

EXILE □ CHAPTER 11

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

We'll take our last step back now and see what we'd forfeited in the course of the exile so as to know just what will be restored (since nothing saddens the heart more than losing precious things, and nothing gladdens it more than getting them back). We'll find that we'd lost four things.

It's important to know that G-d had originally "arranged for Luminaries to allow His emanations to shine upon the universe", as Ramchal puts it. That's to say that the universe was to have always been well nourished on all levels from up above. For when those Luminaries "set their countenances toward the lower world to illuminate it" as they're designed to, "all windows, light, and blessing open up, goodness intensifies everywhere, and there's no longer any tribulation or sorrow in the world". But something went very wrong at a certain juncture. The Luminaries stopped doing that and were hidden away, and the lustrous emanations "started to wane". That left our people vulnerable. There came a point when that had become so calamitous that "both the Shechina and the Jewish Nation" were deprived of the light and nourishment they'd enjoyed to that point. (The "Shechina" is the manifestation of G-d's presence in this world.)

So, the first of the four losses we've suffered in the exile was "the hiding of the Luminaries' lights, and the (collateral) lessening of the (Divine) emanation".

The second was the fact that we lost sway over our situation, and as a consequence, other peoples began to enjoy "a great deal of illumination, power, and dominion" over us which they hadn't had before. And they began to rule over us.

The third loss, which is termed "dreadful and frightful", is the fact that "the Shechina has been cast into exile" along with us, and "many powerful and mighty Luminaries accompanied Her there and were delivered into the hands of the husks" as a result! That's to say that G-d's presence could no longer be sensed in our midst and seemed to be gone.

The fourth and final loss had been our "being cast into dire poverty, and being forced to endure other hardships", including death and captivity, which has long been our people's lot despite blessed periods of reprieve, thank G-d.

"But in truth," Ramchal assures us, "all of that will prove to have been a smelting and refining process", and we'll be "cleansed of all of (our) impurities" as a consequence. The point is that all of that will be restored with the oncoming of the redemption and will have been proven to be for our ultimate bene fit.

That having been said, we've now entered upon the main body of "The Great Redemption". As we'll see, it will be comprised of the laying out of the two main stages of redemption, known as the P'kidah ("The Visitation") and Z'chirah ("The Remembrance") stages, and it will then depict what will follow them in their in even greater detail than we'd done up to now in final section entitled "The Rectified World".

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