



THE TORAH OF REDEMPTION

As the Jewish people grow and evolve throughout history, the Torah follows a similar pattern. Just as new attributes of our national character are realized and developed over time, so too Torah study grows, and new facets of Torah are revealed with each day. And so, alongside the dramatic changes that our people undergo as we return to our homeland, the Torah, too, is evolving with us. The flowering of the Torah in the time of redemption is termed “*Toras hageula*,” and it has a unique character that is directly tied to the times during which it is being revealed. In the upcoming essay, we will both attempt to define *Toras hageulah* as well as understand some of its impact on klal Yisrael.

Toras hageulah can be described with three main pillars, and though they all flow from the same source, it helps to

divide them up. The first pillar is the increased focus on the hidden side of Torah, known as *penimiyus Hatorah*. The main feature of *penimiyus Hatorah* is its fixation on Hashem’s presence. Instead of speaking about the halacha itself for example, it focuses on Hashem’s divine wisdom that went into commanding the law. Whereas the halachic side of Torah may focus on practical behaviors in the workplace, *penimiyus Hatorah* focuses on looking deeper and seeing Hashem in every business deal. In the past, such study was limited to only a few unique people, but the soil of Eretz Yisrael is rich with the right nutrients to foster its spread to the masses. The Land of Israel is the land of prophecy, the land of interaction with Hashem, and that is what makes it spiritually ripe for Torah study that is entirely focused on seeing and interacting with Him.¹

Rav Kook explains:

מתי הוא טוב ללמוד סתרי תורה, כשהתשוקה הפנימית של קרבת ד' היא חזקה, מתעלה ומתגברת, עד שלא תתן מנוח לנפש, ואינה משביעה את חפצה בשום תכן רוחני וקדוש שבעולם, כי אם עם ההגיון הפנימי המדבר ברזי עולם.

When is it good to learn the secrets of the Torah? When the inner desire for closeness to Hashem is strong, ascending and increasing until it does not give rest to the soul and does not satiate its desire except through the most spiritual and holiest content in the world, except through the inner logic that speaks of the secrets of the world.²

Oros Hatorah 10:1

The return to the land of prophecy has sparked this desire in our people to be close to Hashem,³ and thus not only is the soil ripe for *penimiyus Hatorah*, the people, too, are primed to engage in it in a real and broad way.⁴ [The

unity of the people is also a major theme in *penimiyus Hatorah*, and klal Yisrael is seen as one body, with each individual acting as a unique cell with a unique purpose. In this way, *klal Yisrael* acts as single chariot for materializing Hashem's presence in this world.]

The second pillar of *Toras hageulah* flows directly from the first, and that is the expansiveness of the Torah. *Toras hageulah* is not limited to any sphere, and in fact covers all bases of life. Whereas in the past, the enemy of the Jewish people may have been the Greeks, and their evil activities included influencing the Jewish people to be involved in sports, art and music (the Yefes of the universe), in the days of *geulah*, those activities play a big part in *avodas Hashem*. Exile has forced our people to put up walls from the beauty of the material world and separate from it in the safety of *batei medrash* and shuls, but on the soil of Eretz Yisrael, the mundane can be holy and need not be shunned. Art, music and athletics all have a place in the Torah, and there can be healthy engagement in the holiest of contexts without fear of being dirtied by ulterior un-Jewish motives. Hashem is everywhere and is the life force of everything, and therefore He can be accessed in all corners of existence. In fact, this was an ideal since the earliest days of mankind when the Torah tells us:

יְפֹת אֲלֹהִים לְיִפְתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁכֶּן בְּאֶהֱלֵי שֵׁם...
May Hashem grant beauty to Yefes, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.
Bereishis 9:27

This means that the kingdom of Yefes, the glory of Greece, will one day find its place in the tents of Shem, the ancestor of the Jewish people. Due to the spreading of awareness of Hashem

in all places, Hashem can be accessed and appreciated in what was once off limits because it was deemed unholy.

The third pillar is the expansion of *avoda shebilev*, the service of the heart. Tefila has extended beyond the borders of the synagogue and has become a mode of existence. Tefila does not occur only in three specific meetings of the day, but rather is a yearning for connection with Hashem that is constant. As Rav Dov Singer terms man the “*homo mispalelus*” (*Tikon Tefilati*, intro), we are naturally pray-ers and tefila is our frame of life. Thus tefila has grown to more of

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a natural state of *dveykus*, no matter what activity is going on.

This also includes a deepening of the Torah's view on the human experience, which encapsulates both the emotional and psychological realms of ideas and activities. The Jewish heart is developing and our relationship with Hashem is deepening. The return to the Land of Israel means a return to the place where Hashem's presence is most potent, and it provides an opportunity to heal pain that we have experienced

throughout the exilic distance. *Toras hageulah* speaks to the Jewish heart and enhances that relationship with Hashem.

The evolution of Torah study in the times of redemption is just getting off the ground. Already, its impact has dramatically affected the experience of Jews in the Land of Israel and it is beginning to spread its influence in the Diaspora. The outcome of these developments include greater connection to Hashem, greater connection to each other, and a tangible march toward the days of prophecy. *Toras hageulah* is deep and exhilarating, and is worth engaging with on a deeper level no matter where it is studied. The more *Toras hageulah* spreads to the Diaspora, the more those in the Diaspora will realize the importance of returning home — the place where these ideas are most relevant and most potent — and the more unified our people will be.

Endnotes

1. This is not a coincidental phenomenon. Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai wrote in the Zohar, *Ra'aya Mehemna*, Naso 124b, the foundational text of *penimiyus Hatorah*, that the study of his sefer will bring the Jewish people out of exile.
2. Translation by R' Yosef Bronstein *shlita*.
3. This thirst is a direct fulfillment of a prophecy in Amos:

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם ה' א-לֵקִים וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעֵב בְּאֶרֶץ
לֹא רָעֵב לֶלֶחֶם וְלֹא צָמָא לַמַּיִם כִּי אִם לְשִׁמְעַת אֶת דְּבָרֵי
ה'.

A time is coming — declares my Lord Hashem — when I will send a famine upon the land: not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of Hashem. (Amos 8:11)

4. See “*Ma'amar Hador*” from Rav Kook for his understanding that the core of the nation — both observant and not yet observant Jews — have this same yearning for *penimiyus Hatorah*.