

On that day, Hashem saved Yisrael from the hand of Egypt, and Yisrael saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. (14:30)

Pesach and *Purim* occur a month apart on the Jewish calendar, but the mode of celebration of each differs greatly. This is because each manifested a different mode of celebration, with regard to our emerging triumphant over our enemies. On *Purim*, we celebrate the day that Haman's evil decree was annulled, the day *asher nacha mei'oyiveihem*, "they rested from their enemies"; in contrast, on both the first and seventh day of *Pesach*, we celebrate the destruction of our enemies. During the *seder* night, the firstborn of Egypt perished. Nary was there a home that did not reek of death. Our enemies were beginning to receive payback for their centuries-old nefarious treatment of the Jews. On the seventh day of *Pesach* they drowned in the Red Sea, a fitting ending to a nation that sought to obliterate us through the medium of water.

We neither conceal our joy, nor do we silence our elation, over the drowning and elimination of our mortal enemies. We do not believe in counterfeit coverage, the hollow and bogus penitence offered by our enemies for the thousands of years of pogroms, crusades, persecutions and outright murder, culminating in the ultimate tragedy, the Holocaust. The calumny that accompanies their seeking absolution – for either their direct participation, or their turning the other way when the violence and murder was overtly committed – adds insult to injury. Their apologies are a public relations sham which no decent, respectable member of the Jewish community should countenance. It is what it is, they are who they are, and we have lived with it throughout the millennia. We will continue our unswerving faith in Hashem and remain fully committed to His Torah and *mitzvos*.

Revenge, explains *Horav Bentzion Firer, zl*, is acceptable (and we do not conceal our feelings) when Hashem metes it out. Indeed, *Chazal* (*Berachos* 33) teach, "Great is *nekamah*, revenge, that was given (placed) between the letters (of Hashem's Name) *Keil Nekamos Hashem*, 'O' G-d of vengeance, Hashem" (*Tehillim* 94:1). The Jewish nation stood on the other side of the Red Sea and saw what Hashem had done to the Egyptians. They did not turn their heads away; they were not ashamed. This form of vengeance eliminates the evil. It is appropriate.

Purim, on the other hand, is different. While Heaven sanctioned the vengeance meted out against the persons who sought to kill the Jews, it was, nonetheless, executed via the medium of Jewish fighters who rose up against their enemies. They were appropriate in their actions, but, when people act violently even against their sworn enemy, one must always question the purity of their motive. Did physical/emotional revenge enter into the equation? There is the fear that the individual might get carried away with his personal feelings of rage and denigrate the Heavenly vengeance to become a personal vendetta. On *Purim*, we do not celebrate our revenge against our would-be murderers. Jewish revenge is not Jewish in nature. Heavenly vengeance expunges evil. Even when evil is eradicated, it must be executed in the most morally-pristine manner.

Another aspect of *Shevii Shel Pesach*, the seventh day of Pesach, should be emphasized. *Rashi* comments that on that day, the day the Red Sea split, the Jewish people stood on the other side of the Red Sea (having safely passed through from one shore to the other) and observed that the sea had ejected the Egyptian corpses onto the shore. Hashem did this, so that the Jews should not conjecture, “Just as we are ascending from the sea on this shore, so, too, are the Egyptians ascending on another part, distant from us, and they will soon pursue us.” Hashem wanted His People to see and acknowledge that it was finally over. They were free, not only of the live Egyptians, but they also would no longer be chased by their demons.

People who live in fear and anxiety run from shadows. They run even when no one is pursuing them. Fear pursues them, fear that is self-imposed, fear that is the result of centuries of persecution. Such fear can only be expunged through *emunah*, complete faith in Hashem. When the Jewish People left Egypt, they were physically liberated, but in their minds they had yet to disencumber themselves from the demons that haunted them. They feared that somehow, some way, the Egyptians would apprehend them and return them to Egypt. It was not enough for the Jews to assume that the Egyptians had drowned; they had to see it with their own eyes. Otherwise, they would live in fear. Their total salvation came when Hashem caused the sea to spit out the bodies. When the Jews saw this, they celebrated their liberation from Egypt and from the Egyptians. Their real liberation, as well as ours today and every day, is only when we maintain *b’emunah sheleimah*, with complete faith, that we have no one upon whom to rely but Hashem. This faith will free us from all enemies – actual and hypothetical.