

The
CHASSIDUS
PERSPECTIVE
with Reb Yoel Kahn

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UNCOVERING GALUS

The *geulah* from this *galus* will be similar to the *geulah* from Mitzrayim: "I will show you wonders as in the days when you left Mitzrayim." One example is mentioned in the Haftorah of Acharon Shel Pesach. Just as Hashem split the Yam Suf when the Jews left Mitzrayim, after which they sang *shirah*, when Moshiach comes Hashem will "dry up the gulf of the sea of Mitzrayim" as well as splitting the River of Peras.

Although reminiscent of the *geulah* from Mitzrayim, the present *geulah* will differ in certain details. The Midrash tells us that when singing Az Yashir, the Jews said the word *zeh* once: *zeh keili ve'anveihu*. In the future, however, our song will include the word *zeh* twice: *hinei Elokeinu zeh, zeh Hashem kivinu lo*. What is the significance behind this difference?

Another difference is that the Yam Suf split into twelve passageways, while the river of Peras will split into seven, allowing the exiles to cross from all the seven countries mentioned earlier in the Haftorah (Ashur, Mitzrayim, Pasrus, Kush, Eilam, Shin'ar, and Chamas). What is the reason for this difference? And why does the *possuk* choose to divide the Jewish nation into seven, and not into a more common division (such as twelve, for the *shevatim*, or three, for the categories of Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael)?

TOTAL EXPOSURE

What is the inner significance of turning an ocean into dry land?

The Gemara says that every creature that exists on dry land exists in the ocean as well. The difference is that land creatures are visible to us, while water animals are hidden from view. Thus, dry land represents the levels of Elokus we can see and appreciate (*alma de'isgalya*), while the ocean symbolizes levels that are hidden from perception (*alma de'iskasya*).

Which levels are revealed and which are concealed? There is no single answer. What for one person is hidden may be within another's grasp. For example, for most of us reality consists of this physical world and nothing higher. For us, even the spiritual aspect of the world of Asiyah is beyond our grasp. Someone on

a higher plane can perceive the spiritual world of Asiyah as well, and for him, it is the world of Yetzirah that is hidden. For others, Yetzirah is revealed and Beriah is hidden (as we say in Shacharis, "Yotzer or u'vorei choshech," i.e., Yetzirah is visible while Beriah is dark and hidden from view). For yet others, Beriah, ultimately a created entity as well, is revealed, while Atzilus is hidden.

Which hidden level was revealed by Kerias Yam Suf?

The Midrash relates that when Hashem split the Yam Suf, every body of water in the world split as well. In addition to the literal sense, this means that *every* concealed level, no matter how sublime—be it Asiyah *haruchnis*, Yetzirah, Beriah, or Atzilus—was open to all.

REVEALING OUR DEPTH . . .

In the chronological order of events, Kerias Yam Suf followed Galus Mitzrayim. (In fact, the redemption was not complete until the Jews saw their enemies' downfall in the Yam Suf; until that point, although having already left the *land* of Mitzrayim, they still retained a fear of their former masters.)

This was no coincidence. The revelation of what was previously hidden—the inner meaning of Kerias Yam Suf—was a direct result of having been in *galus*, because it is when we are faced with opposition and resistance that our innermost powers are revealed.

This can be compared to a stream of water that is confronted with an impediment, such as a barrier

of stones and dirt. At first, the water is held back and its flow recedes. But then, slowly but surely, energy builds up, until the water breaks through the barrier, now flowing with a greater intensity than before.

Similarly, throughout history, it was in those times and places where it was difficult to adhere to our faith that our inner strength was revealed, taking the form of a greater yearning, deeper passion, and stronger *mesiras nefesh* than in times of

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comfort. And this is why specifically Galus Mitzrayim led to the revelation of the deepest levels, allowing even the simplest Jew to perceive the highest revelations.

...AND THE DEPTH OF GALUS

In addition to revealing the inner powers of a Jew, *galus* reveals something else as well: the hidden sparks of *kedushah* concealed within *galus* itself.

This concept is alluded to in the statement of Chazal: "The only reason the Jews were sent to exile was so that they should be joined by converts." When a non-Jew converts, he is motivated by the sparks of *kedushah* concealed deep within him, which come to the fore when he joins the Jewish faith. (This is why the Gemara uses the expression, "a *convert* who converted," and not "a *non-Jew* who converted"—unlike "a *child* who matured" and "a *slave* who was redeemed"—because he possesses sparks of holiness beforehand as well.) In broader terms, by spending time in *galus* and utilizing the world around us for the right purpose, we reveal the Elokus hidden within *galus*.

THE SECOND ZEH

We can now understand the difference between Galus Mitzrayim and the present *galus*.

Galus Mitzrayim mainly accomplished the first idea: The hidden powers of the *neshamah* were revealed, as well as the highest levels of Elokus, which is why they said *zeh keili ve'anveihu*: be it Atzilus, Kesser, or beyond, every level was in plain sight. However, since it was still before Mattan Torah, and the Divine decree placing a barrier between physicality and spirituality was yet in place, it was difficult at that time to reveal the sparks of *kedushah* hidden within *gashmiyus*. This is why the song of Az Yashir includes *zeh* just once, symbolizing one aspect of revelation.

The second concept—revealing the *kedushah* within physicality—is primarily accomplished now, during this final *galus*. When Moshiach comes, we will experience a double revelation—*zeh* twice: All the concepts we struggle to understand in Chassidus will be clearly visible, and the *kedushah* hidden in the physical will be revealed as well. We will see Hashem as He exists Above, as well as how He is found, so to say, below.

TWELVE AND SEVEN

This explains why the Yam Suf was split into twelve pathways, while Peras will be split into seven.

The twelve passageways corresponded to the twelve *shevatim*. Each *shevet* possesses unique spiritual powers, and Kerias Yam Suf revealed the inner strength in each category of the Jewish nation.

When Moshiach will come, however, not only will our *pnimiyus* be revealed, but the *pnimiyus* of *galus* will be revealed as well. This is why the river will split into seven, corresponding to the seven countries of *galus*.

The first days of Pesach recall the redemption from Mitzrayim. But as Acharon Shel Pesach approaches, when we read the Haftarah that describes Moshiach's arrival and we eat *seudas Moshiach*, our attention

shifts toward the redemption from this *galus*. The *conclusion* of Pesach—reminiscent of the *conclusion* of *galus*—reflects the imminent *geulah*, when we will say *zeh* twice: *hinei Elokeinu zeh, zeh Hashem kivinu lo*. May it take place immediately!

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