

PESACH

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

The Jewish people did not leave Egypt until they broke all the ministers of that kingdom and they left its control for that of The Holy One, Blessed is He, and became bound to Him. (Zohar, Bo 40a)¹ All of this happened through The Holy One, Blessed is He, Himself because of how dear Israel is to Him, as mentioned previously.

In any case, Egypt was the head of spiritual impurity and completely included the Sitra Achra. As a result, through His revelation, may His Name be blessed, at the time of the redemption, the Sitra Achra was about to be completely annihilated.² Therefore, it had to be given new strength,³ so that free-will should remain, and to renew the basis of the reason for Creation.⁴ This is really what the verse means when it says:

For they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves. (Shemos 12:39)

This would seem to present a great difficulty. They seemed to be afraid of the Egyptians to the extent that they didn't even want to prepare anything for the way, and thus the commentators explain that they had to leave quickly in order to avoid descending to the 50th level of the Fifty Gates of Impurity.

However, this does not seem to be correct. Just the opposite! The strength of impurity had been eliminated as a result of the revelation of the Divine Presence, as it says, "For the Children of Israel even a dog will not growl" (Shemos 11:7). He judged their gods and killed their firstborn. If so, how can it be said that impurity have any control, God forbid?

This is not relevant to say except with respect to the end of the oppression and the beginning of the redemption. That is, had the redemption not begun at all and they had remained enslaved to Egypt, then there would not have been a rectification, God forbid, since they had entered the 49th level of impurity, as we see in the Zohar Chadash, at the beginning of Parashas Yisro.

However, after the redemption had already commenced, from the time the plagues had begun 12 months prior . the S"A (Sitra Achra) began to lose power and he continued to do so from that point onward, particularly from the time the actual oppression ended by Rosh Hashanah, as it says in Rosh Hashanah (11a).⁵

In the month of Nissan, and especially on the first night of Pesach, the S"A was completely beaten

and conquered to the point of extinction. If so, how can one say there was concern about the power of the 50th gate? . For, The Holy One, Blessed is He, emanated His holy light onto the Jewish people, as the author of the Haggadah has written, "The King of Kings was revealed to them."

Therefore, they could not remain in Egypt a moment longer lest the S"A become completely eradicated and free-will become eliminated, the purpose of Creation.⁶ For, Egypt was the chief of all the Klipos and if she been destroyed then so would the S"A and yetzer hara have been destroyed completely. Free-will would no longer have existed, and for this reason they could not delay.

Thus, the verse says, Egypt imposed itself strongly upon the people to hasten to send them out of the land, for they said, "We are all dying." (Shemos 12:33): they had to leave quickly in order that evil could still exist, so that free-will could still function and justify Creation .

Thus, redemption had not occurred as a result of their own merit, but on the contrary, they had been quite absorbed and drowning in the zuhama and depths of Egyptian impurity. Indeed, only as a result of the merit of Bris Avos⁷ did The Holy One, Blessed is He, emanate upon them His holy light to completely weaken evil and remove that which was absorbed within it.

As a result, The Holy One, Blessed is He, uprooted the yetzer hara from within them, sanctifying Israel in His holiness, may His Name be blessed, to the point that they had to leave quickly in order to not completely eliminate the yetzer hara-so that free-will could continue to exist.

If so, then clearly evil and the enemy stands over them constantly ever ready to take revenge. Therefore, each year when this time comes around and there is an emanation of this light it becomes forbidden for us to take pleasure from chometz; even a little amount should not be seen or found, because all chometz flows from the level of strong Gevuros, which is the source for evil, as it is known.

Evil has a connection to all levels of chometz, and therefore we must distance ourselves so that we can be far away from anything that is related to it, so that it cannot attach itself to us draw from that light, God forbid .so that when there is a stimulation upon us from above, there won't be jealousy and hungering after us.⁸ This is in the meaning of the verse

Do not eat with it⁹ chometz seven days . because in haste you left Egypt. (Devarim 16:3)

This means that since you did not leave in your own merit you did not deserve to completely destroy the yetzer hara. That is why you had to leave so quickly, as mentioned before. Therefore, be careful regarding chometz which is connected to it (i.e., evil). However, in the future when the great upper light is drawn down upon us, then it will be completely eliminated, as it says regarding that time:

You will not leave in haste nor will you go in flight; for God will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. (Yeshayahu 52:12)

Then we will remain in the shadow of The Holy One, Blessed is He, forever.

- 1 Thus, that night as they conducted the Pesach Seder in Egypt, they had already risen completely above the levels of impurity and had already become holy.
 - 2 Since at that time in history Egypt and the Sitra Achra were, for all intents and purposes, the same entity spiritually- speaking, destroying the former meant destroying the latter.
 - 3 That is, God strengthened Pharaoh's heart.
 - 4 The world was made for free-will, and as long as free-will is necessary in Creation so too will evil need to exist in order to make choice a real possibility.
 - 5 The oppression did not end even after the first few plagues had already occurred.
 - 6 In other words, had the Jewish people stayed longer in Egypt then evil would have been destroyed, not the Jewish people. This, in turn, would have prematurely eliminated free-will, so therefore the Jewish people were pushed out of Egypt in order to preserve free-will.
 - 7 The promise made to Avraham that his children would eventually leave Egyptian oppression.
 - 8 The Gevuros are portrayed as spiritual vultures; since they have no source of sustenance of their own, but must draw instead from kedushah to survive, to which they lack free access, they look for any source they can find. They are particularly drawn to those who are most spiritually vulnerable.
 - 9 The Pesach Offering.
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