

REDEMPTION THROUGH LOVE

by Ben Goldberg

Last class we continued looking at the first bracha of Shemonah Esrai and took a closer look at what it means when G-d bestows His beneficial kindness and remembers the kindnesses of our Patriarchs. Today we will continue looking at the first bracha, taking a closer look at the next phrase. As a reminder, the first bracha states:

"Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, G-d of Abraham, G-d of Isaac, and G-d of Jacob; the great, mighty, and awesome G-d, the supreme G-d, Who bestows beneficial kindnesses and creates everything, Who recalls the kindnesses of the Patriarchs **and brings a Redeemer to their children's children, for His Name's sake, with love.** O King, Helper, Savior, and Shield. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Shield of Abraham."

Today we will focus on the bolded text – "and brings a Redeemer to their children's children, for His Name's sake, with love."

Like the previous phrase, this text is written in the present tense, which seems a bit odd. Since G-d will bring a Redeemer in the future, should it not be written in the future tense? One would expect the verse to read, "and He will bring a Redeemer to their children's children..." Why is the verse telling us that G-d brings, in the present tense?

Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, in citing to the Siach Yitzchok, offers a fascinating response. The phrase is written in the present tense to teach us that redemption is not an event that will just abruptly occur sometime in the future. It is an ongoing process, constantly occurring. Every single event that transpires throughout the day is another step in the process leading us to the final redemption. This is truly a reassuring idea! As Rabbi Feuer goes on to note, we should realize then that every event, even those that seem to be terrible and tragic, is truly a step toward the coming of Mashiach!

I recently read in an e-mail newsletter that the Chatam Sofer, in one of his Shabbos Shuva speeches, pointed out that the death of Queen Vashti, at the beginning of the Purim story, must not have seemed like a notable event to the Jews of Shushan. I'm sure it registered as news given her prominent position but none of the Jewish citizens could have imagined that her death would ultimately lead to the appointment of Esther and, as a result, to their salvation! So too, we must remember that every event, no matter how it seems to us now, is truly for the best, as it is another step leading us to Mashiach.

And how do we get to the ultimate redemption? This verse gives us the answer to that as well, when it tells us that G-d will bring a Redeemer with love. G-d's endless love for us should serve as the guidepost for how we treat those around us. We know that the Second Beit HaMikdash, the holy Temple, was destroyed because of the baseless hatred that was so prevalent in those times. We can only be redeemed, then, by correcting this flaw and showering each other with sincere love.