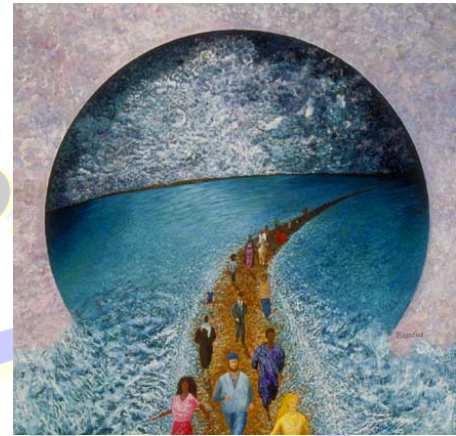


Exodus, Past and Present

By HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

There is an old saying of Chinese wisdom, “once a man slept and dreamed he was a butterfly, yet his dream was so real than when he awoke, he contemplated whether he was a man who dreamed he was a butterfly or actually a sleeping butterfly dreaming he is a man.” Whenever we come to the Book of Shemot in the Torah reading cycle and begin the retelling of the story of Moshe and the Exodus, this is exactly how I too feel. I always get this strange feeling of déjà vu that there is so much more in this story than meets the eye.



For centuries our Sages have taught us that the generation prior to the coming of Mashiah will be like the generation in Egypt prior to the redemption. We are taught that while in Egypt our ancestors fell to the proverbial “49th level of tumah” (disconnection from G-d) and that prior to Mashiah we would fall to the final lowest “50th level.” Judging from the world body politic and the deplorable state of affairs in world Jewry, I do not understand how many can be blind to see that we are indeed sunk in the “50th level” of disconnection from G-d.

Just when things appear the darkest and that matters could get no worse, “a savior” is born. Moshe Rabbeynu, of the finest Israelite stock, grew up as a totally assimilated “Jew.” Although he was aware of his heritage, it was not until later in life that pride for his origins arose within him motivating him to kill a murderous Egyptian. As the story tells us, this zeal led to Moshe having to leave the only home he ever knew and to go into exile into a foreign land. During his many years away, he was refined and honed sharp to become the instrument and very Hand of G-d.

As it was then, so is it today? So, we are taught. It makes we wonder, who among us today, raised among the modern Egyptians and banished into exile from the secular world is presently being honed and refined to become the “new” Hand of G-d for our generation? I will wager a guess that when he does arrive on the scene of the world body politic, that like Moshe Rabbeynu, he will be met with scorn and disbelief. How typical! How repetitive! I told you I have this feeling of déjà vu. It is about to happen all over again.

In ancient days Pharaoh sought to destroy the Jewish people by weakening their resolve to live and thrive. His plans were greatly successful in that, as legend tells us, 80% of the Jewish slaves in Egypt did not deserve to experience the coming redemption and perished during the plague of darkness.

Prophecy tells us that as it was in the days of Moshe Rabbeynu so will it be in the days of Mashiah. In other words, the majority of Jews alive today will not survive to see the dawn of the Messianic kingdom.

In Egypt those who died did not care about redemption and were happy with their status quo. Today, how weird it is that about 80% of modern Jews like their Egyptian counterparts care nothing for Mashiah and have absolutely no interest in seeing the advent of the final redemption. Is there really any question as to what will be the fate of those who stand in the way of Divine progress? Judging from the past, I believe that we can extrapolate on to the future.

Torah has been studied for centuries. Prophecies about the terrible generation that sees the coming of Mashiah have also been around for centuries. Knowing all these so well, how is it that our entire generation has slipped into the "50 level of tumah" and seems so oblivious to it? Even those who can see it and acknowledge it do not seem to care enough to be motivated to action. Our generation has sunken into a level of mental slavery. We are so intimately attached to our life styles and our "fleshpots" of our modern Egypt. I wonder, can there even be as many as 20% who can survive to see Mashiah?

Let's deal with some numbers. There are approximately fifteen millions Jews in the world today. If prophecy holds true and that 80% of them will die before Mashiah comes, that adds up to twelve millions souls. In other words, the pre-Messianic holocaust will literally be double the size of the Nazi holocaust. Judging from rising number of Jew haters in all corners of the world today and their blood thirsty drive to exterminate all Jews, such a holocaust is more than just a remote possibility.

Of course, we do not see this. We have no sense of imminent danger. HaShem is with us, nothing bad can possibly happen! We have a saying, "famous last words!" I am sure that prior to the plague of darkness not one Jew in Egypt foresaw what fate awaited him. I also know that during Hitler's rise in Europe almost the entire population of European Jewry ignored his threats and rants. Almost in a unified voice they said, things are not that bad and HaShem will help us. As history documented, things WERE INDEED that bad and HaShem helped them all right, right into Auschwitz and the other death camps.

In Egypt those who saw what was coming did more than teshuva (repent), they packed their bags and got ready to leave. Those who escaped Europe did the same. They packed their bags and did not wait for a savior to take them out of Europe, they were happy to grab any mode of transport that they could find. In the end, those that left lived; those that stayed died. Again, we are taught, as it was in the days of the Egypt, so will it be with the days of Mashiah.

We are taught that prior to Mashiah HaShem would again send plagues, this time upon all the nations of the world. The plagues that hit Egypt were not metaphors. They were real and serious economic and health crises. The entire Egyptian society was destroyed, the economy, the culture, the governmental structures, even the physical, emotional and mental health of the populace, everything was smashed.

Look around today, do we not see major financial upheavals affecting the world economy? Is not secular society completely out of control and almost totally divorced from reality? Today, is not what is

good being presented as evil and what is evil being presented as good? Is there not a terrifying trend of growing emotional and mental health problems everywhere? Has not moral character and honorable behavior become like an ancient relic of the past? How long do you imagine things can continue in the upside-down way?

The pre-Messianic plagues are all around us and we are oblivious to them. What do we do then in these tough times? How are the everyday people coping with all these troubling issues? The answer is rather clear. WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, TODAY THE TOUGH GO SHOPPING! Yes, that is right. Today rather than address any issue with moral outrage and overtly active political involvement, most are overwhelmed. They decide that there is nothing that they can do, so why bother doing anything?

Rather than pack their bags and move away, they just go to the mall and buy more things. Mind you, most, if not all purchases today are made using credit cards, creating for ourselves huge piles of debt. We become even more attached to the system because we have to work harder, to pay our bills. Then we spend more, work harder and spend some more. On and on the cycle goes and we are so totally oblivious to the fact that we are as enslaved today as were our ancestors in Egypt. As it was in Egypt, so will it be before Mashiah comes. We still do not get it!

Am I dreaming? Am I a butterfly or am I a man? Am I really seeing the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy all around me or am I not spending enough time at the mall shopping? Am I a slave tied down to modern Egypt or am I a free man? Am I mobile? Can I pick up and leave? Can I detach from the sticky web of modern society and all its tumah (filth)? And if I am to detach, how should I do it, where should I go?

Long ago, I asked people if they really want Mashiah to come. Everyone answered with a resounding yes! Then I explained to them what the coming of Mashiah really means.

It means that like Egypt, modern secular society will have to be completely destroyed. There will be no more credit cards, no more malls, no more democracy, no more free speech, no more comfort and the worse, no more TV!! What a harsh reality, how terrible! How could we ever survive without the latest spring fashions? How can I face myself, my family and my neighbors unless I am driving a very expensive late model foreign car (which I still have payments on for the next five years)?

Before Mashiah comes, there must first come the Messianic wars. The Kingdom of Mashiah cannot be built until first the present world kingdom is dismantled. This is simple physics, two things cannot exist in the same place at the same time. Either modern society goes, or the Messianic kingdom goes. The two cannot exist together. It is an "either-or" proposition.

This explains why no one really wants Mashiah to come. I do not say this because that is what people are saying. On the contrary they say the opposite, that they do want him to come. Yet, these voices are not honest. What people really want is not revealed by what they say, rather it is revealed by what they do! Today people are not doing much of anything to dismantle the modern Egypt to make room for the Messianic kingdom. On the contrary, with every trip to the mall, they are only reinforcing the stone walls of modern Egypt and making themselves more and more slaves to the modern Pharaoh.

80% are destined to perish along with modern Egypt. I no longer question why. I think that we should all see it coming. Redemption came to Egypt in a single night. By then the 80% were already dead. Right now, the 80% are already dying. The lucky ones are being killed by the terrorists. At least their souls remain pure. The unlucky ones are being killed slowly, by being worked to death in modern Egypt. They stand to lose their souls, for the price of what they buy in the malls.

Yes, Mashiah is coming. Prophecies will be fulfilled. Do not allow yourselves to be deceived by those fools who call themselves Rabbis and proclaim that HaShem will perform miracles and we will all enter the Messianic age in peace. These voices are voices of deception. They are misleading their flocks as did the false prophets in Biblical Israel. Their voices are the same one that led their flocks into the concentration camps in Europe. Do not listen to the deceivers who say "peace, peace." For there is no peace!

Yes, I am experiencing déjà vu. We have all been here before. This period in history, we have experienced this before, long ago, in Egypt. HaShem knew that we would forget and not recognize it when it again came upon us. This is why every day we are commanded to remember our exodus from Egypt. We have to remember the past so that we can realize the present and know what to do in the near future.

We must make a modern exodus. Unfortunately there is no physical place that we can go to. The powers that be work extra hard to make certain that modern Israel is even worse than modern Egypt. In this they have succeeded. Yet, an exodus we must make. We must leave all elements of this modern Egypt that is slated by Heaven to soon be destroyed, toppled to its very foundations. When you "head for the hills" you can leave your credit card at home. The day will come when it will no longer work. Yes, the day will come when our mighty modern Egypt will fall, and with it all our credit cards, cell phones and internet connections.

Now you see why you really DO NOT want Mashiah to come. 80% will perish. 20% will survive. Yet, the prophecy states that the survivors will be "put through the fire and refined like silver." Something tells me that this metaphor of purification will not be a pleasant one, certainly it will not be economically feasible. Yet, it is destined to come. We can chose between the proverbial frying pan and the fire. We can chose between the 80% or the 20%. I already know that most will chose to ignore everything that I have said here and discount it and deny it has any legitimacy. That too is a choice. 80% - 20%, these are the odds, on which side of the divide you will land, maybe you should consider.

I am experiencing déjà vu about the past. I am no longer dreaming. I have awoken. I am seeing visions of the immediate future. My bags are packed. How about you? Think about it. Maybe I'll see you later at the mall. I hear they are having some really fantastic sales going on this weekend. I can't wait for Shabbat to end. I'm going to get tough and go shopping! Then again, maybe not!