone like someone who is "immersed in learning Torah, in *mitzvos*, in *dikduk hadin*, in which he seems to be a *ben aliyah*, a *mevakesh*, an *oved Hashem* (all different important titles), but the truth is that if someone understands the *pnimiyus*, he sees that there is nothing of the sort here. Usually, not only hasn't a person completed his work yet - he hasn't even started, to enter into *pnimiyus*.

Living Simply With Hashem

This *pnimiyus* is: To have a simple bond with Hashem, to live simply with Him. At the *pnimiyus* of everything, we can find Hashem, and to the extent that one leaves his personal Egypt, he will grow closer to Hashem.

Therefore, just externally observing the Torah today, even with good intentions, is not enough today to fight the *tumah* of today. A person has to know the situation he is in, the time period of history he is found in, so that he can be a counterforce to the *tumah* of today. Otherwise, it's like lighting the Menorah on Pesach – the person doesn't know what time he is in, so his intended *mitzvah* is making him stumble into a sin. Or, it's like a person who is trying to fight a desire by using a technique to overcome anger, who will be unsuccessful. We need to know what situation we are in, what's preventing us. Though it's clear that all of the Torah is *kedushah* and it is the medicine to fight against the yetzer hora, each problem has its own medicine, to save and heal us from the *kelipah* that is dominating during a specific time.

Willing To Leave The World of Falsity

The great pursuit of materialism today has caused two big problems. It has caused people to forget about Hashem – not only that people don't know about Hashem intellectually, but mainly so in that people do not live in their hearts with Hashem. They know about Hashem, but they have forgotten Him from their hearts. "And your hearts will grow haughty and you will forget Hashem." A second problem today is the many different desires of the yetzer hora today which people are chasing, which contains all of the world's vanities. These factors pull a person after them, whether a person is aware of it or not. What is the advice to get out of it? It is by being willing, every moment, to leave this world of falsity.

It is like the words of the *sefer Tzetzil Kattan*, that a person should always imagine that he is being thrown into a furnace and to sanctify his life in the name of Hashem, rather than commit an *aveirah*. This is the first, basic point

which saves a person from this world of falsity. If a person cannot fathom this, it can only be because he is very attached to this world.

With just a little contemplation, anyone can know that the world of truth is certainly better than this world of falsity that we live on. Why, then, do we resist this truth? What is holding back our hearts from immediately leaving behind this world of falsity and cross over into the "world that is entirely good"? This is not an intellectual point to grapple with, it is an inner matter about where our soul is connected to, of its unwillingness to part from the world of falsity. If a person really wants to go free from falsity, he must be very clear of what his obligation on this world is, of what he is doing here and for what purpose he came down onto the world. When one becomes clear that the purpose of him coming to the world was to reach closeness with Hashem, it will be simple and clear to him that he should want to leave this world of falsity at all times!

When one has a desire to remain on this world, this is what's preventing him from a real connection with Hashem. Only with simply recognizing our purpose of coming down here on one hand, along with recognizing that we are on a world of falsity, and being clear that there is only one true place for us to be in – this is the one single thing that can save us from the *shaar haNun d'tumah*. If a person will say, "But this is such a high level to be on! Where will get such an ability to think like this?" This can only be because he has never truly entered into the inner world yet. There is an illumination of *pnimiyus* that is radiating in our times today, and if one searches for it, he will certainly find it. If he doesn't search for it, though, he will certainly fall - not as a maybe, but as a certainty. For we

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are facing today the *kelipah* that draws everyone towards it like a magnet.

These words are not *mussar* (rebuke) nor is it *hisorerus* (inspiration), and this is not a shiur to prepare 30 days before Pesach so that we can know its halachos. This is an issue of our very life, a point which our very life depends on. It is about what situation we are in and where we stand.

Power of Atik

The *sefarim hakedoshim* said that these words of the Zohar cited by Rashi, “*B’Atika talya milsa*”, is the secret of the final Geulah, which reveals “*Atik*”, the deeper purpose of Creation. *Atik* means to copy – to become a copy of the higher world and reflect into our own soul, so that we are no longer ourselves, but a “copy”, a reflection, of the upper world, of the true reality. It is when a person is not thinking about himself and he is not thinking about fulfilling his own desires, but when his thoughts are focused solely on the One Individual Who Is Hashem.

When Nachshon jumped into the sea, this was *mesirus nefesh*, and then the sea was split, leading to the *Shirah* and great revelations where even a person on the lowest level perceived more than Yechezkel *HaNavi*. It was where Hashem was revealed to them. All of this revelation came from the *mesirus nefesh* of Nachshon when he jumped into the sea, in which he was willing to leave behind this world of falsity. When Nachshon jumped, did he think that he would die and just disappear? *Chas v’shalom!* He knew that he was leaving

behind this world and that he would become bound with Hashem, because after a person dies, he sees Hashem.

There is no advice and no logic to get around what Hashem wants from us. We must become clear about what our situation is, and what the advice is. The advice has already been written in the words of *Raboseinu*, and they are clear. It is just that people are used to other kinds of advice which worked in the past, and because people have grown used to it they don’t want to hear anything else. Is it for nothing that Hashem has revealed the *pnimiyus* in our times? It is the *pnimiyus* found in front of us which the Baal Shem and Ohr HaChaim wrote about as being absolutely necessary for anyone’s soul survival today. This is not a matter reserved for people on a high *madreigah* or for people who want to become holier (*kadosh*) or for people who are coming to purify themselves (*haba l’ta-her*). There is no advice today to survive, other than this.

Power of Torah In The Final Days

And now we can understand the depths of the words of the Ohr HaChaim that in the final exile, *Klal Yisrael* will enter into the 50th level of *tumah* but they will go out from it with the power of the Torah. *Chazal* said that for every word of Torah which the people heard at Har Sinai, their souls flew out of them. This was not by chance, because it is the very way which the Torah has to be received. The simple reason for this is because “Torah does not last with a person unless he kills himself

over it.” But there is more to it. Their souls left them for each word of Torah they heard for a deeper reason. The Ohr HaChaim (*parshas Shemini*) said that Nadav and Avihu died through “Hashem’s kiss”, meaning that they felt such an intense connection to Hashem and a yearning for Him that their souls left them from the experience, and that is how they died.

The 50th level of *kedushah*, which is the inner level of the Torah, is when a person is drawn after it with a very strong pull, to the point that he is willing to give himself up to Hashem for it, just as everyone’s souls flew out of everyone when they heard every word of Torah at Har Sinai. When Hashem came down onto Har Sinai, it was the revelation of Torah which a person is pulled after so strongly that he is willing to die for it.

The words here are really simple and clear, but each person needs to become clear about these words on his own. May Hashem help us that these words should go into the hearts of those who heard it, not just as inspiration which comes and goes. May it become clear to us what test we are facing today, and what one’s personal obligation is in this generation. Through believing completely in the words of *Raboseinu* and using the advice which they have written, with the understanding of the *kelipah* of today and how to come out from it – this can bring the entire world to its complete *Geulah*, may it come quickly.

TRANSLATED FROM HEBREW SHIUR FROM 2002

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