

# *Reflections of Redemption*

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,  
Based on the talks of the  
Lubavitcher Rebbe,  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Va'eira, 5786  
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 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** ה"ד  
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by  
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

# Vaeira

## FOUR CUPS OF REDEMPTION

*The four cups of wine parallel the four expressions of Redemption. But the correspondence is out of order: the second expression in the Torah corresponds to the fourth cup. This reflects the difference between the Exodus and the final Redemption.*

This week's Torah portion contains the four expressions of Redemption. The best known explanation for the rabbinic institution of drinking four cups of wine at the *seder* is that they correspond to these expressions. This means the four cups of wine drunk at the *seder* are connected to, and are expressions of, Redemption, paralleling the expressions found in the Torah.

Torah is not a history book. And every word is precise. The Torah uses four expressions to describe the Redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt; the four cups of wine drunk at the *seder* every year correspond to these four expressions; and the *seder* is not just a re-enactment of the Exodus of over 3300 years ago, but a reliving of the first Redemption, in such a way that it foreshadows and anticipates the final Redemption. It seems appropriate, therefore, to look more closely at how and why the *seder's* four cups of wine correspond to these four expressions of Redemption – and where they differ. For we know that the pattern and process of the final Redemption with Moshiach will follow that of the first Redemption with Moses, as it says, “As in the days of your going forth from Egypt, I will show you miracles.”

This inner connection finds expression in a practical manner, in one of the laws concerning the conduct of the *seder*. The Alter Rebbe

writes in his *Shulchan Aruch*, his code of Jewish law, that one must lean when drinking the four cups of wine. He gives the following reason: “[. . . They] are reminders of Redemption and freedom. The four cups that the Sages established correspond to the four expressions of Redemption stated in the portion of *Vaeira*, namely, I shall bring, I shall redeem, I shall take and I shall save. Therefore, they have to be done while reclining, in a manner of freedom.”

Just prior to this, the Alter Rebbe writes that in general one should sit in a reclining manner during the *seder*, since in every generation one should consider it as if at that every moment – that Passover night – one was going from the slavery of Egypt to freedom. We are told that “in Nissan they were redeemed, in Nissan they will be redeemed.” Just as the first *seder* was the preparation for and beginning of the Exodus, so too, we should act and truly feel as if this *seder*, this very night, we will experience the true and final Redemption. The *seder* is more than a commemoration; it is an actual anticipation. Participating in a *seder* gets us ready for Moshiach.

Now there’s a curious point in the Alter Rebbe’s wording. He presents the four expressions of Redemption in a different order than that found in the Torah. The order in the Torah is: “I shall bring, I shall save, I shall redeem and I shall take.” The Alter Rebbe’s order is “I shall bring, I shall redeem, I shall take and I shall save.” The Alter Rebbe moves “I shall save” from the second expression to the last. Since, as mentioned earlier, everything in Torah is spiritually precise, including the details of the practical laws, we need to understand why the order of the expressions of Redemption is changed.

To understand the change from the narrative of the Exodus to the laws of the *seder*, we have to understand to which aspect of Redemption each of the four expressions refers. Since we drink four separate cups at four different times of the *seder*, clearly each

cup was established to commemorate a separate, unique concept – not just freedom in a general sense, but a particular aspect of Redemption. Thus we would expect the change of order to reflect the order of the themes. The four different stages or themes of the *seder* each centers around one of the cups of wine, culminating in the theme of (and the cup representing) future redemption.

The first cup of wine is used to recite kiddush. The verb associated with the first expression, in both the Torah and the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, is "I shall bring." It is over this cup that we recite kiddush, in which the verb "to bring" is also used, specifically in the phrase, "in remembrance of being brought from Egypt."

In the Torah, the second expression is, "I shall save," while at the *seder*, the second cup is drunk over the expression, "I shall redeem." Redemption – the first Redemption from Egypt – is connected with the recitation of the Haggadah. Although we must remember the exodus every day, on the night of Passover we speak of it at length and with many explanations. This corresponds to the description of the great wonders and miracles of the Exodus, as the Torah says, "I redeemed you with a strong arm and great miracles." Indeed, the blessing for the recitation of the Haggadah concludes, "Redeemer of Israel."

Over the third cup, "I shall take," we recite *Birkas Hamazon*, the Blessing After the Meal. In the *Birkas Hamazon* we mention our gratitude for the Torah which G-d taught us. This is reminiscent of G-d's declaration that at the time of the giving of the Torah, "I took you for My people and I became your G-d." So we see that the order in the *seder* follows the historical progression of Redemption: G-d's remembrance of the exile and servitude of the Jewish people – the "I shall bring" of kiddush and the first cup; the wonders and miracles, the actual events and story of the Exodus – the "I shall redeem" of the recitation of the Haggadah and the second cup; and

G-d taking the Jewish people and giving them the Torah – the “I shall take” of the blessing after the meal and the third cup.

This brings us to the fourth cup, “I shall save,” which we drink after finishing Hallel and saying the blessing over the songs of praise. The conclusion of Hallel, the final blessing and the part of the hagaddah that accompany it, all refer to the future – the times of Moshiach and the final Redemption. Since the specific details about Redemption would not become known until they occur, the Alter Rebbe uses a generic term such as “I shall save.”

We may thus summarize the relationship between the four cups of wine and the four expressions of Redemption as follows: the first cup, Kiddush, represents the potential for Redemption; the second cup, associated with the Haggadah, represents the Exodus itself, the actual first Redemption; the third cup, part of the Blessing After the Meal, associated with Torah, represents spiritual Redemption; and the fourth cup, associated with the completion of the *seder* and perfection, represents the coming of Moshiach.

Just as the purpose of the Exodus was Torah, so the fulfillment of Torah is Moshiach.

Thus, the *seder*, which reminds us of the Exodus, also – and perhaps mainly – points to the future Redemption. And the expressions of freedom – symbolized by the four cups of wine – correspond to the structure of the *seder*, which itself alludes and corresponds to the process of the future and final Redemption, with the coming of Moshiach.

*(Based on Likkutei Sichos 11, pp. 14-23)*

## BESURAS HAGEULO

### The Announcement Of The Redemption

## 13

In times like these, when the nations are in conflict with one another, the Jewish people have the special assurance from the A-mighty that, "My children, have no fear, all that I have done, I have done solely for your sake,"<sup>1</sup> - in addition to the multitude of promises mentioned in the Torah to the effect that "Behold, He does not sleep nor slumber, the guardian of Israel"<sup>2</sup> and that "I am with him in distress,"<sup>3</sup> and "G-d will redeem Israel from all of its distress,"<sup>4</sup> (and only after that "He will redeem Israel from all of their sins"<sup>5</sup>) **etc. etc.**

It is a certainty that "He will not sleep nor slumber, the Guardian of Israel," wherever Jews may be situated - even in the Diaspora, and all the more so in the Holy Land, characterized by our Holy and true Torah as, "A land which G-d our G-d's eyes watch over from the beginning of the year to the end of the year."<sup>6</sup>

...And as was stated, the A-mighty notifies and proclaims to Jews wherever they are situated, particularly in the Holy Land, "My children, have no fear."

*(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Vo'eira, 26 Teves,  
Mevorchim Shvat [Blessing of the month of Shvat], 5751)*

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1. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu, Remez 499.*

2. *Tehillim 121:4.*

3. *loc. cit. 91:14.*

4. *loc. cit. 25:22.*

5. *loc. cit. 130:8. [This is a reference to the fact that G-d will bring the Redemption even before we fully atone for our sins. Translator's note.]*

6. *Ekev 11:12.*



## 59

The tenth of Shvat ("the tenth is holy,"<sup>1</sup> in every month, and all the more so the tenth day of the eleventh month<sup>2</sup>) is the day of passing of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation.

The concept of a day of *hilulo*<sup>3</sup> is explained by the Alter Rebbe in Tanya:<sup>4</sup> "all his deeds, his Torah and his Divine service that he performed throughout his life... reveals itself and shines in a revelation from above to below... affecting salvation in the midst of the land." Further and fundamental, this includes giving strength for a continued **growth** with greater force and greater vigor after his passing, as a result of his **sowing** "all his deeds and Torah and Divine service that he performed throughout his life."<sup>5</sup> [This continues] until the flowering of the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach in this generation (the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption), according to the testimony of the leader of our generation that all the appointed times have already passed, and all is ready for the festive meal of the future, a table prepared with the festive meal of Livyosan, Shor HaBar and Yayin HaMeshumar.

One might say that the era that commenced with the day of *hilulo*, the tenth of Shvat (the seventy years of life he lived in this world, and continuing for more than forty years<sup>6</sup>) can be divided

1. *Bechukosai* 27:32.

2. [See below #65 for the significance of the eleventh month. Translator's note.]

3. [*Hilulo* literally means "wedding," and is used to refer to the reunion of a soul with its Maker. Translator's note.]

4. *Iggeres HaKodesh*, sections 27 and 28.

5. See *Iggeres HaKodesh* there: "And in the *chakal tapuchin kadishin* ["orchard of the holy apples," i.e., the Garden of Eden] **are implanted** most sublime lights... growths in the second degree."

6. For then "a person reaches the level of his teacher" (*Avodah Zara* 5, beginning of second side) because "G-d gave you a heart to understand, eyes to see and ears to hear" (*Tavo* 29:3).

into three periods that parallel the three general periods throughout all the generations (before the giving of the Torah, the giving of the Torah, and the days of Moshiach). These are indicated in the three parshas: Shmos, Vaeira and Bo:

The first period, forty years (5640-5680), was during the leadership of **his father**, when the finishing touches of the process of the spreading of the Wellsprings commenced, particularly through the establishment of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim (which was administered by his only son). This followed the pattern and is analogous to the Divine service of **the Patriarchs**, who prepared for and introduced the concept of the giving of the Torah.

The second period includes the thirty years of **his leadership** during his lifetime in this world (5680-5710). During this period his unique innovation in his role as the leader of the teachings of Chabad Chassidus was his spreading of the wellsprings outward - outward in the most literal sense - to the extent that during his last ten years (the completion and perfection of his Divine service) the innovation in the spreading of the wellsprings outward reached the lower hemisphere (wherein the giving of the Torah did not occur). This followed the pattern and is analogous to the innovation of the giving of the Torah.

In the third period, the continuation of the leadership after his elevation from the physical (from the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the eleventh year (5711<sup>7</sup>), the spreading of the wellsprings outward increased, with greater strength and greater vigor, into all corners of the world, until the Divine service was completed and perfected. Everything is already prepared for the festive meal of the future - the days of Moshiach.

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vaeira, 28 Teves,  
Blessing of the New Month of Shvat, 5752 (a))*

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7. See the pamphlet from the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vaeira 5750, note 99 (*Sefer HaSichos* 5750, vol. 1, p. 255-56.)

## 60

When it occurs that "one passes away"<sup>1</sup> on the eve of Shabbos"<sup>2</sup> it becomes a "good sign"<sup>3</sup> (if there is still any need for "signs") that the Divine service of the emissaries (*shlichus*), to refine and purify secular matters, has already been completed and perfected. This was done in a manner of "a wolf that tears" through "the offspring of Yosef" (my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation) who are compared to fish.<sup>4</sup> Everything is prepared for the festive meal of the time to come ("a day that is all Shabbos and rest, in the

1. *Kesubos* 103b.

2. The passing of the venerable Chassid Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Hecht on the eve of this Shabbos. See in the talk at length. (*publisher's note*).

3. When it says "a good sign **for him**," this describes not just a particular individual, but also describes his role as a member of the community of students and emissaries of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation.

4. [This talk was delivered in honor of Rabbi Hecht. The name "Hecht" in Yiddish is the same as the word for fish (specifically, a pike). The Rebbe here discusses the connection between the family name ("Hecht") and eating fish on Shabbos. More precisely, the pike is a "fish that tears" (which is nevertheless kosher). The Talmud teaches that for every creature on dry land there is a corresponding creature in the sea. Thus the "hecht" (pike) corresponds to the wolf, since both are creatures that tear. The tribe of Binyomin is compared to a wolf, and the Rebbe points out that Binyomin tore for kedusha, that is, he "snatched" things from this world and elevated them to kedusha, holiness. The evening before Shabbos is, of course, a time for preparing the Shabbos meal, including fish, which is traditionally eaten on Shabbos. Furthermore, our Sages teach that one should add to the time of Shabbos, both its beginning and its conclusion, from the weekday. In other words, one should tear time from the week for Shabbos, just as a wolf tears. This indicates the conclusion of the Divine service of the six days of work, namely, the purification and elevation of the things of this world so that they will be included in the holiness of Shabbos. Therefore, fish is prepared before Shabbos (and this corresponds to the wolf's (Binyomin's) Divine service of "snatching"). The preparation of the fish before Shabbos (and the "tearing" of time from the week) result in the eating of the fish on Shabbos (the time of rest). Translator's note.]

world to come"<sup>5</sup>), when there will be a complete consumption of the fish<sup>6</sup> (after completion of all the preparations on the eve of Shabbos) "from the flesh<sup>7</sup> of **Livyosan**," and also the Shor HaBar and Yayin HaMeshumar.

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vaeira, 28 Teves,  
Blessing of the New Month of Shvat, 5752 (b))*

5. *Tamid* at the end.

6. *[We may explain the comparison as follows: those who are likened to fish will be rewarded with a festive meal of the great fish, Levyasan, in the days of Moshiach. Translator's note.]*

7. *Bava Basra 75a.*

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