



The Community

Boruch Hashem

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Weekly Newsletter Published by The Jewish Center - Chabad of North Miami

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Vol. 27, No. 30

Rabbi's Article

Who Will Redeem or Inherit Me?!

Concerning a Jewish slave's redemption the verse states (-Leviticus 28:48-49), "He shall have redemption; one of his brothers shall redeem him. Or his uncle or his cousin shall redeem him, or the closest [other] relative from his family shall redeem him; or, if he becomes able to afford it, he can be redeemed [on his own]," from which (the order of the relatives listed in the verse) we learn (-Torat Kohanim on the verse), "We are hereby taught that the nearest of kin takes precedence," to redeem the slave.

Questions: (i) "He can be redeemed [on his own]," takes precedence over all relatives, hence, should have been listed *first*, rather than *last*? (ii) Being that the verse lists many relatives, and in the order of, "the nearest of kin takes precedence," why then does it not list first the *father*? As we find in the *Laws of Inheritance*¹ (-Maimonides, Chapter 1, Law 3), "If the son (the deceased) does not have descendants, the estate returns to the deceased's father. If the father is no longer alive, we look to see if the father left descendants - i.e., the brothers of the deceased"!

The Explanation: The verses here are speaking of one's descent for not observing the agricultural laws of the *Sabbatical Year* (-[Link](#)), which brings upon him an *order* of physical descent, in which, if the *lighter* (having to sell off his movable possessions) doesn't arouse him to repent, it gets *harder* and *harder* (selling his properties; himself as a slave to another Jew), to the point of, "sold to a resident non-Jew," and to the lowest point of, "or to an idol of the family of a non Jew"! It is self-understood that the physical descent, lower and lower, is a reflection of the individual's spiritual descent, being that: (i) (-Maimonides, Laws of Slaves 1:3), "A person who sells himself as a servant is not permitted to sell himself to a gentile, not even to a resident alien," (ii) (-Rashi, Numbers 26:1), "One who has been sold [as a servant] to a non-Jew, that he should not say, 'Since my master has illicit relations, I will also be like him! Since my master worships idols, I will also be like him! Since my master desecrates the Sabbath, I will also be like him!'", and (iii) how much more so, one who has sold himself to the service of an idol!

Hence, the obvious question, how can a Jew have fallen so low, to the point of, "Selling himself to the service of an idol!?" Only that this descent begins with one disconnecting himself and forgetting of his *Father in Heaven*. With this, he has forgotten the *Love and Fear* that exists between a child and their father, as the prophet bemoans (-Malachi 1:6), "A son honors a father, and a slave his master. Now if I am a father, where is My honor? ...says the L-rd of Hosts to you."

Mystically Speaking: He is lacking the revelation of his "Father," which is the *Faculty of Wisdom* of his soul. As explained in Tanya (-Chapter 19), "The (Faculty of) Wisdom in the divine soul --(-Chapter 18), "Wisdom... The faith in G-d, is beyond comprehension and understanding"---... It is merely dormant in the case of the wicked, not exercising its influence within them," hence, he does not feel how every sin, even a *minor* sin, renders him, "Separated completely from G-d's unity and oneness." However, when one sees that, "Even he who commits a minor sin transgresses the Divine will, and he is completely sundered from G-d's unity and oneness," then "They are prepared to sacrifice their lives without any knowledge or reflection but as though it were absolutely impossible to renounce the one G-d!"

With this we can now understand (on the mystical level) why here (the redemption of a Jewish slave), and in the Torah-portion of *Inheritance*, the *father* is not mentioned: *Death* on a spiritual level is (Brochos 18b), "The wicked, in their lifetime are called, 'dead'," or, on an even more refined level (-Zohar, Vol III, 135b), "one who descends from his stature... upon him is called, 'Death'." And this form of *Death* happens because he forgets of his *Father in Heaven*, which then causes the *father* (*Wisdom*) dimension of his soul to be in a state of *sleep*, and (-Brochos 57b), "Sleep is 1/60th of death." Therefore, the verses speak not of the *Father* redeeming him, or inheriting him, for if the 'father' dimension were awake (alive and able to inherit or redeem) within him, then (-Ecclesiastics 7:12), "Wisdom gives life," and there would be neither 'Death' nor slavery!

1. Even though the same could be asked upon the verses of inheritance (-Numbers 27:8-11), "If a man dies and has no son, you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter... to his brothers... to his father's brothers... the kinsman closest to him," with no mention of the father's inheriting his son! However, commentaries (Nachmanides on the verse) explain that the verses doesn't wish to speak of thus, "cut off," which is a punishment in which one buries his own child, Heaven forbid. -cont. on Page 3

This Week...

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2023 ★ כ"א אייר תשפ"ג

[Shabbat Candle Lighting](#): 7:40 PM · [Kabbalat Shabbat](#): 7:30 PM

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2023 ★ כ"ב אייר תשפ"ג

TORAH READING: [Behar](#) (Levit. 25:1-26:2) & [Bechukosai](#) (Levit. 26:3-27:34) · HAFTORAH: [Jeremiah](#) 16:19-17:14
[Shabbat Chazak](#) · [Shacharit](#): 9:30 AM · [Mincha](#): 7:15 PM · [Shabbat Ends](#): N. Miami: 8:35 PM

Just as one's being *sold into slavery* is reflecting a *spiritual* descent, so too, concerning his *redemption* --which (i) the Torah *commands* and *obligates* the relatives to, "He shall have redemption," and (ii) the verse's, "He shall have redemption," is also to be read as a *promise* (and not just as a commandment) that it speaks (internally) of a *spiritual* redemption, as the verse dictates that (-Leviticus 25:54-55), "He shall go out in the Jubilee year,"-- and the reason being because, "For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants," and therefore (-Rashi ibid), "My contract (G-d's 'contract' with us at Mt. Sinai that we are *His* slaves) is first!"

The internal explanation to this *spiritual redemption* from whichever lowly status he may be in is: At Mt. Sinai we became *eternal* slaves to G-d ("They are My servants," "My contract is first!"), and this became our very *essence*, and hence, *never be taken away from us*. And even when we do the opposite of G-d's will, nevertheless, our relationship with evil ("sold to the service of idols") is only an *external covering*, placed upon our *essence*, for our *essence* (being a *Servant of G-d*) can never change! Hence, it is an absolute definite that, "He shall have redemption!"

--And with this we can appreciate the opening of the Torah-portion --"And the L-rd spoke to Moses *on Mount Sinai*, saying"-- which is the all-encompassing general introduction to the entire portion, for it is of the power of our reaching Mt. Sinai that it became, "My contract is first!" ("They are My servants") which is the reason of the end of the portion --"He shall have redemption"-- that regardless of how far one has fallen, it is *definite* that, "He shall have redemption!"--

With this we can also glean insight into the longevity of Rashi's comment. The verse states, "And your brother becomes destitute with him and is sold to a resident non Jew among you or *lia'aker* (לעקר - "To that (which must) be uprooted"; namely, to an idol) of the family of a non Jew." Hence, Rashi explains: "The family of a non-Jew: [Without the word לעקר,] this [expression] means [the Jew is sold to] an idolater; but when Scripture says לעקר [literally 'to uproot,' making it לעקר משפחת גר], it refers to [a Jew] who is sold to the idol itself [לעקר meaning 'that which is to be uprooted'], he becomes an attendant to it. He does not worship it as a deity, but to chop wood and draw water."

From where does Rashi take that the Jew did not sell himself, "to the idol itself"? And if it is because it is forbidden for a Jew to do so: (i) It is likewise forbidden for a Jew to sell himself to, "becomes an attendant to it"?! (i) More than this, it is forbidden for a Jew to sell himself to a gentile altogether?! However, this is precisely what Rashi is telling us on a mystical level! Even such a Jew who fell that low that he not only sold himself to a gentile, but to, "becomes an attendant to it," nevertheless, even such a Jew, would *not* sell himself, "to the idol itself," for this is, "something that is completely impossible!" Why so? For even *before* he is redeemed, it is not that there isn't by him any memory of his *Father in Heaven*, only that, presently this memory is in a state of "sleep". The *Wisdom* within his soul has *not* been abnegated, only that it presently is, "in a state of sleep." Which therefore, "When they (the wicked) are confronted with a test of faith... then it (*Faculty of Wisdom* within the soul) 'arises from its sleep'... to withstand the test of faith in G-d." Hence, even such a person could never sell himself, "to the idol itself"!

Nevertheless, being that this individual's *memory* --his soul's *Faculty of Wisdom*; "Father"-- of his *Father in Heaven* is, "in a state of sleep," to the point where he is no more master over himself, but instead is, "sold to a gentile," to the point of, "to the idol itself," therefore, he can not redeem himself. As the ruling of the Talmud (-Brochois 5b), "A prisoner cannot free himself from prison." Thus the answer to the question why the verse does not list the slave redeeming himself *first*. However, being that the Torah's goal is that the help from his relatives, "the nearest of kin takes precedence," is to transform the slave's inner-dimensions, until --as the *conclusion* of the verse-- "he becomes able to afford it, he can be redeemed [on his own]!"

In Conclusion: The very opening of the portion (-Leviticus 25:1-2) tells us why it can happen that a Jew should fall into a situation in which his *Faculty of Wisdom* is, "in a state of sleep", And together with this, the verse gives us the solution to this problem, as well: "And the L-rd spoke to Moses *on Mount Sinai*, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and you shall say to them: 'When you come to the land that I am giving you, the land shall rest a Sabbath to G-d.'"

The challenge begins with the fact that the Jewish people are to leave the protection of the *Clouds of Glory* and the *manna*, in which they were occupied only with *spirituality*> Now, "you come to the land," in which he now must (-ibid, verse 3), "You will sow your field for six years, and for six years you will prune your vineyard, and gather in its produce." Hence, the descent of the individual, --as his submerges himself into, "the land," the physical and the coarse,-- causes his *Faculty of Wisdom* to fall, "into a state of sleep." Therefore, *verse one* immediately states, "And the L-rd spoke to Moses *on Mount Sinai*," which gives the individual the strength, that even when, "you come to the land," ultimately, not only, "He shall have redemption," but even more so, we will transform the *Land of Canaan* into the *Land of Israel*, that there will be, "the land shall rest a Sabbath to G-d," and in which we will ultimately, "uproot the an idolater," and all will clearly see (-ibid 25:23), "the land belongs to Me!"