

**TORAH from
GOLD OF JERUSALEM**

from Rabbi Gold's mind & pen
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I Heard G-d Crying - I Saw Him Rejoicing

A friend who just returned from a family visit to America related a brief encounter with a mutual friend (he will never tell me his name) who said to him, "You should be living here [U.S.] not there [Eretz Yisrael]." I would have erupted in a paroxysm of anger but my calmer friend responded by saying, "You have it all wrong. The precise opposite is true. You should be where I am [Eretz Yisrael]."

In the hour following the call I was overcome with a wave of sadness the likes of which I have not experienced in a long time. This fellow is a talmid chacham, a truly devout Jew who is no doubt preparing himself now for the Seder and the fulfilment of the mitzva of sipur y'tzi'at mitzrayim, retelling the story of Israel's glorious exodus from the Egyptian house of bondage. I am sure that he knows what Rav Chaim Brisker says about that mitzva and the further profound comments of his grandson, Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Solovetchik. Amongst other ideas the Rav writes that because the event being commemorated is over 3500 years old, one can easily come to regard it as so remote from the entire episode as to be completely detached from it. The

Hagada emphasizes the relevance of the exodus to us. "And if G-d had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt we and our children and our children's children would still be enslaved in Egypt." Relevance is also the purpose of "for not only one tyrant has risen up against us to destroy us, but in every generation tyrants have sought to destroy us and the Holy One Blessed be He has delivered us from their hands."

Now our golus-loving friend who is completely and totally detached from what is happening now, every day in his own time, the seventy-year unfolding of the majestic drama of kibbutz galuyot (the ingathering of the exiles) is totally incapable of fulfilling in any way, shape or form, the mitzva of sipur y'tzi'at mitzrayim.

The clincher will come at the end of the Seder when he ecstatically sings l'shana habaa birushalayim, next year in Jerusalem. The full ugliness of his hypocrisy won't even enter his mind. He sings one thing and says another, "You should be here in the United States."

This reminds me of Rabbi Nachman Kahana's great story of a father and his sons singing L'shana habaa somewhere in America and their mother is weeping bitterly. The husband asks her why she is crying. Looking up at the chandelier worthy of royalty, looking down at the plush, sink-into carpet fit for an Arabian prince, a table glittering with finest bone china, real silver Seder-table-ware, she responds, "Next year in Jerusalem and we will leave all this?" Her husband consoles her and says,



"Don't cry dear, it's only a song."

I am sure that AGJ (American Golus Jew) has many black holes in his study of Torah and is obviously thinking about other things when he prays and is totally blank when he bentshes.

What happened to the many references to kibbutz galilot in davening? Should we remove "t'ka b'shofar gadol" from Shemoneh Esrei? It says, "And gather us together from the four corners of the earth." I wonder what he is thinking when, in Tachnun Monday and Thursday he says, "Our Father, compassionate Father, show us a sign for good, and gather our scattered ones from the four corners of the earth."

In fact G-d has answered our prayers of a thousand years. He heard us. He's doing it. It's happening. What our ancestors longed for is now reality. This should be reason for an outburst of gratitude and thanksgiving. Instead our AGJ throws it all back in G-d's face. He is unfortunately guilty of a rejection of G-d's gift.

Eliyahu HaNavi is very upset with our friend and I wonder how he will greet him when the door is thrown open wide for Eliyahu to enter.

I think that Eliyahu, the greater lover of Israel, will suggest to our talmid chacham to take another closer look at the Gemara in B'rachot (Daf 3). The Gemara tells the story of Rav Yosi who prayed in one of the ruins of Yerushalayim while Eliyahu waited for him outside. "Eliyahu said to me, 'My

son, what sound did you hear when you were in the ruin?' And I said to him, 'I heard a heavenly voice that was moaning like a dove and saying "woe to the sons because of whose sins I destroyed My house and burned My Temple and exiled them among the nations."'"

Our friend in America has embraced exile with all his being. What G-d sees as punishment he chooses with relish. G-d is not moaning, He is crying - I have given my people a great gift and they have rejected it.

AGJ should look a few daf further in Masechet B'rachot where no less a figure than Rav Shimon Bar Yochai speaks of the three good gifts G-d gave to his people! Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and Olam Haba. And all are acquired through suffering and struggle.

Have you ever encountered someone who will tell G-d - keep your Torah, I don't want it or I can forego your Olam Haba? But our friend has said precisely that about Eretz Yisrael. G-d weeps.

Hashem's solemn promise to gather us all back to Eretz Yisrael from the first time it is uttered by Moshe Rabeinu in Parshat Nitzavim becomes a recurring refrain of our great prophets.

"Then Hashem, your G-d, will bring back your captivity and have mercy upon you, and He will gather you in from all the peoples to which Hashem, your G-d, has scattered you. If your dispersed will be at the ends of heaven, from there Hashem, your G-d will

gather you in and from there He will take you. Hashem, your G-d, will bring you to the Land that your forefathers possessed and you shall possess it; He will do good to you and make you more numerous than your forefathers." (D'varim 30:4, 5)

The Solution

In the Hagada we recite a passage from a mishna in B'rachot that records the position of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria that we must mention the exodus from Egypt by day and by night. His view is expounded by Ben Zoma, "For it is stated that you may remember the day when you came out of Egypt all the days of your life." "The days of your life" refers to daytime, "all the days of your life" teaches us that the exodus should also be mentioned at night. The Rabbis disagree and say that the word all includes the days of Moshiach, that then also we will mention the exodus. This much appears in the Hagada.

In the Gemara that follows, Ben Zoma asks the Rabbis, it would seem incredulously, "Will we mention the Exodus in the Messianic Era, but Yirmiyahu prophesied, "Behold days are coming says Hashem when people will no longer swear "As Hashem lives, Who brought the children of Israel up from the land of Egypt," but rather, "As Hashem lives, Who brought up and brought back the offspring of the House of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands where He had dispersed them." [Yirmiyahu's prophecy appears twice, chapter 15:14-15; chapter

23:7-8].

The Rabbis replied that this verse does not mean that mentioning the Exodus from Egypt will be uprooted from its place (and discontinued completely) but rather that the mention of the redemption from the dominion of the nations will be primary and the exodus will be secondary. The Divine ingathering of Jews from all over the world is the defining event of one time.

I would suggest that during the Seder we should recite those two passages from Yirmiyahu to acknowledge fully our profound gratitude to Hashem for choosing our generation and us (all of us here) to be the fulfillment of His great promise.

Maybe our good AGJ should consider now after seventy years to indeed celebrate Yom Haazmaut and say Hallel. Here in Eretz Yisrael Hashem rejoices.

