

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

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Hashem will never forsake the Jewish People.

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יַעֲקֹב וְאֶף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יִצְחָק וְאֶף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אַבְרָהָם אֶזְכָּר וְהָאָרֶץ
אֶזְכָּר:

“And I shall recall my Yaakov covenant, and even my Yitzchok covenant, and even my Avraham covenant, I shall recall and I shall recall the Land.” (Vayikra 26:42).

What are these three separate covenants? Why does Hashem recall the bris with Yaakov first and then backwards to Yitzchok and Avraham? In this case, why is the Land mentioned last?

The Torah gave two ways that the nation can be restored back from exile. One way is “either” if they humble themselves and do teshuva. (Ibid 26:41). In that case, Hashem will then recall the covenants as mentioned. The “either” indicates a second option. Then there is a way that the Bnei Yisroel will return without such heartfelt teshuva. “And even also this.... I will not reject them, and I will not utterly destroy them, to terminate my covenant with them, because I am Hashem their Lord.” (Ibid 26:44). The solution to this way back is, “I shall recall for them the first covenant, that I took them out of the Land of Mitzrayim in the eyes of the nations to be for them a Lord, I am Hashem.” (Ibid 25:45).

There are two clear paths back from exile. First is through repentance. When that happens, Hashem will recall the covenants He made individually with the forefathers. He will also recall the Land. Second, is through force. The Jewish people are about to be utterly destroyed from this world. Then Hashem will bring them back because He will remember His covenant with them.

The merit path back from galus is through repentance and deeds. That is a nation being worthy of returning. They were rejected and ejected from the Land for their misdeeds. The land will have made up the shmita years and the sins, and will be able to accept them back. (Ibid 26:43). This is based on the individual brisim.

The three individual covenants are when Hashem appeared as Kel Shakkai. To Avraham He appeared and changed his name and promised him the land. (Bereishis 17:8). To Yitzchok Hashem tells him specifically not to go down to Mitzrayim. (Ibid 26:2). He promises him the Land and establishes the same oath as with Avraham. (Ibid 26:3). While the Torah does not use the term, Kel Shakkai there, Yitzchok tells Yaakov that is how Hashem did appear. (Ibid 28:3). Then, when Hashem changes Yaakov’s name to Yisroel He appears as Kel Shakkai. (Ibid 35:11). He then promises the Land to Yaakov and his children. (Ibid 35:12). Hashem makes the bris with the avos because they followed His voice and command. (Ibid 18:19, 26:5,35:1).

After Avraham arrives in the Land of Canaan, Hashem promises the Land to him. (Bereishis 12:7). This one pasuk is explained later. It would be through a biological son

that his lineage would be passed on. (Ibid 15:4). His offspring will be great and many. (Ibid 15:5). It was “on that day, Hashem formed a covenant with Avraham saying, ‘To your progeny I shall give this land, from the Nile to the Euphrates.’” (Ibid 15:18). Now, one could think that this land would be given to all of Avraham’s children, Yishmael and Eisav, too. To be specific, the Torah recalls the Bris Bein Habsarim indicating it will be the line that goes to a strange land and are burdened there for four hundred years. (Ibid 15:13). This is the Covenant of the Land. These brisim were tied to following Hashem’s commands (Avraham leaving his birthplace) and so when Bnei Yisroel return on merit, it is these brisim that Hashem recalls. “On that day” is the same day that Hashem appeared to Avraham in the plains of Mamre (Ibid 17 and 18). As later recounted: “The bris that I formed with the Avos on the day I strengthened My hand to take them out of Egypt.” (Yeremiahu 31:31).

Hashem also made a bris based on force. After Hashem changed Avraham’s name, the Torah says, “And the Lord said to Avraham.” (Ibid 17:9). This is now the Lord – Elokim – the Creationist. This was built into Creation that Yisroel can never perish and they must end up in their Land. Avraham was given the mitzvah of bris mila. (Ibid 17:10). This special covenant, although bris was given to Yishmael, too – because he was a member of Avraham’s household, and the entire household was commanded to have a bris mila (ibid 17:13) – was to pass only to Yitzchok. (Ibid 17:21). The only way to lose this bond is not to have a bris. (Ibid 17:14).

When Bnei Yisroel cried out of bondage in Mitzrayim, “the Lord heard their cries, and the Lord recalled his bris with Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov.” (Shmos 2:24). Then Hashem first told Moshe, “I am the Lord of Avraham, Lord of Yitzchok, and Lord of Yaakov...I have surely seen the affliction of My people...I have descended to rescue them from the hand of Egypt.” (Ibid 3:6-8). Then it says, “And now, behold! The cries of Bnei Yisroel have come up to me.” (Ibid 3:9). This means that Hashem was going to save them in the merit of the forefathers, because He heard their cries of pain. Then He also heard their cries of prayer directed at Him. This was Hashem acting as the Creationist. Redemptions came at the final hour. (Ibid 12:41). That is why bris mila is connected to koran Pesach. (Ibid 12:13,48). It was a forced geula, and those under the bris were saved.

Leaving Egypt was based on the unilateral covenant. Hashem took Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim to be their Lord. (Bamidbar 15:41). It was option B. However, option A is to earn return. That is why the brisim work backwards in chronological order. It shows we can work backwards toward our nearest forefather, Yaakov, then “even” pile on with Yitzchok, and then Avraham, and finally the Land promise as well. When there is merit the reach need not go that far back. Hashem adds from farther back as a gift. When it is not merited, then Hashem has to reach all the way back, to the first covenants, back to what is built into Creation – that Hashem redeemed them from Egypt in the eyes of the world, to their Lord. So too, He shall redeem them again. (Yeremiahu 31:32).

We can leave by force or we can leave by merit. May we leave soon on merit. Soon in our days!