

Light of the Original Pesach (from the book: Pesach Light)

Where did the light come from that shone on the original *Pesach*? Rabbi Nachman of Breslov asks this question. He answers that it was “borrowed” from the Future:¹

What is the essence of the redemption from Egypt? From what “place” and “time” were all the miracles and supernatural wonders that occurred then taken [“borrowed”] when Hashem completely changed and overturned the natural order of the world, nullifying the laws and constants of nature, and thereby revealing His unmitigated providence over the world? It was all borrowed from the level called *ha'ketz ha'acharon* (the final end-time), that is, from the light that will be revealed at that time. [For He will then show us that there was never any such thing as “nature.”] The so-called laws of nature will be nullified [and all will see that they were merely a camouflage for God’s direct and uninterrupted providence]. This ultimate end is none other than the Great Shabbat [that will culminate the 6,000 years of this-world]. It is *Alma d’Atei* (the ultimate World-of-the-Future), the complete Sabbath [that will follow the “weekdays” of this world]. It is from that ultimate future that Hashem drew the light of providence, from *sof ha’olam* (i.e., from beyond the boundaries of the world as we know it), from *ketz ha’acharon* (the ultimate end) [in order to overturn the natural order and redeem us from *Mitzrayim*].

In the source for the above quotation, Rabbi Nachman adds:²

כְּשֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא רוֹצֵה לְרַחֵם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלְהוֹשִׁיעַם מִגְלוּתָם וְלַעֲשׂוֹת קֶץ וְסוֹף מִהַמְצַר לָהֶם, אֲזִי מִמְשִׁיב עֲלֵיהֶם הַשְּׁגָחָה... מִקֶּץ וְסוֹף הָעוֹלָם... וְדַע שֶׁזֹּאת הַהֲשָׁגָה הוּא מִמְשִׁיב מִסוֹף הָעוֹלָם, כִּי לַעֲתִיד בְּעֵת הַקֶּץ יִתְבַטֵּל הַטִּבֵּעַ לְגַמְרִי, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה רַק הַשְּׁגָחָה לְבַד כְּמֵה שֶׁכָּתוּב “כִּי שְׁמַיִם כָּעָשָׁן נִמְלְחוּ וְהָאָרֶץ כְּבָגָד תִּבְלֶה וְיִשְׁבִּיהָ כְּמוֹ כֵּן יָמוּתוּן וְיִשׁוּעַתִּי לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה...” (יִשְׁעִיָּה נ”א ו’)... וְעַל כֵּן גַּם עֵתָה כְּשֶׁהַשֵּׁם יִתְבַרֵךְ רוֹצֵה לַעֲשׂוֹת קֶץ וְסוֹף מֵאִיזָה עֲכוּ”ם וְיִשְׁיֵיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעְלָה, אֲזִי מִמְשִׁיב עֲלֵיהֶם הַשְּׁגָחָה מִקֶּץ וְסוֹף הָעוֹלָם... (לִיקוּטֵי מוהר”ן חֶלֶק א’ תוֹרָה ר”ן)

When the Holy One arouses His compassion on Israel, to redeem them from their exile and to put an end to their suffering, He draws His *hashgachah* (divine providence) down upon them... from *sof ha’olam* (the extremity of the world) that is, from the future *ketz* (end-time), when He will nullify “nature” completely, [dispel the illusion that anything exists separately from Him] and reveal that there is nothing but His *hashgachah*. This is the meaning of, “The heavens [that you presently perceive with your eyes] will dissolve like smoke, and the physicality of earth will wilt away like an old garment; the physical bodies of earth’s inhabitants shall pass away; only My salvation [pure, unadulterated, pristine *hashgachah*] will endure forever” (Isaiah 51:6)... Therefore, even now [within history as we know it], when He wishes to bring about the end of a particular civilization in order to elevate Israel, He draws down His *hashgachah* upon them from the *ketz* and *sof ha’olam* (i.e., from beyond the boundaries of the world as we know it)...

As implied in Rabbi Nachman’s teaching there is an even deeper way to see this light. If the light of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, the Exodus-light, was borrowed from the light of the *ketz ha’acharon*, the ultimate end, and is none other than the light of the future redemption, what is the source of the light of redemption? From where will *it* be “taken”? What is the source of the light of redemption?³

¹ *Likutey Halakhot, Orach Chayim, Netilat Yadayim Shachrit 2:6.*

² *Likutey Moharan I 250.*

³ In truth, the future redemption will be many times more powerful (to the magnitude of 50 x 50) than the original *Pesach*, as implied in the verse, “*Ki’mei tzet’khem me’eretz mitzrayim ereinu niflaot*—as in the days of your Exodus from Egypt, I will show them (i.e., the last generation) *niflaot*-wonders” (Micah 7:15), where the word *niflaot* can be re-read as *nun-pelaot*, “50 x 50 times the level of wonders,” where *nun* (pronounced “noon”) is spelled *nun-vav-nun*, i.e., 50 x 50.

We have numerous sources that all say the same thing: The light of the future redemption, the light of *Mashiach*, the light of the *Beit HaMikdash*, and the light of the Great Shabbat, the light of Eternity, are all manifestations of the *Or HaGanuz*, the Original Light that Hashem stored away in order to create the universe and man in it:⁴

Rabbi Yehudah bar Simon said: The [spiritual or mental] light that the Holy One brought into existence on the first day of creation was so great that with it Adam could see from one end of the world to the other. When the Holy One foresaw the wicked deeds of the generations of the Flood and the Tower of Babel, however, He decided to store this light away for the righteous [who would be resurrected] in the Future. How do we know that He hid it? It is thus written, "He has withheld light from the wicked" (Job 38:15). How do we know that He stored it away for the righteous in the Future? It is written, "The way of the righteous is like a radiant light that grows ever brighter until the height of noon" (Proverbs 4:18).

In the Zohar we read:⁵

It is written, "Elokim said: Let there be light and there was light." This is the supernal First Light that pre-existed the universe. From it came forth all hosts and powers, and the earth was sweetened, and it brought forth its power... When the Holy One foresaw the wicked of the world, He hid and concealed it, and it is only *revealed now in hidden and obscure ways* that are not apparent...

Rabbi Yitzchak said: The light with which the Holy One created the world was ubiquitous. It extended from one end of the universe to the other. He then hid it. Why? So that the wicked would not be able to use it and derive benefit from it. He therefore stored it away for the righteous [who would be resurrected]... as it is written, "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart" (Psalm 97:11). When the Holy One finally reveals that light, all the worlds will be sweetened [rectified]. All will be ONE. Until that future day, it [the unified light] remains hidden and concealed.

And in the *Sefer Bahir*:⁶

Rabbi Berakhya sat and expounded: Each day we speak of the World-to-Come. But do we understand what we are saying? In Aramaic, *Olam Haba* (the World-to-Come) is *Alma d'Atei* (the World-that-Came). And what is the meaning of the World-that-Came? We have learned: Before the world was created, it arose in Thought to create a great light to illuminate it. The Holy One thus created a light so great that no created thing could endure... Foreseeing that the world would not be able to endure [the full intensity of] this light, the Holy One took a seventh of it and left it in its place for them. The rest [i.e., the major portion of the light] He stored away for the righteous in the ultimate future. He then said: If they show themselves worthy of this seventh by safeguarding it, I will give them the rest in the final world. This is why it is called *Alma d'Atei* (the World-that-Came)—seeing that it already existed from [before] the six days of creation. Regarding this light it is written, "How great is the good that You have stored away for those who fear You" (Psalm 31:20).

⁴ *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:2; see also *Chagigah* 12a, and Rashi on Genesis 1:4.

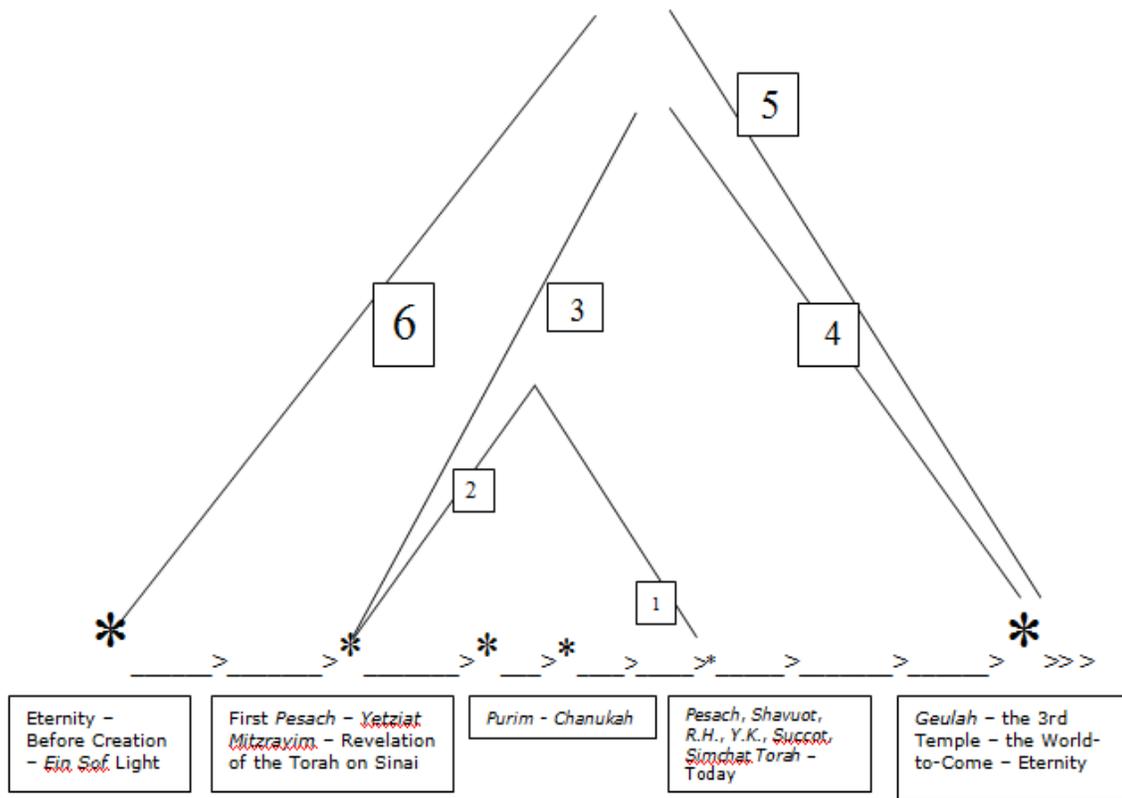
⁵ *Zohar* 1:30b and 1:31b.

⁶ *Sefer HaBahir* 160.

To put this entire discussion into perspective, see Figure 1, which is a Time-Line that moves from left to right, i.e., from Before the Creation of the World, to the Exodus from *Mitzrayim* and the Revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai, to the miracles of *Purim* and *Chanukah*, to *Pesach* in our own time, inching closer and closer to the *Geulah*, the Final Redemption, the End of History as we know it, the DAWN of a NEW LEVEL of EXISTENCE, the ultimate RETURN to EDEN on a higher level.

Now, note the lines numbered 1-6. Lines 1-2 represent the connection between our annual *Pesach* and the first *Pesach*. Lines 3-4 are a paradigm shift to a higher level of magnitude. That is, they connect the first *Pesach* to the ultimate redemption. Lines 5-6 represent the ultimate paradigm shift.⁷ They connect the ultimate redemption back to the original light that shone before creation, bringing everything full-cycle in accord with the principle that "What manifests last in action, was first in the thought of God."

From Eternity to Eternity (with some time in-between)

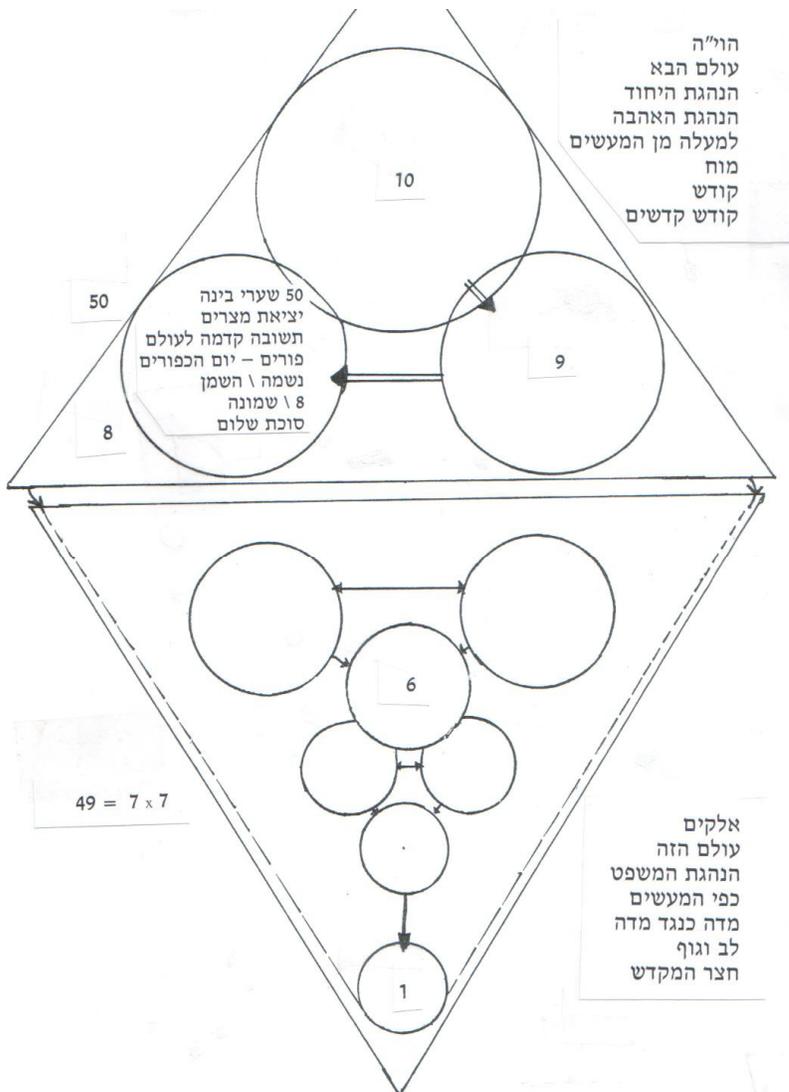


The purpose of this time-line is twofold. First, it helps lift us out of the seeming smallness of our lives, to see that we are really part of a great and wondrous divine drama that, contrary to all appearances, is taking place within Hashem's *Ein Sof*/Infinite Oneness. Second, it also helps us to know how awesome every moment is. That is, contemplating and realizing that our own annual *Pesach* Exodus's are

⁷ Of course, even the "ultimate" redemption is a relative term in the context of Eternity. According to Torah/kabbalah, when this present cycle of creation ends and we all return to where we began, we will see that it was/is merely part of a larger cycle, which was/is part of a larger cycle, ad infinitum. This is the secret of *lekh lekha*, "go—to your Self." That is, our souls had to descend into the *Mitzrayim*-darkness of this world in order know Hashem's light in a way that we never could in heaven. And there is even a surprise ending waiting for us at the end of each cycle: Not only was He with us in our *Mitzrayims* (which is truly amazing!), but on an even deeper level, all this took place *in* Hashem's Infinite Oneness. We never left.

connected to the whole purpose for which God created the world helps us bring that awesome SPIRITUAL LIGHT called the *OR HaGANUZ* into our own consciousness. This, in turn, allows us to align our small lives (and even the tiniest moments of our lives) with the LIGHT OF ETERNITY. And once we do this on our weekly Shabbats, and on our annual *Pesachs, Shavuots, and Tisha b'Avs*, and on our *Rosh Hashanahs, Yom Kippurs, Succots, Chanukahs, and Purims*, we can learn to draw this level of consciousness into every day and every moment of our lives. We literally become *bnei Olam Haba*, children of eternity, even now as we live our seemingly mundane existence.

The truth is: Knowing that we literally wouldn't be able to go on or even survive without it, Hashem revealed sparklings of the *Or HaGanuz* at designated times throughout history, and continues to reveal it in increments every year, precisely in order for us to access its sweetness at any time and in any place.



Rabbi Akiva's X-Ray Vision

R. Akiva said: Happy are you, O Israel! **Lifnei Mi atem metaharim**—before Whom do you purify yourselves? **U'Mi metaher etkhem**—and Who purifies you? None other than your Father in Heaven! As it is written, "I shall cast/sprinkle pure waters upon you and you shall be purified" (Ezekiel 36:25). And it is written, "Hashem is the *mikveh* (hope) of Israel" (Jeremiah 17:13)—just as a *mikveh* (bath) purifies the impure, so does [hoping in] the Holy One purify Israel.

One of the many code-words in the *Tanakh* for the higher dimensional reality known as *Olam Haba* is **Mi**. In simple Hebrew the word **mi** means "who?" In the code-language of *Sod* [Kabbalah], however, it refers to *Olam Haba*. One reason for this is its *gematria* (numerical value): 50 (*mem* = 40, *yod* = 10). We can now understand the depths of Rabbi Akiva's words:

"**Lifnei Mi atem metaharim**—before **Mi** do you purify yourselves" corresponds to the 49 steps that lead up to *Mi*, i.e., that precede the level of the Great 50, just as the 49 days of the *Omer* precede *Shavuot*, and the 49 years of the seven *Shmittahs* precede the 50th year of the *Yovel* (Jubilee). These 49 symbolic steps essentially constitute the work that **we** have to do to prepare the vessels to receive the light that Hashem wishes to give us.

"**U'Mi metaher etkhem**—and **Mi** purifies you" corresponds to the level of the Great 50, the infinite light of *Ein Sof* flowing down through *Keter* to *Chokhmah* to *Binah*, crowning our efforts beyond anything we could ever attain on our own.

The Torah usually emphasizes the work that we have to do, rather than the larger framework or context within which this work takes place. Nevertheless, the other side of the coin is always present.

Yes, we live in *olam hazeh* (this-world), that dimension of reality in which Hashem purposely constricted and occluded His great love for us in order to give us the greatest gift possible, namely, the ability to attain our own perfection. But this doesn't take place in a vacuum. Behind this is *Olam Haba*, not just the world-to-come in a simplistic sense, as if it will eventually exist but doesn't yet exist. No, ***Olam Haba is the greater context within which olam hazeh takes place.*** In fact it is the **only** context within which the existential condition of *olam hazeh* makes sense.

This hidden-but-always-present all-pervasive level of *Olam Haba* is what Yechezkel and Yirmiyahu refer to in the above *mishnah*. From that overriding level of Hashem's love "I shall cast/sprinkle pure waters upon you and you shall be purified" (Ezekiel 36:25). "Hashem is the *mikveh* (hope) of Israel" (Jeremiah 17:13). In both verses Hashem's love for us (the level of *Olam Haba* that streams down into *olam hazeh* to lift us up and free us) is couched in a metaphor of water.