

# A GLIMPSE OF REDEMPTION

*by Rabbi Binyomin Adler*

The period referred to as Bain Hametzarim, the Three Weeks, is almost upon us, and it is worth our while to reflect on our current situation. This week we heard about the Israeli and terrorist group prisoner swap, where the Israelis received the bodies of two soldiers who were killed al Kiddush HaShem, sanctifying G-d's Name, while the terrorists received in exchange live murderers with Jewish blood on their hands. Although I normally refrain from using current events and politics as a springboard for insights in the weekly Torah portion, it is noteworthy what the terrorist declared when he reached his safe haven in Lebanon. According to news reports, the terrorist announced, "I return today from Palestine, but believe me, I return to Lebanon only in order to return to Palestine."

Leaving aside the intent of this murderer's words, let us focus on how this statement can be applied to us. We have been in exile for almost two thousand years. Every day in our prayers we declare that we wish to return to Eretz Yisroel. What does it mean to return to Eretz Yisroel? Are we saying that we wish to live a life completely according to the Torah, or are we merely engaging in some form of nostalgia? Every individual must decide for themselves what returning to Eretz Yisroel means, but there is one thing that we can all agree upon. The idea that we are all still in exile is a fact that no one can dispute. The Gemara (Kesubos 111a) states that the Jewish People are cautioned from ascending to Eretz Yisroel in a forceful manner. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon every Jew to anticipate the arrival of Moshiach and yearn for the day when we will all return to the Land that HaShem promised to our forefathers. Thus, we should also declare, "we have left Eretz Yisroel to reside in the exile, against our will, but believe me, I am only in the exile in order to return to Eretz Yisroel."

The Ramban (Parashas Korach) is of the opinion that there is a biblical commandment to seek out the construction of the Bais HaMikdash. Are we seeking to reach the point where we can be confident that the Bais HaMikdash will be rebuilt? Fortunately, we have an opportunity every week to taste a semblance of the redemption and this occurs on the Holy Day of Shabbos.

The Rambam (Hilchos Melachim 12:4) writes that the sages and the prophets did not desire the Messianic Era for the purpose of dominating the nations of the world or for the purpose of eating and drinking and being merry. Rather, they desired the Messianic Era so that we should be free from oppression and thus we will be able to study HaShem's Torah and thereby merit a portion in the World to Come.

Shabbos is a day when we rest from our labor and toil of the week and we have the opportunity to engage in praying to HaShem and studying His Holy Torah. The Gemara (Shabbos 118b) states that

were the Jewish People to observe two Shabbosos properly, they would be redeemed immediately. We have the opportunity, this Shabbos, to observe the Shabbos as an entire nation. If we will all observe the Shabbos properly, we will not need the reminder of the Three Weeks and Tisha Baav to remind us that we are still in exile, longing to return to Eretz Yisroel. May we see today the fulfillment of the verse that states (Yeshaya 52:8) *kol tzofayich nasu kol yachdav yiraneinu ki ayin biayin yiru bishuv HaShem Tziyon*, the voice of your lookouts, they raise their voice, they sing glad song in unison; with their own eyes they will see that HaShem returns to Tziyon.

### **Shabbos in the Zemiros**

Askinu Seudasa - Composed by the Arizal, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria

*Uzeir anpin viatika kadisha asyan lisaada bahadei*, the Miniature Presence, and the Holy Ancient One. Come to feast with it. The Arizal writes that zeir anpin is in the image of a man. Perhaps the idea being expressed here is that although we cannot see HaShem, we know that HaShem comes to feast at the Shabbos meals, and He arrives, so to speak, in the form of zeir anpin.

### **Shabbos in Tefillah**

*Koach ugevurah nasan bahem lihyos moshlim bikerev teivel*, strength and power has He granted them, to be dominant within the world. The Mishna (Avodah Zara 4:7) states that the gentiles asked the Sages in Rome, "If your G-d has no desire for idolatry, why does he not abolish it?" The Sages replied, "If it was something unnecessary to the world that was worshipped, he would abolish it; but people worship the sun, moon, stars and planets; should he destroy his universe on account of fools!" Thus, we see from this Mishna that HaShem empowered the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets with a function in this world. We must view the heavenly bodies in a responsible manner and recognize that they are merely HaShem's servant who HaShem created for our benefit, and not, heaven forbid, with the perception of the idolaters who assumed that the heavenly bodies had independent powers.

### **Shabbos Story**

The Sabba Kaddisha of Radoshitz, in his sefer, Niflaos (vol. 1, pp. 21- 22), recorded an amazing story about the formulation of this "Prayer before Praying." The story goes like this: When he was a child, the Sabba Kaddisha was once visiting Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. He was conversing with chassidim from the Rebbe's inner circle in front of the Rebbe's home when several extremely tall men came and hurried into the house. When they reached the doorway, they had to stoop down to enter since they were so unusually tall.

The holy Rebbe closed the door behind them before the chassidim could catch a glimpse of their faces. They waited outside until the visitors left to see if they could recognize them. Again the chassidim were astonished when the men left. They did so in such a hurry that they could not make out the men's features and just saw their backs; they left so fast they almost vanished. The chassidim realized that something unusual had just taken place, and they decided to investigate and

find out what had occurred. The elder chassidim among them approached the Rebbe and asked him to explain the strange incident.

This is what the Rebbe told them: "When I realized that most people cannot concentrate properly on their prayers anymore due to the awesome burdens of earning a livelihood, and they lack the time and the understanding to concentrate fully, I decided to rewrite the standard formula for the prayers. I would write a new, short and concise version that would be equally understood and grasped by everyone. The holy Members of the Great Assembly, the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah (the original authors of the standard prayers from the time of the Talmud), realized what I intended. They came here to ask me not to change even one prayer from their established formula. I took their counsel and discussed the matter with them. They advised me to establish a prayer to pray before the formal prayer service. This would help anyone who lacks the concentration and proper devotions that are necessary for all formal prayers." This "prayer before prayers" is the Yehi Ratzon prayer printed in many siddurim in the name of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. [Reprinted from a Free Download from the book "Mipeninei Noam Elimelech" translated and compiled by Tal Moshe Zwecker by permission from Targum Press, Inc.]

There is a story told of the Rebbe's brother the Rebbe Reb Zisha of Hanipoli. After Rebbe Elimelech passed away he was approached by his brother's students to be their new leader. Rabbi Zisha declined and explained his reason with a parable. "The possuk in Bereishis 2:10 states "And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden and from there it split into four paths." The Torah is eternal and alludes to all events above and below for all generations. Eden alludes to our holy master the Baal Shem Tov. The river was his student the holy Mezritcher Maggid. The garden refers to my brother the Rebbe Elimelech. This then is the meaning: a river flows from Eden to water the garden, the Torah flows as water from the Baal Shem Tov by way of the Mezritcher Maggid to the Rebbe Elimelech. From there it separates into four paths: they are 1. The Holy Rebbe the Chozeh or Seer of Lublin. 2. The Holy Rebbe Avodas Yisrael the Koznitzer Maggid. 3. The Holy Rebbe Mendel Rimanover and 4. The Holy Ohev Yisrael the Apta Rav. You need no Rebbe other than them."

## **Shabbos in Navi**

### Shoftim Chapter 21

In this chapter we learn how the Jewish People allowed the tribe of Binyomin to intermarry with the other tribes. The tribes were concerned that an entire tribe from the Jewish People would become extinct, so they allowed for the men of Binyomin to grab a wife from the daughters of Shiloh. The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 11:8) states that Shabbos complained to HaShem that it did not have a mate, and HaShem told Shabbos that the Jewish People will be its mate. It would seem that if not for Shabbos, heaven forbid, the Jewish People would not have a connection to HaShem. The Rambam writes that the love one has for one's spouse is a semblance of the love that exists between HaShem and the Jewish People. Let us use the Shabbos, our partner in life, to achieve a great closeness to our Creator, Hashem.

## Shabbos in Agadah

The Sfas Emes (Yisro 5643) quotes Rabbeinu Bachye who cites the Rambam who writes that it is said (Shemos 20:9) *sheishes yamim taavod v'iasisa kol milachtecho*, six days shall you work and accomplish all your work. The Rambam writes that this verse means that one should serve HaShem for six days by performing all of one's work, similar to the Avos who also performed actions. On Shabbos, however, the service of HaShem is without action. The Sfas Emes explains that similar to the six days of creation which were six days of action, so too the world is sustained from the service of the righteous in the form of work and labor. Thus, when it is said that HaShem rested on the seventh day, this means that the work on Shabbos is not performed through action. Despite the fact that on Shabbos there is no labor, it is the Shabbos that sustains the six days of the week. (See further in Sfas Emes how he connects this concept with the idea of everyone being in agreement that the Torah was given on Shabbos).

## Shabbos in Halacha

The Poskim mention one exception to the requirement of covering the flame. One can place raw meat in a pot on an open flame immediately prior to the onset of Shabbos, as it is not possible that the meat will be cooked in time for the evening meal. In this instance there is no concern that one will increase the heat as the food will anyway not be ready until the morning meal. This ruling will only apply nowadays to a crockpot which cooks slowly. Regarding other methods of cooking, however, since the food can generally be cooked in short period of time, one should not rely on this leniency. Thus, one would be allowed to place raw meat in a crockpot, without the use of a blech, immediately prior to the onset of Shabbos, as long as one is certain that the food will not be ready for the evening meal. Moreover, even if the pot contains partly cooked food, it is sufficient for one to place in the pot one piece of raw meat so that the entire pot will not require a blech.

## Shabbos in Numbers and Words

It is said regarding Shabbos (Shemos 20:11) *al kein beirach HaShem es yom haShabbos vayikadsheihu*, therefore HaShem blessed the Shabbos day and sanctified it. It is noteworthy that the words *beirach HaShem es yom* equal in gematria the word *haShabbos*.

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