

A Taste of Torah

Putting the Pieces Back Together

by Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky

The Jewish Nation has been in exile for many thousands of years. The nature of such a lengthy exile can cause one to become accustomed to its reality to the point that one does not see how it could ever change. It can be hard to believe that one day, the Jewish Nation will be the most beloved nation in the world. It sounds almost ludicrous.

However, our Sages teach us it's just the opposite - exile is the real impossibility! Let's explore this idea a bit.

In this week's parsha, our forefather Avraham is told by Hashem, "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be aliens in a land not their own." (Lech Licha 15:13) The Medrash expounds on the double expression of "knowing" expressed in this verse, "know" and "know with certainty." The Medrash explains that this verse, which predicts the future exile of the Jewish Nation, also contains within it a promise for the future redemption.

The Medrash finds allusions in the verse to three aspects of exile and redemption, and, based upon them, presents Hashem's full message to Avraham: "Know that I will scatter them, and know with certainty that I will gather them together. Know that I will put you under the control of others, and know with certainty that I will redeem you. Know that I will make you enslaved, and know with certainty that I will redeem you."

What idea is the Medrash conveying with these three categories of exile - being scattered, under the control of others, and enslaved? And why is

there so much focus on the promise for redemption being included in the very same verse that promises our exile?

The Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Loew; 1512/1526-1609) explains that a nation in exile is an extremely unnatural phenomenon from many different angles. It is unnatural for a nation to be splintered into thousands of pieces and dispersed. Normalcy dictates that a nation sticks together and, if it's separated, the disparate pieces will inevitably be drawn back together.

This idea goes a step further. It is the normal state of affairs for a nation to be under its own control. For a nation to be under the power of another nation is unnatural and creates a situation that cannot last forever. The oppressed nation will, sooner or later, reclaim its independence.

And yet a third level. It is the natural state of a nation to be free and not enslaved by another nation. It's not natural for one nation to oppress another nation and make them slaves. When such a reality occurs, the enslaved people will eventually succeed in obtaining their freedom.

This, says the Maharal, is the meaning of the three parts of exile presented by the Medrash. Avraham is being told that his descendants are going to be scattered and dispersed all over the world. The Jewish Nation will be scattered in foreign lands; it will be placed under the control of a foreign nation; it will be enslaved by other nations that will impose their will upon it. In this very sad picture, however, lies



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Stories for the Soul

Delayed Benefits

A man lost the bag containing his tallis and tefillin. Unfortunately, he did not have any identifying information in the bag, and so he figured he would not be seeing them again. He therefore went to a *sofer* (scribe) and ordered a new pair of tefillin.

When the tefillin were ready, the *sofer* called and told him to pick up his new tefillin.

When he arrived, the *sofer* was still putting the straps into the tefillin. The man, who was short on time, impatiently wondered out loud why the *sofer* had told him to come if the tefillin weren't quite ready. The *sofer* assured him they'd be ready momentarily.

Just then, the phone rang. The man buying the tefillin asked the *sofer* to ignore the call and complete the task at hand so that he could be on his way. The *sofer* ignored the plea and answered the phone.

The person on the line told the *sofer* that he had found a bag containing talis and tefillin near the garbage. "There's no name on the bag, but there's a sticker on the tefillin that says they were checked by you some time ago. Perhaps you can identify whose tefillin they are?"

The *sofer* replied, "Thousands of tefillin come to us for checking. How can I remember whose it is? Is there any other identifying mark?"

"There's a volume of Gemara (Talmud) in the tallis bag. The Gemara doesn't have a name on it either, but there are a couple of

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Kollel Happenings

T4T CLE CONFERENCE ON DEC. 6

The Kollel's first ever T4T CLE Credit Conference will take place on Friday, Dec. 6 at the Wells Fargo Center, 1700 Lincoln St., from 8:15 am-12:30 pm. Three classes running from 9-12, all with CLE credits, will be presented by AG Phil Weiser, Mr. Ted Gelt, and the Honorable Daniel M. Taubman, along with Kollel presenters. Breakfast & light refreshments will be served. \$50 for entire event if registered by 11/20; \$72 entire event/\$25 per class thereafter. To register, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

TORAH BY THE MOON

A night out for couples to engage in Torah learning! Men join Rabbi Shmuel Halpern for Tractate Brachos in Halacha and Aggada. Women attend *Chassidus in Real Life* with Rabbi Moshe Heyman. Mondays, 8-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St. For more info visit denverkollel.org or email Rabbi Heyman, rmh@denverkollel.org.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

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|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Blessed mountain | 4) Calev came in |
| 2) Leftover giant | 5) Miscarriage |
| 3) Trip into space | 6) Fall before the cut |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XXVII

More than sixty *rabbonim* signed and attended the first Agudah convention in 1939, held in Far Rockaway, NY. This was but a fraction of the rabbis in America, but it was an auspicious beginning nonetheless. Rabbi Silver

was elected president, and Rabbi Shlomo Heiman, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Voda'as, and Rabbi Mordechai Shlomo Friedman, the Boyaner Rebbe, were elected as vice presidents.

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the promise of exile's end, because all these things go against the very nature of the world, and it's impossible for the Jewish Nation to be in such an unnatural state forever! The promise that these various levels of exile will occur contains within itself the very

promise that the Jewish Nation will be redeemed. The Jewish Nation will return to its natural state, united together as a nation, back in its homeland under its own control, free to serve Hashem, exactly as things should be.

Stories for the Soul

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pages of handwritten *chidushei Torah* (Torah novellae) tucked inside the Gemara."

All this time, the customer was getting more and more impatient. But then the *sofer* told him about the nature of this phone call, and asked him whether there was anything in the tefillin bag that he lost.

"There was a Gemara, and some handwritten *chidushei Torah* inside it..." Lo and behold, the lost tefillin were found!

Hashem tells Avraham to travel to the Land of Canaan with the words *lech licha*, go for yourself. Rashi points out that Hashem was telling Avraham that this journey to an unknown place, leaving behind all he had known, was ultimately for his benefit. We, too, often do not understand why we must deal with something, be it a loss, an unexpected delay, or something much more serious. Ultimately, though, Hashem has our best interests in mind.

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| 1) Blessed mountain 12:6 s.v. <i>elion</i> | 3) Trip into space 15:5 s.v. <i>vayotzei</i> |
| 2) Leftover giant 14:13 s.v. <i>vayavo</i> | 4) Calev came in 15:16 s.v. <i>vedor</i> |
| 5) Miscarriage 16:5 s.v. <i>amochi</i> | |
| 6) Fall before the cut 17:3 s.v. <i>vayafel</i> | |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers