
EZRA-NECHEMIAH CHAPTER 9: ENCOUNTERING INTERMARRIAGE

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CONGREGATION OR TORAH

פרשת כי תשא תשפ"ד

WHERE DID THE INTERMARRIAGE HAPPEN?

(1) EZRA 9:1-2

(1) Now when these things were done, the princes drew near to me, saying, "The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.
 (2) For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mixed themselves with the peoples of the lands. Yes, the hand of the princes and rulers has been chief in this trespass."

(א) וּבְכַלּוֹת אֵלֶּה נִגְּשׂוּ אֵלַי הַשָּׂרִים לֵאמֹר לֹא־נִבְדְּלוּ הָעָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרְצוֹת כִּתְּעַבְתִּיהֶם לְפָנַי הַחַיִּי הַפָּרָזִי הַיְבוּסִי הָעַמְּנִי הַמְּאָכִי הַמִּצְרִי וְהָאֱמֹרִי:
 (ב) כִּי־נָשְׂאוּ מִבְּנֹתֵיהֶם לָהֶם וּלְבָנֵיהֶם וְהִתְעַרְבוּ וַיַּרְעוּ הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּעַמֵּי הָאָרְצוֹת וַיִּדְּ הַשָּׂרִים וְהַסֹּגְנִים הַיְתָהּ בַּמַּעַל הַזֶּה רָאשׁוֹנָה:

(2) RASHI MALAKHI 2:11

ובעל בת אל נכר – שנשאו נשים נכריות בבבל ואפילו הכהנים כמו שמפורש בספר עזרא (עזרא ט'א'-ב'). ורבותינו אמרו (בבלי מגילה ט"ו.): מלאכי זה עזרא.

“and married the daughter of a foreign god” - that they married gentile women in Babylon, and even the priests, as is delineated in the Book of Ezra (chap. 9 and 10). Our Sages said that Malachi is Ezra.

WHO WAS INTERMARRYING?

(3) MALAKHI 2:10-16

הֲלוֹא אָב אֶחָד לְכָלֵנוּ הֲלוֹא אֵל אֶחָד בְּרָאֵנוּ מִדּוֹעַ נִבְגַּל אִישׁ בְּאֶחָיו לְחַלֵּל בְּרִית אֲבֹתֵינוּ: (יא) בְּגַדָה יְהוּדָה וְתוֹעֵבָה נַעֲשֶׂתָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִירוּשָׁלַם כִּי חָלַל יְהוּדָה קֹדֶשׁ י"י אֲשֶׁר אָהָב וּבָעַל בַּת־אֵל נָכָר: (יב) יִכְרַת י"י לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂנָה עֵר וְעִנְיָה מֵאֶהְלֵי יַעֲקֹב וּמִגִּישׁ מִנְחָה לִי? צְבָאוֹת: (יג) וְזֹאת שְׁנִית תַּעֲשׂוּ פְסוֹת דְּמִעַה אֶת־מִזְבַּח י"י כִּי נִאֲנָקָה מֵאִין עוֹד פְּנוֹת אֶל־הַמִּנְחָה וְלִקְחַת רִצּוֹן מִיְדְּכֶם: (יד) וְנִאֲמַרְתֶּם עַל־מָה עָל כִּי־י"י הַעֵיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר בְּגִדְתָּהּ בָּהּ וְהִיא חִבְרַתָּה וְאַשְׁתִּי בְרִיתָהּ: (טו) וְלֹא־אֶתְדַּע עֲשֶׂה וּשְׂאָר רֵיחַ לִי וְמָה הָאֶתְדַּע מִבְּקֶשׁ וַיַּרְעוּ אֱלֹהִים וּנְשַׁמְרַתֶּם בְּרוּחְכֶם וּבְאַשְׁתִּי נְעוּרֶיהָ אֶל־יִבְגְּדוּ: (טז) כִּי־שָׁנְאָה שְׁלֹחַ אָמַר י"י אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכִסְּהָ חֶמְסַ עַל־לְבוּשׁוֹ אָמַר י"י צְבָאוֹת וּנְשַׁמְרַתֶּם בְּרוּחְכֶם וְלֹא תִבְגְּדוּ:

(10) Don't we all have one father? Hasn't one God created us? Why do we each deal treacherously against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers? (11) Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of Hashem which He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. (12) Hashem will cut off, to the man who does this, him who wakes and him who answers, out of the tents of Jacob, and him who offers an offering to Hashem of Hosts. (13) This again you do: you cover the altar of Hashem with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, because He doesn't regard the offering any more or receive it with good will at your hand. (14) Yet you say, 'Why?' Because Hashem has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt

treacherously, though she is your companion, and the wife of your covenant. (15) Not one has done so, if he had the residue of the spirit. And what does the one seek? A godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. (16) For I hate divorce," says Hashem, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with violence!" says Hashem of Hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you don't deal treacherously.

(4) ABARBANEL MALAKHI 2:10

ולא האשימם הנביא פה ולא ג"כ בספר עזרא שהיו נותנים בנותיהם לגוים כי אם שהיו לוקחים להם נשים נכריות אולי היו עושים זה בחושכם שהם ימשלו בנשותיהם ולא יתפתו לעבוד ע"ז שלהם, אבל בנות ישראל לא הגיעה רשעת הדור להבעל לגוים כי ידעו שבהכרח תמשך האשה אחר עבודת בעלה, גם שחרפה היה להם לתת את בנותיהם לאיש אשר לו ערלה

The prophet did not indict them here, or in Ezra, for giving their daughters to the nations, but only for taking foreign women. Perhaps they [only] did this, thinking they could control their wives and not be drawn into their idolatry, but the wickedness of the generation had not reached the point of having Jewish women live with non-Jews. They knew that the woman would be compelled to follow her husband's worship. Also, it would be shameful to give their daughters to men without *brit milah*.

WHY IS INTERMARRIAGE WRONG?

(5) DEVARIM 7:1-4

(א) כִּי יָבִיאֲךָ יי"י אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בֹא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָשַׁל גּוֹיִם-רַבִּים | מִפְּנֵיךָ הַחַתִּי וְהַגִּרְגָשִׁי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי שִׁבְעָה גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְעַצוּמִים מִמֶּךָ: (ב) וְנָתַתְּם יי"י אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִפִּיתֶם הַחֶרֶם תַּחְרִים אֹתָם לֹא-תִכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית וְלֹא תִהְיֶינָם: (ג) וְלֹא תִתְחַתֵּן לָהֶם בְּתוֹךְ לֵאמֹר לִבְנֵינוּ וּבָתוּרָנוּ לֹא-תִקַּח לְבָנָהּ: (ד) כִּי-יִסֵּר אֶת-בְּנֵיךָ מֵאַחֲרַי וְעָבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְחָרָה אַרְבִּי' בְּכֶם וְהִשְׁמִידֶךָ מִהָרָ: (ה) כִּי-אִם-פֶּה תַעֲשֶׂוּ לָהֶם מִזְבְּחֹתֵיהֶם תִּתְּצוּ וּמִצְבֹּתֵיהֶם תִּשְׁבְּרוּ וְאֲשִׁירֵיהֶם תִּגְדְּעוּן וּפְסִילֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ: (ו) כִּי עַם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לִי יי"י אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּרָךְ בְּתוֹרַי יי"י אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְהַנִּיחַ לֹךְ לְעַם סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה:

(1) When Hashem your God shall bring you into the land where you go to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before you, the Hittite, and the Gergashite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations greater and mightier than you, (2) and when Hashem your God shall deliver them up before you, and you shall strike them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. (3) You shall not make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son, and you shall not take his daughter for your son. (4) For he will turn away your son from following Me, that they may serve other gods; then the anger of Hashem would be kindled against you, and He would destroy you quickly. (5) But you shall deal with them like this. You shall break down their altars, and dash their pillars in pieces, and cut down their Asherim, and burn their engraved images with fire. (6) For you are a holy people to Hashem your God. Hashem your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples who are on the face of the earth.

(6) AVODAH ZARAH 36B

בנותיהן דאורייתא היא דכתיב {דברים ז':ג'} לא תתחתן בם דאורייתא שבועה גוים אכל שאר אומות לא נאטו אינהו וגזור אפילו דשאר אומות. ולרבי שמעון בן יוסי דאמר {דברים ז':ד'} כי יסיר את בנה מאחרי לרבות כל המסירות מאי איכא למימר אלא דאורייתא אישות דרך התנות ואתו אינהו גזור אפילו דרך זנות.

It was stated that the prohibition against marrying the daughters of gentiles was decreed on account of idolatry. The Gemara raises an objection: But the prohibition against marrying **their daughters** is prescribed by Torah law, as it is written: **“Neither shall you make marriages with them”** (Deuteronomy 7:3). The Gemara explains: **By Torah law** intermarriage is prohibited only with the **seven** Canaanite **nations**, but intermarriage with **the other nations** of the world is **not** prohibited, **and** the students of Shammai and Hillel **came and decreed** that intermarriage is prohibited **even** with **the other nations**. The Gemara asks: **And according to** the opinion of **Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai**, who says that the subsequent verse: **“For he will turn away your son from following Me”** (Deuteronomy 7:4) serves **to include all who turn away** one’s son from God, i.e., all gentiles, **what is there to say? Rather, by Torah law only sexual relations by way of marriage** are prohibited, **and they came and decreed** that sexual relations are prohibited **even by way of licentiousness**.

(7) SHULCHAN ARUKH EH 16:1 WITH REMA

ישראל שבועל פותית, דרך אשות, או ישראלית שנבעלה לגוי (דרך אשות), הרי אלו לוקין מן התורה, שנאמר: "לא תתחתן בם" (דברים ז, ג) {ניש חולקין בזה (טור)}.

If a Jew mates with an idolatress in the manner of marriage, or a Jewess mates with an idolater (in the manner of marriage), they are lashed for violating the Torah text, as it says, “And you shall not marry among them.” {*And some dispute this*}.

(8) RASHI MALAKHI 2:13

שנית תעשו – הראשנה שהוכחתי הרבה היא קשה ישראל שנשא גויה ואפילו הוא פנוי, וזאת שנית קשה ממנה שהנשואי ישראליות נשאו עליהם את הנכריות לפי שנתפחמו ישראליות ברעב ובגולה ונתגנו עליהם, והיה מושיבה בביתו צדו ובאלמנות חיות והנכרית היתה גברת.

“And this second thing you do” - The first matter concerning which I reproved you is, indeed, very grave, for one to have married a gentile woman even if he was unmarried; but this second matter is graver, for those [who were] married to Israelite women and married gentile women in addition to them. [The men did this] because the Israelite women became black from hunger and from exile, and became repugnant to them. [Such a man] would, therefore, sit her [his Israelite wife] in his house, bound in living widowhood, and the gentile wife would be the chief wife.

(9) R' TZVI SINENSKY, "INTERMARRIAGE DURING SHIVAT TZION

Beyond the greater emphasis on intermarriage, the books of *Shivat Tzion* seem to present a different underlying reason for the prohibition than do earlier Biblical texts... Endogamy, in other words, is required so as not to lead one's children toward idolatry. It would appear that the emphasis here is not on the prohibition per se, but against its potentially idolatrous outcome. The reasoning, in other words, is extrinsic, not intrinsic.

In contrast, the leaders of *Shivat Tzion* seem to speak with a different point of emphasis. Ezra in particular introduces a new set of terminology to our discussion. He first observes that "the holy seed [of Israel] has been intermingled with the peoples of the land" (9:2). This phraseology is arresting and implies that the sin is not so much about the concern for idolatry or otherwise sinful lifestyle (extrinsic), but runs counter to the holiness of the Jew (intrinsic). *Malakhi* (2:15) similarly suggests that God desires "Godly seed," and *Nechemia* records that the "Israelite seed separated from all foreigners" (9:2).

Moreover, on no less than five occasions, the verses refer to exogamy as "*ma'al ha-gola*," "the trespass of the exile" (9:2, 4; 10:2,6,10; see also *Nechemia* 13:27). *Meila* generally refers to an act of betrayal... Strikingly, with one possible exception (*Nechemia* 1:8), during the period of *Shivat Tzion*, *meila* is used exclusively in reference to intermarriage. *Malakhi* also refers to intermarriage as "breaking faith" and an "abhorrent thing." This implies that the demand of endogamy is a function of our loving relationship with God, our "sacred seed," not merely due to the extrinsic concern of *avoda zara*...

If *Devarim* and *Shivat Tzion* do not contradict, why the shift in accent? The answer seems to harken back to a recurring theme. For arguably the first time in history, during the period of Ezra and Nechemia, the temptation of idolatry no longer looms large. Therefore, whereas *Devarim* and *Melakhim* tended to stress the lure of paganism, Ezra, Nechemia and *Malakhi*, no longer confronting this threat, emphasized the inherently objectionable nature of the proscription. Furthermore, given that intermarriage was a grave danger confronting the entire nation – as opposed to previously, when the concern was either theoretical or particular to an individual, such as Shimshon or Shlomo – Ezra and Nechemia sounded the alarm and responded in dramatic fashion.

WHY DID THE LEADERS PARTICIPATE?

(10) BEREISHIT RABBAH 18:5

בשעה שעלו ישראל מן הגולה, נתפחמו פני הנשים מן השמש והניחו אותן, והלכו להם ונשאו נשים עמוניות, והיו מקיפות את המזבה ובוכות, הוא שמלאכי אומר "וזאת שנית תעשו", שנייה לשטים

When the Jews ascended from exile, the women's faces were blackened by the sun. The men left them and married Ammonite women, and the Jewish women surrounded the altar and cried. As Malachi said, "This is the second thing you do' – second to Shittim.

(11) DA'AT MIKRA EZRA 9:1 N. 7

7 ל כ נ ע נ י ו ג ו ' — ומנה כאן שמונה עמים. ארבעה הראשונים והאחרון נמנים על שבעה עממי כנען. ועוד שלשה נמנים על העממים האסורים לבוא בקהל: העמני, המאבי, המצרי (דב' כג ד, ח). בשום פנים אין לומר שעמי כנען ישבו עוד אז בארץ, שהרי הושמדו בימי השופטים והמלכים, ושמות עמי הארצות הנמצאים מפורשים במ"ב יז ובספרנו ד ט; אכן עזרא דרש בתורת ה', והורה דין על דרך בנין אב: בכל מקום שאסרה תורה את החיתון בעמים ההם טעמה בצידה: פן ילמדו תועבותיהם — אם כן דין הוא שגם עמים אחרים העושים כתועבותיהם, יחול עליהם אותו איסור, כמו שאמרו בקידושין סח ע"ב: שאר אומות מניין? אמר קרא: כי יסיר את בוך (דב' ז ד), לרבות כל המסירין. מטעם זה אסר פילון גישואי תערובת עם יונים (ראה על החוקים ספר ג סעיף ח; מבוא הערה 30). אבל שרי ישראל לא סברו כן, וחשבו שרק העמים שנמנו בתורה אסורים בחיתון, וכן הוא לשיטת הטור (אבן העזר סימן טז), שמן התורה אין איסור חיתון אלא בשבעה עממים, ולכן התחננו בעמים שבאו מרחוק; ואף עזרא דן אותם כשוגגים להביא קרבן על שגגתם (לקמן י ט). וראה עוד שמ' לד יא—טז; דב' ז ג—ד.

(12) R' YOSEF KAHANEMAN, RESPONSE TO PRIME MINISTER DAVID BEN-GURION, *WHO IS A JEW?* PP. 23-4

Joshua stood up and warned the people, pointing to the utter destruction which would be the result of intermarriage in our Holy Land. The issue came to the fore again, in more poignant form, during the second immigration, in the days of Ezra, seventy years after the destruction of the First Temple. About forty years prior to the return of the exiles, all was still [literally, “no bird chirped in our land”]. Only a fraction of the people returned from Babylon; the majority preferred to stay behind. As yet they had not overcome the horrors and the pain of destruction; the picture of the waste land was ever present before their eyes. It seemed that the rescue of people and land demanded a temporary departure from Halakah, with respect to the heathen women and their children. There were, indeed, among the leaders of the people, men who took this point of view, as it is recorded: “The hand of the princes and rulers had been first in this faithlessness” [Ezra 9:2]. The expression, “the hand of the princes,” points to the fact that there was a definite policy with regard to this national disgrace, presumably undertaken by the leaders for the purpose of strengthening the people... However, Ezra the Scribe, with his pure spirit foresaw the seed of utter destruction for the people...

EZRA'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

(13) EZRA 9:3-15

(3) When I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down appalled. (4) Then were assembled to me everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the trespass of those of the captivity; and I sat appalled until the evening offering. (5) At the evening offering I arose up from my fasting, even with my garment and my robe torn; and I fell on my knees, and spread out my hands to Hashem my God, (6) and I said, "My God, I am ashamed and

(ג) וְכַשְׁמַעֲי אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה קָרַעְתִּי אֶת־בְּגָדֵי וּמַעֲיָלִי וְאָמַרְטָה מִשְׁעַר רֹאשִׁי וּזְקָנִי וְנֹאשְׁבָה מְשֻׁמָּם: (ד) וְאֵלַי יֶאֱסְפוּ כָל חֹרֵל בְּדַבְרֵי אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל מַעַל הַגּוֹלָה וְאֲנִי יֵשֵׁב מְשֻׁמָּם עַד לְמִנְחַת הָעֶרֶב: (ה) וּבְמִנְחַת הָעֶרֶב קָמַתִי מִתְּעֻנָּתִי וּבְקָרְעֵי בְּגָדֵי וּמַעֲיָלִי וְאֶקְרָעָה עַל־בְּרַפִּי וְאֶפְרָשָׁה כַּפַּי אֶל־יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי: (ו) וְאָמַרְהָ אֱלֹהֵי בְּשֵׁמִי

blush to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up to the heavens. (7) Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty to this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder, and to shame of face, as it is this day. (8) Now for a little moment grace has been shown from Hashem our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. (9) For we are bondservants; yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended loving kindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the ruins of it, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. (10) Now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, (11) which You have commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, "The land to which you go to possess it, is an unclean land through the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, through their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their filthiness. (12) Now therefore don't give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters to your sons, nor seek their peace or their prosperity forever; that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.' (13) After all that is come on us for our evil deeds, and for our great guilt, seeing that You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such a remnant, (14) shall we again break Your commandments, and join in affinity with the peoples that do these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? (15) Hashem, the God of Israel, You are righteous; for we are left a remnant that is escaped, as it is this day. Behold, we are before You in our guiltiness; for none can stand before You because of this."

וּנְכַלְמָתִי לְהִרְיֹם אֱלֹהֵי פָנַי אֵלֶיךָ כִּי עֲוֹנוֹתַי
 רַבּוּ לְמַעַלְהָ רֹאשׁ וְאֲשַׁמְתֵּנוּ גְדֹלָה עַד
 לַשָּׁמַיִם: (ז) מִיָּמֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ בְּאֲשַׁמָּה
 גְּדֹלָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבְעֹוֹנוֹתֵינוּ נִתְּנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ
 מְלָכֵינוּ כְּהַיְוֵנוּ בְּיַד מְלָכֵי הָאָרְצוֹת בְּחֶרֶב
 בְּשִׁבְיָה וּבַבְּזָה וּבְכַשְׁת פָּנִים כִּהְיוּם הַזֶּה: (ח)
 וְעַתָּה כַּמַּעֲט־רִגְעַל הִיטָה תַחֲנֹה מֵאַתָּה יי'
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהַשְׁאִיר לָנוּ פְּלִיטָה וּלְתַתְּלָנוּ יְתָד
 בַּמְקוֹם קִדְשׁוֹ לְהַאִיר עֵינֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וּלְתַתְּנוּ
 מַחְנָה מְעַט בְּעַבְדֵּתְנוּ: (ט) כִּי־עַבְדִּים אֲנַחְנוּ
 וְבַעֲבָדְתְּנוּ לֹא עֲזַבְנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִשְׁעֵלֵינוּ
 חֹסֵד לְפָנָי מְלָכֵי פָרַס לְתַתְּלָנוּ מַחְנָה
 לְרוֹמָם אֶת־בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵינוּ וּלְהַעֲמִיד
 אֶת־חֻרְבָּתוֹ וּלְתַתְּלָנוּ גֹּדֵר בְּיְהוּדָה
 וּבִירוּשָׁלַם: (י) וְעַתָּה מֵה־נֹּאמַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 אֶחְרִי־זֹאת כִּי עֲזַבְנוּ מִצְוֹתֶיךָ: (יא) אֲשֶׁר
 צִוִּיתָ בְּיַד עַבְדֶּיךָ הַגְּבִיאִים לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בָּאִים לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אָרֶץ נֹדֶה הִיא
 בְּגֵזַת עַמֵּי הָאָרְצוֹת כְּתוּבָתְהֶם אֲשֶׁר
 מְלֹאָהּ מִפֶּה אֱלֹהִים בְּטַמְאָתְכֶם: (יב) וְעַתָּה
 בְּנוֹתֶיכֶם אֶל־תַּתְּנוּ לְבָנֵיהֶם וּבְנֹתֵיהֶם
 אֶל־תִּשְׂאוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם וְלֹא־תִדְרָשׁוּ שְׁלָמָם
 וְטוֹבָתָם עַד־עוֹלָם לְמַעַן תִּחְזְקוּ וְאִכְלַתֶּם
 אֶת־טוֹב הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹרַשְׁתֶּם לְבָנֵיכֶם
 עַד־עוֹלָם: (יג) וְאַחֲרַי כֹּל־הִבָּא עֲלֵינוּ
 כַּמַּעֲשֵׂינֵנוּ הַרְעִים וּבְאֲשַׁמְתֵּנוּ הַגְּדֹלָה כִּי
 אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חֲשַׁכְתָּ לְמַטֵּה מַעֲוֹנוֹ וְנִתְּתָה
 לָנוּ פְּלִיטָה כְּזֹאת: (יד) הַנְּשׁוּב לְהַפְּרֵ
 מִצְוֹתֶיךָ וּלְהַתְּחַלֵּם בְּעַמֵּי הַתַּעֲבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה
 הַלֹּא תִאָּנַר־כִּנּוּ עַד־כִּלְהָ לְאִין שְׂאֵרִית
 וּפְלִיטָה: (טו) יי' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל צְדִיק אַתָּה
 כִּי־נִשְׁאַרְנוּ פְּלִיטָה כִּהְיוּם הַזֶּה הִנְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ
 בְּאֲשַׁמְתֵּינוּ כִּי אִין לַעֲמוּד לְפָנֶיךָ עַל־זֹאת:

(14) METZUDAT DAVID EZRA 9:3

קרעתי וגו' – מגודל הצער בעבור המעל הזה.

“I tore...” – from the great pain over this breach.

(15) CHOMAT ANAKH EZRA 9:3

הוראת שעה היתה, לגודל צערו ולהראות חרדה גדולה על הדבר.

It was a temporary dispensation, from the great pain and to show his great fear over this matter.

(16) MALBIM EZRA 9:8

(ח) ועתה כמעט רגע היתה תחנה – שהוא רק חנינה שלא ע"פ הזכות והדין, והיא רק כמעט רגע, "להשאיר" באר שהתחנה היה בד' דברים, א] "להשאיר לנו פלטה" שלא יכלו בגלות, ב] "ולתת לנו יתד במקום קדשו", שיוכלו לבנות המקדש ולקבוע שיבתם בא"י, ג] "להאיר עינינו אלהינו", שע"כ יוכל להאיר עינינו שנשוב ללכת בדרכיו ובזה יכלה העונש הנגזר עלינו, ד] "ולתתנו מחיה מעט" שע"כ נצליח מעט בהיותנו בארצנו הגם שאנו עוד "בעבדותנו", כי עדיין לא הגיע זמן הגאולה האמתית כמ"ש המלאך לדניאל:

“Now for a little moment grace has been shown...” – This grace was not based on merit and justice, and has only lasted for a moment. “To sustain” – it is explained that this grace consisted of four things: 1] “To sustain for us a remnant” that would not be lost in the exile, 2] “and to give to us a peg in His place of holiness,” such that they would be able to build the Temple and establish their dwelling in Eretz Yisrael, 3] “to enlighten our eyes, our God,” through which they would be able to enlighten our eyes so that we would return to walk in His ways and in this way complete the punishment decreed for us, 4] “and to give to us small sustenance,” through which we would have small success in our land, even though we are still in “servitude,” for the true redemption had not yet occurred, as the angel said to Daniel.

FURTHER READING

<https://etzion.org.il/en/tanakh/ketuvim/sefer-ezra/ezra-chapter-9-intermarriage-during-shivat-tzion>

OUTLINE
