

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Shemot, 5781
(Vol. 13)



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IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shgalov

Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman

Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg

Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה

Ekman (Santiago, Chile)

Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769

ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF

Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** תחיל'
Shgalov

DEDICATED BY

Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shgalov

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602 North Orange Drive.

Los Angeles, CA 90036

Tel.: (323) 934-7095 * Fax: (323) 934-7092

<http://www.torah4blind.org>

e-mail: yys@torah4blind.org

Rabbi Yosef Y. Shgalov,

Executive Director

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by
Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Shmos

MOSES AND MOSHIACH

There are many points of comparison between Moses and Moshiach. Both are redeemers and teachers of the Jewish people. But why was it necessary to have a two-stage process, a redemption through Moses and one through Moshiach?

When Moses encounters G-d at the burning bush, an extended conversation ensues. G-d wants Moses to redeem the Jewish people, to take them out of Egypt. Moses demurs, finding several excuses why he should not be the Redeemer. At one point, he tells G-d, "Please send the one You will send." Moses was asking G-d to send someone else, namely, Moshiach. Since G-d was going to send Moshiach in the future anyway, Moses asked G-d to send Moshiach immediately. Moses wanted the first redemption to also be the last.

Of course, Moses's request was not granted. G-d wanted Moses to be the one who took the Jewish people out of Egypt. Moses was to be the first redeemer. Still, the request, "Please send the one You will send" indicates there is an essential connection between Moses and Moshiach. Therefore, Moses could ask that Moshiach be the one to redeem the people from Egypt.

The connection seems rather obvious: both Moses and Moshiach redeem the Jewish people from exile. This task so unites the two that the Sages declare, "Moses is the first redeemer and he is the last redeemer." Obviously this doesn't mean that Moses himself will be the final redeemer, since Moses was from the tribe of Levi while Moshiach will be from the tribe of Judah. It means that through the strength of Moses, Moshiach will come.

How so? The first, and therefore primary, qualification of Moshiach is to be uniquely expert in Torah. This means his ability to redeem the Jewish people comes through Torah, the Torah of Moses. Also, the Jewish people bring Moshiach and the Redemption through their study and fulfillment of the Torah, given to them by Moses.

The parallel runs deeper. Both Moses and Moshiach removed impurity and imperfection from the world. At creation, the world was perfect and unblemished. Through the sin of the tree of knowledge, impurity and imperfection came into the world. When the Torah was given – through Moses – the impurity was removed. The world was elevated to its original state -and beyond – by the Jewish people at Sinai. The sin of the Golden Calf caused the world to once again descend into impurity, a situation that will last until Moshiach, when the world will be purified and refined forever.

In general, we may say that the spirituality, the revelation of G-dliness, that Moses introduced into the world, Moshiach will establish permanently. According to the well-known principal that a descent is for the sake of an ascent, we can understand the connection between the sin of the tree of knowledge and the giving of the Torah. The Torah, G-d's Wisdom, enabled the world to reach a higher spiritual state than it experienced before the sin. At Sinai, the revelation of G-dliness was visible to the physical eye. Still, this was only a temporary state, and therefore only an example of the revelation that will occur at the final Redemption.

We know that Moshiach will teach Torah, and on a higher level than Moses. This is because the revelation of G-dliness that Moshiach will bring will be much higher than that experienced at Sinai and the giving of the Torah.

The difference between Moses and Moshiach may thus be said to be the difference between the temporary and the permanent. The

giving of the Torah temporarily interrupted the state of impurity of the Jewish people (and therefore that of the rest of the world). But this revelation of G-dliness from Above did not penetrate and purify the world. So when that revelation was removed, so was the purification, and it became possible for the impurity – and death – to return. However, the Torah set in motion, so to speak, the process of purification. With the coming of Moshiach, the world will be completely refined, death will be swallowed up forever and the purification will permanently penetrate the world.

The “descent for the sake of ascent” parallel between the situations of Moses and Moshiach goes even further: before Redemption, both the first of Moses and the last of Moshiach, there is the process of exile, oppression and Divine service. Before Moses, the Jewish people went into the Egyptian exile. There, despite the slavery and persecution, they maintained their Jewishness and performed the Divine service required of them. The iron cauldron of Egypt prepared them for the Torah, the revelation at Sinai. Similarly, through their Torah study and observance of mitzvos throughout this long exile, the Jewish people have refined themselves and purified the world, preparing both to experience the imminent future Redemption.

Let us ask: Why is the permanent revelation of G-dliness a two-stage process, first the revelation through Moses and then, over thirty-three hundred years later, the revelation through Moshiach? Why not a one-stage process as Moses requested?

The purpose of creation is to create a “dwelling place below,” to transform the world so that G-dliness may be revealed within it. This requires two things: the world must be capable of being transformed, and there must be the means of transforming it. The Jewish people, the agents of that transformation, were given the Torah and its mitzvos at Sinai. Also at Sinai, the world received the

ability to be affected by the Torah and mitzvos of the Jewish people. When the Torah was given, the world's existence was temporarily nullified. This temporary nullification from Above imprinted into the nature of the world the capacity to recognize the G-dliness inherent within it. The Torah and mitzvos actualize that ability, so that recognition of the G-dliness within creation occurs even on the physical level.

Moses started the process. By bringing to the Jewish people the ability to refine the world, and the world the capacity to recognize the Oneness of G-d within itself, Moses laid the groundwork for the future Redemption, when the world as a dwelling place for G-dliness would become a physical reality. Making that happen is the task of Moshiach. But the strength to achieve this, and the very possibility, comes through Moses.

This explains the two-part process: The primary purpose of the servitude and exile in Egypt, and the subsequent redemption, was for the Jewish people to receive the Torah, and thus the ability and potential to refine the world. This was the task of Moses. After the Torah was given, the primary purpose of the oppression and exile of the Jewish people was to actually fulfill their potential, to refine the world through their Torah and mitzvos. The coming of Moshiach completes that process, leading to the primary Divine service of the world, after it has already been purified and refined.

Man is a microcosm. The same order that applies to the world at large applies to each individual. As the Torah of Moses leads to the redemption of Moshiach in a general sense, each individual, through his or her mitzvos, can make it real in the here and now. The day begins with prayer and Torah study, which gives the person the strength to work and perform his Divine service. Prayer enables a person's Divine soul to control his inclinations and influence his part of the world. His conduct, in accordance with Torah, affects

and transforms his environment and those around him. It becomes obvious to all who observe him that he is wise, ruling over his "small city," his body and inclinations, for, acting as the Torah dictates, he brings Moshiach.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 11, pp. 8-13)

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