



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Tazria / פרשת תזריע 5779

## The Divine Word of Yerushalayim

According to Kabbalah and Chassidus each month has its own characteristics and character traits that become the theme of the month. The Beni Yissasschar explains that the month of Nissan is the faculty of speech.<sup>1</sup> The Zohar explains that “speech” was exiled in Egypt together with the Jewish people and therefore the redemption of Pesach represents the redemption of speech.<sup>2</sup> The Arizal adds that the word Pesach its can be split into two words: “Peh” and “Sach” which means “the mouth talks.” Similarly, Moshe begins the story as one who has difficulty speaking but emerges as an eloquent bearer of the word of God.

What is the meaning of this characterization? How is the redemption of Egypt related to speech? The Sefat Emmet<sup>3</sup> explains that the entire world was created via the words of God. The Torah describes that God created the world through ten statements. The Ba'al Shem Tov extends this theme and describes how even today the letters of the Aleph-Bet are what give life to the heavens and earth. As the Alter Rebbe eloquently relates in Tanya:<sup>4</sup>

It is written: "Forever, O G-d, Your word stands firm in the heavens." The Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, has explained that "Your word" which you uttered, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.. .", these very words and letters stand firmly forever within the firmament of heaven and are forever clothed within all the heavens to give them life, as it is written, "The word of our G-d shall stand firm forever" and "His words live and stand firm forever. ..."

According to this approach, “speech” refers to the ability to discern God’s presence behind the veil of physical reality. The exile of speech symbolically represents the inability to see God. When the

<sup>1</sup> Ma'amarei Chodesh Iyar, ma'amar 2:2.

<sup>2</sup> Raaya Mehemna, parshat Va'eira.

<sup>3</sup> Sefat Emmet, Pesach, 5632

<sup>4</sup> Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, chapter 1.



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Jewish people were exiled in Egypt and Paroah seemed all-powerful, God's speech - His discernable presence in this world - was in a concealed and exilic state.

All of this changed with the redemption. God reveled himself and the entire world saw His power, dominion and control over all aspects of this world. Accordingly, God's "speech" was redeemed and open for all to see and realize His presence in this world.

With this background we can appreciate the deeper meaning of a often-cited verse. Yeshayahu prophesied that in the end of times:<sup>5</sup> "out of Zion shall the Torah come forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The simple meaning of the verse is that all of the nations of the world will congregate in Yerushalayim to hear the teachings of God. However, perhaps a deeper message is that the entire world will see the "word" of God emanating from Yerushalayim. They will appreciate that God's spoken word gives vitality to every aspect of the world. And they will realize that the source of the "word" of God and its most concentrated location is Yerushalayim – God's home on earth.

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<sup>5</sup> Yeshayahu 2:3.