

Likkutei Sichos

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining its clarity. However, as in all translations, inadvertent errors may occur.

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1.

WHY WORRY ABOUT AVRAHAM COMPLAINING

Commenting on the verse,¹ “I will grant favor to this people in the eyes of Egypt...” — which quotes Hashem’s words to Moshe when informing him about the Exodus — the Midrash says:²

I will grant favor to this people. This refers to what I told Avraham,³ “. . .and afterward they shall leave with great wealth.” I will make you find favor in the eyes of Egypt so that they will lend you {the expensive articles you ask for}, and you will leave laden {with goods. I will do all this} so that our father Avraham should not have any opening to complain that I fulfilled in them the decree, “They will enslave them and oppress them,”⁴ but His promise, “. . .and afterward they shall leave with great wealth,” was not fulfilled in them.

We can readily understand why the Midrash begins its remarks by immediately clarifying, “This refers to what I told Avraham, ‘... and afterward, they shall leave with great wealth.’”⁵ Because a question arises: When talking about the exodus from Egypt, why did Hashem tell Moshe immediately (even before Moshe accepted the mission, and certainly before leaving Midian), “I will grant this people favor...”? The Midrash answers that this was a **prerequisite for the Exodus**: “He {Pharaoh} will let you go,”⁶ on condition that beforehand, “I will grant... and every woman shall ask from her neighbor.”⁷ This would fulfill Hashem’s promise (that He made immediately as soon as He informed Avraham about the exile and redemption from Egypt in the “Covenant between the Parts”): “. . .and afterward they shall leave with great wealth.”

But we must clarify: What does the Midrash mean by continuing, “so that our father Avraham should not have an opening...”? Why is a potential complaint from Avraham germane? Either way, Hashem needs to fulfill His promise!

¹ *Shemos* 3:21. {During the conversation between Hashem and Moshe at the burning bush.}

² *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 3, sec. 11.

³ *Bereishis* 15:14.

⁴ *Bereishis* 15:13.

⁵ See *Yefeh Toar (HaShaleim)* on *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 3, sec. 11.

⁶ *Shemos* 3:20.

⁷ {*Shemos* 3:21-22.}

2.

MIDRASH VS. GEMARA

In the Gemara in *Berachos*,⁸ we also find this same idea: The Jewish people had to ask the Egyptians for “silver... vessels...”⁹ so that Avraham would not demur that “they will enslave them...” was fulfilled, but “afterward they shall leave with great wealth” was not. According to the Gemara, however, the necessity to forestall Avraham's objection is straightforward:

The Gemara focuses on the verse in *parshas Bo*,¹⁰ “Please speak in the ears of the people, and they shall ask....” This verse discusses Hashem’s command to Moshe that the **Jewish people** should ask the Egyptians for riches. The Gemara explains:¹¹

In Rabbi Yannai’s yeshivah, they said that the word “please” always connotes a request. The Holy One said to Moshe, “Please, go and tell the Jewish people, ‘Please, ask the Egyptians for silver and gold vessels,’ so that that righteous man (Rashi explains: this refers to Avraham) should not say that the divine decree, ‘They will enslave them and oppress them,’ was fulfilled, but not the divine promise that ‘afterward they shall leave with great wealth.’”

In other words, the Gemara addresses the question as to why Hashem pleaded with the **Jewish people** — “*please speak* — ‘please’ always connotes a request” — to ask the Egyptians for silver and gold vessels. After all, at the time, the Jews were not thinking about such things. On the contrary — as the Gemara continues¹² — “The Jews said to Moshe, ‘if we can just escape with our lives {without any riches}.’” The Gemara explains that although the **Jewish people asked** to forgo these great riches, Hashem would not accept their request “so that that righteous man should not say....”

In contrast, the Midrash does not discuss the command to the Jewish people to request gold and silver from the Egyptians. Instead, the Midrash focuses on what **Hashem** will do to fulfill **His promise**: “**I will grant** this people favor in the eyes of Egypt....” Why must the Midrash add that Hashem did this to prevent Avraham from complaining?

⁸ *Berachos* 9a-b.

⁹ {*Shemos* 11:2.}

¹⁰ *Shemos* 11:2.

¹¹ This is also cited by Rashi on *Shemos* 11:2 (with some variations).

¹² *Berachos* 9b. {The Gemara presents a parable about a person imprisoned to whom people say: “We promise to release you tomorrow when we can pay you a large sum of money.” The prisoner responds, “I implore you, release me today and I ask for nothing.”}

3.

THE WORDING

Several nuances in the above-mentioned teaching of our Sages require clarification, among them:

a) Why does the Midrash emphasize “in them”: “fulfilled **in them**. . . not fulfilled **in them**”? Seemingly, it should have said, “‘They will enslave them and oppress them,’ was fulfilled, but ‘afterward they shall leave with great wealth,’ **was not fulfilled.**”

b) Why is the objection presented such that Avraham’s insistence that Hashem fulfills His promise, “they shall leave with great wealth,” is predicated upon Hashem having fulfilled His promise, “they will enslave them and oppress them”? Seemingly, Avraham’s objection was {simply} that the promise “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth” was not fulfilled in them.” Wasn’t this the crux of his grievance?¹³

c) Why do the Midrash and the Gemara use different wording? The Midrash says, (a) “so that our father Avraham (b) should not have any opening to complain,” whereas in the Gemara, it says, (a) “so that that righteous man (b) should not say.”¹⁴ [This is especially perplexing since in the Midrash, the name “Avraham” is mentioned earlier — “This refers to what I told Avraham” — making the words “our father Avraham” seemingly redundant. In contrast, in the Gemara, the name “Avraham” is not mentioned at all,¹⁵ and yet the Gemara uses the term “that righteous man,” not “our father Avraham.”

4.

HASHEM HAD TO DELIVER REGARDLESS; AVRAHAM WANTED MORE

We will clarify this by prefacing:¹⁶

Hashem had to fulfill His promise because of the promise itself — because **He gave His word**. For {as the verse states}, “Hashem is not a man that he should be deceitful... would He say and not do, or speak and not fulfill it?”¹⁷ “I shall not profane My covenant, and

¹³ This question is raised in *Parashas Derachim*, “*Derech Mitzrayim*,” fifth discourse. Though on a simple level this isn’t really a question, since it’s understood that the fulfillment of the foretold enslavement **adds** to the grievance.

¹⁴ See *Iyun Yaakov* on *Berachos*, loc cit; *Yedei Moshe* on *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 3, sec. 11.

¹⁵ Indeed, Rashi had to explain in his commentary on the Gemara that this refers to Avraham, and he made this same clarification in commentary on Scripture — *Shemos* 11:2.

¹⁶ See the commentaries on *Ein Yaakov*, *Berachos*, loc cit; *Parashas Derachim*, ibid; **et al.**

¹⁷ *Bamidbar* 23:19.

the utterance of My lips I shall not alter.”¹⁸ Keeping His promise, therefore, is an inherent necessity, not just a requirement to forestall Avraham’s complaint.

Therefore, we must conclude that even without “I will grant favor to this people...,” Hashem would have fulfilled **His** promise that the Jewish people receive great wealth. Nonetheless, Avraham would still find an opening to complain that Hashem had not {entirely} fulfilled His promise {as explained in the following sections}.

This is the novelty introduced by the Midrash: Only by fulfilling the promise in the manner of “I will grant this people favor in the eyes of Egypt...” does Hashem forestall Avraham’s complaint. Working with this same novel premise, the Gemara **adds** that even “I will grant this people favor in the eyes of Egypt... so that they will lend to you, and you will leave laden” is still insufficient. The **Jewish people** had to ask for gold and silver from the Egyptians. “**Please** speak in the ears of the people, and **they shall ask...**” Following this procedure would remove any room for Avraham’s complaint.

5.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

The explanation is as follows:

The Gemara in tractate *Sanhedrin*¹⁹ relates that during Alexander the Great’s reign, the Egyptian delegates approached Alexander, claiming that the Jewish people should be forced to return the silver and gold they had taken from them. Geviha ben Pesisa retorted, “Give us the lost wages for the work of six hundred thousand who you enslaved in Egypt....”

Commentators²⁰ explain that the great riches the Jewish people received from the Egyptians were just payments for their labor in Egypt.

Since this compensation was both punishment for the Egyptians (as will be explained) and payment for the Jewish people, there can be two approaches as to which of these two elements was primary:

a) Primarily, as a punishment, the Egyptians had to forfeit their riches to the Jewish people. Thus, Scripture says (concerning the “Covenant between the Parts”),²¹ “And also the

¹⁸ *Tehillim* 89:35. In fact, Hashem had said these words to Avraham {in the context of the binding of Yitzchak} — see Rashi on *Bereishis* 22:12 (quoting *Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 56, sec. 8).

¹⁹ *Sanhedrin* 91a.

²⁰ See the commentators on *Ein Yaakov*, *Berachos* 9a-b; *Parshas Derachim*, loc cit.

²¹ {*Bereishis* 15:14.}

nation that will enslave them I will judge, and afterward they shall leave with great wealth.” The promise “they shall leave with great wealth” is part (and a continuation) of the promise “the nation... I will judge.” In other words, this whole narrative primarily concerns retribution, “**You shall plunder the Egyptians.**”²² However (why did the Jewish people receive the wealth?), since the Jewish people had slaved away for the Egyptians, the punishment of the Egyptians was structured such that their wealth would be given to the Jews as wages for their labor.

b) The “great wealth” was at the outset determined to serve as wages for slavery and oppression — “they will enslave them and oppress them.” The fact that this promise was stated in continuation to “I will judge” is because, along with serving as compensatory wages for the Jewish people, relinquishing their great wealth was also punishment for the Egyptians because their possessions were taken to the extent that “you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

6.

HOW TO BECOME WEALTHY

The difference between these two approaches is as follows:

According to the first approach, it didn’t matter how the “great wealth” came to the Jewish people. The main thing is that the great wealth was **taken** from Egypt, and the fact that it came to the Jewish people is only secondary. Thus, how it transpired is irrelevant.

Accordingly, if the Jewish people had taken the “great wealth” from the Egyptians during the plague of darkness, for example, this also would have fulfilled the intention behind the promise, “they shall leave with great wealth.”

However, if the promise, “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth,” was (primarily) wages for the slavery and oppression — “they will enslave them and oppress them” — it had to be dispersed in the form of **payment**. In other words, it must be evident and felt that the **Egyptians** gave it to the Jewish people²³ as payment of wages for their labor.²⁴

This is what the Midrash means when it says that expressly, Hashem says, “I will grant this people favor....” He forestalls Avraham from complaining that “they will enslave them

²² *Shemos* 3:22.

²³ As a absolute and unconditional gift (not as a loan), as stated by *Rashbam* (*Shemos* 3:22; 11:2; 12:36), *Bechayei*, citing *Rabbeinu Chananel*, *Chizkuni* and *Kli Yakar* on *Shemos* 3:22; et al.

²⁴ Furthermore, if the Jewish people were to sieze the Egyptians’ possessions or steal them surreptitiously, as mentioned earlier, not only would the Jewish people not view this wealth as compensation for their labor, but they would also fear that the Egyptians would come to reclaim it, etc.

and oppress them,’ was fulfilled in them, but, ‘afterward, they shall leave with great wealth’ was not fulfilled in them.”

Hashem’s actual promise, “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth” (the purpose and intent of which is not explicit), can be fulfilled even in a manner wherein it is (mainly) perceived as punishment for the Egyptians and not as reward and compensation for the labor and suffering of the Jewish people.

However, in that case, there remains room for **Avraham** to demur: Avraham, the father of the Jewish people, demands that the intention behind the Jewish people receiving “great wealth” should (primarily) be for the **benefit of the Jewish people**. It should serve as compensation for the slavery — “they will enslave them.” (Only then can it serve as consolation for their harsh exile in Egypt.)²⁵

On this basis, we can also appreciate why Avraham’s potential complaint (that “‘afterward...,’ was not fulfilled in them”) was predicated upon, “‘they will enslave them and oppress them,’ was fulfilled in them.” This is because this is the **foundation** of the complaint regarding the “great wealth”: Since Hashem fulfilled the promise — “‘they will enslave them and oppress them’ **was fulfilled in them**” — **the Jewish people** underwent hard labor and suffering — it also triggered the requirement that the promise “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth” (should be in the manner of) “**fulfilled in them.**” (Therefore, the Midrash adds extra emphasis — “(fulfilled) **in them,**” not just “fulfilled.”) The Jewish people should feel that, from the outset, the “great wealth” was promised to **them** (and for **them**) as a reward and compensation for their labor and suffering.

To forestall this complaint, Hashem ensured that the Jewish people received the “great wealth” by the Egyptians **giving** it to the Jews with favor, **by their own good will**, and with a pleasant demeanor; “I will grant this people favor....” This emphasizes that the “great wealth” was connected with the slavery and oppression of the Jews — “they will enslave them and oppress them” — as explained.

²⁵ See also *Kli Yakar* on *Shemos* 11:2.

COMPLETE JUSTICE

Regarding the above point, the Gemara adds and clarifies to what degree Avraham's potential complaint was addressed. It does so by citing the interpretation in connection with the verse, "Please speak in the ears of the people, and they shall ask...":

Even if the Egyptians gave the Jewish people silver and gold vessels, etc., with a pleasant demeanor when they left Egypt, there could still be room to allege that it is not evident that the gold and silver served as wages for labor. One could argue that these were simply gifts. Alternatively, maybe the wealth was given so the Jewish people would not leave Egypt naked and empty-handed.

Therefore, to completely settle the issue that "and afterward they shall leave with great wealth" should be "fulfilled **in them**" (that it should be clear that this was recompense for years of labor), Hashem commanded that, specifically, the (oppressed) laborers themselves should ask. Their forceful demand should be articulated in a way that the Egyptians were moved to give the Jews "great wealth." This exchange {between the former Jewish slaves and their oppressive taskmasters} openly demonstrated that the Jews were **entitled** to this "great wealth."

On this basis, we can appreciate why the Gemara's wording diverges (from the Midrash's wording). The Gemara says, "so that that righteous man should not say" (without calling it a "complaint"). Furthermore, the Gemara says, "that righteous man" (and not "our father Avraham"):

Had the Egyptians, **on their own initiative**, given the Jewish people the promised wealth, it would also have proven that the Jewish people were entitled to the "great wealth" and that the Egyptians had intended it to be for the benefit of the Jewish people. Therefore, there would also be no "opening" for a complaint [viz., by the Egyptians "opening" the closed mouth {of Avraham}]. Only if the Egyptians hadn't given their wealth would they prompt Avraham to complain that the promise "'afterward they shall leave with great wealth' was not fulfilled in them."

But the Gemara intimates that such compensation would be insufficient by saying, "so that that **righteous man** should not say." From the perspective of our father Avraham — the personification of perfect justice and righteousness — there is room to say that undergoing such harsh servitude and suffering in Egypt ("they will enslave them and oppress them") **entitled** the Jewish people to be paid with the "great wealth" in a manner that made it

manifestly evident that this payment was wages for their labor. (Only then would the promise, “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth,” be **fulfilled in them completely.**)

This is accomplished, as mentioned, through, “Please speak in the ears of the **people, and they shall ask....**”

8.

GREAT WEALTH OF SPARKS

The deeper explanation of this matter as it applies to our divine service:

As known,²⁶ the “great wealth” that (according to the inner dimension of the Torah) the Jews extracted from Egypt consists of the sparks of holiness residing there — some inside the silver and gold, etc. These items were later used to make the Tabernacle and were generally employed in a holy context. Throughout the Jewish exile in Egypt, these sparks became refined. In fact, the intent and purpose of the Jews undergoing exile in Egypt was to fulfill the promise, “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth” — to extricate the holy sparks from Egypt and elevate them.

[This explanation answers a somewhat surprising element of the story: The Jewish people were ready to forgo the “great wealth,” saying, “If we can just escape with our lives” (as elaborated in the Gemara’s parable).²⁷ Why did Hashem not “forgo” the “great wealth”?

Based on the above discussion, the answer is straightforward and obvious: Receiving “great wealth” was a significant objective of the exile in Egypt. Without the “great wealth,” the intention and purpose of the exile would not have been accomplished.]

Through the slavery and oppression — “they will enslave them and oppress them” — through which the Jewish people refined and elevated the sparks of holiness, they, too — the Jewish people themselves — “**in them**” — were elevated.

This is the deeper meaning of the clause, “and afterward **they shall leave** with great wealth.” The Jewish people **earned** and left with “great wealth,” and with the elevation that occurred within the Jewish people themselves — “I {Hashem} shall surely bring you up.”²⁸

²⁶ See Arizal’s *Likkutei Torah*, *parshas Ki Setzei*, explaining the negative mitzvah of not returning to live in Egypt; *Torah Or*, “*parshas Bo*,” 60c; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 823, ff.

²⁷ *Berachos* 9b. {The Gemara presents a parable about a person imprisoned, to whom people say: “We promise to release you tomorrow and pay you a large sum of money.” The prisoner responds, “I implore you, release me today and I ask for nothing.”}

²⁸ *Bereishis* 46:4; See *Torah Or*, beg. of “*parshas Shemos*.”

9.

REFINING THE SPARKS

On this basis, we can appreciate the meaning of the two approaches discussed above (in Section 5) in terms of *avodah*:²⁹

If we assume that the primary purpose of “great wealth” was for the Egyptians — to punish the Egyptians — then it turns out that the principal (deeper) intent of the exile was to refine and extract the sparks of holiness from there, so that **they** — the sparks — should be elevated. However, since the Jewish people were the ones who refined these sparks through their *avodah*, they deserved a reward. The reward would be the tremendous spiritual elevation they received through their *avodah*.

However, from Avraham’s perspective, the primary purpose of “great wealth” was for the **Jewish people** so that “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth” would be “**fulfilled in them.**” In other words, the purpose of the exile in Egypt was for the **Jewish people** to achieve elevation and wholeness. Therefore, Hashem sent them to Egypt to refine the sparks of holiness there so that they would achieve wholeness through this. That is, the purpose was for the benefit and elevation of the Jewish people, but this was achieved through the refinement of the sparks.

Therefore, the “great wealth” had to come to them specifically: “I will grant favor to this people — that they will lend to you, and you will leave **laden.**” When the **Egyptians** gave their wealth to the Jewish people (as opposed to the Jewish people taking it themselves), it demonstrated that the refinement of the sparks was to elevate the Jews. In this way, the sparks of holiness themselves assisted the Jewish people in their *avodah*.

[This is **similar** to the well-known³⁰ concept of “Hashem is with me with my helpers”³¹ — “helpers” in the plural. The sparks of holiness, refined by a person’s *avodah*, become “helpers,” assisting the person in his *avodah*.

Perhaps we can suggest that the sparks of holiness become the helpers of the one who refined them because the primary purpose of refining the sparks is for the Jewish people so that they will be elevated.]

²⁹ {Divine service.}

³⁰ See *Maamar “Havayah Li BeOzri 5687”* (*Sefer HaMaamarim 5687*, p. 208; *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, vol. 1, 182b ff.).

³¹ *Tehillim* 118:7.

10.

EVERY INDIVIDUAL

The two above-mentioned approaches also exist in the *avodah* of every Jew (in that the descent of the soul into the body “is... considered real exile”):³²

The soul descends into the body to refine the body and the animalistic soul — “to connect and unite them with³³ *Or Ein Sof*.”³⁴ In this way, the individual turns this lowly world into a dwelling place for Hashem.

By descending into the body and performing the *avodah* of refining and purifying the world, the soul experiences that “this descent becomes an ascent”³⁵ — the soul is elevated (higher than it was before descending) to the extent that through this *avodah*, the soul reaches **its** state of **completeness**.³⁶

In this context, there are two approaches³⁷ (similar to the above approaches regarding the exile in Egypt):

a) The primary purpose is for the **world** to be refined and become Hashem's home. However, since the Jewish people are the ones who make this home, they deserve a reward,³⁸ “and afterward they shall leave with great wealth.” This refers to the elevation they achieve through their *avodah*.

b) The primary purpose is for a **Jew** to reach his state of authentic wholeness. However, the way to achieve this wholeness is through the soul's descent into the body and its work, refining and purifying the world.

³² *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 37 (p. 48a).

³³ {Lit., “The Infinite Light”; meaning the revelation and diffusion of His Essence from a level prior to the primordial contraction of Divine Light.}

³⁴ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 37 (p. 48b).

³⁵ See *Likkutei Torah* as indicated in the indices (“*Neshamos: yeridah tzorech aliyah*”); *Kuntres UMaayan, maamar 6*, ch. 1; *Maamar “VaYarach 5700* (p. 8); *Maamar “UMaayan 5706*,” end of ch. 3; et al; see also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 20, p. 284, fn. 30.

³⁶ See the sources cited in the previous fn. For an extensive discussion of this concept see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 245 ff.

³⁷ We can posit that this represents two types of Divine servants — see below in the text.

³⁸ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Re’eh*,” 28d.

TWO ATTITUDES

The two above-mentioned approaches correlate with the two possible approaches of a soul to its work of refining and purifying the world:

a) The *avodah* is done with *kabbalas ol*³⁹ like a simple servant.⁴⁰ In other words, what the *avodah* accomplishes makes no difference. A person only knows one thing: he has a mission from Hashem. To him, it doesn't matter **what** the mission achieves. As the well-known adage goes,⁴¹ "If he were commanded to chop wood," he would do it with the same degree of *kabbalas ol*.

b) Although he performs his *avodah* with humility and *kabbalas ol*, he also knows and appreciates the point of the *avodah* and the mission — to make this lowest of worlds a home for Hashem.

The difference between these two types of *avodah* becomes evident afterward in terms of the soul's elevation brought about by the *avodah*:

Suppose the person first performed his *avodah* with the sole purpose and intention of fulfilling the mission of Hashem. In that case, his soul's advancement is tangential to his *avodah*. It resembles a reward (which he receives because he carried out Hashem's intent).

But when he also appreciates the meaning of the mission — when he appreciates what he accomplishes through his *avodah* (connecting the world with G-dliness so that it becomes a home for Hashem) — then the uplifting of his soul is not like a reward but like a corollary of the *avodah* itself. This is because the nature of the soul's advancement reflects the achievement of the person's *avodah* {in the world}. The impact of his *avodah* — channeling {and revealing the light of} Hashem's Essence {into this physical world} by refining and elevating the world (making a home for Hashem's blessed **Essence**)⁴² — is revealed to the soul (who helped to assemble this home).

³⁹ {Lit., "accepting the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven," connoting an unequivocal commitment to Hashem, based not on a person's own desire or understanding, but rather on his selfless submission to Hashem.}

⁴⁰ {See *Sefer Hamaamorim, Hemshech Samech Vav*, s.v., "*Mikneh Rav*" ff. The simple servant serves the master simply because he must, with no feeling attached.}

⁴¹ *Likkutei Torah, "parshas Shelach,"* 40a; et al. [A similar point is found in *Guide for the Perplexed*, vol. 2, ch. 51.]

⁴² Like a person's home, in which the person's very essence resides (*Hemshech 5666*, beg. [p. 3]; et al).

12.

TWO ATTITUDES

However, this (second) type of *avodah* can also be performed in two ways:

a) A person recognizes the meaning and the nature of his *avodah's* accomplishment (not while performing the *avodah* itself, but) upon completing it. When he completes his *avodah*, he appreciates what his *avodah* achieved.

b) Even while performing the *avodah* itself, he appreciates its nature and purpose. This appreciation is so keen that he performs his *avodah* not only to carry out **Hashem's** plan. Instead, in the midst of his *avodah*, Hashem's intent (so to speak) itself becomes **his** intent and passion, namely, to make this world a home for Hashem and to bring the world to perfection.

We can say that this explains the difference between the way this dynamic appears in the Midrash and the Gemara:

According to the Gemara, so that “that righteous man should not say, ‘and *afterward they shall leave with great wealth* was not fulfilled in them,” the Jewish people had to request {gold and silver} from the Egyptians. This is because, according to the Gemara, even during their enslavement, the Jews recognized that the purpose of the *avodah* was the “great wealth” — refining the sparks.

Therefore, the Jews demanded this upon completing their *avodah* — as a **continuation** of their *avodah* — since their work culminated in receiving “great wealth.”

In contrast, according to the Midrash, the Jewish people did not recognize the intention and purpose of their *avodah* **during their enslavement**. Only after the completion of their *avodah*, they grasped it. Therefore, it was sufficient that the “great wealth” followed the completion of their *avodah* in a manner described as “they lent them”⁴³ — that on their own initiative, the Egyptians enriched the Jewish people, as explained above.

⁴³ {*Shemos* 12:36.} See *Ibn Ezra* on *Shemos* 3:21 and *Kli Yakar* on *Shemos* 3:22.

13.

MOTIVATION TO BRING MASHIACH

From all the above, we also derive a lesson in the *avodah* of every Jew in our actions and *avodah* during the entire duration of the exile,⁴⁴ especially nowadays when we can hear the footsteps of Mashiach:

A Jew must study Torah and observe the mitzvos with *kabbalas ol*. This is what Hashem commands. The Divine intent behind the Jew's mission and *avodah* is irrelevant. The Jew carries out his work with the same tenacity regardless. Consequently, it is immaterial to him whether he is living in Temple times, during the general time of exile, or in the times of "the footsteps of Mashiach." He always serves Hashem with a single purpose: To execute Hashem's commands and fulfill His mission.

However, we need to know that our *avodah* needs to reflect that we live in the era of "the footsteps of Mashiach." Beyond that, we need to know that the ultimate perfection of the messianic era and the Resurrection of the Dead — when the *Or Ein Sof* will be revealed in this physical world (for which reason Hashem created our world)⁴⁵ — depends on our actions and our *avodah* during the entire exile. This knowledge also needs to be felt in our *avodah*.

We see, in fact, that when a Jew senses that his observance of Torah and mitzvos brings and hastens the coming of Mashiach and the building of the Temple, etc. — that is, his *avodah* brings the world and the entire continuum of Creation toward the purpose for which it was initially created: to make a home for Hashem — his Divine service is infused with a completely different degree of vitality. It is greatly enhanced and performed to a much higher standard.

When the *avodah* is done this way, his desire and entreaty for the revelation of Mashiach has an entirely different energy, to the extent that he **demand**s, as it were: "We want Mashiach now."⁴⁶

This sort of mindful *avodah* hastens and accelerates the redemption of every Jew and the Divine Presence (which also finds itself) in exile, and "**immediately** they are redeemed"⁴⁷ — truly immediately — "now."

From talks delivered *Shabbos parshas Devarim 5740 (1980)*

⁴⁴ *Tanya*, "Likkutei Amarim," ch. 37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 36 (46a).

⁴⁶ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 20, p. 234, and the sources cited there.

⁴⁷ *Rambam*, *Mishneh Torah*, "Hilchos Teshuva," ch. 7, par. 5.