

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

FRIDAY NIGHT:

Therefore, say to the Children of Israel, "I am Hashem, and I shall take you out . . ." (Shemos 6:6)

Jewish history is always about two sides of one coin. It is either about exile or redemption, and there is nothing else. As we spoke about in Parashas Vayechi, and as we see in the world today, we can fool ourselves into believing that we have been redeemed when in fact we have not been, or by believing that something in between exile and redemption exists, but reality catches up for a very simple reason: we are meant for Paradise.

We were created in Paradise - Gan Aiden - and it is to Paradise that we must return. Temporary redemptions are an aspect of this, but the Final Redemption, the one we now await, will be the threshold to returning for good. Our entire drive for lasting pleasure is a function of this, and often in desperation we'll settle for whatever form of pleasure we can find.

The system never rests. It is either moving in the direction of exile - Katnus - or redemption - Gadlus. (See last week's parshah sheet.) And, depending upon which direction it is moving determines what is happening with the Jewish people. The chain reaction around the world is incomprehensible to man; if we are a light unto nations, the improvement to mankind is awesome, and if we are not, then the darkness that results is dreadful.

In last week's parshah, we witnessed a turn for the worst. The parshah began speaking about Yosef and his brothers, who undoubtedly commanded a certain amount of respect from the Egyptians while they were alive. We know from tradition that it wasn't until after Levi's death, the last of the brothers, almost 100 years since arriving in Egypt, that the oppression began. While the brothers were alive, something existed that allowed Ya'akov's family to dwell in relative peace, something that kept Egypt from turning its collective back on the Jewish people to enslave them.

According to the Arizal, the Jewish people possessed the potential and the opportunity to elevate Egypt rather than to be lowered by it. No doubt, it could have been during this time that they could have done it. They were in exile, so Zehr Anpin was without Muchin (see last week's parshah sheet), but it was still peaceful and not distracting, leaving time and energy to do that which draws light down from the upper Sefiros to provide Zehr Anpin with its Keser, Chochmah, and Binah - and Klal Yisroel with redemption.

Had we done that, then not only would we have forgone Egyptian slavery, but the entire concept of exile would have come to an eternal end. As the Leshem points out, the only reason why we left Egypt so quickly was to save Pharaoh and Egypt, not ourselves (Sha'arei Leshem, p. 408). Had we stayed in Egypt a little longer, then Egypt would have been obliterated and with her, the yetzer hara and free-will.

The Leshem explains, in every generation there is one nation in particular that represents the yetzer hara, and when it goes, so too does evil. Had the plagues not begun early when they did, then the Jewish people would have descended past the point of spiritual recognition and lost the chance for redemption. However, once the plagues began, the Jewish people only improved with time, becoming spiritually stronger with each plague that inflicted the Egyptians, and by the time the tenth plague came around, the one-fifth that survived the Plague of Darkness was triumphant over evil.

The Leshem also explains, since we did not bring the light into Zehr Anpin on our own, but rather G-d Himself did it to fulfill the need of Creation, it could only be, at best, a temporary redemption. Egypt had to survive because the yetzer hara had to survive and because free-will also had to survive, and therefore G-d even strengthened Pharaoh to balance out good and evil once again.

We squandered the 94 years and the chance to cause a lasting redemption peacefully. The next 116 years would bring it about in an alternative manner.

SHABBOS DAY:

You shall know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens . . . (Shemos 6:7)

Ya'akov and his family came down to Egypt in the year 2238, in the first quarter of the third millennium. The third millennium corresponded to the third day of creation, which corresponded to the third of the six sefiros, Tifferes. This sefirah in turn corresponds to Ya'akov Avinu, who represents Torah, and thus Torah was given in the year 2448.

Torah is redemption. The letters themselves are channels through which the Ohr HaGanuz shines. Learned and applied properly, Torah can only lead to freedom. Indeed, as the Talmud states and the Pri Tzaddik echoes, Ya'akov Avinu had one foot in the World-to-Come and the other foot in this world the last seventeen years of his life, even while living in Egypt. He was visible to the human eye, and he interacted with all those around him, but his consciousness was way above the physical constrictions of the exile of this world.

We are now living well into the last quarter of the sixth millennium. The sixth millennium corresponds to the sefirah of Yesod, which corresponds to Yosef HaTzaddik. History has already lived out Chesed, Gevurah, Tifferes, Netzach, Hod, and three-quarters of Yesod. There isn't much time or sefirot left to use, and as of this year, there are only 236 years left.

However, there is something quite unique about Yesod, as a sefirah and also as a millennium.

True, the fact that we have an obligation to believe that Moshiach can come at any time means that each sefirah has a potential to create such a moment, or series of moments. However, the reason why he hasn't come as of yet, and there have been plenty of close calls with much greater people than there are today, is because potential is just that: Potential, a possibility, but not an inevitable reality.

Not so with respect to Yesod. The Zohar itself refers to Yesod by another name: Goel, which means Redeemer. It is Moshiach ben Yosef who is said to kick-off the Final Redemption, and what better time can there be for that than in the sefirah/period that corresponds to Yosef?

But there is more to it than this, more to it than the fact that we are running out of time, more to it than the 210 of those 236 years that are supposed to belong to another period of time called Techiyas HaMeisim - Resurrection of the Dead. For, Yesod, unlike the other five sefiros of Zehr Anpin, consists of two sections, one called Yesod and the other called Atarah HaYesod, and that difference translates into the following:

The Yesod divided into two kings, the Yesod and the Atarah. The Atarah is relevant to Malchus since it is her (Yesod's) crown, which is why it is called Atarah . . . Therefore, the Yesod and the Atarah became two, but after the tikun the Yesod and the Atarah became one in order to join together Zehr Anpin and Nukveh forever . . . This is the sod of Yemos HaMoshiach being at the end of the sixth millennium, the time when the Atarah governs . . . and gives off light for Yemos HaMoshiach . . . Yesod governs the time of exile until Yemos HaMoshiach . . . Since the Atarah is rooted in an independent king, and the Yesod divided into two, therefore the sixth millennium, which corresponds to Yesod, divides into two. During the time that corresponds to the Yesod there will still be destruction and exile. However, the time that corresponds to the Atarah will be Yemos HaMoshiach . . . (Hakdamos v'Sha'arim, page 172)

The kings to which this refers are the pre-Creation sefiros which broke, or were made to break, as a prelude to Ma'aseh Bereishis. There were ten of them then as there are now, but they had yet to be called by the names we use for the Ten Sefiros since Creation. They set the pattern for all of history since Creation, including the last possible time by which the Final Redemption must occur, sometime, as the Leshem explains, during this sixth and final millennium of history.

For, there is another thing that Jewish history is about, though it really is the same as redemption: building Malchus, a de facto reality once Zehr Anpin gets its own Muchin. Malchus means kingdom, which refers to the Kingdom of G-d on earth, for which the Jewish people are the contractors:

The rectification of the Malchus and Israel are the same thing, for they are her (Malchus) building and her limbs. She emanates through each and every Jew and she is Klal Yisroel, and every rectification of Israel and their actions occur within her, since they are her spirit that has emanated. (Sha'arei Leshem, p. 86)

For, whatever Zehr Anpin is lacking during a state of Katnus, Malchus, the tenth and final sefirah, is

lacking even more. But, because of the intimate connection between Zehr Anpin and Malchus, to build the former is to build the latter.

When the Malchus has its own set of ten sefiros, G-d is One in the minds of all mankind, peace reigns, and the Jewish people fit comfortably into their role as the light unto nations. Likewise, there can be no better measure of Malchus' incompleteness than heresy, war, and the Jewish people being pushed out of the family of nations. Anti-Semitism is really a signal that the Malchus is b'Katnus and in need of completion.

SEUDOS SHLISHIS:

I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be a G-d to you. (Shemos 6:7)

Malchus means kingdom, and kingdoms require kings. And kings wear crowns - atarot - and thus Atarah HaYesod is really the transition from the sixth millennium to the seventh, the one we refer to in bentching as "the day that is completely Shabbos," which is governed by the tenth sefirah, Malchus.

It is like an apartment building, where the floor of the upper apartment is also the roof of the lower one. Yesod is a period of 1000 years, but for the sake of the analogy let's say it is a distance of ten vertical feet, where the year 5000 is the top of Yesod - its ceiling - and year 6000 is the bottom of Yesod, its floor. However, the ceiling of the apartment below it is what we are calling Malchus.

There is something unique about the apartment called Yesod. It is really one space that is made up of two parts, the top part being the Yesod itself and the bottom part being called the Atarah, which sits like a crown on top of Malchus, the lower floor. In a sense this is the transitional area between the apartment called Yesod and the one below it, the Malchus.

Returning back to the reality of the Sefiros, we are dealing once again with a time period of 1000 years. But, how much of that 1000 years is actually Yesod, and how much is actually the Atarah? Or more precisely, what is the final date for the arrival of Moshiach that the moment of transition from Yesod to Atarah represents?

Good question. And there is no answer. However, we are already in the year 5764, leaving only 236 years left until the year 6000. If Moshiach came this year, then it would mean the proportion of Atarah to Yesod is 236 divided by 1000 to 764 divided by 1000, or about 1:4.

However, the Zohar explains, the period called Atarah is made up from two sections, one called Techiyas HaMeisim - Resurrection of the Dead - and the other called Yemos HaMoshiach. Whereas the latter may be a variable to us, the former is a fixed period of time:

... As a result, the period of resurrection for the entire generation will be long, though tzaddikim who have died previously will resurrect immediately at the beginning of the period - forty years after the ingathering of the exiles. This is what it says in the Midrash: There will be many resurrections, and the

period of time will continue, according to Rebi Yehudah, from forty years after Kibbutz Golios, at which time the first resurrection will occur, and continue on until the last resurrection, a period of 210 years. Rebi Yitzchak says: 214 years. (Sha'arei Leshem, page 489)

Thus, the period of transition from this world to the period of history between 6000 and 7000, Kabbalah is telling us, is comprised of two parts, 210 (perhaps 214) years of Techiyas HaMeisim, and an unspecified period of time referred to as Yemos HaMoshiach. The former period of time, the period of resurrection is fixed and not a variable, but the latter period of time (which is the first one chronologically) could have begun at any point throughout history, but it didn't.

We're now holding in the Jewish year 5764 from Creation, 26 years in advance of the year 5790, 210 years prior to the year 6000. Techiyas HaMeisim, according to all opinions is after the period of Moshiach. That is, when he has already come and completed his work, between today and 5790, is also a period of transition to Techiyas HaMeisim.

In other words, by the time 5790 rolls around, Zehr Anpin will have grown up, received its Muchin, as will Malchus. Indeed, the fact that free-will ends with the establishment of Moshiach ben Dovid means that the light has come down and completed the six sefiros of Chesed through Yesod, and by necessity, also the Malchus.

Where does that leave us now?

MELAVE MALKAH:

G-d said to Moshe, "See, I have made you master over Pharaoh . . ." (Shemos 7:1)

However, becoming master over the Jewish people was another matter altogether . . .

The point of this exercise was to create a particular awareness. Like Yonah asleep in the hold of a ship being tossed around on turbulent seas, the Jewish people are missing a point, a very important point. And, when it comes to Jewish history, missing such a point can be like missing the last train - to redemption.

As adults, we constantly warn children about missed opportunities, and even become frustrated when they respond with a carefree attitude that suggests that they can have their cakes and eat them too, that is, waste the opportunities of today and yet still lose nothing in the future. All the examples in the world to the contrary seem to do little to budge them.

Yet, if Heaven could feel frustration, it would be blowing a gasket by now. You'd think we would have learned the system by now. You'd think that we, as a people, would realize that history is a system, and a system that runs with mathematical precision. It is not one that lacks an ending until it reaches it, but the ending is already known, and built into the system, because free-will only demands that WE don't know the outcome of events.

The sun goes up and it goes down just about the same way each day. The seasons come and go as

they do each year, and the cycle of life continues to spin as it has for all eternity. If we have learned anything from Quantum Mechanics, it is that the significant things take place out of eyeshot, and not within it.

If only Moshe Rabbeinu had access to the Internet in his time. Perhaps, then, he could have e-mailed all 15,000,000 Jews of his time and explained to them the difference between Zehr Anpin b'Katnus and Zehr Anpin b'Gadlus. Maybe he would have even attached a drawing illustrating the point using Adobe Illustrator, just to avoid any misunderstandings that could result in 12,000,000 Jews not getting the message.

The Jews of Moshe's time would have learned and understood that redemption at that time meant that no Jews could remain in Egypt. They would have seen how the Sefiros demanded it, that remaining behind in Egypt was not at all an option at that time. They would have seen clearly that the System would have responded to such a decision with death during the Plague of Darkness (the only one of the ten plagues to allude directly to Hitler, y"s).

And yet, we have Internet today and so many other ways to graphically portray and teach the System with its bells and whistles to millions of Jews. But here are Rava's words echoing in our minds: "So too will it be in the Days of Moshiach" (Sanhedrin 111a). So "too" what? So too will the Jews of Moshiach's time not get the point and get stuck where they ought to have departed from long ago.

Sure enough, as much as there are similarities between then and now, there are also major differences, one very important one being that it was the beginning of Jewish history then. Now, it is close to the end of it. True, Moshe had more bells and whistles than any of us will have to open the minds of our sleeping brethren to the status of the Jewish people today, but maybe history has compensated by giving us what we have now.

Who knows, besides the Creator Himself?

The System He created, and in such a way as to communicate to us what we need to know to be able to respond to it in life-saving ways. Learn the System, learn survival, and learn redemption.

Have a great Shabbos,

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Text

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