

PTDT

PhiloTorah D'var Torah

4? 5? 8!

Ask people why do we have four cups of wine at the Seder and you will likely get the answer - corresponding to the four terms of redemption.

There are actually other reasons for four cups, but let's stay with the popular answer of K'NEGED ARBA L'SHONOT GEULA.

The first three terms clearly belong to the Seder night. V'HO-TZEI-TI, V'HI-TZAL-TI, V'GA-AL-TI. I will take you out from under the culture of Egypt; I will save you from their enslavement; I will redeem you...

These three terms are found in one pasuk - specifically, Sh'mot 6:6.

The fourth term follows in the next pasuk (6:7) - V'LA-KACH-TI, and I will take you to Me as a nation. This part of the prophecy relates to the Sinai experience and Matan Torah - not part of the Exodus itself.

Or maybe that's not correct. Our receiving the Torah and entering into a covenant with G-d is a major reason in His taking us out of Egypt.

So adding V'LA-KACH-TI the the first

three terms, is appropriate.

We'll get back to that second pasuk of the prophecy in a moment.

When we speak of the four terms of redemption, we also acknowledge that there is a 5th term. V'HEI-VEI-TI - and I will bring you to Eretz Yisrael is also a major reason for G-d's having taken us out of Egypt, as well.

Actually, a fifth cup - corresponding to this fifth term is filled - we call it KOS SHEL ELIYAHU. The fact that the fifth cup is not a full member (yet) of the cups of wine we drink at the Seder is because of our long exile. And we can also say it is not yet drunk, because of the Sin of the Spies - which caused the Eretz Yisrael component of the prophecy to have its problems and difficulties.

We are getting there, though. And as more and more Jews come on Aliya and more and more Jews in Israel (and elsewhere) commit themselves to Torah, we'll be drinking a fifth cup some time in the future (near, we hope).

Now we are up to five terms of redemption.

I submit that there are really eight terms of redemption within the three-pasuk prophecy from the beginning of Va'eira. They might not

call for differentiation at the Seder, but we definitely need to focus on them to see and understand the whole process.

The pasuk that begins with G-d's promise to take us to Him as His Nation - V'LAKACHTI - is immediately followed by V'HAYITI LACHEM LEI-LOKIM. This is our side of the covenant with G-d. We become His nation and He becomes our G-d. In the bigger picture, this definitely warrants our attention. And in that same pasuk, we have another important aspect of our redemption - VIDA-TEM, and you shall know that it was HaShem who took us out of Egypt. Par'o was not the Abe Lincoln of his day; G-d took us out.

This element in the whole picture is so important, that the first thing (and not too much more) that we heard directly from G-d, was ANOCHI... I am HaShem your G-d who took you out of Egypt. In the context of our becoming a Nation, G-d's Nation, knowing that He took us out seems to be more important than His having created the world and everything in it.

Now we come back to V'HEIVEITI, the fifth term which has become the seventh term because of the counting of V'HAYITI and VIDA-TEM among the terms of redemption.

And this seventh term is followed by an eighth term, no less important than its partner term in the third pasuk of the prophecy.

V'NA-TA-TI OTAH LACHEM... And I will give the Land to you as a MORASHA.

As important as it is that G-d made promises to our forefathers, it is vital that we understand that we are not only dealing with G-d keeping His promises - enthusiastically or reluctantly - but with His intention to give the Land of Israel to us.

This is not just a prophecy to the generation which came out of Egypt. It is a prophecy to all Jews throughout all the generations. That means to us. You and me.

B'CHOL DOR VADOR... in every generation, we must see ourselves having come out of Egypt; having received the Torah at Sinai and having entered into an Eternal Relationship with HKBH; and having been brought to Eretz Yisrael - time and again and today and tomorrow, and having been given this Land for ever and ever, for us to live in it and live Torah lives therein.