

Through the eyes of the Talmud Yerushalmi

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The Salvation of the Jewish People

We turn our hopes to God when a difficult situation arises and we need to believe that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. But as time passes and we do not see a way out of our situation, we are quick to dismiss that God has propitious plans for us, all the while oblivious that salvation may in fact be in the works.

We also extend our hopes of Salvation to our entire People and trust that God will hasten its arrival. But here too, if the time looks right for Salvation, we raise our hopes, but as soon as the time passes without any escalation we tend to dismiss it as a false sign.

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachoth 1:1) teaches us that salvation is not instant, but in fact quite gradual. It likens the process of salvation to the manifestation of the light of the *Ayeleth HaShaHar*. Signs of salvation first manifest in small steps, often far apart from each other, but only with extended time do these steps become closer and more frequent.

The Talmud Yerushalmi takes the story of Mordechai in the Book of Esther as the historical paradigm of the Jewish People's salvation. Salvation comes unexpectedly and the events that lead up to it are unpredictable! Each event is but a small step in a long process which will ultimately culminate in complete salvation.

In times of distress, the lack of an immediate turn-around in one's fortune or lack of continual improvement in one's situation should never be taken as a sign of God's abandonment of the individual. The same is true even more so of the Jewish People at large.

May we wait patiently and witness salvation in our personal lives and the ultimate Salvation of our people! (Adapted from Rabbi Y.G. Bechhofer's lecture: Ayeleth HashaHar : www.talmudyerushalmi.org/lectures)

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