

# MEDINAT YISRAEL - REDEMPTION, CONFUSION AND MASHIACH BEN YOSEF

## LOWER MERION SYNAGOGUE

APRIL 2020 - CELEBRATING 72 YEARS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

### A] GEULA - OF LAND AND INDEPENDENCE

1. אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: שיר שבתורה - משה וישראל אמרוהו בשעה שעלו מן הים. והלל זה מי אמרו? נביאים שביניהן תקנו להן לישראל, שיהו אומרין אותו על כל פרק ופרק ועל כל צרה וצרה שלא תבא עליהן, ולכשנגאלין אומרים אותו על גאולתן

פסחים ק"ז.

*The early Nevi'im instituted Hallel as a necessary response to thank God for the redemption - 'Geula' - of the Jewish people.*

2. (כה) כִּי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָכַר מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ וּבָא גֹאֵל הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו וּגְאָל אֶת מִמְכָּר אָחִיו: (כו) וְאִישׁ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ גֹּאֵל וְהִשְׁיִגָה יָדוֹ וּמָצָא כְּדֵי גֹאֲלָתוֹ

ויקרא כה-כה-כו

*If a person became poor and had to sell their ancestral lands to a stranger they could be bought back by a 'goel'. This process of restoring ownership is called 'geula'.*

3. (כט) וְאִישׁ כִּי־יָמַכְר בֵּית־מוֹשָׁב עִיר חוֹמָה וְהִיָּתָה גֹאֲלָתוֹ עַד־תָּם שְׁנַת מִמְכָּרוֹ יָמִים תִּהְיֶה גֹאֲלָתוֹ: (ל) וְאִם לֹא־יִגָּאֵל עַד־מְלֵאת לֹךְ שָׁנָה תִּמְיָמָהּ וְקָם הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־בְּעִיר אֲשֶׁר־לֹא לּוֹ חֹמָה לְצִמְיַתָּהּ לִקְנָה אֹתוֹ לְדַרְתּוֹ לֹא יֵצֵא בִּיבֹל: (לא) וּבְתֵי הַחֲצָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לָהֶם חֹמָה סָבִיב עַל־שְׂדֵה הָאָרֶץ יִחָשֵׁב גֹּאֲלָהּ תִּהְיֶה־לּוֹ וּבִיבֹל יֵצֵא

ויקרא כה-כט-לא

*If a person sells a house in a walled city they have 1 year to perform 'geula' - buying back the house to restore its original ownership. For other property 'geula' comes automatically at the Yovel year (if not bought back earlier).*

4. (מז) וְכִי תִשְׁיֵג יָד גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ וּמָךְ אָחִיךָ עִמּוֹ וְנִמְכַר לְגֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ אוֹ לְעַקֵּר מִשְׁפַּחַת גֵּר: (מח) אַחֲרַי נִמְכַר גֹּאֲלָהּ תִּהְיֶה־לּוֹ אַחַד מֵאֲחָיו יִגְאֲלֵנוּ: (מט) אוֹ־דָדוֹ אוֹ־בְרָדָדוֹ יִגְאֲלֵנוּ אוֹ־מִשְׁאָר בְּשָׂרוֹ מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ יִגְאֲלֵנוּ אוֹ־הַשִּׁיגָה יָדוֹ וְנִגְאֲלָל

ויקרא כה-מז-מט

*If a person became poor and sold themselves as an indentured servant to non-Jews, they, or a relative, may buy back their liberty. This process is (five time in quick succession!) called 'geula'.*

5. רבי אליעזר אומר: .... בניסן נגאלו, בתשרי עתידין ליגאל. רבי יהושע אומר: .... בניסן נגאלו, בניסן עתידין ליגאל

ראש השנה י"א.

*What type of 'geula' are Chazal talking about here?*

Geula, from a Tanach perspective, is defined as the restoration of a person to their independence and their ancestral lands. In the context of the return of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael in the 20C, can this process be similarly defined as a 'Geula' process? Does it also necessarily have to lead directly to 'yeshua/salvation' or Mashiach?

**B] THE DUALITY OF MASHIACH**

6. וַיִּרְאֵי ה' אַרְבַּעַה חֲרָשִׁים (זכריה ב:ג). מאן נינהו ארבעה חרשים? אמר רב חנא בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידא: משיח בן דוד ומשיח בן יוסף, ואליהו, וכהן צדק

סוכה נב:

7. חרשים - אומנים. משיחים שניהם חרשים לצנין בית המקדש. אליהו חרש אבן, שצנח מזבח זהר הכרמל, ומלינו שהוא עתיד להשתלח וכהן צדק - הוא שם בן נח

רש"י שם

Chazal discuss TWO Meshichim - Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. Both are called 'craftsmen' as they will be involved in building the Beit Mikdash.

8. וְסִרְהָ קִנְיַת אֶפְרַיִם וְצָרְרִי יְהוּדָה יִכְרְתוּ אֶפְרַיִם לֹא יִקְנֶנָּה אֶת־יְהוּדָה וְיִהְיֶה לָאֵצֶר אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם: (רש"י - משיח בן יוסף ומשיח בן דוד לא יקנאו זה בזב).

ישעיהו פרק יא:יג

A significant factor in the time of Mashiach will be the ultimate union between Yehudah and Yosef (Efraim) and the forces and ideas they represent.

9. וַיִּמְשַׁחֵת אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ וְקִדְשֵׁת אֹתוֹ

שמות מ:יא

The verses dealing with the creation of the Mishkan refer to the anointing of the kiyor.

10. (יא) וַתִּרְבֵּי יַת כַּיֹּרָא וַיַּת בְּסִיסִיָּה וַתִּקְדָּשׁ יַתִּיהָ מְטוּל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ מְשׁוּמְשָׁנָה רַבָּא דְסַנְהֶדְרִין דְּעַמִּיָּה דְּעַל יְדוּי עֵתִידָא אַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְאִיתְפַּלְגָא וּמְשִׁיחָא בְר אֶפְרַיִם דְּנַפְיָק מִיְגִיָּה דְּעַל יְדוּי עֵתִידִין בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַנְצָחָא לְגוּג וּלְסִיעֵתִיָּה בְּסוּף יוּמָא

תרגום המיוחס ליונתן - תורה שמות פרק מ פסוק יא

Targum Yonatan saw in this a reference to 'Mashiach ben Efraim' who will one day rise to fight the wars of the Jews.

**C] THE FOG OF WAR .... AND OF REDEMPTION**

11. ומה ראו לומר גאולה בשביעית? - אמר רבא: מתוך שעתידין ליגאל בשביעית, לפיכך קבעוה בשביעית, והאמר מר: בששית - קולות, בשביעית - מלחמות, במוצאי שביעית בן דוד בא. - מלחמה נמי אתחלתא דגאולה היא

מגילה יז:

The Talmud explicitly states that the time of war leading up to Mashiach will itself be part of the geula.

12. [בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִגְדַל הַמֶּסֶד׳ בִּירוּשָׁלַם כְּמִסְפַּד הַדְּדִרְמוֹן בְּבִקְעַת מִגְדוֹן:] וְסַפְדָּה הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁפָּחוֹת מִשְׁפָּחוֹת לְבָד מִשְׁפָּחוֹת בֵּית־דָּוִד לְבָד וְנִשְׁיָהֶם לְבָד (זכריה יב יא-יב) ... הא הספידא מאי עבידתיה? פליגי בה רבי דוסא ורבנן. חד אמר: על משיח בן יוסף שנהרג

סוכה נב.

One of the few things that Chazal say about Mashiach ben Yosef is that he will be killed!

13. ואומר אחרי זה, כי על שני הענינים יחד, ר"ל אם לא נחזור בתשובה ויהיו המאורעים של בן יוסף, ואם נחזור בתשובה ולא יהיו, יראה לנו משיח בן דוד פתאום. ואם יהיה משיח בן יוסף קודם לו, יהיה כשליח לו וכמתקן האומה וכמסקל הדרך

ספר האמונות והדעות מאמר ח

Rav Saadia Gaon writes that role of Mashiach ben Yosef is to prepare the way for Mashiach ben David. But the events of his days are contingent and not decreed. If the Jewish people do teshuva the death of Mashiach ben Yosef is not inevitable!

14. [דָרַךְ כּוֹכַב מִיַּעֲקֹב וְקָם שֵׁבֶט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל (במדבר כד:יא)] והכוונה צזה כי אם ישראל יהיו צגדר שיכיו נקראים 'יעקב' לא יאיר להם אלא משיח בן דוד אצל משיח בן אפרים ימות צמלחמה ראשונה, שיכרגנו רומילום, כאומרם ז"ל. אצל אם ישראל יהיו כולן לדיקים שצטט 'ישראל' יתכנו, אז אפילו אותו שצטט שהוא משיח הצא מאפרים, 'וקם' - פירוש תהיה לו תקומה לפני אויביו ולא יכרגנו רומילום

אור החיים על במדבר כד:יז

*The commentary of the Orach Chaim on Chumash sees the same idea in the prophecies of Bilaam.*

15. אולם בקצת המדרשים יראה בוא משיח בן יוסף קדם משיח בן דוד .... וקצת הגאונים דברו בו. ולפי שלא התבאר באמתתו, לא ראינו להאריך בו

אור ה' (ר' חסדאי קרשקש) מאמר ג' כלל ח' סוף פרק א'

*Ultimately, references to Mashiach ben Yosef are few, fragmented and unclear and most commentators have not felt it worthwhile to discuss them!*

16. כי משיח בן יוסף הוא בסוד השמאל, והוא בסוד החיצוניות הצריך לכל התקונים האלה. ומשיח בן דוד הוא בסוד הימין, הצריך שיהיה מתחבר אליו, והגאולה שלמה

ספר קנאת ה' צבאות של הרמחל חלק שני

*The Ramchal describes Mashiach ben Yosef as representing 'externality' and needing to effect 'tikun' before Mashiach ben David can come.*

### 17. **The Lamentation in Jerusalem** on the death of Dr. Theodor Herzl

*On that day the lamentation will be great in Jerusalem, like the lamentation of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. (Zecharia 12:11) .....*

So it came about that throughout the Exile there is a see-saw effect of these two opposing forces. At times, there is exhibited a drive toward material, worldly success that flows primarily from the foundation of Joseph and Ephraim; other times there is a stirring of the spiritual drive for observance of Torah and spiritual development, for awe and love of God.

Since it is impossible for our nation to attain its lofty destiny other than by actualizing these two components - the universal symbolized by Joseph, and the distinctive symbolized by Judah - there arise in the nation proponents of each aspect. Those who would enhance spirituality prepare the way for Messiah son of David, whose focus is the final destiny. Truly the focus of life is spiritual attainment, except that the spiritual can only develop properly if it is accompanied by all the material acquisitions of which a full-bodied nation is in need. Those who redress the material, general aspects of life prepare the way for Messiah son of Joseph.

When these two forces work at cross purposes as a result of the calamity of exile, shortsightedness and disarray, these are the 'birthpangs of Messiah', or to be more exact, the 'birthpangs of Messiahs' (plural). The Psalmist (89:52) writes: 'That Your enemies have defied, O Lord; that they have defied the footsteps of Your Messiahs' עֲקֻבוֹת מְשִׁיחָךְ

Two footsteps of two Messiahs!

Now since the major achievement of Messiah son of Joseph, which is the general advancement of mankind, is accomplished by de-emphasis of the unique Jewish form, Messiah son of Joseph cannot endure, so he is destined to be killed.

When this happens, all will recognize the perversity of the situation. They will realize that it was wrong not to subjugate the universal dimension to the spiritual aspect which is Israel's destiny, to the kingdom of David. 'They will lament him as one laments an only son, and grieve for him as one grieves for the firstborn son.' (Zecharia 12:10) The lamentation for an only child is bereft of hope for future children. Elderly parents who have lost their only son, are totally forlorn. If the verse were to end on that note, it would spell utter doom, but the bitterness is mitigated by intellect. Intellect perceives that the nation has produced the soul of the Messiahs.

The nation is not as elderly parents who have lost their only child, but rather as young parents who have lost their firstborn child. Being inexperienced at raising children, they did not attend properly to the child in its state of illness, so the child succumbed.

By the same token, the nation comes to the realization that it did not know how to make proper use of this universalist dimension, did not understand how it could contribute to Israel's unique destiny. In that way, it could have survived. The nation labored under the illusion brought on by the divisiveness of exile that these two forces are truly at odds. The result is that whoever holds up the universal side of the nation becomes unfortunately an enemy of Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments). Contrariwise, whoever focuses on the uniquely Jewish, becomes an adversary of material wellbeing. In the first scenario, the fence of Torah is broken down; in the second, the result is weakness and morosity.

After this latest experience of Messiah son of Joseph's impermanence, let us deduce that truly the two forces are not mutually antagonistic. It is time to bring it all together and to organize the nation's ways. Let every universal perfection serve as a basis for perfecting the uniquely Israelite. Let both parties - those disposed to the material and universal, and those disposed to the spiritual and particularistic - come to the same conclusion.

Then the lamentation will be on both sides; both will recognize their mistake. These two forces were created to be united; once rent asunder, they were mutually injurious.

.....

The Zionist vision manifest in our generation might best be symbolized as the "footstep of Messiah son of Joseph" (*ikva de-Mashiah ben Yosef*). Zionism tends to universalism (as opposed to Jewish particularism). It is unequipped to realize that the development of Israel's general aspect is but the foundation for Israel's singularity. The leadership of the Zionist movement must be greatly influenced by the gifted few of the generation, the righteous and the sages of Israel. On the other hand, the ideal of Israel's national renaissance, including all the material accouterment - which is a proper thing when joined to the spiritual goal - to date has not succeeded, and the lack of success has brought on infighting, until finally, the leader of the movement has fallen, a victim of frustration. It behooves us to take to heart, to try to unify the "tree of Joseph" and the "tree of Judah," to rejoice in the national reawakening, and to know that this is not the end goal of Israel, but only a preparation. ....

This is the benefit to be gained by remorse over one whom we might consider the "footstep of Messiah son of Joseph" (*ikva de-Mashiah ben Yosef*), in view of his influence in revitalizing the nation materially and generally. This power should not be abandoned despite the wantonness and hatred of Torah that results in the expulsion of God-fearing Jews from the movement. We must develop the courage to seek that any power that is of itself good be fortified, and if it is lacking spiritual perfection, let us strive to increase the light of knowledge and fear of the Lord such that it (i.e. the light) is capable of conquering a powerful life-force and of being built up through it. Then there will be fulfilled in us the prophecy, "I will grant unto Zion salvation, unto Israel My glory." Return (*teshuvah*) must be from our side. Return will be enduring only if all the powers presently found (and possible to be found) in the nation will be vigorous, and directed to good. Then we will be a vessel for the divine will, "a crown of ornament in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God."

The Lamentation in Jerusalem, Rav Kook. Ma'amarei RAYaH 1 (1980) pp94-99<sup>1</sup>

1. Translation by R. Bezalel Naor, available at <http://shaalvim.co.il/uploads/files/13-d-10-lamentation.pdf>

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