



From Exodus to Redemption: Our Ongoing Journey

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A. Redemption from Egypt or the Final Redemption

<p>1. Ramban, Introduction to the Book of Exodus [R. Moses b. Nahman, 13th century, Spain]</p>	<p>1. רמב"ן, הקדמה לספר שמות</p>
<p>Scripture completed the Book of Genesis, which is the book of creation, describing the advent of the world and the creation of every being and the events of the Patriarchs, which are akin to a form of creation for their descendants. For all their events are symbolic foreshadowings, to hint and make known everything in the future for them...The Book of "These Are the Names" [i.e., the Book of Exodus] was then set apart with regard to the matter of the first exile, which was explicitly decreed, and the redemption from it. And therefore [Scripture] returns and begins with the names of those who went down to Egypt and their number, even though this had already been written, because their descent there is the beginning of the exile, for from that time it commenced. And behold the exile is not complete until the day they return to their place and are returned to the stature of their forefathers. And when they left Egypt, although they went out from the house of slavery, they were still considered exiles, for they were not in their own land, being confused in the desert. And when they came to Mount Sinai and made the Tabernacle, and the Holy One, blessed be He, returned and caused His Presence to dwell among them...then they were considered redeemed.</p>	<p>השלים הכתוב ספר בראשית, שהוא ספר היצירה בחדוש העולם ויצירת כל נוצר ובמקרי האבות שהם בענין יצירה לזרעם, מפני שכל מקריהם ציורי דברים לרמז ולהודיע כל עתיד לבא להם...ונתיחד ספר ואלה שמות בענין הגלות הראשון הנגזר בפרוש ובגאולה ממנו, ולכן חזר והתחיל בשמות יורדי מצרים ומספרם אע"פ שכבר נכתב זה, בעבור כי ירידתם שם הוא ראשית הגלות כי מאז הוחל. והנה הגלות איננו נשלם עד יום שובם אל מקומם ואל מעלת אבותם ישובו. וכשיצאו ממצרים אע"פ שיצאו מבית עבדים עדין יחשבו גולים, כי היו בארץ לא להם נבכים במדבר. וכשבאו אל הר סיני ועשו המשכן ושב הקב"ה והשרה שכנתו ביניהם...ואז נחשבו גאולים.</p>

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<p>2. <i>Shelah, Pesahim, Matzah Ashirah 4:17</i> [R. Isaiah <i>ha-Levi</i> Horowitz, 16th-17th centuries, Central Europe]</p>	<p>2. שלי"ה, פסחים, מצה עשירה, דרוש ד, אות יז</p>
<p>And now we shall explain the four cups. Since the Exodus from Egypt was the ultimate purpose, and the sufferings were those of love, and their being brought out from Egypt was in order to fulfill “you shall serve God upon this mountain” (Exodus 3:12), which is the acceptance of the Torah, which in turn was to bring them to the Land. And our Rabbis of blessed memory said (<i>Berakhot</i> 5a): The Holy One, blessed be He, gave [Israel] three gifts, through suffering: Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come. For the ultimate purpose of the Torah and of the Land of Israel, whose air makes one wise, is entirely in order to come to the World to Come. And the four cups allude to the World to Come.</p>	<p>ועתה נבאר ארבע כוסות. מאחר שיציאת מצרים היה התכלית, והיסורין הם של אהבה, והוצאתם ממצרים היה בשביל תעבדון את האלקים על ההר הזה (שמות ג:יב), דהיינו קבלת התורה, והיא להביאם אל הארץ. ואמרו רז"ל (ברכות ה.): שלוש מתנות נתן להם הקב"ה על ידי יסורין, תורה וארץ ישראל ועולם הבא. כי תכלית התורה וארץ ישראל אויר המחכים הכל כדי לבוא לעולם הבא, ועל עולם הבא ירמזו ארבע כוסות.</p>

Discussion Questions:

- How does the Ramban (source #1) redefine the endpoint of redemption? What specific moments mark “true” redemption?
- What tension does the Ramban create between leaving Egypt and actually being redeemed?
- According to the Shelah (source #2), what is the ultimate purpose of the Exodus? How does this reshape how we understand the four cups of wine of the *seder*?
- How does the Shelah connect Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come as a single redemptive trajectory?
- If redemption was not complete at the highpoint of the Exodus, what does this suggest about how we should understand our own historical moment?
- How might these texts challenge a Passover experience that focuses only on past redemption?
- What does it mean to frame redemption as a multi-stage process rather than a single event?



B. The Dichotomy as Manifested in Hope

<p>3. <i>Haggadah Shel Pesah, Maggid</i></p>	<p>3. הגדה של פסח, מגיד</p>
<p>Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed is He. For the Holy One, blessed is He, calculated the end, to fulfill what He said to our father Abraham in the Covenant Between the Pieces.</p>	<p>ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל, ברוך הוא. שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב את הקץ, לעשות כמו שאמר לאברהם אבינו בבְּרִית בין הבְּתָרִים.</p>
<p>4. Rashbatz, Commentary on the <i>Haggadah</i>, s.v. ברוך שומר הבטחתו <i>Haggadah</i>, s.v. ברוך שומר הבטחתו [R. Simeon Tzemah Duran, 14th-15th centuries, Spain/Algeria]</p>	<p>4. רשב"ץ, פירוש על ההגדה, ד"ה ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל ברוך הוא</p>
<p>We are obligated to bless our God, for He promises and fulfills: For He brought Abraham out from among his father's household and led him through the land of Canaan after promising him... and afterward decreed upon him [i.e., his descendents, the Children of Israel] servitude and affliction, which was a great trial. Yet He promised him to bring him out of exile, set a time for it, and fulfilled His promise.</p>	<p>חייבין אנו לברך לאלקינו שהוא מבטיח ועושה, כי הוציא אברהם מבית אביו והוליכו בארץ כנען אחר שהבטיחו... ואח"כ גזר עליו עבדות ועינוי וזה נסיון גדול, אבל הבטיחו להוציאו מהגלות וקבע לו זמן וקיים הבטחתו.</p>
<p>5. <i>Shibbolei ha-Leket</i>, Commentary on the <i>Haggadah</i>, s.v. שהקב"ה מחשב את הקץ לעשות מה שאמר לאברהם אבינו בין הבתרים [R. Zedekiah b. Abraham Anaw ha-Rofeh, 13th century, Italy]</p>	<p>5. שבלי הלקט, פירוש על ההגדה, ד"ה שהקב"ה מחשב את הקץ לעשות מה שאמר לאברהם אבינו בין הבתרים</p>
<p>My brother, Rabbi Benjamin, may he be preserved, explained that when the Holy One, blessed is He, is described as "calculating the end," it does not refer to the Exodus from Egypt, but rather to the final redemption. This is</p>	<p>פירש אחי ר' בנימין נר"ו שזה שאמר הקב"ה מחשב את הקץ לא קאי איציאת מצרים, אלא אגאולה האחרונה קאי, והוא לחזק לב אומרי ההגדה.</p>



meant to strengthen the hearts of those who recite the *Haggadah*.

Discussion Questions:

- What does the passage from the *Haggadah* (source #3) emphasize about God's role in redemption?
- Explain the dispute between Rashbatz (source #4) and *Shibbolei ha-Leket* (source #5). According to each position, what is the subject of the *Haggadah's* passage (source #3)? How does each subject alter the way that we view the redemptive arc of Passover?
- Why might the *Haggadah* intentionally blur the line between past and future redemption?
- What role does hope play for Rashbatz (source #4) and *Shibbolei ha-Leket* (source #5)? What role does hope play when redemption is delayed or incomplete?
- How can the ritual storytelling that takes place on Passover function as a tool for sustaining belief in future redemption?

C. Concrete Strategies of Redemption: Continuity and Engagement

<p>6. <i>Sefer ha-Pardes, Commentary to the Prayers of R. Solomon</i> [R. Solomon b. Isaac (Rashi), 11th century, France]</p>	<p>6. ספר הפרדס, פירוש תפילות לרבינו שלמה</p>
<p>“God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob” – this is to recall the names of the Patriarchs...“The great God” – as it is written regarding Abraham, “And I will make you into a great nation” (Genesis 12:2), that is to say a nation of the great God...“The mighty and awesome” – these are additional expressions, that Moses said: “The great, mighty, and awesome God, who shows no favoritism” (Deuteronomy 10:17). How did they go from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people? He performed many mighty deeds for them and reproved kings on their behalf. As it says, “And Abram heard that his kinsman was taken captive...” (Genesis 14:14–20) [the story of the war of the four and five kings],</p>	<p>אלקי אברהם, אלקי יצחק, ואלקי יעקב כדי להזכיר שמותן של אבות...הקל הגדול, על שם שכתב באברהם, “ואעשך לגוי גדול” (בראשית יב:ב), כלומר גוי של הקל הגדול...הגבור הנורא מוסיפין עוד שאמר משה, “הקל הגדול הגבור והנורא אשר לא ישא פנים” (דברים י:ז). היאך התהלכו מגוי אל גוי וממלכה אל עם אחר. והרבה גבורות עשה להן, ויוכח עליהם מלכים, “וישמע אברם כי נשמע אחיו” (בראשית יד:כ), הודיע גבורותיו על אברהם, וכיוצא בהם הרבה. והנה עד היום הזה הניח לבניהם שה פזורה בין אריות, אומה יחידה בין עי אומות, ובגבורתו וגדולתו ונוראותיו ומעשיו מגין עליהם באמיתו.</p>



demonstrating His might through Abraham, and many similar acts. And behold, to this very day, He has left their descendants like a scattered sheep among lions, a single nation among seventy nations; and through His might, greatness, awe, and deeds, He truly shields them.	
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7. Pirkei Avot 6:6	7. פרקי אבות ו:ו
Anyone who says something in the name of the one who said it brings redemption to the world.	כל האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאולה לעולם.

8. Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu Zuta 14	8. תנא דבי אליהו זוטא יד
Israel is not redeemed out of suffering, nor out of subjugation, nor out of wandering, nor out of confusion, nor out of distress, nor out of lack of sustenance, but rather through ten people that sit together, each reading and studying with the other, and their voices being heard...And similarly, we find with our ancestors: they were redeemed from Egypt only through words of Torah. Even though they had not yet reached the forty days of receiving the Torah, nor yet arrived at that moment, they engaged in Torah all their days.	אין ישראל נגאלין לא מתוך הצער ולא מתוך השעבוד ולא מתוך הטלטול ולא מתוך הטירוף ולא מתוך הדוחק ולא מתוך שאין להם מזונות אלא מתוך עשרה בני אדם שהן יושבין זה אצל זה ויהיה כל אחד מהם קורא ושונה עם חבירו וקולם נשמע...וכן מצינו באבותינו הראשונים שלא נגאלו ממצרים אלא מתוך דברי תורה אע"פ שלא הגיעו עדיין לארבעים יום של קבלת התורה ולא באו עדיין לידי אותה השעה אלא עשו תורה כל ימיהם

Discussion Questions:

- How does *Sefer ha-Pardes* (source #6) in explaining the *Amidah* use the Patriarchs to construct a sense of ongoing divine protection?
- What is the significance of invoking the names of the Patriarchs in prayer?
- How does *Pirkei Avot* (source #7) define one mechanism for redemption? Why do you think this mechanism works?
- According to *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu* (source #8), what does not bring redemption, and what does? Why is communal Torah study emphasized?



- What do these sources suggest about the role of tradition and memory in sustaining redemption?
- Why might learning Torah together be framed as bringing redemption more than escaping suffering?
- How does invoking our ancestors and citing earlier voices function as a form of continuity across generations?
- What practical models of engagement with Judaism emerge from these texts?

D. Earning Our Redemption

<p>9. <i>Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishma'el, Maskehta de-Pisha</i> 5</p>	<p>9. מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל, מסכתא דפסחא ה</p>
<p>The time arrived for the oath that the Omnipresent had sworn to Abraham, that He would redeem his children. But they had no commandments in their hands with which to occupy themselves in order to be redeemed...So the Omnipresent gave them two commandments: the commandment of the Passover offering and the commandment of circumcision, so that they might engage in them in order to be redeemed.</p>	<p>הגיע שבועתו שנשבע המקום לאברהם שיגאל את בניו, ולא היה בידם מצוות שיתעסקו בהם כדי שיגאלו...נתן להם המקום שתי מצוות, מצות פסח ומצות מילה, שיתעסקו בהן כדי שיגאלו.</p>

Discussion Questions:

- According to the *Mekhilta* (source #9), why were the Children of Israel unprepared for the redemption from Egypt?
- What role do the commandments of the Passover offering and circumcision play in enabling redemption? Why did God single out these two specific commandments?
- How does the *Mekhilta* reinterpret God's promise to Abraham in light of human action?
- What does it mean that redemption required active participation rather than passive waiting? How does this challenge the idea that redemption is purely divine and guaranteed?
- What kinds of actions today might we take in order to earn redemption? How can we strengthen engagement with Torah and continuity with the past in our communities?
- How does Passover function not only as a remembrance, but as a call to action toward redemption?