

Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

פרשה זו נתנדבה ע"י הרה"ח ר' אפרים ווייס הי"ו לרגל נשואי בתו
ויה"ר שהזיווג יעלה יפה יפה ויבנו בית נאמן בישראל אכי"ר

וע"י הרה"ח ר' חיים צבי פריעדמאן הי"ו לע"נ אביו ר' אשר זעליג ב"ר חיים ע"ה
ולע"נ אמו גיטל בת ר' אברהם ע"ה

וע"י ר' יואל ב"ר אליעזר שווימער הי"ו

Shemos 5770

And it will come to pass on that day that Hashem will beat out [the Jews] from the Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt, and you will be picked up one by one, Children of Israel. (Haftarah, Yishaya 27:12)

Rashi says that the prophet is comparing the ingathering of the exiles to beating an olive tree and subsequently picking up the fallen olives. The owner does the beating and then he and others pick them up off the ground. Here too, Hashem will begin the ingathering process, as it says in the following verse: “And it will come to pass on that day that a great shofar will be blown and there will come those lost in the land of Assyria, and those cast away in the land of Egypt, and they will bow to Hashem in the holy mountain, in Jerusalem.” Later, anyone who finds one of you in exile will bring him up to Jerusalem as a gift..

We see here that the process of gathering in the exiles will be begun by Hashem, not by human effort. This is also the meaning of the verse to which Rashi refers here: “And they will bring all your brethren from all the nations as a gift to Hashem” (Yishaya 66:20). The Metzudas David says there: “They will bring all your brethren – this means the Jews who are far away, who did not ascend with their brethren. The gentiles among whom those Jews live, when they hear about the great wonder that Hashem will do to the camp of Gog and Magog, will bring the Jews on horses and chariots as a gift to Hashem on His holy mountain.” In other words, this is talking about a period in which most of the Jewish people has already been gathered to Eretz Yisroel by Hashem. The nations will gather under Gog and Magog against the Jewish people in Jerusalem, as mentioned in Yishaya 66:18. Hashem will defeat them in a wondrous manner, as described in Zechariah 14:12. After word of this defeat spreads throughout the world (Yishaya 66:19), the gentiles will bring those few Jews remaining in exile to Eretz Yisroel as a gift to Hashem.

Those who advocate a Jewish ingathering with the support of gentile nations before the coming of moshiach point to the commentary on Shir Hashirim attributed to the Ramban (actually it was written by Rabbeinu Ezra, disciple of Rabbeinu Yitzchak, son of the Raavad). On Shir Shirim 8:13 he writes as follows: And after this, the Jews scattered among the nations will appoint one leader over them - Moshiach ben David, who was with them in exile – and with the permission of the kings of the nations and with their help, they will go to Eretz Yisroel, as it is written, “And they will bring all of your brethren from all the nations as a gift to Hashem.” That kingdom will exist forever. And that is the meaning of the verse, “The word of Hashem G-d, Who gathers the dispersed of Israel: I will once again gather unto it, to its gathered ones” (Yishaya 56:8). “Who gathers the dispersed of Israel” – this refers to the Ten Tribes. “I will once again gather unto it” – this refers to Yehuda. The Torah also refers to these two gatherings when it says, “And Hashem

your G-d will return your captives and have mercy on you; and He will go back and gather you from all the nations to which Hashem your G-d scattered you” (Devarim 30:3).

But these people are missing an obvious point. Rabbeinu Ezra is saying that the second stage of the ingathering will take place with the permission of the kings. The first stage will be accomplished by Hashem alone. And as we have seen above, the verse he cites as a source for the gentiles bringing the Jews up – Yishaya 66:20 – was understood by both Rashi and Metzudos David as referring to the second stage of the ingathering, not the first. Furthermore, Rabbeinu Ezra says clearly this ingathering will take place after Moshiach ben David is already here.

It is worth noting that Rabbeinu Ezra writes that even when Moshiach ben David is here, we will not regain Eretz Yisroel through warfare; the return to Zion will take place peacefully, with the permission of the nations. He explains this based on the verse in Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; exult, daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king will come to you; righteous and saved is he – a poor man riding on a donkey.” This modest description of Moshiach is a prophecy that the Jewish people will not regain their land through their bow and sword (Tehillim 44:4), not with horses or chariots, but by the will of the Creator, Who will subdue all the nations before them. Zechariah continues (9:10), “And I will abolish chariots from Ephraim, and horses from Jerusalem; and there will be no more bows of war, and they will speak peacefully with the nations; they will rule from sea to sea, and from river to the ends of the earth.” They will need no weapons, as it says (10:12), “I will make them mighty with Hashem, and with My name they will walk, said Hashem.”

Therefore, to see Rabbeinu Ezra’s words as a prediction of the events of our time, in which a Jewish state, recommended by some nations, was born through a war and maintained by fighting seven more wars – and all this before the coming of Moshiach – is to go completely against his intent.

The Rambam, in his commentary on Sanhedrin and in his Letter to Yemen, also seems to say that in the time of Moshiach there will be no wars. He says, “All the nations will make peace with the king Moshiach, because they will be afraid of him.” Similarly, in Hilchos Teshuva 9:2, the Rambam says (based on Yishaya 2:2) that all the nations will come to hear the wisdom of Moshiach. However, in Hilchos Melachim 11:4 he says that Moshiach will “fight the wars of Hashem.” Perhaps this is referring to the war of Gog and Magog, which the Rambam says (Melachim 12:2) will take place in the beginning of the days of Moshiach. We can say that when the Rambam says that all the nations will make peace with him, he means only after this war. As the Rambam says there, no one will know how these things will happen until they happen.



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