



GEULAS YISRAEL

RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN
RAM YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
MAGGID SHIUR ALL PARSHA AND ALL DAF, OU.ORG



Yom Ha'atzmaut: Recognizing Redemption

Chazal understood that redemption does not arrive all at once. It unfolds in stages. To describe this, they, in the Yerushalmi (Yoma), compared geulah to sunrise. At the first light of dawn, the world is still dark. A faint streak appears on the horizon. Slowly, the light expands. Darkness begins to recede. Only later does the full day arrive. Sunrise does not happen all at once, and neither does geulah.

In 1947, when the United Nations voted to grant a foothold in Eretz Yisrael to the Jewish people, many Rabbanim opposed it. This fell far short of the redemptive vision we carry. It did not resemble the geulah we had imagined.

The Gerer Rebbe responded by citing this Yerushalmi, which compares redemption to sunrise and teaches that it unfolds קימא קימא, slowly and gradually.

CONSTRUCTION

Chazal offered a second metaphor to describe the slow, staged nature of redemption. They compared geulah to a construction project, which unfolds over time and is never completed in a single moment.

This image of a construction process reinforces the gradual nature of redemption already implicit in the sunrise metaphor. However, it reminds us of something additional. A sunrise doesn't build one stage upon the

next. It is a naturally occurring event which just takes time. A construction project is different. Each row of bricks which is laid serves as the foundation for future laying of bricks. It isn't just gradual but incremental. One row forms the foundation for the next row. One moment serves as the platform for the next, which may come several months or even years into the future.

This framework helps us read our current moment. We have been involved in a grueling war over the past two and a half years since our enemies attacked us on October 7th. There have been periods of intense fighting followed by interludes of relative calm. During the latest round of the war with Iran, our home front was severely challenged by a completely disrupted routine. Schools and workplaces shut down as the entire country ground to a halt for six weeks. As I write this, there is a ceasefire, and many are left wondering whether we have emerged victorious. Instead of searching for definitive victories, it is important to remember that we are still involved in a very long process with multiple stages and layers.

Jewish history has unfolded this way before. It took numerous rounds for Ezra and the Jewish people to finally return after our first exile of 70 years. It is difficult to determine how

long it will take for us to fully return after an exile of close to 2000 years.

THE LONG HORIZON

Seen within that larger process, as we celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, think back to how much we have accomplished since 5 Iyar 1948. Think of how we stabilized our nation against existential threats, how we emerged as a country with economic, military and diplomatic strength, and how Israel transformed from an experiment in the desert into the epicenter of Jewish life and the anchor of Jewish identity across the world.

Do not allow the complex war of the past three years to narrow our vision and ignore the immeasurable and spectacular gains of the past 78 years.

THE LANGUAGE OF 1948

As much as the past two and a half years are a continuation of 1948, they are significantly different. Religious Jews see redemption even when events do not appear to be religiously driven or oriented toward redemption. We know that sometimes redemption comes masked in geopolitics, just as it did in Mitzrayim.

Our redemption in 1948 advanced under the mask of secular movements. The state was founded by secular Jews deeply influenced by a Marxist socialist agenda of creating an economically egalitarian society. Moreover, they advanced an anti-religious mission to rid Jews of their religious past and of the helplessness which had characterized the terrible years of exile. Out of this new state would be born a new Jew, powerful and brave, able to till his own land, create a democratic socialist society, and able to defend our sovereign homeland. The choices of 1948 weren't patently religious. Religious people are able to listen to the subtext, and we all knew that this

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was a harbinger of redemption. The door to redemption had begun to crack open, even if the echoes didn't feel religious.

Not only was the founding of the state driven by largely secular goals, but our opposition did not present itself in religious tones. The Arab world, fevered with Arab nationalism, sought to establish a pan-Arab state stretching from Turkey all the way south to the African continent and east to the Gulf states. The Jewish state of Israel was seen as a thorn inserted into the pan-Arab dream. The founding fathers of the State of Israel didn't speak in religious terms, and neither did our sworn enemies.

THE LANGUAGE OF 2026

Much has changed in the 78 years since. The State of Israel isn't yet fully religious in a halachically observant manner. We still wait and hope for that day. However, the country has become deeply spiritual and deeply committed to the prophetic destiny Hashem promised us in the Land. Likewise, our enemies are primarily Islamic fundamentalists who speak in the name of an angry god who doesn't exist. It is clearer now than in 1948 that the battle isn't geopolitical or territorial or a war of rival nationalities. It is a religious war between the people to whom this Land was promised and those who cannot stand to allow Hashem into this world. It is a battle over the presence of Hashem in this world.

It is a struggle between a culture which celebrates death and suffering and a culture which cherishes life and the dignity of the human condition. It is much easier now than in 1948 to pick up the whiff of redemption.

CULTURE WARS

That religious dimension does not remain confined to the battlefield. Something else has emerged over the past two and a half years. The struggle over our ancient homeland, over the land of Hashem, has been fused with the general culture wars which have been swirling across Western society for the past few decades. It is jarring to witness hyper-liberal movements dedicated to the fall of Western institutions also be so adamantly and violently opposed to the Jewish state. This strange alliance can be explained through many socio-political theories, but for religious people this tethering comes as no surprise. Yerushalayim is at the heart of human experience, and our history drives human history. If general culture is broken, it is obvious that the solution must come from Yerushalayim.

THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH

Beyond any particular values, at the heart of this culture war is a battle to protect truth in our world. As always, truth has been warped and weaponized, as the Jewish state and Jews around the world have been accused of every crime imaginable to modern man.



This isn't new, as libels and discrimination have always cast us as the root of all evil.

The recent wars with Iran highlighted even more how much this battle isn't only about land, but about truth and the presence of an absolute truth as reflected by our Creator. Civilization has developed exquisite tools to exchange information. It has also begun to use those tools to distort truth. Social media has empowered individuals or minority actors to simulate broad public opinion through bots which mimic human voices. As we surge into the era of AI, we are more delicately hanging on the precipice between truth and falsehood. AI can generate images and videos that are fabricated. This will become a major cultural challenge for our future, to learn to discern truth from falsehood.

For us, truth is not only factual. It is divine. Hashem is the ultimate truth, and the propagation of falsehood pushes Him from this world.

This war was fought between countries committed to truth and fact and those which fabricated facts to create false narratives of success. As Iran was suffering battering defeats across many fronts, they continued to publish fake images and videos depicting destruction in Israel. They shut off the internet to control information and to shape the narrative. Aside from the strategic and logistical issues behind this manipulation, it reflects a society committed to false narratives rather than to transparency and truth.

At its core, this is a further effort to silence Hashem from this world. As Dovid HaMelech writes in Tehilim (פרק ט"ו), only those who speak truth can encounter Hashem:

ה' מי יגור באהלך ומי ישכון בהר קדשך
הולך תמים ופועל צדק ודובר אמת בלבבו
"Hashem, who may dwell in Your tent, who

may reside on Your holy mountain? One who walks with integrity, acts with righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.” (Tehilim 15)

We are trying to bring the full presence of Hashem into this world. When Hashem appears, all brokers of falsehood and lies will fade, and the truth of Hashem’s presence will turn hearts back to truth, back to morality, and back to appreciating and clarifying the role of the people of Hashem who are meant to reside in Yerushalayim. ■




Rabbi Moshe Taragin's latest sefer entitled: **Reclaiming Redemption, Vol. II: Faith, Identity, Peoplehood, and the Storms of War**, is available at: mtaraginbooks.com.

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