

זכרון  
אליהו חיים

**A Journal of *Divrei Torah*  
in honor of Pesach 5774**

*Compiled by the Members of the*



***Bais Medrash  
of Ranchleigh***



*A project of the Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu Fund  
of the Bais Medrash of Ranchleigh  
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**This *Kuntress* is sponsored  
in memory of our parents**

**Dr. Eliot Shimoff, ז"ל  
אליהו חיים בן הרב אפרים ז"ל**

**Dr. Sandra Shimoff, ז"ל  
שרה רחל בת יוסף ז"ל**

**Their dedication to Torah learning  
and Mitzvah observance,  
Their honesty and good will towards others,  
lives on in our memories and  
is perpetuated in our deeds.**

**Yehoshua and Pnina Dixler**



## Preface

You hold in your hands our third Pesach *kuntress bs”d*, the largest one ever. This *kuntress* is a project of Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu, the charity arm of our Bais Medrash of Ranchleigh. One of the cornerstones of ZYE is our morning Kollel Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu, which is a catalyst for creating a strong *kol Torah* every weekday before *Shacharis*. This *kuntress* is enhanced with *Divrei Torah* by two of our *chevrei hakollel*. We are also fortunate to include a piece by another catalyst for our morning *kol Torah*, Rabbi Elya Caplan; for over a decade he has delivered a stimulating *bekius shiur*, completing many *mesechtos* in the process.

Unfortunately, this past year has been marked with the passing of parents of several members of our *kehillah*. We have therefore added a special section containing memorials of three special men who will no longer be able to grace our Beis HaMidrash with their presence.

I have included in the addendum a selection from the *Elucidated Maamarei HaRamchal*, which I hope to publish in the not so distant future. It appropriately discusses the Pesach Seder. Any feedback on that chapter will be appreciated. The *kuntress* is rounded out with a *maamar* I have written on one of the cities of Eretz Yisrael, Ashdod. Although not directly related to Pesach, anything involving Eretz Yisrael bespeaks the *geulah*, and can thus be included in a journal devoted to *zman cheiruseinu*. But this *maamar* in particular also discusses a certain aspect of *galus* and *geulah*.

## Zichron Eliyahu Chaim

At this point, I would like to repeat what I say each year: Working on this *kuntress* has added the dimension of being able to work with each contributor in learning. We know that Torah is the strongest connection that can exist between people. The back-and-forth, the discussions, and the writing together have created a special bond that I hope we can repeat often.

A final word about this *kuntress*. The goal was not to create an original *chidush*, although there are many here. [Hoping not to slight any of the excellent contributions, I would like to make special mention of Dr. Michoel Keidar's piece on the power of the *kal vachomer*; I gained much through working with R' Michoel on it.] The assignment was to pick a *dvar Torah* that resonated in one's mind and heart, which he felt was worth sharing with his fellow members of the *tzibbur*. You, the reader, will therefore find a diverse selection of topics, but all written from the heart, each composed with the conviction that his words are worth writing and sharing with others.

I will close with a thank you to the members of the *maareches* (in alphabetical order) who helped with this production: R' Michoel Keidar, R' Moshe Rock, R' Elli Schwarz, and R' Chaim Sugar. Thanks also to the sponsors who made the printing possible; their names are listed on the sponsorship pages. Very special thanks to the Dixler family for sponsoring the name of this year's *kuntress* in memory of Mrs. Dixler's father, Mr. Eliot Shimoff, Eliyahu Chaim ben HaRav Ephraim ז"ל. May the Torah study that comes from it be a *zechus* for him, his wife ז"ל, and their entire family.

## Preface

A final thank you is due to my *eishess chayil*, the *Rebbetzin*, who allowed me to spend even more time away from my family duties to work on this *kuntress*.

Each year I express the wish that we all be *zocheh* to produce another *kuntress* next year, in Eretz Yisrael, with the coming of the *Mashiach*, במהרה בימינו אמן. We have produced another *kuntress*, but sadly we are still in *galus*. May this year be the end of our long *galus*, and may we be speedily redeemed with the *geulah sheleimah*.

Abba Zvi Naiman  
Adar HaSheni 5774





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## Hashem's Rewards <sup>1</sup>

**Baruch Raczkowski**

The *pasuk* states (*Shemos* 2:9): וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה הַלְוִיָּה וַתְּנִיקֶהוּ, *The woman [i.e. Yocheved] took the child and nursed him.* The Midrash on the *pasuk* says: באותה שעה נתן לה הקב"ה מקצת שכרה שהיא היתה מחיה את הילדים וכן הקב"ה החזיר לה את בנה ונתן לה שכרה, *At that time [i.e. when she was paid for nursing her son], Hashem gave her a partial reward for rescuing the children; and so Hashem returned her own son to her and gave her [total] reward.*

*R' Chaim Shmuelevitz* (*Sichos Mussar* §16) understands the Midrash to be referring to a single act of rescue, not to two different actions. He therefore finds it strange that the Torah divides the reward for saving the children into two parts – the return of her own child and the payment for nursing her child. One would think that her own child's return was a reward much greater than the payment she received for nursing him. How can they be mentioned at the same time?

*R' Chaim* raises the same question with regard to Chanukah. The miracle of the Menorah burning for eight days was certainly a wonderful gift from Hashem and we should certainly commemorate it. However, should the primary commemoration not be the salvation of the Jewish nation from a world power – as we say in *Al HaNissim*? Why is the miracle of the Menorah highlighted above all else during the eight days of Chanukah?

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on an insight found in the ArtScroll Midrash series.

*R' Chaim* says that we need a deeper understanding of rewards and miracles. We are Hashem's children and Hashem provides for our vital needs and sustains us as any father would sustain his children. However, we are not ordinary children; we are His *beloved* children. When Hashem provides us with extra gifts not central to our survival, he is in fact bestowing upon us a kiss of a father who wishes to shower His children with gifts. It is for this reason that the Menorah is so significant: it was an extra gift. It is also a reason why the Torah adds the fact that Yocheved was paid to nurse her child. The return of her child, the redeemer of Israel, was certainly a necessary reward for her efforts. But the fact that she was paid for nursing him was a sign to her that Hashem was shining His countenance on her in the gloom of *galus Mitzrayim*. It demonstrated the special love Hashem has for His nation.

## ***Bitachon and Galus Mitzrayim***

**Rabbi Moshe Grossman<sup>1</sup>**

The Gemara in *Nedarim* (32a) poses a question: R' Abahu asked in the name of R' Elazar, why was Avraham Avinu punished and why were his children enslaved in *Mitzrayim* for 210 years? The *Rosh* explains that the R' Abahu's question is that although the punishment came to Avraham because he asked Hashem: *By what will I know that I will inherit it* (i.e. the Land of Israel) in *Bereishis* 15:8, what prior *aveirah* caused Avraham to stumble in the *aveirah* of asking: By what will I know. The *Iyun Yaakov* in the *Ein Yaakov* explains that Hashem does not allow a *tzaddik* to err in a large *aveirah* unless he has previously committed a small *aveirah*, that is, "*Aveirah gorerres aveirah*" (*Avos* 4:1).

The Gemara gives three answers to this question. R' Abahu in the name of R' Elazar answers that Avraham was punished because he enlisted his students, who were *talmidei chachamim*, to fight against the four kings. R' Shmuel bar Nachmani answers that he was punished because he doubted Hashem's ways when he asked "*By what will I know*" after Hashem had promised him that he would inherit the Land of Israel. R' Yochanan answers that he was punished because he agreed to return the captives he freed when he fought against the four kings to the King of Sodom. He should have insisted on keeping them, in which case he would have brought them to the worship of Hashem.

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<sup>1</sup> This *dvar* Torah should be a *zechus* for אמי מורתי דבורה זעלדע בת אשר זעלעג הכהן, who was *nifteres* this year.

Although each of these answers presents a shortcoming that led to Avraham's questioning Hashem's word, what is R' Shmuel bar Nachmani's answer according to the *Rosh's* explanation of the Gemara's original question? According to the *Rosh*, the Gemara is asking what *aveirah* caused Avraham to doubt Hashem's word and ask, "*By what will I know.*" R' Shmuel bar Nachmani says that Avraham's *aveirah* was that he doubted Hashem and asked, "*By what will I know.*" According to the *Rosh*, he is not answering the question!

The *Anaf Yosef* in the *Ein Yaakov* explains that R' Shmuel bar Nachmani is answering that Avraham's very words when he asked the question indicates a lack of trust in Hashem's word. He asks Hashem, "*By what will I know that I will inherit the land?*" His words appear to be asking for an assurance that he will inherit the Land of Israel. If he had just asked, "*By what will I inherit the land,*" it would be clear that he believed Hashem's promise. He would simply be asking by what merit would he and his children deserve the land. However, adding the word *eida* (will I know) to his question indicates a small lack of *bitachon* in Hashem. Avraham wants a further assurance that his descendants will inherit the Land of Israel. R' Shmuel bar Nachmani's answer is that this lack of *bitachon* in Hashem is itself the *aveirah* that brings Avraham to ask, "*By what will I know.*"

However, this answer only answers half of the original question. The Gemara asked why was Avraham punished *and* why were his descendants enslaved. Why were Avraham's progeny punished for his *aveirah*? The Gemara in the beginning of *Berachos* (7a) teaches us that children are punished for the sins of the father only if they continue in his evil ways. Where did the Jews in Mitzrayim show a lack of *bitachon* in Hashem?

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The Jews in Mitzrayim did show a lack of *bitachon* in Hashem's word when Moshe first came to them and told them that Hashem had sent him to bring them out of Mitzrayim. After Moshe appeared before Pharaoh and asked him to let the Jewish people go, he responded by increasing the workload of the Jewish people. The Jews became angry with Moshe and Aharon blaming them for making trouble. Later, when Moshe related Hashem's message of redemption to the Jews, they did not listen to him "*because of shortness of breath and hard work*" (*Shemos* 6:9). The *Rashbam* explains that after hearing Moshe the first time before he and Aharon went to Pharaoh, they assumed that the slavery would end very soon after Moshe and Aharon spoke to Pharaoh. When Pharaoh, instead, increased their workload, they lost *bitachon* in the redemption. If they lost *bitachon* so quickly after such a minor setback, there must have been a weakness in their *bitachon* to begin with. The slavery in Mitzrayim was their punishment for this lack of *bitachon*.

The redemption from Mitzrayim teaches us that Hashem is all-powerful and keeps His word. Just as He promised Avraham and the Jewish people in Mitzrayim that He would redeem them, He has promised us that He will redeem us. Although the situation in the world appears very dangerous and very bleak, we must use the lesson of the redemption of the Jewish people in Mitzrayim to strengthen our *bitachon* in Hashem that He will redeem us and bring us back to our land and to His service in the Beis HaMikdash.

## Remaining Distinct in *Galus*

### Roman Kimelfeld

There is a *Rashi* in *Parshas Eikev* (based on *Sifrei* there §43) that is difficult to understand. *Rashi* seems to imply that the function of mitzvos in *galus* is merely to practice for when we return to Eretz Yisrael. Here is his wording (*Devarim* 11:18): אף לאחר שתגלו היו מצויינים במצות הניחו תפילין עשו מזוזות כדי שלא יהיו לכם חדשים כשתחזרו, *Even after you have been exiled make yourselves distinct (metzuyanin) by means of the mitzvos: don tefillin, make mezuzahs, so that they shall not be new to you when you return.* *Rashi* appears to imply that we put on tefillin and do other mitzvos in *galus* just so that we are ready to truly fulfill these mitzvos when we come back to Eretz Yisrael. It seems difficult to believe that our mitzvos nowadays serve only as practice exercises for when we return to Eretz Yisrael at the time of the *geulah*.

However, to understand *Rashi* better, we also need to see the end of this *Rashi*, where he says the following: וכן הוא אומר הציבי לך ציונים, *And so it says (Yirmiyah 31:20): Erect markers (tziyunim) for yourselves.* The simple meaning of this *pasuk* in *Yirmiyah* (as understood by *Metzudas Dovid*) is that the Jews should mark their path from Eretz Yisrael to *galus*, so that they would know the way to return to Eretz Yisrael. By quoting this *pasuk*, *Rashi* is actually telling us that the way for us to make these road markers (*tziyunim*) is to be distinct (i.e. *metzuyanin*) through observing mitzvos. The mitzvos in *galus* serve as the road markers that remind us that we are Jews; and these mitzvos will eventually enable us to return to Eretz Yisrael.

This appears to be the meaning in *Sifrei* (ibid.) upon which this Rashi is based. *Sifrei* points out that the *pasuk* in *Yirmiyah*, which begins with the words “Erect markers” (i.e. be distinguished through observance of mitzvos in *galus*) ends with the words “...Return...Israel, Return to these cities” (which, according to *Sifrei*, signifies the *geulah*). Apparently, according to *Sifrei* observing the mitzvos in *galus* is a pre-requisite for our return to Eretz Yisrael. Hence, the ultimate benefit of observing the mitzvos in *galus* is that it makes the *geulah* possible.

Thus, we do not keep the mitzvos in *galus* merely in order to be familiar with them when we return to Eretz Yisrael (which is what *Rashi* seems to mean at first glance). Rather, we keep the mitzvos in *galus* so that we merit the *geulah* and do not disappear in *galus*. Accordingly, when *Rashi* says *make yourselves distinct (metzuyanin) by means of the mitzvos... so that they shall not be new to you when you return*, he means that we should observe the mitzvos right now so that there will never be lapses in our mitzvah observance.

### **Being distinct (*metzuyanin*) in Mitzrayim and nowadays**

To describe our obligation of being connected to mitzvos in *galus*, *Sifrei* uses the expression *Be “metzuyanin” in the mitzvos*. Perhaps, by using the word “*metzuyanin*,” *Sifrei* is suggesting that we need to be *metzuyanin* (i.e. distinct) in our *galus*, just like our ancestors were *metzuyanin* (i.e. distinct) in Egypt (as we say in Hagadah). Our ancestors were *metzuyanin* in Egypt by not changing their language, names and clothes (*Vayikra Rabbah* 32:5). Now that we have Torah, there is no longer an obligation for us to be distinct by means of language, names and clothes, as *Igros Moshe* writes in *Orach Chaim* (Vol. IV §66). Rather, our distinctness must be expressed by our connection to the mitzvos.

Perhaps we can say further that being distinct through mitzvos does not necessarily mean fulfilling the mitzvos, but also making an effort to observe the mitzvos. A Jew making an effort to fulfill a mitzvah sets himself apart from non-Jews; and he demonstrates to his children that Yiddishkeit is important. His efforts to remain connected to Yiddishkeit become *tziyunim* (road markers) that will enable his children to come back to full Torah observance when the opportunity arises. Perhaps, such person can also be called *metzuyan bemitzvos* through his effort to fulfill mitzvos.

### **Becoming distinct through purchasing Soviet Matzah**

I would like to try to illustrate how it may be possible to become distinct by means of a mitzvah even when it is not possible to fulfill the mitzvah.

In 1970's and in 1980's, the government of the USSR allowed the sale of matzos in Moscow Synagogue (and also in some other cities). The Yidden of Soviet Union enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to buy matzos. Thousands of Yidden traveled long distances to Moscow synagogue and stood in long lines to buy the matzos.

Unfortunately, this matzah was not acceptable for Pesach use. It was prepared from regular non-Passover flour which was soaked in water (as described in the book *Yevreiskiy Vopros* by Rabbi A. Shayevich). Such matzah can neither be eaten nor even possessed during Pesach (see Rabbi Shimon Eider, *Halachos of Pesach*, XIX B 8, based on *Mishnah Berurah* 453:24). However, although the Soviet matzah might not have been kosher for Pesach use, nevertheless the Yidden who obtained this matzah certainly became distinct from non-Jews by trying to hold on to

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## Section I: *Galus Mitzrayim*

the tradition of eating matzah. The matzah that they bought taught their children that Yiddishkeit was still relevant and that the redemption from Egypt was a real event that was worth celebrating. Thus, the Soviet matzah, despite its questionable Kashrus status, nevertheless helped Yidden to become *metzuyanin*.

Every year, my grandmother, Mrs. Miriam Katsina, would spend many hours traveling to Moscow Choral Synagogue and standing in the long line in order to buy matzah. She would bring the matzah home and she would tell us that we eat matzah in order to remember the exodus from Egypt. Through my grandmother's efforts to remain connected to the tradition of eating matzah, and thus being distinct from non-Jews, her descendants are now able to celebrate Pesach in the proper manner.

We need to be grateful to all of our ancestors who remained *metzuyanin* in *galus*, thus enabling us to remain Jews. Ultimately, remaining distinct through the observance of mitzvos will help us achieve the final *geulah* speedily in our days.

## Mortar and a *Kal VaChomer* <sup>1</sup>

Daniel Menchel

In *Parshas Shemos*, we begin to read about the descent of Yaakov and his sons into the *galus* of Mitzrayim (*Shemos* 1:1): וַאֲלֵהֶם שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ, *These are the names of the Children of Yisrael who came to Mitzrayim with Yaakov; each man and his household came.* Concerning the difficult enslavement they endured in this Galus, it states (*ibid.* v. 14): וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה בָחֹמֶר וּבִלְבָּנִים וּבְכָל עֲבֹדָה בַּשָּׂדֶה אֵת, *They embittered their lives with hard work, with mortar and with bricks, and with every labor of the field; all their labors that they performed with them were with crushing harshness.*

We find an incredible passage in the *Zohar HaKadosh* regarding this latter *pasuk* (*Bereishis* 27a): וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה, בקושיא: בָחֹמֶר, בקל וחומר: וּבִלְבָּנִים, בליבון הלכתא: וּבְכָל עֲבֹדָה בַּשָּׂדֶה, דא משנה ברייתא: אֵת כָּל עֲבֹדָתָם וגו', דא משנה. There the *Zohar* associates each of these types of bitter, crushing labor with a corresponding type of Torah study.<sup>2</sup> At first glance, this seems totally incomprehensible. How is it possible to suggest that the

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<sup>1</sup> This piece is based on *Shvilei Pinches, Parshas Shemos* 5744.

<sup>2</sup> Note the similarities between the names of the types of work and the corresponding Torah study. For example, *chomer* [חֹמֶר], meaning mortar, is understood as hinting at a *kal vachomer*.

It is worth noting further that the *kal vachomer* played a major role in the *geulah*, as R' Shimon Sofer explains (*Toras Moshe HaShalem, Shemos*) that the *middah* of the *kal vachomer* arouses mercy. This concept is discussed at length below, p. 77 ff.

Egyptians embittered the lives of Yisrael with Talmudic questions, applications of the principle of *kal vachomer*, clarification of points of halachah, study of Mishnah and study of Baraisa-elements comprising the entire gamut of the Oral Torah? First of all, the Torah had not been given yet. Secondly, the simple reading of the text makes it quite clear that the Egyptians subjected Yisrael to backbreaking labor and not to exercises in Torah study.

### **Why did Hashem subject Yisrael to the *galus*?**

It appears that we can clarify the meaning of this *Zohar* based on what we have been taught by our sages – both from those in the Talmud as well as from the Rishonim and Acharonim. They all address the question of why Hashem subjected Yisrael to the *Galus* in Mitzrayim involving two hundred and ten years of brutal slavery at the hands of the Egyptians. As we know, Hashem does not punish his creatures for naught; punishment is related to some form of transgression. Adam HaRishon was punished for partaking of the forbidden *Eitz HaDaas*. The generation of the flood – *dor hamabul* – was punished for their extreme corruption. Concerning the upheaval and destruction of Sedom and Amorah, it is written (*Bereishis* 18:20): וַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַאֲמֹרָה גְּדוֹלָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, *The outcry of Sedom and Amorah has become great, and their sin has been very grave.*

Yet, here we learn of the difficult slavery endured by Yisrael in Mitzrayim, but find no explicit reason for this severe punishment. The holy *Alshich* expresses his amazement concerning this matter in his sefer *Toras Moshe* at the beginning of our *parshah* and states that Yaakov and his family were the holiest people in the land. So, why were they and their children and grandchildren enslaved for two hundred and ten years in Mitzrayim? What

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transgression were they guilty of? After all, we do not suspect Hashem of exacting punishment without just cause.

Now, in truth, Hashem revealed to Avraham in the *Bris Bein HaBesarim*, that his descendants would be subject to exile in Mitzrayim (*ibid.* 15:13-14): וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יְדָע תָּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה וְנֻכַח בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וַעֲבָדוּם וְנָנוּ אֶתָּם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וְגַם אֶת הָאֱשֵׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וַעֲבָדוּם וְנָנוּ אֶתָּם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וְגַם אֶת הָאֱשֵׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דו' He said to Avram, "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be sojourners in a land not their own, they will enslave them, and they will oppress them four hundred years. And also the nation that will enslave them, I shall judge, and afterwards they shall leave with great possessions." Even there the reason for the enslavement is not provided! One might suggest that they were enslaved so that they would depart with great wealth. The *Alshich* discards this notion by pointing out that clearly the material gain is not commensurate with the damage and suffering incurred during the prolonged slavery.

## Preparation for Receiving the Torah

To answer this question the *Alshich* proves at length that the purpose of Galus Mitzrayim was to cleanse Yisrael of the contamination of the primeval serpent – the *nachash hakadmoni* – introduced into all of creation by means of the transgression of the *etz hadaas*. So long as they were not rid of this contamination, they were unable to receive the Torah. Consequently, Hashem arranged for Yisrael to suffer bitterly as slaves in Mitzrayim. Thus, they were cleansed of the *nachash's* contamination and merited receiving the Torah. The *Alshich* concludes his explanation by stating that it was Hashem's plan to exile them in Mitzrayim, in order to oppress them and rid them of the *nachash's* contamination-like silver which is melted down



## Section I: *Galus Mitzrayim*

and refined in an iron furnace. The pure silver left Mitzrayim, while the impurities died during the days of darkness.

The *Alshich* adduces explicit proof from the following *pasuk* (*Devarim* 4:20): וְאַתֶּם לְקַח ה' וַיּוֹצֵא אֶתְכֶם מִכּוּר הַבְּרִזָּל מִמִּצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לוֹ: לְעַם נַחֲלָה כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה, *But Hashem has taken you and withdrawn you from the iron crucible ("kur habarzel"), from Mitzrayim, to be a nation of heritage for Him, as this very day.* Rashi clarifies by saying that "*kur*" is a vessel used to refine gold. It is necessary to remove the impurities and dirt attached to the gold by means of an iron melting pot; so too, Hashem refined the *neshamos* of Yisrael through the suffering and severity of the labor in Mitzrayim. This was done to prepare them for the Torah: *To be a nation of heritage for Him, as this very day.*

In this manner, the *Alshich* interprets Hashem's pronouncement to Avraham Avinu at the *Bris bein HaBesarim*: "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be sojourners in a land not their own, they will enslave them, and they will oppress them four hundred years" – to refine them of the contamination the *nachash* introduced into all of creation. And also the nation that will enslave them, I shall judge, and afterwards they shall leave with great possessions – this passage refers to the great wealth inherent in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah that they will merit receiving as a result of this arduous purification process in Mitzrayim. This is the gist of his explanation.

We can now shed some light on the puzzling passage quoted by the *Zohar HaKadosh* assigning the horrific tasks the Jews did with allegorical terms of Torah study. The *Zohar* is alluding to this idea just presented in the name of the *Alshich*. Yisrael was made to suffer as slaves in Mitzrayim in order to cleanse them

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and refine them of the *nachash's* contamination. This qualified them to receive the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, which contains the elements of *kushya* (questions and difficulties), *kal vachomer*, clarification of points of halachah, *Mishnah* and *Baraisa*.

## Wither *Bechirah Chafshis*?

**Dr. Barry Reiner**

We are commanded on Pesach night to delve into the history of our enslavement in Egypt and our Exodus. We fulfill this mitzvah of *sippur yitzias Mitzrayim* through reciting and expounding upon the section of the Hagadah known as Maggid. In doing so, we must consider two central tenets of our faith – freedom of choice (*bechirah chafshis*) and reward and punishment (*sachar ve'onesh*), and their application vis-a-vis Pharaoh and the Mitzrim.

The principles of *bechirah chafshis* and *sachar ve'onesh* set man apart from the rest of the created world. Simply put, man, the highest being of creation, uniquely has the ability to distinguish between good and evil and the ability to choose to do good or evil. Precisely because of this ability, man is held responsible for his choices and rewarded or punished accordingly.

Early in the Maggid section, there is a quote from *Lech Lecha* in which Hashem foretells to Avraham the events of *galus* and *geulas* Mitzrayim (*Bereishis* 15:13-14): יָדַעְתִּיע תָּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וְעַבְדֵּיהֶם וְעָנִיו אֶתָּם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. וְגַם אֶת הָאֱשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן כִּי נֶאֱמָרְתִּי בְּכֹחַ יְהוָה, *You shall surely know that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not their own – and they will serve them, and they will oppress them – four hundred years. But also the nation that they will serve, I shall judge, and afterwards they will leave with great wealth.* Now, if it was a preordained decree from Hashem that the Mitzrim will enslave *Bnei Yisrael*, that implies that the Mitzrim lack the free will to do

otherwise. If so, on what basis are they to be subsequently judged and punished?

Perhaps the climax of Maggid is the recitation of the ten plagues. Every child old enough to stay awake until that point is fully aware that “Hashem hardened Pharaoh’s heart” in order to bring upon him the full brunt of the plagues. It is left for us to consider whether this represents an interference with Pharaoh’s free will, and, if so, the justification for bringing these plagues upon him and his country.

These questions have been dealt with by the *Meforshim* and several approaches to both questions have been offered which allow us also to further consider the principles of *bechirah chafshis* and *sachar ve’onesh*.

With regards to Mitzrayim being judged for enslaving *Bnei Yisrael* when they were actually preordained to do so, several opinions have been offered:

1. The conduct of the *nation* of Mitzrayim as a whole was Divinely preordained but each *individual* Egyptian had the freedom to choose whether or not to participate and were therefore legitimately responsible for their actions. This is the opinion of the Rambam (*Hil. Teshuvah* 6:5):  
המצריים כל אחד ואחד מאותן המצרים והמריעים לישראל אילו לא רצה להרע להם הרשות בידו שלא גזר על איש ידוע אלא הודיעו שסוף זרעו עתיד להשתעבד בארץ לא להם, *Each and every one of the Egyptians who were tormenting and harassing the Jews, if he did not want to harass them he had the ability. For [Hashem] did not decree for a specific man [to enslave the Jews]; rather, he informed [Avraham] that*

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*his offspring would eventually be enslaved in a land not theirs.* To express this as a modern day conundrum, we certainly believe that the outcome of an election is preordained even though each individual has the freedom to vote as he or she chooses. The *Ramban* (*Bereishis* 15:13-14) takes issue, as this statement appears to have been a command on the nation of Mitzrayim, in which case it was a mitzvah, so to speak, for each individual Egyptian to participate.

2. The Mitzrim were Divinely preordained to enslave and subjugate *Bnei Yisrael* and did not have a choice whether or not to do so; but they, by their own choice and free will, went well beyond their Heavenly mandate by torturing and killing members of *Bnei Yisrael* and were, therefore, punished for that choice. This is one of the opinions expressed by the *Ramban* (ibid.).
3. The Mitzrim were Divinely preordained to enslave and subjugate *Bnei Yisrael*, and did not have a choice whether or not to do so, but were punished because of their evil intentions as opposed to having the intention to carry out the will of Hashem. This is a second opinion expressed by the *Ramban* (ibid.).

Regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart being a violation of his own free will, several opinions, many of them expressed together (*Rashi*, *Shemos*, 7:3) have been offered:

1. When Pharaoh started his wicked actions, there was a possibility for him to do teshuvah, but as his actions became more sinister, the possibility of doing teshuvah

was removed as an option. Essentially, removing his free will, his freedom to choose to turn away from his actions, to do teshuvah, was Pharaoh's punishment (*Ramban, Shemos 7:3*)

2. Similar to the first answer (the difference being that the first answer applies to all the plagues), we note that in the first five plagues the terminology used is *וַיִּחַזֶּק לֵב פַּרְעֹה*, *and Pharaoh's heart was hardened*. This was of his own doing. Only in the latter plagues does the Torah use the terminology *וַיִּחַזֶּק ה' אֶת לֵב פַּרְעֹה*, *and Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart*. Here, Hashem takes over and suspends Pharaoh's *bechirah chafshis*, his freedom of choice, perhaps as a punishment. (*Ramban ibid.* and 9:12).
3. In "hardening Pharaoh's heart," perhaps Hashem was actually restoring to Pharaoh his *bechirah chafshis*. Hashem did not want Pharaoh to "do the right thing" vis-a-vis *Bnei Yisrael* because he was paralyzed by fear. Hashem allowed Pharaoh to do what he really wanted to do to *Bnei Yisrael* and ignore the consequences, even as they devastated his people and country until he brought about, by his own actions, their utter destruction (*Sefero 7:3, 9:12, and 9:35; Sefer HaIkarim 4:25*).
4. Indeed, Pharaoh's *bechirah chafshis*, was completely suspended. Pharaoh truly had no choice in his actions and yet he and his people were subjected to the devastating consequences of his actions. This was in response to Pharaoh's attempt to deny the existence of Hashem (*מִי ה' אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי*). Hashem set the stage for

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a *gilui Shechinah* so wondrous and incontrovertible that it was obvious to Mitzrayim and served as the central sign to generations upon generations of *Klal Yisrael*, until the present day.

May we be *zocheh*, as we worry about the various difficulties facing *Klal Yisrael*, but as we learn about the geulah and hope for the *geulah*, to witness a *gilui Shechinah* of unparalleled proportions.

## **Pesach, Shavuos and Tishah B'Av**

### **Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman**

The Jewish holidays don't fall randomly on any day of the week. They are governed by a system called *AtBash* (אתבש). The first day of Pesach (א), which this year falls out on a Tuesday, coincides with the day of the week designated for תשעה באב. The second day of Pesach coincides with שְׁבוּעוֹת. The third day of Pesach is on the same day בַּאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה (Thursday, this year, the start of a three day Yom Tov). And it continues... I would like to focus on the first two connections – the first day of Pesach with Tishah B'Av, and the second day with Shavuos.

Rabbi Dovid Heber, *shlit"a*, has explained these connections, as follows: *Sefiras HaOmer* begins on the second day of Pesach. *Sefiras HaOmer* is, according to the *Sefer HaChinuch* and others, the countdown to the event of receiving the Torah on Shavuos. (In fact, Rav Aharon Kotler, zt"l, wonders why we start from the number one and count until forty-nine. A regular countdown ends with the number one – 5, 4, 3, 2, 1<sup>1</sup>). Hence, the second day of Pesach and the first day of Shavuos are connected. The first day of Pesach and Tishah B'Av are similarly connected. On that first day of Pesach the counting towards Shavuos had yet to commence. No connection to *Matan Torah* is evident on the first day of the Jewish exodus. A situation, in which no yearning for the Torah is in evidence, is the foreshadowing of *churban*. We cannot hope to maintain

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<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 89.

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Hashem's presence in our midst, without a connection to His Torah.<sup>1</sup>

Another explanation of the *aleph-tav* connection could be that the author of the Hagadah tells us, "זו גְּלוּי תְּכִינָה, וּבְמוֹרָא גְּדוֹל", "The Jewish nation's exodus from Egypt was done amid a revelation of Hashem's Presence. That Presence must be appreciated, or else there will be a resultant *hester panim*."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, we note in the *kinos*, the juxtaposition between the events and the mood during the Egyptian Exodus to the events that transpired as we were exiled from Jerusalem. We can't appreciate the great toll that *churban* took on us until we compare it to the jubilant events of the same night of the week, sixteen weeks earlier.

Once we arrive at the second day of Pesach we start longing to connect to Hashem through the Torah. We experience what the Siddur calls תְּרוּת עוֹלָם. This aligns with what our Rabbis teach us that the only truly free person is the one who toils in the Torah (*Avos* 6:2). Hence the freedom of the second day is linked to Shavuot. However, the Gemara tells us (*Megillah* 14a) that we don't say Hallel on Purim because even following the Purim miracle we were still enslaved by Achashveirosh. How then can

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<sup>1</sup> Parenthetically, most cities in the United States, even with large Jewish populations but devoid of Yeshivas and Kollelim – whether the cause of the problem or the symptom of a larger problem – have ended up as Jewish wastelands).

<sup>2</sup> This thought is based on Rav Shlomo Wolbe's explanation of the proximity of Tishah B'Av to the בֵּא לַשְּׁפוֹט of Elul and Rosh Hashanah (see *Yalkut Shimoni, Vayikra* §651). Before we can appreciate the "closeness" of the Shechinah in Elul, we must mourn its absence in Av.

we recite every day in our Maariv tefillah, that after the Egyptian Exodus we experienced eternal freedom?

The answer might be that the eternal freedom that we experience after *yetzias Mitzrayim*, is the one encapsulated in the Mishnah in *Avos* (3:6): כל המקבל עליו עול תורה, מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות ועול דרך ארץ, *Whoever accepts the yoke of the Torah, the yoke of the monarchy and of subsistence is removed from him.* Yes, we are still subjugated to foreign powers (even in Eretz Yisroel) and to feed, clothe and protect our families. However, Hashem gave us a refuge from those daunting stressors, His Torah. As we sing the words of the *Zohar* on the Shavuot holiday, דמשתכין בצערא, דלהון ועסקין בחדותא דילי, *(even though) they find themselves in their own anguish, they toil in my Torah!*

## **Torah, Emunah, and Tefillah: The Joy of Learning before Shacharis**

**Rabbi Tuvia Tessler <sup>1</sup>**

Chazal (*Yalkut Shimoni*, *Hoshea* §519) teach us, “In the merit of *emunah* we were redeemed from Egypt and in the merit of *emunah* we will once again be redeemed.” We also find, however, that the Jewish people fell to an extreme low while in bondage in Egypt. They became so corrupted that they reached the forty-ninth level of impurity. From this the *Nesivos Shalom* points out that even as a Jew falls lower and lower and reaches even the lowest levels, the most enduring element of the soul is its *emunah*, the *emunah* that is rooted so deeply in our souls from our *avos*. It is that *emunah* that has the power to rescue someone out of the depths and help him to once again reach the highest levels of purity.

The question that begs to be asked however is how were the Jews in Egypt able to hold on to their *emunah* despite such deep spiritual corruption? It is vital for us to understanding from where they drew their strength, so that we too, in our current *galus*, can learn how to hold on to our *emunah*, pull ourselves out of the muck, and merit redemption.

The Midrash (*Shemos Rabbah* 5:18) tells us that the Jewish people possessed Torah scrolls that spoke about the *geulah*. They would delight in the study of these Torah scrolls every Shabbos. Another Midrash (*VaYikra Rabbah* 3:1) adds that the ultimate

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<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Tessler is a member of our morning Kollel Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu.

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redemption will only come in the merit of Shabbos. This is so because Shabbos has the ability to give us that level of *emunah* that existed in Egypt. However, it seems to me that if we want to merit the *emunah* that they had, we have to utilize the Shabbos the way they did in Egypt. After a long week of work, who doesn't want to collapse on his bed and fall asleep? Yet, they used their Shabbos to learn Torah and fill themselves with the encouragement that Hashem has not abandoned them, and that there will yet be a redemption.

In fact, the very act of Torah study is an expression that shows how we have not forgotten Hashem and his promises for redemption. We are told that the giving of the Torah at Sinai was like a marriage between Hashem and the Jewish people. The Torah is likened to the *kesubah*, the marriage document that describes the spousal obligations as well as the monetary gifts and financial obligations of the husband toward the wife. Once there was a king who had a tremendous love for his bride. He wrote into his *kesubah* a tremendous amount of wealth and gifts as an expression of his love. One day the king became upset and sent his wife away. Time went on and people began to tell her, "He's not going to take you back, it's been so long already; forget him." But she would read her *kesubah* and remember the great love that the king had for her and it filled her with hope that he would surely take his beloved wife back. Sure enough, one day, after many years, the king called her back. "How is that you did not lose hope of ever returning to me?" the king asked. "Because every time I began to have doubts, I would read the *kesubah* that you gave me, and I knew that one day you would certainly take me back." So too Klal Yisrael has gone through a long and bitter galus and the nations of the world try to tell us that Hashem has forsaken us and is not going to take us back.

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Nonetheless, when we read the Torah that He gave us with such love at Sinai we are filled with the faith that he will certainly take us back once again, and we will yet see redemption.

Every time we learn Hashem's holy Torah it reminds us of Hashem's love, and that He is always with His people and will once again reveal Himself to us with a great redemption. I believe that this is part of the joy and delight with which David HaMelech describes the Torah so many times throughout *Tehillim*, despite his difficult suffering and tribulations.

The Gemara in *Berachos* (9b) describes incredible rewards for one who connects the ideas of the redemption from Egypt to his prayer – *semichas geulah l'tefillah*. Such a person gains happiness, protection from harm, and even *Olam Haba*, the World to Come. Why does such a seemingly small thing merit such great reward? *Rabbeinu Yonah* explains that the act of praying immediately after speaking of the redemption is an expression of a deeply rooted *emunah*. It signifies an understanding that Hashem is the one and only Redeemer and He is the only one to turn to for all of our needs. It fills one's heart with the belief that Hashem loves us and will indeed hear all of our prayers, redeeming us in our own lives as well. This is a source of great joy for a person, a joy that has the power to elevate him and all of his prayers, and it is the *emunah* that is the basis to our relationship with Hashem and is fundamental to our achievement of *Olam Haba*.

However, there is a detail in this halachah that at first glance seems puzzling given this explanation of *Rabbeinu Yonah*. The *Shulchan Aruch* states (*Orach Chaim* 111:1): “One must juxtapose the redemption to his prayer and he may not break

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between them even to answer amen...” On this the *Rama* comments, “And some say that one needs to juxtapose the redemption to his prayer only during the week or Yom Tov, but on Shabbos it is not necessary to do so (Because the source for connecting the redemption to prayer is from the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (19:15), *May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, Hashem, my Rock and my Redeemer*, which is followed by (20:2), *May Hashem answer you on the day of distress...* Shabbos is not a time of distress to cry out in prayer, as opposed to the Yomim Tovim which all have an element of judgment.)” The *Rama* concludes, “It is better to be stringent on this matter, unless there is situation of need.”

Now, if, as the *Rabbeinu Yonah* explained, the requirement to juxtapose the ideas of the redemption to our *shemoneh esrei* reflects an expression of *emunah* in Hashem and His ability to redeem us, why should this be any different on Shabbos? The simple explanation is that there exists no expression of that *emunah* without following it with a cry for help. However, based on what we have explained perhaps we can suggest a different explanation. Shabbos, when utilized properly, has that special ability to strengthen our *emunah* to the extent that, even without recalling the wondrous redemption from Egypt, one can enter his prayer with the faith that Hashem is our Redeemer.

Based on what we have explained, when one learns before he prays it has that same effect. We find in the Gemara in Berachos (31a)<sup>2</sup> that even before Minchah one should first learn Torah that

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<sup>2</sup> ועי' רש"י שם. ועי' בשו"ע וז"ל (או"ח צג, ב), לא יעמוד להתפלל אלא באימה והכנעה  
לא מתוך שחוק וקלות ראש ודברים בטלים ולא מתוך כעס אלא מתוך שמחה כגון דברי

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brings him joy. This is why we say *Ashrei* before Minchah, because it is learning Torah, and it contains verses that strengthen our *emunah* and thereby brings us joy.

How wonderful it is that at the Beis Midrash of Ranchleigh so many come to learn with joy in the wee hours of the morning before Shacharis. Whatever one learns has that power to enhance one's prayers by filling his heart with *emunah* and joy, and the joy that exists in our Beis Midrash is palpable. If you are already coming to learn before Shacharis, *ashrecha*; and if not, please join us. You won't believe the difference it will make to your entire tefillah, and your entire day.

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תנחומין של תורה סמוך לגאולת מצרים או סמוך לתהלה לדוד שכתוב בו רצון יראיו  
יעשה שומר ה' את כל אוהביו, עכ"ל.

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## **Gems on *Yetzias Mitzrayim***

### **Dovid Baruch Keidar**

1] In *Parshas VaYeishev*, a question can be asked about Yosef's dreams. Why in his first dream is Yosef represented by a sheaf of grain, whereas in his second dream he is portrayed as a human? Perhaps we can answer that the first dream corresponds to the time before Yosef revealed himself, so he was not himself; he was only a sheaf. However, by the second dream he already revealed himself since his parents are represented in the dream by the sun and the moon. Yosef therefore appears as himself in this dream.

2] In *Parshas VaYigash*, there are 106 *pesukim*. In Hebrew, the number 106 is spelled ק"ו. Reading this word as an acronym [ק"ו] yields *kal vachomer* [קל וחומר]. This hints to us that we should make a *kal vachomer* from the *parshah*, as follows: Just as King Pharaoh, who was a wicked man, treated his guests very nicely in that he gave the *shevatim* the best land of Goshen when they came to Egypt, so we too should certainly treat our guests nicely.

3] In *Parshas Va'era*, there are 121 *pesukim*. The number 121 is a palindrome. From here, we could understand the Midrash that says the same *makkos* that happened in *Mitzrayim* will happen by the final *Geulah*. Since a palindrome reads the same back and forth so the *makkos* will come back on the evil nations, iy"H, in our days. Or one could suggest a different *pshat*. The palindrome hints at the *middah keneged middah* in *Mitzrayim*; all the suffering that the Mitzrim caused was visited upon them at the end. A third *pshat* is that it could also hint at how at the Yam Suf in *Parshas Beshalach* all the arrows that the Mitzrim shot at



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Bnei Yisrael rebounded back at them. This too is like a palindrome, since it goes forth and then comes back.

4] In *Parshas Yisro*, it first says that anyone who touches the mountain shall die. In that *pasuk* it says *mos yumas* [מות יומת]; and *Rashi* says that *mos yumas* (מות יומת) is referring to death strangling. However, later on it says anyone who touches the mountain shall be stoned [סקילה]. So which one is it? Is it strangling or stoning? We know that stoning is more *chamur* than strangling. An answer could therefore be that there are two different ways of touching the mountain. One is if someone sticks his hand behind his back so no one could see what he is doing; that is worse since he is afraid of people more than he is of Hashem. Therefore, he should get stoned, which is more *chamur*. However, if someone openly touched the mountain it is not as bad because he is careless about both Hashem and people. He should therefore get strangling, which is less *chamur*.

## **Why the World Needs to be Upside-Down**

***Olam Hafuch*** (*Bava Basra* 10b)

**Label Cooper**

Before his death in 1543, and after much reluctance, the astronomer and mathematician Nicolaus Copernicus finally allowed his life's work to be published. Found within, a most (to put it quite literally) revolutionary claim for his time was made. Indeed, though a dangerous position to take in his day, Copernicus would posit that it is the Earth that actually revolves around the Sun, and not vice versa.

In the early 1600's, it was Galileo Galilei, a well-respected astronomer (among other prestigious titles) who would be among the early champions of Copernicus's discovery. Because of this, he would face persecution and much controversy throughout his lifetime. But his ardent belief, though declared to be heretical by both the religious and scientific community of his time, would help change the tide of how man would begin to study, theorize and freely expound on the apparent workings of the universe.

Indeed in our day, it has become the predominantly accepted view that the Earth revolves around the Sun, and not the other way around. The advance of science has given us the invention of great tools that measure and calibrate the movements of planets, stars and even distant galaxies. Yet other theories still exist regarding what really revolves around what. An example of a current theory being considered by today's experts suggests an idea that Earth, Sun and all the planets are in fact themselves orbiting around the center of mass of the solar system.

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In any event, toying with the idea that anything but “Man and his Earth as the center of the Universe” was a dangerous way to think not so long ago. And although we see ourselves today as much more advanced and matured, we might want to reflect on why this issue mattered so much back then. Quite unlike those times, today – outside the world of astronomy, hardly anyone even gives this question a second thought.

But, after all, are we not faced with this thought provoking dilemma every day of our lives? Every day when we wake up, we experience from sunrise to sunset the apparent movement of the Sun around our Earth. If indeed there is serious evidence suggesting that what occurs is the absolute total opposite of what we see, should that not invoke serious question as to why it is so? Is it not worth careful consideration why our Creator has put us into a world where the most blatant of realities is likely not at all to be as we see it? Perhaps we should extrapolate, and consider that maybe a great deal of what we see and experience in many facets of our life might in fact all be the polar opposite of what really occurs.

Let us therefore suggest that our Creator is likely delivering a blatant, daily important reminder upon which to reflect, meant for us to derive truths about life that really are indeed only apparent when we turn what we see upside down. Furthermore, this upside down and opposite picture we are given is linked with the sunrise, our fundamental source of warmth, light, and nourishment. So perhaps decoding our world’s inherent oppositeness might be key to understanding the fundamentals of what nourishes life itself. As such, whenever we see the Sunrise, let’s remind ourselves that the major truths of life are quite often the exact opposite of what they seem, as follows:

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1) Some major constant themes in our lives that work opposite to how they appear:

- a. You really ‘get’ when you ‘give’
- b. You find the deepest calm and tranquility when you ‘toil’
- c. Freedom results from fulfillment of obligation, not freedom from it
- d. Free will is not merely to ‘do’ what you want, but to ‘not’ do what you want
- e. You don’t have a lot when you get a lot, you have a lot when you are happy with your lot

2) Another conclusion that can be drawn:

When the world is obedient and revolves around the Sun, the Sun rewards the world by allowing it to feel as if the Sun revolves around the world. As it says in *Pirkei Avos* (2:4): "Do His will as if it were your own, so that He will do His will as if it were yours."

On a daily basis, we are actually experiencing the concept of "*Bishvilli nivra ha'olam* – the world was created for me." By fulfilling the laws that Hashem has given us, our lives constantly revolve around the Creator, just as the Earth constantly revolves around the Sun. In return, as we’ve now perfectly aligned ourselves in service towards our Creator, we feel this concept actualized by the sense that all creation is now serving us. In fact, both are completely true. We are serving, and thereby feel served.

In the days of Copernicus and Galileo, it was intolerable to view anything as not revolving around Man and Earth. Copernicus

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revealed the probability that everything, including Man and Earth, actually revolve around the Sun. For us, they were both half right, you just have to put the two together. And this is the reciprocal picture we are shown by our Creator in vivid color every single day!

## **Rice Matzah at the Pesach Seder <sup>1</sup>**

### **Yehoshua Dixler**

#### **Introduction**

If you were asked to list the grains that may be used to make matzah, the five grains (wheat, barley, oats, rye, spelt) would be the obvious response. If you were then asked whether rice, a type of *kitniyos* grain, may be used for matzah at the Seder, “No,” would be the obvious retort. But that is not a complete and accurate answer.

In fact, the two questions are related. One of the ironies of Pesach is that only the grains that can become chametz qualify for use as Seder matzah. You would assume that rice, which cannot become chametz, could never be used for the Seder, but that is far from clear. This article will discuss how rice, although not one of the five grains, might be able to be used for the Seder matzos even by *Ashkenazim*.

#### **Rice Matzah**

Although rice is *kitniyos*, the Gemara treats it differently than other *kitniyos* such as beans. The Gemara in *Pesachim* (114b) cites the opinion of R’ Yochanan ben Nuri forbidding rice because it can become chametz. Even the majority opinion in *Pesachim* (35b), which holds that only the five grains can become chametz, agrees that under some conditions rice can become chametz and consequently can also be used for Seder

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion is for *pilpul* only and is not meant to be *halachah lemaaseh*.

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matzah. What are these special circumstances? The *Beis Yosef* (§453) quotes two opinions that allow Seder matzah to include rice mixed with wheat in various quantities:

1] *Raavad, Rosh, and Rashba* say that the quantity of wheat must be sufficient to enable the eater to consume a כזית of wheat בכדי אכילת פרס.

2] *Ramban* (quoted by *HaRav HaMaggid*) says a כזית of wheat גוררין את האורז is not required because the wheat is גוררין את האורז – drags the rice along – so that the eating of the rice is also included in the mitzvah.

According to the *Machatzis HaSehekel*, the *Ramban* is saying a *chidush* that the principle of טעם כעיקר applies to this mixture. He goes even further to cite an opinion explaining that even a very large majority of the matzah can be rice provided there is a perceivable taste of wheat. The wheat taste will convert (גוררין) the rice portion of the matzah to become just like the wheat. In this scenario, the person is actually eating rice matzos that have a little wheat as a taste additive.

According to both opinions, the Seder matzah can include some quantity of rice; the only dispute concerns the ratio of rice to wheat in the mixture. The halachah follows the majority that requires eating a significant quantity of actual wheat in the matzah, as stated by the *Magen Avraham* (453:4) who requires כזית בכדי אכילת פרס. The *Mishnah Berurah* (453:14) rules even more stringently, requiring the majority to be wheat.

At this point we have established that Seder matzos can contain rice. However, it would seem this permit would only apply to

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*Sephardim*; but *Ashkenazim* have a *minhag* not to eat *kitniyos*, including rice, on Pesach. This would apparently preclude using rice in their matzos. However, we might be able to find some conditions under which *Ashkenazim* too will be able to eat Seder matzah with rice. To understand how this is possible, we need to analyze the original *minhag* of *kitniyos*.

### ***Minhag Kitniyos***

The *minhag* to forbid *kitniyos* dates back at least to the era of the *Rishonim*; for the *Smak* (quoted by the *Bach* §453) states: כיון שראוי לעשות ממנו עיסה אתי לאחלופי בשאר מיני עיסות דגן לאותן שאינן בני תורה, *Since it can be made into dough, those who are not bnei Torah may come to make dough from other types of grain* [which would be *chametz*].

*Hagaos Maimonios*, (cited by *Beis Yosef* §453) provides two additional reasons:

- 1] Kernels of wheat are often found mixed with *kitniyos*.
- 2] Cooked goods made with *kitniyos* are easily confused with wheat dishes.

The *Aruch HaShulchan* (453:5), though, contends that the *minhag* can be sourced in the Gemara (*Pesachim* 40b). After stating that in the home of the *Reish Galusa* they used flour made from roasted grain, which cannot become *chametz*, Rava states: מי איכא דשרא כהאי מילתא בדוכתא דשכיחי עבדי, *Is there anyone who would permit such a thing where servants are prevalent* [who may also use unroasted grain, which would be *chametz*]? Since people in the days of the *Aruch HaShulchan* were less respectful of halachah than the slaves at the time of the Gemara,



he concludes it is necessary to be strict on *kitniyos*, which could be confused with *chametz* flour.<sup>2</sup>

*Chasam Sofer* writes that the *minhag* dates from the time of the *Geonim*:

הגאונים שהתקינו כך לא תקנו מתחילה על מנת שיתפשט בכל ישראל אלא על בני אשכנז... ונתקבל גזירתם באמת, *The Geonim who established this [minhag], did not originally establish it to spread throughout the Jewish people; rather, only for Ashkenazim... and their decree was truly accepted.*

Because the *Beis Yosef* (ibid.) expresses his opposition to this *minhag* in very strong language, saying it's a שטות, and even the *Tur* describes it as a חומרא יתירא, *Sephardim* never adopted this *minhag*.

Whether the *minhag's* source is from Gemara, *Geonim* or *Rishonim*, it is well established as part of *minhag Ashkenaz*. If so, how could anyone permit Seder matzah to be made with rice?

#### **Exceptions and limitations to the *minhag***

Some *Poskim* put restrictions on whether the *minhag* can be extended into new areas. R' Moshe Feinstein, while discussing why the *minhag* should not include potatoes and peanuts, offers the following insight (*Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim* Vol. III §63):

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<sup>2</sup> The other *Poskim* do not cite such an early source, and the *Aruch HaShulchan* doesn't address why a *minhag* rooted in the Gemara was not adopted universally, including by *Sephardim*. Since it is clear from the context that he was defending this *minhag* against the scoffers of his day, it's likely the *Aruch HaShulchan* saw it was important to seek earlier roots for the *minhag*.

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דאין למילף ממנהג לאסור גם דבר שלא נהג לאסור. ואולי מפני שבטעמים קלושים... ולכן חכמי דורות האחרונים לא רצו להוסיף לאסור עוד המינים *We do not learn from the minhag [of kitniyos] to forbid additional items for which there is no prior minhag. Perhaps it is because [the minhag relies on] weak reasons... therefore the Sages from the later generations did not want to forbid additional types.* Perhaps these words will give us some basis for the suggestion that we will make below to permit rice matzos.

*Kaf HaChaim* (453:3) cites the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (§5) and the *Chayei Adam* (127:1) to allow the use of *kitniyos* during *Pesach* provided it was well checked to ensure that none of the five species are present. This permit is based on the logic שאין להחמיר על קטניות יותר מדגן, that is, the level of strictness applied to *kitniyos* should not be greater than the laws of the five species of grain themselves. According to these *Poskim*, if the concern for actual chametz is removed from the *kitniyos* there is no reason for the *minhag* to apply. Just as the five species are permitted provided precautions are taken against leavening agents, *kitniyos* would be permitted under the same conditions.

We also find some contemporary Ashkenazi *Poskim* who consider the use of rice matzah. For example, the *Rivevos Ephraim* (Vol. VII §256) writes that even *kitniyos* prepared on *Pesach* can be permitted. Based on the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (453:60) and others, he allows the use of *kitniyos* that has never been touched by water to be eaten on *Pesach* since the *minhag* to forbid *kitniyos* was only when water was involved. He then asks whether one could bake matzos made from *kitniyos* when made with all the stringencies that would prevent wheat from becoming chametz. *Rivivos Ephraim* is lenient based on something he heard in the name of the *Brisker Rav*, *R' Yitzchak*

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*Zev Soleveitchik*. *R' Yitzchak Zev* had said we cannot be stricter with *kitniyos* than we are with the five species themselves, since the reason for the *minhag* against *kitniyos* is due to the five species. Consequently *kitniyos* prepared in a fashion that does not involve water (e.g. by roasting) or in a way that would prevent chametz, such as for matzos, would be permitted, just as we permit these cases involving the five grains.

On the other hand, *Piskei Teshuvos* cites *Poskim*, including the *Maamar Mordechai* and *Sdei Chemed*, who disagree with the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* and forbid *kitniyos* either because people may become confused and come to use wheat dough or we are concerned people may mistakenly use *seder matzos* made completely from *kitniyos*. However, these *Poskim* were discussing restrictions for *kitniyos* food prepared during *Pesach*. Would they also restrict *kitniyos* dishes if they were prepared before *Pesach*?

Perhaps we can say that when the *kitniyos* were prepared before *Pesach*, an additional permit can be applied even according to the stricter opinions. We find many leniencies when it comes to preparing food with the five grains before *Pesach*. In some cases chametz can be added as a minor ingredient before *Pesach* and then used on *Pesach*. Additionally, based on the *Igros Moshe* above, the *minhag* should be limited to cases which have been forbidden for generations. Consequently, the *minhag* should not apply when the *kitniyos* were prepared before *Pesach* in the same manner as matzos are made because this case was never part of the *minhag*.

### **Conclusion**

While *Sephardim* have always enjoyed *kitniyos* on *Pesach*, *Ashkenazim* might also find ways to include *kitniyos* in their *Pesach* fare. As long as the proper safe-guards are in place and preparation concludes before *Pesach*, the *minhag* should not apply to forbid the consumption of *kitniyos* foods on *Pesach* itself. According to this reasoning, one should even be able to use *kitniyos* for the Seder matzos, provided the five grains are the majority ingredients. As always, ask your *Rov* for practical guidance in this matter.

## To Recline or Not to Recline

### Rabbi Doniel Horowitz

Among the more memorable moments of Pesach night is when the family and guests pull out their pillows and cushions to be used at the Seder. The children come to the table with their special pillow-cases that were carefully designed in grade school with a smattering of glitter and cute markings depicting the Seder – all to fulfill the mitzvah of *haseibah* [reclining] on Pesach night. But is there really a *chiyuv* or even an *inyan* to recline throughout the duration of the Seder? Or is the mitzvah to recline limited to the eating of the matzah and the drinking of the arba kosos? How expansive is the *chiyuv* for this unique practice?

There is a consensus among the Rishonim and Poskim that the *chiyuv haseibah* is only *MeDerabanan* – merely a Rabbinic manifestation of the general Torah requirement to remember our transition from *avdus* to *cheirus* on Pesach night. However, there is some ambiguity in the Poskim as to the nature of the *din derabanan* and for which parts of the Seder we are required to recline.

When the Gemara discusses the mitzvah of *haseibah* (*Pesachim* 108a), it lists only the eating of the matzah and the drinking of the four cups as the components of the Seder requiring *haseibah*. At a cursory glance, it is unclear whether one can deduce from the Gemara that the other parts of the Seder do not require *haseibah*. Perhaps, the Gemara only mentions those two parts because they are the most definitive and tangible mitzvos relating to the commemoration of freedom.

Moreover, the Gemara could just be using those examples as a juxtaposition to the mitzvah of maror, which represents the *avdus* in Mitzrayim – the antithesis of the thought that *haseibah* is supposed to elicit. That’s why the Gemara singles out maror as one part of the Seder clearly exempt from the *chiyuv*. But what about the rest of the Seder – Karpas, Maggid, Hallel, and Shulchan Aruch – for example?

### **Two outlooks on the mitzvah of *haseibah***

The *Rosh* in the *sugya* of *haseibah* addresses another important question concerning the severity of the *chiyuv* – one which sheds light on our original question. There is a debate among the Poskim whether someone who forgot to recline while eating the matzah or drinking the four cups is required to repeat the mitzvah with *haseibah*. The *Rosh* rules decisively that a person did not fulfill his obligation and must therefore eat another *kezayis* of matzah *behaseibah*. He even posits that one who forgot to drink the four cups *behaseibah* can and must repeat the mitzvah with no fear of violating *baal tosef* [MeDerabanan] because drinking without reclining is completely void. Hence, the *Rosh* holds that the mitzvah of *haseibah* is not a standalone obligation; rather it is a condition exclusively connected to the *chiyuv* of consuming the matzah and *arba kosos*. Perforce, eating the matzah or drinking the four cups without reclining invalidates the entire mitzvah [on a *derabanan* level], not just the *chiyuv haseibah*.

*Tosafos* in the *sugya* seems to also rule that eating matzah with *haseibah* is essential for fulfillment of the mitzvah, even *bedieved*. [*Tosafos* is uncertain about the four cups only because a repeat of the drinking might be a problem of *baal tosef*.] The *Tur* and the *Mechaber* (*Orach Chaim* §472) both rule that

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*haseibah* is essential for fulfilling the mitzvot of consuming matzah and the arba kosos. The *Beur Halachah* even says that someone who already recited Birchas HaMazon after forgetting to eat with *haseibah* must wash again and eat reclining so as to fulfill the actual mitzvah *DeOraisah* of eating matzah.

Accordingly, if we follow the view of the *Rosh* that the entire *chiyuv* of *haseibah* is a condition in the mitzvah of consuming the matzah and the four cups, there is no reason to recline during the other parts of the Seder. There clearly is no independent mitzvah of *haseibah*. The *Rosh* still holds that *haseibah* is required while eating the Afikoman because it is an extension of the *chiyuv* to eat matzah. And the *Tur* and *Beis Yosef* conclude that the Korech sandwich should also be eaten *behaseibah* because it is a commemoration of when Hillel ate the actual korban pesach with matzah and maror during the time of the Bais HaMikdash, which was definitely done *behaseibah*.

The *Rosh*, *Tur*, *Tosafos*, and *Mechaber* make no mention of an *inyan* to recline during the rest of the Seder. The *Rambam* (*Hil. Chametz U'Matzah* 7:7-8), on the other hand, seems to imply that *haseibah* is an independent mitzvah distinct from the main *chiyuvim* of consuming matzah and the arba kosos. The *Rambam* says, as a means of personalizing the *cheirus* experienced by our forefathers in Mitzrayim, לפיכך כשסועד אדם בלילה הזה צריך לאכול, ולשתות והוא מיסב דרך חירות, *Therefore, when a person dines on this night, he must eat and drink while he is reclining in a way of cheirus.*

The *Brisker Rav* deduces from the *Rambam* that *haseibah* is clearly an independent mitzvah to recline during the Seder; it's just that Chazal established the primary *chiyuv* during the most

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stringent, definitive, and universal mitzvot of the night – consuming the matzah and the *arba kosos*. Presumably, Chazal didn't want to place the main *chiyuv* on a *davar reshus* [an optional activity] such as eating matzah balls and asparagus during Shulchan Aruch or even some of the *minhagim* cited in the Gemara. The *chiyuv haseibah* had to be established on the primary *chiyuvim* of the night. However, unlike the *Rosh*, the *Rambam* holds that *haseibah* is an independent mitzvah from matzah and *arba kosos*.

Accordingly, there are two practical differences in halachah if one follows the view of the *Rambam*. 1) If someone forgot to eat the matzah *behaseibah*, there would be no *chiyuv* to rectify the mistake. He lost the mitzvah of *haseibah*, but still fulfilled the underlying *chiyuv* of eating matzah. Not surprisingly, the *Rambam* never mentions a *chiyuv* to eat again the matzah *behaseibah* like the *Rosh* requires so emphatically. 2) With regards to our original question, there would at least be an *inyan* to recline during the rest of the Seder given the fact that *haseibah* is an independent mitzvah from the two big *chiyuvim* of the night. Indeed the Rambam concludes that שאר אכילתו ושתייתו אם היסב הרי זה משובח, [Regarding] one's other eating and drinking, if he reclined he is praiseworthy.

The *Yerushalmi* (*Pesachim* 10:1, 82a ArtScroll edition) is quite terse and ambiguous in its discussion about *haseibah*, but according to the understanding of the *Pnei Moshe*, these two opinions (the *Rambam* and the *Rosh*) are subject to dispute. R' Simone in the name of R' Yehoshua ben Levi holds that the *chiyuv haseibah* is only during the eating the matzah, while R' Levi holds that there is a *chiyuv*, at least *lechatchila*, to recline throughout the entire meal.



### **The View of the *Raavyah***

Perhaps we can also say that the *Raavyah* holds in accordance with the *Rambam* – that *haseibah* is a general and independent *chiyuv*, not an exclusive condition in consuming the matzah and the arba kosos. The *Raavyah*, regarded as a minority opinion on this issue, rules that there is no *chiyuv haseibah* at all nowadays because reclining is not a symbol of freedom or royalty. Even affluent and powerful rulers do not recline while eating.

As we all know, generally speaking, we are still required to keep mitzvos *derabanan* even if the rationale behind them becomes obsolete. It is therefore very hard to understand the view of the *Raavyah* if we assume he held that *haseibah* is a condition in eating matzah to the extent that it was essential for fulfilling one's obligation during the times of Chazal.

It is more likely that he held *haseibah* was an independent fulfillment of demonstrating *cheirus* and *malchus* along the lines of the *Rambam's* view, much like the requirement to have nice dishes and tablecloths on the table. Ultimately, if someone ate matzah on a poor quality tablecloth, nobody will say that he did not fulfill the mitzvah. Likewise, if someone forgot to recline while eating matzah, the *Raavyah* would hold that even during the times of Chazal it was not essential to fulfillment of the mitzvah. Consequently, now that there is no semblance of *cheirus* associated with reclining, according to the *Raavyah*, we can do away with *haseibah* and channel our actualization of *cheirus* through more appropriate means.

With the view of the *Raavyah* in mind, it's clear that the *Rama* also followed the view of the *Rambam* as opposed to the *Rosh*. For after the *Mechaber* rules that someone who forgot to recline

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must rectify his mistake, the *Rama* says that there is no need to eat the matzah or drink the four cups again *bedieved*, after the fact. He observes that since there is a baseline view (*Raavyah*) that completely vitiates the *chiyuv haseibah* nowadays, one can certainly rely on it to the extent that, after the fact, he need not go back and eat again with *haseibah*.

Although the *Rama* is employing more of a *pesharah* than forging a definitive view in the *sugya*, he is clearly working on the assumption that *haseibah* is not an essential condition in consuming matzah and four cups of wine, rather it is an independent mitzvah. After ruling leniently with regards to someone who forgets to lean during eating matzah, the *Rama* rules “stringently” that *lechatchila* one should recline throughout the Seder.

This is consistent with the two variables that change within the view of the *Rambam*. If you view *haseibah* as an exclusive condition in matzah and arba kosos [the *Rosh*], it is essential for the validity of those underlying mitzvos, even *bedieved*. On the one hand, there is no *inyan* to recline during the rest of the meal. Conversely, if you view *haseibah* as a separate mitzvah that was merely established to coincide with the most important mitzvos of the night – consuming matzah and the arba kosos, it is not essential for the validity of those underlying mitzvos after the fact. Yet, there would at least be some degree of a mitzvah *lechatchila* to recline during the rest of the meal.

The degree of the *inyan* to lean during the rest of the meal according to these views is subject to a dispute among the Acharonim. The *Pri Chodosh* (472:7) holds that when the *Rama* says “*lechatchila*,” it is not a precise halachic directive, rather

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more of a *זה משובח* “extra credit” (similar to the *Rambam*). However, the *Gra* (472:15) and the *Pri Megadim* (M”Z 486:1) seems to hold that the *Rama* is mandating a full *chiyuv lechatchila* to recline during the rest of the meal. Their reading of the *Rama* would be in line with the view of R’ Levi in the *Yerushalmi*, as understood by the *Pnei Moshe*. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* also rules that one should recline during the entire meal.

### **The non-eating parts of the Seder**

Even according to those who hold there is a mitzvah to recline during the rest of the meal, what specifically is included in “the rest of the meal?” The *Rambam* sounds like the mitzvah only applies to “eating and drinking.” That is how the *Mishnah Berurah* explains the *Rama*, noting later on in *siman* 273 that Maggid should specifically not be read while reclining because it requires *אימה ויראה*, *awe and respect*. This is in accordance with the view of the *Shelah*, which presumably would apply to hallel as well. The *Pri Megadim* (ibid.), who holds that there is a mitzvah *lechatchila* to recline during the entire meal, explicitly says that the Hagadah, Hallel, and Birchas HaMazon are excluded and should be read “sitting with awe and respect.”

The *Meiri* (*Pesachim* 108a) takes the opposite approach. While working within the general framework of the view of the *Rambam*, he rules that there is a *chiyuv* to recline during the Haggadah, Hallel, Kiddush, and Birchas HaMazon – more so than during *Shulchan Aruch*, which he sets at the lower level of *זה משובח*, *he is praiseworthy*. Clearly, the *Meiri* holds that the obligation to celebrate the *cheirus*, and act accordingly, overrides the usual decorum in which we are required to conduct ourselves when praising Hashem and making berachos.

*R' Shlomo Kluger (Hagadas Maasei Yedai Yotser)* brings a proof to the view of the *Meiri* from the story with the Tannaim discussing *yetzias Mitzrayim* on Pesach night in Bnei Brak. It says they were *mesubin* while reading the Hagadah.

### **Reclining for Karpas**

The final piece of the puzzle is karpas. None of the Rishonim discuss whether one should recline while eating Karpas, but there appears to be conflicting views amongst the Acharonim as to whether it is appropriate. The *Birchei Yosef* (473:14) holds that one specifically should not recline during Karpas because it is similar to maror in the respect that it is supposed to commemorate the *avdus* – not the *cheirus* that is celebrated by *haseibah*. The *Maamar Mordechai* (473:4) takes the opposite view. He holds that karpas signifies the meal of kings in which they would typically dip foods before the main meal. Accordingly, Karpas is the superlative time to do *haseibah*. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* also rules to eat the Karpas while reclining.

### **Conclusion**

For those who find it uncomfortable or awkward to recline while eating, there are certainly a lot of opinions that can be relied upon to justify eating the meal without *haseibah*. Sephardim can especially rely on this leniency because the *Mechaber* never mentions an *inyan* to recline aside for consuming the matzah and the arba kosos. However, those who enjoy reclining and are looking for an extra mitzvah can rely on the opinion of the *Rama* that holds there is a *chiyuv lechatchila* to recline during Shulchan Aruch. As for the other parts of the Seder, given the fact that there are some opinions that hold that we should specifically abstain from *haseibah*, one should rely on his *minhag*.

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## ***Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim***<sup>1</sup>

**Louis Leder**

The Torah tells us that two distinct types of people contributed to the building of the *Mishkan*. They are referred to as *nesa'o libo* and *nadvah rucho* (*Shemos* 35:21). What distinguishes these personalities? The *nesa'o libo* reacted and contributed to the building of the *Mishkan* based on an intellectual, rational approach. When asked to contribute, many in *Bnei Yisrael* analyzed their ability to donate relative to the needs of the *Mishkan* and arrived at a figure to donate. Their intellectual approach toward building the *Mishkan* was perfectly acceptable and legitimate.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the *nesa'o libo* reacted on a more instinctive level. Such an individual was guided by his heart and consumed with the desire to build the *Mishkan* as an expression of an emotional attachment to Hashem. Such people went above and beyond what was required of them, *lifnim meshuras hadin*.

The difference between the intellectual and emotional approach to performing a mitzvah is most noticeable when analyzing the different approaches to giving charity. A person can readily comprehend and accept the intellectual rationale behind giving

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on a shiur by HaRav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik, z"l.

<sup>2</sup> See *Rashi's* comment (ibid. 35:27) regarding the attitude of the *nesiim*, the tribal leaders, who adopted a wait and see approach to supplement any potential deficiencies that would remain after the people concluded to donate.

charity to the poor. It is perfectly rational, for one who has the means, to support and provide to those in need. The amount that such an individual will donate will be based on his assessment of the need relative to his available resources. When one acts in such a proper, rational way he is performing an act of *tzedakah*.

One can also perform charity from an emotional perspective. When one is so affected by a situation to the point that it becomes etched in his mind, and he takes the situation to heart to the extent that he is constantly disturbed by it, wherever he goes and whatever he does he will act out of an emotional impulse. Such emotional impulses cannot be suppressed by rationalization, nor can they be diminished by additional analysis and introspection. When one acts on such an impulse, it is characterized as an act of *chesed*.

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 104b) says that a neighbor of Rabban Gamliel would cry inconsolably every night for her son who was murdered by the Romans during the period of the destruction of the second Bais HaMikdash. Instinctively, Rabban Gamliel felt her pain and would cry along with her each night. It is perfectly logical for one to sympathize with a widow mourning the loss of her only son for a night, perhaps a week, maybe even a month. But Rabban Gamliel experienced the same level of empathy and emotional pain every night, just as he did the very first night he heard her heart rending cries. The *nadvah rucho*, the intellectual rationalist, would have eventually grown accustomed and inured to her cries. But Rabban Gamliel, like *gedolei Yisrael* throughout the ages, was a *nesa'o libo*; his was an emotional response that he felt wherever he turned, and he continued to grieve with her as if it was his own tragedy.

### Section III: The Seder

The distinction between the intellectual and emotional approaches to fulfilling a mitzvah can also be seen in the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, our obligation to retell the story of the exodus from Egypt on the night of Pesach. We are commanded to reenact the events that took place at the time of the exodus, to make them come alive for us. We must view them from a detached perspective, as events that took place thousands of years ago. We involve the children in the telling of the story because we need to capture the emotions and feeling of a child in order to make the story tangible and bring it alive for us. An adult will tell a story from an intellectual, analytical perspective that will not inspire an emotional response. When a child tells a story, he feels the events that he is retelling; each time he tells the story he relives the emotional experiences that he is recalling.

On the night of Pesach we want to experience the feeling of escaping from Egypt at the very moment of the Exodus. To do that, we must relive the story from experiential perspective of a wide-eyed child who is epitomizing *nesa'o libo*, and not as an adult who is an intellectual *nadvah rucho*.

## **The Hagadah in Times of Exile: Two *Chidushim* of R' Eliezer Eskenazi <sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Silverberg**

### **[1] “As a Man of Seventy”**

The kiddush has been recited. The four questions have been asked. The mitzvah of telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt has been established. We have learned that our greatest sages occupied themselves with this mitzvah the entire Seder night.

Suddenly, the Hagadah takes a strange turn (based on *Berachos* 12b):

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה הָרִי אֲנִי כְּכֹן שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה

Said R' Elazar ben Azaryah: Behold, I am like a man of seventy years...

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<sup>1</sup> R' Eliezer Eskenazi, born in Italy in 1513, was a prominent personality in the Jewish world of that time. He was the rabbi of a number of prestigious communities, and is mainly known for two of his writings. The first is a peirush on Megillas Esther entitled *Yosef Lekach* which was held in high esteem by the Gaon of Vilna. The second is a sefer entitled *Maasei HaShem*. This sefer contains four sections, one of which is entitled *Maasei Mitzrayim*. A Hagadah comprised of highlights from this sefer was published in Bnei Brak in 1992.

This essay shall present two pieces from that Hagadah, both of which reveal fascinating historical insights into well known passages recited on the Seder night.



## Section IV: The Hagadah

נֶלֶא זְכִיתִי שֶׁתֹּאמַר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילֹת עַד שֶׁדִּרְשָׁה בֶּן זֹמָא,  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם יְצִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי  
חַיֶּיךָ הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלֵּילֹת. וְחֻכָּמִים אוֹמְרִים יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָעוֹלָם  
הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהֵבִיא לִימֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ

...and I did not merit (to know) that it is an obligation to mention the Exodus from Egypt at night until Ben Zoma expounded: as it says, *in order that you should remember the day of the Exodus from Egypt all the days of your life*. “The days of your life” includes the days. “**All** the days of your life” includes the nights (as well). And the Sages say: “the days of your life” means in this world. “**All** the days of your life” comes to include the days of the Messiah.

R’ Elazar ben Azaryah presents a proof that mentioning the Exodus of Egypt is a mitzvah every night of the year. The Sages suggest an alternative (or perhaps additional) interpretation of the *pasuk* at hand; that mention of the Exodus will be a mitzvah even in the World to Come. These proofs are based on the drashah of Ben Zoma.

The halachah is certainly pertinent. Its placement in the Hagadah is appropriate, as R’ Elazar ben Azaryah is mentioned in the story of the Seder of Bnei Brak which immediately precedes this halachah.

But what does it mean that he was “as” a man of seventy years? It is apparent from this statement that he was not actually seventy years of age, and, in any case, it is unusual for a person’s age to be included in a Mishnah. Of what interest is it to us? Further, if his correct age was not seventy, what, if any, is the

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significance of the Hagadah's use of "seventy" as opposed to sixty or eighty or ninety? Is it significant, or merely arbitrary?

The most popular answer (and the one taught in every cheder and kindergarten and recited by our children and grandchildren every year at the Seder table) has its source in a Gemara in the fourth *perek* of *Berachos* (28a). The Gemara tells the famous story of how Rabban Gamaliel was removed from his position of *Nasi* (President). R' Elazar ben Azaryah was appointed in his place. (Rabban Gamaliel was soon re-appointed and shared the position with R' Elazar ben Azaryah). The Gemara relates that R' Elazar ben Azaryah was only eighteen years old at the time of his appointment. His erudition in Torah was very impressive, but his appearance was still youthful. In order that he receive the proper respect, a miracle occurred and several rows of his hair turned white.

The *Toras Chaim Hagadah* (Mossad HaRav Kook, 5758) is a compendium of eight classical commentators: *Rashi*, *Peirush Kadmon*, *Orchos Chaim*, *Rashbatz*, *Myuchas l'Rashi*, *Ravan*, *Riben Yakar*, and *Avudraham*. All of these *meforshim* comment on the phrase הָרִי אֲנִי כָּבֵן שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה, and all of them cite this Gemara. While they do not all concur on the exact age of R' Elazar ben Azaryah, all agree he was a teenager. Therefore, his new, more aged, appearance made him "as" a man of seventy.

R' Eskenazi has an entirely different approach. He emphasizes that the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* (which may be fulfilled **only** on the Seder night) and the mitzvah of mentioning the Exodus from Egypt **every** night in the recitation of Shema in the parsha of tzitzis are separate and distinct commandments. He points out that in the Mishnah referenced above, the drashah of

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## Section IV: The Hagadah

Ben Zoma serves as a source text for the mitzvah that the Exodus from Egypt must be mentioned **every** night of the year in the recitation of the Shema – there is nothing particular in this Mishnah that refers to the Seder night, or to the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. Further, he notes, the Hagadah omits the beginning of the Mishnah in *Berachos* that includes the drashah of Ben Zoma. In the omitted section, the Tanna Kama says מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות (“We mention the going out of Egypt at night”), which should have been included in the Hagadah if the Mishnah was dealing with the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. He concludes his challenge by pointing out that the Torah states (*Devarim* 16:1): ה' הוציאך ממצרים לילה, Hashem took you out of Mitzrayim at night. This suggests that the “default” for *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* would be the nighttime, and no other proof is needed.

Therefore, he concludes, it cannot be that the purpose of this paragraph in the Hagadah is to serve as a proof text that the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* must be recited after dark. The Baal Hagadah must have intended to teach something else.

R' Elazar ben Azaryah and the Sages, says the *Maasei HaShem*, are discussing a very different issue: Does the obligation of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* apply to Jews who are in exile?

The Gemara (*Megillah* 14b) rules that Hallel is not said on Purim, as the Jews were still slaves to Achashverus even after their salvation. While there are certainly distinctions between the redemption of Purim and that of Pesach, it is possible to surmise that, in a similar fashion, the Hagadah should not be recited on Pesach at a time when the Jews are in exile and subservient to non-Jewish rulers. After all, the paragraph of R' Elazar ben

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Azaryah is immediately preceded by עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרֹעַ הַבְּמִצְרַיִם, *We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.*

It seems, says R' Eskenazi, that Bnei Yisroel (who did not yet have the drashah of Ben Zoma) did not recite the story of the Exodus from Egypt in the seventy years of exile between the destruction of the First Bais HaMikdash and the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel. He brings a proof from *Ezra* (6:22): וַיַּעֲשׂוּ חֵג מִצּוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּשִׂמְחָה כִּי שָׁמְחָם ה' *And they made the holiday of Matzos seven days in joy as HaShem rejoiced in them.* This *pasuk*, he contends, does not refer to the korban Pesach but to *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, which was revived upon the return from exile.

Therefore, says the *Maasei HaShem*, R' Elazar ben Azaryah's curious statement אֲנִי כְּכֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה does not refer to his age at all, but to the historical period that was the focus of his mindset. *I was like a person living in those seventy years – the seventy years of the first exile – and did not know whether the story of the Exodus from Egypt should be recited during those years, until the drashah of Ben Zoma. “All the days” comes to include the times when Klal Yisroel is engulfed by the darkness – the night - of golus. The Sages reason that “the days” include both the times of the Bais HaMikdash and the times of exile, and that “all the years” refers to the times of the Messiah.* R' Elazar ben Azaryah was no longer perplexed. The drashah of Ben Zoma brought clarity to this long-standing dilemma.

Therefore, concludes R' Eliezer Eskenazi, the drashah of Ben Zoma from the Mishnah in *Berachos* is brought in the Hagadah to teach us that now, in our time after the destruction of the Bayis

*Sheni* (Second Temple) *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* still must be said on the Seder night.

[2] *Ha Lachma Anya...* כֹּל דִּכְפִין יִיתִי וְיִכּוֹל

“This is the bread of affliction...let all who are hungry come and eat.”

The *Rambam* in the introduction to his Hagadah notes that this paragraph was not said during the times of the Bais HaMikdash. R’ Eskenazi expounds on this *Rambam*.

He asks us to imagine the first Pesach after the destruction of the Second Temple. On that Seder night, as the Jews sat around their tables to fulfill the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* they remembered Zion and the Seder nights of previous years. In those times they celebrated with their neighbors and dear friends. They prepared to eat the korban Pesach and rejoiced in their fulfillment of the will of their Creator. But now, in exile, there was no korban Pesach, no friends and neighbors. They felt alone, broken, servants driven from their land. They lamented, to fulfill the words of *Tehillim* (137:6): אִם לֹא אֶעֱלֶה אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַל רֹאשׁ שְׁמִחָתִי.

They began their seudah with the words “This is the bread of affliction.” This meal in exile is a poor man’s meal, and not the joyous meal of past years in Yerushalayim. This is the type of meal דִּי אָכְלוּ אֲבֹתֵנוּ בְּאַרְעֵא דְּמִצְרַיִם (that our forefathers ate in Egypt), a servant’s meal that we now must experience here in exile – a meal of longing and sighing.

It is in the way of a *kinah* (a lament), writes R' Eskenazi, that we recite כָּל דֹּכָפִין יִיחִי וְיִכּוֹל, כָּל דְּצָרֶיךָ יִיחִי וְיִפְסֹחַ (all that are hungry come and eat, all that are in need come and offer the (korban) Pesach). It is a dirge, because in the past it was not permitted to invite guests at the last minute to the Seder. Everyone had to be assigned to a particular korban Pesach. No one could eat of a korban Pesach unless the arrangements and assignation were made earlier, before the korban was offered. But now, in exile, the Jews lamented, there was no korban. There were no assignments. Anyone could come and eat a measure of matzah *shmurah*. The invitation itself was a source of great sorrow.

Yet, Jews are not ones to dwell in sorrow. They remembered Yerushalayim and lamented the lack of grandeur of their current Pesach. הִשְׁתָּא עַבְדֵּי וְהִשְׁתָּא הֶרְא ("now we are here" and "now we are slaves"), said in the vernacular Aramaic so that those less educated would understand the lament, and to emphasize that this paragraph was an addition to the Hagadah. But they quickly turned to consolation and prayer, and to the obligation to have faith in Hashem's future redemption, saying in Hebrew לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה ("next year in Jerusalem"). And finally and emphatically in Hebrew לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּגֵי חוֹרֵין ("Next year may we be free").

So may it be His will, speedily and in our days.

## The *Berachah* of *Kol*

Reuven Kaplan

We say in the Hagadah: **צא ולמד מה בקש לָבָן הָאֲרָמִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב** אָבִינוּ... *Go forth and learn what Lavan the Aramean wanted to do to our father Jacob... [He] wanted to uproot "הַכֹּל"/everything.*

What is this "הַכֹּל"/everything that Lavan wanted to uproot? Why doesn't the Hagadah simply say that he wanted to uproot Yaakov Avinu?

We see in *Parshas Chayei Sarah* (24:1) that Hashem blessed Avraham Avinu "כָּל" as it says: **וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים נֶהְיָה בְּרַךְ אֶת** "כָּל", *And Avraham was old, advanced in days, and Hashem had blessed Avraham with "כָּל"/everything.* Later on this *Parshah* we see that Avraham passes this "כָּל" to Yitzchak Avinu (25:5): **וַיִּתֵּן אֲבְרָהָם אֶת "כָּל" אֲשֶׁר לוֹ לְיִצְחָק**, *And Abraham gave "כָּל"/everything that he possessed to Yitzchak.* And in *Parshas Vayishlach* when Yaakov Avinu meets Eisav, to Eisav's statement of (33:9): **גֵּשׁ לִי רֵב**, *I have plenty*, Yaakov replies (33:11): **גֵּשׁ לִי כָּל**, *I have "כָּל"/everything.*

We thus see that this term "כָּל" is associated with all of our Avos. What is the meaning of this blessing? The *Ramban* on *Chayei Sarah* (loc cit.) answers this latter question. He writes:

Our Rabbis have a wonderful insight into this matter. They said: (*Bava Basra* 16b) regarding the *pasuk*: *and Hashem had blessed Avraham with "כָּל"* as follows: R' Meir said that Avraham was blessed in that he did not

have a daughter; R' Yehudah said that he did have a daughter; Acheirim say that he did have a daughter and her name was Bakol... The intent of Acheirim and their controversy with R' Yehudah were not merely to inform us of the name of this daughter. Rather, Acheirim established a new interpretation on this verse, a very profound matter, and they explained with it one of the secrets of the Torah (סוד מסודות התורה). Thus, they said that the word "בְּכֹל" hints at a great matter, namely, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has an attribute called "כֹּל" (*Everything*), so called because it is the foundation (יסוד) for everything. It is with reference to this attribute that it says (*Yeshayah 44:24*): אֲנִי כִי ה' עֹשֶׂה: כֹּל, *I am the Eternal that makes "כֹּל"/everything*. And this is also what Scripture says (*Koheles 5:8*): וַיִּתְּרוֹן אֶרֶץ: בְּכֹל הִיא, *And the profit of the earth is "כֹּל"*. That is to say, the profit of the earth and the abundant goodness that is bestowed upon all that come into the world is on account of this attribute "כֹּל". It is the eighth attribute of the thirteen attributes. And there is another attribute called בת (literally "daughter") that emanates from it, and with it He moves everything. ... It was this attribute which was given to Avraham as a בת because he was a man of kindness, and he conducted himself in accordance with it. This is why the Acheirim said that this blessing with which Avraham had been blessed in all things does not allude either to his having begotten a daughter from his wife Sarah Imeinu, as R' Yehudah said, or not, as R' Meir claimed. Rather it hints at a great matter, i.e., that he was blessed with an attribute called בת which is contained in the attribute "כֹּל".

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## Section IV: The Hagadah

This is further explained and clarified in a Midrash of R' Nechunya ben HaKaneh: It says in the *pasuk* "I am the Eternal that makes "כֹּל" (*Yeshayah* *ibid.*). I planted a tree for the whole world to enjoy. Everything is spread through it and it is referred to as "כֹּל". That everything depends on it, everything stems from it, everything requires it. And from there the neshamos come out."

In other words, the *Ramban* is telling us that "כֹּל" is the source of all creation and the source of all berachos. Avraham was its first recipient, and Hashem told him (*Lech Lecha* 12:2-3): וְאַבְרָהָם... וְיִבְרַכְךָ כָּךְ "כֹּל" מְשַׁפְּחָת הָאָדָמָה, *I will bless you, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you*. Avraham then passes this berachah of "כֹּל" to Yitzchak. However, we don't see in the Chumash how Yaakov gets this "כֹּל"; nevertheless, we know that he had it, as he expresses it to Eisav at their meeting, as mentioned above. In addition, Lavan wanted to uproot Yaakov's "כֹּל".

I would like to suggest that the "כֹּל" of Yaakov was his son Yosef. As mentioned in the *Ramban* above, "כֹּל" is the foundation (יסוד) for everything, and we know that Chazal refer to Yosef as יסוד (such as in *Zohar Vayikra* 103b; the 41st day in the counting of the Omer is *Yesod BeYesod*, which is connected to Yosef HaTzaddik, etc...). That is why Yaakov waited until Yosef was born to return to Eretz Yisrael. As it says in *Parshas Vayeitzei* (30:25), וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה רְחֵל אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיֹּסֶף וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל לָבָן, *And when Rachel gave birth to Yosef, Yaakov spoke to Lavan: "Send me away, and I will go to my place and to my land."* Therefore, when Yaakov says כֹּל לִי he

means *יֵשׁ לִי יוֹסֵף*, “I have Yosef,” because Yosef is the embodiment of *כֹּל*.<sup>1</sup>

How did Lavan try to uproot Yaakov’s *כֹּל*/Yosef? By switching Rochel for Leah, Lavan tried to intervene with the creation of Klal Yisrael and its destiny by preventing Yosef from being the first born. Nevertheless, Baruch Hashem, the Divine plan always prevails.

So as we say during our benching, *כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבְּרַכְנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרָהֶם יִצְחָק*, *כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבְּרַכְנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרָהֶם יִצְחָק* – *Just like our forefathers were blessed with [this berachah] of כֹּל*, *כֵּן יְבָרַךְ אוֹתָנוּ כָּלָנוּ יחד בְּבִרְכָּה שְׁלֵמָה* – *so he should bless all of us together with a complete berachah.*  
– *so he should bless all of us together with a complete berachah.*  
*כָּל* – *And let us say, “Amen.”*

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<sup>1</sup>This is also hinted at in our daily davening when we say during *Pesukei DeZimra*: *לְךָ ה' הַגְדֵּלָה וְהַגְבוּרָה וְהַתְפָּאֶרֶת וְהַנִּצָּח וְהַהוֹד כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם* *וּבָאָרֶץ*, *לְךָ ה' הַמְּלָכָה*. Our Sefarim teach us that these seven expressions of Hashem’s greatness were epitomized by Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid, respectively. Yosef thus relates to *כָּל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ*, as the one who brings the *shefa* from the *Avos* down to the rest of the Jewish nation – connecting the heavens with the earth. We should also add that the *pasuk* states (*VaYigash* 47:12): *וַיִּכְלֹכֶל יוֹסֵף אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אֶחָיו וְאֶת כָּל בֵּית אָבִיו לָחֶם לְפִי הָטָף*, in which Yosef is associated with two times *כָּל* in the word *וַיִּכְלֹכֶל*.

## ***Baruch HaMakom***

**Dr. Eli Lazer Singman**

In our Pesach Hagadah, we introduce the section concerning the four sons with the phrase “*Baruch HaMakom*,” or Blessed is the *Makom*, and we follow with a blessing thanking Hashem for giving us Torah. The Midrash explains that we are thanking Hashem for giving us a Torah that is so perfect that it provides a proper response for every possible type of personality, regardless of whether that person is wise, wicked, simple or might not even know to ask (*Me’am Lo’ez Passover Hagadah*, p.29). Recognizing that *Makom* is the Hebrew word for “place,” there needs to be some explanation linking *Hashem* to *Makom*. The Midrash (quoted there) that states the association is made since Hashem is the “place of the universe” rather than the universe being His place. In other words, “all existence is filled with His glory” (ibid).

There are a number of other fascinating references linking *Hashem* to *Makom*. For example, the tetragrammaton, YKVK yields the word *Makom* numerically (ibid):  $yud (10)^2 + hei (5)^2 + vav (6)^2 + hei (5)^2 = 100 + 25 + 36 + 25 = 186$ . This number is the *gematria* of *Makom*:  $mem (40) + kuf (100) + vav (6) + mem (40) = 186$ !

Another association between *Hashem* and *Makom* is stated in our daily prayers when we say *ה' מְקוֹמוֹ בְּרוּךְ*, *Blessed is Hashem from His place*. This statement is drawn from *sefer Yechezkel* (3:12). The commentary in the Artscroll edition (p. 101) of this *sefer* indicates that, according to the *Metzudas David*, the entire

statement means that the glory of Hashem is not diminished in exile.

Rabbi Munk's *sefer*, *The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet*, provides another elucidation of the word *Makom*. He quotes *Rashi* (*Exodus* 16:32) in defining *Makom* as "omnipresent." He further states that *Hashem* is called *Makom* since "He imbues the place of the world" (quoting *Pesikta Rabbasi* 21:1). Finally, he discusses the two letters *mem* in the word *Makom*:

"The Name *Makom* begins with an open *mem* and ends with a closed *mem*. The open *mem* alludes to the fact that He is perceived through the wondrous functioning of the universe, which is full of His Glory (*Yeshayah* 6:3). Yet in the final analysis, He remains unknowable, invisible, and hidden (as indicated by the closed *mem*), beyond the grasp of our limited human intelligence....The final *mem* is closed because no one knows His Dwelling Place (quoting *Osios R' Akiva* 2:406). Even the Heavenly Hosts approach each other with the question "Where is the *Makom* of his Glory?"

Another reference: In our prayer of condolence to mourners, we say "*HaMakom* should comfort you among all the mourners of *Zion* and *Yerushalayim*." Here, *HaMakom* again is meant to specifically refer to *Hashem*.

The concept of aligning Hashem with place raises a difficulty. Since Hashem is omnipresent, why should the Torah make a point of indicating that Hashem can be in any particular place? Yet we see in many places where this is the case. Three examples:

## Section IV: The Hagadah

- a. In *parshas VaYigash*, Hashem tells Yaakov “I will go to Egypt with you” (46:4).
- b. In *Yeshayah*, it says “For your sakes, I was sent to *Bavel*” (43:14).
- c. In the *Chafetz Chaim’s sefer, Let There Be Light*, the author writes: “*Chazal* said, ‘Wherever the Jews were exiled, the Divine Presence was exiled with them. When they were exiled to *Bavel*, the Divine Presence was exiled with them, and so too when they were exiled to *Edom*’” (p. 191).

Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the halachah guiding of mourners to change their *makom* in *Shul* when davening. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (211:15, Artscroll Ed. Vol. 5, p. 504) indicates that mourners must *daven* at least 4 *amos* from their previous *makom* and the new location must be further from the *Aron* than the previous one. The reason given for this custom, according to *Darkei Moshe HaAruch* (393:6), is so that the *tzibbur* should know that the person who moved their *makom* is a mourner. This allows them to provide sympathy to the mourner and gives *kavod* to the departed.

As an aside, I would like to suggest another reason for the change in *makom*. Recognizing that Judaism memorializes our history through re-enacting events (e.g., the *Pesach seder* and dwelling in the *Succah*), one could suggest that the mourner, who must change his place and move further away from the *Aron* is re-enacting *galus*, when the Jews were forced to leave *Eretz Yisrael*. We have been in *galus* so long that it has become nearly impossible to feel the tragedy that has overcome us. Only a mourner could feel the pain that resembles the loss of our *Beis HaMikdash* and our land. As the mourner remembers a departed

loved one, so too will he recognize that this loss (and every pain we suffer as Jews) stems from the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. And since anyone who mourns the loss of the *Beis HaMikdash* is guaranteed to see it rebuilt, the pain of mourning itself provides an ultimate source of comfort and hope to the mourner.

Concerning the conflation of the terms *Hashem* and *Makom* as they relate to the mourner changing his *makom*, it is my hope and belief that the mourner might find some solace in his mini-exile from the reassurance that *Hashem* is *Makom*, i.e., Omnipresent, and therefore will certainly be found in the new place. Perhaps even more importantly, the mourner might find comfort knowing that despite being further away from the *Aron*, he will know that *Hashem* accompanies him as he goes out, just as he accompanies all Jews in exile.

This year, like every year in this long exile, *Hashem* has decided that some *Pesach Sedarim* will be missing beloved members. May the blessing “*Baruch HaMakom*” at the *Seder* provide a comfort to everyone who has suffered a loss. And may the *Makom* comfort all the mourners of *Zion* and *Yerushalayim* by ending this *galus*, bringing all Jews home and rebuilding the *Bais HaMikdash* soon in our time. *Amein v’Amein!*

## It's All in a Word<sup>1</sup>

David Kaye

We are all familiar with the four sons. The *chacham*, the *rasha*, the *tam* and the one who knows not how to ask.

From where do we know that the *rasha* is a *rasha*? As with all other questions, we turn to the Chumash for an answer. Let us take a few minutes to examine the *pesukim* that describe the three sons who actually ask a question.

The *chacham's* question is found in *Devarim* (6:20): פִּי יִשְׁאַלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם. *If your child will ask you tomorrow, saying: "What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the laws that Hashem, our G-d, commanded you?"* Note that the *lashon* of the *pasuk* is יִשְׁאַלְךָ, *he will ask you*.

The *tam* asks his question in *Shemos* (13:14): וְהָיָה פִּי יִשְׁאַלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה זֶה. *It will be when your child will ask you tomorrow, saying: "What is this?"* Here too the *lashon* of the *pasuk* is יִשְׁאַלְךָ, *he will ask you*.

The *rasha's* question, though, is different. Regarding his question the *pasuk* says in *Shemos* (12:26): וְהָיָה פִּי יְאֹמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מָה הָעֶבֶר זֶה הִיא אֵת לָכֶם. *It will be when your children say to*

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<sup>1</sup> For the past two years I have had the *zechus* of having my Pesach Seder with Rabbi Tzvi Tuchman's family. With his *reshus* I am sharing one of his favorite Seder *derashos* in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak Waldsheim, which is found in the Hagadah of *The Greats of the Mussar Movement*.

you, “What is this service to you?” Here the *pasuk* states וְאָמְרוּ, they will say, not that they will “ask.” We can learn about the *rasha*’s attitude from how his question is phrased. The *chacham* and the *tam* “ask” because they are truly interested in the answer. The *rasha*, though, just “says” what he wants; he has no interest in any answer for if he was interested he would “ask.” This is how we know that he is a *rasha*. For he has no intention of growth in learning or coming closer to Hashem.



## *Kerías Yam Suf* – Four Separate Paths <sup>1</sup>

# Michael Cooperman

In *Parshas Beshalach*, two similar *pesukim* describe the event of *Kerias Yam Suf*. First (14:22): וַיֵּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בִּיבֶשֶׁת׃, *Bnei Yisrael came within the sea on dry land; and the water was a wall [חומה] for them on their right and on their left*. And then (14:29): וַיֵּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בִיבֶשֶׁת׃, *Bnei Yisrael went on dry land in the midst of the sea; and the water was a wall [חמה] for them on their right and on their left*.

Although these *pesukim* appear virtually identical, careful examination yields two differences between them. In the first *pasuk*, the sea is mentioned before the dry land and the word הַיָּם, *wall*, is spelled with a *vav*. The second *pasuk* mentions the dry land first before the sea, and there the word הַיָּם, *wall*, is spelled without the usual *vav*. Because of this, the word can also be read חֵמָה, *cheimah*, which means anger. The Midrash (see *Mechilta* there) says that the water itself was angry at the people of Israel.

The *Gra z"l* explains the difference between these two *pesukim* by saying that there were two kinds of Jews involved. The first *pasuk* is referring to Nachshon ben Aminadav and some of the Benyaminites who when Moshe told the people to go forward, had *bitachon* in Hashem and jumped into the sea before it split. It says that they jumped in up to their necks, but had total *bitachon* in Hashem saving them. The *Gra* continues that the

<sup>1</sup> This is adapted from a shiur given by Rabbi Yitzchok Breitowitz.

first *pasuk* in which the word *chomah* means walls only, is referring to those Jews who were worthy. That is why in that *pasuk*, it says, *they came within the sea*, because that is what those people did, and *then* it became dry land. For those people, the sea simply became walls, with no anger. But the second *pasuk* is referring to the Jews who were not so faithful. They *went on dry land in the midst of the sea*, i.e. they waited until Hashem had split the sea for them – and then they went forward. For those people too, the water became a wall; but for them it was also angry.

It is important to note that during the initial time in Egypt, after Yosef died, there was a move toward assimilation. Some said to themselves, “If we are held in such high esteem now, how much more so will we be if we break down the barriers between us and the Mitzrim?” This obviously did not work and slavery began. Slavery actually drew the people back toward each other and produced unity in them.

The *Meshech Chochmah* notes that the first time that unity breaks down is at the sea. When they saw the Mitzrim coming toward them, the Jewish people had four basic responses. (1) There were those who wanted to jump into the sea as a way of committing suicide, giving up; and (2) there were those who wanted to surrender and return to Egypt as slaves. Also, (3) there were those who wanted to make war with the Mitzrim; and (4) there were those who wanted to jump into the sea as a way of moving forward.

Once the unity of the people was gone, they could no longer be judged the way they had been in Egypt, as a unit of one, above and beyond each individual’s personal merit. With the

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breakdown in unity, they were now judged individually, and therefore, the second *pasuk* shows that, while the sea was content to split for those who merited it, it was angry at those who did not.

This description of the power of unity and the four different responses the Jewish people had when faced with the waters on one side and the Egyptians on the other can be seen metaphorically as well. Turbulent water is often a metaphor for the hostile societies in which we find ourselves, which seek to drown and crush us. There have historically been the same four different responses to it.

The first response is that of suicide – jumping into the waters to kill ourselves. This is a reference to assimilation – spiritual suicide. It has been the case throughout Jewish history that one Jewish response to hostility is to seek to erase ourselves as Jews. People have always thought that if Jews would simply stop being Jews, no one would hate them. That approach has been proven, time and time again, to be spiritually and physically wrong, often tragically.

The second response to a hostile society is to surrender, and return to slavery. This is akin to people living their lives in a divided fashion, Jews at home and citizens of the world outside the home. This is what slavery is. A slave has a small zone of privacy in his hut, for example, but the rest of his life is lived at the behest of the master. So too, some Jews have lived at the whim of the outside world. They keep mitzvos, but at work, in society, they do not necessarily live their Jewishness; they don't bring their values to the workplace. They are Jews at home and

non-Jews outside. Obviously, neither of these responses will lead to a positive outcome.

The third response, though, is to make war on the hostile society. There are times when we must reject all aspects of the outside, deranged world and to live in a cultural war with it. At that point, we choose to ghettoize ourselves as Jews and insulate ourselves from any participation in the corrupt, host society.

But sometimes there is another option, symbolized by the fourth response – to jump into the waters, but not as a means of suicide. In this way, we too can sometimes participate in society, not by shedding who we are, but by bringing our values and our *emunah* with us, in all aspects of our lives.

There cannot be one method that will work in all circumstances, for all people. We must follow the *Gedolim* of our times, who can advise us with their *daas* Torah on the proper response to the particular society in which we live.

## Do Intentions Count?<sup>1</sup>

**Moshe Kravetz**

The *pasuk* states (*Beshalach* 15:1): אָז יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁיר הַזֶּה לַיהוָה, *Then Moshe and the Children of Yisrael chose to sing this song to Hashem, and they said the following*, etc. The Midrash (*Mechilta*) comments, *To Hashem they said it and not to flesh and blood*. This comment needs clarification.

*Rashi* writes (there): *Then when Moshe saw the miracle, it entered his heart [the thought] to sing the song.*” The Torah says יָשִׁיר in the future tense, rather than שָׁר in the past tense. This too needs to be clarified, for why is it necessary for the Torah to relate to us Moshe’s thought; surely it would suffice to inform us of this actions, i.e., that Moshe sang.

*Yitav Ponim* (Volume 2, *Parshas HaChodesh*) explains *Rashi*’s comment to mean that although normally it is the mouth that inspires a person’s heart to do good, in this context it was Moshe’s heart that inspired his actions. He explains similarly the *pasuk* in *Parshas Vayeitzei* (29:1): וַיִּשָּׂא יַעֲקֹב רַגְלָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶרֶצָה כְּנָעַן, *Yaakov lifted his feet and went toward the land of the easterners*,” to which *Rashi* comments: “*when he was informed of the good news that he was guaranteed by Hashem to be protected, his heart lifted his feet, and it became easier to go.*”

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Sefer Romoh Bayom*, a collection of writings of Rabbi Meir Hirtentfeld z”tl, edited and published by his grandson Rabbi Mordechai Hirtenfeld – a friend of mine since **Yeshiva Ketana** days.

The *Yitav Ponim* concludes that someone has reached a high spiritual level of service to Hashem when his heart inspires his actions.

Similarly, David HaMelech said (*Tehillim* 119:59): חֲשַׁבְתִּי דְרָכַי וְאָשִׁיבָה רַגְלִי אֶל עֵד תִּיּוֹנָךְ *I considered my ways, and I turned my feet to your testimonies*. The Midrash explains that David HaMelech was saying, “I considered the reward for mitzvos against the loss caused by *aveiros*; therefore I turned my feet to your testimonies.” In other words, reflecting upon the mitzvos and considering their great merit is what caused David HaMelech to act and fulfill the mitzvos.

This concept can be better understood through the law (*Mishnah, Kiddushin* 28b): אֲמִירָה לַגְבוּהָ כַּמְסִירָה לַהֲדִיוּט דְּמִי *A statement to the Most High is like handing over to a commoner*. This teaches that merely saying that one will donate to the Bais Hamikdash is as binding as actually giving something to a common person. From this we see that in Heavenly matters a person’s intention is highly regarded; for with his intention alone his planned deed is already considered accomplished and he can no longer change his mind about it!

Thus we also find that *terumah gedolah* [the tithe of approximately 2% given to the Kohen] and *terumas maasar* [ten percent of *maasar rishon*, which the Levi gives to the Kohen] are considered given to the Kohen with the mere intention to do so (*Mishnah Terumos* 1:7, *Beitzah* 13b), and he may therefore even consume the produce in question before he physically separated the *maaser*. Moreover, R’ Meir holds, based on this ruling, that if someone purchases wine from a *Kusi* immediately prior to Shabbos [so there was no time to separate it], he may mentally

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separate the required *maaser* and drink from this wine immediately. He then physically removes the *maaser* portions after Shabbos. From this we see that when it comes to matters of holiness, one's thoughts count as if he actually performed a physical act.

Perhaps this concept can be explained with the famous expression in the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 106b): הקב"ה ליבא בעי, "*Hashem seeks the Heart.*" The *Pele Yoetz* explains that all service of Hashem requires good thoughts. Indeed all 613 mitzvos depend upon one's thoughts. Perhaps for this reason we find many mitzvos based upon this concept. For example, the reason the Kohen wears special garments when performing the *avodah* is in order for his special external appearance to remind him before whom he is performing the service. Tefillin, too, remind us to be humble and to fear Hashem and not to waste time, but rather to spend our time occupied with words of truth and justice [i.e. Torah] (*Rambam Hilchos Tefillin* 4:25). Thus we declare when donning the Tefillin (excerpt of *L'shem Yichud*): *It is placed opposite the heart thereby to subjugate the desires and thoughts of our heart to His service... and upon the head opposite the brain so that the soul that is in my brain together with my other senses and potentials; may all be subjugated to His service.*

Similarly, the Gemara teaches (*Menachos* 43b): *Beloved is Yisrael, for Hashem has surrounded them with Mitzvos; tefillin on their heads, tefillin on their arms, tzitzis on their garments, and a mezuzah on their doorposts.* All these mitzvos are based upon the lessons taught here – our external appearance influences our thoughts. We thus see that the performance of

these physical mitzvos lead to an even higher mitzvah; the end goal of subjugating our hearts to the service of Hashem.

Bearing this concept in mind, it becomes clear why the Torah relates Moshe's thoughts at the Yam Suf. For the Torah regards a person's intention very highly, and his deed is considered done even before he actually does it. Therefore, the Torah credits the mere intention of singing the song, and considers it already done. Yaakov, too was credited with having gone east, from the time he decided to do so.

It now becomes clear the intention of the cryptic Midrash "*To Hashem they said it, and not to flesh and blood.*" For only **Hashem** credits people for their good intentions even before they are actually carried out. But **people** do not tend to credit other people for their intentions, until they are actually carried out.

May we merit to subjugate the desires and thoughts of our heart to His service; thus shall we be granted long life, a flow of holiness, and holy thoughts.



## ***Kerias Yam Suf and the Kal VaChomer***

**Dr. Michael Keidar <sup>1</sup>**

כתיב (שמות יד, כא) וַיִּלְכָּךְ ה' אֶת הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עָזָה כָּל הַלֵּילָה. ואיתא במדרש פליאה (כתונת תשבץ סי' נב), מה ראה הים, ברייתא דר' ישמעאל, ע"כ. והדברים נפלאים, שאיזה שייכות יש בין קריעת ים סוף לברייתא דר' ישמעאל.

כתיב עוד (שם יד, טו) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מֶה תַּעֲשֶׂק אֵלַי דָּבָר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ. ופי' רש"י למדנו שהיה משה עומד ומתפלל, אמר לו הקב"ה, לא עת עתה להאריך בתפילה, שישראל נתונים בצרה. והגור אריה מבאר, נראה שכל זמן שהוא עומד ומתפלל לא נענה עד סוף תפילתו, ע"כ. וצריכים להבין למה משה רבינו היה צריך להפסיק תפילתו כדי שיקרע הים.

וכדי לבאר ענין קריעת ים סוף יש להקדים מה שכתוב (תהלים קמז, יט-כ) מִגִּיד דְּבָרָיו לִיעֲקֹב חֲקִיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹא עָשָׂה כֵן לְכָל גּוֹי וּמִשְׁפָּטִים כָּל יְדָעוֹם הַלְלוּ-ה. ולומדים מזה שקבלת התורה היא חסד מאת הקב"ה. ודבר פשוט הוא שגאולת מצרים קשורה לקבלת התורה, דבהתחלת התנוצצות הגאולה אמר הקב"ה למשה רבינו (שמות ג, יב): וְזֶה לָךְ הָאוֹת כִּי אֲנִי שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ בְּהוֹצִיאֲךָ אֶת הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה. והיינו שתכלית הגאולה היא קבלת התורה על הר סיני. ויש להקדים עוד שהגאולה ממצרים כולל את עצם היציאה למדבר עד ועד בכלל סוף ההצלה ממצרים בקריעת ים סוף.

ובהתחלת הגאולה כתיב שמשה רבינו טען להקב"ה (שמות ו, יב), הֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאֵיךְ יִשְׁמְעֵנִי פְּרָעָה. וכותב רש"י שם, זה אחד מעשרה קל וחומר שבתורה. והמהר"ל מבאר הקל וחומר בגור אריה

<sup>1</sup> עם הערות מאת העורך.

שם, פירוש מה ישראל שהוא לטובתם לא שמעו לי, פרעה שהוא לרעתו לא כל שכן. ע"כ.

ויש להעמיק בענין קל וחומר. במוצאי שבת מבקשים בפיוט המבדיל בין קודש לחול: נִחְנוּ בְיָדֶיךָ פְּחוּמָר, סֶלַח נָא עַל קֵל נְחוּמָר. והדבר פלא שאיזה סליחה צריכים לקל וחומר. ומצאתי שמביאים ביאור לזה מהפני מנחם מגור וז"ל (מקץ עמ' שנא), הפירוש הפשוט שיסלח לנו השי"ת על העבירות הקלות ועל העבירות החמורות, ויתכן לפרש על פי דאיתא שמדת קל וחומר מעוררת רחמים, צדיקים יכולים להפוך הכל לרחמים, ולכן אמרו השבטים הן כסף אשר מצאנו בפי אמתחותינו השיבנו אליך מארץ כנען ואין נגנוב מבית אדוניך כסף או זהב, ואיתא ברש"י שזה אחד מעשרה קל וחומר האמורים בתורה, שכיון שרצו לעורר מדת הרחמים לכן אמרו קל וחומר [ע' ספר עבודת ישראל שם], וזה הפירוש סלח נא על קל וחומר, היינו על ידי קל וחומר, ע"כ.<sup>2</sup> ויש להוסיף על דבריו שאומרים זה בפרט במצש"ק זמן יציאת קדושת שבת, משום שאז צריכים רחמים לבא לימי החול.

ודבריו מיוסדים על דברי הבני יששכר שמביא (ראש חודש מאמר ד' סי' ג ועוד כמה מקומות)<sup>3</sup> שכתב הרב הקדוש מהרד"ב זצוק"ל [המגיד ממעזריטש, ודבריו נמצאים בספרו מגיד דבריו ליעקב פ' בהעלותך],

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<sup>2</sup> ומוסיף שם, שכ"ק אאז"ל אמר שלכל העשרה קל וחומר שבתורה יש פירכא, ואפשר שהוא לימוד זכות שאפילו אם יש על האדם פירכא מכל מקום יכולים להפוך לרחמים.

<sup>3</sup> למשל עי' דבריו ניסן מאמר ד דרוש ב, סיון מאמר ה סימן טז, מאמר ו סימן ד, תמוז אב מאמר ג סימן ז, אלול מאמר ב סימן ז, תשרי מאמר יב סימן ד, כסלו טבת מאמר ד סימן כג, אדר מאמר ה סימן יד, ועוד ועוד בשאר ספריו. וע"ע אור תורה בהעלותך, ערבי נחל ויצא, קדושת לוי כי תשא, אמרי פנחס השלם (סוכות תקסא), בניהו לברכות לב. וע"ע מראה מקומות בספר כי חייא (פרשת וארא עמ' קעו) ובבנ"י (מהדורות עוז והדר אלול שם). וע"ע ספר טעם הצבי (פ' וארא עמ' כ ופ' וילך עמ' קפט).

בשעה שבקש משה (במדבר יב, יג) "א-ל נא רפא" וכו' השיב לו הקב"ה שידרוש קל וחומר ואביה ירק וכו' ועל ידי זה יעורר מדת א-ל, ע"כ.<sup>4</sup>

ומוסיף הבני יששכר במקום אחר (ניסן מאמר ד דרוש ב), הנה קל וחומר נקרא דין כמ"ש תמיד בגמרא והלא דין הוא, והוא נגד מדה הראשונה שבי"ג מדות של רחמים היינו א"ל, והוא החסד הגמור (תהילים נב, ג), חֶסֶד אֱ-ל כָּל הַיּוֹם, והנרצה לנו בלימוד האדם קל וחומר אפילו הוא ח"ו נתון בדין מתהפך לחסד, ע"כ. ומבאר עוד דזה ענין מילתא דאתיא בקל וחומר טרח וכתב לה קרא וז"ל (אגרא דכלה פרשת חוקת), על כן תתבונן על פי מאמרינו מדת קל וחומר נקרא דין כמ"ש, והנה טרח וכתב לה קרא, היינו מדת א-ל שבתורה שבכתב בי"ג מדות של רחמים כנודע, ושם א-ל מורה על חסד גמור, ע"כ.

וכן מוסיף הרב יוסף ענגיל על פי יסוד הזה וז"ל (בית האוצר א-י נו, טז), והנה נודע בחכמת האמת כי השם א-ל הוא שם מדת החסד, ועי' מכילתא בשלח... וז"ל "זה א-לי" נהג עמי במדת רחמים כו' ומנין שאין א-לי אלא מדת רחמים שנא' "א-לי א-לי למה עזבתני"... וע' ב"ר פרשה מ"ג "הא-ל תמים דרכו" זה אברהם כו' והכוונה כי אברהם מדתו חסד וכנודע וע"כ יתייחס בבחינתו השם א-ל אשר הוא ג"כ שם החסד, וע"כ נראה כי בהיות מדת הק"ו מכוונת לעומת השם א-ל דהוא מדת החסד לכן אין עונש יוצא ממנה זאת בהיותה מדת החסד והיינו טעמא דאין עונשין מן הדין כנלענ"ד דרך אפשר, ע"כ.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ובאמת זה שיש קשר בין י"ג מדות הרחמים וי"ג מדות שהתורה נדרשת בהם נמצא בווה"ק (פינחס רחח). תליסר מכילין דרחמי דאורייתא דאתמר בהון בי"ג מדות התורה נדרשת, ע"כ. וחידוש הרב המגיד הוא שהם מקבילים כל אחת לאחת. ופירש זה נמצא גם במלבי"ם וז"ל (ארץ חמדה פ' בהעלותך), מה שהזכיר שם א-ל י"ל עפמ"ש המקובלים ובראשם האר"י ז"ל שני שמות ה' ה' הם המקור והשרש לי"ג מדות הרחמים והשלש עשרת מדות מתחילין משם א-ל והוא נגד מדות הק"ו מהי"ג מדות שהתורה נדרשת. וע"ש עוד.

<sup>5</sup> ובספר דף על הדף למכות ה: מביא שהגר"נ ליברט ז"ל ביאר דעפ"י יומתק דלכן נרמז בכתוב "ואיש אשר יקח את אחותו וגו' חסד הוא" (ויקרא כ יז) ומתוך לחיך מה שדרשו חז"ל הא דאין עונשין מן הדין דוקא מכאן.

וזכינו לדין שיש קשר אמיץ בין מדת קל וחומר ומדת החסד של הקב"ה. ונחזור לענין שלנו של קריעת ים סוף. כיון שביארנו לעיל שעצם יציאת מצרים עד הגמר של קריעת ים סוף היה בחסד ה' ליתן לנו את תורתו הק' צ"ל שגם מדת א-ל היתה גלויה שם, ובאמת כתיב (במדבר כג, כב), א-ל מוֹצִיָאם מִמִּצְרַיִם. ואם כן יכולים לבאר המדרש פליאה שכתב שהים ראה ברייתא דר' ישמעאל. והיינו שהים ראה השלש עשרה מדות שהתורה נדרשת בהן, ובראשם מדת הקל וחומר, שהיא מקביל למדת החסד של ה' כנ"ל. וא"כ מובן נמי למה קרע הים דוקא כאשר משה רבינו הפסיק מלהתפלל. שעצם גמר יציאת מצרים היתה כולו במדת החסד של הקב"ה, ולא בזכות תפילתו של משה רבינו.<sup>6</sup>

איתא בפרקי אבות (ג, ה), רבי נחוניא בן הקנה אומר, כל המקבל עליו עול תורה, מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות ועול דרך ארץ, ע"כ. והיינו כאשר מקבלים התורה בלב שלם וזוכים למדת החסד שבו מעבירים ממנו הול הדרך ארץ של אומות העולם, וכמו שנקרע הים לברוח מחיילי פרעה.

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ויש להוסיף שגם חלר מקבלת התורה [הפרישה מן אשתו] היתה מבוססת על קל וחומר של <sup>6</sup> משה רבינו, כדאיתא בשבת פח. ואם כן גם הוא היה מעורר את מדת החסד. שאע"פ שהתורה היא מפי הגבורה, החסד של הקב"ה מהפכת כל הדינים לחסדים כדברי הבני יששכר הנ"ל.

## An Understanding of Lag BaOmer<sup>1</sup>

**Daniel Menchel**

The number thirty-three is associated with the laws of both *sefiras ha'omer* (the *omer* counting period) and Lag BaOmer, the semi-holiday celebrated on the thirty-third day of the *omer* counting. The *omer* counting spans the period of forty-nine days beginning from the second night of the festival of Pesach and extending until the festival of Shavuos. On the second day of Pesach, an offering from the season's first barley crop, the *omer* offering, was brought in Beis HaMikdash. After this offering was brought, the people were permitted to eat all the new grains of that year's harvest, which they had not been allowed to eat until that time. Seven weeks later, on Shavuos, an offering of two loaves from the new crop of wheat was brought in Beis HaMikdash, following which the new wheat became permissible for use in other bread offerings.

The commentaries explain that the holiday of Pesach is in fact a preparation for and dependent upon the holiday of Shavuos. Freedom from Egyptian bondage, which Pesach commemorates, is alone insufficient cause to establish a festival. We celebrate Pesach only because that freedom led to receiving the Torah, which Shavuos commemorates. We could not have taken on the yoke of Hashem without first having broken Pharaoh's yoke. In fact, had the Jewish people not sunken to the forty-ninth level of impurity while they were enslaved in Egypt, the Torah could have been given as soon as they left Egypt, and Shavuos could

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<sup>1</sup> This piece and the next are based on the Torah of R' Uziel Milevsky, z'tl as they appear in his sefer, *Ner Uziel*.

have immediately followed Pesach. Before the Jews could fall to the fiftieth level of impurity, Hashem hurried them out of Egypt, commemorated by our rushed baking of the matzos. However, a period of spiritual preparation was necessary before the Jewish people could receive the Torah.

This preparation was accomplished during the forty-nine days between Pesach and Shavuot. Nowadays, these weeks are also a time designated for semi-mourning over the thousands of R' Akiva's disciples who died in a plague during this period. According to most opinions, however, the actual number of days during which certain customs of mourning - such as refraining from wedding celebrations and haircuts - are practiced is 33.

Kabalistic teaching associates the thirty-third day of the *omer* count with the passing of R' Shimon bar Yochai, one of R' Akiva's greatest disciples. However, rather than mourning this *tzaddik's* death, Lag BaOmer is traditionally a day of celebration. Some say that this is because R' Shimon died of natural causes, unlike R' Akiva's first disciples who died because of the plague.

*Ramban*, however, cites a Midrash that states that the forty-nine days of the *omer* period are festive days with semi-holiday status, similar to the days of Chol HaMoed, the intermediate days of Pesach and Succot. This concept has been completely inverted, so that we now observe these days as a period of semi-mourning. How is it that mourning the deaths of R' Akiva's disciples has the power to overturn the intrinsically joyous nature of this period?

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The Gemara (*Yevamos* 62b) teaches that the reason many thousands of R' Akiva's disciples perished in a plague is that they did not show one another proper respect. Historically, this plague occurred some six or seven decades *after* the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash. The pain of that colossal national tragedy was still fresh, yet the Jewish people viewed the disciples' deaths as even greater cause for apprehension and dismay. Although the Beis HaMikdash was gone, as long as there was Torah in the world, there was still hope; but with the deaths of so many thousands of future leaders of the people, the last embers of the nation's hope for rebirth were extinguished. Their long, dark night of exile had begun in earnest.

Like Moshe Rabbeinu at Sinai, the Jews of R' Akiva's generation looked to his disciples to establish and preserve the Torah among the people. To live up to this role, the disciples would have had to acquire the trait that makes one truly a receptacle for Torah: humility, the trait that defined Moshe, the exemplar of Torah leadership. Without humility, it is impossible for a person to rid himself of his preconceived notions in order to allow the words of Hashem to penetrate. Whereas humility opens one's potential to receive the Torah, its reverse - pride - shuts off that potential.

R' Akiva's disciples died of the disease of pride; their pride shut them off, both from one another and from the Word of Hashem. They died, not coincidentally, between Pesach and Shavuos, the period during which every Jew is expected to prepare himself to receive the Torah, to become a receptacle for Torah, just as our ancestors did in the wilderness during their journey to Sinai.

Historically, in the cycle of the Jewish calendar, the period of the *omer* counting underwent a dramatic change - from being a

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semi-festive time, it has become a time of semi-mourning over opportunities lost. Nevertheless, the weeks between Pesach and Shavuos remain propitious ones, during which we can find special success when we attempt to improve our character traits and prepare ourselves to receive the Torah.

The potential for spiritual progress during these weeks is symbolized in the specific offerings brought on these two festivals. The *omer* offering, brought on the second day of Pesach, was made from barley, a grain generally used as animal feed. On Shavuos, however, the two loaves that were offered were made of wheat, a grain generally reserved for man's own use. Throughout the forty-nine days between Pesach and Shavuos, we are involved in ridding ourselves of pride, which is based in the animalistic nature of man, and strive to develop the humility that makes one truly human - raising ourselves from impurity to holiness, making ourselves ever more fitting receptacles for Torah.

The Zohar HaKadosh teaches that before the Third Beis HaMikdash is rebuilt, the hidden mysteries of the Torah will need to be revealed in the world. R' Shimon bar Yochai, whose insights form the basis of the Zohar's teachings, took the first step toward the Beis HaMikdash's reconstruction by revealing these mysteries to his disciples.

In a conversation between this illustrious disciple of R' Akiva and Mashiach (or, in another version, the prophet Eliyahu), R' Shimon asked his interlocutor, "When are you coming?" to which Mashiach replied, "When your teachings will spread throughout the world." When the Torah's concealed teachings are revealed and become widely accepted, then Mashiach will arrive.

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R' Shimon was the one who readied the way for the next stage of receiving the Torah. Where the earlier disciples of R' Akiva failed, he brought new light to the world, initiating the process that will ultimately lead to the redemption of all of Creation. Thus it became a Kabalistic tradition to celebrate R' Shimon's death as a joyous occasion, as a sign of hope for the future, anticipating the coming of the Mashiach.

We find a similarly paradoxical relationship between sadness and celebration relative to the day of Tishah B'Av. It is the most tragic day in the Jewish calendar, the day on which we mourn the destruction of the First and Second Temples, yet the *Tachanun* prayer, in which we express our remorse for having sinned, is omitted from the service on that day, as if Tishah B'Av were a holiday. The reason for this uncharacteristic omission is our tradition that Mashiach will be born on Tishah B'Av. Thus, while Tishah B'Av commemorates the destruction of the Jewish people, it also heralds the nation's rebirth and redemption.

When a specific number appears in the Torah, it has inherent symbolic significance, a significance that is a common theme, uniting all the different instances in which that number is found. The number seven and all multiples of seven represent a cycle that exists within nature and that is defined through nature - the rhythm of the world of physicality. The forty-nine days of the *omer* counting seven times seven - signify a complete cycle in the preparatory process we undergo between Pesach and Shavuos. The culmination of this process, and of the counting of weeks, is the fiftieth day - Shavuos - the day on which the Torah was given. The number fifty, like the number eight, signifies a jump beyond the natural cycle, a breaking past the physical constraints of life; fifty represents eternity. The number forty, on

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the other hand, signifies radical change within nature, a transformation from one extreme to another. Thus, after 40 days of the Flood, the earth was reborn. It took 40 years in the desert for the Jews to become a nation of free people. Moshe Rabbeinu spent 40 days on Har Sinai transforming himself into an angel-like being who could receive the Torah directly from Hashem.

A woman who has borne a child must also undergo a radical change in her status before she can enter the Beis HaMikdash or touch anything holy. This happens after forty days: seven of these days are spent in a state of ritual impurity, and an additional thirty-three days constitute her purification period. The number thirty-three thus represents the transition process, the journey from the natural cycle of seven days to the radical transformation that occurs after forty days.

R' Akiva's disciples *could not* break out of the physical encumbrances of this world; they were caught within the domain of the cycle of nature represented by the number forty-nine, a multiple of seven. They could not reach the number fifty, could not break past the bounds of their physical existence to become fitting receptacles for the Torah, by abandoning the middah of pride and selfish absorption.

Only a later disciple of R' Akiva, R' Shimon bar Yochai, was the exception. He alone was able to transcend the natural cycle of seven, because he had captured the single element needed to reach the level of radical change signified by the number forty: R' Shimon embodied the transition process, the number thirty-three within the number forty, that facilitates entry into the highest realms of Torah life and awareness.

## Yisro and Rus<sup>1</sup>

**Daniel Menchel**

After he converted and became so intimately involved in the internal affairs of the Jewish nation by helping design Moshe's court system, Yisro should have had every reason to remain in the desert with the Jews. Instead the Torah informs us that "he went away to his homeland" (*Shemos* 18:27). The Midrash (*Mechilta*, *Yisro* 1:2) explains that he set out to convince the rest of his family to convert to Judaism, following his example.

Yet the timing of Yisro's departure, on the outset, is jarring. If we assume that the Torah's narrative is arranged according to the chronological flow of events, the juxtaposition of Yisro's departure with the passage that follows it (*Shemos*, Ch. 19) indicates that Yisro left only days before the Revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Some commentators disagree with this interpretation, explaining that in this instance the narrative does not follow the chronological order of events. They cite the *pasuk* "On the next day Moshe sat to judge the people" (ibid. 18:13), which the Sages tell us refers to the day after Yom Kippur (*Mechilta*, *Shemos* 18:13). This proves that Yisro remained in the Israelite camp at least until the month of Tishrei (the month in which Yom Kippur falls), a full four months after the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai in the month of Sivan.

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<sup>1</sup> This piece and the previous one are based on the Torah of R' Uziel Milevsky, z'tl as they appear in his sefer, *Ner Uziel*.

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Rabbi Milevsky says that esoteric texts provide additional proof that Yisro was indeed camped with the Jewish people during the Revelation, based on a startling similarity between Yisro's name and the name of Rus the convert (see *Megillas Rus*). The numerical value of Rus's name is 606 (200 [for *reish*] + 6 [for *vav*] + 400 [for *tav*] = 606), which represents the number of mitzvos that a Jew was obligated to observe over and above the seven Noahide laws to which all mankind are subject. This is an indication of Rus's role as the prototypical convert who accepted upon herself 606 additional commandments.

Interestingly Yisro's name contains the very same letters as that of Rus, with the addition of an extra *yud*, whose numerical value is ten. The *yud* in Yisro's name, the texts say, alludes to the fact that he was superior to Rus in one respect: he personally experienced the Revelation at Mount Sinai and, with his own ears, heard the Ten Commandments.

## The Festival of “Weeks”

### Rabbi Shmuli Motzen <sup>1</sup>

Immediately after leaving Egypt we are headed towards our ultimate goal of accepting the Torah. We count 49 days leading up to *Matan Torah*. We break up these days into seven weeks, hence the name Shavuos.

However, upon further thought, the name seems a little peculiar. The name of each holiday tells us about what happened to us on that day. Pesach is the day Hashem took us out of Egypt, or the day He had pity and skipped over our homes during *makkas bechoros*. Yom Kippur is the day we achieved atonement. We don't call Pesach ‘Thirty’ corresponding to the 30 days before Pesach when we begin to study the halachos of Pesach. We don't call Yom Kippur ‘Forty’ corresponding to the days of Elul and *Aseres Yimei Teshuvah*. Why then is Shavuos the appropriate name for the day of the giving of the Torah?

There is another famous question about these weeks, already asked by the Rishonim. Why do we count up (1,2,3...) these weeks? We are much more familiar with a countdown (...3,2,1) to a momentous occasion. *Matan Torah* is likened to a wedding and we know how the *chasan* and *kallah* count down the days, hours, and even minutes until their *chasunah*.

The *Sefer HaChinuch* answers this last question by saying that we count up to show our tremendous desire to reach the time of *Matan Torah*. However, this still needs to be explained further

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<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Motzen is a member of our morning Kollel Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu.

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because as we mentioned, when we are excited to get to a certain date we count down, not up.

Rav Shimshon Pincus explains the words of the *Chinuch* with a parable. If a person desperately needs a million dollars and he is told that in another hundred days he will receive the money, every day of waiting feels like an eternity. Each day separates him from that golden day when he receives the money. On the other hand, if this man was offered a deal that if he worked for the next one hundred days, he would receive ten thousand dollars per day, so that at the end of the hundred days, he would end up with the million dollars he so desperately needs, he will find the time to be passing by very rapidly.

The difference is that for the first fellow each day is just an empty day, a day of waiting, a day that is in his way and blocks him from his money; whereas for the second man, each day he is building towards his goal, each day he is advancing to his goal of making his million. Each day is cherished and not to be missed, because skipping even one day would prevent him from reaching his goal.

So too, Rav Pincus explains, each of the days leading up to Shavuot is another block, another step preparing us for the Torah. Each day prepares us more to be able to accept the Torah, until we arrive 49 days later fully ready for *Matan Torah*.

Now we can answer the question with which we began. The true name of this holiday is 'Weeks' for it is only possible to accept the Torah after seven weeks of growth, of building ourselves up in preparation for this awesome day. According to the amount of

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preparation we put in during these weeks, so too will be the depth and breadth of our acceptance of the Torah on Shavuos.

May we all sincerely utilize these weeks for growth so that we can come to the Festival of Weeks with seven weeks of growth under our belts!

## Standing for People Performing Mitzvos

### Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

The Mishnah states (*Bikkurim* 3:3) that when the people bringing their *bikkurim* entered the city, all the craftsmen of Yerushalayim would rise for them and inquire into their welfare. The *Yerushalmi* (23a, ArtScroll ed.) asks how craftsman could interrupt their work to rise for the people bringing *bikkurim* when the halachah is that one does not have to suffer a financial loss in order to stand in honor of a Torah scholar. R' Yose the son of R' Bun answers:

בוא וראה כמה גדול כוחן של עושי מצוות – **Come and see how great is the power of those who are performing mitzvos.** שִׁמְפָּנִי  
לְקַדְמֵי זֶקֶן אֵין עוֹמְדִין – **For [craftsmen] do not stand before an elder,**  
וּמִפְּנֵי עוֹשֵׂי מִצְוֹת עוֹמְדִין – **but before those performing mitzvos they do stand.**

This principle has far-reaching ramifications regarding standing for people performing mitzvos. We will explore the various issues discussed by the Poskim.

### A Funeral

The *Yerushalmi* itself supplies another application of this rule. It notes that there is a common practice to rise before a corpse being taken out to burial. The *Yerushalmi* explains that we should not mistakenly think that we are rising for the corpse. Rather, we are rising because of the people who are carrying the corpse; for they are acting with kindness by accompanying the deceased to his final resting place. I.e., they are performing the mitzvah of escorting the dead (see *Mahara Fulda* and *Pnei*



*Moshe* there), and it is for them that we are rising, not for the corpse.

The *Sefer Chasidim* (§580) cites this *Yerushalmi* and also concludes that even if those carrying the corpse are *amei haaretz* one must still rise for them because they are performing a mitzvah, just like those who brought the *bikkurim*. This halachah is further cited in the *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh Deah* 361:4. And the *Taz* there (§2) points out that since the obligation is to stand for the people performing the mitzvah, it does not make any difference as to the stature of the deceased person.<sup>1</sup>

### **A Bris**

The *Rav MiBartenura* (to the Mishnah) adds that for the same reason, one should stand when an infant is carried toward his circumcision – to honor those who are assisting in the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Pischei Teshuvah* (§3) infers further from the *Taz* that there is an independent mitzvah to stand before a deceased Torah scholar; therefore, if the people escorting the corpse are *akum*, one would stand only if the deceased himself was a Torah scholar. *Alei Tamar* (to the *Yerushalmi*) adds the same is true if the people escorting the corpse were doing so only because it was their job; there would be no mitzvah to rise before them since they are not acting out of kindness, but rather to get paid. This is very relevant in a funeral home where the workers are moving the corpse; since they are doing so for pay, one would not rise for them. [However, *Alei Tamar* writes further that this entire discussion refers specifically to craftsmen who will have to stop their work in order to rise, as the *Yerushalmi* states; but someone who is not working would, in fact, have to rise for any deceased person. Accordingly, the nature of the pall-bearers would be irrelevant.]

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performance of a mitzvah. This halachah is accepted by *Chidushei R' Akiva Eiger* (*Yoreh Deah* 265:1 כשמברכים (ד"ה).<sup>2</sup>

This seems to be a simple extension of the *Yerushalmi's* rule, but the *Shoshanim LeDavid* (to the Mishnah, quoted by *Tos. Anshei Shem* there) asks that the case of bringing a baby to his *bris* is apparently very different from the cases of bringing *bikkurim* to the Beis HaMikdash and taking a corpse for burial. For in those latter two cases, the people are performing an actual mitzvah. In the case of *bikkurim* there is a mitzvah to transport them to the Beis HaMikdash (see *Devarim* 26:10, with *Bava Basra* 81b-82a); and there is a mitzvah to escort a corpse for burial (see *Kesubos* 17a). But there is apparently no mitzvah to carry a baby to be circumcised; it is merely a necessary preparation for the mitzvah to be able to take place. In fact, *Shiltei Gibborim* (to *Mordechai*, *Shabbos* §422) writes that *Rabbeinu Meir* would stand during the circumcision, based on the obligation to stand for those bringing *bikkurim*. That is understandable, because at the time of the actual *bris* a mitzvah is being performed. But there is apparently no mitzvah being performed when the baby is being carried in. [For example, no one would say that there is an

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<sup>2</sup> *R' Akiva Eiger* is commenting on the ruling of the *Rama* that everyone should stand when the *bris* is being performed because the *pasuk* states (*II Melachim* 23:6): *The entire nation stood for the bris*. [The *bris* referred to in that *pasuk* was not a circumcision, but it is nevertheless a hint for standing at a *bris*.] The source of this *Rama* is the *Mordechai* cited in the next paragraph above. It is to this halachah that *R' Akiva Eiger* adds that everyone should also stand as the baby is being brought in, as stated by the *Bartenura* to *Bikkurim*. But we need to understand why the ruling of the *Mordechai*, standing for the actual *bris*, cannot be derived from the *Yerushalmi Bikkurim* – as *Shiltei Gibborim* (cited there) states. We will suggest an answer in our Conclusion.

obligation to rise for the person bringing in the knife that will be used for the *bris*.]

*Pri Etz Chaim* (*Bikkurim* §50) makes several attempts to defend the *Bartenura*, and concludes with an interesting suggestion על דרך דרוש. The well-known *Rama* (*Yoreh Deah* 265:11) states that the *sandak* at the *bris* is similar to someone who is burning *ketoress* on the *mizbei'ach*. Accordingly, the one bringing the baby in to the *bris* is like someone bringing the *ketoress* to the *mizbei'ach*. Now, there is a dispute between the *Rambam* and the *Rosh* regarding whether carrying the *ketoress* on days other than Yom Kippur is considered an *avodah*; according to *Rambam* it is not an *avodah*, whereas according to the *Rosh* it is an *avodah* (see *Rabbeinu Chaim HaLevi, Hil. Temidin U'Musafin* 3:4). Hence, according to the view of the *Rosh*, one would have to rise before the person bringing the baby because he is similar to the one performing the *avodah* of bringing the *ketoress* to the *mizbei'ach*.<sup>3</sup>

### Weddings

The *Kenesses HaGedolah* (*Yoreh Deah* §265, *Hagahos Beis Yosef* §2) states that one should stand during a wedding ceremony taking place under the *chuppah* because one is supposed to stand before those who are performing a mitzvah.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Alei Tamar* suggests that we stand in honor of *Eliyahu, malach habris*.

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere (*Even HaEzer* §62, *Hagahos HaTur* §2, cited by *Be'er Heitev* 62:1), he writes that the source to stand is because a *chassan* is considered similar to a king (see *Pirkei D' Rebbi Eliezer*, end of §16); just like one rises for a king, so one should rise for the *chassan*. However, *Maarchei Lev* (Vol. II §127, p. 267b) argues that according to that reason there should be an obligation to stand for him during the

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However, some suggest (see *She'arim Metzuyanim BeHalachah, Kuntress Acharon* 147:13) that this applies only to those who are under the *chuppah*. But those guests outside the *chuppah* are not required to stand because they are in a different domain.

When the *chassan* and *kallah* are walking down the aisle to the *chuppah*, though, this leniency does not apply. Since they are not yet under the *chuppah*, they are in the same domain as the guests. And even if you want to say that they are not performing any mitzvah at the time,<sup>5</sup> their parents taking them to the *chuppah* are performing a mitzvah – i.e. *hachnasas chassan vekallah*. For just as there is a mitzvah to escort a corpse to its burial, there is a mitzvah to escort the *chassan* and *kallah* to their *chuppah*.<sup>6</sup> This is exactly parallel to the halachah cited in

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entire week of *sheva berachos*, since he is considered a king the entire week. He therefore prefers the other reason and suggests that the *Kenesses HaGedolah* himself changed his mind to what he wrote in *Yoreh Deah*. [A possible difference between the two reasons might be the obligation of a Torah scholar to stand. If it is because the *chassan* is considered like a king, perhaps a Torah scholar does not have to stand for a quasi-king. But if it's because he is performing a mitzvah, which the *Yerushalmi* holds is more important than standing before an elder, it might apply to a Torah scholar as well.] See also *Alei Tamar*, who adds *chuppah* to the words of the *Bartenura*.

<sup>5</sup>They would thus be subject to the same issues discussed above regarding those who bring the baby to his *bris*. And they further would not have the status of a king.

<sup>6</sup>Nowadays, the term *hachnasas kallah* evokes images of collecting money to help the needy pay for their wedding. But the literal meaning of the mitzvah is to escort the *kallah* to her *chuppah*. See *Rama, Even HaEzer* 65:1 with commentators for details about this mitzvah. In fact, *VaYevarech David* (Ch. 58), complains that when chairs are set up for the guests to sit on before the *chassan* and *kallah* arrive, the attendees

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*Shulchan Aruch* cited above about rising for those escorting a corpse, and has nothing to do with whether the *chassan* and *kallah* themselves are performing a mitzvah at the time.<sup>7</sup>

### **Gabbai Tzedakah**

We will discuss one final application of this *Yerushalmi*. *Teshuvos Yad Eliyahu* (§54) derives from this *Yerushalmi* that one must stand before someone who is collecting charity for the poor, for the Gemara (*Shabbos* 118b) considers this an important mitzvah. He concludes, though, that if the collector is getting paid, there is no obligation to stand before him since he is collecting for his own benefit, not for the mitzvah.<sup>8</sup>

*Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchak* (Vol. 10 §81), though, differentiates between two types of *gabbaim*. If the *gabbai* was appointed by

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are being denied the opportunity to perform the mitzvah of *hachnasas chassan vekallah*. See also next note.

<sup>7</sup> As to why this halachah is not cited in *Shulchan Aruch* and the Poskim, that is because it was not common practice in earlier times to have all the guests seated to watch the wedding procession as is done nowadays in America. In former times – and even today in *chassidishe* circles, as well as in Eretz Yisrael – all the men would go to escort the *chassan* to the *chuppah*, while the women would escort the *kallah* (see *Nitei Gavriel* 17:2 and *VaYevarech David* Ch. 87, p. 181). There was thus no one left to stand before these people who were performing the mitzvah of *hachnasas chassan vekallah*; it was only when the *chassan* and *kallah* reached the *chuppah* that the obligation of the *Yerushalmi* possibly went into effect. But now that in America weddings are performed this way, the *Yerushalmi* becomes very relevant [unless for some reason the *שושבינין* are not considered to be doing the mitzvah of *hachnasas kallah*].

<sup>8</sup> See also above (fn. 1) regarding those getting paid to carry a corpse.

the community to collect a fixed amount of money for a public need, he is considered to be working for his own benefit if he is getting paid. However, if he is sent from a Torah institution to make people aware of the need, and without his efforts they would not be giving *tzedakah* to support that important cause, he is considered to be involved in a mitzvah even though he is getting paid. There would thus be an obligation to stand before him.

### **Conclusion**

Our survey of where the *Yerushalmi Bikkurim* is invoked has taken us to the laws of a burial, a *bris*, a wedding, and a *gabbai tzedakah*. It is interesting to note that a common element of all of our cases is that they involve a person doing a mitzvah while walking.<sup>9</sup> Apparently, this *Yerushalmi* should not be used to require one to stand before someone performing a mitzvah like wearing tzitzis or sitting in a succah. In this way, it is similar to the obligation to rise before a Torah scholar. For that obligation applies only to a scholar who is walking by; but if you are in a

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, we noted above (fn. 2) that the *Yerushalmi* is disregarded when reasons are mentioned for the custom to stand during the *bris* itself. This makes sense if the *Yerushalmi* applies only to people who are doing a mitzvah by walking. [However, it should be mentioned that the *Shiltei Gibborim* to that *Mordechai* does add the *Yerushalmi* as a reason for everyone to stand during the *bris*. But he seems to be a *daas yachid*.]

Furthermore, although we cited the *Kenesses HaGedolah* who mentions our *Yerushalmi* as the reason to stand for a *chassan* and *kallah* performing the marriage under the *chuppah*, other reasons are given for that requirement as well (see fn. 3).

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*beis hamidrash* and see a Torah scholar studying Torah, there is no obligation to stand for him.<sup>10</sup>

This might be based on how R' Yose bar Avin (R' Yose the son of R' Bun of our *Yerushalmi*) describes the obligation in *Bavli* (*Kiddushin* 33a): בּוֹא וּרְאֵה כַּמָּה חֲבִיבָה מְצוּהָ בְּשַׁעֲתָהּ, *Come and see how beloved a mitzvah is during its time*. The “time” is when someone performing a mitzvah enters our area and will soon be gone. We have to seize the moment to demonstrate our love for mitzvos by showing that person respect.

As a possible support for this conclusion, we cite the *Taz* (ibid.), who derives from this Gemara, דבכל דבר מצוה שאדם "הולך" ומתעסק, *בא, יש לעמוד בפניו*, *that for any mitzvah matter that a person is “going” and occupied in, one should stand for him*. *Birkei Yosef* (loc cit.) asks why the bothers to cite this *Bavli* when he earlier cited our *Yerushalmi*. But based on the above, we can suggest that the *Taz* wants to focus specifically on the “going” aspect here, i.e. a mitzvah a person is doing through walking. It is that type of mitzvah that can be derived from the Gemara’s talk of a mitzvah “during its time.”

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<sup>10</sup> *Toras Chaim* (*Orach Chaim* 102:8) too writes that the *Yerushalmi* cannot require a person to stand in the presence of someone reciting *Kerias Shema*. However, he wants to suggest that the reason one may not sit next to someone davening *Shemoneh Esrei* is based on the *Yerushalmi*. In his view, the *Yerushalmi* applies to all mitzvos that must be performed by standing; one is required to rise for a person performing such a mitzvah. However, his suggestion is difficult because the Rishonim give other reasons for the restriction of the Gemara (*Berachos* 31b) against sitting next to someone davening *Shemoneh Esrei*. This indicates that the *Yerushalmi* is not applicable in that situation either.

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## The *Kabbalas HaTorah* of Purim

Rabbi Elya Caplan<sup>1</sup>

We know that Shauvos is the time for *Kabbalas HaTorah*. But there is also another aspect of *Kabbalas HaTorah*, found on Purim, as we will see.

The Gemara states: (*Yoma* 29a):

קָתִיב "לְמַנְצֶחַ עַל-... אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ. — **R' Abahu said:**  
"אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר — ...It is written: *For the conductor, about the morning hind.* — **Just as in the case of this hind** — **its antlers branch off here and there,**... אָמַר רַב — **so too, the light of this morning sun diffuses here and there...**  
אָמַר רַב — **Why is Esther, who is alluded to in this psalm, compared also with the morning?** — **To tell you that just as morning is the end of the entire night,** — **so, too, the redemption wrought by Esther is the end of all the miracles.**

Rav Nachum Lansky, *shlit"a*, asked the following questions: (1) Why is Esther compared to the end of the night and the beginning of the morning? Wouldn't a better parallel of the

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<sup>1</sup> Our Beis HaMidrash has been fortunate to host a pre-Shacharis Gemara shiur given by Rabbi Caplan for over the past ten years. Being a *talmid* of HaRav Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg zt"l, and להבהחל"ה, HaRav Moshe Shapira shlit"a and HaRav Nachum Lansky shlit"a, the attendees are often treated to *divrei Torah* from these Rabbeim. This shiur has been adapted by Baruch Raczkowski for inclusion in our *kuntress*.

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period of Esther be to compare it to the end of the day and the beginning of the night, since she marked the end of the period of open miracles and the beginning of the period in which Hashem is concealed? (2) We also find that there are miracles in *Tanach* that the Amoraim seemed to do "as a matter of fact." So we must ask how the Gemara says that Esther is the end of miracles. (3) And further, in what way was this period like the "antlers of a hind that branch off" in all directions?

Rav Lansky answered these questions (based on *Sefer Me'or Einayim*) by first explaining that Esther was the beginning of the development of תורה שבעל פה, the Oral Torah, as we know it.

The Gemara states (*Shabbos* 88a):

"וַיִּתְּצֻבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר" — The *pasuk* says (*Shemos* 19:17): ***They stood at the foot of*** (literally: in the bottom of) ***the mountain.***

אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָדִימִי בַּר חָמָא בַּר חָסָא — **Rav Avdimi bar Chama bar Chasa said:**

מְלַמֵּד שֶׁכָּפָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הָהָר — **[This] teaches that the Holy One, Blessed is He, covered them with the mountain as though it were an upturned vat**

אִם אַתֶּם מְקַבְּלִים — **And He said to them:** וְאִם לֹא שָׁם תְּהֵא — **"If you accept the Torah, fine.**

אָמַר רַב — **But if not, your burial will be there!"** מִכָּאן מוֹדָעָא רַבָּה — **Rav Acha bar Yaakov said:**

— **From here stem strong grounds for a notification of coercion regarding acceptance of the Torah.**

אָפַּי עַל פִּי בֶן הַדּוֹר קַבְּלוּהָ בְּיָמֵי אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ — **Rava said:** **Nevertheless, they accepted [the Torah] again in the days of Achashveirosh,**

— **as it is written:** קִיְּמוּ וְקִבְּלוּ — ***The Jews established and accepted,*** which is interpreted to mean: קִיְּמוּ מֵהָ שְׁקִיבֻלוֹ כְּבָר — **They established**

in the days of Achashveirosh **that which they had already accepted** in the days of Moshe Rabbeinu.

*Tosafos* ask how the Gemara can say that Hashem had to force Bnei Yisrael to accept the Torah. Why, they had already expressed their willingness to do so when they said a few days earlier: כָּל אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע, “Everything that Hashem has said, we will do and we will hear” (ibid. 24:7). *Tosafos* answer that they might have changed their minds upon seeing the tremendous fire [that accompanied the Revelation], which temporarily caused their souls to leave their bodies (see *Devarim* 5:22 and *Shabbos* 88b). *Midrash Tanchuma* (Noach §3), however, gives a different answer: The declaration of “We will do and we will hear” signaled acceptance only of the Written Torah. It did not apply to the תורה שבעל פה, which requires extreme effort and discipline in its study and observance. Thus, the people had to be coerced to accept the תורה שבעל פה. And the full acceptance of the תורה שבעל פה took place during the times of Esther.

The first Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos* states:

מֹשֶׁה קִבֶּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינִי וּמָסָרָהּ לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ – Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua, וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ לַזִּקְנִים – and Yehoshua transmitted it to the Elders, וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ לַזִּקְנִים – and the Elders to the *Neviim*, וְהַנְּבִיאִים מָסְרוּהָ לְאַנְשֵׁי כְנָסֶת הַגְּדֹלָה – and the *Neviim* transmitted it to the Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah. הֵם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים – They said three things: וְהָעֲמִידוּ, הָיוּ מְתוּנִים בְּדִין – Be deliberate in justice, וְהָעֲמִידוּ, הָיוּ מְתוּנִים בְּדִין – develop many students, וְהָעֲמִידוּ, הָיוּ מְתוּנִים בְּדִין – and make a fence for the Torah.

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We learn from this Mishnah that before the times of Esther and the Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah the Torah was in the hands of the *Neviim*. This means that the תורה שבעל פה was based on the מסורה [the transmission] that Moshe had received at Sinai; and at that time the תורה שבכתב was still growing, i.e. the *Sefarim* of *Nach* were still being added to the Written Torah. However, after the miracle of Esther, things changed. All נבואה ceased to exist; no *Sefarim* were added to the תורה שבכתב after *Megillas Esther*. At that time, the *Chachamim* had to rely on תורה שבעל פה to answer questions. Questions that used to rely on מסורה would now have to be answered by the *pilpul* of the *Chachamim*. In order to know the Torah properly, the students needed to learn תורה שבעל פה; and this required there to be teachers who would develop the students. This further led to the תנאים ואמוראים, זוגות, the ראשונים, and then the תאחרונים who explained the תורה שבעל פה as it was developing. The Torah began to spread out into the different areas of תורה שבעל פה. The awakening of תורה שבעל פה thus spread in all directions like the antlers of the antelope. And this is why the miracle of Esther was the "beginning of the day," as the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* describes it; for there now developed a new light of Torah – the spread of תורה שבעל פה.

Now, let us further examine the aforementioned Mishnah in *Avos*. It states that the Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah said to make fences around the Torah. This was needed particularly after the miracle of Esther because there was no longer open השגחה to protect כלל ישראל from sin. Now כלל ישראל was "in control" of the תורה and therefore had to make סייגים on their own. The Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah further advised that we be deliberate in judgment. This is so because we can no longer use the direct מסורה from Sinai to issue rulings, but rather we must use סברא which requires, by definition, more thought and

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deliberation. Finally, they said to develop many students. This was necessary because the give and take of learning תורה with פלפול works better with a greater amount of students; whereas before the miracle of Esther, it was preferable for a select few, rather than the multitudes, to accurately memorize the text of the מסורה.

We can now understand what the Gemara means when it says that Esther is the end of all miracles. This is so because the period before the תורה שבעל פה was developed could be characterized as one of “darkness.” It was a time of ואמונתך so that a miracle brought about by a נביא was like a flash of light in the dark night. However, after the time of Esther, when the *Chachamim* were responsible to develop the תורה שבעל פה, they could perform miracles in a “matter of fact” manner. Through the power of the תורה שבעל פה they were able to control nature.

This is why Chanukah and Purim are ימים טובים of תורה שבעל פה. These ימים טובים differ from the שלש רגלים in the following way: The ימים טובים of Chanukah and Purim were initiated by כלל ישראל. The שלש רגלים came from Hashem without our input.

him of the great spiritual heights he could have attained given the uniqueness of the day. On that account, a *bechor* is obligated to fast. Additionally, it is for this reason that female first-borns and heads-of-households are not obligated to fast. Even though they were included in *makkas bechoros*, they were never initially chosen to lead the *avodah*.

On the other hand, we cannot forget the fact that Erev Pesach is ultimately a joyous day because Hashem spared all first-borns

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from the plague. Perhaps, that is why we go out of our way to observe the significance of the day, but ultimately proceed to break the fast by attending a *siyum*.

Moreover, amidst the sadness of losing the *avodah*, there is also the hope that one day the *avodah* will be returned to the *bechoros*. It is hinted to in several Midrashim, and posited explicitly in the *Ohr HaChaim* (*Bamidbar* 3:45), that the *avodah* will return to the *bechoros* when the *Bayis Shelishi* is built לעתיד לבא (although the Kohanim and Leviim will also continue to serve). As all of *Klal Yisrael* prepares to celebrate the *Chag* of *Geulah*, *bechorim* have an additional reason to celebrate the *Geulah* and long for the building of the *Bayis Shelishi*, במהרה, בימינו, אמן.

## Internet Safety Revisited <sup>1</sup>

**Question: I have the latest iPhone/iPod Touch/iPad (at least the latest iOS 7). What kinds of protections are available?**

**Answer:**

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Please note that while the information below uses the iPhone as an example. The procedures and options are the same on the iPod Touch and iPad.

There are two approaches to securing an iPhone, depending on your needs: using iPhone built-in Parental Controls or/and using Qustodio product.

iPhone built-in Parental Controls – the iPhone has the best built-in Parental Controls of any Smart device on the market today. You can use it to completely block off Internet, purchasing apps, purchasing music, watching movies, and playing games, just to mention a few. You can also use the built-in Parental Controls to filter Internet activity as we will discuss shortly. These features in and of themselves are a powerful protection against misuse.

If you do need access to the internet, but would like to filter and monitor the internet activity, there is a third-party product on the market called Qustodio. Qustodio will filter the internet on the iPhone and allow a parent or other "internet-*shomer*" to view or

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<sup>1</sup> In our inaugural *kuntress*, two years ago, we introduced the issue of internet safety and the availability of the TFSA to educate and aid in protecting ourselves and our children. We present a newly-relevant issue presented by the TFSA.

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receive email logs of web activity (e.g. what sites were visited). You can also customize what sites are blocked and what sites are allowed via the Qustodio website, as well as set time limits on web use and restrict usage to specific times of each day of the week. These features are all free. You can also use Qustodio to filter and monitor computers and laptops. The free version will filter and monitor five users and five devices.

For full protection with Qustodio you **MUST** also use the iPhone's built-in Parental Controls to ensure there is no way around Qustodio. The built-in Parental Controls also have a web filter. This filter does not monitor web activity and cannot be configured without having the device in-hand. For this reason and others we do not suggest relying on the built-in web filtering, especially if children are the ones using these devices. It is important to set up the built-in web filtering, however, to block web access through mobile ads that many apps contain.

In past versions of the Apple system there was one weakness in the built-in Parental Controls. Even with Safari (the built-in web browser) disabled, ads in apps such as games will open in a quasi-browser. There is no address bar. You can't type in any web addresses but all links on the webpage displayed by the ad are enabled as are links on pages reached from those first links and so on. This browser is now governed by the built-in filtering software. For this reason it is important to ensure the built-in filtering is enabled even if Safari itself is disabled. If a user clicks on an ad and tries to use a link in the ad to go to another web page they will be blocked by the built-in website filtering. Website filtering is located in the Settings under General > Restrictions > Websites.

Please understand, there is always a way around everything. The only way around this setup is to reset the iPhone to factory defaults, which will delete all content on the phone. A vigilant parent (or other internet-*shomer*) will quickly realize something is wrong, when he stops seeing internet activity reports from Qustodio and can intervene. We also suggest arranging a dedicated time to check the device each week to ensure the Parental Controls are still in place and have not been tampered with.<sup>2</sup>

For further questions on this and other Internet safety related topics, please feel free to contact TFSA at [support@tfsa.org](mailto:support@tfsa.org).

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<sup>2</sup> Another important point is that you should always keep your wireless internet access password protected in order to ensure your family's safety and that of your neighbor. For more information, contact us.

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## Star-K Insect Checking Quick Reference Guide<sup>1</sup>

This guide is applicable only for conventional (non-organic) produce found in North America. We do not recommend using organic produce since it is often very highly infested.

### A. Asparagus

- 1) **There are two areas that need checking. Under the side leaves and the top leafy area.**
  1. **If tops will be removed and sides peeled, no checking is necessary.**
- 2) Do NOT pre-wash the produce.
- 3) **Checking the sides** – two methods:
  1. Peel ALL the asparagus you will be using. No further checking ON THE SIDES needed. The tops still need to be checked as per instructions below.
  2. Check under the side leaves of three servings (about 15 spears). If no insects found, all in that lot may be used.
- 4) **Checking the tops:** Take three servings of asparagus and agitate the tops in water (like herbs – see above below F 2-5)

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<sup>1</sup> We were fortunate this winter to hear a presentation by Rabbi Sholom Tendler of the Star-K regarding demonstrating practical methods of checking our produce. He has supplied us with an updated version (2/7/14) of his handout, which we have adapted for our *kuntress*. More detailed information as well as additional product information can be found in the Star-K Guide to Checking Vegetables, available at [www.checkforinsects.com](http://www.checkforinsects.com).

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**B. Barley**

- 1) Place all the barley you wish to use in a white bowl.
- 2) Fill the bowl with water, a few inches over the top of the barley.
- 3) Allow to sit for 15-20 minutes.
- 4) If there are insects present, they will float to the top.

**C. Broccoli/Cauliflower**

- 1) Wash well **using warm water** (for best results, use a detergent solution.)
- 2) Prepare a basin with (a non-bleach and non-toxic) dishwasher liquid solution.  
**PLEASE NOTE THAT EVERY HEAD MUST BE CHECKED. WE DO NOT ALLOW SAMPLE CHECKING ON BROCOLLI OR CAULIFLOWER.**
- 3) Let product soak in solution for 15-30 seconds.
- 4) Agitate product vigorously in the solution.
- 5) Check the water using a light box, either in the basin or on a thrip cloth.
- 6) If any insects are found, repeat steps 1-5. This can be done up to three times. If insects are still found on the third try, the produce should not be used.

**D. Celery**

- 1) Remove leaves
- 2) Wash stalks well under stream of water while rubbing with your hand or a vegetable brush.

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E. **Garlic (whole)** – There seems to currently be an infestation of mites in between the layers of the garlic peels. The garlic cloves themselves have no infestation issues. As a precaution, it is recommended to rinse off the cloves. Roasting the whole bulb with the peels is not advisable. We are still researching this issue and will update this guide with further information as it becomes available.

F. **Grapes**

- 1) Break larger clusters into smaller ones.
- 2) Rinse in direct stream of water.
- 3) No further checking necessary.

G. **Leafy Herbs** (dill, parsley, cilantro, spinach, etc. **EXCEPT mesclun, spring mix or any other mix of herbs**)

- 1) Wash ALL the produce needed for immediate use (for best results, use a detergent solution.)
- 2) Prepare a basin with (a non-bleach and non-toxic) dishwasher liquid solution.
- 3) Agitate three bunches or servings of product in the solution.
- 4) Check the water using a light box, either in the basin or on a thrip cloth.
- 5) If any insects are found, repeat steps 1-4. This can be done up to three times. If insects are still found on the third try, the produce should not be used.
- 6) **For mesclun, spring mix (or any other mix of herbs), samples must be checked from each bag/box and the lot # is not enough to ensure uniformity.**

**H. Mushrooms (all types)**

- 1) Wash well, especially the fan area under the crown.
- 2) No further checking necessary.

**I. Pineapple - There is currently an infestation issue of mites. The mites are being found in the crown and outer rind, and also the inside the blossom cups and crevices if the pineapple is not peeled properly (see picture below). The pineapple should be peeled until only yellow fruit is visible (see picture below). The fruit and cutting board should be rinsed after peeling since the insects often crawl onto the cutting board. The crown and rind should not be used on decorative platters since the insects can transfer to other fruit.**

**J. Romaine (and all open head lettuces - Green Leaf, Boston, Butter etc.)**

- 1) Wash ALL the produce needed for immediate use (for best results, use a detergent solution.)
- 2) Check three heads either leaf by leaf or by preparing a basin with (a non-bleach and non-toxic) dishwasher liquid solution.
- 3) Agitate product in the solution,
- 4) Check the water using a light box, either in the basin or on a thrip cloth.
- 5) If any insects are found, repeat steps 1-4. This can be done up to three times. If insects are still found on the third try, the produce should not be used.

## Section VI: Freedom to Observe the Torah

### **K. Closed head lettuces - Iceberg, Cabbage (green or purple)**

- 1) If small quantity, pre-wash all produce. If using large quantity (i.e. a case) do NOT pre-wash produce prior.
- 2) Check three complete heads from each case (either leaf by leaf or in water; see romaine steps 2-4).
- 3) If no insects are found, the entire case may be used.
- 4) If any insects are found, all the heads in the case must be peeled and washed. Then proceed like romaine steps 1-4.

### **L. Scallions/Leeks**

There are two potential issues with scallions and leeks. Leafminers, which dig inside the stalks and can not be removed with washing, and thrips which are inside the hollow part of the tubes or in between the layers of the stalks.

- 1) Do NOT pre-wash the produce.
- 2) Visually inspect ALL pieces for leafminer trails. If any are found, remove that area.
- 3) Take three scallions or leeks and check the area in between the stalks.
- 4) Slice open three pieces, from top to bottom (as far down as you wish to use).
- 5) Visually inspect the interior of all three pieces for insects.
- 6) If no insects are found, all the scallions from that lot may be used.
- 7) If any insects are found, all the scallions must be sliced open and washed. Then repeat step 3-5.

**M. Strawberries (Fresh only; Frozen, cannot be washed and are required to have a reliable *hashgocho*). Dried strawberries do not need checking.**

- 1) Prepare a basin of detergent solution, using at least two tablespoons of detergent per gallon of water.
- 2) Agitate the strawberries in the solution for 10-15 seconds.
- 3) Let the strawberries soak for at least one minute in the solution.
- 4) Rinse off each berry.
- 5) It is advisable to remove the tops. Otherwise, pay careful attention to rinsing off the top area well.
- 6) No further checking is required.

**N. Do NOT use:**

- 1) Artichoke (bottoms are acceptable with *hashgocho*)
- 2) Brussel sprouts (except frozen Jewish brands with a reliable *Hashgocho*)

**O. Dried Fruit**

- 1) **Carob** – Look for holes on the outside, which are an indication of infestation. Then break open in several places to check for infestation. If it is infested, white stringy webbing will be visible on the inside. Holes on the outside may also indicate infestation.
- 2) **Dates** –It is recommended to slice open a few out of the container and check inside.
- 3) **Figs** - It is recommended that one open and do a visual inspection on a few out of the container (even if they have a hechsher). If they have no insects, one can assume the rest do not.

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P. **No checking required** (make sure they are properly sealed and stored in a cool dry area. Improper storage can lead to infestation issues.)

- 1) Beans
- 2) Blueberries; fresh or frozen. (EXCEPT: Organic, wild, or pick-your-own)
- 3) Cherries
- 4) Corn
- 5) Flour
- 6) Nuts (unless product of Israel)
- 7) Onions
- 8) Peppers (all)
- 9) Raisins (Name brand preferred as other brands may have been stored for long periods of time. When storing at home, make sure to keep in cool, dry place.)
- 10) Spices
- 11) Tomatoe

## **Rav Hirsch Diskind, z"l**

### **Rabbi Paysach Diskind**

Every society has its own unique culture. The culture of a given society is expressed by the way people talk, the way they eat, and the way they think – by their priorities and aspirations. The culture is a byproduct of many components that converge on the given society. These components include the political situation, the economic situation, the demographics of the people, the natural resources, the technological advances of the people, and so on. In our day we have seen dramatic shifts in the cultural norms, much of which is driven by the advance of technology.

In Yiddishkeit, too, there is a culture, a unique culture. Our culture is also a byproduct of what happens in our society, namely the adherence to the mitzvos. When our society follows the laws of the Torah in the context that they were intended, the culture of the Torah develops. There is a sharp distinction, however, between the cultures of other peoples and that of the Torah. Others do not map out how their culture should look; rather they live their lives based on their given circumstances, and the culture grows by itself. The Jewish culture, on the other hand, was carefully crafted by the Director of history for the specific purpose to create a paradigm for the rest of humanity to look at and to learn how a people should behave. The mission given to us is to be a "kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation." This carefully crafted culture was so designed through the mitzvos of the Torah. In other words, the purpose of the mitzvos is not limited to the inherent value of the mitzvah itself. Rather the purpose of the mitzvah is to mold the person who performs the mitzvah and to mold the society that guards those mitzvos.

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## Section VIII: Memorials – Men of the Torah

Perhaps this is why Chazal teach us that serving *talmidei chachamim* is greater than learning from them; for the learning will only impart the raw Torah, whereas serving them will reveal the whole culture that permeates the *talmid chacham*, the essence of what the Torah is attempting to achieve.

My father, *zichrono levrachah*, was a Jew whose life reflected the genuine Torah culture. A close study of his behaviors, his aspirations and his goals reveals the beauty of the Torah's culture. The joy he had in being a member of Hashem's beloved people was a real part of him. It was a joy that was both infectious and contagious. The culture was simply part of him.

To illustrate a few such points I would like to share a few stories. Within the Torah culture is the appreciation and awareness that Hashem is constantly with us and there is never a need to feel abandoned.

In his final months the pain that my father suffered was so extreme that he told me once that he had not known that pain could reach such heights. In spite of this pain, he would often exclaim during a bout of pain, "Wow, how Hashem loves me so! As Shlomo HaMelech writes, '*He who Hashem loves does he reprimand.*' " My father understood with a clarity that all what Hashem does is only for the good of the recipient. He also understood that Hashem feels the pain of the sick person and bears the pain just as the person himself. If Hashem places a person in pain, it hurts Hashem even more than the sick person. So if in spite of all this pain Hashem continues giving pain it must be of great benefit to receive it. Oh! How fortunate I am that Hashem loves me so.

When one is cognizant of Hashem's closeness, there is natural love and warmth that develops towards Hashem. All cultures have their passions for any given activity or ideal. These passions are evident in the lyrics which are given to their music. The Torah culture also has its passions that are identified by their lyrics. Among my father's favorite songs was a song to which his Rebbe, Rav Hutner זי"ל, composed the tune and then attached it to the words of *achas shaalti*. The message of these lyrics depicts the longing that the singer has to be close to Hashem and bask in the warmth of His company. This is a song that reaches to the deep flowing currents of emotions that come from the heart.

His love of Hashem gave birth to the joy he experienced when a *kiddush* Hashem occurred. He loved Hashem's children as one would love the children of a dear friend. I believe that this is how he was able to remember all of his *talmidos*, their husbands, and children. It was not a function of his memory but a function of his love. His love and concern for them was so real that he naturally remembered them. They were always on his mind.

One such story was related to me by Steve Levin who married Rena Ambush, a *talmidah* of my father. Many years after Steve and Rena were married my father met Steve and greeted him with his wide warm welcoming smile. Steve thought that clearly Rabbi Diskind does not know me and must think that I am somebody else. He therefore introduced himself as Steve Levin to my father. My exclamation "Of course I know who you are, you married Rena!"

May it be Hashem's will that the lessons my father taught should continue bearing fruit as they increase *k'vod shamayim*.

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## **Rav Naphtali Menachem Mendel Deutsch, z”l Aharon Cheifetz**

My father-in law, Rav Naphtali Menachem Mendel Deutsch, z”l, was *niftar* on 20 Iyur 5773 in Detroit. He was an extremely bright and giving person. He was also a big talmid chacham who was always learning Torah.

He grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan with his twin sister. His father worked as a tailor. His mother lost her sight when he was ten years old so he and his sister took over most of the household responsibilities. He learned in MTJ and then in Rav Gustman’s yeshiva, where he received semichah. Before Pesach, he worked as a kneader at the Shatzer Matza Bakery in Brooklyn. By the end of the day he could barely move his arms from the hard work of kneading the dough by hand. After he received semichah, he became a Rebbe in Yeshiva Bais Yehudah in Detroit where he met his wife, my mother-in-law; they lived there until moving to Long Branch, NJ where he became the Hebrew principal of the Hillel Yeshiva. They later moved to Cincinnati where he became principal of the Hebrew Day school until he left to go into business. He moved his family back to Detroit when his children got older so they could receive a proper Yeshiva education.

His son, Rav Avraham Deutsch learned in the Telshe Mesivta in Cleveland. My father-in-law would often travel to Telshe to spend time with him and check on his progress in learning. At the *levayah*, my brother-in-law reminisced about the time he was called in to Rav Gifter’s zt”l office. He was very nervous as he was just a high school bachur and he did not know why he was

being called to the Rosh HaYeshivah's office. Rav Gifter *zt"l* told him that his parents had come to talk to him about his not being happy in the shiur he was in and his wish to move to another shiur. Rav Gifter then said that he had seen many mothers cry about their sons being unhappy in yeshiva but never a father; he could therefore switch to whichever shiur he wanted.

My family was *zocheh* to spend the whole of last Pesach with my in laws, which is something we never did before. My father-in-law loved spending time with his children and grandchildren, learning with them, playing chess or just talking with them. He was always willing to help people, financially, training them how to run a business, giving advice or tutoring in science.

His presence will be especially missed by his family at Pesach time. Besides enjoying the Seder and its preparation, he loved to cook *kremselach* and other Pesach treats for his family. May his memory be blessed.

## Dr. Yisrael Meir Rock, ז"ל

### Avie Rock <sup>1</sup>

My father, Yisrael Meir Rock ה"מ, was a teacher, a student, a ירא שמים and a בעל חסד. He had many other fine characteristics, but these are the ones that I think best describe his character.

I would like to describe his approach to Hashem and people by sharing not only some of the many things that he taught me, but also his unique style of teaching them.

My father enjoyed being precise. It goes without saying that he always tried to be accurate, but being able to convey a message based on a precise usage of language gave him extra joy. For example, when my father gave צדקה or did חסד he always did it quietly and discreetly. When I would say, "If you do that nobody will know it was you," he would point to the heavens and say "no **body** will know, but some **One** will." He once told my mother ע"ה that he could probably buy her **anything** she wanted, but certainly couldn't buy her **everything** she wanted.

Dad had some favorite *vertlach*. Most of them included a precise reading of a text in a way that provided a twist and an important

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<sup>1</sup> When asked to put a *zikaron* in this year's *kuntress* for my father, I immediately turned the *kavod* to my brother. He is much more eloquent and has memories of my father א"ה that beautifully depict his true and inner character. Avie, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to you for honoring dad in such a tremendous way. You portrayed him in a way that only you can. It was an honor both to his memory and his legacy, and should be an *aliyah* for his *neshamah*. And we both thank Rabbi Naiman and BMR for giving us this opportunity. Moshe

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message. For example, it was important to dad that we be דן לכף זכות, give people the benefit of the doubt. In his inimitable style my father used a famous Rashi to make this point. The first *pasuk* in *parshas Noach* says (6:9): גִּם אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו, *Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations.*

*Rashi* comments: יֵשׁ מְרֻבּוּתֵינוּ דּוֹרָשִׁים אוֹתוֹ לִשְׁבַח כ"ש שֶׁאֵלּוּ הָיָה בְּדוֹר צַדִּיקִים הָיָה צַדִּיק יוֹתֵר, יֵשׁ שְׂדוֹרָשִׁים אוֹתוֹ לִגְנָא לִפִּי דּוֹרוֹ הָיָה צַדִּיק וְאֵלּוּ הָיָה נַחֲשָׁב לְכֻלָּם. *There are some among our Rabbis who explain it to his credit: all the more so had he been in a generation of righteous people he would have been more righteous. But there are others who explain it to his discredit: in comparison to his own generation he was righteous, but had he been in the generation of Abraham he would not have been considered of any importance.* Dad would say, “See, those who are דן לכף זכות, *those who judge people favorably*, are called *our Rabbis*; but those שְׂדוֹרָשִׁים אוֹתוֹ לִגְנָא, *those who judge to discredit*, are just יֵשׁ, *others*. He would then remind us that we wouldn’t want to be just יֵשׁ.

My father lived in a time of great social, cultural, religious and technological change. Technologically he saw developments from the ball point pen, to the electric typewriter, to the moon landings, to microwave ovens and computers. He lived through wars including World War II, the Vietnam War, and Israel’s wars. He saw cultural and societal changes such as the civil rights movement, Woodstock, and the increasing promiscuity in public and in the media. Through all of that, dad held firmly to a Torah way of life. He explained the need to lead a Torah life with a unique interpretation of one of the questions asked to a person when he goes back to Hashem. The question is (see *Shabbos* 31a): קִבַּעַת עֲתִים לַתּוֹרָה, *Did you establish times for Torah?* This is typically understood to mean “did you regularly

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set aside time for torah study?” Dad had his own unique interpretation of what was being asked. He would interpret the question to mean “did you קובע, *establish*, the עתים, *the times*, according to the Torah, or did you try to establish the Torah to match the times?” In other words, did you try to make the Torah fit your life, or did you make your life fit the Torah. He clearly chose the latter.

My father was at his core a teacher. To him learning did not just happen in a classroom or a Beis Midrash. To dad, all of life was an opportunity to teach, as the following story will demonstrate. Years ago, when I was a teen, my father needed a new car. At that time cars came standard with AM radios. FM radios cost an extra eighty dollars. (CD’s weren’t even close to being invented). Dad took me car shopping with him. At the dealer I told my father that he should get the radio; after all, I said, “Eighty dollars is not that much money.” My dad smiled at me and said “Here’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to give you eighty dollars. You can keep it, or use it to get the FM radio.” Suddenly, for me, buying the radio was a much bigger deal. That is how he taught me that it easier to spend other people’s money than to spend your own.

Dad did not just teach, he also learned. My earliest memories of my father include seeing him on the sofa reviewing the *parshah* and learning *Tanach*. When he moved to Florida, one of his criteria for living in a neighborhood was that he be able to find *chavrusos*. In his later years, he had a set amount that he would learn every day. Even when he was ill and his memory was declining he continued to learn. I recently opened one of his Gemaras and saw that he had written dates in the margins to help keep his place from day to day.

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I think my father's greatest *middah* was accepting עול מלכות שמים, Hashem's will. My dad was a research scientist, so understanding the "how and why" of things was very important to him. When it came to halachah however, it was enough to know that it was the will of Hashem. It was important to him, that no matter how uncomfortable or difficult a halachah might be, it should be observed correctly and in detail. He didn't work around it and didn't try to find or invent leniencies – he joyfully and determinedly did it the way it was supposed to be done.

My father was *niftar* on Chol HaMoed Succos. As my wife so wisely pointed out at the *siyum* for his *sheloshim*, this was his final lesson to us. There is probably no more awkward, difficult and complicated a period in which to be an *onein/aveil* than Chol HaMoed Succos. There is a funeral, but one is not allowed to express their sadness in a eulogy. It leads into Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. It is a mitzvah to be joyous on those days; public mourning is forbidden; people are uncomfortable around the *aveil* because they don't quite know what they are allowed to say. After Yom Tov the *shivah* resumes. The halachah dictates the *aveil's* emotions. For a week and a half, the *aveil* feels what halachah says he should feel, not what he wants to feel. Dad left us with that lesson – we should do what Hashem wants us to do the way Hashem wants us to do it. We should be קובע our lives to the torah no matter what the עת – regardless of the situation.

May Hashem grant us that we be able to live up to the lessons that my father taught, and that in the merit of doing Hashem's will, the *neshamah* of אבי מורי ישראל מאיר בן זאב הכ"מ should be granted an *aliyah* to the highest places in Gan Eden.



## – ענין סדר ליל פסח – The Seder on Pesach Night<sup>1</sup>

The Ramchal begins his discussion about the Seder by explaining the effects that the Exodus had on Yisrael:

**Through the Exodus from Egypt, the people of Yisrael were selected and separated from all of the other nations במדרגתם להיות מתעלים – to rise up in stature from ordinary physical humanity<sup>2</sup> ולהיות ראויים להתעטר בעטרת הקדשה – and to become deserving of being crowned with the crowns of holiness.<sup>3</sup>** This caused a profound change in Yisrael.

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<sup>1</sup> This is an elucidation of a chapter in the Ramchal's *Maamar HaChachmah*, which will be published bs"d as part of the *Elucidated Maamarei HaRamchal* in the not too distant future.

<sup>2</sup> In *Derech Hashem* (Part II Ch. 4) the Ramchal explains how the level of humanity fell to a more physical state after the transgression of Adam HaRishon. Hashem gave mankind a limited opportunity to return to Adam's previous state, and by the generation of the *Haflagah*, only Avraham Avinu had taken advantage of this opportunity. The Ramchal now explains how Avraham's descendants in Egypt completed the process that their ancestor had started.

<sup>3</sup> In *Derech Hashem*, the Ramchal writes (IV 4:9): *Although Avraham Avinu, a"h, was selected to be chosen for Hashem, so that he and his children should be set apart from all the nations, nonetheless, they still had no opportunity to gather strength and establish themselves as a perfected nation and to be worthy of the crowns befitting them because of the evil that was spreading its darkness over them and the initial*

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– **For instead of the way things were from Adam HaRishon’s transgression until that time, when the darkness of physicality prevailed in the human body,**      ומה ששעד אותו הזמן היה ח’ ששך החמרייות מתגבר בגוף – **and prevented the light of Torah and holiness from shining,**      והיה אחר  
– **after Yisrael suffered the affliction and great subservience that they suffered in Egypt**      – **Hashem’s attribute of justice was appeased,**      ונשאר המקטרג בלי טענה  
– **the accuser remained without any claim.**<sup>4</sup>      – **and Yisrael became ready to be illuminated by the Divine light.**<sup>5</sup>

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*contamination from Adam’s transgression that had not yet left them.*  
[See note 236 there.]

In *Kelalim Rishonim* (§26), the Ramchal writes that the “crowns” represent the level of sanctity one gains through his service in this world. [The Gemara in *Berachos* (17a) states: *In Olam HaBa the righteous will be sitting with their crowns on their heads, receiving pleasure from the glow of the Shechinah.*] See מאמר עילוי אחר עילוי in the back of this work, note 24, for further details about these crowns. The crowns were also mentioned in *Maamar Halkarim*, Chapter 8; see note 2 there. See also above, Chapter 1, note 17.

<sup>4</sup> In *Derech Hashem* (II 3:8), the Ramchal explains that when people are punished in proportion to their indiscretions, the attribute of Hashem’s justice is appeased (see note 135 there). In this context, it was the suffering of Yisrael in Egypt that rectified the sin of Adam HaRishon. [Evidently, it was the accumulation of suffering that lead to this purification, for along the way, Yisrael reached the forty-ninth level of *tumah*.]

<sup>5</sup> We will see below that this was necessary for Yisrael’s redemption from Egypt.

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The rectification that was realized through the Exodus has ramifications even in our times:

כל זֶה מִתְחַדֵּשׁ – On this first night of Pesach,  
 – all of this is renewed, וּמִתְעוֹרֵר מֵהַ שְׁנֵי עֲשָׂרָה  
 – and the accomplishments of the first [Pesach] are  
 reawakened.<sup>6</sup> וְזֶה עֲצָמוֹ סִיּוֹעַ אֶל הַגְּאֻלָּה הָאַחֲרוֹנָה שֶׁתַּעֲשֶׂה –  
 This itself is a catalyst for the final redemption to occur.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> That is, every year on this day, every member of Yisrael is again elevated beyond the ordinary physical state of humanity. Additionally, Yisrael, as a nation, rises to a new, higher level (*MiMishnas Shel HaRamchal* p. 185).

<sup>7</sup> This is a second achievement of Seder night: the annual reduction of the power of physicality and evil brings the final redemption, when evil will be totally eradicated, closer (*ibid.* p. 188, citing *Shiv'im Tikunim* §4 and *R' Moshe David Vali, Parshas Bo* p. 188, who make the same point). [*Siach Yitzhak* (*maamarim* based on *R' Yechezkel Levenstein*, p. 80) notes that the Ramchal states in *Derech Hashem* (IV 7:6) that on each holiday, the light that originally shone, shines again. Here Ramchal states that Pesach has the additional advantage of bringing the final redemption closer.]

*MiMishnas Shel HaRamchal* (p. 191) adds that we can now understand why we pour a cup of wine for Eliyahu HaNavi at the Seder, and devote the second half of the Seder to prayers and requests for the final redemption. Once we have become elevated from our ordinary level (especially through the mitzvos of the first part of the Seder, as we will soon learn), we are qualified to pray for the ultimate revelation of Hashem's Oneness.

The Ramchal now begins a discussion about the mitzvos of the Seder:<sup>8</sup>

– **However, the primary accomplishment of the Seder depends on four things:** והם פסח – **They are: the *pesach* offering, matzah, maror, and the four cups** of wine. – ועתה נבאר ענינם – **We will now explain, one by one, the concepts behind each of them.**

The Ramchal begins by explaining maror:

– **We have already explained** in the first paragraph of this chapter **that the refinement of the exile in Egypt** – **is what purified Yisrael** – **and removed them from the contamination** that was caused by the sin of Adam כְּדִי – **so that they could later receive the illumination of holiness.**<sup>9</sup> וְהָיָה עֵינֵן הַמְרֹרֶר שֶׁהוּא

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<sup>8</sup> That is, the very fact that the night of the fifteenth of Nissan has arrived once again reinforces the accomplishments of the original Exodus. The Ramchal now explains how the mitzvos that we perform at the Seder are needed for the great *tikun* that takes place on this night (*MiMishnaso Shel HaRamchal* p. 194; see there for discussion about the role of explaining the “reasons” for mitzvos).

<sup>9</sup> We will learn in the next section how Hashem’s illumination was needed to attract the souls of Yisrael to Hashem. This could not be accomplished as long as their bodies were still sullied with the contamination from Adam HaRishon’s transgression. The suffering of

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"וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם" – **This is the concept of maror, which is expressed in the *pasuk* (Shemos 1:14): *They embittered their lives.***<sup>10</sup>

The second major component of the Seder – the *pesach* offering:  
 וְהָיָה בְּשִׁגְלָה לְהֵם גְּלוֹי מֵאֹר קִדְשָׁתוֹ ית' – **When the time came for [Yisrael] to be redeemed,**  
 וְהָיָה בְּשִׁגְלָה לְהֵם גְּלוֹי מֵאֹר קִדְשָׁתוֹ ית' – **it was necessary for a revelation of the holiness of Hashem's illumination to be revealed to [Yisrael],**  
 וְהָיָה בְּשִׁגְלָה לְהֵם גְּלוֹי מֵאֹר קִדְשָׁתוֹ ית' – **to which the souls of Yisrael could cleave**  
 וְהָיָה בְּשִׁגְלָה לְהֵם גְּלוֹי מֵאֹר קִדְשָׁתוֹ ית' – **and be drawn to it.**<sup>11</sup>

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slavery cleansed their bodies of this contamination so that their souls could benefit from the illumination of Hashem.

[The Ramchal is saying here (see also *Derech Hashem*, IV 4:9, cited above, note 2, and *ibid.* 8:1), that Yisrael's bodies were purified of this contamination while they were still in Egypt. However, this is seemingly difficult because the Gemara in *Shabbos* (146a; see *Rashi* there) states that Yisrael became purified from this contamination when they stood on Har Sinai. The Ramchal apparently means that the process of this purification begun in Egypt, but reached its final stage at Sinai.]

<sup>10</sup> Thus, when we eat maror at the Seder, we cleanse our bodies of impurities that can block Hashem's illumination from shining upon our souls.

<sup>11</sup> This is in addition to purifying their *bodies* of contamination, which was accomplished through the harsh slavery, as explained in the previous paragraph. This paragraph describes the illumination of Hashem that benefited the *souls* of Yisrael. [In *Derech Hashem* (IV 4:9) as well, the Ramchal states two steps. First, the slavery removed the contamination, and then "at the proper time Hashem strengthened His *hashpaah* and illumination over Yisrael."]

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משפלותם – They would thereby be elevated from their lowliness, – and – וַיִּתְּפְדוּ מִן הַטֹּמֶאֶת שֶׁהָיוּ שְׁקוּעִים בָּהּ – become separated from the *tumah* in which they were immersed. – וְזֶה נַעֲשֶׂה עַל יְדֵי קֶרְבֵּן הַפֶּסַח – This was accomplished through the service of the *pesach* offering, – וְבוֹ – in whose context it was stated to them (*Shemos* 12:21): – "מִשְׁכּוֹ וְקַחוּ לָכֶם" – Draw forth and take for yourselves... – שֶׁפָּרְשׁוֹ ז"ל – which Chazal explained to mean (*Shemos Rabbah* 16:2): – מִשְׁכּוֹ וְיָדִיכֶם מֵעִ"ז וְקַחוּ לָכֶם – Withdraw your hands from idolatry and take for yourselves a sheep for the *mitzvah* of the *pesach* offering.<sup>12</sup>

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*Mizmor LeDavid* (§14 p. 329) explains this passage of the Ramchal with *Ritva's* commentary on the Hagadah, which states: "ובמורא גדול", "With great awe" – this is the revelation of the *Shechinah*. *Ritva* explains that this occurred at midnight. That is, Hashem revealed His *Shechinah* to Yisrael at midnight – before killing the Egyptian firstborn – to free their souls from the exile.

<sup>12</sup> That is, the beginning of the process of freeing Yisrael's souls from the exile was the *pesach* service that was conducted earlier in the day. At that point, they began to become servants of Hashem. When this process culminated with the revelation at midnight, Yisrael were ready for their physical redemption through the death of the Egyptian firstborn and their Exodus the next day (*Mizmor LeDavid* *ibid.*).

*MiMishnaso Shel HaRamchal* (p. 204) cites *R' Yitzchak Isak Chaver*, who writes that nowadays when we do not have the *pesach* offering, our discussion about it at the Seder takes the place of eating it, and serves to protect Yisrael.

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The third major component – matzah:

לְשִׁיחָהּ – **It was also necessary for Yisrael** – וְאָמְנָם עוֹד הִצְרִיכוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 גּוֹפֶם מּוֹכֵן וּמְזֻמֵּן לְאוֹר הֶרְאוּי – **in order that their bodies be**  
 נְשִׁיזוֹנוּ ז' – **prepared and readied for the proper illumination**<sup>13</sup>  
 יָמִים אֵלֶּה בְּשָׁנָה מִן הַמָּצָה – **that they should be sustained during**  
 שְׁהִיא – **these seven days of the year from matzah,**  
 מְזוֹן בְּבִחִינַת יֵצֶר טוֹב לְבָד – **which is food that is solely associated**  
 בְּלִי יֵצֶר רַע כָּלִל – **without any**  
 וּבִהְיוֹת נְזוּנִים בְּזֶה יָמִים אֵלֶּה – **yetzer hara whatsoever.**<sup>14</sup>  
 – **Through being sustained with this kind of food during these**  
 הַיָּמִים – **the** – נִשְׁאָרָה הַתּוֹלְדָה הַטּוֹבָה לְכָל הַשָּׁנָה  
 לְהִיּוֹת כָּל – **beneficial results remain for the entire year,**  
 הַשָּׁנָה מוֹכְנִים לְקִדְשָׁהּ – **so that they are primed for holiness the**  
 עֲנִיָּה – **entire year.**<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is yet another step towards freedom. After Yisrael's bodies were freed of contamination through the harsh labor, and Hashem revealed His illumination to attract Yisrael's souls to Him, Yisrael's *bodies* were also attracted to Hashem's illumination.

<sup>14</sup> In *Derech Hashem*, the Ramchal writes (IV 8:1): *The bread that is prepared as man's nourishment is truly appropriate for the desired state of man. The idea of leavening, which is a natural element within the bread, making it easily digestible and good tasting, is also the result of the rule befitting man, for he too needs to have a yetzer hara and a physical tendency.* Matzah, though, is not at all associated with the yetzer hara.

<sup>15</sup> In *Derech Hashem* (ibid.) the Ramchal explains further that it is not possible to require matzah the entire year because that is not the goal of

The Ramchal now begins his explanation of the last of the four primary Seder mitzvos:

אָמַנְם עֲנִין ה' כּוֹסוֹת הוּא – **The idea behind the four cups** of wine is שֶׁהֵינָה יָדוּעַ שֶׁמִּדְּרָגוֹת הַס"א הֵם ד' – **that it is known that the sitra achra** [literally: the other side; i.e. the force of evil] **has four levels,**<sup>16</sup> וְכָלֵן שְׁלֵטוֹ מֵאַחַר הִטָּאוּ שָׁל אָדָם – **all of which reigned after the transgression of Adam HaRishon.** וְכָלֵן הָיוּ – **And they all opposed holiness and**

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our stay in This World. Refraining from *chametz* and eating matzah during the days of Pesach gives the correct balance for our service of Hashem in This World. [Since we eat matzah for all seven days of Pesach, it thus emerges that this third aspect of the Seder, unlike the previous two, extends to the rest of the holiday. Perhaps this is because the first two – ridding the bodies of contamination and connecting the souls to Hashem's illumination – serve to bring about the final redemption, as Ramchal stated in his introduction to this chapter. Uplifting the level of the bodies to be able to receive illumination is an ongoing process even now, and thus needs reinforcement for all seven days of Pesach.]

Rav Chaim Friedlander (*Derech LeChaim* loc cit. §353) explains that this is the meaning of what the disciples of the *Arizal* stated: "One who is very careful not to eat chametz on Pesach and takes upon himself additional stringencies [regarding this prohibition] is guaranteed not to sin throughout the year." The spiritual impact of this mitzvah will protect the person year-round from even inadvertent sin.

<sup>16</sup> Chazal associate these four levels with the four phrases in the *pasuk* in *Yechezkel* (1:4): *I saw, and behold! There was (1) a stormy wind coming from the north, (2) a great cloud with (3) flashing fire, and (4) a brilliance surrounding it.* The Ramchal elaborates on them in *Kelalei Maamar HaChochmah* (§14), *Adir BaMarom* (p.194), and in his commentary to *Mishlei* (*Otzros Ramchal* pp. 183-184). See also *Derech Hashem* (Part I 5:9) with our note 125 there.



**good**                      שֶׁלֹא יִמָּצָא בְּעוֹלָם – trying to ensure **that it should not be found in the world.**<sup>17</sup>                      וְהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל סְגוּרִים בְּתוֹכָן – **Now, in**

**Egypt, Yisrael was trapped among [these four levels of evil]**

   שֶׁלֹא הָיוּ יְכוּלִים לְצָאת כָּלָל – to the degree **that they were not able to escape at all.**<sup>18</sup>                      עַד שֶׁהָאֵר עָלֵיהֶם הִקְבִּ"ה בְּכֹחוֹ הַגָּדוֹל

– This situation remained **until Hashem shined His illumination upon them with His great strength,**                      וְשִׁבְרָה ד' הַקְלָפוֹת –

**broke the four forces of evil,**                      וְהוֹצִיא יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵתוֹכָם – **and rescued Yisrael from them.**<sup>19</sup>                      וְזֶה עֲנִינוֹ ד' גְּאוּלוֹת הַמְּזֻכָּרִים

בַּפָּרָשָׁה – **This, i.e. Yisrael's redemption from these four levels of evil, is the idea behind the four expressions of redemption that are mentioned in the section of the Torah describing the**

<sup>17</sup> *MiMishnaso Shel HaRamchal* (p. 227, citing *Adir BaMarom* p. 200) notes that the roots of these four levels of evil certainly existed even before Adam's transgression. However, after the transgression, they gained control over creation.

<sup>18</sup> In *Shivim Tikunim* (§8, pp. 35-36), the Ramchal writes that because the four forces of evil joined together in Egypt to control Yisrael, Yisrael needed to work four hundred years to merit the four expressions of redemption and be freed of all four evil forces. But since e Yisrael could not withstand that full sentence and were redeemed earlier, the evil forces were not satisfied and each was able to inflict a further exile on Yisrael.

<sup>19</sup> In *Derech Hashem* the Ramchal writes (IV 4:9): *When the proper time arrived, Hashem strengthened His hashpaah and illumination over Yisrael, and humbled the evil before them. [Hashem] set them apart from it... as a result of this they were redeemed from evil eternally.*

Exodus.<sup>20</sup>

ואולם זה עשה בְּהָאִיר עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל ד'

– **And this occurred when [Hashem] shined upon Yisrael the four letters of His Name: yud, kei, vav, kei.**<sup>21</sup>

Why we drink the four cups of wine at the Seder:

– **This event in Egypt was just the beginning of a process** – לְשִׁיבָאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵהֶם – **to enable Yisrael to escape those forces of evil.** אַךְ סוּף הַכֹּל צָרִיךְ

– **But ultimately, Yisrael must control them** – וְיִכְבְּשׁוּם לְגַמְרֵי

– **And this will occur in the future at the time of the final redemption.** אֲמָנָם הֵנָּה זֶה כְּמִי שְׁקוּצֵיב עֵץ

– **But in the meantime, [our efforts] are comparable to** אֶקְדָּה

<sup>20</sup> And they one of the sources of the mitzvah to drink four cups of wine at the Seder (see *Bereishis Rabbah* 88:5).

<sup>21</sup> This refers to the שֵׁם הַמְּיוֹחָד, Hashem's ineffable Name. *Eis Laasos* (to *Derech Hashem* loc cit. §211) explains this passage as follows: The ineffable Name of Hashem represents the entire structure of a man, with its four letters corresponding to man's four major parts (*nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah*; see there). After the transgression of Adam HaRishon, these four parts became ruined and subsequently formed the four forces of evil. At *makkas bechoros*, Hashem revealed the four letters of His Name, breaking the power of the four forces of evil, which allowed Yisrael to be lifted up from their low level and be drawn after Hashem.

<sup>22</sup> The four forces of evil were defeated in Egypt, but were not completely destroyed. They can therefore return and wreak havoc again. The final goal is to completely and irreversibly eradicate the forces of evil from the world.

**someone who is chopping down a tree,** שִׁמְכָה בּוֹ הַכָּאָה  
**– who strikes it time after time** עַד שֶׁקוֹצֵב אוֹתוֹ אַחֵר הַכָּאָה  
**– until he completely chops it down.** Even if a blow  
 does not actually bring the tree down, it certainly contributes to  
 the tree ultimately being cut down. וְכֵן עוֹשִׂים אָנוּ בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה  
**– This is exactly what we are accomplishing each and every**  
**year;** מִתְעוֹרְרִים בְּכֹחַ הָא' שֶׁהָאֵיר – **we arouse that original**  
**power that Hashem illuminated** וּבִתְקוּן שְׁנֵתָקֵן אָז  
**the rectification that occurred at that time.**<sup>23</sup> וּמִתְחַזְקִים לְהַמְשִׁיךְ  
**We strengthen it to further this matter** – הַדְּבָר לְפָנִים עַד שֶׁיִּגְמַר  
**until it is brought to fruition.** וְהִנֵּה בְּסוֹף הַכֹּל  
**And at the very end,** at the time of the final redemption, ה'

**those very four forces of evil will** – קְלָפוֹת עֲצָמָם תִּתְּהַפְּכֶנָּה עַל הָאֲמוֹת  
**themselves turn against the enemy nations** וְתִאֲבָדְנָה  
**and annihilate them.**<sup>24</sup> וְהֵם ד' כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל פְּרָעָנוֹת  
**These are their four cups of punishment** that Hashem  
 will force them to drink.<sup>25</sup> – וְלִישְׂרָאֵל יִהְיוּ ד' כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יְשׁוּעָה  
**But Yisrael will enjoy four cups of salvation**<sup>26</sup> בְּהֶאֱרַת ד'

<sup>23</sup> From the Ramchal's words, we learn that this is accomplished through drinking the four cups of wine at the Seder each year.

<sup>24</sup> Before being destroyed, these four forces of evil will first destroy whatever evil there is in the world, in the form of the enemy nations.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, *Yalkut Shimoni*, Vol. I §147.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

אותיות השם ב"ה שזכרנו – **with the illumination of the four letters of Hashem that we mentioned.**<sup>27</sup> Through drinking the four cups of wine at the Seder we contribute to the total eradication of these four forces of evil and bring the four cups of salvation closer.

This relates to another conduct of ours at the Seder:

והנה מעקר התקון של הלילה הזה הוא – **Included in the primary rectification of this night is** – להראות חרות של הנצחון – **demonstration of the freedom** that was gained through the victory – שניצח הטוב את הרע – **namely, that the forces of good vanquished the forces of evil.** ועל ידי זה נשבר – **Through this the power of the sitra achra is shattered,** – ונכנעת הכנעה גדולה – **and it is greatly humbled.** This is accomplished by demonstrating freedom at the Seder.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See note 20. See *MiMishnas Shel HaRamchal* (p. 233) for sources of this concept. See also there (pp. 234-238) for how each cup corresponds to one of specific letter of the Name). The Ramchal discussed rectification of the bodies or souls when discussing the previous three mitzvos. But when discussing the four cups, he repeatedly mentions “Yisrael” because they represent the actual redemption of Yisrael (*R’ Yosef Spinner Commentary*).

<sup>28</sup> This seems to be a continuation of the discussion about the four cups, which represent the defeat of evil (see *R’ Yosef Spinner Commentary*). Indeed, there are other customs specific to the four cups that demonstrate freedom, such as having another person pour the wine for

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A final word about eating matzah at the Seder:

הוא להמשיך המזון המקדש המתזיק – **The purpose of the *kezayis* of matzah that we eat at the Seder is to draw down the holy sustenance that nourishes the *yetzer tov*, as we mentioned.**<sup>29</sup> אָמְנָם כְּדִי

– **But in order for the rectification remain for the entire year,** וְשִׁשְׁאָר הַתְּקוּן לְכָל הַשָּׁנָה

– **we need to eat the Afikoman afterwards,** וְשֶׁלֹא לֵאכֹל

– **and eat nothing after it,** וְשֶׁכֶּמוֹ שֶׁאֵין הַטֶּעַם

– **for just as the taste of the Afikoman does not leave the mouth,** כִּן אֵין הָאוֹר כִּי מִהִנְשָׁמָה

– **so the illumination that comes from eating matzah will not leave the soul.**<sup>30</sup>

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the Seder leader and the custom to use a type of wine that demonstrates freedom, etc.

<sup>29</sup> That is, the Ramchal explained above that eating matzah all seven days of Pesach prepare us for holiness during the entire year. He now states that it is the *kezayis* of matzah that we eat at the Seder that activates this special benefit of matzah.

<sup>30</sup> Presumably, the Ramchal divides his treatment of matzah into two sections because he wants to conclude his discussion about the Pesach Seder with the last mitzvah performed during it – eating the Afikoman.

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## Ashdod

### Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

א] כאשר החריבו הפלשתים את עיר שילה ולקחו את ארון הקודש, הביאו אותו לעיר אשדוד. וכתוב (שמואל-א ה, ב-ה):

(ב) וַיִּקְחוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיָּבִיאוּ אֹתוֹ בֵּית דָּגוֹן וַיַּצִּיגוּ אֹתוֹ אֶצֶל דָּגוֹן :

(ג) וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ אֲשֻׁדּוּדִים מִמַּחֲרַת וַהֲגָה דָּגוֹן נָפַל לְפָנָיו אֶרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן ה' וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת דָּגוֹן וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֹתוֹ לְמִקְוָמוֹ :

(ד) וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַּבֹּקֶר מִמַּחֲרַת וַהֲגָה דָּגוֹן נָפַל לְפָנָיו אֶרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן ה' וַרָאשׁ דָּגוֹן וּשְׁתֵּי כַפּוֹת יָדָיו כָּרְתוֹת אֶל הַמַּפְתָּן רַק דָּגוֹן נִשְׁאַר עָלָיו :

(ה) עַל כֵּן לֹא יִדְרֹכּוּ כְּהֲנֵי דָּגוֹן וְכָל הַבָּאִים בֵּית דָּגוֹן עַל מַפְתָּן דָּגוֹן בְּאַשְׁדּוּד עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה :

וצריכים להבין למה הובא הארון דוקא לעיר אשדוד, ומה ענין כריתות הראש והידים של עבודה זרה דגון.

ב] וגם צריכים להבין הענין שלא דרכו על המפתן, ואיתא בגמרא (עבודה זרה מא:), דאמרי הכי, שבקיה איסריה לדגון ואתא איתיב ליה על המפתן, ע"כ. ולמה צריכים לידע שטות הפלשתים שלא לדרוך על מפתן בית דגון.

ואיתא במדרש עוד בענין המפתן (שוחר טוב שמואל יא):

אמר ר' ירמיה בשם רבי בר רב יצחק, החמירו ישראל בעבודה זרה יותר מאומות העולם, כתיב "על כן לא ידרכו" וגו' אבל בישראל כתיב (צפניה א, ט) "ופקדתי על כל הדולג על המפתן".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> פירוש מהר"י כהן: פ"י שנהגו יותר כבוד בו שדלגו עליו דרך עבודה ואולי האומות לא עשו אלא שלא נהגו בו זילזול בדריכה עליו. ע"כ.

ג] והנביא ממשיך איך נענשו הפלשתים שבאשדוד (שם ו) :

**וַתִּכְבַּד יְד ה' אֶל הָאֲשֻׁדִּים וַיִּשְׁמָם וַיַּךְ אֹתָם בַּעֲפָלִים [בַּטְחָרִים]  
אֶת אֲשֻׁדֹד וְאֶת גְּבֻלֶיהָ :**

ורש"י שם מבאר שם, מכת הנקב, עכברים נכנסין בנקביהם ושומטין בני מעיהם ויוצאין.<sup>2</sup> הגם שלומד זה ממה שהפלשתים השיבו לישראל חמשה טחורי זהב וחמשה עכברי זהב כשהחזירו את הארון (שם ו, ד), עדיין צריכים להבין למה נענשו בדרך מוזר כזה.<sup>3</sup>

ד] כתוב עוד בנבואה אודות אשדוד, (זכריה ט, ו), וַיָּשֶׁב מִמְּזֹר בְּאֲשֻׁדֹד וַהֲכֵרְתִי גְאוֹן פְּלִשְׁתִּים ע"כ. ובענין הממזר באשדוד יש מחלוקת בגמרא (קדושין עב:):

בשלמא לרבי מאיר [הסובר אין ממזרים עתידים ליטהר], היינו דכתיב "וישב ממזר באשדוד" אלא לר' יוסי [הסובר עתידים ממזרים ליטהר] מאי "וישב ממזר באשדוד", כדמתרגם רב יוסף יתבון בית ישראל לרוחצן בארעהון, דהוו דמו בה לנוכראין. אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל הלכה כרבי יוסי.

והיינו לדברי ר' מאיר הפסוק מובן כפשוטו, שלעתיד לבא כל הממזרים ישבו באשדוד כדי שלא יתערבו בשאר ישראל. אבל לפי ר' יוסי אין

דרשה זה הובא גם ברד"ק בצפניה שם, וע"ש וברש"י לפירושים אחרים על הפסוק.

<sup>2</sup> והרמ"ד וואלי מפרש ענין העכברים בדרך אחר וז"ל, "וישימם" על ידי העכברים המשחיתים את ארצם ועושים אותם שממה, ע"כ. אבל גם האלשי"ך (ו, ד) כותב כרש"י ומביא ראיה שמגפת הטחורים ועכברים אחת היא מהמדרש בהערה הבא.

<sup>3</sup> ודברי רש"י מיוסדים על מדרש שוחר טוב (פרשה י) הובא בילקוט שמעוני שם, וז"ל, לפי שאמרו הרשעים אלה הם האלקים המכים את מצרים וגו' עשרה מכות היו לו ושלמו, אמר להם הקב"ה, אין לי מכה, עתה אני מביא עליכם מכה שלא נהיתה מעולם אלו עכברים שהיו שומטים בני מעיהם, חזרו לעשות להם ספלים, היה העכבר אומר לספל אנו שלוחים של מי שאמר והיה העולם ואתה בריותיו, תן כבוד למי שברא והיה הספל נבקע ועכבר עולה מן התהום ושומט את בני מעיו, וזה אחד מהדברים שהשליט הקב"ה את הרך בקשה. ע"כ.

טעם להבדיל הממזרים כי עתידים ליטרה, ועל כן לפי שיטתו לשון "ממזר" הוא מלשון זר, שבני ישראל שהיו עד הנה זרים בעיר ישובו לאשדוד. וצריכים להבין למה לפי ר' מאיר הממזרים מתייחסים דוקא לעיר אשדוד, ולמה לפי ר' יוסי אשדוד הוא העיר שנבחר כסמל לעיר שלא ישובו בו בני ישראל עד ביאת המשיח.

ה) בספר ישעיה כתיב (כ, א-ב) :

(א) בְּשָׁנָה בָּא תִּרְמֶן אֲשֹׁדֶדָה בְּשִׁלַּח אֹתוֹ סָרְגוֹן מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ :  
(ב) בָּעֵת הַהִיא דִּבֶּר ה' בְּיַד יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן אֲמוּץ לֵאמֹר לֶךְ וּפְתַחְתָּ הַשֶּׁקַּע מֵעַל מִתְּנִיךָ וְנַעֲלֶךָ תַּחְלִין מֵעַל רִגְלֶיךָ וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן הֵלֶךְ עָרוֹם וַיִּחַף<sup>4</sup> :

והנביא ממשיך שזה (שם ג-ד), אות ומופת על מצרים ועל כוש. כן ינהג מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר אֶת שְׂבִי מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת גְּלוּת כּוּשׁ נְעָרִים וְזָקְנִים עָרוֹם וַיִּחַף וַיַּחֲשׁוּפֵי שֵׁת עֲרוֹת מִצְרַיִם. ומפרש רש"י שם, בית מוצא הרעי... וגמול זה היה להם תחת חם אביהם אשר ראה ערות אביו ולא כסה אותה מדה כנגד מדה, ע"כ.

ויש כאן קשר עם ענין מכת טחורים לבני הפלשתים באשדוד, ולבישת ישעיה שק אחר כיבוש אשדוד להיות סימן לשבי מצרים שהם ילכו לשבי "חשופי שת." אבל עדיין צריכים להבין החשיבות של עיר אשדוד בענין הזה.

ו) ועיר אשדוד נזכר בפסוק אחר, בצפניה (ב, ד), אֲשֹׁדֶד בְּצִהָרִים יִגְרְשׁוּהָ, ומפרש רש"י שם :

<sup>4</sup> רש"י מפרש שנצטוו ישעיה לחגור שק בדוחק על בשרו, כי עד עשכיו לא ציוהו לחגור שק שהוא אומר לו להתירה, ע"ש. אבל הרד"ק מפרש שהיה לובש שק על גלות השבטים ומתאבל עליהם, ואמר לו שיפתח אותו השק שהיה חגור על בשרו ועל מתניו ויחלוץ נעליו וילך ערום ויחף, ע"כ. ובדרך זה מפרש המלבי"ם, לא הלך כן רק יום אחד או שעה קטנה בביתו, ע"כ. וע"ע אבן עזרא בתחילת תרי עשר שמבאר שכל זה היה בנבואותו.



אשדוד שמה ובעהרים אשר ישוד בזה קטב ירשוה ותהיה שדודה, דבר אחר בעהרים יגרשוה מקום מרעה צאן היה וצהרים קשה לצאת בו צאן וכן הוא אומר (שיר השירים א, ז), איכה תרביץ בצהרים.

והרד"ק כותב שם :

זכר צהרים לפי שה"קטב ישוד בעהרים" (עי' תהלים צא, ו), ואשדוד לשון שד, והרי הוא כאלו הוא לשון נופל על הלשון. "יגרשוה", יגרשו האויבים עדת אשדוד ממקומה פתאום כמו הקטב שישוד בעהרים.

ולומדים מזה ששם אשדוד היא או לשון שידוד וחורבן או לשון שד הגורם חורבן. וצריכים להבין ענין מקום כזה בארצינו הקדושה.

### ארון הקדש וכבוד

ויש לבאר שענין כיבוש הארון הקודש היה אבידת כבוד של ישראל. וכן כתוב כאשר כרע אשת פינחס בן עלי ללדת (שמואל-א ד, כא-כב):

(כא) וַתִּקְרָא לַנֶּעֶר אֵי כְבוֹד לֵאמֹר גָּלָה כְבוֹד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶל הַלֶּקַח אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֶל חֲמִיָּה וְאִישָׁה :  
(כב) וַתֹּאמֶר גָּלָה כְבוֹד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי נִלְקַח אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים :

והיינו שהארון נותן כבוד לישראל. וכן איתא בחז"ל (שמו"ר כז, ב) :

אמרו יצא משה יצא אהרן נדב ואביהוא ושבעים מזקני ישראל, ויש אומרים אף ארון יצא עמהם, לכך נאמר (משלי ג, לה) "כבוד חכמים ינחלו".

ומפרש הרש"ש שם דארון נקרא כבוד כדכתיב "גלה כבוד מישראל כי נלקח ארון האלקים". והיינו שהכבוד שזכה לו יתרו הוא שהארון יצא לקראתו אם משה רבינו. ומוסיף המהרז"ו מאבות שאין כבוד אלא תורה

והארון מקום הלוחות והתורה, ע"ש.<sup>5</sup>

ובנוגע לקיבוץ גליות של כלל ישראל כתיב (ישעיה מג, ז), כִּל הִנָּקָא בְּשִׁמִּי וְלִכְבוֹדֵי בְּרָאתִיו יִצְרָתִיו אֶף עָשִׂיתִיו. שישאל נברא לכבוד ה'. והרבינו בחיי (במדבר כה, ז) מבאר שעל כן נקרא ה' "מלך הכבוד" (ראה תהלים כד, ז), ע"ש. ופרשה זה נאמרה כשהביא שלמה המלך את ארון הקודש לבית המקדש כדאיתא בגמרא (שבת ל.). ולמדנו שכלל ישראל נבראו לכבוד ה' מלך הכבוד כי רק הם שומרים רצון ה' הכתוב בתורה המושם בארון הקודש.

### טחורים

ובזה יכולים להבין את מכה הזרה של טחורים. שכותב התוס' רי"ד, מפני שהם נולדים בתוך המעי אמר להם לשון סתר, ומפני שראו בסתרי הבורא לקו במכת בית הסתרים, ע"כ.

והרמ"ד וואלי מוסיף:

"ויך אותם בטחורים" הטעם הוא כי נקב האחור הוא סוד הקלון ממש כמ"ש במקום אחר, והרי הש"י כבודם בקלון המיר (עי' הושע ד, ז) שהיו חושבים לעכב אצלם את כבוד ישראל שהוא ארון האלקים, ועוד שחשבו ליהנות מאורו הגדול והש"י הביא עליהם חשך ולא אור, ולכן כתיב "עפולים" שהוא מלשון חשך אפילה, ומה גם שהחולי הזה מחשיך עיני הבריות כידוע.

והיינו שמכת טחורים היא ההיפך של כבוד האדם. ומוסיף המשבצות הזהב עוד:

ענין זה שיוכל האדם להתפנות ולעשות צרכיו הוא כבוד האדם ומשום כבוד הבריות לא גזרו על הקינוח בשבת, ואפשר שזה

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<sup>5</sup> ועי' רד"ל שמקשה שהארון עדיין לא היה למאן דאמר קודם מתן תורה בא יתרו, ואף למאן דאמר לאחר מתן תורה משמע שמיד ששמע יתרו מתן תורה בא קודם מעשה המשכן, ועל כן מעדיף נוסחת המכילתא שגורס אף שכניה יצא. וכן עי' במהרז"ו.

טעם נוסף למה שקראו חז"ל לבית הכסא "בית הכבוד" במשנה (תמיד א, א)... וכיון שהם פגעו בכבוד השכינה היה עונשם על ידי פגיעה בכבודם.<sup>6</sup>

נמצאנו למדים העונש מדה כנגד מדה של הטחורים.

### עכברים

ובזה יובן גם כן מה שעכברים הציקו את הפלשתים. ונקדים לבאר ענין עכברים. הגמרא מתארת עשיר שאינו מהנה מממונו לאחרים (סנהדרין כט: ) עכברא דשכיב אדינרי, ע"כ. ומפרש רש"י שהוא כעכבר זה ששוכב על דינרי זהב ואינו נהנה מהן, ע"ש. ומבאר המהר"ל (אור חדש עמ' פ):

וקראו עכברא דשכיב אדינרי כי אין לך דבר מיאוס רק העכבר, וכן הוא מאוס המאסף את העושר ואין משתמש בו להוצאה, ומה שהוא מאוס המאסף העושר באוצרו כי עיקר העושר הוא הכבוד שיש בעושר ואין הכבוד רק אצל אחרים ולא אצל עצמו ולפיכך אין כבוד כאשר העושר הוא באוצרו ואדרכא מאוס הוא כי הוא הפך הכבוד כאשר אין מוציא העושר לאחרים, ואשר הוא הפך הכבוד הוא מאוס בודאי.

והיינו שיש שני דרכים לאדם להנהיג את עצמו בעושר שלו. הוא יכול לפזר אותו לאחרים, ואז העושר הוא כבוד לו. אבל אם מניח כל העושר באוצרו, אז הוא עושה דבר מאוס, והוא דומה לעכבר שהוא גם כן בריה מאושה.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> וכותב עוד שם:

גם אפשר לפרש היות שכונת הפלשתים היתה שעל ידי הארון האלקים יהיה אצלם תהיה להם אחיזה ויניקה מהשפע הנשפע על ידי הארון שיצא לחיצונים אשר זהו ענין הגלות שהשפע יוצא ונשפע על הגוים ועל החיצונים, ולכן לקו באותו מקום אשר שם יציאת הפסולת ודחייתה לחיצונים.

<sup>7</sup> ואפשר להבין שמפני זה עכברים הם נמאסים בפרט לנשים, כי נשים הן מקבלות, ומי שמונע קבלה של האשה הוא נמאס בפרט לה. וכן יש להוסיף שהחיד"א בחומת אנ"ך מביא שעונש מכת טחורים היה לעשות איש כאשה הרואה דם נדה, שגם האנשים ראו דם ממכת הטחורים. ואם כן גם זה שייך לעונש על אלו שאינם משפיעים שפעם כראוי.

וכן איתא במדרש (דברים רבה ג, ג) :

מעשה בר' פנחס בן יאיר שהלך לעיר אחת והיו העכברים אוכלים בתחומה של אותה העיר באו ובקשו הימנו, מה עשה רבי פנחס בן יאיר אמר להן... אם אתם מפרישין מעשרותיכם כראוי אין עכברים אוכלין עוד.

ואם כן יכולים כבר להבין למה הוכו הפלשתים במכת עכברים. שהם רצו להחריב כבוד הארון, וההיפך מכבוד הוא המיאוס של עכברא דשכיב אדינרי.<sup>8</sup>

ושני דרכים בהנהגה של עושר מושרשים בהנהגת הבריא. שבפרשת וישלח קוראים אודות המלכים אשר מלכו בארץ אדום לפני מלך מלך לבני ישראל (עי' לו, לא). והמלך השביעי הוא בעל חנן בן עכבור (לו, לח). ומבאר הרמח"ל באדיר במרום ח"ב (עמ' קכו-קכז) :

דע שיש זמן רוחה למעלה, שהמאורות יכולים להוציא אורותיהם בריוח, ולהיות מהנים מהם לאחרים. ויש זמן אחר, שצריך אדרבא, שיסתמו את אורותיהם, ולא יגלום. וסוד זה (ברכות סג.) בשעה שמכניסים פזר, בשעה שמפזרים כנס... והנה זה סוד בעל חנן ועכבור, כי בעל חנן הוא בבחינת השליטה וההשפעה הרוחה, שנאמר בו (תהלים לז, כא) "וצדיק חונן ונותן", יען הוא בעל שולט בחלקו ממש. אך עכבור הוא להפך, כגון עכברא דשכיב אדינרי, שאינו אלא שומר בלב חרד על ממונו, ולא השליטו הקב"ה ליהנות לאחרים ממנו כלל... ועל כן קרויים עכברי רשיעי (ירושלמי בבא מציעא ג, ה) שהוא ממש הפך ענין הצדיק.

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<sup>8</sup> והבאנו בהערה למעלה מהמדרש שוחר טוב (פרשה י') היה העכבר אומר לספל אנו שלוחים של מי שאמר והיה העולם ואתה בריותיו, תן כבוד למי שברא והיה הספל נבקע ועכבר עולה מן התהום ושומט את בני מעיו, ע"כ. והיינו שהעכברים תבעו את כבוד ה'. ואיתא בגמרא (שבת יד.), שבתחלה היו מצניעין את אוכלין דתרומה אצל ספר תורה ואמרו האי קדש והאי קדש, כיון דקחזו דקאתו לידי פסידא גזרו ביה רבנן טומאה, ע"כ. ומפרש רש"י שם שעכברים מצויין אצל אוכלין ומפסידים את הספר, ע"ש.

והיינו הצדיק המפזר את ממונו נקרא בעל חנן, והרשע שאינו נותן כלום נקרא עכבר. וכן כשיש השפעה ברווח מה' אז יש בחינת בעל חנן, אבל כשיש הסתר פנים אז הוא מדרגת עכבר.

והגרמ"מ משקלאוו מקשר ענין בעל חנן בן עכבור למעשה שלנו בענין אשדוד (כתבי הגרמ"מ ז"ל, דרושים על סדר ההשתלשלות עמ' רצג):

וסוד בעל חנן בן עכבור הוא בסוד אבר מת, ו"גלה כבוד מישראל אל הלקח ארון אלקים" ביד טמאים וזרים, ועם ה' נפלה בחרב, והוא בסוד הסתרת פנים מאד, מכל מקום הקב"ה משגיח "ומלכותו בכל משלה" (תהלים קג, יט),<sup>9</sup> וחנן את ישראל בהיגלות כבודו על ידי עכברים וטחורים כידוע, עד שחמשה עכברים של זהב אשר שלחו הפלשתים דורן לאלקי ישראל היה מונח בצד ארון ה' (עי' בבא בתרא יד.), וזהו כבודו ית"ש שעל ידי הכל עושה הקב"ה שליחותו (עי' בראשית רבה י, ז),<sup>10</sup> הגם שהכל מושלים בעכברים שסורן רע (הוריות יג.), גם בהם נותן כח לעשות שליחותו, וזהו גבורתו ית"ש, "למען תדע כי אין כה' אלקינו" (שמות ח) "בקרב הארץ" (שם) ממש.

זאת אומרת שהפלשתים רצו לקחת את כבוד ישראל להורות שאין ה' משגיח על ישראל. אבל דוקא אז כאשר ארון ה' היה בגלות מעם ישראל

<sup>9</sup> דבריו מובנים על פי דברי האריז"ל (במאמרי רשב"י פ' תצא) המובאים בלשם ספר הכללים (אבנ"מ סימן ח' אות לב מערכת הב"ן סעיפים י-יא):

זה נראה תימה גדול איך סמ' ונוקביה יהיו כל כך פתאים למרוד בקונם ולחשוב בלבבם שהם אלהות הרי הם יודעים ומכירים שהם רק שלוחיו ית"ש. אך הענין הזה יובן בסוד "ומלכותו בכל משלה" שאמרו בתיקונים (וכן ברע"מ פנחס רמג): דביומין דחול שכינתא תתאה אתלבשת באלין קליפין. והוא בזמן שישאל חוטאין כי אז השכינה גולה בגלות ומתלבש תוך הקליפות. ובראותם כי הם נעשה גוף וכלי אל ניצוץ האלהות המתלבש בתוכם אז הם חושבים כי הם עצמם גוף האלהות ח"ו ועי"ז הם עבדי גרמייהו אלהות, עכ"ל.

<sup>10</sup> איתא שם, רבנן אמרי אפילו דברים שאתה רואה אותן שהן יתירה בעולם כגון זבובין ופרעושין ויתושין אף הן בכלל בריותיו של עולם הן, ובכל הקב"ה עושה שליחותו אפילו על ידי נחש אפילו על ידי יתוש אפילו על ידי צפרד, ע"כ. והגרמ"מ מוסיף אפילו על ידי עכבר.

הראה הקב"ה שיכול להתכבד גם משרצים מאוסים כעכברים.<sup>11</sup>

ואם מעשה הזה קרה בעיר אשדוד יכולים לומר שמקום זה מסוגל בפרט לענין של כבוד ה' הנעשה על ידי דברים פחותים כמו עכברים כאשר יש הסתר פנים של גלות. וזה מתאים במה שהבאנו באות ו' שהשם אשדוד הוא מלשון שדוד וחורבן או שד הגורם חורבן.<sup>12</sup> שדוקא במקום שאין שום מעלה ידוע יש הנהגה של כבוד ה' בדרך זה של הסתר פנים. והפלשתיים חשבו שאין כבוד לה' כלל במקום של הסתר פנים ועל כן הביאו את הארון שם להטמין את כבוד ה' במקום שלא יתגלה. והוכו בעכברים להורות שה' עושה שליחותו אפילו במקום כזה.

### דגון

ועכשיו שבארנו שמעשה העכברים מורה לנו איך שיש השגחת וכבוד ה' אף בשעת הסתר פנים בגלות יכולים להבין למה שמו הפלשתיים את הארון אצל עבודה זרה של חצי אדם וחצי דג. כי הרמח"ל מבאר ענין הדגים באריכות בספרו אדיר במרום, ובתוכן דבריו שם מגלה לנו שזה שאין לדגים כיסוי לעיניהם ואין השינה מגעת אליהם, מורה על השגחת ה' התמידי בעולם. וכותב שם (עמ' רצד):

וסוד הענין תלמידי חכמים שמנדיין שינה מעיניהם בלילה כדי ללמוד תורה (בבא בתרא י.), והנה היה כאן מקום לדקדק אם באמת השינה היא מסודרת על פי סדר הנהגה אם כן למה תתבטל והלא בודאי גם היא תיקון, וגם מהיכן ימשכו שפעם אלו המנדיין שינה, אך האמת הוא מהו שכתבתי שיש מאורות אלה למעלה הנקראים דגים.

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<sup>11</sup> ויש להוסיף על פי פירוש השני של הרמ"ד וואלי למעלה שרצו ליהנות מאור ה' ועל כן הוכו במכת טחורים שהביא להם חשך. וידוע שחש"ך הוא אותיות שכ"ח, וכל האוכל ממה שעכבר אולכ משכח כדאיתא בהוריות יג.

<sup>12</sup> ועכשיו שלמדנו שער אשדוד שייך להשפעת ה' בזמן הגלות, יכולים להוסיף ביאור במה שהבאנו שם ששם אשדוד מתיחס ל"קטב ישוד בצהרים". וענין המזיק הזה מבואר במדרש תנחומא (פ' נשא כג, וע"ע במדבר רבה יב, ג, אבל ע"י פסחים ק"א:), ומירי שולט משבעה עשר בתמוז עד תשעה באב בצהרים, לפיכך "מקטב ישוד בצהרים", ע"כ. והיינו שהקטב נמצא בזמן החורבן והגלות. וע"ע בשלחן ערוך אורח חיים תקנא, יח עם ביאור הלכה שם.

ואם כן דגים הם ההיפך מעכברים שלא רוצים להשפיע, כי הדגים משפיעים בכל עת בלי שינה. ובדברי הרמח"ל המובא לעיל (אדיר במרום ח"ב עמ' קכו) העכברים הם כמו אנשים שהם צרי עין תמיד, ע"ש. וכותב עוד שם, וזה הדבר נמשך תמיד מהארת העינים, בסוד (משלי כב, ט) "טוב עין הוא יבורך", ע"כ. והדגים דקדושה מתנגדים לצרות עין של עכברים. אבל יש גם דג טמא וכחם של פלשתיים היה לאחוז בכח זו לסייע צרות עין שלהם למנוע שפע הקב"ה אל עמו. על כן הפלשתיים שרצו להסתיר כבוד ה' שיתנהג כעכבר שאינו רוצה להשפיע, שמו את ארון ה' אצל עבודה זרה שלהם של דג הטומאה<sup>13</sup> שאין לו ראש ועין כלל<sup>14</sup> להורות שגם בחינת הדג של הנהגת הקב"ה בטל ונמסר לכחות הטומאה, ח"ו.<sup>15</sup> ויש להוסיף שגם את שמשון הביאו

<sup>13</sup> ואפשר שדג זה היה עכברא דים (עי' חולין קכו:).

<sup>14</sup> והרמח"ל מבאר (אדיר במרום עמ' רצז), שהאות ע"ן היא השולטת בעינים, כי העין אינו אלא אות ע"ן במילואה, ומבחינה הזאת נעשית הדגים והבן היטב, כי מציאת הדגים נמצא מכאן, וסוד זה הוא ד"ג ג' ו' שיצא מן הע', ע"כ. ובעבודה זרה של הדגון לקחו את העין פקחא של הדג ועשה דמות אדם שם.

<sup>15</sup> ומבאר הרמח"ל עוד שם (אדיר במרום עמ' רצד):

הדג הוא סוד היסוד בשעת הזיווג שהוא מכוסה ממש בתוך הנוקבא בים שבה בסוד היסוד שלה המעלה מיין נוקבין שהוא ממש סוד הים כמבואר במקום אחר. והנה בזמן הזיווג המאורות עומדים בטהרה גדולה שאין שום פגע מגיע שם כלל ועל כן הדגים האלה אין בהם מין פגם, והיינו כי הדג כבר אמרתי שהוא היסוד, אך מאורות הרבה מאירין ממנו בבחינה זו וכולם נקראים דגים והם בבחינה זו שאין דמם קשה עד שיצטרך לשפוך אותו ואין צריך שחיטה לתקנם כמו הבעלי חיים אחרים, ואלה יש להם גם כן עינים פקוחות. וממשיך שם (עמ' רצד):

ונמצא שתולדות העינא פקחא דא"א הוא היסוד דו"א בבחינת דג, ולכן הדגים עיניהם פקוחות, וגם אין עין הרע שולט בהם (ברכות נה:), כי הם מושגחים תמיד מן העינא פקחא הזה וכדלקמן בסוד "בן פורת עלי עין" (בראשית מט, כב) שבהיות יוסף בסוד הדגים לכן לא שלט בו עין הרע... הערלה היא נמשכת מן הו"ק ולכן היא שם ביסוד הבא מכתם ואז נקרא אבר מת והוא נופל בסוד "כי יפול הנופל ממנו" (דברים כב, ח) שהיתה נפילת המלכין, אך בגדלות אין שם ערלה ואז הוא אבר חי והוא הקמתו מן הנפילה בסוד "ואת בריתי אקים את יצחק" (בראשית יז, כא).

ואם כן כבר ראינו מהגרמ"מ שסוד בעל חנן בן עכבור הוא סוד אבר מת. ואם כן יכולים לומר שזה היה גם כן ענין עבודה זרה של דג דטומאה תחת שפע התמידי הבא מדג טהור ואבר חי. ועבודה זרה זו מתייחסת בפרט לטומאת פלשתיים הנקראים ערלים, שאז נקרא אבר מת כדברי הרמח"ל כאן.

ועי' עוד בדברי הגרי"א חבר (אפיקי מים, שבת קד. עמ' נו):

לעבודה זרה שלהם הדגון, כשחשבו שנצחו את משיח ה'.

ולפי זה אפשר להבין גם המנהג לאכול דוקא דגים ביום שבת קדש, שכותב המגן אברהם (רמב, א):

ובתיקוני שבת שיאכל בכל סעודה משלש סעודות דגים ע"ש, ונ"ל דכל אחד לפי טבעו כמו שכתוב סי' רפ"ח ס"ד. אם הערלים מיקרין השער דגים נכון לתקן שלא יקנו דגים וראיה ממשנה ספ"א דכריתות (צמח צדק).

והיינו שאוכלים דגים ביום השביעי לתקן סיתום השפע של המלך השביעי בעל חנן בן עכבור. אבל אם הערלי"ם מיקרין את שער הדגים אז יש סימן שהוא זמן הסתר כבוד ה' ומתקנים שלא יקנו דגים.

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והם י"ם כ"ל שכ"ל היסוד דדכורא כי כ"ל בשמים וכו' וי"ם הוא יסוד דנוק' ושם הוא בעזרת נ' כפופה מה שאין כן יסוד דדכורא, ולכן נק' נז"ן מלשון דג דרגא דיוסף "וידגו לרוב" וכו' מה דגים שבים מים מכסים וכו' (ברכות כ.) והם מ"ד ומ"נ שבב' היסודות שלהם, ע"כ.

וכותב עוד שם (עמ' לב):

עיקר הענין כי יסוד הוא ספר הזיכרון והוא סמיכה לנוק' בגלותא, ושם התורה שבעל פה שבו השכחה גובר על ידי הסט"א האחוז ברגלין דילה, ותיקונה בחיבורא דדכורא בזווגא שאז נדחים החיצונים, ועל ידי זה אין שכחה כי ספר הזיכרון מחבר דו"נ כחדא, והוא חיבורא דתורה שבעל פה עם תורה שבכתב על ידי כלילתו בתורה שבכתב ברמיזין דקראי באותיות ונקודות... ויסוד הוא סמ"ך כמו שכתב רבינו בפירושו לתורה פ' בהעלותך [ע"י יהל אור יג.], וכותב שם עוד, והענין כי בגלות נקרא סמ"ך סומך ה' לכל הנופלים, ע"כ. [הוא ארון הברית דהיה ס' מקורין עילאין שמקבל מבינה, ע"כ.]

ונמצאנו למדים ביותר עומק איך דגים דקדושה הם מתנגדים לטומאת העכברים. שכבר הבאנו בהערה למעלה מגמרא הוריות איך עכברים גורמים שכחה. וכאן מבאר הגרי"א חבר שמדת היסוד, שהיא סוד דגים כנ"ל מביא זכרון על ידי החיבור בין תורה שבעל פה, שיש בה שכחה, ותורה שבכתב. והיסוד הוא אות סמ"ך שהוא גם כן אות ארון הקדש. והוא הסומך את הנופלים בגלות כאשר האבר מת [אות נז"ן, דהיא דג, כאשר הדגים בטומאה]. וכן כותב הרמח"ל באדיר במרום שם, כי הצדיק בהיותו שולט, נאמר (תהלים לו, כא) וצדיק חונן ונותן, כנ"ל. והדין הפך זה, נקרא עכבור. ותראה שבצדיק תלויה הזכירה, והעכבר הוא ממש המשכח, כמו שפירש בגמרא (הוריות יג.), ע"כ.

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ויש להביא עוד את דברי האוהב ישראל בענין נשים צדקניות שבמצרים  
(פ' עקב):

בשעה שהיו הולכין לשאוב מים הקב"ה הזמין להם דגים בתוך  
כדיהם ומוליכין אותן אצל בעליהן לשדה ומאכילים ומשקים  
אותם ונזקקים להם בין שפתים... הרי שהיו הנשים מעוררות  
את בעליהן להזיווג ונמצא אז היו אתערותא דלתתא מה  
שהנוקבא היא מעוררת את הדכר... והנה אי' דבמן היו ישראל  
מרגישין כל הטעמים חוץ מטעם דגים שלא היה בו וטעמו של  
הדבר נראה דהנה אמרו חז"ל אתו דרדקי... שהג' הוא העשיר  
המשפיע לזולתו שהוא בחי' נוק' הפושט יד ומקבל... והנה  
ד"ג דהאותיות המה מהופכים למפרע ד' קודמת לג' שהוא  
מורה ומרמז על היכא דיש ל'נוק' ג"כ בחי' דכ"ד, והוא דהנוק'  
מעוררת את הדכר להשפיע לה כדי שיקבל אז הדכר תענוג  
ממנה, אז היא ג"כ בבחי' דכר מה שהיא מקדמת ומעוררת את  
התענוג... לכך לא היה במן בחי' וטעם דג כיון שהיה בלא  
התעוררת התחתון היו בושים מהשפעה זו, לזה כתיב והמן  
כזרע ג"ד, הג' קודם לד' מפני שהד' שהיא המקבל הופכת  
פניה מן הג' מחמת בושא... ולזה אמרו זכרנו את הדג"ה.

וזה ביאור יותר עמוק איך הדגים מעוררים את ירידת השפע מהזכר  
לנקבה, ומהקב"ה לכנסת ישראל, ההיפך ממה שהפלשתים הערלים  
רוצים לקחת את כבוד ה' ולהפסיק השפע.

### מפתן הבית

ועכשיו יכולים להבין הענין ש"ראש דגון ושתי כפות ידיו כרותות אל  
המפתן". ובאות ב' הבאנו את הגמרא, דאמרי הכי, שבקיה איסריה  
לדגון ואתא איתיב ליה על המפתן, ע"כ. והענין הוא שהם לא היו  
טפשים לחשוב שהעבודה זרה שהם עשו בידיהם יש בה שום כח. אלא  
שהם טעו שאלהים הטמא שלהם השרה טומאתו על מעשה ידיו, כמו  
להבדיל שהקב"ה משרה שכינתו על הבית המקדש ובפרט בין הכרובים  
על הארון הקודש. וכשנשבר בנין שלהם חשבו שכח הטומאה שלהם  
נסע למפתן הבית.

ובאמת מוצאים ענין זה ממש להבדיל בשכינה הקדושה. דאיתא בגמרא (ראש השנה לא.), עשר מסעות נסעה שכינה מקראי, מכפרת לכרוב, ומכרוב לכרוב, ומכרוב למפתן, וממפתן לחצר וכו', ע"ש. והגמרא מביאה הפסוק ביחזקאל (ט, ג), וכבוד אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִעְלָה מֵעַל הַכְּרוּב אֲשֶׁר הָיָה עָלָיו אֶל מִפְתֵּן הַבַּיִת וַיִּקְרָא אֶל הָאִישׁ הַלְבָּשׁ הַבְּדִים אֲשֶׁר קָסַת הַסֵּפֶר בְּמַתְּנָיו, ע"כ. והיינו שכבוד ה' שהיה בארון הקדש כמו שלמדנו<sup>16</sup>, נסע מהכרוב על הארון למפתן הבית כדי לצאת מן הבית.

וכתיב שם להלן (י, ד), וַיָּרָם כְּבוֹד ה' מֵעַל הַכְּרוּב עַל מִפְתֵּן הַבַּיִת וַיִּמָּלֵא הַבַּיִת אֶת הָעָנָן וַיַּחֲצֵר מְלָאָה אֶת נִגְהַ כְּבוֹד ה', ע"כ. ובפרשה זו יש המעשה המובא ביומא עז. אודות גבריאל וחורבן הבית שמפני טעותו עם הגחלת של הכרובים אבדה משמרתו לאחד ועשרים יום, ומפרש המהרש"א שם שהם כנגד הימים של בין המצרים. והתיקון איתא בגמרא שם היינו נשותיהן של תלמידי חכמים שמגדודות שינה בעולם הזה, ע"ש. וזה מדרגת דגים כמו שראינו לעיל.<sup>17</sup>

ובאמת לומדים הלכה מענין זה. דאיתא במדרש (ילקוט שמעוני יחזקאל שנ):

"ויצא כבוד ה' מעל המפתן", והא לא הוה צריכא אלא ויצא כבוד ה'. משלו משל למה הדבר דומה למלך שהיה יוצא מפלטין שלו והיה מנשק בכתלים מגפף בעמודים ואמר הוי שלום ביתי הוי שלום פלטין ידי, כך היתה השכינה מנשקת

<sup>16</sup> עי' של"ה הקדוש (תענית, דרוש מטות מסעי יח), שכותב שענין הכפרת הוא שהוא על הארון שבו עמוד התורה, ע"ש.

<sup>17</sup> וכותב הגרי"א חבר (בית עולמים קסא):

ואז היה הפגם גדול ועשו פירוד בין זו"נ וזהו שכתוב אחר כך "וכבוד אלקי ישראל נעלה מעל הכרוב" כו' כידוע שעל ידי הכרובים הוא זיוגא דזו"נ ב' סמכין כמ"ש בזוהר פ' אחרי מות שתחילה היו פכ"פ "ופניהם איש אל אחיו" ואחר כך אתהדרו לאחורא ואז הנוקבא ירדה לתתא נקודה תחת היסוד וזהו שכתוב "אל מפתן הבית" והוא השער לנוק' שנקראת בית כמ"ש "זה השער לה' צדיקים יבואו בו" והוא כתר רחל שנגד היסוד דז"א, והראו לנביא מה שיהיה בשעת חורבן שגרמו על ידי עונותיהם שאז חזרה נקודה, ע"כ. ושייכות לפנימיות ענין שלנו מובן מאליו.

בכתלים מגפפת בעמודים ובוכה ואומרת הוי שלום ביתי ומקדשי הוי שלום בית יקרי פלטינ דידי.

ולומד הקב הישר ממדרש זה (פרק נ):

כי כותלי בית הכנסת הם קדושים מאוד ואור השכינה חופפת עליהם תמיד, ולכך מנהג כשר לנשק הכותלים של בית הכנסת מחמת הקדושה, וראייה ממדרש ילקוט יחזקאל... ועכשיו בגלות הזה הבתי כנסיות הן דירות השכינה ועל כן צריכין אנו לנהוג בבתי כנסיות שלנו כבוד וקדושה, ולא להראות בהן קלות ראש כמש"ל, וכל המתפלל באימה וביראה ובכוונת הלב זוכה לחזות בנועם ה' ולבקר בהיכלו אמן.

אמנם יחזקאל הנביא גם התנבא על התיקון שעתיד להעשות ממפתן הבית, דכתיב (מז, א), וְיִשְׁבְּנִי אֶל פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת וְהָיָה מִיָּמַי יִצְאִים מִפֶּתַח מִפֶּתֶן הַבַּיִת קְדִימָה. ומים מפכים האלו יבראו נחל גדול שכתוב עליו (שם ט-י):

(ט) וְהָיָה הַדָּגָה רַבָּה מְאֹד כִּי בָאוּ שָׁמָּה הַמַּיִם הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּרְפְּאוּ וְחַי כָּל אֲשֶׁר יָבוֹא שָׁמָּה הַנָּחַל:

(י) וְהָיָה עֲמֻדוֹ עָלָיו הַדָּגִים מְעִין גְּדִי וְעַד עֵין עֲגָלִים מְשֻׁטוֹת לַחֲרָמִים יִהְיוּ לְמִינָה תִּהְיֶה דָגָתָם פְּדִגַת הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל רַבָּה מְאֹד:

והיינו תחת אשר בחורבן הבית השכינה יצא מהכרוב למפתן עד שנסע מן הבית לגמרי, לעתיד לבא יצא שפע של מים ממקום הזה עצמו, ובו יחיו כמה מיני דגים, המורים על ההשגחה התמידית של הקב"ה בעין שפתוח תמיד.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> ויש להעיר שמקים הדגים מן עין גדי על עין עגלים. וענין עין גדי כמובן שייך לענין העין פקחא של הקב"ה, וגם ג"ד המשלים את ענין ד"ג, כדברי האוהב ישראל הנ"ל. וענין עין עגלים אפשר לבאר על פי הקהלת יעקב, שכותב (ערך קטב), פי' בזוהר פקודי שהוא כח עגל זהב שחטאו בו ישראל והזהב מצד תוקפא דשמשא... וכן "קטב ישוד צהרים" גי' זהו החכמה ובינה ודעת דקליפה, ע"כ.

והשם משמואל מפרש ענין זה עוד (סוכות תרע"ב ד"ה במשנה):

במשנה (מדות ספ"ב) למה נקרא שמו שער המים שבו מכניסין צלוחית של מים של ניסוך בחג, ולכאורה יפלא שבשביל זה יהיה שער מיוחד במקדש... ונראה דהיה ר' אלעזר בן יעקב שם אמר טעם אחר מפני שבו המים מפכים ועתידין להיות יוצאין מתחת מפתן הבית, והנה מפורש ביחזקאל שפע הברכה שבמים האלו... ולא מצינו שתהיה שפע ברכה רבה רק במים שיוצאין מן המקדש, והטעם כי מים הם למעלה מכל גוון וזה מורה על מקור ההשפעה טרם באה בכלים שונים, וזה מעוררין ישראל בניסוך המים... ולזה מכוונין להכניס את הצלוחית של מים דרך השער אשר עתידין המים להיות מפכין ויוצאין מתחת מפתן הבית להורות שבאים להמשיך משם דוקא את שפע הברכה.

והיינו שיכולים לעורר השפע הבא מן המים המפכים מתחת מפתן הבית על ידי ניסוך המים בשער זה בכל שנה.

ואם כל זה יכולים להבין הטענה הגדולה כנגד כלל ישראל שהיו דולגים על המפתן של עבודה זרה יותר מפילו מן הגוים. שבאמת היה לכלל ישראל להרגיש איך השפע של קדושה בא במפתן הבית המקדש אם כל הענינים גדולים שראינו שם, ואם כן איך היו יכולים לעבוד את מפתן עבודה זרה בתעוררות יותר מפילו מן הגוים שהיא עבודתם.<sup>19</sup>

#### וישב ממזר באשדוד

ולפי זה מבואר גם כן שיטת ר' יוסי באות ד' שלא יהיה באשדוד ישוב ישראל עד ביאת משיח. שלשבת באשדוד צריכים עבודה קשה במקום של הסתר פנים של כבודו ומיעוט השפעה של הקב"ה. ורק בזמן משיח יזכו בני ישראל לשבת שם.

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<sup>19</sup> ויש להוסיף שכתוב בפסוק הסמוך שם (א, י'), "והיה ביום ההוא נאם ה' קול צעקה משער הדגים". דגים דוקא.

ולשיטת ר' מאיר כותב המלבי"ם שם :

שם לא ישב איש רק ממזרים הנגרשים מעריהם מפני פסולם  
יתישבו שם, ואמר זה לגנאי על פלשתים שמקור מחצבתם הוא  
בממזרות, שבמקומם ישב ממזר אחר.

אבל לפי דברינו נמי אתי שפיר שרק ממזרים ישבו באשדוד. שזה גם כן  
מורה על טבע אשדוד להיות מקום שיכולים לומר כדברי הגרמ"מ  
משקלאו שזהו כבודו ית"ש שעל ידי הכל עושה הקב"ה שליחותו,  
אפילו ממזרים.

ויש לקוות שאם יש ישוב ישראל בעיר אשדוד בזמנינו שזה סימן לביאת  
משיח צדקינו בב"א. ונזכה לקיים דברי נעים זמירות (תהלים קמה, יא-  
יב) :

(יא) כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֵאֱמָרוּ וְגִבּוֹרֶתְךָ יִדְבָּרוּ :  
(יב) לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבְנֵי הָאָדָם גִּבּוֹרֶתוֹ וְכְבוֹד הָדָר מַלְכוּתוֹ :

שמלך השמיני הוא מלך הדר, שמרמז על התקון השלם, ואז יתגלה  
כבוד ה' במלואו.



# ***Sponsors***





לעילוי נשמת

## יעקב אליהו בן דוד ע"ה ניימאן

י ליד באלטימאר מעורב עם הבריה

ע וד בנערותו שימש גדולים בתורה

ק יים מצות בשדה מלחמה

ב אשת נעוריו שמח נ"א שנה

א ח נאמן עד דשבק חיים

ל אחר שנעשה ע"ז בשנים

י סורים סבל בסבר פנים

ה ניח אחריו בנים ובני בנים

ו כולם עוסקים בתורה וחסדים

נפטר בשם טוב ח' שבט תשס"ה לפ"ק

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

In honor of our dear mother,

**Deborah Naiman (Klein)**

Thank you for all that you have  
done and continue to do for us.

Love,

Irvin and Eleanor,

Yehudah Mayer, Atara, and family

Avrami, Jen, and family,

and **Fayge**

In appreciation of the

**Rav and the Rebbetzin**

by

**The Solomons**

With gratitude to

***HaKadosh Baruch Hu***

for all that

He has granted us

**The Kaplans**

In memory of  
the parents of our members  
who passed away this year

הרב פסח בן הרב צבי ז"ל  
הרב נפתלי מנחם מענדל בן הרב אברהם ז"ל  
ר' ישראל מאיר בן זאב ז"ל  
דבורה זעלדע בת אשר זעלעג הכהן ע"ה

by  
**The Singmans**

In memory of

**מרים בת בנימין ע"ה**

**Miriam Katsina**

**by**

**The Kimelfelds**

**For an appreciation of her, please see p. 9.**

In honor of  
**the Rav, Gabbayim,**  
**and Kiddush Committee**  
for their tireless efforts in BMR  
by  
**The Sugars**

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לעלוי נשמת  
**אליעזר בן שלמה ע"ה**

**Louis Cooper**

by his son,  
**Label Cooper**

**As we go to press, we are  
saddened over the passing of our  
esteemed neighbor**

**Mr. Louis Pretsfelder**

**אשר בן ר' נתן הלוי ע"ה**

**A true *Ish Yehudi* with golden  
hands, he lived a long life filled  
with Torah observance and  
exemplary integrity. He remains a  
source of inspiration to all of us.**

**יהי זכרו ברוך**

**The Chelwood Neighbors**