

## ANTICIPATION AND REALIZATION

**"אֲנִכִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים" (שמות כ':ב')**

In this week's פרשה, the Jewish Nation reaches the climax of its Exodus from Egypt: מתן תורה, the receiving of the תורה and the עשרת הדברות. This event, where G-d initially speaks to בני ישראל directly, represents a national physical and spiritual high of the Jewish People, a level that we strive to work towards every single day. G-d opens this (literally) awesome revelation with a simple statement of fact "אֲנִכִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם" - I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out of Egypt." Since this is the first time that any of the יוצאי מצרים, with the exception of משה, heard directly from G-d, it seems appropriate that He would introduce Himself to them before he began the עשרת הדברות. However, it is curious that G-d, the all-mighty creator of the universe would כביכול introduce himself as the one who took the Jewish Nation out of Egypt, when He had already done much greater and miraculous things. Why did He specifically introduce himself as "אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם"?

While it is very difficult to even begin to comprehend what happened at הר סיני let alone explain seeming difficulties in G-d's monologue, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi tries to answer our question through a משל in one of the essays he wrote to the Khazars in ספר הכוזרי. He teaches that when an average uninformed Joe Shmoe hears of how great the king of a foreign country is, it won't mean that much to him, and he won't feel the need to share praise of that king with others. However, if that foreign king sends him gifts and money, Joe will feel much closer to the king and will want to share stories of the greatness of the king with the world. Since the king now has personal significance to Joe, Joe will feel more obligated and closer to the king. Rabbi Yehuda Halevi teaches that the נמשל is that G-d as the ה' has a distant connection with every single person in the world. However, G-d's role as "אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם", the שומר ישראל, has a much closer significance to the Jewish People, and as a result, G-d introduced Himself to us as this- to make it all the more significant to us that our Savior was giving us these מצוות. This helps explain why G-d's introduced Himself in such a specific way- because it helped us understand even better our bond to Him.

In the ספר מצות קטן, a shortened ספר of the מצות by Rav Yitzvhak ben Yosef of Corbeil, France, writes that the first and most important מצוה of Judaism is to believe and know that G-d created the world and He alone rules it. The סמ"ק explains that most thirteenth century philosophers (modern philosophers of his time) believed in מזלות and the world running by itself. We, as Jews, must believe that G-d constantly controls the world and causes everything that we see every day. He takes this a step further by quoting a Gemara (שבת ל"א עמ' א) which teaches that among the questions that one will be asked by the בית דין

של מעלה when after 120 years he passes away, is "צפית לישעוה" - Have you [properly] anticipated the גאולה? The סמ"ק continues that just as we must believe that G-d took us out of Egypt in the first גאולה, we must also believe that He will take us out of גלות אדום in the final גאולה. This, he concludes, is the lesson of "אנכי ה' אלקיך" and "אשר הצאתיך מארץ מצרים" - by reminding us that He took us out of Egypt, G-d is also telling us that one day He will also take us out of the final גלות. In order to properly fulfill this First Commandment, we must first believe in G-d's future redemption, that He will soon grant us the גאולה.

The Nusach Sefarad siddur, while very similar to the Nusach Ashkenaz one, has a few major differences in its text. One of the more interesting ones is located in the Kedusha prayer for Shabbat Mussaf, where it concludes: "והוא יושיענו ויגאלנו שנית וישמיענו ברחמיו שנית לעיני כל חי לאמר: הן גאלתי אתכם אחרית" - He will save and redeem you with mercy a second time as it says 'they will be redeemed a second time as the first and I will be for them a G-d.'" This text echoes the idea of the סמ"ק, that in the future redemption, the people will accept G-d again as they did at הר סיני with "אנכי ה' אלקיך." This equation of הר סיני and the גאולה also tells us that in ימות המשיח, the Jewish People will be on a similarly high level as they were at Sinai, a very exciting and hopeful thought for our future.

It has been noted by Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth Rav Jonathan Sacks that the Jewish people for the most part are a very auditory people who are cautioned against physical manifestations of G-d (see the Second Commandment). Nevertheless, one of the spiritual highs of the Jewish people started with the world's biggest sound and light show, and another involved witnessing the Sea unnaturally splitting down the middle. Why would it be that a nation of the word would have such important visual events?

Rabbi Sacks answers that even though we are mostly a people of the book, of spirituality, מעמד הר סיני was G-d giving us a message that sometimes we must open our eyes, look out the window of the בית מדרש for a minute, and appreciate what is going on in the physical world. By doing this, the Jewish people were able to appreciate the miracles that G-d did for them at מעמד הר סיני, and I believe that this lesson applies equally, if not more so, now.

While many might not recognize and appreciate it, if we look out onto the Land of Israel, we can see the beginning of the unfolding of the גאולה. The State of Israel, the first Jewish country since the ancient Jewish Kingdoms of Judea and Israel in biblical times, is thriving. לשון הקודש, once a dead language, is now spoken throughout the country and very much alive. In the recent Israeli election, 33%

of the newly elected Knesset Members are religious Jews, a new high. The land itself, once desolate, is blooming and back to life. If the people of Israel take an honest look around, we can realize that the Jewish country is not only the **אתחלתא דגאולה**, but also a beginning of the intrinsic promise of the first **דברה**, as explained by the **סמ"ק**. G-d has begun to return us from our **גלות** just as He took our ancestors out from their **גלות** so many years ago. All we need to do now is take an honest look at ourselves and ask the question that G-d will ask us after 120 years: "**ציפית לישועה**" - Did you truly anticipate the **גאולה**?"