

THE SINGLE EXPRESSION OF GEULAH

by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein

I will take you as a people to Me, and I shall be a G-d to you. And you will know that I am Hashem your G-d...I shall bring you to the Land.

Be'er Mayim Chaim: We are accustomed to thinking of the four expressions of redemption as separate, discontinuous items - as different one from the other as the four cups of wine they generate. But what do we make of the different phrases within this, the fourth expression, which includes everything besides the coming into the Land? They are at once both more different from each other than we initially realize, and more similar to each other in where they take us.

If Hashem takes us as a people, how could He not be our G-d? He doesn't merely promise to make us a people, but pledges to take that people to Himself. This more than implies that the people accepts Him as their Leader. What is left incomplete by His taking us as His people, that His becoming a G-d to us remains a significant enhancement?

In fact, these two aspects are two sides of one coin - but distant and distinct from each other. By becoming His people, the Torah means that we become dear to Him. He showers us with all kinds of blessings. We become the beneficiaries of His munificence.

Becoming a G-d to us most definitely adds a new dimension. It means that He becomes our advocate and protector. He is the judge and prosecutor who goes after those who harm us, achieving justice by visiting retribution upon our enemies.

Between the two, we witness chesed and din together. We experience the chesed of His gifts to us, and the din that he visits upon the Egyptians and all other oppressors after them. Observing these two great facets of Himself, we get to the third phrase: knowing Him. "And you will know that I am Hashem." We graduate beyond strong belief, and arrive at personal knowledge of Him, which is much more powerful.

This leads directly to the "fifth expression" of redemption (and the source of the Cup of Eliyahu - important enough to be on the table, but not universal enough that we should all drink from it): "I shall bring you to the Land." The causal relationship between knowing Him and being brought into the Land becomes apparent when we consider the teaching of the Ari z"l. He taught that one of HKBH's purposes in creating the world was so that all people would eventually come to recognize His existence in the heavens above and on the earth below. Our "knowing Him" is what earns us

the right to live in the Land. There, we have an opportunity to nurture that knowledge and use it in turn to support a Light of Hashem as we live lives of great holiness.

Think of it. The gift of the Land, it could be argued, has nothing to do with any of the matters we discussed above. It had already been assigned to us in the days of the Patriarchs! Rather, we must realize that the core value of the promise to them was that they would be able to extract from the Land its special value and gift. They would be able to see the Ohr Hashem as they lived in the Land, and experience its kedushah. None of the people who inhabited the Land before and after the time of the Avos caught a glimpse of this Light. Here, Hashem promises that when the descendents of those Avos would achieve the "knowing Him" our pasuk speaks of, they too would see the supernal Light available in the Holy Land.

What we see, therefore, is the interconnectedness of the expressions of redemption, and how they are arranged progressively. Saved, redeemed from the Egyptians and from Egyptian culture, we become capable of learning from displays of chesed and din. The potent, personal knowledge of Hashem that ensues opens our eyes to the great displays of kedushah in the Land. Through that, we truly "arrive" in the Land.

Sources:

1. Based on Be'er Mayim Chaim, Shemos 6:7-8
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