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FREEDOM, Ba'al Shem Tov Style

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Pesah is a time when each of us is required to remember our redemption from the Egyptians. Yet, this redemption is no mere historical event of the past, it is an ongoing psychological and spiritual event of the present.

We must not only remember this ACTIVE exodus in which we partake today, we must actually make the move from psychological / spiritual slavery into true internal freedom.

This can only be accomplished by one who is emotionally and mentally in harmony with G-d and with oneself.

The following words recorded in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov sum up what it is that I wish to say.

“For this commandment which I command you today - it is not hidden from you and it is not distant.” Deuteronomy 30:11.

“For this commandment” includes the entire Torah and [its] commandments, [especially] meaning [the commandments of] repentance, prayer, spiritual unification meditations (yihudim), the sweetening of [supernal] judgments, the removal of the klipot (forces of evil) and the unification of the [supernal] lights that draw down the supernal wisdom [mohin]. [These are] “Not hidden from you.” It is not a separate and removed thing from you.

“It is not in heaven” (Deuteronomy 30:12a) [this means that one should not] focus one’s meditations upon heaven above to draw down the [supernal] radiance and to unite the [supernal] lights. “Nor is it across the sea” (Deut. 30:12b) [meaning that one] should [not seek out] the depths of the klipot (forces of evil) in order to raise up souls and sparks.

FOR ALL THESE [THINGS] ARE [SIMPLY ACCOMPLISHED] WHEN ONE RECTIFIES BAD PERSONALITY TRAITS AND REMOVES EVIL DESIRES FROM ONE’S SOUL.

All must be placed under the direction of the Mind soul (Neshama). In this way do you tear and break the klipot. [In this way] do you become purified and become worthy that the Divine presence dwells [upon you] to draw down upon yourself the pleasant light which is the radiance of the Shekhina.

When you perform a spiritual unification meditation in yourself, in your mouth and in your heart then will the spiritual union be performed [automatically] above [in Heaven].

*You, [therefore], are the source. **EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON YOU.***

G-d took us out of Egypt once. It is now up to us to take ourselves out of the “Egypt” of our own makings.

Start being honest with yourself. Look G-d in the proverbial Eye. Talk to your Creator from your heart, not just the Siddur. Try to see yourself as G-d sees you, with all your merits AND ALL YOUR FAULTS.

As the Ba'al Shem Tov said above, do not place your attention upon rectifying the supernal worlds above alone. Rather, focus on rectifying those “worlds” within yourself.

If one succeeds in doing this and does rectify one's personality and attributes, then by law of ripple effect the supernal levels of one's soul in the invisible dimensions surrounding us are also influenced and healed of all blemishes.

As the Ba'al Shem Tov said, “everything depends on you.” Embrace freedom – then live it!

This is not just a message for Pesah. Omer time is upon us a time of a spiritual “Murphy's Law,” when if something can go wrong, it will and in the worse possible way.

Free men/women will not have to concern themselves with this limitation. Those who are slaves to themselves and to other things of this world must take heed.

Free individuals keep focused on the goal, as it is said, ‘keep your eye on the ball.’ In this case, HaShem Himself is the focus. His holy Name YKVK is the “ball” that we should keep our eyes on.

Although mitzvot are essential, the telling of the Hagadah tale is not complete unless one sees oneself as if he/she PERSONALLY left Egypt, not only the Egypt of then, but also the Egypt of now!

Redemption, therefore, is in your hands. The alarm clock is ringing. The sleeper must awaken.

As the Ba'al Shem Tov said, “everything depends on you.” May G-d bless you and yours with true freedom internal and external, Amen.