

THE NETZIV'S CUP OF ELIYAHU

Parshas Bo

By Rabbi Menachem Rokeach

The four cups of wine on the Seder on Pesach night symbolize four aspects of the redemption process of the Exodus, as expressed in the Chumash (Shmos 6:6). "I shall take you out, I shall rescue you, I shall redeem you, I shall take you to be My people". The Seder is programmed to celebrate the four step by step stages:

- 1) First cup, Kiddush; expressing the sanctity of the day.
- 2) Second cup, Haggadah; relating the miraculous delivery from slavery.
- 3) Third cup, Grace after the meal, (which is especially significant, since the meal includes basic Pesach mitzvos: matzoh, maror, afikomen).
- 4) Fourth cup Hallel; Called "Hallel HaMitzri (Mitzraim), it is recited on other holidays as well; however, on Seder night, its timelines, over a cup of wine, excites particular ecstasy.

In addition to the four cups of wine, a fifth cup is called "the Cup of Eliyahu" and representing a fifth Torah expression in the redemption process. According to most authorities, the expression is "Vehaivaisi... I will bring you to the land (Eretz Yisroel). The fifth cup, therefore, represents the promise of the future redemption, the Geula Shlaima, which will be heralded in advance by Eliyahu Hanavi.

The Netziv, however, in Haamek Davar, states that the fifth cup represents the Torah expression, "V'yedaatem... and you shall know that I am Hashem" (Shmos 6:7). It is only following that expression that the Torah brings the sixth expression, "I shall bring you to the land". It is in connection with the phrase, "V'yedaatem", the knowledge of Hashem and His Torah, that the fifth cup is called the Cup of Eliyahu. This connection is very appropriate, for when Eliyahu will herald the news of the Redemption, he will likewise bring parents and children together in dedicated observance of Torah. So we read in the prophecy about Eliyahu, "and he (Eliyahu) will restore the hearts of fathers to children

and the hearts of children to their fathers..." (Malachi 3:24, Haftorah for Shabbos HaGadol).

It is thus, utterly fitting on the Seder night, observing the mitzvah of conveying the Exodus story "to your children and children's children" (Shmos 10:2) to give tribute over a cup of wine to Eliyahu the Prophet, as we are awaiting this "great and awesome day of Hashem" (Malachi 3:23).

[It is interesting to note the part of Eliyahu's prophecy of restoring the heart of parents to children. One does not recall in recent history the phenomenon of parents inspired for Yiddishkeit by children, as we see today, in the thousands.]

2) The phrase "V'Yedaatem, and you shall know that I am Hashem" is found again in Parshas Bo (10:2). But this time it is mentioned in connection with the ridicule of Pharaoh; "So that you may relate to your children and grandchildren about the mockery I made of Egypt... and you shall know that I am Hashem." One should ponder, what constitutes mockery and why the emphasis on mockery, above the plagues suffered by the Egyptians? And how is this mockery a result of the preceding statement "For I hardened his heart (caused him to be unyielding to My command). Also, where in this mockery is the concept of "measure for measure"?

One conjectures the answer is as follows: When Man was created, the Torah reads "Naaseh Adam". "Let us make Man"(Bereishis 1:26). Hashem Echad created man; He alone. Why the use of the plural, "Let us".

The Meshech Chochma (R'Meir Simcha of Dvinsk) offers a profound explanation. Every part of Creation, including animals, was imbued with a strict nature to observe. An animal behaves as it does by instinct. It cannot behave otherwise. When Hashem was about to create Man, He wished to give Man the power of choice (B'chira). He could follow the Will of Hashem, but he is also given the power to behave contrary to the Will of Hashem. That makes Man a second power. This is the reason for the use of the plural, "Let us make man".

When Pharaoh was requested by Hashem to let Israel out of Egypt, he did not only refuse by the power of his choice; he completely denied

the existence of Hashem. Pharaoh replied, "Who is Hashem, that I should heed His Voice, to send out Israel? I do not know Hashem nor will I send Israel out" (Shmos 5:2). Measure for measure, he was punished that the power of choice was taken away from him. Pharaoh was no longer able to abide by Hashem's Will. His heart was hardened, becoming obstinate. The control of events was now "only" in the Hands of Hashem.

Pharaoh was disgraced and lowered to the level of an animal, which has no power of choice. This constitutes the "mockery" wrought upon him. And this is a paramount phrase of faith to grasp by Israel, "V'Yedaatem" that I am Hashem.

Returning to the Netziv's teaching that the fifth expression of redemption refers to V'yedaatem, "and you shall know", he includes in this knowledge the comprehension of Torah wisdom, bestowed on Sinai. This, too, is appropriately symbolized by the cup of Elijah. The Talmud records numerous questions and doubts, without resolution, placed in waiting for Elijah to decide. "Taiku" is the abbreviated form for Tishbi (Elijah) will solve...

The only way to reach a level of "Vyedaatem" is to toil in Torah. "You shall contemplate it day and night... Hashem your Creator is with you wherever you may go" (Joshua 1:8,9).

"V'yedaatem" obligates us not only to learn, but also to know. It means to review the learning, remembering it, until it becomes one's own. For this we beseech Hashem, Give us "our share" in Thy Torah, the fulfillment of V'yedaatem.

"Knowing Hashem" is accentuated in Parshas Vo'airo no less than eight times (6:3, 6:7, 7:5, 7:17, 8:6, 8:18, 9:14, 9:29) like a refrain. Finally, the ninth time: "And you shall know" (6:7). A Torah student does not merely study, but study to know. Even if less in volume, but thorough, detailed mastery of one Perek of a Mesechta, one Parsha in Chumosh.

Measure for measure, Hashem responded to Israel: "Vayaida... And Hashem knew" (Shemos 2:25).

