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Torah Is Eretz Yisrael Vs. Torah in Egypt

The first of Yaakov's sons to descend to Egypt was Yosef HaTzaddik. Yosef epitomized the *middah* of "Shemiras HaBris" - guarding the *Bris Kodesh* (the Holy Covenant). The entire descent to Egypt was meant to fix the damage of Adam's sin, which was a damage to the *Bris Kodesh*; thus Yosef was the first to descend, so that the correction for Adam's sin could begin.

In Egypt, the labor was with *choimer* and *levainim* - "mortar and bricks." Besides for the simple meaning of this, there was an inner kind of "mortar and bricks" going on [which we will explain].

"Hashem, Yisrael and the Torah are one." We are one with the Torah; thus, the Torah was exiled with us in Egypt. The Torah which Yaakov learned in Eretz Yisrael was one kind of Torah, and it was not the same kind of Torah which the Jews were learning in Egypt. The Torah was in exile - but it wasn't the same Torah. What was the difference between the Torah learned in Eretz Yisrael and the Torah learned in Egypt?

It has to do with the *choimer* and *levainim* that the people had to do difficult labor (*avoda koshoh*) with. The cruel labor going on in Egypt wasn't just in the physical sense - it was that they had a hard time perceiving the Torah. It was a Torah that required great *ameilus* (exertion) to understand. At Sinai, the spirit of impurity was removed from us, and we received a new kind of understanding in Torah. But in Egypt, we had "bricks and mortar" - in other words, it was very difficult to learn Torah there.

External and Internal Layers To Learning Torah

There is an external and internal layer to learning Torah. The external layer to our learning is the kind of Torah we have during this exile; it is the Torah which requires great difficulty to understand. But the Torah which we will receive in the future will be a Torah of total *menuchah* (serenity). It won't be so hard to understand.

"Everyone agrees that on Shabbos, the Torah was given." This hints that the Torah we received at Har Sinai, was a Torah of total *menuchah* - a Torah that represents Shabbos.

Egypt was the root of all our exiles. Egypt is still going on today - we still have *avodah koshoh*, difficult labor, in learning Torah. We see this hinted to from the fact that many *mitzvos* we do are *zecher l'yetzias mitzrayim* (to remember the exodus from Egypt), and this is not simply to remember Egypt - it is because it is still our *avodah* today to leave Egypt! We have to continuously leave Egypt.

It is not about remembering the past – it is about the present. The redemption from Egypt wasn't complete, and we have to complete it, by doing the *mitzvos* that are *zecher l'yetzias mitrayim*.

Since we didn't totally leave Egypt yet, we still have *avodah koshoh*. However, on the other hand, we aren't totally in Egypt either, because we did receive the Torah at Sinai. So we have within us two forces at once. On one hand, we have both kinds of Torah – the Torah of exile, and the Torah of the future (which we received at Sinai). The Torah of exile needs *avodah koshoh* to acquire it, while the Torah of the future is a Torah acquired through *menuchah*.

If a person doesn't exert himself in Torah, he will not understand Torah. That is clear. But on the other hand, we need *menuchah* as well in learning Torah; “*And he saw that menuchah (rest) was good.*” Therefore, we cannot look at Torah learning as just exertion. We need to also gain *menuchah* in our Torah learning.

The *menuchah* in Torah is the inner point of the Torah which our soul needs to yearn for. We are now in exile, and we cannot have total *menuchah* yet. But Shabbos is a resemblance of the World To Come; Shabbos can give us a glimpse of *menuchah*.

The concept of exile is to have Torah learning that only involves exertion, with no *menuchah*. The concept of redemption is that Torah learning will be through *menuchah*. As it is written of Yissocher [the tribe who is blessed with Torah scholars]: “*And he saw that menuchah was good.*”

We do not mean, *chas v'shalom*, that one should slacken off from his learning; the intention here is that we need *menuchah* in the Torah – we need to *connect* to our Torah learning.

If we truly connect to Torah, the Torah will to us reveal her secrets; the Torah is called the *aishes chayil* of the Jewish people, because just as a wife reveals her secrets to her husband, so does the Torah reveal to us its secrets – when we connect to it.

The exertion in Torah learning we have should not just be about exertion for the sake of exertion. True exertion in learning is to learn Torah with dedication, to learn it with all our energy – to become one with the Torah – and then we can become like a *maayan hamisgaber* (a “mighty wellspring”) in Torah. We can only become a *maayan hamisgaber* when we exert ourselves in learning with all our strength, with *mesirus nefesh* (sacrificing) for the Torah.

Yes, we must “kill ourselves over the Torah” (as the Rambam writes) but eventually, we must come to the point in which we have *menuchah* in the Torah.

The days of Shovavim are days that are meant to fix the damage done to the *Bris Kodesh*. These are days which we can essentially complete our redemption from Egypt – to totally leave it. But first, we must realize what our exile is, and then we can know how to get out of it.

Had Adam never damaged the *Bris Kodesh*, our thoughts would always be pure, and we would never have sinful thoughts. We wouldn't need to exert ourselves in Torah learning, because our soul would be so connected to Torah that we wouldn't need to try so hard to get involved in it.

“Hashem, Yisrael and the Torah are one.” We need to feel as if we are one with the Torah, and when we feel one with the Torah, our thoughts will be purified. We will then be able to become a *maayan hamisgaber* in our Torah learning.

When our comprehension in learning is concealed from us, it is because our thoughts aren't being guarded. All of us experience hardship in learning for this reason – Adam damaged the *Bris Kodesh*, and ever since then, our thoughts have become affected, and we can't understand the Torah fully.

But we can return to the kind of Torah that we received at Har Sinai, in which we were able to fully understand the Torah.

(If we don't exert ourselves in Torah, we won't understand it).

What does it mean to do *teshuvah* [during Shovavim]? It means that we must return to the inner point of Torah, to reach *menuchah* in learning Torah.

The Maharal says that Torah is spread all over the place, since we are in exile. A person has to learn a *sugya* (section of Gemara) in one *masechta* (tractate) and then he has to learn a different *sugya* in another *masechta*, in order to complete his understanding. That is the Torah of this exile – the Torah is spread out everywhere, and it isn't concentrated into any one place.

We should exert ourselves in learning, but at the same time, we need to aspire for *menuchah* in our Torah learning. (This does not mean laziness, as we said.)

Shabbos - A Glimpse of Menuchah

Besides for physical exertion in learning, we need to realize the depth of our exile – that the Torah is in exile. Because the Torah is in exile, that is why we need to exert ourselves so much to understand it. We need to taste the *menuchah* of Torah – and we can taste it through Shabbos. If we properly experience Shabbos, which is a resemblance of the World to Come, then we will have some understanding of *menuchah*.

We need to connect to the *menuchah* of Shabbos. If we connect to the *menuchah* of Shabbos, we will gain the “Torah that was given on Shabbos” – a Torah of total *menuchah*. And when we gain that *menuchah*, we will become a *maayan hamisgaber*.

The Barometer

If a person wants to see if he's leaving the Egyptian exile, he should see how connected he feels toward the Torah.

If a person truly dedicates his mind towards learning Torah, as much as his energy allows him to – then he essentially leaves this exile, and he enters into the inner point of Torah – the *menuchah* of Torah.

May we merit from Hashem to exert ourselves fully in our Torah learning – with all our energy – and from that, we should reach the *menuchah* found in Torah.

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