

Yearning for Salvation

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Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

The theme of *emunah*, faith, lies at the heart of *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, the first of the Ten Commandments. This commandment¹, which is an imperative for every Jew to believe in Hashem's existence, has a lesser known aspect especially relevant for our times. According to the medieval work *SeMaK* (*Sefer Mitzvos Katan*, authored by Rabbeinu Yitzchak of Kurvil), this commandment requires us to cultivate *tzipiya liYeshu'a*, yearning for salvation:

Just as we must believe that He took us out of Egypt, as it says, "I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of Egypt" ... Since this is one of the Ten Commandments, it must mean that just as I wish you to believe that I took you out, I wish you to believe that I am Hashem your G-d and that I will gather you and save you in the future. As indeed, He will in His mercy save us again, as it says, "He will return and gather you from all the nations."

Sefer Mitzvos Katan, §1

שכשם שיש לנו להאמין שהוציאנו ממצרים
דכתיב אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך וגומר.
ועל כרחיך מאחר שהוא דיבור, הכי קאמר,
כשם שאני רוצה שתאמינו בי שאני הוצאתי
אתכם כך אני רוצה שתאמינו בי שאני ה'
אלהיכם ואני עתיד לקבץ אתכם
ולהושיעכם. וכן יושיענו ברחמי שנית,
כדכתיב (דברים ל') ושב וקבצך מכל העמים
וגו'.

ספר מצוות קטן א

The element of yearning for Hashem's ultimate salvation is a recurring theme in our liturgy. Each day in *shemoneh esrei* just before concluding the blessing of *ישועה* קרן we say *כי מצמיח קרן ישועה* because for Your salvation we yearn all day.²

Of the Rambam's thirteen fundamentals of faith, the twelfth, which deals with the belief in the coming of Moshiach, emphasizes not only belief in Moshiach's coming, but also "longing" for this to happen each and every day: *ואף על פי שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבא* - even though he delays, nonetheless I long for him each day, that he should come³. This notion is echoed in the poem of *Yigdal*, recited at the outset of our prayers, which encapsulates the thirteen principles: *ישלח לקץ* - He will send our Moshiach at the end of days to redeem those who long for His ultimate salvation. Similarly, this affirmation appears in the *shacharis kedusha* for Shabbos: *ותמלוך עלינו כי מהכים אנחנו לך* - reign over us because we long for You.

Anticipating the Redemption: Dogma or Virtue?

Let us explore the Talmudic discussion about this longing; what it suggests, and its significance.

¹ According to many *rishonim*, the dictum "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*" constitutes an actual commandment to believe in a Creator, rather than being merely an axiomatic statement.

² This expression, as explained by Abudarham and Rabbeinu Yehuda b. Rav Yakar, is based on two Biblical verses: Bereishis 49:18 - "איתך קויתי כל היום" and Tehilim 25:5 - "לישועתך קויתי ד" -

³ The wording is based on *Chavakuk* 2:3 "אם יתמהמה חכה לו כי בא יבא"

R. Shmuel b. Nachmani said, R. Yochanan said, "a blight on those who calculate ends, for they say, 'since the end arrived and Moshiach did not come, he will no longer come.' Rather, long for him, as it says, 'if he tarries, long for him.' Perhaps you will say that we long for him, but He does not long for us? The verse says, 'Hashem therefore will long to be gracious with you, and He will rise to show you mercy.' Now that we long, and He longs, who is to stop [the redemption from occurring at once]? The midas haDin (strict attribute of justice) stops [the redemption]. Now that the attribute of justice stops the redemption, why long for it? To receive reward, as it says, 'praiseworthy are those who long for him'."

Sanhedrin 97b

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: תיפח עצמן של מחשבי קיצין, שהיו אומרים: כיון שהגיע את הקץ ולא בא - שוב אינו בא. אלא חכה לו, שנאמר אם יתמהמה חכה לו. שמא תאמר אנו מחכים והוא אינו מחכה - תלמוד לומר ולכן יחכה ה' לחננכם ולכן ירום לרחמכם. וכי מאחר שאנו מחכים והוא מחכה, מי מעכב? - מדת הדין מעכבת, וכי מאחר שמדת הדין מעכבת, אנו למה מחכים? - לקבל שכר, שנאמר אשרי כל הוכי לו.

סנהדרין צז:

Even without delving into the full depth of this enigmatic passage, we glean several important ideas:

1. While one should not engage in specific calculations regarding the time of Moshiach's arrival, one should actively await his coming.
2. It is not only we who wait; Hashem, Himself, does the same.
3. The delay in Moshiach's coming is caused by *midas haDin*, making the process of anticipation something of a struggle in futility; yet, precisely for this we are assured special reward.

In contrast, the Rambam writes:

Anyone who does not believe in him, or who does not long for his coming, denies not only the prophets, but denies the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu. For the Torah testifies about Moshiach, as it says, "Hashem will return your captivity and have mercy upon you; he will return and gather you ... even if your scattered ones are at horizon's edge ... Hashem will bring you." These explicit words of the Torah include everything spoken by the prophets.

Rambam, Hilkhot Melachim 11:1

וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו, או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו, לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר, אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו, שהרי התורה העידה עליו שנאמר ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך וגו' אם יהיה נדחך בקצה השמים וגו' והביאך ה', ואלו הדברים המפורשים בתורה הם כוללים כל הדברים שנאמרו על ידי כל הנביאים.
רמב"ם הלכות מלכים יא:א

The plain sense of the Rambam's words suggests that not only is belief in Moshiach's coming a critical tenet of Jewish faith, but that the process of anticipating his arrival is equally critical. One who does not actively await Moshiach's arrival is considered to have denied the Torah. How can this be reconciled with the passage in Sanhedrin which implies that the process of anticipation is inherently irrational, and serves only as a means of earning extra reward?

Two Tiers of Yearning

Sefer Siach Yom, a commentary on *Shemoneh Esrei*⁴, suggests that there are two distinct aspects of longing for Moshiach. The first is referred to as *tziyipa beRu'ach*, a spiritual vision of longing. This means that one is not merely required to believe in the coming of Moshiach, but one is

⁴ Authored by Rabbi Yosef Roth and Menachem Stein (Bnei Brak 5760), pp. 300-304.

equally obliged to recognize the deficiency of a world which has yet to be perfected by G-d's salvation. The Rambam's attribution of a rational element to the process of longing for Moshiach refers only to this *tzipiya liYeshu'a*. It is quite possible for one to wholeheartedly subscribe to the Messianic doctrine, yet mistakenly believe that fulfillment is found in achieving personal goals, not in the larger picture of *tikun olam*. Such an individual is deemed *eino mechakeh leBi'aso* - he does not truly await the arrival of the Moshiach because he does not perceive the vacuum that exists in a world lacking Hashem's salvation.

The gemara in Sanhedrin, on the other hand, is discussing a higher order of yearning. Not only should a Jew be cognizant, in a general sense, of the void that exists in an unredeemed world; he should reinforce such sentiments on a daily basis with an eye to becoming consumed by awareness of the real possibility that the Moshiach could come at any moment. This kind of anticipation is exemplified by such saintly figures as Rav Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev whose son's wedding invitation stated that the wedding would take place, G-d willing, in Yerushalayim, but in the event that Moshiach would not yet have arrived, then an alternate site would be designated in Barditchev. This level of yearning, while perhaps not indispensable as an article of faith, is something for which every Jew should strive and for which one accrues special merit. This is why, when we petition G-d in the *Shemoneh Esrei* to bring the salvation, "*es tzemach David meheira satzmiach*," we append to this request the affirmation of "*ki liYeshu'ascha kivinu kol hayom*" – because for Your salvation we yearn all day. We ask that Hashem bring redemption in merit of the fact that we passionately yearn for it. This form of yearning, which flows from the heart rather than the intellect, is not dimmed or squelched by the *midas hadin* which inexorably delays Moshiach's coming.

Tikva and *Tzipiya*

The Talmud (Shabbos 31a) teaches that one early question asked of each departed soul by the heavenly tribunal is "*tzipisa liYeshu'a*" - have you yearned for salvation? The Chofetz Chaim explained the distinction between the terms *tikva* and *tzipiya*, both of which mean "hope," along the lines of the two levels of yearning described above. *Tikva* refers to a sense of hope which is consistent with an inner vision, while *tzipiya* which derives from the word *tzofeh*, an onlooker, suggests the image of someone who, as a result of his intense yearning, rushes outside constantly to see if the dream has been realized. It is this second level which the gemara describes as *tzipiya liYeshu'a*, longing for salvation. And it is this notion that is apparently alluded to in "*ki liYeshu'ascha kivinu kol hayom*." (The additional words "*kol hayom*" are meant to transform the first level of *tikva* into one of *tzipiya*.) Indeed, *nusach Sefard* siddurim contain two additional words here, as if to accentuate the point: *uMetzapim liYeshu'a*.⁵

Existential Perils in Israel

While we cannot expect to understand the reasons for the existential challenges that we face in Eretz Yisrael on a daily basis, and the heavy toll that it has fraught over the years, there can be no doubt that it all serves, in some mysterious and inexplicable way, to help bring about the

⁵ *Sha'arei Teshuva* to *Orach Chayim* 118 notes that when we recite the words "*ki liYeshu'ascha kivinu kol hayom*" we should think of this question, *tzipisa liYeshu'a*, which will be asked in the afterlife, and prepare to respond in the affirmative. This may have been the origin of the two words that appear in *nusach Sefard*.

ultimate redemption. The ongoing crisis in Israel should serve as an impetus for us to intensify our quest for salvation and sharpen our inner vision. We must constantly remind ourselves that if Eretz Yisroel is not whole then we are not whole, and that without peace in Israel we too cannot experience true fulfillment in our personal lives. Rav Shlomo Wolbe (1914-2005), the great musar personality, once noted regarding the sequence of blessings in *bircas haMazon* that after thanking Hashem for our food in the first *bracha*, we speak about the land of Israel in the next *bracha*, and then, in the third *bracha*, proceed to request mercy for Yerushalayim. The message is clear: so long as Eretz Yisroel is in spiritual exile, so long as the *Beis Hamikdash* in Yerushalayim is yet to be rebuilt, our own fulfillment is also lacking.

But beyond reinforcing an inner vision of hope, we must also strive to embrace the dimension of *tzipiya liYeshu'a*, generating an ever-present awareness that salvation can come literally at any time. In one sense, nurturing this kind of anticipation is difficult in the face of the many heartbreaking events we have witnessed in recent years, and in the context of a political situation that holds little promise for solution. But on the other hand, ironic though it may seem, it is precisely the darkness and despair that can give rise to passionate hope. It is always darkest before dawn, but dawn inevitably shines forth.

Rising From the Ashes: The Symbol of the *Menorah Shel Aish*

The son of the Chofetz Chaim quotes a beautiful thought in the name of his father to illustrate this point. Of all the Mishkan's utensils, there was one – the *menora* - which Moshe had particular difficulty visualizing. Hashem repeatedly showed Moshe the manner in which the *menora* was to be made, but to no avail. Finally, Hashem said: "Hurl the gold into the fire and then you will see the *menora* emerge from it. "What was it about the *menora* in particular" asked the Chofetz Chaim, "that gave Moshe such difficulty?" He answered as follows. As is known, each of the vessels in the Mishkan contained some symbolic representation. (The *aron* symbolized divine wisdom, the *shulchan* corresponded to the material sustenance of the Jewish people, etc.) The *menora*, explained the Chofetz Chaim, is the *ner tamid* of our people – the symbol of the eternity of the Jewish people. According to the Zohar, the light of the *menora* in the Mishkan was meant to correspond to a heavenly light which illuminated the continued survival of the Jewish people. Why did Moshe despair with respect to the *menora*? Because he saw through divine inspiration the millions of *korbanos* throughout the millennia – all the terrible tragedies that would befall us and the deep sense of despair that would exist. So Moshe asked incredulously: "How can I construct a *menora* whose purpose is to light up the nation when all I see is darkness?" Hashem's response was "Moshe, throw the gold into the fire and see what emerges." The symbolic message is that while man can only see things superficially, in reality it is precisely those periods that seem bleakest – when destruction surrounds us, when we seem to be consumed by the blazing fire of our enemies – that the *menora* will emerge and shine forth. Just as the founding of *medinat Yisroel* came about miraculously out of the ashes of the Holocaust, there is no doubt that all the trials and suffering that we have witnessed in Eretz Yisroel are meant somehow, in the divine scheme, to pave the way for a glorious future. We must intensify our efforts to support *acheinu bnei yisrael* in Eretz Yisrael during these trying times, while at the same time look beyond the immediacy of the moment and perceive with *tzipiya* the seeds of *geulah* which are already implanted.