

COMMENTARIES OF THE DUBNO MAGGID

PESACH

Seder Night

The first day of Pesach always falls on the same day of the week as Tishah B'Av. In this connection, the Midrash states (*Eichah Rabbah* 3:5, end, expounding on *Eichah* 3:15): "Just as He sated me with bitter herbs on the Pesach Seder night, so He filled me up with wormwood on Tishah B'Av night." In his commentary on *Eichah* 3:15 in *Kol Yaakov*, the Maggid offers various explanations of this puzzling Midrash. Here we present a brief version of one of them.

The Torah exhorts us repeatedly to remember the Exodus from Egypt. There are several reasons why Hashem put such stress on this matter. One of them is so that we would maintain our faith and hope that He would redeem us in the future. This idea is reflected in the following verse (*Habakkuk* 3:2): "...Hashem, restore that which You wrought over the years ... amid rage, remember Your mercies." According to its simple meaning [cf. *Rashi*], this verse represents a plea for Hashem to restore the kindnesses and wonders He did for our forefathers in days of yore.

It is quite apt that the verse says "amid rage, remember Your mercies" rather than "amid rage, act with mercy" or "amid rage, show us mercy." The verse may be viewed as saying: "Hashem! You may have hidden Your face from us out of rage. Our deeds may not make us worthy of new mercies and kindnesses. But at least remember Your former mercies which You showed our forefathers in days of yore. Let us be saved with these mercies." By recalling Hashem's virtues, His strength, and His wonders, we can merit to benefit from them anew.

The Midrash about the bitter herbs may be interpreted along these lines. Hashem sated us with bitter herbs on the Pesach Seder night, exhorting us to reawaken our memory of the miracles He wrought in Egypt. At first we could not understand the reason for this, but now we understand. After the wormwood of Tishah B'Av night, we could easily fall into despair. Hence Hashem arranged to make sure that even then we will still recall the miracles of Egypt and hope for them. By recounting these miracles and praising Hashem for them, we gain the merit to be redeemed as our forefathers were.

Shir HaShirim

In *Shir HaShirim* 1:4, the Jewish People say: "Draw me along, and we shall run after You." The Maggid notes that this request seems self-contradictory. When someone is being drawn along, this indicates that he does not want to go, and must be led by force. But when someone is running after another, this indicates that he wants to meet up with the one he is pursuing. The Maggid explains the matter as follows. We Jews are Hashem's people, and our souls emanate from the Divine Spirit above. Our souls constantly yearn to cleave to Hashem and to serve Him wholeheartedly – the Divine emanation within us is drawn toward the source from which it came. But the evil inclination – the "yeast in the dough," as the Gemara in *Berachos* 17a calls it – holds us back from improving our ways. Hence we entreat Hashem to pull us along – that is, to compel our evil inclination to acquiesce to the life of serving Him. Once the evil inclination is subdued, we will naturally run after Hashem, for our souls yearn dearly to cleave to Him.

Chag Kasher V'Sameach!