

7th DAY PESACH 1992  
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

Today is the seventh day of Pesach. On the seventh day of Pesach we read about the destruction of the Egyptian army, how after the Jewish people crossed the Red Sea after it had split and the Egyptian army had pursued after them the waters of the Red Sea came cascading down upon them and the Jewish people were now free. That is why, of course, Pesach is seven days according to the Torah, because it was only on the seventh day that the Jewish people were really free because up to that time the Egyptian army could have come any time they wanted and brought them back to Egypt, but after the Egyptian army was destroyed Egypt no longer had the power to enslave the Jewish people. It took many, many years for the Egyptian people to recoup their wealth and to build an army which would be formidable enough to even venture into the Sinai and to launch any campaigns against the land of Israel.

After the Jewish people were freed from any fear of being recaptured, and when they saw their enemy had been defeated, they burst out into song, and it says, "Then Moshe sang". Why should it have to say Oz Yoshe Moshe, which literally means Moshe will sing. The rabbis learn from this an intimation of the world to come because of the use of the future tense. Of course, there are other grammatical reasons why the future would be used here, but why does it say **Oz** Yoshe Moshe, then Moshe sang. Why doesn't it just say Moshe and the Children of Israel sang? Why does it have to say Oz?

Also, if we look at the song, itself, we will see that it is divided into three parts. The first part talks about G-d's greatness and glory and how He is victorious in battle. The second part talks about the arrogance of the Egyptians who said, "I will pursue and I will overtake and I will divide the booty of my enemy..." We can see from here that the Egyptians, so to speak, acted in such an arrogant manner that they deserved the punishment which they received. Then we have the third part, which speaks about the fact that the inhabitants of Philistine are

trembling, that the chieftains of Edam are afrighted, that the mighty men of Moab trembled, and then it says that until your people pass over, until your people have acquired Passover, bring them and settle them in the mountain of thine inheritance. In other words, we are no longer praising G-d for an event which happened in the past, but we are praising G-d for something which will happen in the future. In other words, the song no longer becomes a praise of the past but it deals with an uncertain future.

We also learn in this Torah portion about Morah, how the Jewish people, after they sang this song, travelled for 3 days and did not find water, and they came to a place called Morah. There the water was not fit to drink. They had not found water for 3 days, and they rebelled against Moshe and they complained against him and G-d showed him a special tree and he threw it into the water and these waters were sweetened. Why does the Torah have to mention this at all? It would have been enough if we would have just ended the Torah reading for this seventh day after we learn how Miriam also organized the women and how they also sang a song before G-d. Why do we have to read this portion at all on the seventh day of Pesach?

What's more, we also have a strange law. On the seder night we know that we have to drink four cups of wine. This is a rabbinical law, not a law from the Torah, but, yet, the rabbis were so strict with this law that they said that even if a poor man had to sell his clothes he should sell his clothes so he should have four cups of wine at the seder. They said that the people who were responsible for doling our charity in the communities must make sure that the poor man not only had enough money for matzah and for the bitter herbs and the paschal lamb but also for the four cups of wine. Why should that be so since the four cups of wine are only a rabbinical law? They said that a person even had to hire himself out to obtain the money necessary in order to drink the four cups of

wine. Why should that be so? The rabbis say that the reason we have four cups of wine is because of the four ways that G-d redeemed us from Egypt. It says, "And I brought you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I saved you from their labor, and I redeemed you with an outstretched arm and with great wonders, and I took you to Me to be a nation." So it says, I brought you out, I saved you, I redeemed you, and I took you, so, therefore, because of these four expressions we have four cups of wine. The rabbis also say that we have four cups of wine because in the dream of the butler the word cup is mentioned 3 times, and in Joseph's interpretation of the dream he mentions it a fourth time. Therefore, because of these 4 mentionings of the word cup in the butler's dream, therefore, we have four cups of wine on Pesach. This does not seem to have anything to do with Pesach. Why should we be concerned about the butler's dream at all? The first reason we can understand. We have four different stages of freedom, and, therefore, because we have four different stages of freedom, therefore, we have four different cups of wine. We have said, "I will bring you out from the burdens of Egypt." That is the first stage of the redemption of the Jewish people. The rabbis say that actually the harsh slavery ended 6 months before they left Egypt. Because of all the havoc that the plagues had wreaked on Egypt, the economy had broken down, and the Jews were not enslaved with the vigor that they were before. We understand that G-d took us out from the physical slavery of Egypt, and when it says, "I saved you from their service," that meant from their idol worship. The Jewish people had sunk to the 49th level of idol worship, and at the night of the seder when the Jewish people had taken the lamb and had slaughtered it and put the blood on the door, and even if they had done a great act of courage they had broken with spirit worship because the Egyptians, of course, believed the spirit of Aries, the lamb, which was the sign of the zodiac at this time of year was supreme and that the spirit was incarnate in the lamb

and anybody who would touch a lamb could cause potential great harm to Egypt, and anyone, on the other hand, who would worship the lamb could cause great good to come to Egypt. So they were redeemed from this terrible spirit worship. Then, of course, we know we He said, "And I will redeem you", that was at the Red Sea, "with outstretched arm and with great judgments". Now they were really free. They could never be brought back. And when it said, "And I took you to be for Me a nation," that refers to Mount Sinai when we received the Torah. Why do we have to drink four cups of wine? We have to drink a cup on each one of these stages. We have to be thankful and grateful to G-d that we reach one of these stages even though it is not complete. So often you find people who are always pessimistic, who say, "Oh, I receive this and this but look what I didn't get." We should always be grateful and thank G-d for what we do get. When G-d took us out from the burdens of Egypt we should thank Him and be grateful to Him. Afterwards when He saved us from their idol worship we should be grateful. When He destroyed their army and made that we should be completely free, we should be grateful. When He took us to be a nation we should be grateful. Even though all these stages do not have to be complete before we should be grateful. If just one part of it came true we should be grateful. Judaism is a religion of simcha, joy. Even though we know there are problems ahead but when events happen which transform our live, even though we know there are many perils ahead we should be grateful.

In our day we should be grateful that Soviet Jewry is now free. People says, "Yes, but they are not religious," but they are not socialist anymore either. Who cares? They are now free. They can now learn their religion. They can come back to our people. Yes, it is important that you come back to our people. People say, "Yes, we have a State of Israel but look they are besieged by enemies." Yes, but we have a state. Let us do everything we can to support it and help

it. Other people say, "Yes, but they really are not following all the laws of the Torah." Yes, they may not be doing it now but they may in the future. Let us be grateful for what we have. The same thing applies throughout all life. In all life when things improve we should recognize them and be grateful and be happy about them. When people enter into a marriage we should be happy about it. Oh, yes, there will be problems. Yes, they are going to have arguments and frustrations, but we should be happy because they reached a greater stage. So many young people come to me today and say, "Rabbi, I can't get married because I am afraid of all these divorces around here." Why are you afraid of all the divorces? Get married and work on your marriage and you will have a good marriage. Or people say, "Rabbi, we are married but we are afraid to have kids. Look at all the horrors that are around us, all the drugs and alcohol." That is not the way to look at life. Yes, it is true that there are horrors around, but you should still have children. You should be grateful at every stage of the way.

That is, of course, why we say in the Torah portion we read today, Oz Yoshe Moshe, then Moshe sang a song. Didn't Moshe know that in the future there were going to be great problems for the Jewish people? Yes, Moshe knew that there would be great problems. That's why the first two parts of the Shira deal with the past but the third deals with the future. He knew that the Jewish people had complained in the past and they were going to complain in the future, too. It was not going to be such an easy job to take them into the land of Israel, but he knew that it could be done, and he still sang for joy even though there were great challenges ahead. He was happy. That, of course, was why the rabbis saw fit to include this portion about Marah, the bitter water, and the complaints of the Jewish people just three days after they had sung the great Shira because life is like that. In life we have great victories, but life does not stop. There are also other problems afterwards, but that does not mean we should not be grateful for our victories

and we should look positively and not negatively at life. We should be grateful for what we have and we should be joyous in what we have, and we should forward to the next stage. The enemy of the better is the best. Many people are sad and unhappy and miserable because they do not have the best, It may not be the best yet but it is better, and since it is better you should celebrate. That's why you find so many people who are always complaining who do not look at the positive side of things. They look at the community and they look at the downside, how many Jews do not have an education, how many Jews are not practicing the religion, etc. Look at the positive things. Look what we have now in our community that we did not have before, thriving day schools. We have now facilities in our community so you can lead a totally Jewish life. We have so many wonderful things here. Yes, they are not perfect. Yes, things could be better, but rejoice for what we do have. Instead, people say, "Oh, they gave us this but in the future they are not going to give us anything else." We should not think that way. Instead we should be positive. We should not complain all the time, but instead direct our energies to thanking G-d for what we do have and to doing even more in the future.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a young lady who was standing inside the door holding a bunch of coats with about 4 or 5 children milling around her feet. All of a sudden her husband came walking down the stairs and said, "What are you standing there for?" She said, "Honey, this time why don't we do things differently? Why don't you take the coats and put them on the children and I'll go outside and honk the horn?" In life too often today we have people who all they like to do is honk the horn. They do not like to put on the coats. Let us be grateful for what we have. Let's praise G-d for what we have. Yes, prepare to do even more, but realize that in life there is always much more to do. Yes, in the future there will always be more problems. Victories today are not going to solve the whole problem. There has to be victories tomorrow and victories the

next day and the day after that, but with G-d's help we can go from stage to stage. This applies not only to our life in the community but also in our personal life as well. That is why some rabbis say we have four cups because of the butler. The butler in his dream saw he was holding the cup of Pharaoh. He had an opportunity. He took the grapes and he squeezed them into the cup. Then after he squeezed them into the cup he gave it to Pharaoh. Then what did Joseph do? Joseph saw that the cup that was in Pharaoh's hand, that Pharaoh received it. That is what we have to do in life. When we have an opportunity, seize it. Do not bemoan the fact that we may not always be successful. Don't bemoan the fact that there are other problems and other stages ahead, but persevere. Seize the cup. Fill it. Offer it. It will probably be accepted, but at every stage of the way be grateful you got to that stage. Don't bemoan your fate and complain but instead be positive. If we all learn to be positive, if we all learn to thank G-d for what we do have and move forward we will truly be able to succeed so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.