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Sefat Emet

(or 'Sefas Emes' in the Yiddish pronounciation) is the name used to refer to Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib of Ger, an eminent Chassidic sage and the second Gerrer Rebbe. Born in Warsaw, Poland in 1847, he was raised by his grandfather, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir, the first Gerrer Rebbe, after his father, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai, died when Yehudah Aryeh Leib was only 8 years old. Raised to be a scholar, he distinguished himself at a young age by devoting 18 hours a day to the study of Torah, mastering Talmud, the Zohar, and Chassidic classics. In 1870, at the age of 23, he succeeded his grandfather as the second Gerrer Rebbe. Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib's monumental work, Sefat Emet al HaTorah, is a commentary on the Torah in five volumes. His comments stress the moral and ethical lessons to be derived from the text, and he offers many kabbalistic allusions. The title, Sefat Emet, comes from Proverbs 12:19: Sefat emet tikon la'ad - "Truthful speech abides forever", which was the last verse on which he commented before he passed away. Rabbi Leib himself then came to be known by the title of his most popular work. He died in Ger, Poland in 1905. From Kolel-The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning

On the topic of the redemption from Egypt and the splitting of the Sea: It is correct to posit that these two redemptions were needed. They are the aspect of Joseph and Judah. The Messiah son of Joseph and the Messiah son of David. The redemption required both of these aspects. This is the brit hamaor (circumcision) and the brit of lashon (language). We therefore find that in the redemption from Egypt the Jews (males) circumcised themselves. And it says (Exodus 13:19) He took the bones of Joseph with him. But in order to be able to open the mouth to sing shirah and tefillah, this was the aspect of crossing the Sea. Therefore it says: the desert enclosed them (Exodus 14:3), that is to say they still required redemption of speech which is the aspect of Judah and David. Therefore it says: Judah was his sanctuary. (Psalms 114:2). In this vein, every day, there is an aspect of the exodus from Egypt and the splitting of the sea. As it says in the liturgy shirah hadasha… Each day there is a renewal of shirah. This is smicha geulah letefillah, the juxtaposition of redemption to the Amidah (prayer of request). And the Talmud says that the line at the beginning of the Amidah: God open my mouth and my mouth will declare your praise, is one long expression of redemption. We can suggest that this is the intent of the midrash on the verse (Exodus 14:15) why do you cry to me? Their cry takes precedence over your cry. For there is the prayer of Moshe (Psalm90:1) and the prayer of the poor (Psalm 102:1). The prayer of Moshe is the voice/sound of Torah. Now however we need the actual voice of prayer. Why do you cry out to Me? Moshe

Rabenu peace be upon him, was praying for an extended time. And God told him there is a time to limit one's prayer and a time to extend one's prayer. My children are in crisis. To explain the Mekhilta through a symbolic way, according to what we have in our holy texts. The tzaddik when he prays must leave this world and ascend to the upper world to pray for the needs of the Divine. This is called an extended prayer for it is in the world of limitless (extended) time. And it is proper that Moshe, peace be upon him, was in this aspect of prayer. He forgot all the pain and crisis Israel was in below. This is the explanation of God to Moshe: why are you crying to me? For the necessity was for a limited short prayer (one related to the needs of this world).

Translated by Rabbi Michael Balinsky

ברית מילה word-

שפת אמת שמות פרשת בשלח

[תרמ"ג]
בענין יצ"מ וקי"ס. יתכן לפרש שהי' צריך ב' גאולות. בבחי' יוסף ויהודה. משיח בן יוסף ומשיח בן דוד. שצריך להיות הגאולה בב' הבחינות. והוא ברית המעור וברית הלשון. לכן ביצ"מ איתא שמלו בנ"י עצמם. וכ' ויקח כו' עצמות יוסף עמו. אך כדי לפתוח הפה בשירה ותפילה הי' בחי' קי"ס. לכן נאמר סגר עליהם המדבר. כלומר שעדיין צריכין לגאולה בבחי' הדיבור בחי' יהודה ודוד. לכן כ' על הים היתה יהודה לקדשו. וכן מתעורר בכל יום בחי' יצ"מ וקי"ס. כמ"ש שירה חדשה שבחו גאולים. שיש בכל יום התחדשות השירה. וזה סמיכות גאולה לתפלה. ואיתא א' שפתי תפתח כגאולה אריכתא היא. וי"ל שזה כוונת המד' בפ' מה תצעק. צעקתם קדמה לצעקתך. כי יש תפלה למשה ותפלה לעני. וחפלת משה היא קול התורה. אבל עתה היו צריכין לבחי' קול תפלה ממש כנ"ל. ואיתא מה תצעק אלי. שהי' מרע"ה מאריך בתפלה. וא"ל הקב"ה יש עת לקצר ולהאריך. בני נתונים בצרה כו' ע"ש במכילתא. ולבאר הענין ע"ד הרמז ע"פ מ"ש בספרי קודש. כי הצדיק כשמתפלל צריך לצאת מעוה"ז ולבוא לעולם העליון להתפלל רק לצורך גבוה. וזה נק' תפלה אריכתא. בעולם שכולו ארוך. ויתכן כי כשבא מרע"ה לבחי' תפלה זו. שכח מכל צרות בנ"י שלמטה. וז"ש מה תצעק אלי כו'. שהי' כאן הצורך תפלה קצרה כנ"ל.

1. Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XIX:5

THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER. R. Simeon b. Halafta said: When Israel departed from Egypt, God said to Moses: ' Exhort the Israelites concerning the command of the Passover. THERE SHALL NO ALIEN EAT THEREOF, BUT EVERY MAN'S SERVANT THAT IS BOUGHT FOR MONEY, WHEN THOU HAST CIRCUMCISED HIM, etc. (XII, 44). When the Israelites saw that the uncircumcised were disqualified from eating the Passover, they arose with the least possible delay and circumcised all their servants and sons and all those who [subsequently] went out with them, as it says: *Thus did all the children of Israel (ib.* V, 50). It can be compared to a king who arranged a banquet for his friends and who said: ' Unless the invited guests show my seal [on the invitation card], none can enter.' Similarly, God ordained a feast for them, flesh roast with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, to commemorate their deliverance from trouble; but He commanded: ' Unless the seal of Abraham is inscribed on your flesh, you cannot taste thereof.' Thereupon all those who had been born in Egypt were immediately circumcised....

2. Tanach - Exodus Chapter 14

1. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
2. Speak to the people of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-Zephon; before it shall you encamp by the sea.
3. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has closed them in.
4. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart,that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored over Pharaoh, and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so.

3. Tanach - Psalms Chapter 114

1. When Israel went from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of foreign language;
   Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

4. Prayerbook

מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם ה׳, מִי כָּמֹכָה נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ, נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת, עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא.
שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְּחוּ גְאוּלִים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל שְׂפַת הַיָּם, יַחַד כֻּלָּם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ׃
ה׳ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוּמָה בְּעֶזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּפְדֵה כִנְאֻמֶךָ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. גֹּאֲלֵנוּ ה׳ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ, קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

אֲדֹנָי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתֶךָ.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹקינוּ וֵאלֹקי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹקי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹקי יִצְחָק, וֵאלֹקי יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵ-ל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵ-ל עֶלְיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אָבוֹת, וּמֵבִיא גּוֹאֵל לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם, לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Moses and the children of Israel sang a song unto thee with great joy, saying, all of them.

WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE, O LORD, AMONG THE MIGHTY? WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS, REVERED IN PRAISES, DOING MARVELS?

With a new song the redeemed people offered praise unto thy Name at the sea shore: they all gave thanks in unison, and proclaimed thy sovereignty, and said.

THE LORD SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.

O Rock of Israel, arise to the help of Israel, and deliver according to thy promise, Judah and Israel. Our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his Name, the Holy One of Israel. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who has redeemed Israel.

Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the most high God, who bestows loving kindnesses, and art Master of all things; who remembers the pious deeds of the patriarchs, and in love will bring a redeemer to their children's children for thy Name's sake.

5. Brachot 4b

The Master said: 'Let him recite Shema and say the Tefillah.

This accords with the view of R. Johanan. For R. Johanan says: Who inherits the world to come? The one who follows the Ge'ullah immediately with the evening Tefillah.

R. Joshua b. Levi says: The Tefilloth were arranged to be said in the middle….

In the beginning [of the Tefillah] one has to say: O Lord, open Thou my lips [etc.], and at the end one has to say: Let the words of my mouth be acceptable? [The only explanation] there [is that] since the Rabbis ordained that O Lord, open Thou my lips should be said, it is like a long Tefillah. Here, too, since the Rabbis ordained that 'Let us rest' should be said, it is like a long Ge'ullah.

6. Exodus Rabbah 21:8

WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME? Yesterday, they were complaining, *Because there were no graves in Egypt,* etc. *(ib.* XIV, 11), and now you are piling up prayers? SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD *(ib.* 15); that is, let them remove the complaint from their heart.[1]Rabbi said: God said: ' The faith which Israel had in Me is sufficient cause that I should divide the sea for them; for did they not say to Moses: "How can we turn back without frightening our women and children that are with us?"--but they believed Me and followed Moses!' R. Eliezer said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: 'There is a time to pray briefly and a time to pray at length. My children are in dire distress, the sea shuts them in and the enemy is pursuing, and you stand here adding prayer on prayer! SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD.'

7. Sotah 37a

the tribe of Benjamin and descended first into the sea; as it is said: There is little Benjamin their ruler — read not rodem [their ruler] but rad yam [descended into the sea]. Thereupon the princes of Judah hurled stones at them; as it is said: The princes of Judah their council. For that reason the righteous Benjamin was worthy to become the host of the All-Powerful, as it is said: He dwelleth between his shoulders. R. Judah said to [R. Meir]: That is not what happened; but each tribe was unwilling to be the first to enter the sea. Then sprang forward Nahshon the son of Amminadab and descended first into the sea; as it is said: Ephraim compasseth me about with falsehood, and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah yet ruleth with God. Concerning him it is stated in Scripture, Save me O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing etc Let not the waterflood overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up etc. At that time Moses was engaged for a long while in prayer; so the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'My beloved ones are drowning in the sea and thou prolongest prayer before Me!' He spake before Him, 'Lord of the Universe, what is there in my power to do?' He replied to him, Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand etc. For that reason Judah was worthy to be made the ruling power in Israel, as it is said: Judah became His sanctuary, Israel his dominion. Why did Judah become His sanctuary and Israel his dominion? Because the sea saw [him] and fled.

8. Zohar 168b

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: *A prayer of the poor, when he fainteth* (*ya'atof*) *and poureth out his complaint before the Lord* (Ps. CII, 1). He said: 'As has been laid down in many places, this psalm was composed by King David when he contemplated the plight of the poor man, and that was when he fled from his father-in-law. It was then that he composed a "prayer of the poor", as much as to say: "Behold, this is the prayer a poor man offers up to the Almighty, and one which should ascend in advance of all other prayers." The phrase, "a prayer of the poor", finds its parallel in the expression: "A prayer of Moses, the man of God" (*Ibid.* XC, 1), the one alluding to the phylactery of the head, the other to that of the arm, the two being inseparable and of equal importance. The reason why the prayer of the poor is admitted first into the presence of the Almighty is indicated in the verse: "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the lowliness of the poor, etc." (*Ibid.* XXII, 25).