

From L'Shana Haba'ah to Hatikva: An Expression of Hope and Prayer on Exalted Nights

I clearly remember the last Pesach Seder before we made aliyah six years ago. We reached the culminating point where everyone joyously sings together *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim*, which obviously had deeper meaning for us that year. But then I began to wonder, what do people who are already living in Israel, specifically Yerushalayim, say if they are already there? What about tourists and visitors who are spending Pesach in Yerushalayim?

The same can be said for the end of Yom Kippur, which in of itself is a question – what makes Yom Kippur and Pesach night unique as the only two times throughout the year we include this as a set part of our liturgy?

The Gemara describes when the future redemption will take place:

רבי אליעזר אומר ... בניסן נגאלו בתשרי
עתידין ליגאל. רבי יהושע אומר ... בניסן
נגאלו בניסן עתידין ליגאל.
ראש השנה י-יא.

R. Eliezer says ... In Nissan we were redeemed and in Tishrei, we will be redeemed. R. Yehoshua says ... In Nissan we were redeemed and in Nissan,



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we will be redeemed.

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Based on this, Rabbi Yitzchak Arieli (Mashgiach of Yeshivas Mercaz HaRav in Jerusalem who lived from 1896-1974), in his *Haggadah Shiras Hageula* (p.94) offers an explanation to our question. According to R' Elazar and R' Yehoshua, either Tishrei or Nissan will be the month that the redemption will take place and that is why we specifically say *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* on these two holidays, Yom Kippur in Tishrei and Pesach in Nissan.

However, there are several chagim in Tishrei. Why specifically choose Yom Kippur?

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon in his *Haggadah Shiras Miriam* (p.372) also references this Gemara, but adds:

במדרש (מכילתא יד) אף הזוכר במפורש
כי ליל הסדר הוא זמן הראוי לגאולה: 'ליל
שימורים הוא לה' – בו נגאלו ובו עתידין
להיגאל.' בשני הזמנים הללו אנו זוכים להיות
זכים וטהורים. במוצאי יו"כ – לאחר תהליך
הכפרה והסליחה. בליל הסדר – לאחר
שיצאנו לחירות פנימית, השתחררנו מכל
השעבודים החיצוניים, וזכינו להתקרב אל ה'
כעת מרגישים אנו מוכנים, ומבקשים בצורה
ישירה, 'לשנה הבא בירושלים הבנויה.'

The Midrash states explicitly that Seder night is a time worthy of redemption. "It is the night where Hashem guards us," In it, we were redeemed and we will once again be redeemed. At both of these times, we have merited being clean and pure. At the conclusion of Yom Kippur, after the process of atonement and forgiveness, and on Seder night, after we have experienced an inner redemption and were freed from our external influences, we merit coming close to Hashem. At that moment we feel

This article is dedicated to my dear friend Rav Gavriel Pinchas ben Devora Zlata. May he merit a refuah shleimah.

ready and are able to request in a direct fashion: next year in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

Nonetheless, there is now one other time during the year when many proclaim *L'Shana'ah haba'ah* as part of the tefilla, on Leil Yom Ha'Atzmaut. How does Yom Ha'Atzmaut fit the paradigm we saw previously?

Let's rewind to the beginning of the Haggadah, where we can learn from a similarly worded statement to *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim*:

השתא הכא לשנה הבא בארעא דישראל.
Now we are here. Next year, we shall be in the Land of Israel.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook writes:

הדברים שאינם מוכנים צריכים זמן רב להתפתחותם אבל מה שכבר מוכן בעצמותו וסיבות צדדיות מנעו מהיות ההכנה יוצאת אל הפועל תיכף כשתסור המניעה יוצא מה שמוכן כבר אל הפועל. יחוסנו לארץ ישראל איננו יחש מקרי אבל הוא יחש אלהי טבעי לנו כל הוייתנו ועצמותנו קשורות הנה בארץ חמדה וכל ריחוקנו מאדמתנו מפני הטאינו לא גרם שינוי בעצמות ערכנו והננו תמיד קשורים לאדמת קדשנו בכל טבע לבבנו ועצמותנו בארעא דישראל.
סידור עולת ראייה חלק ב' עמ' רסה

Things which are not prepared require a long time to develop, but things which are inherently prepared and external factors prevent them from coming to fruition will sprout once that external factor is removed. Our relationship with the Land of Israel is not an arbitrary feeling, but rather a Divine feeling for us. Our entire essence and being is connected to the Land and our distance from it because of our sins does not change our inherent state. We are constantly connected to our holy land with all of our hearts.

Siddur Olat Raayah, vol. 2, p.265

Rav Kook understands this statement not merely as noting the facts (which may not be factual for one who lives in Israel), but rather as a prayer

and a promise. "We are praying for redemption, but we also are confident that it will surely come."¹

This same concept can be applied to our song of *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* — not just a declaration that we physically be present in Yerushalayim next year, but a confident prayer we will be there in the framework of the geula.

But what about those already living in Yerushalayim?

A story is told about Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook when he once went to fundraise in America. A wealthy man offered a significant donation on the condition that Rav Kook would explain to him why Yerushalaimi Jews say *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* at the end of the Seder and also the end of Neilah if they are already there! Rav Kook answered that we add the word "*habnuya*", for there is still time until this will be fulfilled completely. And then, he added wryly, when we say *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim*, our intention is that our whole being should merit to be in Yerushalayim, both physically, spiritually and mentally, unlike nowadays when some can live in Yerushalayim but their mind is elsewhere, thinking about trips to America to collect money.²

Similar to Rav Kook, many commentators from the last century also add the word *habnuya* either parenthetically or with a notation specifying it as *minhag Eretz Yisrael* or *Minhag Yerushalayim*.³

The addition of *habnuya* transforms *L'Shana haba'ah* from a factual proclamation to a confident and hopeful prayer that we not only return to Eretz Yisrael, but will see the full geula with the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash by this time next year.

The Yom Kippur They Sang Hatikva

Interestingly, there are some communities who have the custom to sing Hatikva at the conclusion of Neila on Yom Kippur, including some Northern Tel Aviv Synagogues⁴ and the Jerusalem Great Synagogue.⁵

Rabbi Yitzchak Avigdor Ornstein (1894-1948), former Rabbi of the Western Wall, also writes⁶ about an episode that occurred at the Kotel at the end of Yom Kippur in 1945 after the blowing of the shofar and singing of *L'Shana haba'ah*, "The young men and women began singing Hatikva and other songs... they davened Maariv, and the young men and women left the Kotel area in song..."⁷

While this custom may have originated from those (secular) young men and women at the kotel,⁸ it is nonetheless an expression of yearning, prayer and tikva, hope, for a national redemption to not only return to Israel (as they currently lived there) but to receive independence in the Jewish homeland, which *L'Shana haba'ah* also represents.

Hatikva Pesach Night

In 1919, the sefer *Midrash Haggadah* was printed in Djerba, Tunisia. This Haggadah was the work of Rabbi Tzemach Cohen the 2nd (1744-1830), a Dayan, Torah scholar and Kabbalist from Djerba, and included 55 different commentaries he had collected into one work. When it was published in 1919, the printer added the song "Hatikva" to the very last page under the heading "Shir Hatikva". It was a logical inclusion, as the end of the Seder dealt with aspects of geula (i.e. *Chasal sidur Pesach* and *L'Shana*

haba'ah B'Yerushalayim), and the Jews of Northern Africa had great affinity for Naftali Herz Imber's Hatikva song.⁹ Additionally, some communities have the custom to sing *Chasal sidur Pesach* to the tune of Hatikva, although Hatikva itself they do not recite.¹⁰

While the custom may have been started erroneously and was not widespread, the fact that Hatikva was even presumed to be naturally juxtaposed with *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* at the end of the Seder, demonstrates *L'Shana haba'ah's* role as a communication of tikva, hopeful prayer for the redemption, on the Night of Redemption, Leil HaSeder.

L'Shana Haba'ah on Yom Ha'atzmaut

We can now understand why *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* is included on Yom Ha'atzmaut night. In a similar vein to Pesach and Yom Kippur, we are offering a confident prayer as we celebrate a time when we saw God shine on us "rays" of geula through the establishment of a Jewish state; Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik famously asserted that the establishment of a Jewish state was considered a great gift that God gave us.¹¹ Yom Ha'atzmaut has come to be a day that signifies our confidence in Hashem fulfilling His promise to return us to our Land, where we can freely worship Him and observe Jewish law; where

"Happy New Year" is symbolized with an apple and honey rather than the ball dropping at Times Square, and where, come December, Maoz Tzur and Haneiros Halalu are playing throughout the stores rather than songs about Santa. It is exactly at this time, on the 5th of Iyar, that we raise our voice in praise, prayer and hope – *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim habnuya!*

The miracle of Medinas Yisrael, and all of the miracles we've seen over the last almost 67 years in the Land of Israel may only be the *aschalta d'geula* (or *aschalta d'aschalta d'geula*), the beginning of redemption, but we hope and pray this Pesach that our prayer will be answered, so that the 5th of Iyar and Yom Haatzmaut will truly be *moadim l'simcha l'geula shleimah*.

Notes

1. *The Night that Unites Haggadah*; Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider, Urim Publications 2014.
2. *Malachim Kivnei Adam*, p. 221, as noted in R. Shlomo Aviner's *Shu"t SMS "L'Shana Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim Habnuya."*
3. See Rabbi Menachem Kasher's *Haggadah Shleimah* and *Haggadat Pesach Artziyisraelit*; Rav Aviner, op. cit., notes that Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlop also listed *habnuya* parenthetically and Rabbi Shlomo Goren wrote it was Nusach Eretz Yisrael, as the minhag to say *L'Shana haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* began in *Chutz La'Aretz*, as those who are in Eretz Yisrael, or more accurately Yerushalayim, are already there and therefore add *habnuya*. It should also be noted that in *Haggadah Shel Pesach M'Beis Levi* p. 233, the GRI"Z was against adding *habnuya* and changing the *nusach*, claiming

it was a creation by those who feel we've already reached partial *geula* and all that remains is building the Beis Hamikdash.

4. Dov Sedan, *Ant Hu Malka Melech Malchaya* (1985) pg. 550 as cited in Arend (see note 8).
5. As told to me by Sandy Cohen.
6. Rabbi Ornstein's son, Shmuel Even-Or, compiled into book form, a diary Rabbi Ornstein had written about daily occurrences at the Kotel. Its title is *Yoman Hakotel HaMaaravi* (Jerusalem, 1968).
7. *Yoman HaKotel HaMaaravi* p. 344 as quoted in Arend (note 8). On p.388, he tells a similar episode from the following year as well.
8. See Dr. Aharon Arend, "*Minhag Shirat Hatikva Acharei Tekiat Shofar B'Motzai Yom HaKippurim*," *Daf Shvui, Universitat Bar Ilan* no. 255. Also see there for a more in depth analysis and hypothesis of the relationship between Hatikva and the shofar blowing.
9. See Dr. Aharon Arend, "*Hatikva B'Leil HaSeder*," *Daf Shvui, Universitat Bar Ilan* no. 387. Dr. Arend notes that the North African Jews' affinity to Hatikva was most likely the full original 9 stanza verse which is more religious in nature and verse than the shorter Israeli national anthem Hatikva that we know today. Also, many religious Jews were against the revised version of Hatikva, specifically for the secular tone and anti-Jewish ideology of being an *Am Chofshi*. Imber's original verse instead read "*lashuv l'erez avoteinu l'ir ba David chana*, to return to the land of our forefather, to the city where David camped." In fact, once the newer version of Hatikva became popular, the custom of Djerba to recite Hatikva Pesach night stopped. Tangentially, this is why the Yom Haatzmaut special Tefillah at night does not include the singing of Hatikva, but rather *Shir Hamaalos* (which almost was voted the Jewish national anthem at the World Zionist Congress in 1933) to the tune of Hatikva.
10. Arend, *ibid*.
11. *Nefesh HaRav* pg. 85.

