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**WEEKLY PARSHA  
ARCHIVE Q&A**

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**BILVAVI**

**METZORA 5784**

### EXILE OF OUR DAAS

The Egyptian exile was an exile of our *Da'as* (our mind). We learn this from what Hashem told Avraham Avinu, that “you will surely know (“*yodua teida*”) that your offspring will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs...”

The Egyptian exile was an exile of our *da'as*, and its redemption was a redemption to our *da'as*. From the double usage of the word *da'as* in the possuk (*yodua teida*) we learn that there are two kinds of exiles that both involve an exile of our *da'as*. Let us reflect what these two kinds of *da'as* are.

The Baal Shem Tov explains that these two kinds of *da'as* are a “masculine” kind of *da'as* and a “feminine” kind of *da'as*. The redemption from Egypt was a feminine kind of *da'as*, and the future redemption will be a masculine kind of *da'as*. What does he mean?

We can understand the Baal Shem's statement as follows. Each individual has two components: feelings and vision. (An example of “vision” is that a person is obligated on the night of Pesach to see himself leaving Egypt”).

The feminine kind of *da'as* is “feelings”, and the masculine kind of *da'as* is “vision”. Egypt was an exile of our feelings – our feminine aspect of *da'as*. Its redemption was a redemption as well of our feminine *da'as*. But the future redemption will involve our masculine kind of *da'as*, which is our vision. “*For with an eye and an eye we will see the return of Hashem to Zion.*”

It is well-known that the final redemption is also contained in the first redemption. The redemption from Egypt is the root of the final redemption. We must know what these two different kinds of redemption are in our soul.

## OUR MIND IS STILL IN EXILE

There are two “kings” that reside in a person: the mind and the heart. The mind’s vision is limited and we need to learn how to expand it.

The Zohar always uses an expression of *ta chazi*, “come and see”, while the Gemara always uses an expression of *ta shema*, “come and hear.” When a person hears, he hears the feelings, but when a person sees, he doesn’t use his feelings, just his limited vision. The abilities of feeling and vision are two distinct forces in the soul, and each of them need to be removed from what’s blocking them. Our mind’s vision is prevented by being too narrow-sighted, while our heart’s feelings can be stuffed with *timum halev* (spiritual “blockage”).

In the Egyptian exile, our heart was in exile. There was a redemption to this, so our feelings. But our mind still hasn’t been totally redeemed. Our feelings of the soul, such as *ahavah* (love), *yirah* (fear), *hispaarus* (pride), etc. were redeemed in Egypt, but our mind’s vision – in other words, our inner vision, the ability to see holiness – is still concealed in this exile.

The avodah of the Egyptian exile was to recognize Hashem’s goodness and to come to have feelings for Him, such as love and fear of Hashem. But what is the avodah of the final exile?

We must expand our minds in order to know this.

## THE SECRET OF THE REDEMPTION: UNITY

The Arizal explains that the night of Pesach is a time of “*gadlus ha-mochin*” (a higher state of mind). What is the higher state of mind, and what is the lower state of mind?

Simply speaking, it means that sometimes our mind is more or less

clear. But the more truthful outlook is that *gadlus hamochin* is a straight way of thinking – “G-d made man upright” (*Koheles 7:29*) – it is a straight kind of vision, and in it lies a person’s mind.

In the redemption of Egypt, anyone who didn’t merit to leave Egypt perished. The wicked perished in the plague of darkness. Everyone else who left Egypt left as one collective unit – there was *achdus* (unity) of the entire nation at the redemption. At this redemption, the entire Jewish people were united to follow Hashem into the desert, experience the splitting of the sea and the giving of the Torah. At all of these events, all 600,000 souls of the Jewish people were all present.

The inner way to look at reality is to see everything as one. From an inner perspective, a person sees how many details are really all one collective unit. The secret that brings redemption is unity in one unit. For example, the entire Jewish people in Egypt did not change their names, language, or dress.

Thus, the redemption is all about *achdus* – unity. There is a redemption that will take place to the Jewish people as a whole. There is also a personal redemption to each person that will take place, a redemption to each person’s soul. This is to redeem our mind. To redeem our mind, we must acquire an inner perspective on things – a perspective of *achdus*, to be able to see how many details connect and are all one.

Before, we mentioned that we have two different component in us: feelings, which are in our heart, and our vision, which is in our mind. Our mind, which is otherwise known as the masculine kind of *daas*, has an advantage over the heart in that it can see how many details connect as one. Our mind is capable of seeing *achdus*.

The second *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*

(baseless hatred). The future redemption will be the opposite of this; it will be a unity of the world. The secret of the redemption is *achdus*.

The secret to the redemption when a person acquires this inner perspective – the way to see unity in many details.

The secret to the current exile is contained in the Egyptian exile. By understanding what the Egyptian exile was, we can learn about our own redemption from the current exile, because the root of all redemption is the redemption from Egypt.

### WHAT IS THIS UNITY?

What is this secret of “*achdus*” of the final redemption, which is contained in the Egyptian exile?

We say in the *Haggaddah*, “*And G-d took us out of Egypt, not through an angel or through a seraph or through a messenger, but G-d Himself, in His Honor.*”

There is a concept that everything which takes place in the world also takes place in time, and everything that takes place in time also takes place in our soul. In our own soul, there can be a redemption by Hashem Himself.

On the night of Pesach, there is a revelation of G-dliness in every person’s soul! “*Not through an angel or a seraph or a messenger, but G-d himself.*” As long as a person doesn’t block this revelation from happening, it becomes revealed in one’s soul on the night of Pesach: a personal redemption that takes place in the soul.

When a person still has an egotistical “I”, he is separate from others. But when there is a revelation of G-dliness in the soul, a secret of “oneness” (*rozo d’echad*) is revealed in the soul.

If a person looks at another person according to the other's opinions about life, then he is apart from others. Chazal say that "*Just like all faces are different, so are all minds different.*" But when a person looks at another person's soul with a deep perspective, he sees G-dliness in another Jew's soul. He sees "Hashem Himself" that resides in the deepest point in every Jew's soul. (This deepest point is the called "*Yechidah*".) When a person has this perspective, he has an outlook of *achdus* toward every Jew and he unifies every soul into one unit.

This revelation that takes place in the soul on the night of Pesach is the root of the future redemption.

Thus, on the night of Pesach we have an additional form of avodah. Besides the well-known avodah of connecting ourselves to "leaving Egypt now", we must also reveal the root of the future redemption. We must recognize what the redemption is and connect to it.

### **THE ROOT OF THE FUTURE REDEMPTION - NULLIFYING YOUR EGO**

The power of the future redemption is essentially the ability to leave the selfish "I" in a person. As long as a person is still egotistical, there is a divide between a person and Hashem. When a person still has his ego, he has only his *daas*, and each person's *daas* is different. This is the depth of Chazal that "Just as all faces are different, so are all minds different." A person's self-absorption prevents the revelation of *achdus*.

We need to acquire the higher *daas*. This is called "*Keil de'os* (G-d of knowledge", an expression used by the *Rambam*). This is not regular *daas* of a person; it is a higher kind of *daas* that is hidden from us. It is the kind of *daas* which unifies the many varying opinions of people, the many different kind of *daas* that everyone has.

In the redemption from Egypt, even though it was a redemption of our *daas*, it was only a redemption of each person's private *daas*. We

are still different from one another, because we each have our own opinions. It wasn't yet a total redemption.

There are two ways how we can see this. First of all, Moshe Rabbeinu was afraid that the people wouldn't be worthy of being redeemed, because of the wicked individuals present. This was already a lapse in the unity of the Jewish people. In addition to this, even when they were redeemed, the *Erev Rav* ("Mixed Multitude", Egyptian non-Jews who escaped Egypt together with the Jewish people) came with them, which affected the unity of the Jewish people.

The future redemption, though, will be a total redemption of our *daas*. It will be nullification of our *daas* and in its place a revelation of the higher *Daas*, the *Daas* of the Creator. The revelation of Hashem by the redemption will be a revelation of the *achdus* of the Jewish people.

Thus we have two missions on Pesach: we must feel as if we are leaving Egypt now, to receive a new vitality in our feelings. But this isn't enough. Even with renewed feelings, our perspective can still be very limited. Feelings without a developed mind can be imbalanced. Feelings aren't everything. Some people are so zealous that they go overboard with their zealotry. We must realize that our feelings are only a garment on our soul. Feelings aren't everything, and we shouldn't get caught up in them – they need to be fused with an expanded mind.

For example, the *mitzvah* of *Ahavas Yisrael* really applies to wicked people as well. One of the four sons is a wicked son; we must still love him as a son, even though he is wicked. In the future redemption, all the dispersed members of our people will be gathered together, even the wicked members. Although in Egypt, "had the wicked son been there, he wouldn't have been redeemed", still, in the future redemption, which is a more complete redemption, the

wicked will be included. This kind of feeling is a feeling expanded by the mind. This is the *gadlus hamochin* contained in Pesach.

***“Now we are slaves, Next Year we will be free”***

We need both kinds of redemption: the past redemption of Egypt (which we already experienced), and the future redemption. These are two different kinds of redemption.

The previous redemption, the redemption from Egypt, is a light that we must return to each year on Pesach. The future redemption is something else: we must draw it closer to us and extend it upon us even now.

In the beginning of the *Hagaddah*, we say “Now we are slaves, Next year we will be free.” These are the beginning words of the *Hagaddah*, and they are the preface to what occurs on the night of Pesach.

In these words we mention two things. We mention the “bread of suffering” which our ancestors ate in Egypt, yet we also mention the future redemption – “Next year we will be free.” This is not just a yearning for the redemption (which is also a wonderful thing to aspire to), but it is a connection to the redemption.

If we only consider the light of the redemption to be a thing of the past, then the purpose of the festival remains concealed.

The redemption hasn't yet come. Thus, the *avodah* we have on this Pesach is to awaken in us the inner meaning of the redemption – the higher aspect of the redemption, not the lower aspect of the redemption. We need both aspects. The point is that we need the higher aspect of the redemption as well.

### **INSPIRATION LASTS ONLY IF WE EXPAND OUR MIND**

Upon understanding these words, we can look at the inner depth



of the avodah upon us, in a new light. There is a deep point hidden here.

Every year, the holy Jewish people want to be awakened and inspired. People hear inspiring lectures – each to his own. Everyone wants to awaken in his soul a feel for the holiness of the Yom Tov. But we must know that many times we just have “inspiration” (*hisorerus*) and after some time, our inspiration wanes and we just go back to “usual”.

What is the mistake that people are making? It has to do with what we have been saying until now: feelings, without the mind to guide them, are only half the equation. Even if we redeem our “feelings” and we are full of renewed feelings for holiness, without expanding our **mind** the feelings won’t last. It’s only “half” the redemption.

If all we do is open up our feelings, without expanding our mind – then we only have the first kind of redemption, a redemption from Egypt. We will be missing our current redemption.

With just feelings and no mind, the inspiration we get doesn’t last. We will be able to connect to the redemption from Egypt with our renewed feelings of love and fear of Hashem, but after that our inspiration will go away, and we will just be left with the remaining exiles that came after Egypt....

In order for our inspiration to last, we need an expanded mind. On the night of Pesach, one is obligated to “see” himself as if he’s leaving Egypt. What does it mean to “see” yourself leaving Egypt? Are we supposed to become deluded by our imagination?!

We can understand that all our souls were there one time in Egypt, but why must we **see** ourselves actually leaving Egypt now?

We need to be able to “see” since the other part of our redemption

is to redeem our power of vision in the mind. This *halachah*, that one must see himself leaving Egypt, contains the higher aspect of the redemption: to redeem one's vision of the mind.

The depth of this is that if a person hasn't nullified his ego and he doesn't integrate himself with the Jewish people, then he doesn't know how to "see." He doesn't have a vision of *achdus*. **His redemption has nothing to do with Hashem – it's all about redeeming himself.** When a person remains absorbed in himself, he might have wonderful feelings for Avodas Hashem, but he actually might be on a very lowly level. Reb Yisrael Salanter's words are famous – a person can be so afraid of the *yom hadin* (day of judgment), yet he damages others when they see a scowl on his face.

When a person only seeks to have great feelings in avodas Hashem, it doesn't mean yet that he is pure. It's possible that he is self-absorbed in himself as he seeks to gain high levels in avodas Hashem. He is so self-absorbed in his personal growth that he doesn't even see any person next to him! Even when such a person relates the story of the exodus to his household, he's wrapped up in his own self as he seeks higher levels to attain. Such a person is sorely mistaken in the purpose of the festival.

When a person doesn't realize that the main part of the redemption is to be redeemed from one's selfish ego, he is missing the whole redemption. He might love and fear Hashem and have all the great feelings that one can reach, but it's all another way of being self-absorbed. This is not a true redemption.

**The true redemption to have on Pesach is when one nullifies his self and integrates into the Jewish people, as a part of a whole.**

When one considers the redemption of Pesach to be about himself, he only redeems “himself.” We cannot call this a redemption. The purpose of the redemption is that all should recognize Hashem; it is about revealing Hashem, not about revealing one’s “I.”

The way to redeem yourself on Pesach is actually by nullifying yourself. When a person is locked up in a jail, he desires to escape it – he wants his “I” to escape. His escape from it will just be all about how he worries for himself. But the depth to the redemption is to leave your very self and forget about yourself.

This is really the depth of *Ahavas Yisrael*, which is the secret of the final redemption. *Ahavas Yisrael* is really when your soul has a redemption – when you leave yourself! In other words, there is a kind of personal redemption in which you leave your inner imprisonment, and then there is another kind of redemption – when you leave your “I”. This is when you leave your ego for the sake of integrating with the rest of the Jewish people.

Thus, the beginning of redemption is to redeem our feelings. We need to first leave the materialism – the “bricks and mortar” – and enter the world of spirituality. The second part of our redemption, which is the purpose, is to reach our masculine kind of *daas* – the revelation of unity on the world; in other words, to nullify your “I.”

Hashem should merit all of the Jewish people that we all integrate with each other and from there, to integrate in unison with the Creator, who is really the only One who exists.

פסח 002 מהות גאולת הנפש תשס"ב

## WHAT TO SAY AT THE SEDER

**QUESTION:** Regarding the Pesach seder, in a family that includes boys and girls of all different ages, is it better to focus on conveying the simple meaning of the Hagaddah, relaying parables and stories, which would disappoint the older children [because the older children won't enjoy this]? Or, is it better to focus on more intellectual-type insights of the Hagaddah, which the younger children won't understand?

**ANSWER:** One needs to run the Seder with wisdom, and to be attentive at all times to the level of concentration [of the family]. Accordingly, one can then decide what kinds of insights can be relayed.]

## AFIKOMAN

**QUESTION:** Is the custom of “stealing the afikoman” a contradiction to the spiritual lessons of the night of the Seder? Is it possible to forego this custom somewhat? Or, to the contrary, is this a custom that only creates a positive experience at the Seder which can bring the family closer to fulfilling the mitzvos [of the Pesach Seder] with greater joy?

**ANSWER:** The custom should not be foregone. However, one should find a positive point in this custom which he can focus on [for the family] and emphasize at the Seder. For example, one can explain to the family that taking the afikoman is a parable of how we need to search in our own “hidden places” [to do soul-searching]. This is actually the deeper intent of the ceremony of “Tzafon” at the Sefer, which, on a deep level, is about the “light which is hidden for the tzaddikim in the future” [the ohr hatzafun, the “hidden light”].