

parashas Shemos

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*S*lavery again, and only a whole *year* later. The good news is that redemption is two *parshios* away. Everything happens much faster in the Torah than it does in real life, which makes it easier to focus on the essence of ideas so we can implement them into everyday life.

When you think of exile, you probably imagine a nation being carted off to a foreign land, often in chains. That's how the Jewish People were taken from *Eretz Yisroel* after Nebuchadnetzar exiled them to Babylonia. Or, it can be as simple as a person leaving home for a short while, even willingly. Great rabbis of the past periodically exiled themselves to keep them humble before God.

But there is a form of exile that happens without actually going anywhere, and in truth, it is the real exile that tends to lead to all of the others. It is the exile of the mind, *Gohus HaDa'as*, which can be momentary or, *God forbid*, permanent. When the Gemora says that a person only sins when a spirit of

This week's *parsha* is dedicated in loving memory of

Rafael ben Esther and Yosef, z"l.

May his *Neshamab* have *aliyah* after *aliyah*, and being a *meilitz yosbar* for his family and all of *Klal Yisroel*.

insanity enters them (*Sotah* 3a), it is not being melodramatic. You have to be crazy to sin, at least in the moment.

But what about people who don't even know they are sinning, especially if they're not sure about God and Torah? You have to be out of your mind not to check it out because, if God does exist and Torah is from Him, the implications about life and the World to Come are staggering.

It's like a person taking all of their savings and randomly investing in something they know nothing about. While there is a chance they could make money, the odds are against it and favor losing a lot of money instead. It's one thing to shoot blindfolded at a target, but very different to do so without knowing where the target is before blindfolding. You'll hit a target alright, just not the one you intended and probably wished you hadn't.

That's why the exile wasn't only in Egypt, but in *Mitzrayim*. Egypt is just a *geographical* location, but "*Mitzrayim*" is a *spiritual* one. The word is comprised of "*meitzer*," which means "border," and *Yud-Mem* has the *gematria* of fifty, the number of *Binah*—understanding—and source of *Da'as*, what the Torah means by "wisdom." *Mitzrayim* is any place that constricts the *Nun Sha'arei Binah*, that is, the *Da'as*.

Therefore, though Egypt always remains in northern Africa, *Mitzrayim* can be anywhere in the world, and at any time in history. Secular society is just another name for *Mitzrayim*, wherever it is, and though a Jew can feel right at home there, they are in mental exile according to the extent that they have been impacted by the secular world around them.

Therefore, before a person can change their location, they need to change their mind. They need to know the Torah's view on where and how they are living to measure the accuracy of

their approach to life and to current events. That's why God increased the slavery at the end of the *parsha*, to change the mentality of the Jewish People so they could take advantage of the redemption.

Because, at the end of the day, redemption doesn't occur because the host nation in exile tells us to leave, and it won't be because of some military strategy governments have worked out. Redemption occurs because God wants it to and makes it possible, and that is only after He sees that we have the *Da'as* for it.

This is why the Zohar, Ramchal, and GR"A have said that someone who learns Kabbalah at the end of days will be spared *Chelei Moshiach* and the War of Gog and Magog. They only come to restore *Da'as* in the world, and so does the Zohar. Therefore, learning the latter eliminates the need to go through the former.

We'll talk about this more in the next few weeks, b"H. In the meantime, have a great Shabbos. Latest book: What Now: Navigating the End of Days.

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