



Likkutei Sichos

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and *siyum* on tractate *Pesachim*

I Will Redeem You

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A note on the translation: Rounded parentheses and square brackets reflect their use in the original *sichah*; squiggly brackets are interpolations of the translator or editor. The footnotes in squiggly brackets in this translation are those of the translators, and do not correspond to the footnotes in the original. Great effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation, while at the same time striving for readability. However, the translation carries no official authority. As in all translations, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists. **Your feedback is needed — please send all comments to info@projectlikkuteisichos.org**

1.

TORAH SOURCES

From the verse,¹ “And each firstborn person among your sons you shall redeem,” the *Jerusalem Talmud*² learns³ (in addition to the father’s obligation to redeem his firstborn son) that if a father fails to redeem his son, the child must redeem himself (when he matures). However, the *Babylonian Talmud*⁴ learns this law from the verse,⁵ “redeem, yes redeem...”⁶ in *parshas Korach*.

We need to clarify:

- a) Why does it matter which verse is used to teach that if a father doesn't redeem his son, the son must redeem himself?
- b) Why does the *Babylonian Talmud* learn this law from the verse, “redeem, yes redeem,” in *parshas Korach*, while the *Jerusalem Talmud* derives this law from the verse in our *parshah*?

2.

ONE COMMANDMENT, TWO SOURCES

There is a distinction in content and in approach between the way the commandment to redeem the firstborn son is presented in our *parshah*, and the way it is presented in *parshas Korach*:

¹ *Shemos* 13:13.

² *Kidushin* 1:7.

³ {The verse could have omitted the word, “person.” We would still understand the verse to be commanding a father to redeem his firstborn son. The extra (seemingly unnecessary) word “person” teaches us the child's obligation to redeem himself}.

⁴ *Kidushin* 29a.

⁵ *Bamidbar* 18:15.

⁶ {The double expression, “*padoh tifdeh*,” in the original Hebrew.}

- a) Our *parshah* states, “and each firstborn person among **your sons** you shall redeem” {and a few verses later}, “and I will redeem all my firstborn **sons**.”⁷ Our *parshah* explicitly teaches that a child’s **father** is the one obligated to redeem his firstborn son. In contrast, the verse in *parshas Korach* states simply, “however, redeem, yes redeem, the firstborn person” {without indicating who is obligated}.
- b) In our *parshah*, the commandment to redeem the firstborn follows the exodus from Egypt, providing a rationale for the commandment: “When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us out, Hashem killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt... **therefore**... I shall redeem all the firstborn of my sons.” In contrast, the law of redeeming the firstborn, in *parshas Korach*, is listed as one of the gifts given to the *kohanim* (with additional details: “from one month,” “five *shekalim*”).

In light of this, we can explain the basis for the different scriptural sources quoted in the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem Talmuds*, regarding the obligation of the firstborn child to redeem himself if his father had not redeemed him. However, first we must preface by explaining {a passage in the *Babylonian Talmud* at} the end of tractate *Pesachim* regarding the redemption of the firstborn.

3.

CONCLUSION OF TRACTATE *PESACHIM*

The *Talmud* at the end of tractate *Pesachim* writes:⁸

Rabbi Simlai attended a *pidyon haben*.⁹ Those present asked him: “It is obvious that {the blessing} for a *pidyon haben*, ‘Who sanctified us with His *mitzvos* and commanded us concerning the redemption of a son,’ is recited by the child’s father. {But regarding the blessing:}

⁷ *Shemos* 13:15.

⁸ *Pesachim* 121b.

⁹ {Firstborn redemption ceremony}.

“Blessed... Who has given us life {*shehecheyanu*}, sustained us, and brought us to this time” — does the *kohen* recite this blessing, or the child’s father? Does the *kohen* recite this blessing, as he benefits,¹⁰ or does the child’s father recite this blessing, as he performs the *mitzvah*?¹¹ Rabbi Simlai did not have a ready answer; he went to pose this question in the study hall. Those present told him that the child’s father recites two blessings. And the *halachah* is that the child’s father recites two blessings.

We need to clarify: The question posed to Rabbi Simlai, “Does the *kohen* recite this blessing, or the child’s father,” was only regarding “*Shehecheyanu*.” Why was it necessary to preface (with something self-evident): “It is obvious that {the blessing} for a *pidyon haben*...” is recited by the child’s father”?

*Tzlach*¹² addresses this question. He explains that the purpose of this preface was to emphasize that it was the nuanced wording of the *pidyon haben* blessing that motivated the question regarding *shehecheyanu*. He explains this in two ways:

- a) The terminology of the blessing, “**concerning** the redemption of a son” (and not, “**to** redeem”)¹³ demonstrates that this *mitzvah* can also be done through an agent. As such, a dilemma arises as to who recites the *shehecheyanu* blessing: If the father recites it, the blessing will be omitted occasionally, whenever a person appoints an agent to redeem his son; nevertheless, the father is the one who recites it as “he performs the *mitzvah*.” Alternatively, this consideration— when using an agent, this blessing won’t be recited — compels us to establish that the *kohen* recites this blessing at every *pidyon haben*, “as he benefits” every time.

¹⁰ {A *kohen* who performs a *pidyon haben* receives five *sela*.}

¹¹ {“*Shehecheyanu*” is recited on infrequent, joyous occasions. Financial benefit and fulfillment of a *mitzvah* both bring joy.}

¹²{Yechezkel ben Yehuda HaLevi Landau (8 October 1713 – 29 April 1793) was an influential [authority](#) in *halachah*. He is best known for the work *Noda Biyhudah*, by which title he is also known}.

¹³ {In the original Hebrew: “*lifdos haben*”}.

- b) The terminology, “concerning (the redemption of a son)” demonstrates that the *mitzvah* of redeeming the firstborn cannot be fulfilled in its entirety by the father alone; rather, he needs the collaboration of a *kohen* to receive the redemption money. This creates a doubt as to who recites the *shehecheyanu* blessing, since the *mitzvah* is performed by both the father and the *kohen*, and the *kohen* benefits {financially}.

However, the basis of this explanation — that the doubt expressed by Rabbi Simlai’s questioners was based only on the nuanced **terminology**, “**concerning** the redemption of a son” — does not conform well to the Talmud’s style or with the substance of the Talmud’s further discussion:

- a) {This difficulty is apparent} from the “contrast”: “**It is obvious...** ‘Blessed...’ does the *kohen* recite this blessing, **or** does the child’s father recite it...?” The phrasing implies that what the questioners found to be obvious concerned the same subject of their dilemma (namely, the one who recites the blessing).¹⁴
- b) If the primary emphasis is (not that it is obvious that the **father** recites the *pidyon haben* blessing, but rather) on the **wording** of the blessing, then the question should have been asked with the clauses reversed: “It is obvious (that) the child’s father recites the blessing (using the formula), concerning the redemption of a son” — not the way the question is currently worded, “It is obvious that {the blessing} “concerning the redemption of a son...” is recited by the child’s father.” As worded, the syntax of the question implies that the blessing’s phrasing isn’t at issue, just the identity of the one who recites the blessing.
- c) The *Talmud* could have written more concisely: “Since over the *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben*, the blessing recited is concerning the

¹⁴ {That is, based on the Talmudic presentation, the doubt expressed by Rabbi Simlai’s questioners was not based on the nuanced terminology of the blessing, “**concerning** the redemption of a son.”}

redemption of a son,' regarding *shehecheyanu*, does the *kohen* recite...?"

On this basis, our earlier difficulty returns: Why does the *Talmud* preface by teaching us that the child's father recites the blessing, "...concerning the redemption of a son"?

Similarly, we can also raise a difficulty regarding the response given to Rabbi Simlai in the study hall, at end of the *Talmud's* narrative, "The child's father recites **two** blessings," and the *Talmud's* conclusion, "The *halachah* is that the child's father recites **two** blessings." Does the *Talmud* need to instruct us how to count?¹⁵ After all, this difficulty does not relate to both blessings, only to one (*shehecheyanu*). The *Talmud* should have concluded, "The child's father recites *shehecheyanu*."

4.

CONNECTION TO PIDYON HABEN

We need to clarify further: What connection does the *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben* and its blessing have with tractate *Pesachim* (for which reason this discussion was placed at the conclusion of this tractate)?

Rashbam clarifies:¹⁶

The *Mishnah* discusses two different blessings that are interdependent, recited by one person for the same act,¹⁷ such as "Pesach" and "zevach,"¹⁸ since the *Chagigah* offering is brought together with the Pesach offering. For this reason, this *Mishnah* also discusses this case, in which the child's father recites two blessings.

¹⁵ {This question is frequently asked in the *Talmud* when a *Mishnah* provides a number for things that readers could count themselves.}

¹⁶ {*Rashbam's* commentary on *Pesachim* 121b.}

¹⁷ {Slaughtering a sacrifice.}

¹⁸ {"Al achilas hapesach," recited for the Pesach offering, and "Al achilas hazevach," recited for the *Chagigah* offering.}

Still, this explanation is reasonable only with respect to the *Gemara*. It is insufficient, however, with respect to the *Rif*¹⁹ and the *Rosh*,²⁰ who also cite this *halachah* in {in their commentaries on} tractate *Pesachim*.²¹ Their approach is “to collate *halachic* decisions from the *Talmud* that are germane to the tractate dealing with those *halachos*.”²² (They should only have brought this *halachah* in *Bechoros*.) Thus, this *halachah* regarding *pidyon haben* certainly must have a special correlation with tractate *Pesachim*.

5.

THE CORE COMMANDMENT

The explanation of all of these issues: The *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben* involves three participants: The child's father, who redeems his son; the son, who is redeemed; and the *kohen*, who receives the redemption money.

A *kohen* participates {in *pidyon haben*} by receiving the redemption money (by which a firstborn son is redeemed). This cannot be understood to be an **obligation that rests upon the *kohen*** to redeem Jewish firstborn children. Rather, his participation is merely a detail of, or a necessary condition of, fulfilling this *mitzvah*: The redemption can only be accomplished by giving money to a *kohen*.

The father, who redeems his son, and the child who is redeemed, can conceivably be viewed from two perspectives:

- a) The *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben* rests upon the son. However, since he is incapable of redeeming himself as a minor when the *mitzvah* {first}

¹⁹ {*Yitzchak ben Yaakov Alfasi ha-Cohen* 1013–1103.}

²⁰ {*Asher ben Yechiel* 1259-1327.}

²¹ {27b.}

²² *Korban Nesanel* {in his commentary on *Rosh*, “*Pesachim*,” 134b, entry “a,” s.v. *Rav Simlai*.}

applies, the Torah assigns the *mitzvah* to the father, who assumes this obligation in his son's place.

- b) From the outset, the obligation to redeem rests upon the father. The *mitzvah* to redeem is the **father's *mitzvah***.

Among the *halachic* differences resulting from the two perspectives: Should a father fail to redeem his minor son, who is responsible to redeem the son when he reaches adulthood? According to the first perspective, the essential *mitzvah* to redeem is the son's obligation. Since in this case, the son has reached adulthood and can redeem himself — and consequently, is **obligated** to redeem himself — the father's obligation (and right) to redeem his firstborn son is revoked. But if initially the *mitzvah* to redeem was the father's obligation, then even after the son reaches adulthood without having been redeemed, the father's obligation and right to redeem his son remains intact. However {in this case} a distinct exegesis teaches us that if a father does not redeem his son, the son is obligated to redeem himself, as mentioned above.

This explains the difference between the *Jerusalem Talmud* and the *Babylonian Talmud* regarding the scriptural source they adduce in support of this *halachah*:

The *Jerusalem Talmud* also attributes this ruling — that if the father fails to redeem his son, the son must redeem himself — to the same verse from which we derive that the father is obligated to redeem the firstborn, “And each firstborn person among your sons you shall redeem.” This means the original source in the Torah for *pidyon haben* includes the obligations of both (the father and the son) together. We can surmise {in light of this} that initially, the *mitzvah* is the son's obligation, while the father's obligation, explicit in Scripture, devolves from his son's obligation. Since the *mitzvah* is to redeem the son when he is an infant, when he is unable to redeem himself, the Torah instructs his father to (act in his son's place and to) redeem his son.

In contrast, the *Babylonian Talmud* attributes this ruling (that a son must redeem himself if his father fails to redeem him) to (a single **detail** in the *parshah* describing gifts owed to the *kohanim* in) a different verse, and not to the same verse in **the *parshah* of *pidyon haben*** detailing a father's obligation. This proves a son's obligation has no basis in, or connection with, a father's scriptural obligation. Rather, a son's obligation to redeem himself when he matures is an **additional** ruling learnt **elsewhere** in Scripture. That is, essentially, the *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben* is a father's obligation, and not a son's. However, after a son matures (nothing is **revoked** — in our case, the father's obligation and right — for what mechanism would cause such a revocation? Rather), the son becomes responsible to fulfill all of the *mitzvos*. This includes a situation in which (a father did not redeem his son, and certainly if) a father does not **want** to redeem his son, when the Torah places this obligation upon the son.

6.

THE EXPLANATION

In light of this, we can also resolve the conundrum mentioned above regarding the end of tractate *Pesachim* — why does the Talmud preface: “It is obvious...‘Who sanctified us with His *mitzvos* and commanded us concerning the redemption of a son’ is recited by the child's father.” For only after this preface can the question of who recites the blessing “*Shehecheyanu*” be understood.

The explanation of this nuanced wording: Since “it is **obvious**” that the **father** (unconditionally) recites the blessing over a *pidyon haben*, he does so **always**, even after his son matures (the wording of the blessing as recited by the father: “Who sanctified us with His *mitzvos* and commanded **us**”).

In other words: If a son, rather than his father, would be the one to recite this blessing (if the {as yet unredeemed} son had matured), because

the child is the one who is obligated (the Torah only obligating a father when his son is incapable), there would be no question as to who recites the blessing, “*Shehecheyanu*” (when a minor is redeemed). Obviously, the *kohen* would recite this blessing for the {financial} benefit **he receives**. It would be unreasonable for the father to recite this blessing because this *mitzvah* does not inherently belong to him. Rather, he is only fulfilling his son's *mitzvah* (**similar** to a person fulfilling a *mitzvah* for others, who does not recite the blessing, “*Shehecheyanu*”).

However, the fact that it is **obvious** that the blessing, “Who sanctified with His commandments and **commanded us** concerning the redemption of a son is (always) recited by the father” demonstrates that redeeming the firstborn is the father's *mitzvah*. As such, we are unsure who recites the blessing, “*Shehecheyanu*” — the father or the *kohen* — being that, seemingly, they are both equal. Does the father recite it, as “he **performs** the *mitzvah*,” since Hashem gave **him** the opportunity to fulfill this (sporadic) *mitzvah*? Or, does the *kohen* recite this blessing, since he benefits {financially}, and, “a person who experiences any {special} joy... is **obligated** to recite a blessing.”²³

[You may ask: If this is so, they should both recite “*Shehecheyanu*.” The father of the child should recite it since he performs the *mitzvah* (when giving {the money}), and the *kohen* should recite it (when receiving {the money}) for he benefits from it! We may posit that the answer is as follows: The blessing, “*Shehecheyanu*,” is only recited when receiving a special or valuable benefit, and not for every benefit (and accordingly, the blessing is only recited when purchasing a new home or new {expensive} clothing, etc.). Therefore, in our case, a *kohen* would not recite “*Shehecheyanu*” just for the benefit of receiving five *selai'm*. However, the *kohen* receives this benefit as a result of the *mitzvah* of redeeming the firstborn, and the *mitzvah* (although being done by someone else, i.e., the father) **imparts importance** to the benefit. If the father recites “*Shehecheyanu*,” however, he does so over the **actual mitzvah**. In turn, this leaves no room for the

²³ Alter Rebbe's *Seder Birkas HaNehenin*, beg. of ch. 12; see *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Berachos*,” ch. 10, sec. 7.

kohen to recite “*Shehecheyanu*” **in connection with** a collateral component of the *mitzvah*. Therefore, the *kohen* would be reciting the blessing for his {financial} benefit alone {which is unacceptable}.]

Based on the above explanation, we can appreciate the nuanced wording of the reply (after {Rabbi Simlai} asked his question in the study hall), “Those present told him that the child’s father recites **two** blessings,” and (they did) not (just answer the question), “the child’s father recites “***Shehecheyanu***”: This underscores the shared reasoning for both {blessings}. The primary *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben* is the father’s. (He does not act in place of his son; therefore, the father recites the blessing even when the son has the responsibility to redeem himself.) The primary obligation to recite “*Shehecheyanu*” is {also} a father’s (therefore, a father recites it even though the *kohen* derives benefit, just as the {case of the first blessing, where there is an} obligation on the child himself, as mentioned above.

If the {Talmud} would have stated, “the child’s father recites ‘*Shehecheyanu*,’” we would not have understood its reasoning. We might have thought that this was because the *kohen* does not derive sufficient benefit to enable him to recite this blessing, (We may have thought that the reasoning in this case was similar to a person who only recites this blessing when purchasing a new home, etc; or to a *kohen* who does not recite a blessing for any of the priestly gifts he receives, or the like.)

7.

IDENTICAL REASONING

In light of the above, the connection between the concept of *pidyon haben* and tractate *Pesachim* can be explained. The (core) commandment to redeem a firstborn in the **Written Torah** (“And each firstborn person among your sons you shall redeem”)²⁴ is preceded by the reasoning and motivation for this commandment: “When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to

²⁴ *Shemos* 13:13.

let us out, Hashem killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt”²⁵ and saved “My firstborn child, Israel.” Thus, every Jewish father is obligated to redeem his firstborn child. The sequence and underlying idea taught in (the Oral Torah in) tractate *Pesachim* is similar. The substance and meaning of the Pesach {sacrifice} is that Hashem, “**passed over** the Jewish people’s houses in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians (during the **plague of the firstborn**), but he saved (the firstborn of) our households.”²⁶ This is the same reasoning {the Torah gives} for the *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben*. Therefore, this is the logical upshot and conclusion of tractate *Pesachim*.

The connection between this discussion and the *siyum* of tractate *Pesachim* is also alluded to in the above mentioned reason for a father being the one to recite “*Shehecheyanu*.” My firstborn child, Israel” (the reason behind the command {to redeem firstborn sons} was saved for the reason that “**Hashem** passed over,”²⁷ after which, “**Hashem** took {us} out.” Since Hashem Himself redeemed *His* “firstborn child” from the land of Egypt, we can appreciate why consequently, regarding the *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben*, the **father** is the one who is **commanded** to redeem his firstborn child.

8.

HASHEM'S REDEMPTION

In light of all of the above, we can explain the inner meaning of the conclusion of tractate *Pesachim* — the **conclusion** and fulfillment of the redemption of, “My firstborn child, Israel” (from exile, namely, this **final** exile).

Being that, “His laws and statutes {that he gave} to Israel, Hashem (Himself) fulfills,”²⁸ surely, Hashem will fulfill the *mitzvah* of redeeming the firstborn child²⁹ by redeeming His firstborn child (from exile).

²⁵ *Shemos* 13:15.

²⁶ *Shemos* 12:27.

²⁷ *Shemos* 12:23.

²⁸ *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 30, par. 9.

²⁹ See *Bamidbar Rabbah*, beg. of ch. 17.

The conclusion {of the tractate} begins: “Rabbi Simlai.”

Rabbi Simlai authored the teaching and ruling that *a person should always **order** his praise of Hashem {first}, and then pray.*³⁰ Generally, the order of our praise of Hashem is twofold: direct and indirect praise.³¹ These two types of praise are reflected in the {standard} wording of blessings, “Blessed are **You... Who** sanctified us.” When we say, “**You**” (in second-person), we speak directly (on the level of *memalei kol almin*³² — *seder hishtaleshelus*³³); When we say, “{**He**} **Who** sanctified us” {in third-person}, we speak indirectly (on the level of *sovev kol almin*³⁴ — beyond *seder hishtaleshelus*).

We must recite this order of praise **several** times **every** day. Primarily, this recitation is {fulfilled when we fulfill the *mitzvah*} “to love Hashem, your L-rd and to serve Him with all your heart.”³⁵ What is the service of your heart? This refers to prayer.”³⁶ Clearly, Rabbi Simlai’s teaching refers to this concept.

Thus, when “Rabbi Simlai attended a *pidyon haben*,” he entered into a deliberation related to our discussion — analogous to the *pidyon haben* in the talmudic anecdote — regarding the *pidyon haben* of “My firstborn child, Israel.” This refers to the redemption of the entire Jewish people of our generations who live in the final moments before the coming of the Moshiach³⁷ (as demonstrated by the signs {of the imminent arrival of

³⁰ *Berachos* 32a.

³¹ {Lit., “revealed” and “concealed”}.

³² {Lit., “fills all worlds.” This refers to Hashem’s Divine *light* as part of the chain-like process of *seder hishtaleshelus*. This *light* is expressed with consideration to the specific realm to which it extends. It is tailored according to its individual recipient.}

³³ {*Seder hishtaleshelus* refers to the chain-like descent of spiritual worlds until this world. Each spiritual world denotes a complete realm of existence, resulting from its general proximity to or distance from Divine revelation.}

³⁴ {Lit., “surrounds all worlds.” This refers to Hashem’s Divine *light* that is beyond the chain-like process of *seder hishtaleshelus*. This *light* is expressed with regard for the realm it is extending to. It is not tailored according to the recipient of this *light*.}

³⁵ *Devarim* 11:13.

³⁶ Beg. of *Taanis*. {I.e., the *Amidah* prayer, recited thrice daily, consists of 19 blessings using this wording.}

³⁷ {*Ikvesa deMeshicha*, in the original, lit., “the heels of Moshiach.”}

Moshiach} at conclusion of tractate *Sotah*). The time when Rabbi Simlai “went to a *pidyon haben*” alludes to a time when Hashem stands ready to redeem His firstborn child {the Jewish people} from Exile.

The talmudic anecdote continues with {an analogy for} the conclusion³⁸ (of the exile), and says: “It is obvious that {the blessing} for a *pidyon haben*, ‘Who sanctified us with His *mitzvos* and commanded us concerning the redemption of a son,’ is recited by the child’s father. {But regarding the blessing:} ‘Blessed... Who has given us life {*shehecheyanu*}, sustained us, and brought us to this time’ — does the *kohen* recite this blessing, or the child’s father?”

The difference between a “father” and a “*kohen*” {in *seder hishtaleshelus*} is: “Father” refers to {Hashem's} *Infinite Light* at a level beyond *seder hishtaleshelus*. (As known, “father” alludes to the attribute of *chochmah*,³⁹ analogous to the idea that “Torah preceded the world by two thousand years,” and the concept of *a'alefcha chochmah*.)⁴⁰ A “*kohen*,” who is a “man of kindness,” is analogous to the level of Divine *light* that extends into *Seder Hishtaleshelus*.

This is the meaning of, “It is obvious that {the blessing}, concerning the redemption of a son’ is recited by the child’s father.” The word “blessing”⁴¹ denotes *drawing down*.⁴² Meaning, the actual redemption will be drawn down from the level of “father” which is beyond *seder hishtaleshelus*.

This {Final Redemption} will be just like the first redemption of the Jewish people — from Egypt — when Hashem Himself in His Glory redeemed the Jews,⁴³ even though, from the perspective of *seder*

³⁸ {“*Siyum*,” in the original Hebrew, denoting both a (*generic*) conclusion and the (*celebration of the*) conclusion of a Talmudic tractate.}

³⁹ *Tanya*, ch. 3. {This refers to the revelation of Hashem through the *sefirah* of 'wisdom,' the highest of the intellectual faculties. *Chochmah* is the source of Torah.}

⁴⁰ {The idea that Torah is the 'blueprint' for this world, as Torah preceded the world}.

⁴¹ {“*Berachah*,” in the original Hebrew}.

⁴² {“*Hamshachah*,” in the original Hebrew. This refers to the Divine *light* being brought down to a lower realm.}

⁴³ *Haggadah Shel Pesach*.

hishtaleshelus, there was room to argue,⁴⁴ “These {the Jewish people} are {idol} worshippers, and these {the Egyptians, also} worship {idols}.”

How much more so regarding the complete redemption from our current and final exile! It is obvious that our redemption and freedom will come about through our Father in Heaven, Himself, in all His Glory — from {a level} beyond *seder hishtaleshelus*.

The dilemma {in the talmudic anecdote} only relates to the blessing, “Who has given us life {*shehecheyanu*}, sustained us, and brought us to this **time**.” Meaning, this dilemma does not concern the origin and source of the essential quality of redemption, but rather, the **manner** and means by which it will unfold in time (and space) in our earthly realm. This is our dilemma — who recites this blessing — the *kohen*, as he benefits, or child’s father, as he performs the *mitzvah*?

“The {argument that the} *kohen* recites this blessing”: The blessing implicit in the redemption, and the redemption itself, will be elicited by a *kohen*, a person {emblematic} of kindness. That is, although the source of the redemption is beyond *seder hishtaleshelus*, nevertheless, when it is drawn into “this time,” it will come by means of the {Divine} attribute of *chesed* {kindness}, through *seder hishtaleshelus*.

The reason for this: “As he {the *kohen*} benefits” — for “the Divine Presence is in exile,” referring to the level of Divine *light* (*memalei kol almin*) which is, so to speak, in exile. As our Sages teach,⁴⁵ “When the Jewish people were exiled to Edom, the Divine Presence was exiled with them.” (Regarding the {Final} Redemption, the Torah says,) “Hashem your L-rd **will return** your captivity.’⁴⁶ The verse does not say, ‘will bring back,’ but rather, ‘will return.’ This teaches us that Hashem will return with

⁴⁴ *Mechilta*, “*Shemos*,” ch. 14, par. 29; *Zohar*, vol. 2, p. 170b; *Yalkut Reuveni*, “*Shemos*,” ch. 14, par. 27.

⁴⁵ *Sifrei*, “*Masei*,” ch. 35, par. 34; See *Iggeres HaKodesh*, ch. 25 (p. 140, top of 1st col.).

⁴⁶ *Devarim* 30:3.

them....”⁴⁷ {The analogy:} Hashem derives benefit for “your L-ord is a *kohen*.”⁴⁸

We may also posit that the concept of redemption is (also) a “benefit” (in the form of a **reward**)⁴⁹ {for our deeds}. This “benefit” {i.e., reward} is actualized by the redemption of the Jewish people. Therefore, the redemption may possibly come about by natural means. For even in this manner, “benefit is received” — {the Jewish people receive} the benefit of the redemption.

On the other hand, one may argue that “the father recites the blessing”: For even the drawing down of redemption and its impact in “this time” {i.e., within temporal reality} will be done by the “Father” — our Father in Heaven.

The reason: “As he {the father} performs the *mitzvah*.” Meaning, the underlying idea of redemption is not only the resultant “benefit” {of the Jewish people being saved from Exile}. Rather, the essence (and the manner) of the redemption itself is primary. For this is Hashem's ***mitzvah*** {i.e., He actualizes it}.⁵⁰ Therefore, the Father himself recites the blessing and draws redemption, as it exists beyond *seder sishtaleshelus*, into the {temporal} limitations of “this time (and place),” so that even the manner of the redemption will be entirely beyond nature.

This dilemma was resolved when those present in the study hall replied, “The child’s father recites two blessings.” Redeeming His firstborn son is a *mitzvah* of our Father in Heaven. Thus, just as the redemption is elicited at the outset (the first blessing) from {a level} beyond *seder hishtaleshelus*, the manner in which redemption is drawn into the world is similarly accomplished by “the Father” — redemption will not come about

⁴⁷ *Megillah* 29a; Rashi’s commentary on *Devarim* 30:3.

⁴⁸ *Sanhedrin* 39a.

⁴⁹ See *Responsa Chasam Sofer*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” ch. 356.

⁵⁰ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5 (p. 244 ff.), which explains that the revelation of Hashem’s Essence at the End of Days (bringing delight to His creation) is not only a reward for our *avodah* studying Torah and performing *mitzvos* in the present era. Rather, this revelation is an essential component of our Torah study and *mitzvah* observance, which elicit Hashem’s Essence (bringing delight to the Creator).

through natural means, etc. Rather, redemption will transpire in one moment and in one instant,⁵¹ with kindness and mercy, to the extent that it will be expressed with feelings of actual, physical joy and delight.

This is also alluded to in the correlation between *pidyon haben* and tractate ***Pesachim*** (in addition to the earlier explanation that the {deeper} idea behind tractate *Pesachim* is the redemption, by Hashem Himself, of, “My firstborn child, Israel” at the time of the exodus from Egypt, which also alludes to the Future Redemption). For the word *Pesach* is etymologically related to the word “*chas* {pity}” (Hashem took pity on the Jewish people), as the *Targum* translates. *Targum Onkelos* similarly translates the verse, “I will pass over”⁵² as “I will take pity,” and “Hashem will pass over”⁵³ as “Hashem will take pity.”⁵⁴ Meaning, the redemption of His firstborn also finds expression in the “*Targum*” (in the language and garb of the world)⁵⁵ as an expression of {Hashem’s} great mercy and compassion.

This dilemma was originally presented in the study hall, in the “four cubits of Torah.” The *Talmud* then concludes, “And the *halachah* is that the child’s father recites two blessings.” The {underlying idea of} this ruling also extended into “the ways of the world,”⁵⁶ “the child’s father recites two blessings.” In so doing, both the essence of redemption and its descent into the world⁵⁷ will originate from a level beyond *seder hishtaleshelus* {coming down into this plane} by a quantum leap.⁵⁸ (which is also one of the explanations of the phrase, “Hashem will pass {skip} over”)⁵⁹ in revealed, and discernable goodness, really very soon.

-From a talk delivered on the 11th of Nissan, 5722 (1962)

⁵¹ As Rambam rules (*Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Teshuvah*,” ch. 7, par. 5): “Torah **promises** that in the end, the Jewish people will do *teshuvah* at the end of their exile, and they will be redeemed **immediately**.”

⁵² {*Shemos* 12:13.}

⁵³ {*Shemos* 12:23.}

⁵⁴ See Rashi’s commentary {to these verses}: “I will take pity”; “He will take pity.”

⁵⁵ See *Torah Or*, “*Parshas Mishpatim*.”

⁵⁶ {*Habakkuk* 3:6.} Tractate *Niddah*, at the end.

⁵⁷ {“Below ten *tefachim*,” in the original, a phrase used to denote Divine *light* reaching into our physical realm}.

⁵⁸ {In the Hebrew original, “*dilug*”; lit., “leaping” or “skipping.” This refers to the process of Divine *light* extending to a lower realm without the usual chain-like process of *seder hishtaleshelus*}.

⁵⁹ Rashi’s commentary {to *Shemos* 12:23}; see also *Mechilta* and Rashi’s commentary to “I will pass over you” {*Shemos* 12:13}.