

# זכרינו לחיים

**A Journal of *Divrei Torah*  
in honor of Pesach 5775**

*Compiled by the Members of the*



***Bais Medrash  
of Ranchleigh***





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**זכרינו לחיים, *Let us remember Khaim***

***This Kuntress is Dedicated  
to the Memory of***

***Khaim Khuvis, a"h***

**ר' חיים בן יהושע ע"ה**

***A cheder student in Romania  
between the Wars,  
a member of our Bais Medrash  
for most of its existence.***

***He inspired us with his sincere davening,  
and showered us with berachos.***

***Sponsored by his friends at BMR***



## Preface

You hold in your hands our fourth Pesach *kuntress bs”d*. Unfortunately, this past year marked the passing of a venerable member of our Bais Medrash, who inspired us almost from the beginning of our founding. R’ Khaim Khuvis, *a”h*, gave us a picture of what a *yid* from the old country looked like. We have chosen to memorialize him in our *kuntress* this year by naming it *Zachreinu LeChaim*, which can be translated loosely to mean, “Let us remember Khaim.” A full appreciation of R’ Khaim is found on p. 117.

On a happier note, we *bs”d* celebrated many Bar Mitzvahs this year, and we are fortunate to have contributions from the Bar Mitzvah *Bachurim* (in alphabetical order) in a special section beginning on p. 102. For a look at the Bar Mitzvah *pshetel* of one of our esteemed members, Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman, see his submission on p. 67. Finally, I have included in the addendum an elucidation of the section of the Ramchal’s *Derech Eitz HaChaim*, which we are currently learning in one of our *chaburos*. This section teaches us the immense value of the Torah study of a child who is not yet Bar Mitzvah, and how it affects him after his Bar Mitzvah.

Also in the addendum is a *maamar* I have written on one of the cities of Eretz Yisrael, Chatzor. 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 presents a deep insight into the *luchos*, so it does have its place in a *kuntress* that spans the period from Pesach until Shavuos.

A final word about this *kuntress*. The goal was not to create an original *chidush*, although there are many here. 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.

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 5775

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## Itemizing One's Chametz

### Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

In recent years, it has become customary in many places to list all of the items that one wants to sell to the non-Jew to avoid owning chametz on Pesach. We will explore the possible reason for this custom, and see if there is any justification for just signing one's name on the Rav's authorization sheet.

#### **The reason to specify the chametz one is selling**

The *Rambam* writes (*Hilchos Mechirah* 21:3): *If someone says to his fellow, "I am selling you everything in this room [box or sack] for such and such [price]... and the buyer agreed and drew [it towards himself], there is no acquisition, because the buyer is not secure. For he did not know if there was straw or gold in it. It is merely gambling.* The *Shulchan Aruch* codifies this ruling in *Choshen Mishpat* (209:2). See the commentators there.

Based on this ruling, the *Nesivos* in his *Mekor Chaim* writes (448:9): *When one is selling chametz, he should itemize each type of chametz that he is selling. Otherwise, it will be like an unspecified thing, which one cannot acquire as stated in [Shulchan Aruch] §209. Even if he says "all of my chametz," it is still not considered a known type.*

This ruling is accepted by the *Mishnah Berurah* in *Beur Halachah* (§448 מועט ד"ה בדבר מועט), *Aruch HaShulchan* (448:27), and *Kaf HaChaim* (448:79). It would thus seem clear that according to all of these *Poskim* one must itemize the types of chametz he

is selling. Otherwise, he would be guilty of attempting to sell an unspecified item, which is not a valid sale.

**“Chametz” is a specification**

The *Shulchan Aruch*, though, appears to contradict himself. For later on in *Choshen Mishpat*, after again citing the ruling of the *Rambam*, he concludes (241:4): *Some argue that it is possible to either sell or give away something that is not specified.* Since whenever the *Shulchan Aruch* cites a disputant opinion, he means to rule in accordance with that second view, he is contradicting his earlier ruling.

However, *Aruch HaShulchan* (241:8) explains that there is no contradiction. The *Rambam* does not accept a *kinyan* involving an unspecified item because the buyer is not secure in knowing what he is buying – as explained above. But the *Shulchan Aruch* in the second citation is referring to where we know what the seller is selling, but we don’t know where it is. For example, he says, “I am selling you one of my fields.” It is that case that the *Shulchan Aruch* holds is subject to dispute, and he rules in accordance with the second opinion, that such a sale is valid.

Based on this reasoning, some *Poskim* rule, in dispute with the *Nesivos*, that as long as the seller says he is selling *chametz*, that should be sufficient to comply with the *Shulchan Aruch*’s second ruling. For in this case, the buyer knows exactly what he is buying. He is lacking only knowledge of where the *chametz* is. See, for example, *Teshuvos R’ Akiva Eiger* Vol. II §7), *Sho’el U’Meishiv* (Vol. II 4:10), *Teshuvos R’ Shlomo Eiger* (*Orach Chaim* §13), *Teshuvos Maharam Schick* (*Orach Chaim* §232), and *Teshuvos Maharshag* (Vol. II §96). Thus, the *Rambam*’s

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invalidation of the sale of an unspecified object should not apply when the seller is specifying that he is selling chametz.

### **There is an appraisal provision**

There is another reason why the *Rambam's* ruling should not apply to the annual sale of chametz. *R' Yitzchak Elchanan* argues in *Be'er Yitzchak* (*Orach Chaim* §6, cited by *Pischei Teshuvah* 209:1) that the *Rambam* is referring to where a person sells the unspecified object for a particular sum of money. In that case, we understand that the buyer is not secure with such an arrangement because his payment might be grossly inflated for whatever he is going to receive. But were someone to sell whatever is in the room or box for a price that will be determined later based on its fair value, the sale would certainly be valid. Therefore, since there is a provision in the chametz contract stating that the value of the chametz will be decided by a panel of three people, the sale would be valid even without making any specification whatsoever of what is being sold. The above reasoning is accepted by *Divrei Malkiel* (Vol. IV §19) and *Avnei Nezer* (*Orach Chaim* §339), among others.

We now have two solid reasons why the ruling of the *Rambam* should not affect our annual chametz sale. (1) By specifying that we are selling chametz, we are complying with the *Rambam's* directive. (2) By providing that the real value of the chametz will determine the sale price, we are avoiding the problem raised by the *Rambam* regarding an unspecified object being sold for a specific price.

### ***R' Moshe's psak***

In his *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* §150), *R' Moshe* first notes that the *Shulchan Aruch* itself rules (209:1) that if someone

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points to a stack of wheat and sells it to his friend the sale is valid. Even though the buyer does not know how much wheat he is getting, nevertheless by knowing the type of item he is purchasing the sale is valid. This would presumably be a precedent to validating a sale when he says he is selling his chametz, for the chametz is equivalent to the wheat.

However, *R' Moshe* argues that there is a difference between the two cases, even where a fair price will be determined in the future. This is because in the case of the wheat, the buyer knows exactly what he is buying; the only question is the amount. And if the agreed-upon price is found to be too high when the wheat is measured, the laws of price fraud (*onaah*) would apply and the sale could be voided. But in the case of selling one's "chametz," the buyer has no idea about the type of chametz he is purchasing. Is it a loaf of bread or a bottle of expensive whiskey? And even if there is an agreement to set the price after the chametz has been appraised and there will be no financial loss, it is nevertheless in the category of gambling; for the buyer might be intending to spend just a little money and he later will find that he owes much more than he intended. Such a sale is therefore more similar to selling "whatever is in the room," in which case the buyer is not secure in the sale since he has no idea about what he is buying.

*R' Moshe*, though, writes further that this entire discussion refers to when a lone individual is selling his chametz to the non-Jew. In that case, we must be concerned that the non-Jew was expecting to buy only inexpensive items. But with regard to the common custom of many sellers authorizing their Rav to sell their chametz, it is sufficient for the Rav to write that he is selling the "chametz" of the entire community. This is so

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because the non-Jew realizes that included in the community's chametz products are expensive items as well as common items. He is thus realistic about the nature of this purchase.

Nevertheless, *R' Moshe* adds that just in case the non-Jew is not sufficiently well-versed in the definition of chametz, it is a good idea to spell out in the sale document what is included in the sale. But this refers only to the document of sale that the Rav gives the non-Jew. Regarding the Rav's authorization document that the individual owners sign, there is no reason for them to itemize what they are selling.

### **The nature of itemization**

As mentioned at the outset, there are *Poskim* who accept the stringency of the *Nesivos*, rejecting all of the aforementioned arguments against his ruling. However, it is important to understand what they mean by itemizing. In other words, does one have to record all of the chametz he has, item by item, along with the quantity of each? Or is it sufficient to list the items without the amounts?

The *Mishnah Berurah*, who accepts the stringency of the *Nesivos*, nevertheless writes (in *Beur Halachah* *ibid.*) that it is not necessary to measure the amounts of each type of chametz before the sale takes place. Rather, one can stipulate with the non-Jew that they will measure or estimate the amount of chametz after Pesach.

This seems to be the opinion of other *Poskim* who write sample sale documents. In all of them, they just name the types of chametz that one might have. And even if a particular seller does not have one of these items, it does not invalidate the sale. This

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is especially true when we are discussing the sale document of a Rav to the non-Jew. For we can certainly assume that there is someone in the city who has each type of chametz listed (see *Divrei Malkiel* Vol. IV §22; cf. *Teshuvos R' Meshulam Igra*).

### **Conclusion**

There are many customs on how to arrange the selling of one's chametz, and each individual should certainly follow the custom of his Rav. We have discussed one detail about the sale document. Is it necessary to itemize the chametz being sold? We have seen that the *Nesivos* is the source of those who hold that the sale is not valid without itemization. But we have also seen that some *Poskim*, in dispute with the *Nesivos*, hold that just writing "chametz" complies with the itemization requirement. Others hold that even according to the *Nesivos*, itemization is necessary only when a price has been fixed; but if the sale document provides that the price will be decided after the chametz is appraised by a panel of experts, itemization is not required.

We must also remember to differentiate between a sale document given to the non-Jew and the authorization document given to the Rav who acts an agent for the community. Our discussion has been focused on the sale document; we have not seen any view that would require the types of chametz to be itemized in the authorization document. Thus, although people commonly say that they are going to the Rav to "sell their chametz," they are not actually doing that. What they are doing is going to the Rav to "authorize him to sell their chametz." It is the Rav who sells the chametz, and it is his document that must comply with the strictures that one accepts. Presumably, for the authorization document it would be sufficient to list just the

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names according to all opinions. Nevertheless, although *Divrei Malkiel* holds that it is not even necessary to itemize the chametz products when there is a provision to make an appraisal (see above), his sample authorization document (ibid.) does list the various types of chametz that one might have.

Finally, the definition of “itemization” is a mere list of all of the types of chametz that could possibly be included in the sale. The same wording can be used year after year, regardless of what is actually being sold by each individual. We have not seen any *Poskim* requiring a detailed list of the amount of each product being sold as long as a provision is added in the document mandating a later appraisal of the chametz, with the price being fixed based on that appraisal. If that provision is not included, it would be necessary for each individual to list his specific chametz and the amounts to comply with this view.

## Leah and Binyamin

Jeff Silverberg

Once in a great while, I have what I believe is an original thought – a *chidush* – in my learning. More often than not I discover that my question or answer has already been asked or answered in classical sources. That means to me that I have indeed asked a very good question or come up with an acceptable explanation for some “problem” in the text, even though it was not a *chidush*.

Sometimes, though, I cannot find any reference to my *chidush* in the *meforshim* (commentators). That always worries me.

Such was the case a number of years ago when the Torah reading reached *parshas Shemos*. The Torah tells us the names of the sons of Yaakov (Jacob) who went to Egypt with him. Reuven, Shimon, Levi, and Yehuda are listed in the first *pasuk*. Yissacher, Zevulon, and Binyamin are named in the second. Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher round out the list in the third *pasuk* before the Torah reminds us that Yoseph was already in Egypt. (*Shemos* 1:1-5).

Consider the list. The first six brothers are the sons of Leah and are listed in the order of their births. Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher are the sons of the handmaids. Yoseph is mentioned later. That leaves Binyamin, the youngest of the brothers and a son of Rachel. He is listed before the sons of the handmaids and not in the order of his birth. And he is included in the same sentence as the two youngest sons of Leah. Why, I wondered, did the Torah

choose to arrange the text in this way? What is the connection between Binyamin and Leah?

I had an idea. There is a concept in Jewish thought that the person who raises a child is considered to some extent to be his mother. This, of course, is the case with adoptions in civil law, but it seems that our tradition recognizes this idea even without legal formalities. Basya bas Pharoah raised Moshe Rabbeinu after she rescued him from the Nile River and his real mother, Yocheved, finished nursing him. Chazal tell us that Amram and Yocheved, Moshe's biological parents, named him Tuvia, כי טוב הוא, because they saw that light filled the entire house when he was born (see *Rashi, Shemos 2:2*). Nevertheless, Basya called his name Moshe in reference to the fact that he was pulled from the river, מן הַמַּיִם מְשִׁיתָהוּ (*Shemos 2:10*), and it is that name by which Moshe Rabbeinu is known. Naming a child is a privilege of the mother. Basya received that privilege. Basya raised Moshe. Therefore, to at least some extent, she is considered to be his “mother.”

Accordingly, I surmised, since Rachel died while giving birth to Binyamin and he was raised by Leah, it is quite fitting that he is listed with Leah's biological sons.

Perhaps I should have stopped at that point. But another thought occurred to me. The Torah, in *parshas Vayeitzei*, relates the birth of the *shevatim*, the tribes, of Israel. As mentioned before, Leah was the biological mother of six of these sons, the youngest being Zevulun. Immediately after his birth, the Torah tells us (30:21): וְאַחֵר יָלְדָה בֵּת וַתִּקְרָא אֹתָהּ שֵׁמָּה דִּינָה, *Afterwards she gave birth to a daughter and she called her name Dinah. Rashi*, ad loc, explains why Leah chose this name: פִּירְשׁוּ רַבּוּתִּינוּ שְׂדֵנָה לֵאמֹר

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דין בעצמה אם זה זכר לא תהא רחל אחותי כאחת השפחות והתפללה עליו ונהפך לנקבה, *Our Rabbis [Berachos 60a] explained that she is called Dinah because Leah made a judgment about herself. If this one is a male, my sister Rachel will not be even as one of the maidservants. She prayed over her fetus and it was transformed into a female.*

The saintly Leah knew prophetically (see *Rashi*, *ibid.* 29:34) that Jacob would have exactly twelve sons. She had already given birth to six. The handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah, already had two sons each. Therefore, only two of the *shevatim* remained to be born. Leah reasoned that if she had another son, only one would be left for her beloved sister, Rachel, who at that point was still childless. It would not be proper for Rachel to have fewer sons than the handmaids. Leah therefore davened that the gender of her fetus be changed, and Hashem granted her prayer.

A beautiful story of the love of a sister for her sister, returning the favor that Rachel had bestowed upon Leah on Jacob's first wedding night when Rachel revealed the signs to Leah to spare her embarrassment. (see *Rashi* *ibid.* 29:25). But there is an aspect of this story that struck me: Clearly, according to this Chazal, Leah was pregnant not just with any male fetus. This fetus, before it was changed, belonged to one of the two unborn *shevatim*. It was either Yoseph or Binyamin. Which one?

I had an idea. Perhaps the fact that Leah raised Binyamin was not the only reason that the Torah lists him with Leah's children. Perhaps there was a much closer and more intimate connection between Leah and Binyamin. Perhaps Leah actually carried Binyamin in her womb for a time, until she davened to spare her sister shame and the gender of the fetus was changed to that of

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Dinah! If so, Leah was indeed Binyamin's mother, really his mother, to a much larger degree – in the sense that she actually carried him for a time in her womb. Only someone's mother can do that!

I liked this theory. I was excited about it. So I tried it on a number of rabbis and other *talmidei chachamim*. No one shared my enthusiasm. No one was particularly impressed. The typical reaction to my suggestion was a skeptical shake of the head with a mumbled "maybe." (Actually, those were the most "favorable" reactions). I often imagined that the rabbis and friends whom I approached rolled their eyes a bit when they turned away.

Undeterred, one fine day I presented my idea to Rabbi Moshe Hauer, *shlit"a*, *mara d'asra* of Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation here in Baltimore. "So, it may be that the baby was Binyamin!" I ventured, and braced for another rejection. I received it, but not in the way I expected. "No, it was Yoseph," Rabbi Hauer answered, as I stood astounded. He explained that the *Shelah Hakadosh* states this clearly, explaining that this is why Dinah went out to the city of Shechem (ibid. 34:1), with disastrous consequences. This was an activity more appropriate for a male, the way she was initially conceived.<sup>1</sup> R' David

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: *Megaleh Amukos* (loc. cit.) adds that this is why Yoseph eventually married Asnas, the daughter of Dinah. Now, the *Shelah* understands the Gemara in *Berachos* to be saying that Leah was carrying Yoseph, and through her prayer he was transformed to become Dinah – leaving Dinah with a male character trait. But *Targum Yonasan* (loc. cit. 30:21, cited by *Tur* there) writes that Leah was carrying Yoseph and Rachel was carrying Dinah. Through Leah's prayers, the two miraculously switched positions. See also *Maharsha* to *Niddah* 31a, *Chidah* in *Rosh David*, *Vayishlach*, and *Meshech*

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Cohen, *shlit" a*, in his *Maaseh Avos* (Vol. IV p. 126) adds the mirror image. *Rashi* (*Vayeishev* 39:6) tells us that Yoseph liked to curl his hair, a trait associated with females. Perhaps this is because he was initially conceived in the feminine gender.

So while my theory was incorrect, I was consoled by the fact that at least my underlying premise – that Leah was carrying one of the two remaining *shevatim* – was validated by the *Shelah HaKadosh*. And it did give me the idea for a sefer. This essay could be the first chapter: “I thought that the baby was Binyamin, but the *Shelah HaKadosh* says it was Yoseph.” All I need is to have nine or ten more erroneous ideas, and I’ll be set!<sup>2</sup>

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*Chochmah* to *Vayigash* 46:22 for further development of this approach. In recent years, this had led to halachic ramifications as well, והמבין יבין.

<sup>2</sup> Editor’s note: Not so fast! *Midrash Sechel Tov* cites a view that Dinah was actually exchanged for Binyamin, and Leah’s prayer occurred after the birth of Yoseph!

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## **Population Growth in Egypt: Miracle Needed?**

**Yehoshua Dixler**

It is well known that 600,000 Jewish men left Egypt (*Shemos* 12:37) and, due to the sin of the spies, only the children under the age of twenty were able to enter Eretz Yisrael forty years later. With the proliferation of children during the slavery in Egypt, as the women routinely bore six children at a time, we would expect to find many *millions* of children leaving Egypt. Consequently, those children leaving Egypt should have resulted in millions of adults between forty and sixty years old entering Eretz Yisrael. However we find only 600,000 entered Eretz Yisrael (*Pinchas* 26:51)! To resolve this riddle, this essay will clarify how many of the children entering Eretz Yisrael were actually from those leaving Egypt and explain the approximate duration and time period of the miraculous births necessary to produce this number.

The number of adults entering Eretz Yisrael who earlier left Egypt as children must be significantly 600,000. If we assume that Jews in the desert were bearing children at a normal rate, we would expect the first generation in the desert to have at least one, and likely more, male children per family during the first twenty years and these children would then enter Eretz Yisrael as adults between the ages of twenty and forty. This suggests at least 300,000 of those entering Eretz Yisrael were born in the desert and not in Egypt. Consequently, of the 600,000 adults who entered Eretz Yisrael, it is possible that less than 300,000 were from the original children leaving Egypt! This further strengthens the question we posed earlier. To resolve this

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conundrum, we must examine when the population explosion in Egypt began and when it ended.

*Shemos Rabbah* writes on the *pasuk* “And Yosef died along with all of his brothers and all of that generation” (*Shemos* 1:6):

This teaches you that as long as one of those who originally entered Egypt was still alive, the Egyptians did not enslave the Jews.

On the next *pasuk* the Midrash writes (also cited by *Rashi Shemos* 1:7):

Even though Yosef and his brothers died, their God did not die; rather, “And the Jewish people increased and proliferated.” Another interpretation: Each one bore six children in a pregnancy... some say 12... some say 60.

The *Yad Moshe* on *Shemos Rabbah* writes that the slavery in Mitzrayim, since it began only after the first generation died, only lasted 86 years, seeming to contradict the 430 years the Torah claims (*Bo* 12:40) they were living, and presumably enslaved, in Egypt. The answer to this question lies in the connection between the two statements of the *Midrash* brought above. After the death of the original generation, at the time the Egyptians began to cruelly enslave the Jews, Hashem had already worked out a way for Jews to leave earlier while still being counted as 430 years. As a result of the huge increase of children during the early parts of the sojourn in Egypt, as mentioned in *Shemos* 1:6, there were five times 600,000 men (three million) when the slavery started. Although the duration of the slavery was only 86 years, Hashem counted this as 430 years of enslavement because five times as many males were enslaved. Thus, he explains, the *Midrash* is saying that Hashem was not

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## Section II: *Galus Mitzrayim*

dormant, but active to redeem the Jews by ensuring that women were bearing children at a miraculous rate to produce a population of three million and foil the Egyptians plans for extended slavery.

From *Yad Moshe* we see that the population explosion did not occur during the 86 years of slavery. In fact, due to the pressure from the severe slavery, which included separating the men from their wives, drowning Jewish males in the river, and slaughtering babies for their blood, it is likely that the number of children born during those 86 years was relatively small, perhaps just enough to replace the number of adults who were dying. After the Jewish deaths during the plague of darkness reduced the population by eighty percent, the resulting size was 600,000 men over age twenty, with likely 600,000 children under age twenty, only half (300,000) of which were male. These are the male children who forty years later entered Eretz Yisrael as adults along with the additional 300,000 men who were born during the first twenty years in the desert.

Now that we established that the miracle of “six births in one pregnancy” ended 86 years before they left Egypt, when is it likely to have begun? We can estimate this by determining when a miracle would have been necessary to produce the requisite population needed at the end of 124 years and the beginning of the slavery.

Some simple calculations show that there could be the needed number of male Jews after 124 years in Egypt without any miracles at all! The formula for population growth is  $P = P_0 e^{rt}$  where  $P_0$  is the initial population,  $e$  is the natural log,  $r$  is the rate of population growth, and  $t$  is the number of time periods.

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Assuming the initial population of 140 Jews who entered Egypt grew at an 8% annual rate over 124 years, we have:  $P_0 = 140$ ,  $r = 8\%$ ,  $t = 124$ . The result is 2,846,619 million people! For comparison sake, the village of Kiryas Yoel had a population of 7,400 people in 1990 and 20,175 in 2010 (Wikipedia) which equates to a 5% growth rate. If there would have been an 8% growth rate, the population would now be 36,652 in twenty short years, without any miracles!

Based on the above, the miracle of six births per pregnancy would only be needed if the period of exponential growth was far less than 124 years. If we instead assume a very normal growth rate of 5%, this results in a population of 15,393 after 94 years. When the growth rate then accelerated six fold to 30%, by the six births per pregnancy, for the remaining twenty years, the total population of males and females would be 6,209,820 at the end of the 124 years. These assumptions would give us the approximately 3,000,000 males we are seeking for the 86 years of the slavery which followed.

We can conclude based on the analysis above, that the population growth rate for the first 94 years in Egypt was only needed to be 5%, similar to what we find today, followed by a profound 30% rate, caused by the six births per pregnancy, enduring for only twenty years. Once the initial group that entered Egypt had died after 124 years, the slavery began and the growth rate decreased to a simple replacement rate to maintain the population of approximately three million males until it was time to leave. Due to the deaths in the plague of darkness, only 20% of these males left Egypt as the 600,000 men mentioned in the Torah accompanied by their 300,000 male children who eventually entered Eretz Yisrael.

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## ***And He Saw that There Was No Man...***

**Dr. Eliyahu Eliezer Singman<sup>3</sup>**

In *Shemos* 2:12, the Torah tells us that prior to killing the Egyptian who was attempting to kill Dassan, Moshe “looked back and forth and he saw that there was no man.” The Egyptian was an overseer who desired Dassan’s wife, Shelomis bas Divri, of the tribe of Dan. He, like all Egyptians, had orders from Pharaoh not to reproduce with the Hebrews because of the risk of increasing their numbers. Despite this, he awoke Dassan earlier than normal while it was still dark, and told him to get to work. He then came to Shelomis and fooled her into thinking he was Dassan. When Dassan came home soon after realizing he had started to work while it was still too dark, he caught this Egyptian and the Egyptian decided to beat him to death to prevent Dassan from telling Pharaoh. Moshe caught sight of this and killed the Egyptian by uttering Hashem’s name, burying him in the sand. Ironically, it was Dassan himself who informed on Moshe, putting *Moshe*’s life at risk and ultimately forcing him to flee Egypt.

The commentators on the Torah provide varying explanations for the phrase “and he saw that there was no man.” These include:

1. Moshe looked to see if there were any witnesses
2. Moshe looked and saw there were no Jews who would inform on him

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<sup>3</sup> May it be Hashem's will that this effort and any Torah thoughts and learning stemming from it be an aliyah for the neshamah of Chanah bas Leah Shapoff, a"h. She inspired so many with her love of Hashem and *Yidden*.

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3. Moshe was able to see that neither *geirim* nor *tzaddikim* would emanate from the Egyptian

It is interesting to note that a Jew did come from the Egyptian and Shelomis. This was the blasphemer mentioned in *Vayikra* 24:10-16. He wanted to pitch his tent with the tribe of Dan but one of the Danites quarreled with him, telling him that tribal affiliation comes through the father rather than the mother. This tribe-less man asked Moshe to support him but Moshe had to *paskin* that the Danites could not be forced to let him camp with them. *Me'am Loez* (p. 236) indicates that this man became angry and complained to Moshe that he had killed his Egyptian father using Hashem's name and so he began to blaspheme using Hashem's name. In fact, the Torah states that this man "went out among the Israelites," meaning not only did he blaspheme in public but also that he went out from this world and the World to Come because he denied Hashem's existence.

*Me'am Loez* explains that a child of the type of union that spawned the blasphemer was bound to have a bad end and become evil. Further, *Me'am Loez* takes Shelomis bas Divri to task, explaining that her name comes from *shalom* (a common greeting) and *dibur* (speech) because she would frequently greet and speak to men and that was immodest. This behavior attracted the attention of the Egyptian overseer and lead to the licentious act.

Notably, the exact same words, "and he saw that there was no man" are repeated in *Sefer Yeshayah* 59:16. In that context, *Yeshayah* is stating that "when Hashem will see that there is no righteous man in whose merit to bring salvation (from Sennacherib of Ashur's impending attack on Yerushalayim) nor

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even anyone...enough concerned to pray for salvation,” Hashem will bring salvation because of his charity and benevolence to those who are unworthy.

Certainly there is an interesting parallel between the two *pesukim*. In both cases neither Moshe nor Hashem saw anyone sufficiently worthy to change the course of events. Personally, I wonder whether the son of Shelomis bas Divri might have been treated in such a way as to prevent him from blaspheming. Would such harm have come from welcoming this Jewish soul into the tribe of Dan? At any rate, he certainly ended up as an unworthy individual and so it is clear that Moshe saw correctly when he looked “back and forth.” On the other hand, it seems Moshe must have missed something when he thought he saw no witnesses prior to killing the Egyptian, since he himself admitted in *Shemos* 2:14 that “the matter has become known,” i.e., the reason for the terrible subjugation of the Jews was that they would indeed inform upon each other, as Dassan and his brother Aviram threatened to do after witnessing Moshe burying the Egyptian. They did this because Moshe interrupted their argument concerning the bill of divorce Dassan planned to give Shelomis, an argument that was about to bring them to blows.

The two identical *pesukim* also highlight the love Hashem has for the Jews. The Egyptian was guilty of adultery and attempted murder; were not these two of the three things (the other being idolatry) that lead to the destruction of the first *Beis HaMikdash* (*Yoma* 9b)? Yet the Egyptian and his progeny were killed by the command of Moshe, while Hashem saved his people from Sennacherib. In addition, Hashem ultimately chose to destroy His temple rather than wipe out His people. This is a great

reassurance that despite our failings, we can trust in His salvation.

Perhaps even more compelling are parallels drawn between Moshe and Yeshayah themselves. The Encyclopedia of Biblical Personalities (*Ishei HaTanach*) mentions some interesting facts:

1. King Menasheh condemned Yeshayah to death saying “your teacher Moshe said ‘no man shall see Me and live’ but you say ‘I saw Hashem sitting on a throne.’ ”
2. None of the prophets fully knew what they were prophesying except for Moshe and Yeshayah.
3. There were no greater prophets than Moshe and Yeshayah and both of them spoke to Hashem.
4. Both Moshe and Yeshayahu (as well as Yirmiyah) prophesized with the expression “*Eichah*.”

This last point highlights Rabbi Yishmael’s second rule of Torah exegesis which states that similar words in different contexts are meant to create a connection between the two topics. If a single word (i.e., *eichah*) creates a connection, then might it be a *kal vachomer* (Rabbi Yishmael’s first rule) than an entire phrase (i.e., “and he saw that there was no man”) must connect *Shemos* and *Yeshayahu*? I welcome the reader to explore this possibility further.

## ***Bein Adam LeChaveiro***

### **Aaron Cheifetz**

In *Parshas Shemos*, the *pasuk* states (4:13): וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי שְׁלַח נָא בְיָד הַשְּׁלֵחָה, *And [Moshe] said, "Please my Master, send through whomever You will send."*

Initially, Moshe Rabbeinu refused to be the messenger and leader to take the Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. This does not make sense; how can Moshe refuse a direct command from Hashem?

R' Yaakov Yitzchak HaLevi Ruderman ז"ל explains in his sefer *Sichos Levi* that we can learn a fundamental lesson from this. Moshe Rabbeinu was afraid that if he went to Pharaoh, it would be an insult to the honor of his older brother Aharon. As a result, Moshe was not responsible to accept this *shelichus* from Hashem, even though it was something that would affect the future of the B'nai Yisrael, namely the giving of the Torah, Eretz Yisrael and the Bais HaMikdash. All were dependent on going out of Egypt. Nevertheless, Moshe did not want to accept the assignment even though Hashem commanded him to go. Moshe had the right to refuse Hashem's command because of the potential insult to Aharon and the mitzvah of *bein adam lechaveiro*.

This involved two mitzvos that were equal in Moshe's eyes. One was Hashem's command to go to Pharaoh; the other was *bein adam lechaveiro*. The rule is like Chazal say in *Bava Metzia* (59b), The Torah "is not in the Heavens." Therefore, Moshe had the right to refuse Hashem's command and refrain from going to Pharaoh even though Hashem clearly told him to. This is

because it was a potential insult to Aharon and contrary to the mitzvah of *bein adam lechaveiro*.

We learn from this how important it is not to insult a person's honor and to keep mitzvah of *bein adam lechaveiro*. Even though Hashem explicitly commanded him to go to Pharaoh, and the future of Bnei Yisrael depended on it, Moshe had the right to refuse this command due to the potential insult to his brother's honor. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also below, p. 85.

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## ***Emunah: The Prerequisite for Geulah***

### **Yair Reiner**

The Gemara in *Nedarim* (33a) quotes three opinions as to why Avraham Avinu was punished by having his descendants enslaved in Mitzrayim for 210 years.

Parenthetically, Avraham Avinu was never punished. He never had to endure the hardships as a result of his actions, so what is the *pshat*? The Gemara says he was punished? It must be that it is a big punishment for parents to see hardship befall their children.

The three answers of the Gemara are:

- A) R' Abahu in the name of R' Elazar says that Avraham was punished because he enlisted his students, who were *talmidei chachamim*, to fight against the four kings. He used *talmidei chachamim* to go to battle.
- B) R' Shmuel bar Nachmani says 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.
- C) R' Yochanan explains that he was punished because he prevented people from joining *yahadus*. He should not have 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.

The *Maharal* in *Gevuras Hashem* (Ch. 9) connects the three answers of the Gemara. Fundamentally, each of the explanations of the Amoraim represents a lack in Avraham's emunah. These three **חסרונות** were so minute, that for a regular person they wouldn't be considered a big sin let alone a justification for having his descendants enslaved for 210 years, but A) Hashem regards tzaddikim at such a high level and is **מדקדק עם צדיקים**; **כחוט השערה**; and B) Avraham is the foundation of emunah of the Jewish people. The slightest of all flaws in a foundation is enough to topple a building.

The *Maharal* explains that according to R' Abahu's answer, who says that Avraham took *talmidei chachamim* to war, Avraham should have gone to war, but he should have taken trained warriors. **אין סומכין על הנס** dictates that Avraham was obligated to go to war and fight with an army, but going to war with an untrained army is indicative that Avraham was acting out of fear, and that is a lack in emunah. Avraham didn't fully think that Hashem would save those who he loved, so he went in unprepared for war.

According to Shmuel's answer, Avraham wasn't asking "How do I know You will redeem the Jewish people", which would be a significant lack of emunah, but he was merely asking Hashem, "In what merit do the Jewish people have to be redeemed?" This represents a small flaw in Avraham's emunah. Avraham was not questioning that Hashem would redeem Bnei Yisrael from the Mitzrim, but he questioned if Hashem would actually give Bnei Yisrael the land of Israel.

According to R' Yochanan's approach, the lack of emunah wasn't in Avraham's internal faith, but the sin was that he was

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

not a זריז in increasing the amount of glory to God vis-à-vis bringing others under the wings of God and being מאמין בו. He did not increase the amount of believers when he had the opportunity to introduce new people to Hashem.

The *Keren Orah* to *Nedarim* explains that each of these three lacks in emunah correspond to a punishment that Bnei Yisrael had to endure in Mitzrayim. In the ברית בין הבתרים, Hashem tells Avraham (*Lech Lecha* 15:13): יָדַע תֵּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא יָדָע. The *pasuk* states three consequences that were going to happen to Bnei Yisrael: A) the Bnei Yisrael would have to live in foreign country; B) they would be enslaved; and C) they would be oppressed. The *Keren Orah* explains, as a result of Avraham's questioning of Hashem regarding a guarantee that Bnei Yisrael would inherit Eretz Yisrael, the Bnei Yisrael were punished by having to be aliens in a strange land. As a result of Avraham causing the *talmidei chachamim* to serve in battle, Bnei Yisrael were punished by having to be servants. As a result of not allowing the captives to join the Jewish people, Bnei Yisrael were subjugated to the עינוי of the שעבוד.

In *Parshas VaEschanan*, the *pasuk* states (4:20): וְאַתֶּם לָקַח ה' וַיּוֹצֵא אֶתְכֶם מִכּוּר הַבְּרָזִל מִמִּצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם נַחֲלָה בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה. *But Hashem has taken you and withdrawn you from the iron crucible, from Egypt, to be a nation of heritage for Him, as this very day.* The *meforshim* explain that just like an iron furnace purifies gold and gets rid of all the imperfections, Mitzrayim was our cleanser which made us fit to become the דור דעה.

This demonstrates the idea that the purpose of galus Mitzrayim was for the Bnei Yisrael to become purified in their conviction. Similarly, The *Shelah HaKadosh* (*Meseches Pesachim*) writes

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that one cannot reach perfection one goes through an iron crucible. Only after we went through the iron crucible of Mitzrayim were we able to receive the Torah and enter Eretz Yisrael.

Similarly, the *Gra* points out that the *gematria* of the word **לחמא** (79) is the same as that of **דעה**. **הא לחמא עניא דעה** can mean the **דעה** is lacking. It is our *avodah* **עבודה** during the Seder to obtain a higher level of **דעה** and **אמונת השם**.

## The Four Expressions of *Geulah*

Baruch Raczkowski <sup>1</sup>

In order to understand this *dvar* Torah, a little background is needed.

The *Meshech Chochmah* explains the four expressions of *geulah* (*Va'eira* 6:6-7) as the steps Bnei Yisrael took to free themselves from the slavery in Mitzrayim.

He explains **והוצאתי**, *I will take [you] out*, as Bnei Yisrael removing themselves from the influences of the Egyptians. The Bnei Yisrael were influenced by the Egyptian society – their culture, their morality, and laws.

He continues by explaining **והצילתי**, *I will rescue [you]*. He explains that this term indicates the termination of Bnei Yisrael's physical work.

**וגאלתי**, *I will redeem [you]*, he explains as the Egyptians losing their ability to force Bnei Yisrael to do any work.

Lastly, he explains **ולקחתי**, *I will take [you as a nation]*, as *Hashem* giving Bnei Yisrael a unique identity, the *Torah*.

This concludes the necessary background information.

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<sup>1</sup> Recently, my son Yehudah Aryeh Leib shared an incredible thought with me. It was a fresh look at a *mitzvah* we are all familiar with.

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My son asked, “Why in the mitzvah of *korban pesach* does a man have to bring his *korban* in a group? Why is this mitzvah different from all other mitzvos?”

My son offered an answer. The *korban pesach* was the first mitzvah given to Bnei Yisrael as they prepared to leave Mitzrayim and become a free nation. In order for Yisrael to really begin to show their freedom and act as a nation, they had to join together into a family. This contrasts to a slave who does not have a family unit. My son suggested the reason *korban pesach* must be brought as part of a group is to allow Bnei Yisrael to feel like free people. Being in a group would allow Bnei Yisrael to begin to contrast their new lives with their former life, the life of a slave. They needed to begin to work as a group.

A slave has no future, has no past; but we, Bnei Yisrael, have both. When we were freed from slavery in Egypt, we were, in essence, allowed to come together and bond as a family and as a nation. The *Meshech Chochmah* states that Bnei Yisrael merited the expression of **וְנִאֲמָרְתִּי** because they did not lose their connection to their earlier generations. The Midrash says that they did not change their names, their dress, or their language. A reason for the requirement that *korban pesach* be brought as a group offering is to allow the family unit to come together to continue the linkage to the past and to look to the future. A slave has no future but, *baruch Hashem*, we do. The future can only be realized by remembering where we came from, following all the laws and customs.

## Lessons from the Frogs

Moshe Kravetz

וַיַּעַשׂ ה' כְּדִבְרֵי מֹשֶׁה וַיָּמָתוּ הַצְפֹּרְדָּיִם מִן הַבָּתִּים מִן הַחֲצֵרוֹת וּמִן הַשָּׂדוֹת  
*And Hashem carried out the word of Moshe, and the frogs died from the houses, from the courtyards, and from the fields.*  
(VaEira 8:9).

It did not take long for Pharaoh to beg Moshe to daven to Hashem to put a stop to the annoying frogs that were literally infesting his entire country. Moshe davened to Hashem and the frogs all died. Chazal tell us that the frogs who had entered the ovens miraculously did not die, either in the oven or afterwards!

We may question the great reward received by the frogs. After all, if they were commanded by Hashem to enter the ovens, where else should they have gone? A similar question may be asked regarding Chazal's statement in *Pesachim* 53b. From where did Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah learn that it is better to be thrown into the furnace rather than bow down to *avodah zarah*? They learned it, says the Gemara, from the frogs in Mitzrayim who filled the homes of the Egyptians and entered even into their ovens. For they reasoned through a *kal vechomer* that if the frogs, who were not commanded to sanctify Hashem's name, were willing to enter into the ovens of Egypt to fulfill Hashem's will, then we, who are commanded in the mitzvah of *kiddush* Hashem, certainly ought to be willing to let ourselves be thrown into the furnace rather than desecrate Hashem's name by bowing to the idol.

The question is obvious. The frogs had no other choice but to fulfill the will of Hashem. Why are they being praised for doing what they were supposed to do? After all, Moshe Rabbeinu, relating the word of Hashem, had told Pharaoh clearly:  
ועלו .... ובמשארותיך.

R' Shimon Schwab z"l, explains in his sefer *Mayan Bais Hoshoeivah* that Yechezkel HaNavi had actually advised Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah to run and hide (in fact, Daniel did run away). Their response was straightforward; they wanted to prove a point. If they had fled, people would say that everyone, including the Jews had bowed to the idol. By accepting the challenge and risking their lives, they were demonstrating to the world that the Jews rejected the idol. This was the appropriate time to make a statement against Nevuchadnezzar. They certainly could have run away in order to save themselves. Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah were willing to sacrifice themselves at a moment when the whole world – including the Jews, including everyone whom they knew and respected – were not ready to do so. And therefore they had a right, we might have thought, to ask: Why us? Why should we be the only ones in the whole world to stand up to Nevuchadnezzar (especially as it was only an image of Nevuchadnezzar and may not have been a true *avodah zarah* at this point)?

And the Gemara therefore asks: From where did Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah get the strength to stand up for *kiddush* Hashem when no one else was willing to do so? From where did they learn that “why me” is not an excuse? It was the frogs that went into the ovens knowing full well the obvious results. HaRav Schwab explains the rationale (also originally attributed

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

to the Vilna Gaon). True, he said, the frogs were commanded to enter, among other places, the ovens of the Egyptians. But each individual frog was not given a specific mission. The frogs as a whole were commanded to go into Pharaoh's home, into his bedroom, into his bed, into the houses of his slaves and of his people, and into the ovens and into the dough. But there was nothing to stop any particular frog from choosing to go into Pharaoh's bedroom or bed, and letting some other frog go jump in an oven.

And therefore those frogs that jumped into the hot ovens – if we can say such a thing about frogs – did so voluntarily. And it is from them that Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah took their lesson....

That is exactly what happened in the valley of Dura. Each one of the assembled Jews knew as well as Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah that he or she ought to give up his life rather than worship an *avodah zarah*. But each one looked around and said: "Why me? Everyone else is going along and bowing down. Why should I be the one to take a stand?" And so the end result was a *chilul Hashem* of massive proportions. They could not permit that and therefore they acted accordingly and entered the fire and created a *kiddush Hashem*.

It is also noteworthy that this "lesson of the frogs" corresponds almost exactly to a comment that the *Rambam* makes about the responsibility of the Mitzrim. The *Rambam* was bothered by a famous question: Why were the Mitzrim punished for enslaving the Jews when, after all, Hashem had told Avraham Avinu, hundreds of years before, that (*Lech Lecha* 15:13): **גֵּר יִהְיֶה זֶרְעֲךָ** **בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וַעֲבָדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת**.

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Since the slavery had been foretold, it would seem that the Mitzrim had no choice; they had to enslave the Jews. Why, then, should they have been punished for it?

And the *Rambam* answers that although it was foretold that the Mitzrim, as a whole, would enslave the Jews, yet no particular individual Mitzri was mentioned in that prophecy. And therefore each individual Mitzri had a choice; he could also choose not to go along, and not to be a party to the persecution. But instead each Egyptian looked around and said: “Everyone else is doing it. Why should I be different?” And because they all chose to hide behind the crowd, they were responsible and ultimately were punished.

The Mitzrim needed to learn the lesson of the frogs!

Now this lesson is also relevant to us. For while we are not called upon to demonstrate the ultimate *kiddush* Hashem of Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah, yet there are often times when we look around and see that everyone seems to be doing something that we know is wrong – and that they, too, probably know is wrong. And the temptation at such times is to say: “OK, it’s wrong; but everyone else is doing it; why should I be the hero? Why me?”

At such times we have to remember the lesson of the frogs; the lesson that *chilul* Hashem begins with the words: “Why me?”. And *kiddush* Hashem begins when we begin to say: “Someone must begin to take a stand and do the right thing and ‘why not start with me?’.”

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The *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (20:3) says: **יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ**. Hashem sends us His assistance **מִקֹּדֶשׁ** because of the *kiddush* Hashem that we create through our honest conduct. *Kiddush* Hashem, very often, is not planned. It results naturally from living life the way Hashem wants us to. If we conduct our lives the way Hashem wants us to, we will make a *kiddush* Hashem, and then **יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ**. He will send us the help and salvation that we need!

## **Schlepping For Another Jew:**

**by Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

**Submitted by Louis Leder <sup>1</sup>**

In the description of the Exodus from Egypt, the Torah says (*Shemos* 11:7): "And to all the children of Israel a dog did not wag its tongue." The *Mechilta* comments on this *pasuk*: "That is why in the case of non-kosher meat, the Torah advises 'You shall throw it to the dogs' – to teach that G-d does not withhold reward from any creature." Since the dogs exercised restraint and did not bark when the Jews left Egypt, forever afterwards the Torah states that when there is an animal which died without being ritually slaughtered, the proper procedure is to throw it to the dogs.

At the end of the *parshah*, the Torah talks about the mitzvah of redeeming first born animals (*pidyon bechor*). There is a mitzvah to redeem firstborns of humans and firstborns of kosher animals. However, the firstborn of non-kosher animals do not generally have any special holiness. However, there is a special procedure in the case of donkeys: Firstborn donkeys do have *kedushas bechor* (firstborn sanctity) and they should be redeemed with lambs; if they are not redeemed with lambs, they are decapitated.<sup>2</sup>

*Rashi* states that here too the special procedure of *pidyon petter chamor* was a reward for the donkeys that helped the Jews

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission of Project Genesis - Torah.org.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 105 for further discussion about this mitzvah.

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

transport the gold and silver they took out from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Donkeys are beasts of burden and *Rashi* says that each Jew left Egypt with several donkeys laden with booty. This can be seen as another instance of the same principle – G-d will not deny the reward of any creature.

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ז"ל asked the following question: Why do we not find a concept of *kedushas kelev* (dog holiness), which would trigger a procedure to redeem first born dogs? Why is it that the donkeys were rewarded with sanctity and the dogs were given the scraps of non-kosher meat?

Rav Yosef Chaim answered that we see from here that one who "schleps" (carries a burden) for someone else becomes holy. The dogs kept quiet. Fine. They were given a reward for that. But the donkeys "schlepped." That was hard work. That is a higher level of effort and for that they were rewarded with sanctity. One who helps another Jew becomes holy. If a donkey becomes holy for schlepping for a Jew, certainly a Jew will become even holier for schlepping for a fellow Jew.

## **Patterns of Redemption**

**Daniel Menchel <sup>1</sup>**

That Hashem miraculously took the Jewish people out of Egypt is a basic tenet of Judaism. Scripture makes frequent mention of this concept, always stressing that the Jewish people's Exodus was solely the result of Divine intervention and that natural circumstances played no part in this event.

However, the opening verse of *parashas Beshalach* suggests otherwise: "When Pharaoh let the people leave, Hashem did not lead them through the land of the Philistines... " (*Shemos* 13:17). In this one instance, the Torah clearly attributes the Jewish people's Exodus not to Hashem but to Pharaoh! How are we to understand this?

The commentators explain that Hashem's redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt follows an eternal pattern that has shaped the course of Jewish history and that remains in effect still. Hashem could certainly have freed the Jewish people at any moment He chose, irrespective of Pharaoh's opposition, yet He refrained from doing so. Instead He brought the ten plagues to bear against Egypt, forcing Pharaoh to capitulate and emancipate the Jews of his own free will. Hashem's ultimate purpose in orchestrating the perpetual cycle of Jewish exile and subsequent redemption is to elevate the nations of the world to a sharper awareness of Israel's pivotal role in the universal scheme. If Hashem were to liberate the Jewish people from their oppressors suddenly, miraculously, and without complications, this goal

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Ner Uziel*, a *peirush* on Chumash by R' Uziel Milevsky, z"l.

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

would not be achieved. Instead, He arranges events so as to rouse the nations to recognize Israel's essential significance in the world scheme through a complex web of natural and supernatural events and experiences, which automatically result in the alleviation of Jewish suffering. In this way both goals are accomplished: the Jewish people are saved, and the non-Jews come to recognize the Jews' special relationship with the Creator.

Hashem molds the mentality of the nations through countless agents; some bring death and destruction in their wake, while others manifest themselves more peacefully. King Artachshasta of Persia, for example, came to acknowledge Israel's chosen status through the gentle words of his Jewish attendant, Nechemyah ben Chachalyah (see *Nechemyah* Ch.2). On the other hand, Hashem unleashed the ten plagues on Egypt only as a result of Pharaoh's obstinate refusal to yield to the divine will. Had Pharaoh taken Moshe's early admonishments to heart and freed the Jewish people in accordance with Hashem's will, the devastation of his country through the plagues would not have been necessary.

## Reacting to a *Neis*

Shimon Weichbrod <sup>1</sup>

As we all know, the *berachah* of *HaGomel* is a (somewhat inadequate) replacement of an event that would require a *korban todah*. Since we cannot bring a *korban todah*, we make a *berachah* on the *neis* in front of a minyan.

The *Vilna Gaon* writes that when Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they had gone through all the four possible events that would require a *korban todah*. The acronym CHaYYiM (life) indicates the four situations that require a *korban todah* – *ch'oleh*, *y'issurim*, *y'am*, and *m'idbar*. When Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they (a) had been physically ill from all of the backbreaking hard labor, (b) they had been freed from the prison of Mitzrayim, (c) they had crossed over the Yam Suf, and (d) they had crossed the desert. The *Abarbanel* equates the *korban pesach* with the *korban todah*.

In fact, the *korban pesach* and the *korban todah* have much in common. They are both eaten anywhere within the walls of Yerushalayim, they are both limited to one night, they are both *kadashim kalim*, and are both obligatory. Both are brought in remember a *neis*, the *todah* for a personal *neis*, and the *pesach* for the *neis* of Klal Yisrael.

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<sup>1</sup> About a year and a half ago our family was able to witness a *neis* and *chasdei* Hashem as it occurred to our then three-year-old son, Noam. Baruch Hashem, he is fine and doing great, *bli ayin hara*. After this event, we sponsored a Kiddush in shul, and I delivered the following *dvar Torah* on the topic of *seudas hodaah* and *Birchas HaGomel*.

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

The author of the sefer **כמוצא שלל רב** on Chumash and the Moadim, Rav Avraham Yisrael Rosenthal, recently put out a sefer called **ורפואה קרובה לבוא** on topics relating to illness and healing. He brings down the following question from Rabbi Yitzchak Mizrachi (one of the Roshei Yeshiva of Mir) who asks: What is the *inyan* of making a *seudas hodaah*, and if there is a *chiyuv* of *hodaah*, how is it accomplished with a meal?

The *Abarbanel* in *parshas Tzav* asks regarding the *korban todah*, since it is a form of *shelamim*, why is the time to eat the *korban* and the accompanying *challos* limited to a single day and night, and not given two days like a regular *korban shelamim*?

The *Abarbanel* gives an answer (also quoted in the name of the *Netziv*) that the *korban todah* was set up specifically in this manner. Since the one bringing the *korban* has a full animal, plus forty *challos*, he has no choice but to invite many people to join in eating the *korban* in an effort to avoid the *issur* of *nossar*. Once all these guests arrive, they'll be curious as to what required this *korban*, which will give the bringer the opportunity to relate the story of the *neis* that occurred for him multiple times, thereby causing a great *Kiddush Hashem*. So, by reducing the time to eat the *korban*, the wonders of Hashem are shared.

So, in our times, when we do not have the opportunity to bring this *korban*, we, in the spirit of the *pirsum haneis*, have a *seudas hodaah* in an effort to let more people know of the *chasdei Hashem* and make a *kiddush Hashem*.

This explains the purpose of a *seudas hodaah*. Let us now turn to the *berachah* of *HaGomel*. It is very odd, that unlike most *berachos*, rather than just answer Amen, we respond: **מי שגמלך**

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טוב הוא יגמלך כל טוב סלה, *May He Who has bestowed goodness upon you continue to bestow every goodness upon you forever.* Now, why is it necessary to wish the person further *nissim* in response to his acknowledging the *neis* in the first place?

Once again, turning to the sefer **ורפואה קרובה לבוא**, he cites an explanation of R' Alexander Sender HaCohen Kaplan, author of the sefer *Shalmei Nedarim* on *Meseches Nedarim*, who writes the following in his introduction:

The Gemara in *Shabbos* 53a states the following:

ת"ר מעשה באחד שמתה אשתו והניחה בן לינק ולא היה לו שכר מניקה ליתן ונעשה לו נס ונפתחו לו דדין כשני דדי אשה והניק את בנו אמר רב יוסף בא וראה כמה גדול אדם זה שנעשה לו נס כזה א"ל אבני אדרבה כמה גרוע אדם זה שנשתנו לו סדרי בראשית

This Gemara relates the story of a man whose wife died and left him with a nursing child; a miracle occurred and he was able to nurse the child himself. Rav Yosef's response to hearing this story was, "look how great this man was, that such a *neis* happened for him," to which Abaye replied, "how low is this man that G-d had to change the natural order of the world for him."

Rav Kaplan quotes from the *Yeshuos Yaakov* that Rav Yosef and Abaye are, in fact, not arguing, but looking at the story from two different perspectives. Of course, Abaye would agree that this must have been a great man; G-d changed the natural order for his benefit. However, Abaye was also stating a concern: how much must this man have gone down in stature because his *zechuyos* had to be reduced to affect this *neis* (similar to what the

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Medrash says concerned Avraham after the war with the kings, to which Hashem replied, **אָחֵר | הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְּבַר־ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם**, **בְּמַחֲזֶה לֵאמֹר אֶל־תִּירָא אֲבָרָם אֲנִכִּי מִגֵּן לֹד שְׂכָרָה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד** more on this in a bit).

This, the *Shalmei Nedarim* says, is the point of the response to the *berachah* of *HaGomel*. The person for whom a *neis* occurred stands up and identifies it, and the Klal responds, “Hashem should continue to grant you *nissim* continuously” – in other words, not reduce your *zechuyos*. He finds the phraseology of **כָּל וּמָקֵל טוֹב לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַחֲסִרְנוּ** in the response of the *tzibur* to be hinting at the *pasuk* in the fourth *berachah* of *birkas hamazon*, **וּמִכָּל טוֹב לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַחֲסִרְנוּ**, and from all the goodness let us not be lacking – meaning, have the *zechuyos* to be granted only goodness.

However, asks the *ורפואה קרובה לבוא*, this *pshat* explains the words recited, but how does the recitation of these words actually help the person and prevent the deduction of his *zechuyos*? How does having others respond that “You should continue being granted *nissim*” affect further *nissim*? In fact, the Gemara in *Shabbos* (32a) clearly states:

**לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַעֲמֹד אָדָם בַּמָּקוֹם סָכָנָה לֹא יִשְׁעוּשִׁין לוֹ נֶס שֶׁמָּא אֵין עוֹשִׂים לוֹ נֶס וְאֵם עוֹשִׁין לוֹ נֶס מִנְכִּין לוֹ מִזְכוּתוֹ**

A person should not stand in a dangerous place and say that G-d will perform a miracle for him – since maybe He won't, and even if He does, it will reduce from the person's merits.

So, how can we wish the person more miracles with our response to his *berachah*?

The *Rama* in *Hilchos Chanukah* states:

הגה יש אומרים כששכח על הניסים בברכות המזון כשמגיע להרחמן יאמר הרחמן יעשה לנו נסים ונפלאות כשם שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה בימי מתתיהו כו'

If someone forgot to say על הניסים during benching in its appropriate place, he can add a *Harachamon* that Hashem should perform *nissim* for him as he did for our forefathers in their time. The *Tevuos Shor* asks this same question on the *Rama* – how can we ask Hashem to perform additional *nissim*, we know the Gemara states that a person should not daven for a *neis*, and from the Gemara above, we saw that it would reduce from your merits?

The *Yeshuos Yaakov* answers this question by explaining the following Medrash on the *pasuk* in *Lech Lecha*, after Avraham fought the war with the four kings and won:

אחר | הדברים האלה היה דבריה' אליאברם במתנה לאמר אליהם אברם  
אניכי מנין לך שכרך הרבה מאד.

The Medrash states that Avraham was concerned that this amazing victory of the powerful kings was an open *neis*, and he would therefore lose some of his reward in the World to Come. To this Hashem comforted him and let him know that his reward was very great. The *Yeshuos Yaakov* interprets the meaning of this Medrash as follows: Although most people, when they are granted a miracle, also have a reduction in their merits, however, for you Avraham, since everyone knows that I am your shield, therefore, your *zechuyos* are not reduced, because each miracle is a *kiddush* Hashem. In other words, there are two ways in which a

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miracle will be performed, either (a) because of a person's merits, and therefore merits are reduced to "pay" for the miracle, or (b) the miracle itself will create a *kiddush Hashem*, and therefore does not require the recipient's merits to affect the *neis*.

This, then is the explanation of the special *Harachaman* on Chanukah and Purim<sup>2</sup> – we ask Hashem to perform the same types of miracles for us that occurred in the story of Chanukah – ones that were so great and created such a big *kiddush Hashem*. Not personal ones that would reduce from our personal merits.

We can thus apply this answer to the *berachah* of *HaGomel* – You, the *baal haneis*, are turning a personal miracle into a public miracle – by getting up in front of the entire shul to state that a miracle occurred for you and creating a *kiddush Hashem*, you are then deserving that Hashem should continue to perform miracles for you allowing you to continue to use them to make a *kiddush Hashem*. So, in this way, the *birchas HaGomel* itself is what is protecting the person from having his merits reduced.

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<sup>2</sup> When I saw this *pshat*, it had me wondering how this answer works with the hidden *neis* of Purim. While Chanukah contained clear miracles of the few beating the Greek many, and the oil lasting for eight days, Purim was specifically a *neis nistar*, so much so, that even the Megillah is written in the form of happenstance. Interestingly, when reading the *Rama* in *Hilchos Chanukah*, he makes no mention of the same halachah applying to Purim, and actually the text clearly states 'בימים ההם בזמן הזה בימי מתתיהו כו'. The *Mishnah Berurah* does mention that the same halachah applies to Purim, but if you check the *Rama* in *Hilchos Purim*, he states only that you do not repeat *Shemoneh Esrei* and Benching if you forgot – no mention of the *Harachaman*. It could be that the *Rama's* opinion is that one adds this *Harachaman* only on Chanukah, and not on Purim. With our approach, we may have an explanation of why this is so.

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We can further apply this back to our discussion on the custom of a *seudas hodaah*. By taking a personal miracle and making it a public event, one where you have an opportunity to tell many people of the chesed that Hashem granted you, you are making a *kiddush* Hashem, and thereby protecting the reduction of your merits.

May Hashem continue to provide wondrous miracles to Klal Yisroel, and provide us the opportunity to make a *kiddush* Hashem!

## In Search of the Perfect Pi

Dr. Barry Reiner<sup>1</sup>

Those who follow the secular calendar have noted that this year on March 14<sup>th</sup> (Pi day), at 9:26:53 (or 54) AM or PM, the date and time will correspond with pi ( $\pi$ ) carried out to 10 digits (3.141592653). Pi has been recognized since ancient times to represent a constant that defines the ratio between the circumference and the diameter of a circle. Mathematicians throughout the ages have been fascinated by the randomness of this irrational number. It should be obvious to us that any worldly wisdom defined by the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians or, subsequently, Greeks (Archimedes) is, *lehavdil*, contained in the Torah and was understood by Chazal.

The *yam shel Shlomo* was a tank built by Shlomo HaMelech that served as a *mikvah* for the Kohanim and is described in *I Melachim* (7:23): וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַיָּם מוֹצָק עָשָׂר בָּאַמָּה מִשְׁקָתוֹ עַד שִׁקְתוֹ עָגֹל סָבִיב וְחֲמִשׁ בָּאַמָּה קוֹמָתוֹ וְקוֹ (וקוה כתיב) שְׁלֹשִׁים בָּאַמָּה יָסֵב אוֹתוֹ סָבִיב, *He made the 'sea' of cast [metal] ten cubits from its one lip to its [other] lip, circular all around, five cubits its height; a thirty-cubit line could encircle it all around.* A companion *pasuk* is found in *II Divrei HaYamim* (4:2).

According to the Gemara in *Eruvin* (14a), these *pesukim* form the derivation of the relationship between the circumference and the diameter of a circle as stated in the Mishnah (*Eruvin* 1:5): כָּל שֵׁיִשׁ בְּהֶקְפוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה טַפְחִים, יֵשׁ בוֹ רֹחֵב טַפַּח, *Whatever round object*

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<sup>1</sup> In memory of my mother-in-law, who was a very special person with wonderful traits. She also made a perfect pie.

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*has a circumference of three tefachim has a width of a tefach. It would appear that the Mishnah is telling us, based upon the pesukim, that the ratio of the circumference and the diameter of a circle is 3.*

Several questions arise from this enigmatically imprecise formulation:

1. What is the need, to begin with, for Chazal, based upon Tanach, to inform us of this geometric principle when it is easily derived by measurement and calculation?
2. Why is the stated calculation so imprecise? It is inconceivable that the architect and builder of the *yam*, Shlomo HaMelech himself, the wisest of men, was unaware of the precise ratio of the circumference and the diameter of a circle.
3. What are the halachic implications of this ratio? And which number would we use in those situations – 3 or  $\pi$ ?

The halachic ramifications of this ratio include the minimum size of a round *korah* (crossbeam) to permit carrying in a *mavoi* on Shabbos (*Eruvin* 13b), the minimum size requirement for the possibility of a round *succah* (*Succah* 7b), and the minimum size of a round *korah* (crossbeam) that would convey *tumas ohel* (*Mishnah Oholos* 12:6), among many others. Some of these derived halachos are applicable on a Biblical level. For some of these halachos, using the value of 3 rather than  $\pi$  would represent leniencies (e.g. minimum size for a round *Succah*), while for others it would represent stringencies (e.g. *tumas ohel*).

The *Rosh* (in *Tosafos HaRosh*) states that the very reason that we are told of this ratio is ***because*** of the imprecision; we are

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instructed to use the number 3 in these halachic calculations. Were we to use the true value of  $\pi$ , there would have been no need to provide additional information. It would appear that, according to the *Rosh*, it is appropriate to use 3 in all halachic calculations. This seems to be the opinion of most Poskim, including the *Mishnah Berurah* (*Shaar HaTziyun* 372:18), although he considers the possibility to be stringent when pertaining to a Biblical law. The *Tashbeitz* (1:165) notes that when Chazal set a standard for measurement, that could be considered the absolute standard (*shiurim miSinai*) but he does note that, when possible, the more precise value should be used.

But this begs an additional question. Why would Chazal provide us with an imprecise value for these halachic calculations? Why not utilize the number that most closely states the proper ratio, i.e.  $\pi$ ? The *Chazon Ish* explains that measurements are *halachah leMoshe miSinai*, meaning that the purpose of the number used is not so that it conforms to a geometric reality but to enable us to adhere to the mitzvos. Accordingly, a round number would certainly provide the population at large an easier opportunity to make the necessary calculation. The *Rambam* (*Peirush HaMishnayos*) provides an additional rationale for using a round number rather than the actual number. Being that  $\pi$  is an irrational number, there is no definitive calculation. By its very nature, this number can never be known. At some point, it must be approximated. Once an approximation is being used, a round number can be used for all of the halachic calculations.

Why would Tanach provide an imprecise measurement in its description of the *yam shel Shlomo*? The Gemara in *Eruvin* suggests that the diameter was measured from the outer surface whereas the circumference was measured from the inner surface,

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so that if the wall width would have been accounted for in the circumference, the resulting calculation would have been precise. The *Eretz Chaim* suggests that the pool was not a perfect circle so the reported measurements, while serving as a source for the halachah, need not adhere to the known formula. Of course, we can also understand that the Tanach provided us with as much precision and detail as needed to make the halachic calculations and was not trying to provide the precise measurements.

Although the Tanach does not appear to provide measurements that conform to the precise value of  $\pi$ , an insight widely attributed to the Vilna Gaon suggests that the *pasuk* contains a hint to that very precise calculation. The term used for diameter in the *pasuk* has a different *kri* and *ksiv*, i.e. it is written differently from how it is read. It is written קיה, the numerical value of which is 111, but it is read קי, the numerical value of which is 106. Dividing 111/106 and subsequently multiplying by 3 results in a value of  $\pi$  accurate to the 4<sup>th</sup> decimal place!

Mathematicians and computer scientists have expended a great deal of time, effort, brainpower and computer memory attempting to calculate  $\pi$ , which has now been calculated beyond a trillion digits. Nonetheless, these calculations remain approximations, albeit very good ones. The absolute value of  $\pi$  remains, and will remain, unknown and unknowable, beyond the realm of man's capability to comprehend.

The Gemara in *Chagigah* (12a) describing the process of creation, notes that the world was expanding continuously in an infinite manner until Hashem abruptly ceased the expansion; והיינו דאמר ריש לקיש, מאי דכתיב אני א-ל ש-די, אני הוא שאמרתי

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

לעולם די, *This is what Reis Lakish said: Why is it written: “I am Keil Sha-dai”? I am the one Who said to the world, ‘Enough’ [dai].*

Using this particular Name, ש-די, Hashem circumscribed and limited the rapidly expanding universe. The numerical value of this Name is 314 (3-14), directly related to  $\pi$  (Rabbi Ben Tzion Korf, Shabbos *derashah*). Not only is  $\pi$  unknowable, it is Divine, integral to Hashem’s creation of the world.

May we be *zocheh* to experience Hashem’s glory at all times, be it when we gaze at a circle, or when we recall and reenact the wondrous miracles that occurred as we left Mitzrayim.

## **Why a Seder?**

### **Yirmiyahu Lauer**

There are many important days in the Jewish calendar. For example Yom Kippur is the day we are forgiven, Rosh Hashanah is the day we are judged for the coming year, and Shavuot is the day we received the Torah. However, when it comes to the perpetuation of the Jewish people and ensuring the continuation of our great mesorah throughout the generations, the night of Pesach surpasses them all. Let me explain.

More than 70 years have now past since *churban* Europe which annihilated a third of our people. For the past couple of decades there has been a growing “movement” to deny the events of the holocaust. As preposterous and appalling as this might seem, like any anti-Semitic propaganda, it spreads and attracts many vulnerable and uneducated people to believe it. The main weapon to disprove this and to counteract their claims is to see the survivors today. Look at the numbers on their arms. Hear all the stories they have to tell. How can it all be made up? There is no way such a ludicrous claim that all these stories are made up can actually catch on. You would think there is nothing to worry about.

The biggest fear, though, is that as time goes on and more and more survivors of the holocaust pass away, we will not have the first hand reports of actual survivors we have today. The people that actually experienced the horrors will not be with us. How will the next generation know what happened? How will we ensure that they will never forget the tragedy of the last century?

## Section IV: The Seder

Who will tell them the stories of the barbarity that actually took place? Will the story be transmitted to the next generation?

There is only one way for our children to know and remember what has happened, and to continue to transmit it to the next generation. We need to tell them that we heard from our parents and grandparents all that transpired. We saw the numbers on their arms and we know it happened. We didn't just read about it... we heard it from the people that it happened to. Our children and our grandchildren will in turn transmit this to their children as well. They will tell their children that they heard it from their parents and grandparents who heard it from the actual survivors.

Then, five hundred years from now, when people are denying the holocaust, our descendants will know better. They will proudly say that these claims are blatantly false because our grandparents told us the story and they heard it from their grandparents who were actually there. There is no denying this. This is how to keep the lessons of the holocaust alive and to ensure that it is never forgotten.

When we sit at the Seder with our family and friends, we are not simply sitting down to tell a story of something that happened thousands of years ago to a bunch of distant relatives. We are telling the story of us... why we are here... why we are who we are. The reason why this story is so compelling is because every year since Yitzias Mitzrayim families have sat down to tell this very same story. Our fathers were told by their fathers who were told by their father's and so on. The same story and the same Seder has been transmitted for thousands of years all the way back to the people who actually witnessed it. This has to be explained to the next generation. They must know that this is not

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just a story that was made up. It is a story that was told verbatim to every generation for the last three millennia. There is no denying its authenticity.

This is why we don't just tell the story and go to bed. We bring the story to life. In the Hagadah it says "*Chayav liros es atzmo...*" We are obligated to see ourselves leaving Mitzrayim. We have to bring the makkos to life and really relive what our ancestors went through. We have maror and matzah and four cups of wine. Everything we have at the Seder is all to help evoke questions and encourage dialogue. The goal is to make it real in our eyes and in our children's eyes.

The Seder night is the most important time in the year because it is not an ancient story we are reading in some book. It is the story of us and it is an opportunity to recognize Hashem and all that He did for us. It is a time to share our values and to convey to the next generation where we came from and why we are here. We have an obligation to transmit this to the next generation like every other generation has done for us.

This year when we come to the Seder, realize what a special time this is. We should not rush through the Hagadah with food on our mind. Our future generations are counting on us to relate our history and our values. Realize the enormous night this is and what we are here to accomplish. When we sit down to lead our Seder, we must realize that we are a link in a chain that has lasted for over three thousand years. We have a duty to teach our family that this story is who we are and why we do what we do and why we are what we are. We strive to tie our glorious past to an even more promising future.

## Section IV: The Seder

We need to teach our children about the miracle of our very existence. We all know that in a normal story, we would not have survived very long. However, we proclaim with vigor *Vehi she'amdah laavoseinu*. Hashem is running the show and that is why we are here. We need to convey this message to our children. The message that Hashem wants us here for a very special reason and we need to fulfill our purpose.

If we do this with an enthusiasm and a love for who we are, we will help ensure the continuity of our people and our descendants will know the truth for generations to come. Our children will transmit this vital story with the same zeal that we have done and continue to be a link in the chain that has kept Yiddishkeit alive all these years. Hopefully, in the merit of that, we should be *zocheh*, as we say at the end of the Hagadah, *leshanah habaah biYerushalayim*.

## **As if We Ourselves Had Left Egypt**

### **Rabbi Moshe Grossman**

Not only are we obligated at the Pesach Seder to relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt, we are also obligated to view ourselves as if we had left Egypt. The Hagadah mentions this mitzvah at the end of Maggid as if to tell us that after we have related the story of the Exodus, we must internalize it. We can understand the importance of the mitzvah of Maggid. The story of the Exodus is the story of how Hashem took us out of Egypt and made us His people. The *Sefer HaChinuch* tells us that the purpose of the mitzvah of Maggid is to awaken in ourselves an emotional tie to the Exodus. Therefore, we recount the entire story in as much detail as possible in order to appreciate the *nissim* that Hashem did for us so that we can properly be *makir tov* to Hashem for all He did for us.

However, why must we view ourselves as if we had gone out of Egypt? What does this obligation add to the mitzvah of Hagadah? Furthermore, why is this obligation mentioned here? Why not mention it at the beginning of Maggid immediately after the section of *avadim hayinu*? Then, when we retell the story of the Exodus, we will be sensitive to this obligation. We will study the words of the Hagadah much more carefully to try to allow them to affect us much more deeply and profoundly.

The *Abarbanel* provides an explanation. He begins by asking why the obligation of viewing ourselves as if we had left Egypt is even relevant since we are now in *galus*. The *Abarbanel* answers that through the Exodus we acquired the basis of our belief in Hashem, His care for us, and His infinite power to



control and change the world as He sees fit. The *Abarbanel* continues that this mitzvah is not just limited to the Seder on Pesach. It is an obligation that is incumbent upon us at all times. Hashem showed us through all the miracles of the Exodus that He is the Creator Who is constantly involved in maintaining and running the world and that He is personally caring for us. Hashem's demonstration of His power and control of the world through the miracles in Egypt form the basis of our belief and stand as an eternal testimony to it. This obligation is not just remembering the Exodus, but also constantly allowing the memory of the miracles to engage us emotionally. Our remembering the miracles in Egypt connects us to Him in a most profound manner. To this end, we must deeply consider these miracles. We must study the details of the Exodus and be aware of their significance to us. This obligation is mentioned here because now that we have studied and have become so involved in the story of the Exodus, we can now properly appreciate it and fulfill this obligation to the fullest. At this point in the Seder, we are about to perform the other major mitzvos of the night. If we have studied and discussed the story of the Exodus in Maggid to the point where it has affected us emotionally, the mitzvos of matzah, maror, and afikomen will serve as physical aids to heighten our feelings to the point where we can actually feel that we also went out from Egypt in the Exodus.

I believe that the challenge that we face living in this *galus* is basically one of priority. Do we consider material accomplishments to be of primary importance, or do we feel that spiritual attainment is most important? In general, are we drawn more toward spiritual activities or toward material pursuits? How can we overcome the temptations of the material world? The Hagadah tells us that the way to begin to give more importance

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to spiritual endeavors is to delve deeply into the Exodus. The Seder provides us with the opportunity to allow the memory of the Exodus to deeply penetrate and become engraved in our emotions. This experience will remain with us beyond Pesach and influence us for the entire year.

## Intent to Fulfill the Mitzvah of Matzah

### Elli Schwarz

The Gemara concludes in *Rosh Hashanah* (28a) that if one is forced by Persians to eat matzah on Pesach he has discharged his obligation. The *meforshim* explain that there are three possible ways to understand this Gemara:

- 1) That מצות אינן צריכות כוונה, *mitzvos do not require intent*. I.e. one is not required to have *kavanah* to discharge his obligation in a particular mitzvah. Therefore, even though the person is being forced to eat matzah and is not intending to perform the mitzvah, he has still discharged his obligation, since *kavanah* isn't a prerequisite to fulfilling his obligation to do the mitzvah (see Gemara there).
- 2) We hold that מצות צריכות כוונה, *mitzvos require intent*. However, we can say that even if one is required to have intent to perform a mitzvah as a prerequisite of fulfilling that mitzvah, that only applies to one doing a mitzvah by hearing something (such as listening to the Megillah, or to the shofar) or saying something (such as reciting *Shema*). However, if one is doing an action to perform a mitzvah, i.e., one is doing a מעשה מצוה, that doesn't require *kavanah*. Merely hearing or saying something doesn't show that one is involved or aware of what he is doing. However, if one is performing an *action* to fulfill a mitzvah, which shows some conscious involvement on his part, this is sufficient to demonstrate intent to

perform the mitzvah and no specific *kavanah* is required (*Maggid Mishnah, Hilchos Megillah*).

- 3) Another possibility is that in general, we do require *kavanah*, even for a מצוה מציצה; however, in a case where one is receiving הנאה (pleasure or benefit) from his action, no *kavanah* is required. This is because even if one is performing an action, that alone is not sufficient to demonstrate intent and involvement in the mitzvah. However if one receives הנאה from performing that action, that demonstrates his body's involvement in the action (i.e., it's not simply a mechanical action performed without him taking notice) and is sufficient to satisfy the requirement to have intention to perform the mitzvah (*Ran*).

This leads to an interesting question: until now, we've been assuming that the individual being forced to consume matzah is aware that it is Pesach and that he's eating matzah, but since he's being forced to do it, he is not having intent to fulfill the mitzvah. However, if at the time he eats the matzah he is unaware of what day it is (he doesn't know it is Pesach), or if he thinks he's eating chametz, does he still fulfill his obligation to eat matzah? It would seem that this individual has no idea of the relationship between his action and a mitzvah (or possibly he thinks it may be an *aveirah*!) – is it still possible for him to fulfill his obligation even in this situation?

The answer to this question may depend on our interpretation of the above Gemara. According to the first reason, that mitzvos don't require *kavanah*, it would seem that although his thoughts are distant from any knowledge that he's doing a mitzvah, there

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is absolutely no requirement for one's mental involvement in the mitzvah at all (at least מדאורייתא). Therefore, even in the case where he doesn't know it is Pesach or he thinks he is eating chametz, he performed the action the Torah required and thus discharged his obligation.

According to the second reason, that in the case of performing an action to do a mitzvah, one doesn't require *kavanah* (since *kavanah* is only required when there is no action, as in performing a mitzvah by simply hearing or saying something), it would also seem that one could discharge his obligation in this manner, since he did actually perform the mitzvah, albeit unknowingly.

However, there is a concept known as מתעסק. This means that if one who involved in performing something and ends up doing something else unintentionally, it is considered as if the action is fulfilled on its own, not through the person's intervention. For example, if one intends to pick up something from the ground on Shabbos and accidentally plucks a blade of grass, it is not considered a violation of Shabbos since we view the action as though it was performed on its own since the perpetrator wasn't intending to perform that act. Thus, in our case, where the person performing the action was entirely unaware that a potential mitzvah action is taking place, perhaps he is not be able to fulfill his obligation due to this concept of מתעסק according to the second reason stated above.

According to the third reason, that a person experiencing הנאה is tantamount to having intent to perform the mitzvah, we can also question whether the concept of מתעסק would be an issue here as well, since he is entirely unaware of the possibility that he is

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performing a mitzvah, and even the הנאה wouldn't be enough to counteract that.

However, one could argue that מתעסק doesn't apply when there is הנאה. This is because another case of מתעסק is if one intends to eat permissible fats (שומן) and accidentally eats forbidden fats (חלב) – and in this case, he is חייב since he had הנאה, even though this would ostensibly be a case of מתעסק. This seems to be because we do not apply the rule of מתעסק to a situation where the individual had הנאה, because the הנאה makes it considered as if it's intentional.

On the other hand, one could say that הנאה only counteracts מתעסק if the *aveirah* itself is the הנאה (like the case of eating forbidden fats, where the *aveirah* is the pleasure derived from eating) whereas in our case of eating matzah, the mitzvah isn't the הנאה of eating itself, but rather in the *action* of eating the matzah. We see this from the halachah that one isn't required to have הנאה to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah, as we see from the halachah that בלע מצה יצא, one who merely swallows matzah without chewing and tasting has nevertheless discharged his obligation (see *Isvan D'Oraisa*). According to this opinion, despite having הנאה, he could still be considered מתעסק and therefore not fulfill his obligation to eat matzah.

In conclusion, according to the first explanation of the Gemara, one simply has to perform the action of eating matzah, regardless of his mindset or the circumstances, and fulfills his obligation. According to the other explanations, one may have to at least be aware that his action would constitute a mitzvah (e.g., where he knows it is Pesach and that he's eating matzah) even if he doesn't consciously intend to fulfill a mitzvah.

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## Women and the Mitzvos of the Seder

### Roman Kimelfeld

As we know, women are obligated in all mitzvos of the Pesach Seder. What is the source of their obligation? Ordinarily, women are exempt from מצוות עשה שהזמן גרמא, *time-bound mitzvos*. Why are the mitzvos of the Seder different?

#### Women's Obligation in Matzah and Wine

The Gemara in *Pesachim* (43b) derives the women's obligation to eat matzah based on the *hekesheh* between the prohibition to eat chametz and the mitzvah to eat matzah in *Devarim* (16:3): לֹא תֹאכַל עִלּוֹי תִּמְצָא שְׂבַעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל עִלּוֹי מִצְוֹת לָהֶם עֲנִי. Based on this *hekesheh*, the Gemara states that whoever is prohibited in eating chametz is also obligated to eat matzah. Thus, the Torah itself requires women to eat matzah on the Seder night.

Also, women are obligated in mitzvos *derabanan* (according to Rabbinic law) of the Seder, such as *arba kosos*, because as the Gemara states elsewhere in *Pesachim* (108b): אִם הָיוּ בָּאוֹתוֹ הֵנּס, *Women also benefited from the redemption from Mitzrayim* (based on *Tosafos's* interpretation).

*Tosafos* in *Megillah* (4a) ask why we could not have learned the women's obligation to eat matzah from הֵנּס בָּאוֹתוֹ alone, rather than from the *hekesheh*. *Tosafos* answer (in their first explanation) that the reason of הֵנּס בָּאוֹתוֹ could only obligate the women *derabanan*. On the other hand, the *hekesheh* makes the women obligated *mid'oraissa* (according to Biblical law) in the mitzvah of matzah.

So, based on what we said so far, women are obligated *mideoraisa* in the mitzvah of eating matzah during the Seder due to the *hekesh*. Women are obligated in *arba kosos* due to *אף הן היו באותו הנס*. But, what is the extent of women's obligation in the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias mitzraim*?

### **Women's obligation in *Sippur Yetzias Mitzraim***

R' Shimon Eider in *Halachos of Pesach* (XIX C 3, footnote 86), cites *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (472:25). According to Rabbi Eider, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* rules that women are only obligated in *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim mederabanan* (whereas men are obligated *mideoraisa*). This is because the *hekesh* (between *issur chametz* and *chiuv achilas matzah*) extends the Torah obligation to women only to eating matzah. On the other hand, women are obligated in *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* merely based on *אף הן היו באותו הנס*, which obligates the women only *derabanan*, as we stated above.

However, *Aruch HaShulchan* (472:15) appears to say that women are obligated in the mitzvos of the Seder to the same exact extent as men. *Aruch HaShulchan* implies that we learn from the *hekesh* not only the Torah obligation for women to eat matzah, but also their Torah obligation of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. He says that we can learn women's obligation of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* from the same *hekesh* that we learn their obligation to eat matzah, because eating *matzah* and *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* are part of the same *inyan*.

### **Possible Rationale for *Aruch HaShulchan's* Opinion**

Why does *Aruch HaShulchan* say that eating *matzah* and *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* are the same *inyan*? Perhaps it is because of Shmuel's statement in *Pesachim* (36a) that matzah is called

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“*lechem oni*” (in the *pasuk* cited above) because it is לחם שעונין עלי דברים הרבה, *bread upon which many recitations are made*. *Rashi* says that this refers to Hagadah and.

In other words, according to Shmuel, the mitzvah of matzah must always be accompanied by recitation of Hagadah, i.e. *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. This means that *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* and eating *matzah* are interdependent *mitzvos* (see *Dvar Shmuel*, to 116b §6). Thus, in order to properly fulfill the mitzvah of matzah, one has to also fulfill the aspect of לחם שעונין עלי דברים הרבה. Consequently, since we know that women are obligated in matzah, it means that they are also obligated in the matzah’s aspect of לחם שעונין עלי דברים הרבה, which can only be fulfilled through *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. Thus, if the Torah obligates women in eating *matzah* – it means that Torah also obligates them in *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*.

### ***Lechem Oni***

I had been wondering for some time whether לחם שעונין עלי דברים הרבה means merely “bread upon which one must recite Hagadah and Hallel,” or whether it also means “bread that prompts one to recite Hagadah and Hallel.” I recently saw a *Sfas Emes*, quoted by *Mesivta* (in the commentary on לחם שעונין עלי דברים הרבה), which explains that one of the features of matzah and *korban pesach* is that they open the mouths of *Yidden*, thus enabling them to narrate *yetzias Mitzrayim* and to sing Hallel. In other words, it is precisely matzah that gives us the energy to recite Hagadah and Hallel at the Seder.

It is widely known that Matzah was one of the major factors that enabled Soviet Jews to maintain their identity during the 70 years of Communism. Even though Soviet government

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prohibited virtually all expressions of Jewish tradition (such as performing *bris milah*, teaching Torah or keeping Shabbos), nevertheless matzah was often available even during the periods of the worst communist repression. The communist government apparently thought that matzah was merely Jewish ethnic food (rather than part of a religious ritual); so they were not concerned that matzah would prevent Jews from fully assimilating into Soviet society.

So how did matzah help Soviet Jews preserve their identity? I think an important effect of matzah was that it prompted older people to share their childhood memories about Pesach with their children and grandchildren. Matzah became the conduit of these conversations because matzah has the aspect of לחם עוני, i.e. the bread that enables one to transmit the *mesorah* about *yetzias Mitzrayim*. While eating matzah, many older people would share with their children and grandchildren some small bits and pieces of information about *yetzias Mitzrayim* (like my grandmother did). Some older people would even remember by heart parts of the Seder, such as “*avadim hayinu*” or “*ma nishtana*.” These conversations would often prompt younger generation to try to learn more about Yiddishkeit.

### **Conclusion**

According to *Aruch HaShulchan*, since the Torah obligates women in eating *matzah*, it therefore also obligates women in *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. These two mitzvos are inseparable, as stated in *Dvar Shmuel*. In fact, matzah prompts *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, as *Sfas Emes* explains. This ability of matzah to generate *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* may have been instrumental in saving multitudes of Jews from assimilation in the former USSR.

## The Greatness of the *Tam* <sup>1</sup>

Michoel Cooperman

When examining three of the four children mentioned in the Hagadah, we are struck with the challenges faced in raising them. The *chacham* should be stimulated with answers that challenge his intellectual appetite. The *rasha* must be guided in the right direction with understanding, patience, and guidance. The *sh'eino yodei'a lishol* must be initiated to open up his mind. But what about the *tam*? What are the challenges faced in raising him?

The *tam* is understood as being the simple child. If the Hagadah is a lesson in child-rearing, what are we to take away in terms of how to teach and educate the *tam*? What is our job when it comes to the simple child?

The issue is the definition of the word *tam* or 'simple.' Was Yaakov Avinu simple? He is referred to as *Yaakov ish tam*. And the Gemara's term for an animal which does not have a dangerous history is *tam*. The *tam* is not the Simple Son or Foolish Son but the Wholesome Son, the good and obedient one. The *tam* is simple – but what a wonderful virtue is simplicity. The *tam* may very well be as wise or even wiser than the *chacham*, but he has no desire to impress people in a public forum by asking impressive questions. He is a person without pretenses who does not wear his Torah knowledge on his sleeve. And herein lies the greatness of the *tam*. He confirms the importance of the totality of Jewish living and integrates all

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<sup>1</sup> Based on *Touched by the Seder* by Rabbi Yechiel Spiro

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experience into simple love and submission to Hashem. He is unimpressed with mental gymnastics and prefers faith over philosophy.

The Hagadah is one big lesson in what is the proper and most effective way to raise children. Every part of the Seder is geared toward educating the next generations. We are all familiar with the concept of ‘the squeaky wheel gets the grease’ in child-rearing. Many parents spend a great deal of time with the more difficult children in the family or are always involved with the more intellectually competent children. Sometimes the ‘perfect’ children receive little time and attention. But ‘perfect’ children need the same time, care, and attention as the more complex children. The Hagadah reflects this advice by instructing us how to answer the questions of the sons. The *chacham* and *rasha* ask complex questions, but the *tam*’s question is simple, just two words: *mah zos*? Nonetheless, the Hagadah makes it clear that we must respond to this question just as we respond to the more complex questions of the other sons. We must make an effort and take the time to deal with the child who, on the surface, does not need as much attention as his other siblings but in fact really does.

## **Some Thoughts and Those of My First *Mechanech* on the *Chinuch* of a *Katan* R' Yitzchak Yochanan ben R' Tzvi Friedman**

The *Chasam Sofer*, in *Toras Moshe*, explains why the Torah frames the requirement that the *korban pesach* be eaten in a chaburah, with the expression *שה לבית אבות* *שה לבית*. He explains that the purpose of the *pesach* offering is to enshrine the emunah lessons of Pesach into the hearts and minds of the Jewish people. The ideal vehicle for this transmission is *בית אבות*. Good chinuch is the key to the continuity of the Jewish people. Therefore, the topic of chinuch is a natural subject for this Pesach kuntress.

The Gemara in *Succah* (3b) relates that the Jewish queen, Hilni, sat in a succah that was unfit to fulfill the mitzvah. The Gemara explains that since women are exempt from the time-bound mitzvah of succah, there was not a problem with her sitting in an invalid succah. However, the Gemara questions the propriety of letting her seven year old child sit in such a succah. Isn't she responsible for the training of her children in the proper performance of mitzvos?<sup>1</sup> The Gemara answers that this training

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<sup>1</sup> This raises the question of whether the obligation of chinuch necessitates the training in the preferred performance of mitzvos or an approximate performance is sufficient. A good example of this question is whether the chinuch set of the daled minim needs to be made up of kosher minim or it suffices that they look like daled minim. Even an inferior set gives the child practice in the mechanics of saying the berachah and how to shake the lulav. This Gemara would seem to support the notion that chinuch needs to be with halachically acceptable items. The Gemara viewed chinuch in a succah whose schach was over twenty *amos*, as not accomplishing proper chinuch. See *Mishnah Berurah*, (658:28, and *Beur Halachah* §657: *ד"ה כדי להנכו*). See *Igros*

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is only Rabbinical in nature and she only kept the Biblical laws that were incumbent upon her and not the Rabbinical ones. The clear inference is that there is a Rabbinical responsibility on the mother to educate her child in mitzvah activity.

This Gemara stands in stark contrast to a Gemara in *Nazir* (28b-29a). The Mishnah states that a father can obligate his son to be a *nazir* through vowing on his behalf but a mother cannot do the same. The Gemara explains that according to Reish Lakish a man is bound to educate his son in mitzvos; hence, he can vow that his son become a *nazir*. A mother is not obligated to educate her child in mitzvos and hence cannot vow that her son become a *nazir*. R' Yochanan argues on Reish Lakish's understanding and says that the mother normally is obligated in the chinuch of her children; *nazir* is the exception to the rule. The *Tosafos Yeshanim* rules like Reish Lakish. He then asks from the discussion of Queen Hilni, in *Meseches Succah*. The *sugya* seems to indicate that she was obligated to seat her seven year old in a kosher succah but shirked her responsibility to follow the Rabbis in this matter.

The *Tosafos Yeshanim* answers that Hilni might not have had a husband and the chinuch responsibility fell on her shoulders. An additional possibility to explain the Gemara's question is that though she might not have been obligated in the chinuch of her children but why wouldn't she want to habituate her children in mitzvah performance (למצוה בעלמא).

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*Moshe, Yoreh Deah* Vol. II §104 for a creative application of this dispute.

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## Section V: The Hagadah

In explaining the second answer of *Tosafos*, R' Yisroel Reisman *shlit"á* explained that the Gemara in *Nazir* is talking about chinuch in the mechanics of mitzvos. Everyone would agree with the notion that this is the responsibility of the father. However, there is the aspect of chinuch that serves to inspire the child to want to do mitzvos. That is in the purview of the mother.

In the same *sugya* in *Nazir*, *Tosafos* posit that a father is not required to take a piece of non-kosher meat from the mouth of his child. The mitzvah of chinuch only applies to positive commandments, not to ensure that he distances himself from transgressions. However, the Gemara in *Yevamos* (114a) states that to hand the child a piece of non-kosher meat would be Biblically prohibited.

In my Bar Mitzva pshetl, *Avi Mori*, Dr. Erwin Friedman *zt"l*, brought the opinion of the *Noda BeYehudah* (*Tinyana, Yoreh Deah* §1) that the fact that one is not allowed to feed a child improperly slaughtered animals makes him party to the mitzvah of shechitah. Therefore, if a minor slaughters an animal it is Biblically kosher. However, a child has no Biblical command to wear tefillin and is therefore disqualified from writing tefillin.

The *Ksav Sofer* (*Orach Chaim* §99) asks from a Gemara in *Berachos* (48a), where we find an argument between *Rashi* and *Tosafos* on the nature of the mitzvah of chinuch. *Tosafos* hold that the mitzvah of chinuch is not only incumbent on the father but the minor himself becomes obligated in mitzvos, albeit Rabbinically. *Rashi* posits that the mitzvah of chinuch is incumbent on the father alone. According to *Tosafos* we can understand that through the mitzvah of chinuch, the child can qualify to slaughter kosher meat. His Rabbinic restriction to eat

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*neveilah* gives him “skin in the game.” However, according to *Rashi*, why would the fact that the father cannot serve him *neveilah* directly qualify him to slaughter?

My father, זת”ל, answered that perhaps *Rashi* didn’t feel that the *katan’s* qualification to *shecht* came from the *hekesh* of slaughtering kosher to eating kosher (כל שישנו באכילה ישנו (בזביחה).<sup>2</sup> The *Rambam* says that a *katan* is permitted to *shecht* because we only find a *pesul* by a non-Jew of (וקרא לך ואכלת) (מזבחור). (Actually, the *Rambam* starts the halachah where he permits the slaughter of a minor (ב”ד, י”ד): “Therefore...” which sounds like a continuation of the previous halachah, which states that a kosher *shechitah* does not require intention. The simple reading of the *Rambam* is that a Jew is kosher to *shecht* and a *katan* is included since *daas* is not a prerequisite - YYF). The right to *shecht* is conferred upon all Jews, as long as they succeed in performing the *shechitah* with the proper mechanics. In other words, *Rambam* does not require that a *shochet* be commanded to eat kosher to enable him to *shecht*! Perhaps, *Rashi* held like the *Rambam* and did not require that the *katan* be prohibited to eat *neveilah* to qualify for *shechitah*!

The *Ksav Sofer* (ibid.) distinguishes between writing tefillin and *shechitah* in the following way: If the minor *shechts* today, he can derive spiritual benefit immediately; his father will be able to feed him this meat. The meat is kosher to consume right now.

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<sup>2</sup> The Gemara in *Gittin* (45b) says that only those individuals that are commanded to wear tefillin may write them successfully. The *Ri* and *Rosh* extend this maxim to *shechitah* and postulate that only he who is prohibited from eating *neveillah* can render an animal permissible through *shechitah*.

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## Section V: The Hagadah

However, if he writes a pair of tefillin today, he must wait until his Bar Mitzvah to enjoy the fruits of his labor. That is what is meant by the *Rosh* that he is not a *bar keshirah* today. Therefore, he may not write tefillin that are halachically valid.

However, this *Ksav Sofer* is problematic due to the fact that if he becomes an acceptable scribe, others can use the tefillin immediately. To fine tune the *Ksav Sofer's* logic, he must mean the following: With tefillin the scribe is creating a *davar shebikdushah*. Just being a Jew who will ultimately be obligated in mitzvos, doesn't qualify you to currently create a *davar shebikedusha*. However, the bar is lowered to *shecht* and the fact that you currently can't eat *neveilah* is sufficient to credential a *shochet*.

On Pesach, when we ponder the mitzvah of והגדת לבנך. I reflect on how much I learned from *Avi Mori*, זי"ל. As you can see, he taught me about learning and mitzvah performance. However, he also inspired me to do those mitzvos by showing me that they made so much sense and they were the ideal way to live! He also created a standard of chesed and honesty that was a model for the young professionals in the communities where we lived and to his family. יהי זכרו ברוך.

## Thoughts on the Hagadah

### Reuven Kaplan

#### Why is *Kiddush* the first step and what is its significance?

*Kadesh* is sanctification of the holiday, done as *kiddush* over a cup of wine, in this case being the first of the four cups of wine. It is done by the Jewish people whom *Hashem* has commanded to be sanctified and holly themselves. So what is sanctification and holiness? In *parshas Kedoshim*, *Hashem* says that the Jewish people have to be holy, קדושים תהיו, and right after that it talks about *arayos*, the separation from illicit relationships. R' Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, the *Ohr Samei'ach*, connects this idea with the *kiddush*. He quotes *Chazal*, who state that even though the Jewish people were affected negatively by their Egyptian neighbors and lowered themselves to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah*, they still never transgressed the commandment of *arayos* (even though it was not even commanded to them yet). Egyptians were very promiscuous and immoral in their relations, yet the Jewish people never became like that. R' Meir Simchah suggests that it is this special *kedushah* that saved the Jewish people. There are four expressions of redemption in the Torah (*arba leshonos shel geulah*) which correspond to the four cups. The first cup, *kiddush*, corresponds to “*v’hotzeisi*” – “and I will take you out.” We were worthy of being taken out from Egypt due to our special sanctification of separation of *arayos*, that made us worthy of being redeemed. As we are holy on this night by keeping this commandment, we are able to sanctify this night through *kiddush*.

**Free to ask questions.**

*Pesach* is our celebration of freedom from slavery. A slave has no right to question authority; he does what he is told. Through *Pesach*, the Jewish people received their freedom and therefore the possibility to ask questions. In other religions, *lehavdil*, asking questions is considered heretical, but it is the opposite in Judaism. The Talmud is written in a question and answer format between the Sages. Only by probing what Judaism is, asking and seeking more growth can one reach yet higher spiritual levels (R' Chaim Meir Bukiet)

R' Akiva Tatz explains it very accurately: there is a *midrash* that tells us that *Hashem* offered the Torah to other nations and they refused. He offered it to Edom, they asked: what is in it? *Hashem* said: you shall not kill. They responded that they live by their sword and thus cannot except the Torah. *Hashem* offered it to Yishmael, they asked: what is in it? *Hashem* replied: you cannot have immoral, illicit relations. They replied that they cannot accept the Torah. *Hashem* came to the Bnei Yisrael and offered them the Torah. We said: *Naaseh Ve'nishma*. We did not ask questions. Yet, what did we get in return? A Torah that demands us to ask questions. [Have you ever met a Jew who does not ask questions, especially before accepting something that will affect his life (and the life of his descendants for generations to come)? It is in our nature to ask questions. We subdued our nature, accepted the Torah and as a reward G-d gave us Torah that allows our nature to flourish – we get to ask questions.]

**Break that *rasha*'s teeth!**

What is so “evil” about the *rasha*'s question that we say that we have to “break” his teeth?

Yaakov Avinu recognized that Yosef was distancing himself from the brothers and he tried to fix that. When he sent Yosef to his brothers who were tending to his sheep near Shechem (*Bereishis* 37:11-14), he says: “go and check on the peace of your brothers and the peace of the sheep.” Why mention peace twice? The phrase would have the same meaning if it would have said “check on the peace of your brothers and of the sheep”... Yaakov was sending a message to Yosef that was more than just finding out the well being of his brothers. There are two types of “peace”: (a) one is when the people coexist without any war, yet there is no cooperation between them; in reality they do not get along, and the peace is just an absence of war; (b) the second type represents a true peace where people care for each other and live in harmony and unity. The flock of sheep represents the first type. They merely coexist together in the same area. One sheep does not necessarily care what is happening to its neighbor. Yosef's brothers on the other hand, lived harmoniously, caring for each other's needs. Yaakov was sending a message to Yosef to recognize that he is distancing himself from the “unity.” Instead of acting like one of the brothers, he is acting like one of the sheep.

However, as we know it was too late for Yosef to fix this problem. The separation that he had created was too large to fix now, and this led to him being sold into slavery and eventually the Jewish people becoming slaves as well.

This was later rectified by *klal* Yisrael at *Har Sinai*, when, as the *Chazal* say, they were there as “*ish echad*, with *lev echad*.”

By saying “what is this for you,” the *rasha* separates himself from the *klal*, “for you” but not “for me.” The *rasha* through his question stresses that he is NOT part of the nation, that he is now acting as one of the sheep, not caring to what happens to everyone else, as long as he gets his food, his piece of grass to graze in, he is fine by himself.

So why do we have to strike his teeth? It is speaking figuratively. We are not being physical with our son, י"ו. If we look at the Hebrew word *lishnot*, “to teach”, we see that root has the word “*shein*” in it (tooth). As we say in Shema: “*ve’shinantem le’vonecha*”. Because learning something means to know it, have it at your “teeth” (aka – “at the tip of the tongue” – it is the teeth that are at the tip of the tongue), and be able to recollect and to speak it. So we are not striking the teeth of the *rasha*. Instead, we teach him, we try to make him see the light, the true path and hope that he will leave his ways and become part of the nation, again.

## The Engagement: Why We Have to Wait Avi Dear

We'll call it an engagement period. That joyous but pressured block of time between the proposal and ultimately marriage. A time of *sheitel* shopping and a time of photographer hiring. A time of shoe shopping and a time of apartment scouring. A time of picking out the tablecloths and a time of ordering the benchers. A time of keeping "גדרים" and a time of breaking "גדרים." A time of picking out the חופה songs and a time of tailoring The Dress.

But there is more. The engagement period goes beyond its pressured planning. Its purpose is not – or at least, *should not* be – simply “a time to plan the wedding.” There is much more that needs to be accomplished other than buying furniture and getting your clothes fitted.

Let me explain...

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The counting of the ספירת העומר from 1 to 49, is not like any other מצוה שבדיבור, or speech related מצוה, says the מנחת אשר. There are Halachic anomalies present in the מצוה of ספירת העומר. These four anomalies force the מנחת אשר to come to a conclusive, foundational understanding of this מצוה (*please* see נא ויקרא סי' נא for his beautifully sweet פילפול describing them).

You see, the מצוה of ספירת העומר has no purpose alone, it has no "מטרה בפני עצמו". Rather, it is a *means to establish the number of days*. The point isn't the counting itself, the point is the

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## Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuot

establishment of days! All other מצות שבדיבור, he says, involve actual עבודה ה' in the spoken words themselves. Saying the *words* is the purpose. But not ספירה. Hashem wants the *result* of the ספירה.

But now we are left with the most obvious question: what is the result of the ספירה? If, as the מנחת אשר explains, the purpose of the ספירה is its result...*then what is the result?! What is the purpose?! We count every year for 49 straight nights. Every year. So I ask you, what is the purpose of this counting?*

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"וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת" The דברי חיים explains that all who have שכל וחוש, an intellect, will plan for the harvest during the sowing. The smart farmer will not simply throw seeds in the ground without first planning how they will grow, when they will grow, and where he will store the grain. A smart farmer plans. A smart farmer foresees the outcome of his planting.

The same with our ספירה. We must be a "smart farmer," the דברי חיים says, to plan for the eventual outcome of our counting. As soon as we start counting we must clarify: what are we counting for? What's the end of the counting? "וספרתם לכם" "you shall count for yourselves" "ממחרת השבת" which חז"ל explain is a reference to the יום טוב of שבועות. Your initial counting must be aimed towards שבועות. You must keep the end goal (the harvesting) in mind from the very beginning (the planting). When you begin counting ספירה at the beginning of פסח you must keep the outcome of that counting clearly in your mind. You are counting towards the day of receiving the תורה. As the רבינו בחיי

says, *ספירה* is the "חול המועד" between *פסח* and *שבועות*, it is the in-between stage. An engagement period, if you will.

It is these 49 days that help us clarify the *מכוון*/direction of the *חירות*, says the *אמת*. These 49 days of counting focus and clarify WHY we were miraculously taken out of *מצרים*. For where do they lead? What is the end goal, the "harvesting" of the *דברי הימים*?...accepting the *תורה*! The purpose of the freedom is to re-enslave ourselves to *הקדוש ברוך הוא*! **תעבדוך**...*העם*...*את* **בהוציאך את העם**...*את האלוקים*. From slavery of man to slavery of G-d. Hashem Himself told us in the first of the *דברות*: *עשרת הדברות*: *אנכי ה' אלוקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים*. "I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of *מצרים*." That is the purpose of the freedom: for Hashem to be our G-d.

We stood there, fresh out of the *ים סוף*. We walked through an ocean and made it out alive and dry. We might have thought, says the *אמת*, that we are done with all of it. "Phew! Glad *that's* over with. The Egyptians are kapoot and I'm ready to live it up!" Not so fast, we are told. Quite the opposite in fact.

Now we must prepare. We left *מצרים* for a reason. There was an end goal, there was a "harvesting." Now is a time to prepare ourselves for the ultimate purpose – *the condition* – of the redemption: accepting *עול מלכות שמים*, the yoke of Heaven.

So we count. That *first* day, as soon as we leave, we are commanded to count. Our mindset must be clear; our end goal must be in focus.



## Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuot

The engagement period begins now.

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But Hashem does not want a brain dead counting. This is not simply a break. It is not 49 days to buy furniture, to set up our tents around **הר סיני**. It is not a time to buy a suit or to prepare the apartment. It is deeper. The day we received the **תורה** on **הר סיני** was **בני ישראל**'s marriage to Hashem, as the **ספרים** say. These 49 days leading up to "The Day" are not simply a break. As we saw, the counting itself is not the purpose. Saying the words is insufficient.

Up until now, Hashem did it all for us. We rode the wave of the **מכות** and **עשר מכות** and **קריעת ים סוף**. But now the real work starts. Now we have to *prepare ourselves for the תכלית of the redemption!*

Before we are able to accept the **תורה** we must perfect ourselves! We must spend 49 days working on the foundation on which the **תורה** stands: our **מדות**. As **ר' חיים ויטאל** famously says, our **מדות** are the **"כסא, ויסוד, ושורש"**, the seat, the foundation, and the root for the part of our **נפש** which the **תורה** and **מצוות** depend on. Succinctly: **תקון המדות** is a prerequisite for **שמירת תורה ומצוות**. As the **שפת אמת** writes: **"כי כפי טהרת הגוף ושלימות המדות זוכין לתורה"** "In accordance with purifying the body and perfecting the **מדות**, [one] merits the **תורה**." So counting is not enough. **תקון המדות** requires work and it requires time! After we made it through the **ים סוף** we weren't off the hook. Now the real work begins.

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## *Zachreinu LeChaim*

Remember why you left מצרים. Remember where you are headed. Start counting to keep that goal fresh in your mind. I know you're excited to leave מצרים (or bachelor/ette-hood) but remember *why* you left. Keep in mind what you are here to "harvest." In order to fulfill the מצוה/goal of the redemption you must work on yourselves. You cannot simply wait during these 49 days. They are not valueless days. They are days of self-perfection. They are days which set the foundation.

Your work begins now.

## **Appreciate Your Mother**

### **Rabbi Paysach Diskind**

In *Parshas Yisro*, we arrive at Mount Sinai and anticipate the greatest moment in Jewish history; the Giving of Torah. Before the actual giving of the Torah, Hashem instructs Moshe to speak to the Jewish people to prepare them for this moment. "*So shall you say to the Jewish women and speak to the Jewish men. 'You have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me. If you will now hearken well to Me and observe My covenant (the Torah) you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples'...*" In this statement, Moshe was conveying to his people that Hashem was choosing the Jewish people to be His most beloved treasure because they will care for His Torah.

It is noteworthy that Moshe is instructed to first speak to the women and then to the men. When it comes to the study of Torah and the teaching of Torah we find that men have the primary role and women a secondary role. It is therefore curious that when it comes to preparing the nation for receiving the Torah we find that the women are given priority over the men, why?

What is the Torah? At first glance we could say that the Torah is the compendium of the laws of Hashem given to the Jewish people. This is an accurate definition – however, it is incomplete. It would be more correct to state that the Torah *contains* the compendium of Hashem's laws but it is something much more.

The Torah has a personality. The Torah is a being that exists with which one can have a relationship. To illustrate this, we will compare Torah to medicine. Let us imagine a medical student who is researching a difficult medical issue and in the middle of a sleepless night, poring over results of an experiment, suddenly unravels the mystery. Could we imagine him jumping up, grabbing his sheets of paper, and dancing while hugging his notes?! An absolutely absurd picture! And yet this does happen in the middle of the night in the halls of a yeshivah as a student of the Talmud resolves a difficult passage! The student is filled with joy and love for his Torah. In fact, when you walk into the study hall of a yeshivah in the middle of the day you will notice how the students are singing while they study! The noise level of the study hall can reach significant levels as the students speak to each other and sing their passages in beautiful tunes. You will not find this in the library or study hall of any other educational institution – why? Because there is a sense of a personal connection, an intimate connection, that every student of Torah taps into. Their studying experience is one of love, joy and connection with their beloved Torah. Their Torah is teaching them – it is an experience.

The Midrash compares Hashem's giving us His Torah to a king who gave his daughter's hand in marriage to a young prince. The Torah is Hashem's daughter. She is not a mere book of laws. We would not expect a good citizen of the United States to love the constitution. We would expect that he would respect and adhere to its laws, but nobody loves it. However, when it comes to Judaism we do find that every passionate Jew loves his Torah and has a personal relationship with her. She is our connection to the King. We cherish her and care for her. We revere her and keep her in our beautiful Arks. We wash our hands before

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## Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuos

studying her lessons. The respect afforded her is paralleled to that which is afforded a great person.

Hashem gave us His daughter for us to be married to her for the rest of eternity. How were we going to insure the continuity of this relationship? This would be accomplished by the parents teaching the Torah to their children. As mentioned earlier, the men assumed the primary responsibility of teaching and studying the Torah. Does the Jewish woman play a role in this continuity?

The emotional sentiment that we have for one thing or another often comes from early childhood experiences. Many such sentiments could come from experiences we had before our conscious memory can recall. So much of who we are and how we conduct ourselves and who we like and dislike come from early childhood experiences. The key to our children's earliest experiences lies primarily in the hands of their mothers more than their fathers. The mother is with the child from their earliest moments. If the Torah is to be our closest friend in whom we trust and who we love and cherish she must be introduced to us very early in our development. This lies in the hands of the Jewish mothers.

Hence, when Hashem prepares His people to accept the Torah it is of paramount importance to enlist the Jewish women in this endeavor because the key to the future relationship lies in their hands. It is only the mothers of the Jewish people who can guarantee the continuity of our relationship with the Torah. Therefore, when it comes to insuring the continuity of our Torah the women go first.

## *Zachreinu LeChaim*

How appropriate it would be for us to take this moment to thank all the Jewish mothers who successfully transmitted their love of Torah for the past ninety generations since the giving of the Torah 3,300 years ago.

We thank you and may Hashem continue granting us such wonderful women.

## The Nature of the Torah

Daniel Menchel <sup>1</sup>

### Part I

The boundlessness of the Torah in the realm of the Ten Commandments that regulate the relationship between finite man and an infinite God (*bein adam laMakom*) is readily apparent. However, regarding the commandments that govern between man and his fellow man (*bein adam lechaveiro*), we would be tempted to suggest that there really isn't much more to the commandment "Do not steal" than what it says. The Ten Commandments themselves can give this impression. The first five commandments which are primarily *bein adam laMakom*, are quite lengthy, developed in multiple verses; whereas the latter five, which are mainly *bein adam lechavero*, are stated succinctly without any elaboration.

However, *Rashi's* comment that the two *luchos* were exactly equal, despite the obvious fact that the first tablet contained many more letters, indicates that though the Torah may offer more explicit information in certain areas, the extent of every mitzvah is infinite and therefore they are all equal.

In his translation of the Ten Commandments, the *Targum Yonasan* may also be trying to highlight the equality and immeasurability of all the mitzvos; even those that govern interpersonal relationships. While translating the first five commandments essentially literally, the *Targum* elaborates much

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<sup>1</sup> This *dvar Torah* is adapted from an article by R. Moshe Shapiro published in the *kuntress* of Congregation Ohr HaTorah in Bergenfield, NJ.

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more on the latter five: “You, My nation, Children of Israel, do not be murderers, not companions or partners with murderers, and there should not appear in the Congregation of Israel murderers, and your children after you should not learn to be with murderers.”

The same lengthy formulation is given regarding adulterers, thieves, false witnesses and coveters. R’ Eliyahu Lopian suggests that the *Targum* was trying to prevent the mistaken impression that somehow the mitzvos *bein adam lechavero* do not have the same limitless potential as the mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*. “Do not steal,” is an injunction against taking another person's possessions, but there are many more subtle levels and aspects, with increasingly more demanding expectations for the development of the religious personality and the perfection of the human character. As a person grows spiritually, these seemingly straightforward commandments take on more meaning. “Do not steal” also means, “Be quiet when others are sleeping” so their sleep is not stolen. It means, “Do not jaywalk” causing drivers to stop or slow down, thereby stealing their time. It warns, “Do not block the whole street in carpool, when there is room to pull over,” so you do not thoughtlessly inconvenience others behind you and waste their time. Did I mention not talking in shul during davening or laining – or when there are still some people davening *Shemoneh Esrei*?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See also above, p. 21.

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## Part II

The Written Torah and the carved stone tablets of the Law are finite, though *Rashi* and *Targum Yonasan* indicate that even the Written Torah is more expansive than might appear at first glance. The Torah that is constantly expanding and developing is the Oral Torah, the *Torah shebe'al peh*. *Rashi* identifies the scroll that Yechezkel and Zechariah saw in their visions as being the physical embodiment of the *Torah shebe'al peh*, and it was to accept this limitless Oral Torah that the Jews at Mt. Sinai responded, “*naaseh*” with all the boundless possibilities that an affirmative response can evoke.

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Sanhedrin* 4:2) quotes an intriguing statement from the sage R' Yannai: “If the Torah had been given cut and dried, we would not have a leg to stand on.” In other words, had every halachic decision been rendered unambiguously in the Chumash, we would not have been able to adapt and apply the Torah to new situations and circumstances. The *Talmud* states that R' Yannai's source is the verse “And Hashem spoke to Moshe” and posits a conversation in which Moshe pleaded with Hashem to render decisive halachic rulings. However, God responded that He would not do so and that we must follow the majority so that the Torah may be interpreted in forty-nine ways to impurity and in forty-nine ways to purity.”

The *Yerushalmi's* message is that the Torah must be flexible and open to multiple interpretations in order to be relevant. However, it is not clear how R' Yannai derived this lesson from the verse “And Hashem spoke to Moshe.” The *Netziv* insists that the passage in the *Yerushalmi* meant to quote the verse in full, “And Hashem spoke to Moshe to say “*leimor*.” He points to *Rabbenu Chananel* in his commentary to *Sanhedrin* 36a, who quotes this

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passage with the full verse. God spoke (*vayedaber*) to Moshe the specific words that are recorded in the Torah. However, *leimor* means that Hashem gave us the Torah "to say." We must argue and debate the forty-nine possibilities of impurity and the forty-nine possibilities of purity. And it is we who must reach a conclusion and say it aloud. The Torah was not given as a static body of law, but as a dynamic, living interaction between the infinite wisdom of God and the finite mind of man.

**Shiur HaRav Y. D. Soloveichik zt”l**  
**on *Inyanei Matan Torah***  
**submitted by Rabbi Yehoshua Cheifetz <sup>1</sup>**

After the story of the splitting of the sea and the Manna we read that Yisro came on the scene to join the people in the desert. The Torah describes his reception by the people and Moshe, the advice that he gives Moshe and of his decision to return home. Why does the Torah tell us about Yisro at this point, right before the main event of *Matan Torah*? Perhaps this story should have been located in *Behaaloscha* where Moshe tells Yisro to join them on their journey to the promised land.

There is another individual mentioned prior to *Matan Torah* even though his actions were despicable and seemingly undeserving of mention in proximity to the other significant events prior to *Matan Torah*: Amalek. The Torah gives us a precise report about the travels of Bnei Yisrael, where they stopped and where they had water to drink. The Torah should have stopped after telling that the people came to Refidim and had no water. Indeed, after Refidim they next traveled to Sinai. But there is an interlude in that we are told the story of Amalek, as if this story is indispensable to the story of *Matan Torah*.

Before we can read about *Matan Torah*, the Jew must know two stories: Amalek and Yisro and his return home to convert the members of his household. Why do we need to know this? Yisro

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<sup>1</sup> This summary is Copyright 1997 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted.

Thank you to Rabbi Cheifetz for making this available to us.

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was impressed by these events and the role that his son-in-law played in all this. He returned home determined to convert his whole family after this encounter. Amalek was another non-Jew who was immensely impressed by the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim yet he decided that this story should be wiped off the pages of history and the people who left Egypt should be annihilated.

Yisro was the chief priest of *avodah zarah*, yet he came with an open mind and was impressed, conquered and overwhelmed by what he saw. It was so impressive, that the chief priest of Midyan dropped everything and decided to join Bnei Yisrael. Yisro is never mentioned as one of the *chasidei umos haolam* by Chazal, yet he was a decent person who followed his heart and was affected by the events of the time. Amalek reached an opposite conclusion. To Amalek, a nation whose laws are different than that of all others must be destroyed. He was not threatened by Bnei Yisrael, yet he still had to attack.

We must understand these different reactions on the part of Yisro and Amalek before *Matan Torah*. What change did the reaction of Yisro generate in Midyan and what were the conclusions that the Amalekim arrived at? Without this we cannot tell the story of *Matan Torah*. Why?

In Ki Sisa, when the Torah tells us that Moshe was commanded to take the second set of tablets for Hashem to engrave, the people are enjoined from coming up the mountain. Rashi says that the first *luchos* were destroyed because they were given with too much publicity, and were broken because of *ayin hara*. Therefore only Moshe was around for the second set. It was given through anonymity and modesty.

## Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuos

The *Meforshim* ask on Rashi: if *ayin hara* was a problem in that the first *luchos* were over publicized and caused the shattering of the *luchos*, why order Moshe to bring the people to the mountain? Why make it a public affair? We recount the publicity associated with the event even in the *berachah* of *Shofaros* that we recite on Rosh Hashanah. According to Chazal, every king and kingdom was aware of *Matan Torah*, to the extent that they were scared and went to Bilam and asked him to explain to them what was happening. This was not an intimate affair. The Midrash says that they recited *Hashem Oz Le'amo Yiten, Hashem Yevarech Es Amo Bashalom*.

Why make it so public? The answer is that the first *luchos* had to be given in a public display, even though this will cause them to be shattered. Despite the outcome, Hashem insisted that the whole world must know. Whether the world will understand and accept, does not matter. The whole world must know that a small nation, Israel, has accepted the Torah and the moral code. Even though the *luchos* will be shattered, a second set will be given. The *berachah* of *Shofaros* on Rosh Hashanah represents *Gilui Shechinah* and revolves around the great noise that accompanied the *luchos*, noise that was indispensable to the process. Without the noise there would not have been *Matan Torah*.

That is what Rashi says: the first set was destroyed because of *ayin hara*. This could not be avoided because every human being, even Bilam, must admit *Hashem Oz Le'amo Yiten, Hashem Yevarech Es Amo Bashalom*. That whole chapter of *Tehillim* expresses the great noise that accompanied *Matan Torah*. The whole world must know that Hashem resides in His people. The fact that Hashem gave His people the Torah proves that He has selected them.

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The Midrash says that the Torah could have been adopted by the other nations but they refused. The whole world must know that the Jewish People accepted the Torah. That is why Hashem made it such a public display. Hashem wanted that years in the future, when Mashiach will come, the whole world will recognize that the Torah that was given so many years ago is the truth and that they would do well to accept it. The drama of *Matan Torah* caused the *luchos* to be shattered, and we paid an unavoidable price. It was important that all mankind know that the Torah is offered to everyone. The non-Jewish community did not take up the offer.

The shattering of the *luchos* was not the main theme. The fact that the message got across to all humanity is the key. Among the multitudes of non-Jews who heard about this great miracle some were affected and understood. That is why it needed to be public to allow these people to come. *Bayom Hahu Yiyeh Hashem Echad U'shmo Echad*, that all will accept the Torah in *yemos Hamashiach*. At that time the whole universe will recognize the greatness of Hashem.

Yisro was the person who heard the message and was affected. He was a regular person, apparently sensitive. Yisro witnessed what confronted Moshe and Bnei Yisrael and he looked at how they existed and was so impressed that he went home to convert his family. Others could have done as Yisro did but chose not to. Eventually they will. The proof that they will when Mashiach comes is *Vayishma Yisro*.

The Torah also wanted us to recognize that there are certain people, who might be very strong and a great nation, yet they will never be converted. They will understand that the Jew

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## Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuot

represents something unique, but they will be impressed to try and destroy them rather than join them. This is the example of Amalek and all others who try to wipe out the Am Hashem.

How will the nations of the world respond to *Matan Torah*? There are two examples: Yisro a sensitive non-Jew with a sense for truth who returned home to convert his family. Amalek, the incarnation of evil, will arrive at the opposite conclusion. The story of Amalek is as relevant today as it was at the time of Moshe. People resent the Jew because he lives by principles that others refuse to follow, not because of economic or political considerations. They attacked the Jews simply because they were Yisrael, a unique entity.

## **Shabbos if Classified as a Sporting Event**

### **Label Cooper**

#### **Basic Overview and General Understanding of the Rules:**

- Contains a list of thousands of restrictive rules
- No age or gender restriction
- Does not come with cards, dice, boards, or pieces of any kind
- Does not require or even condone strenuous effort, yet it seems to make everyone tired
- Yet nobody ever gets tired of it
- Can only be played one day a week
- Can (and should) be played everywhere
- Often not obvious to find anywhere
- Most people in the world are not allowed to play it, but if they do, they are required to cheat at least once EVERY time they play (עכ"ם ששבת חייב מיתה)
- Those who are allowed to play it, HAVE to play it, and are NEVER allowed to cheat even once
- Once it starts, you're not allowed to drive to it
- Most people drive to it anyways, even though it automatically comes to YOU
- You have to constantly keep in mind that you're playing it, yet you are allowed to play some other games at the same time
- Can be played by one person or by many, without a limit
- It's never allowed to be cancelled or postponed
- It has to be played by 'all' participants of every age
- It has to be played for not less than 25 hours in a row
- You have to start playing right away, even if the other players show up late (or not at all)



## Section VII: Pesach and other Special Days

- Not only that, but you're required to start playing it earlier than the start time (without exception, ever)
- And you're required to finish playing after the finish time (without exception, ever)
- Even without any referees, the penalty of making even one mistake is great, even today
- Yet people who haven't ever played before, are invited to play first - then learn the rules later
- Nobody is expected to wait until they learn the rules before they ever play
- Nobody is even allowed to wait until they learn the rules before they ever play
- Very few people ever know how 'all' the rules work
- People like to study how to apply all the rules, yet how to apply all the rules is infinite
- There are no teams
- Yet everyone is on the same team
- Raw beginners are recommended to play on the same table as long-term experts
- There's really no way to practice, you just do it – yet people who do it are called people who practice it
- Sometimes the raw beginners score much higher in a very short time than long-term experts do
- Everyone knows that's true
- Everyone believes that's true
- Nobody can prove this
- Nobody 'will' ever prove this
- Everyone understands that nobody COULD ever prove this
- There are many people who hardly ever ask about the rules, yet they are surprisingly somewhat good at it

- There are even people who don't even know that there are thousands of rules, and even though they might not play it as well as those who know, they still seem to score very high
- No matter how important your job is, you can never leave the game to go to your job, but you always have to leave your job to go to the game
- It's the most serious of all games, so dangerously easy to make a deadly error that you must never lose focus for even a moment
- Yet an unlimited list of snacks and snack breaks are common and more than acceptable
- Some people even snack all day without ever breaking the rules
- You need to always be conscious of the rules, as they can easily be broken, yet you're not only ALLOWED to fall asleep in the middle, but it's actually recommended
- Many people love it so much BECAUSE you can fall asleep in the middle
- Some love it 'so' much that they fall asleep in the middle and don't wake up until it's over
- If someone can't afford it, you're expected to pay for them
- In certain, very limited circumstances where you are allowed to break the rules, you are not allowed to 'not' break the rules
- Nobody is allowed to go home unless you live close by, but even if you go home, you have to continue playing it, even 'while' you're going home
- EVERYONE has an identical copy of the ORIGINAL book of its rules

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- No one would ever think of not having the original book of rules
  - Everyone is required to read the original book of rules every single week
  - Everyone believes that ALL the rules can be found in the original book of rules
  - Yet nobody would ever know how to figure out ANY of the rules from the original book of rules
  - The rules are 'never' allowed to change in the slightest since the game was invented, yet more and more new rule books are written about it every year
  - Even though the rules are never allowed to change, people who descend from certain countries will practice the rules differently than people from other countries
  - They will insist that what THEY are doing is right
  - You will insist that what YOU are doing is right
  - They will admit that what YOU are doing is right
  - You will admit that what THEY are doing is right
  - There are numerous opportunities to score a very high number of points, and everyone wants to do so
  - Yet there is no system to keep track of points
  - People look for all kinds of ways to score the highest number of points
  - Yet nobody knows how to keep score
  - Nobody WILL ever know how to keep score
  - Even if they did, one of the rules does not ALLOW you to keep score
  - Nobody is allowed to quit in the middle
  - You don't take turns – instead, it's EVERYONE's turn ALL the time
  - Even if you take a bathroom break (and even WHILE you're taking the bathroom break)
-

- Beginners and pros alike, everyone just can't wait until it begins, even knowing that one wrong move could instantly cost you your soul forever and ever -
  - o This should make everyone totally anxious, but instead everyone finds this totally relaxing
  - o This should make people lose sleep, yet most people find it the best time to sleep
  - o In fact the most popular rule is that there's more time to sleep
  - o In spite of most people not knowing most of the rules and even knowing that it's dangerous not to, they don't spend much time ever finding out the rules
- It costs nothing to have it
- It costs lots to play it
- Spending even more is recommended
- Most people do
- You get it all back
- No one knows how
- No one can prove this
- Yet everyone knows this
- You get back even more when you're no longer here to play it
- No one ever loses
- Everyone always wins

## What I Do

### Label Cooper

Seeing what I do each day  
You'd surely think I'm strange,  
But don't try to talk me out of it  
For never will I change.

I wake up early every dawn  
And wrap myself in boxes,  
Then I open a big huge book  
And study about some oxes. (1)

Although the guy who's facing me  
Is sitting very near,  
I wave my thumbs around his head  
And yell into his ear. (2)

Once a week I bump and stumble  
In my room at night,  
"Why?" you ask would I do that,  
'Cuz I won't turn on the light.

That day I also refuse to let  
My alarm clock give off rings, (3)  
And I'll dress real sharp and run to hear  
An off-tune boy who sings. (4)

*Zachreinu LeChaim*

Sometimes I'll drive 200 miles  
Through traffic that is vicious,  
To sing and dance right on the cue  
Of mothers breaking dishes. (5)

One week each Spring at every meal  
Dinner, breakfast, lunch,  
Every single bite I take  
Emits a real loud crunch. (6)

For several steamy summer days  
Although the air gets sour,  
I make a very special point  
Not to take a shower. (7)

One day each Fall I dress so fine  
But will not dare to eat,  
I stand and bang my chest all day  
Though I bought an expensive seat. (8)

That weary yet elated night,  
I'm welcomed by my pillows, (9)  
A few days later I just can't wait  
To go and whack fresh willows. (10)

Gleefully that whole week long  
I stayed in a rundown shack, (11)  
Designing it to barely stand  
I really have the nack.

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In early Winter I make sure  
For each successive night,  
To light more candles right at dark  
But never use their light. (12)

Any time I eat or drink,  
You'll always see me mumble, (13)  
You'll think I must be off the wall  
But I'm just being humble.

So if you think I must shake off  
These habits to break free,  
Just ask my wife and all my friends,  
Not one of them will agree!!!

- (1) Talmud study about oxen who cause damage
- (2) Learning with my chavrusa
- (3) Because it's Shabbos
- (4) A Bar-Mitzvah boy trying to sing, but out of tune
- (5) At the *chasunah*, the mothers break a dish and everyone shouts with joy
- (6) Pesach
- (7) The 9 days
- (8) Yom Kippur
- (9) Motza'ei Yom Kippur night
- (10) Shemini Atzeres
- (11) My Succah
- (12) Chanukah candles
- (13) Reciting a berachah

## **Leaving Mitzrayim: A Lesson for a Bar Mitzvah Bachur Yaakov Hyatt**

The first *pasuk* in *parshas* בְּשַׁלַּח contains within it a concept that is applicable for every Bar Mitzvah Bachur.

Let us try for a moment to picture the scene. Klal Yisrael has just suffered under the Galus of מִצְרַיִם for 210 years. Hashem hears their suffering, and proceeds to redeem them from their situation. Hashem does this in the most remarkable of ways. He brings a series of *makkos* on Mitzrayim.

The *meforshim* tell us that as soon as the first *makkah* of *dam* began, the slavery immediately stopped. But Hashem didn't stop there. He proceeded to bring nine additional *makkos*, completely and utterly destroying any notion that Mitzrayim had any power at all over the Jewish people. This climaxed in the tenth *makkah*, the *makkas bechoros*, whereby there could be left no doubt of the supremacy of Hashem in the world.

It is at this point, at this moment of an extreme high for Klal Yisroel, at the end of the *parshah* of *Bo*, the Torah includes two of the *parshos* that are contained in the Tefillin. Both the *parshah* of בְּכֹרֶךְ לִי כָל בְּכוֹרֶךְ, and וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְרָאָה, that are contained in the tefillin clearly tell us that when we wear our tefillin, it should be as a remembrance of the strong hand with which *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* took us out of Mitzrayim.

So at this point Bnei Yisrael is on a tremendous high, leaving Mitzrayim under an incredible set of *nissim* and wonders. That's



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what makes the first *pasuk* in the *parshah* all the more peculiar. The *pasuk* states that when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* led us out of Mitzrayim, He couldn't lead us on the most direct route, because He was concerned that it would be too easy for Klal Yisrael to return back to Mitzrayim.

How could this possibly be? After having just witnessed the most remarkable of miracles, how could Hashem be concerned that Klal Yisrael would panic at the possibility of war and return to Mitzrayim. After all, Mitzrayim was the most powerful nation on earth, and Hashem had just destroyed it?

It is from here that the *Rambam* in his sefer *Moreh Nevuchim* gleans a most important lesson. Hashem is teaching us that it is not in the nature of man to change on a dime. Klal Yisrael had just endured 210 years of slavery, and even though they had just witnessed the most incredible miracles, they were still not strong enough in their *emunah* that the fear of a war would not have left them fleeing to return to Mitzrayim. The lesson that Hashem is teaching us, says the *Rambam*, is that *emunah*, belief in Hashem, is not something that can happen overnight, even with miracles and wonders. It is a process that takes place over time. A process of lifetime with struggles, successes and failures, good times and difficult times, but it is this very process that goes to the core of strengthening ones *emunah* and *bitachon* in the *Ribono Shel Olam*.<sup>1</sup>

Every Bar Mitzvah bachur is on a high. The excitement of putting on Tefillin and of being counted towards a minyan are truly great feelings. But we know from this *pasuk*, that one's

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<sup>1</sup> See also above, p. 23.

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growth in serving Hashem is a process. It is not something that magically happens just because one turns Bar Mitzvah.

There is one more point that the *Rambam* makes, which is important to point out. The *Rambam* asks, after all of the miracles that Hashem just performed, why couldn't he simply make it that Klal Yisrael wouldn't be afraid when they went out of Mitzrayim? He answers that this is one *nes* that Hashem will never do. HaShem will never change what is going on inside one's heart. That is each individual's job in this world. Hashem moves everything around a person to make it conducive for their growth in *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem, but ultimately it has to come from the individual himself.

A bachur once asked an *adam gadol* for a *berachah* for *limud* HaTorah. The *adam gadol* replied that I can give you no such *berachah*. I can give you a *berachah* that the conditions around you should be such that they should be conducive to you learning Torah, but ultimately you must be the one to sit down and learn. Hashem can put all the pieces in place for success in *emunah* and *bitachon*, but ultimately it depends on each individual to take advantage of Hashem's help to achieve that true *emunah* and *bitachon*.

## The Mitzvah of *Pidyon Petter Chamor*

Dovid Boruch Keidar

The מצות פדיה קודם למצות עריפה says: בכורות פרק א משנה ז in משנה ז, the mitzvah of פדיה comes before the mitzvah of עריפה. The מצות פדיה קודם למצות עריפה also states: בכורים ה"א פ"ב מהלכות רמב"ם in רמב"ם – the mitzvah of פדיה comes before the mitzvah of עריפה. In addition, he adds that indeed there are two מצות here: (1) פדיה and (2) עריפה. The השגות הראב"ד, though, argues and says that there is no mitzvah of עריפה and אדרבה it's an עבירה and it's called a מזיק to the Kohen of his properties. The only reason the משנה calls עריפה a מצוה is to be consistent with the same term it uses for פדיה.

The רדב"ז asks the following three questions: (1) In the Mishnah, besides listing the מצות mentioned above, it also states other מצות that take precedence over another, for example יבום, חליצה, etc. And over there we do not say that the second one is not a mitzvah, so why over here would it be different. (2) Something that the תורה apparently permits since it states all the rules about it, how can the ראב"ד call it an עבירה? (3) רבי (the ראב"ד), who knows all the יסודות of the תורה הקדושה, why would he call something that is לכאורה a תקון to the מצוה an עבירה? So the רדב"ז says that the ראב"ד must be meaning something else, not up for discussion, since the משנה says clearly it's a מצוה.

The משנה כסף says that the רמב"ם knows his פשט from the משנה in בכורות ספ"ק but לפי the ראב"ד why would the משנה call something that is a עבירה in a לשון of a מצוה?

The עבירה asks further, why should the ראב"ד call something that is a חייב התורה. In addition, just because the beginning of the משנה says מצוה, why should it say מצוה in the end of the משנה? Moreover, if the ראב"ד holds it is an עבירה because it says on בכורות לוי says since he was מפסיד the חק we are מפסיד him, what about by חליצה the תורה says he's considered an cruel person and there the ראב"ד still calls it מ"ע?

The מנחת חינוך brings down the מהרי"ט אלגזי who brings down the עריפה who asks the following קשיא: if it's true that עבירה is a מצוה, then why does our משנה need to say that a מצוה comes before a עבירה? We never need somebody to tell us a מצוה comes before עבירה! The מהרי"ט גירמיון does not answer the question. However, the מהרי"ט אלגזי answers by bringing down a מכילתא in בא (יג) in פסוק פשטים which learns two פדיה בא פרשה יח אם לא תפדה וערפתו. Either it means the mitzvah of פדיה comes before the mitzvah of עריפה. Or it tells us that it's a קנס and since he was מפסיד the חק we are מפסיד him by chopping the neck off, which is called עריפה. עכ"ל. The מהרי"ט אלגזי says from here comes out 2 פשטים: (1) They are both מצות (but one takes precedence over the other); (2) עריפה is not a מצוה only a קנס. Now he explains the מחלוקת between וראב"ד (י:) and the רמב"ם ולוי (י:). The first פשט of the מכילתא must be going like ומשנה ולוי (י:). The first פשט of the רמב"ם must be going like the second פשט of the מכילתא.

The מנחת חינוך says further that the מחבר holds like the רמב"ם. Still he brings down לוי and says it appears that maybe פשט is that לוי is just saying the reason for the מצוה since it is a קנס. The אבה"ע סי' קס"ט ס"ק פ"ב in בית שמואל brings down the מנחת חינוך where he brings the בה"ג who says that the reason for חליצה is since he doesn't want to do the מצוה he makes it like a נדוי. עי"ש.

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The מצוה מנחת חינוך says also that it's a קנס and we still say it's a מצוה and the words of the חכמי בה"ג is mainly accepted among the חכמי עריפה it should also be considered a מצוה even though it's a קנס.

The איש חזון איש in יז אות ד' says that the ראב"ד cannot hold that it's not a מצוה at all since the ברייתא on י: לא ימיתנו בקנה - don't chop it off not with a reed. So it tells us how to do it so. Rather the חזון איש answers that it's not saying that it's not a מצוה or its saying it's a עבירה rather he says that's it's not a מצוה חיובית rather a מצוה קיומית. A מצוה חיובית is, for example, eating מצה; you have to do it. However, a מצוה קיומית is, for example, ציצית; the Torah says that if you have a four-cornered בגד then put ציצית on it. The חזון איש asks that if the ראב"ד calls it a מצוה קיומית then the רמב"ם would hold it's a מצוה חיובית. But that is for sure not true since it's better to do פדיה. He therefore answers that the ראב"ד really holds it's a רשות to be עורף it if he is not פודה it and this is more מסתבר since י: it says that you are being מקבל an עונש when you are doing עריפה you aren't doing the right thing by not doing פדיה.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also above, p. 34.

## **The Mitzvah of Tefillin**

### **Yitzchak Tzvi Kimelfeld**

I would like to discuss why many *Bnei Ashkenaz* recite two *berachos* on tefillin: “*Lehaniach*” on the *shel yad* and “*Al Mitzvas*” on the *shel rosh*.

#### **Gemara Menachos 36a – Rashi’s interpretation**

The Gemara in *Menachos* 36a appears to say that one should make only one berachah on tefillin. Here is the *lashon* of the Gemara:

Abaya and Rava said: if one did not interrupt (between the *shel yad* and *shel rosh*), he should make only one berachah; but if he interrupted, then he makes two berachos.

So, it seems that if one did not interrupt – then he should make only one berachah (i.e. “*Lehaniach tefillin*”). This is exactly the way *Rashi* understands this Gemara.

#### **Rabbeinu Tam’s interpretation**

*Rabbeinu Tam* understands this Gemara differently. According to *Rabbeinu Tam*, this Gemara is referring to tefillin *shel rosh* only. *Rabbeinu Tam* reads this Gemara as follows: if the person did not interrupt between *shel yad* and *shel rosh*, then he should make only one berachah on *shel rosh* – “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*”. On the other hand, if he spoke between the *shel yad* and *shel rosh*, then he should make two berachos on the *shel rosh*: he should first repeat “*Lehaniach tefillin*”, and then he should say “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*.”

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Thus, according to *Rabbeinu Tam*, when a person recites “*Lehianiach tefillin*” before putting on the *shel yad*, this berachah is actually intended for both the *shel yad* and the *shel rosh*. Later, when the person puts on the *shel rosh*, at that time he recites “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*,” which pertains to the *shel rosh* alone.

### **Gemara *Berachos* 60b**

The Gemara in *Berachos* 60b, seems to say clearly that we say two berachos on tefillin: “*Lehianiach*” on the *shel yad*; and “*Al Mitzvas*” on the *shel rosh*.

According to *Rashi*, who explained the sugya in *Menachos* that one who did not interrupt should make only one berachah – he would explain this Gemara in *Berachos* as referring to a person who spoke between the *shel yad* and *shel rosh*, and who therefore has to repeat the first berachah.

*Tosafos* point out that it is hard to imagine that this Gemara in *Berachos*, which describes the ideal daily conduct of a Jew, would use the example of someone who did the *aveirah* of speaking between the *shel yad* and *shel rosh*. On the other hand, this Gemara (in its plain meaning) works great for *Rabbeinu Tam*, who says that one should always make “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*” on the *shel rosh*.

### **The Halachah**

*Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 25:5) *paskens* like *Rashi*, and says that one should make only one berachah on tefillin – “*Lehianiach tefillin*.” However, *Rama paskens* like *Rabbeinu Tam*, and says that one should make two berachos on tefillin: “*Lehianiach*” and “*Al Mitzvos*.” He says that this is the widespread *minhag* among *bnei ashkenaz*.

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*Rama* adds that after “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*,” one should say “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso LeOlom Vaed*.” Let us try to understand the reasoning behind this.

***Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso LeOlom Vaed***

Many *acharonim* understand that *Rama* recommends saying *Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso LeOlom Vaed* because he is concerned that “*Al Mitzvos tefillin*” may possibly be a *berachah levatalah*. However, this raises a question. We have a principle, called “*safek berachos lehakel*,” which means that one does not make a *berachah* when he is in doubt whether this *berachah* should be made or not.

So, if we are unsure whether we should recite “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*,” then why do we recite it at all? On the other hand, if we are sure that we must say “*Al Mitzvas tefillin*,” then why do we need to say “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso LeOlom Vaed*”?

**Yaakov Avinu**

According to the *Aruch HaShulchan* (*Orach Chaim* 25:13), we say “*Baruch Shem Kevod*.” after the *berachah* on *tefillin shel Rosh* for the same reason we say “*Baruch Shem Kevod*” after *Shma Yisrael*. So, why do we say “*Baruch Shem Kevod...*” after *Shma*?

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* 56a states that Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal to his sons the end of days (when *Mashiach* would come). Suddenly, the *Shechinah* departed from Yaakov, and he was unable to convey to them this prophecy. Yaakov then became concerned that perhaps this happened because one of his children was *pasul*. To reassure their father, the sons said in unison “*Shma Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad*,”

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meaning to say “Listen, our father Yaakov. Just like you believe only in one Hashem, so we also believe only in one Hashem.” When Yaakov heard his sons say *Shma*, he immediately said the following praise to Hashem: “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso Leolom Vaed.*”

As the *Aruch HaShulchan* explains, Yaakov said this praise to Hashem because he experienced a great *kesher* to Hashem when his sons said *Shma*. We learn from Yaakov that “*Baruch Shem Kevod*” is the appropriate praise that should be said when one experiences great closeness to Hashem. This is why we say “*Baruch Shem Kevod*” after the *pasuk* “*Shma Yisrael*,” because this *pasuk* represents our connection to Hashem.

Similar to the *pasuk* “*Shma Yisrael*,” the tefillin *shel rosh* also represents our strong *kesher* to Hashem. As the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* writes (10:1): The tefillin *shel Rosh* serves as a sign to all that the *Shechinah* rests upon *Klal Yisrael*. Chazal say that the *pasuk* in *Devarim* 28:10: “*VeRau kol amei haaretz ki shem Hashem nikra aleicha*” (which means that all nations will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed upon us) refers to tefillin *shel rosh* (*Menachos* 35b).

Since the tefillin *shel rosh* represents our strong *kesher* to Hashem, therefore after putting on tefillin *shel rosh*, we praise Hashem for letting us experience such a close connection to him, by reciting “*Baruch Shem Kevod.*”

Thus, as *Aruch HaShulchan* explains, we say *Baruch Shem Kevod* as praise to Hashem for letting us experience this close connection to Him through the Mitzvah of the tefillin *shel rosh*.

## **A Bar Mitzvah and the Mishkan**

### **Eitan Rock**

People sometimes think that they are coming to celebrate with a Bar Mitzvah boy because he has finally reached that milestone. They are there to dance, eat, and have fun because he has just turned thirteen, reached the apex. He has made it! He has become a man!

But, in truth, this is *not* a party on the *milestone*.

All the effort that goes into the beautiful *seudah* of the *bo bayom*, and the Shabbos celebration is *not* to signify the fact that the boy has reached the state of being a Bar Mitzvah.

Let me explain....

For many *Parshiyos* the Torah describes exactly how Bnei Yisrael built the Mishkan/tabernacle and all of its vessels. It listed all the intricate details of the construction, all the measurements and materials. And Bnei Yisrael put in tons of effort to build it exactly that way. Very precise!

And then, in the final *pesukim* of *Pekudei* ...it was done! The *pasuk* says (40:34): וַיִּכֶס הָעָנָן אֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיָּכַבֹּד ה' מְלֵא אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן, *And the Cloud covered the Ohel Moed, and the Glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan*. They built it and He came! Hashem finally rested in the beautiful house that they built for Him. Yes! They did it.

The End.

## Section VIII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

But it's not! Only two *pesukim* later the Torah says: וַבִּהְעֶלֹת הָעָנָן וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל מַסְעֵיהֶם מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל מַסְעֵיהֶם, *And when the Cloud lifted from on top of the Mishkan, the Bnei Yisrael traveled on all of their journeys.*" Building it was not the end. Even Hashem resting in the Mishkan was not the end. Now they had to *travel* with it! Now they had to take that Mishkan that they put so much effort in to building, and *bring it with them!* They dismantled it, traveled with it, and rebuilt it in their next city. They did this by each of the 42 places that they traveled.

You see, the building of the Mishkan was not the end. It was merely the *beginning!* They built a grand house for Hashem, and they brought it with them. They kept that Mishkan by their side throughout their travels. Its construction was not the end – now they had to *travel* with it.

And *that* is my explanation. A Bar Mitzvah *seudah* is not a milestone party. Oh no! It is a SEND-OFF party! This awesome party is to signify the beginning of a journey. Yes, the Bar Mitzvah boy *did* reach the age of 13, and yes he is a man. But the *seudah* isn't to celebrate the fact that he has reached the end of the tunnel. It is not a chance for him to take a breather, to finally rest with the knowledge that he has become a man. Not even close!

Now he has to take his Bar Mitzvah *with him!* Just as Bnei Yisrael spent all that effort to build a Mishkan, so too parents, rabbei'im, and especially the boy himself has spent 13 years to build what he is on that day. And just as Bnei Yisrael took that Mishkan with them...the boy has to take his Bar Mitzvah with him.

It is said that the 42 places that the Jews traveled in the desert correspond to the 42 distinct events in each person's life. Just as they traveled to those 42 places with the special house of Hashem, so too a Bar Mitzvah boy must take this special day with all of its lessons with *him*, throughout the 42 steps of *his* life. The day of a Bar Mitzvah signifies his promise to serve Hashem, to do mitzvos and learn torah. This day signifies his promise to be an *eved* Hashem, a loyal servant. And this day signifies his promise to be a loving and giving person to all those around him.

The next stage of his life begins on the day of his Bar Mitzvah. Now, he must take his Bar Mitzvah – his dedication to Torah and mitzvos, his promise to serve Hashem each moment of his life, his promise to be a faithful and loving servant – WITH HIM throughout his life. Each and every day of his adult life he must keep the lessons of this day clearly in his mind.

The Journey begins today. Right here, right now.

...my friends, this is just the beginning!

## Your Brother's Donkey

Eli Taragin

In *parshas Ki Seitzei* (22:4), the Torah states: לֹא תִרְאֶה אֶת הָמוֹר אוֹ שׁוֹרוֹ נִפְלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְהִתְעַלְמָתָ מֵהֶם הֵקֵם תִּקִּים עִמּוֹ, *You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road from a heavy burden, and ignore them; rather, you should pick it up with him.*

*Rashi* explains that the *pasuk* specifically ends with the word עִמּוֹ, *with him*. This teaches us that the person who is helping out, does it *together* with his friend – but his friend cannot stand aside while the person is working; the friend must also help.

The *Chafetz Chaim* explains that this is also how the relationship works between Hashem and us. If we daven to achieve a goal, Hashem can help us achieve that goal. But we can't "leave it all" to Hashem – we must also help.

The *Chafetz Chaim* gives an example: Every day in davening we say, "Hashem, help us understand Your Torah." But we can't just leave that to Him – we need to work at it on our end – and then Hashem will help us out. Same thing with our *pasuk*: *You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road from a heavy burden, and ignore them; rather, you should pick it up with him.*

There are two other questions one can ask about this *pasuk*.

Number one – *your brother's donkey.*" Does everyone's brother have a donkey? What is the point of the *pasuk* talking about *your*

*brother?* Also, it says *don't ignore them*. Why can't it just say that if the donkey falls, pick it up? What is the *pasuk* trying to teach by saying not to ignore what's going on?

I think we can explain the *pasuk* as follows: The words *your brother* are an especially important part of this *pasuk* because by helping each other out, we become brothers. The Jewish people are one big family and we should always feel the pain and happiness of each member of Klal Yisrael.

Now why does it say "don't ignore them"? I think the answer is that it is easy to ignore things. Opportunities to help people are all around us, but sometimes we don't see them. And sometimes we don't *let* ourselves see them. The Torah is teaching us to always think of all members of Klal Yisrael and help them whenever we can.

## An Appreciation of R' Khaim Khuvis, a"h

ר' חיים בן יהושע, ע"ה

by Family and Friends

Reb Khaim Khuvis was a member of our Bais Medrash almost from its inception, when it was located in the basement of the Naiman home. The first time R' Khaim came for services, he remarked that it was such a *krasivy* shul. *Krasivy* usually refers to architectural beauty, but to him *krasivy* meant the spiritual feeling of the place.

To have an idea of his influence on our shul: Although he was already eighty years old, he would walk to it in all weather. It wasn't a short walk, and it was not easy. It is uphill, and for many years there was not even a sidewalk on Smith Avenue. But he was always on time. When he was hospitalized a few years ago with leg problems, we thought he would never make it back; but sure enough as soon as he recovered, he was back. Instead of taking him half an hour to make the walk, it now took him 45 minutes – and he was still always on time!

We saw in him a genuine Jew from the old country; a sweet elderly man with large twinkling blue eyes, who was always smiling. Whenever there was a bar mitzvah at the shul, he would give the bar mitzvah boy an emotional *berachah*. We could sense his deep simchah in seeing Jewish tradition being carried on in this new country. Similarly, there was a older *bachur* in the shul from the Soviet Union for whom R' Khaim prayed daily that he should find a wife. When his prayers came true, R' Khaim was overjoyed to attend the wedding

He kept the Torah the best he could. When his siblings passed away, he would say *kaddish* for them and would not shave during the thirty-day mourning period. He loved to shake his lulav at shul each year. And he made sure to come each year before Pesach to arrange for his chametz to be sold. When he was called up to the Torah, he would make the *berachos* loud and clear, and he would make a *mi shebeirach* for his children afterwards. He would sit in his seat near the wall and pray seriously. One of our members who frequently spoke with him said, “I would like to thank Reb Khuvis for those teachings he gave over to me, for his stories and determination to live like a *yid* under any circumstances.” What would the world be like with six million more Jews like R’ Khaim?

Even when he was in the nursing home during the last two years and could no longer come to shul, we received great inspiration from our visits to him. In the beginning, we would always find him with his large yarmulke on his head, and a *Tehillim* or other *sefer* in his hands. When his eyes got worse, we would talk and at the end of every visit he would pour out a heartfelt *berachah* for us, our families, and *kol Yisrael*, all of Israel. Once, some members went to visit but were in a hurry to get home, so they just asked him right away to give them a blessing. R’ Khaim responded that the blessings come from Hashem, not from him.

He would often express his gratitude to the Soviet Union for saving so many Jews during the War. It was just a few months ago when he added that the Soviets not only immediately recognized the State of Israel, but also sent it arms when it most needed them during the war of independence. And most importantly, he would always express his gratitude that his sons



had married Jews and that his family was living a Jewish life. He received so much *nachas* from his family.

Where did R' Khaim come from, to whom *krasivy* meant a rich Jewish life? Khaim was born in Romania in 1921, one of five children. His brother Moshe was killed during the war. His oldest brother Shmuel emigrated to Canada before the war when Khaim was only four years old. His sister Mina also escaped the war by emigrating to Washington not long after. That left Khaim and his brother Yisroel.

Khaim lived in a strong Jewish community, Khotyn, led by a Rebbe. He went to *cheder* for his Jewish studies, going to the level of learning Mishnayos. He read from the Torah scroll for his bar mitzvah. When he was a little older, he would raise funds for the Jewish National Fund in Israel. He was preparing to emigrate to Israel as part of a Zionist group when the war began. Instead, he and his parents were sent to a labor camp in the Ukraine. He took care of his parents in the camp, and even though most of the residents died from hunger, he, along with his parents, survived.

After the war, they returned to Khotyn where he worked with sheet metal, including producing the steel rods for commercial air conditioners. He married his wife Sarah and had two boys, Boris and Igor. R' Khaim's wife would have Igor deliver *shalach manos* on Purim. Purim felt real in the old country.

R' Khaim came to the States in 1991 with his children and moved, together with his son and daughter-in-law Igor and Olga, to Baltimore. At that time his brother Yisrael moved to Israel. R' Khaim was retired, but not only was he not a burden on his

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children he also helped remodel their house with his talented hands. He was a devoted grandfather, taking care of the children when their parents were away. And he was the brains of the extended family, to whom his relatives would turn when they needed to discuss a problem.

Our Bais Medrash has suffered a tremendous loss. Such a great man has left us. Our consolation lies in Jewish tradition, which teaches us that great men ascend to Gan Eden after they leave this world and wait for their souls to reunite with their bodies after the *Mashiach* arrives (speedily, in our days). In the meantime, R' Khaim is in a better place, in Gan Eden, which he certainly calls *krasivy*. May he continue to shower his blessings from above on his family, on his shul, on all of us – *kol Yisrael*.

**The Power of Becoming a Bar Mitzvah**  
**An Excerpt from *Derech Eitz HaChaim***  
**Elucidated by Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman**

The Ramchal presents an advantage that mankind has over *malachim*:

[David HaMelech] – וּפְרַשׁ עוֹד תִּקּוֹן גָּדוֹל שְׁנַעֲשֶׂה עַל יְדֵי בְנֵי הָאָדָם – explained a further great rectification that is accomplished by humans. // "מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וְיִנְקִים יִסְדֶּתָּ" (שם פסוק ג) והוא מה שְׁאָמַר (שם פסוק ג) – *And this is what he said (ibid. 8: 3): Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have established strength, because of Your enemies, to silence foe and avenger.* // וְזֶה כִּי הַמְּלָאכִים פִּיּוֹן – שְׁאֵין לָהֶם יֵצֶר הָרַע – *This is limited to man, because since malachim do not have a yetzer hara,*<sup>1</sup> // אֵין מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם יְכוּלִים – *their actions cannot remove it.* // אָבֵל בְּנֵי אָדָם – *However, humans who have an evil yezer,* // וְכֵדֵי לָתֵת לָהֶם – *are able to remove it.*<sup>2</sup> // וְכֵן יוֹתֵר שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה זֶה הַתִּקּוֹן בְּכֹחַ גָּדוֹל מִה עָשָׂה – *So what did [Hashem] do to give [humans] more power to accomplish this rectification with great power?* // וְנָתַן לָהֶם שָׁנֵי הָעֶרְלָה – *He gave them years of orlah,* // וְשֶׁהָיוּ כָּל הַזְּמַן עַד שֶׁהָאָדָם נִכְנָס לַמִּצְוֹת – *which last the entire time until a person enters into the obligation for the mitzvot.*<sup>3</sup> // וְאֵז הַסְּטָרָא אֲחֵרָא מִתְדַּבֵּקֶת בָּהֶם יוֹתֵר

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<sup>1</sup> Above, the Ramchal wrote that *malachim* do not have to combat a *yetzer hara* because of their uninhibited intellect. See there, note 10.

<sup>2</sup> This is the great rectification mentioned in the beginning of this section – removing the *yetzer hara* and uprooting all evil from the world (*Meor HaMesilah*).

<sup>3</sup> This is based on *Zohar HaKadosh* (Vol. II 98a). See *Be'er Miryam* at length.

– **Then, the *sitra achra* clings to them more**, giving them a greater chance to eradicate it. // "אֲנֹלֶת קְשׁוּרָה (משלי כב טו) – **And this is the deeper meaning** in the *pasuk* (Mishlei 22:15): *Foolishness is “bound” in the heart of a youth, the rod of discipline will distance it from him.*<sup>4</sup>

The Ramchal explains the power of a child’s Torah study:

– **However**, even though the forces of evil are very attached to them, **during that time the transgressions are not considered**,<sup>5</sup> // וְהַתּוֹרָה אֲדִרְבָּהּ הִיא תְּשׁוּבָה – **and the Torah** they study, **to the contrary, is more important** than that of an adult.<sup>6</sup> // וְהוּא עֲגִין הַכֵּל פִּיהֶם שֶׁל תִּינוּקוֹת – **This is the concept of the breath** that comes from the **mouth of children**,<sup>7</sup> // – **for this breath completely silences the *sitra achra***. // וְזֶהוּ "מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וְיִתְּנָקִים – **And this is** the meaning of the *pasuk* under discussion: *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have*

<sup>4</sup> The “binding” indicates a very close connection the *sitra achra* has with children during their years of *orlah*.

<sup>5</sup> I.e. a minor is not subject to any punishment for transgression.

<sup>6</sup> As we will see, precisely because a minor is free from any taint of transgression, his Torah study is purer than that of an adult, who is tainted by his transgressions.

<sup>7</sup> The Gemara in *Shabbos* (119b) states that the world exists based on the Torah study that comes from the breath of children, because theirs is a Torah that does not contain the taint of sin. [This is the version (הבל פיהם) of the Gemara found in *Rif* (*Bava Basra* fol. 10b) and other commentators.]

*established strength...to silence foe.*<sup>8</sup> // "לְהַשְׁבִּית" – וְזֶהוּ לְשׁוֹן – **This is what the *pasuk* refers to with the expression “to silence.”** // וְזֶהוּ כְּאִשׁוּי פְּאָהֶד שְׁעוּמֵד בְּמַלְאכָה אַחַת וְשׁוֹבֵת מִמֶּנָּה – **For it is like someone who is involved in an act and he is silenced from performing it any longer.** // וּבְמַלְאכִים אֵין שִׁיָּה זֶה – **For *malachim* this is not applicable,** // כִּי כִיּוֹן שְׁאֵין יֵצֵר שׁוֹלֵט בָּהֶם – **because since the evil inclination does not rule over them** // אֲלֵא מְגַרְשִׁים אוֹתוֹ – **they cannot silence it;** // אָבֵל בְּנֵי הָאָדָם לָהֶם נוֹגֵעַ – **rather, they can only dismiss it.**<sup>9</sup> // "לְהַשְׁבִּית" – **It is thus only for humans that the term *to silence* applies.**

The Ramchal digresses to discuss the word for Torah used in the aforementioned *pasuk*:

"וְאֶפְרָשׁ לָךְ עֲתָה לְשׁוֹן" יִסְדֶּדֶת עוֹ – **I will now explain to you the term *You have established strength.*** // הַנִּקְרָא הַיּא הַנִּקְרָא "עוֹ" – **The Torah is called “strength” as is known,**<sup>10</sup> // כִּדְוֵעַ – **because it gives power to holiness,** // לְקִדְשָׁה – **as in the deeper meaning of the *pasuk* cited above (*Tehillim* 68:35): *Give strength to Hashem.***<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> That is, the Torah that comes out of the mouths of minors destroys the *sitra achra* to a greater extent (i.e. stronger) than the Torah study of adults.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps this means that since the *malachim* reside in the realm of *Beriah*, they can only prevent evil from entering their realm, but they cannot destroy it. Man, though, in the realm of *Asiyah*, is in close proximity with the *yetzer hara*, and is therefore in a position to eliminate it.

<sup>10</sup> See *Zevachim* 116a.

<sup>11</sup> In his explanation of *pasuk* 2 in *Tehillim*, the Ramchal cited this *pasuk* to demonstrate how man's mitzvos increase the *shefa* that

The Ramchal now returns to discuss the power of children:

מלמדים אותו – **Before a person is born, //** וְהִנֵּה קֹדֶם שֶׁהָאָדָם נוֹלָד  
 וְזֶה לְתַתּוֹ – **they teach him the entire Torah.**<sup>12</sup> // כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָהּ  
 – The purpose of **this is to give his neshamah the power before it enters the**  
**body to be encompassed by all of the Torah, //** לְתַמּוֹ כָּל  
 – in order for it to be able to **rectify all of the**  
**levels of holiness properly.**<sup>13</sup> // אָבֵל בְּצֵאתָהּ לְעוֹלָם – **But when**  
**[the neshamah] goes out to the world, //** בָּא מַלְאָךְ וּמִשְׁכַּחוּ – **a**  
**malach comes and causes it to forget the Torah.**<sup>14</sup> // וְזֶה כְּדִי  
 – **And this is in order to give the yetzer**  
**hara the opportunity to seize him.**<sup>15</sup> // וְשֵׁאֵם לֹא כֵן – **For if it**  
**were not so that the child forgot the Torah upon birth, //** הָיָה

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Hashem grants to the *malachim*. Here he adds that the *pasuk* uses the term “strength” with reference to the Torah. I.e. we give strength to Hashem through our Torah study.

<sup>12</sup> The Gemara in *Niddah* (30b) states that during pregnancy the fetus is taught the entire Torah, but during childbirth a *malach* comes and strikes its mouth causing him to forget all that he learned. Now this seems to be an exercise in futility. Why learn the entire Torah if it will be forgotten anyway? The Ramchal proceeds to explain the meaning of this Gemara (*Meor HaMesilah*).

<sup>13</sup> To rectify all of the levels of holiness one must have the entire Torah at his disposal. And this is possible even if the Torah has subsequently been forgotten.

<sup>14</sup> It is interesting that it is a *malach* that strikes the newborn, through which the newborn loses his angelic level which enables him to be able to accomplish more than a *malach* can accomplish.

<sup>15</sup> As the Ramchal derived above from the *pasuk* in *Mishlei*: *Foolishness is “bound” in the heart of a youth.*

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וְגַם לֹא הָיָה בְּעֵשֶׂה תְקוּנָה הַשְׁכָּתָה // וְהָיָה נֶשֶׁב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ מְלָאךְ – [the *yetzer hara*] would be dismissed from the power of holiness // וְגַם לֹא הָיָה בְּעֵשֶׂה תְקוּנָה הַשְׁכָּתָה // וְהָיָה נֶשֶׁב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ מְלָאךְ – and the child would then be like a *malach*.<sup>16</sup> // וְגַם לֹא הָיָה בְּעֵשֶׂה תְקוּנָה הַשְׁכָּתָה // וְהָיָה נֶשֶׁב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ מְלָאךְ – In addition, the rectification of the silencing of the *sitra achra* that we mentioned above would not be accomplished.<sup>17</sup> // וְגַם לֹא הָיָה בְּעֵשֶׂה תְקוּנָה הַשְׁכָּתָה // וְהָיָה נֶשֶׁב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ מְלָאךְ – Therefore, the illumination of the Torah is concealed in him, // וְגַם לֹא הָיָה בְּעֵשֶׂה תְקוּנָה הַשְׁכָּתָה // וְהָיָה נֶשֶׁב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ מְלָאךְ – so that the *sitra achra* can rule over him. // וְגַם לֹא הָיָה בְּעֵשֶׂה תְקוּנָה הַשְׁכָּתָה // וְהָיָה נֶשֶׁב לְהִיּוֹת כְּמוֹ מְלָאךְ – And this is called his years of *orlah*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The Ramchal stated above that a *malach* can dismiss the *sitra achra*. Thus, if a child was born knowing the entire Torah, he would be like a *malach* who dismisses the power of the *sitra achra*.

<sup>17</sup> For the Ramchal explained there that a human has an advantage over a *malach* in that he can silence the *sitra achra*, not merely chase it away. Thus, if the child remained in a *malach*-like state, he would not be able to destroy evil.

<sup>18</sup> *Orlah* in its literal sense refers to the foreskin that is removed from a boy during his *bris milah*. We will see below that in this context it refers to a blockage that must be removed from the child's heart. This thus explains the purpose in first teaching the fetus the entire Torah, and then causing him to forget it upon birth. His initial connection to the Torah gives him the power to access all the levels of holiness. His forgetting the Torah allows him to be ruled by the *sitra achra* so that with his reclaiming his Torah he can destroy the *sitra achra*.

R' Yechezkel Sarna elaborates on this passage of the Ramchal. We ordinarily think that childhood is a necessary evil that everyone must past through until they become subject to mitzvos. However, according to the Ramchal, the years of childhood are in a very serious way more productive than adulthood. That is, during these years of *orlah*, a child can destroy the *yetzer hara* and the evil from the world, so that when he becomes a bar mitzvah it is similar to the nation of Yisrael receiving the Torah at Sinai. For just as the contamination stemming from the transgression of Adam HaRishon was eliminated at Sinai, so the *orlah* of the heart is removed during the childhood years so the child can become a bar mitzvah freed of it (see *Iyunim*).

## Chatzor

Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

[א] בכיבוש ארץ ישראל כתיב (יהושע יא, א-ג):

(א) וַיְהִי כְשֶׁמֶעַ יְבִין מֶלֶךְ חֲצוֹר וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל יוֹכָב מֶלֶךְ מְדוֹן וְאֶל מֶלֶךְ שְׁמֶרֶן וְאֶל מֶלֶךְ אַכְשָׁף:  
(ב) וְאֶל הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר מִצָּפוֹן בְּהָר וּבְעֶרְבָה נֹגֵב כְּנָרוֹת וּבִשְׁפֵלָה וּבְקִנְפוֹת דּוֹר מִיָּם:  
(ג) הַקִּנְעָנִי מִמְּזֻרַח וּמִיָּם וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי בְּהָר וְהַחִתִּי תַחַת חֶרְמוֹן בְּאַרְצָהּ הַמִּצְפָּה:

וצריכים להבין הענין שיבין מלך חצור דוקא שמע מה ששמע והוא היה הראש במלחמה נגד יהושע.

[ב] ומבינים קצת מחשיבות חצור במה שכתוב להלן (שם יא, י):

(י) וַיָּשָׁב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בָּעֵת הַהִיא וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת חֲצוֹר, וְאֶת מַלְכָּהּ הִפָּה בְּחֶרֶב, כִּי חֲצוֹר לִפְנֵים הִיא וְאֵשׁ כָּל הַמְּמַלְכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה:

והיינו שמלכות חצור היתה הראש של כל ממלכות הצפון. ואם כן היה מוטל על חצור ללחום נגד בני ישראל לשמור את ארצם. אבל מוצאים דבר אחר קשה שם (יא, יא-יג):

(יא) וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶת כָּל הַנָּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ לְפִי חֶרֶב הַחֶרֶם לֹא נֹתַר כָּל נֶשֶׁמָה וְאֶת חֲצוֹר שָׂרָף בָּאֵשׁ:  
(יב) וְאֶת כָּל עַרְי הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֶת כָּל מַלְכֵיהֶם לָכַד יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיָּבֵאם לְפִי חֶרֶב הַחֲרִים אוֹתָם בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה עֲבָד ה':  
(יג) וְכָל הָעָרִים הָעֹמְדוֹת עַל תֵּלָם לֹא שָׂרְפָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וּזְלָתִי אֶת חֲצוֹר לְבָדָה שָׂרָף יְהוֹשֻׁעַ:



ומבאר הרד"ק, ולא שרפם זולתי חצור לפי שהיתה ראש הממלכות ויפחדו הנשאים, ע"כ. ואם כן צריכים להבין את חשיבות חצור שרק אותה נשרפה באש. ואיתא בחז"ל בענין זה (בראשית רבה פא, ד; ועי' עוד ילקוט שמעוני יהושע רמז כב):

**רבי אלעזר אמר במסורת שרפה, הקב"ה אמר למשה, ומשה אמר ליהושע.**

וצריכים להבין החשיבות של דבר זה שהקב"ה יצוה את משה רבינו להגיד ליהושע לשרוף בדוקא את עיר חצור כשיכבוש את הארץ.

ג] ואיתא עוד בענין הכיבוש הזה (ילקוט שמעוני שמות סוף רמז רנא; ועי' עוד במכילתא פרשת השירה ט):

כיון שיצאו ישראל מן הים כנס עמלק את כל אומות העולם ובאו ועשו מלחמה עם ישראל והתפלל משה בעד העם, באותה שעה דממו כלם כאבן לכך נאמר "בגדול זרועך ידמו כאבן". דבר אחר, כיון שנכנסו מרגלים לארץ כל מי שהיה אומר אלו מרגלי ישראל היה דומם כאבן. דבר אחר כיון שעברו ישראל הירדן נכנסו כל מלכי כנען ועשו מלחמה עם ישראל שנאמר (יהושע יא, א) "ויהי כשמוע יבין מלך חצור וישלח אל יובב וגו', (שם יא, ב) "ואל(ה) המלכים אשר מצפון", (שם יא, ד) "ויצאו הם וכל מחניהם עמם" וגו' (שם ט, ב) "ויתקבצו להלחם עם יהושע ועם ישראל פה אחד". באותה שעה התפלל יהושע ודממו כלם כאבן.

וצריכים להבין העונש דוקא כאן שדממו כאבן, ואת השייכות בין מלחמת עמלק ומלחמת יבין מלך חצור.

דן ואף על פי שלמדנו שיהושע הכה את יבין מלך חצור בחרב, מוצאים מלך אחר שהמשיך את מלכות יבין בימי השופטים. דכתיב (שופטים ד, א-ב):

(א) וַיִּסְפוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' וְאַהוּד מָת:  
(ב) וַיִּמָּכְרָם ה' בְּיַד יָבִין מֶלֶךְ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ בְּחָצוֹר וְשָׂר צָבָאוֹ  
סִיסְרָא, וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּחָרְשַׁת הַגּוֹיִם:

וזה לכאורה קשה שכבר למדנו שיהושע שרף את חצור באש, וגם מלך חצור הוא אחד מהשלשים ואחד מלכים שהמית יהושע (ע"י יהושע יב, ט). ואם כן איך היה יבין מלך חצור חי בזמן השופטים. ומתרץ הרד"ק (שופטים שם):<sup>1</sup>

"אשר מלך בחצור" קודם שהכם יהושע והחריכם ושרף את חצור ומלכה הכה בחרב, ויבין הוא שהיה מלך חצור אז, ומה שנשאר מאותה משפחה הלכו לחרשת הגוים ונתישבו שם והמלך נקרא גם כן יבין כמו המלך הראשון.

וזאת אומרת שהיבין של ספר שופטים לא הוא המלך של ספר יהושע כי יהושע באמת הרגו, אלא היה מבני משפחתו של אותו יבין. וגם לא גר בחצור, כי חצור נשרפה, אלא עכשיו מלך יבין הזה גר בחרשת הגוים.<sup>2</sup> אבל כיון שהפסוק עדיין מייחס אותו כמלך "אשר מלך בחצור" מכבר,

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<sup>1</sup> ודברי המצודות דוד שם קשים, שכותב שבאמת לא הכה יהושע את המלך אלא רק את העיר.

<sup>2</sup> ומדברי הרמד"ו משמע שיבין כן גר אפילו עכשיו בחצור, ורק סיסרא גר בחרשת הגוים.

יכולים ללמוד אודות מקומו של יבין גם מסוגיא של ספר שופטים.<sup>3</sup> וכן מבאר המלבי"ם על הפסוק בשירת דבורה אחר ניצוח יבין ושר צבאו סיסרא (שופטים ה, יט), באו מלכים נלחמו אז נלחמו מלכי כנען בתענך על מי מגדו בצע כסף לא לקחו:

בימי יהושע קבץ יבין מלך חצור את כל המלכים מלכי כנען על מי מרום להלחם עם יהושע, ועתה קבץ יבין מלכים שנית,<sup>4</sup> וחנה על מי מגידו, על פי זה מרכיב המשורר את העבר עם ההווה, ויצייר כי מה שקרה עתה כבר היה אז, המלכים באו עם סיסרא ונלחמו, (אז בימי קדם כבר "נלחמו מלכי כנען", בעזר מלך חצור), ומפרש עתה באו "בתענך על מי מגדו" (תחת מה שבאו אז על מי מרום), "בצע כסף לא לקחו", עוזרי יבין לא קבלו משכורת במלחמה זו, כמו שגם אז באו בחנם.

ואם כן בהבנת פרשת מלחמת סיסרא נוכל להבין החשיבות של המקום חצור.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> וכן כתוב (שמואל-א יב, ט) "וישכחו את ה' אלקיכם וימכרו אתם ביד סיסרא שר צבא חצור וביד פלשתים וביד מלך מואב וילחמו בם", ע"כ. והיינו שהמלחמה היתה עם שר צבא חצור.

<sup>4</sup> גם מהמלבי"ם משמע שהיבין של ספר שופטים הוא אותו יבין של ספר יהושע, אם לא שדבריו לאו דוקא הם. אבל גם הרב צדוק הכהן כותב (דברי חלומות כב), כי יבין מלך כנען שהוא לבדו היה מהכנענים שהשאיר הקב"ה אחר כיבוש יהושע בן נון שלחץ לישראל, ע"כ.

<sup>5</sup> ואפשר להעיר שכאן שלח יבין מלך חצור ליובב, ובמלחמת סיסרא כתיב (שופטים ה, כח), "בעד החלון נשקפה ותיבב אם סיסרא". ומיבבות האלו לומדים הלכות תקיעות השופר בגמרא (ראש השנה לג:).

## נשים נכריות

הרב צדוק הכהן מקשה למה יבין מלך כנען הוא לבדו היה מהכנענים שהשאיר הקב"ה אחר כיבוש יהושע בן נון שלחץ לישראל [נדשאר לוחציהם בימי השופטים היו משאר אומות ארם ומואב ומדין ועמון ופלשתים],<sup>6</sup> ומתוך בספר דברי חלומות בהקדם ביאור כחו של יהושע בן נון (אות כב):

**כי [יהושע] היה בסוד היסוד דקדושה מזרעא דיוסף ד"צדיקים ירשו ארץ" (תהלים לז, כט),<sup>7</sup> והוא שורש משיח בן יוסף הנלחם וכובש לאומות. ואילו זכו אז שהיה כובש הכל ולא היה צריך דוד המלך ע"ה הבא אחריו ללחום ולכבוש עוד, היה הוא משיח בן יוסף ותיכף אחריו דוד המלך ע"ה משיח בן דוד בונה הבית הקיים לעד. אלא שהחטאים גרמו שלא נשלם עדיין תיקון היסוד לגמרי ביומו אף דמל בני ישראל שנית והוא הפריעה שניתנה ליהושע... וכן במלחמת עמלק שחתך ערלותיהם וכו' (מדרש תנחומא תצא סימן י').**

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<sup>6</sup> ואפילו לפי דברי הרד"ק הנזכר באות ד צריכים להבין למה נשארה דוקא ממשפחת יבין מי שלחץ לישראל.

<sup>7</sup> היינו שרק במדרגת יוסף הצדיק יסוד עולם בקדושת הברית יכולים לירש את ארץ הקדושה. ובספר תקנת השבין מבאר מה שנקרא מדתו מדת היסוד (כ):

**מדת יסוד ידוע שהוא ההתקשרות והתחברות שבין ישראל לאביהם שבשמים שזהו יסוד הבריאה והעולם כולו, כמו כל בנין שיש לו יסוד בתחתיתו שעליו עומד כל הבנין, וגם כל בנין הבריאה יש לו יסוד שעליו נתכונן וכמו שנאמר (משלי י, כה) "צדיק יסוד עולם", שעליו העולם עומד ולולא כן היה העולם חוזר לתהו ובוהו, וכמו שהיה בדור המבול דנשאר רק נח איש צדיק דממנו הושחת העולם אחר כך.**

כמו בימי עזרא גרם החטא דנשים נכריות כמו שאמרו בברכות (ד). וזוה"ק שמות ז.<sup>8</sup> כן בכבוש יהושע כמו שכתוב בשופטים (ג, ו), ויקחו אֶת בְּנוֹתֵיהֶם לָהֶם לְנָשִׁים וְאֶת בְּנוֹתֵיהֶם נָתַנוּ לְבָנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם, על כן לא זכה [יהושע] לבנים ואמרו (פסחים ק"ט): דעל כן לא יברך בכוס של ברכה לעתיד, כי זה קצת פגם בשורשו שלא תיקן עדיין כל ישראל שבדורו שהם התפשטות ענפיו בקדושת הברית לגמרי.<sup>9</sup>

והיינו שתפקיד יהושע היה לקדש ישראל בקדושת הברית כמו שלחם נגד עמלק המתנגדים לברית קדש של ישראל והיו חותכים ערלותיהם. וזהו היסוד של הבריאה. ואם היה יהושע זוכה לגמור תיקון זה היה הוא זוכה לכבוש כל האומות כמשיח בן יוסף, ואז היה משיח בן דוד בא לבנות הבית המקדש. אבל לא היה יכול לעשות תיקון השלם, כמו שרואים איך שטמאו ישראל את הברית בנשים נכריות, ושרש הפגם ניכר ביהושע עצמו שלא זכה לבנים זכרים.

ועכשיו נמשיך דברי הרב צדוק הכהן איך מפגם זה התפתחו קלקולים רבים לעם ישראל, ובפרט יבין מלך חצור.

<sup>8</sup> איתא בגמרא שם:

**מכאן אמרו חכמים ראויים היו ישראל ליעשות להם נס בימי עזרא כדרך שנעשה להם בימי יהושע בן נון, אלא שגרם החטא.**  
ורש"י שם כותב שגרם החטא ולא הלכו אלא ברשות כורש, ע"ש. אבל לפי הרב צדוק החטא היה שנשאו נשים נכריות, וזה גרם שלא הלכו אלא ברשות כורש. וכן איתא בזה"ק שם:

**הא תנינן דחטאה גרם דנטלו נשים נכריות ואעילו ברית קיימא קדישא ברשותא אחרא, ובגין כך אתאבדו מנהון נסין ואתחזין דאתחזי למעבד להו מה דלא הוה הכי בגלותא דמצרים דכלהו הוו שבטי י"ה.**  
והיינו מפני שנשאו נשים נכריות אבדו כל הנסים שהיו יכולים להוציאם כמו ביציאת מצרים. ועל כן לא יצאו אלא ברשות כורש.

<sup>9</sup> שאם לא כן הגמרא קשה, דבשלמא יעקב לא יברך משום שנשא שתי אחיות בחייהן שעתידיה תורה לאוסרן, אבל איזה פגם יש במי שאין לו בנים. והרב צדוק מבאר שזה שלא היה ליהושע בנים הוא סימן על הפגם שלא תיקן ישראל כדבעי.

יבין

הרב צדוק הכהן מבאר שיבין היה ממש המתנגד לקדושת יהושע בן נון,  
וז"ל שם :

וסימן לארבעה אותיות שמו כי אותיות יב"ן הוא ראשי תיבות  
של הקדושה די'הושע ב"ן נ'ון... לרמז שהיה זה לעומת זה ואות  
הי' הוא הניצוץ קדוש [של החכמה שהיפך השטות שבלע  
והעלימו] שקלט על ידי חטאי ישראל שעל ידי זה היה לו כח  
וחיות וממשלה ועל ידי זה לחץ בני ישראל בחזקה.

והיינו כח יבין בא כאשר אין ישראל מתקדשים את עצמם בקדושת  
הברית על ידי יהושע והיו"ד השני בשמו הוא הקדושה שנוטל מישראל  
כאשר חוטאים בנשואי נשים נכריות. ועל כן רק יבין נשאר מכל מלכי  
כנען שכבש יהושע.

ויש להעמיק יותר בענין טומאת יבין מלך חצור עם דברי הרב צדוק  
כהן, שכותב וז"ל :

והוסיף הי' בשמו [של יהושע] שרומז על החכמה כי קלוקל  
היסוד בא רק על ידי שטות כמו שאמרו (סוטה ג.) אין אדם עובר  
עבירה אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות.

והיינו שמשם רבינו נתן כח ליהושע לקדש את הברית על ידי האות יו"ד  
שהוסיף בשמו. שאם האדם מתנהג בחכמה לא יכשל בעבירה של זנות.

ומוצאים ענין זה גם באופן שקוראים יהושע בשם בן נון, ולא בן נון  
כרגיל, וז"ל :

**וּפֶן עַל שֵׁם הַבֵּינָה וְכִמּוּ שִׁכְתָּב בְּרַמְבַּ"ן עַל הַתּוֹרָה (פֶּרֶשֶׁת תִּשָּׁא  
לֵג, יא) דַּעַל כֵּן נִקְרָא בְּכָל מָקוֹם בֶּן נֹון הִב' בַּחֲרִיק לְרִמּוֹ עַל  
בִּינְתוֹ הִיתִירָה דְּבִינָה לִיבָא שֶׁהוּא הִיפֵךְ לִבָּב הַזּוֹנָה.**

והיינו שגם בבינה כראוי יכול אדם להציל את עצמו מעבירת זנות.  
ודוקא את כח זה לקח יבין מקדושת ישראל, כמו שהבאנו למעלה  
בביאור היו"ד השני שמו:

**וְאוֹת הִי' הוּא הַנִּיצוּץ קָדוֹשׁ [שֶׁל הַחֲכָמָה שֶׁהִיפֵךְ הַשְׁטוֹת שֶׁבִּלְע  
וְהַעֲלִימוֹ] שֶׁקֵּלֵט עַל יְדֵי חֲטָאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁעַל יְדֵי זֶה הָיָה לוֹ כַּח  
וַחֲיוֹת וּמִמְשָׁלָה וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה לַחֵץ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּחֲזָקָה.**

והיינו שלקח יבין גם את כח החכמה והבינה של ישראל.<sup>10</sup> וכן מוצאים  
בהמן הרשע (לקוטי מאמרים צד):

**וְכָל מַעֲלַת הַמֶּן בַּעַת מַעֲלָתוֹ הָיָה בְּפָנָיו עַל דֶּרֶךְ (קַהֲלַת ח, א)  
"חֲכַמַּת אָדָם תֹּאִיר פָּנָיו" וְהוּא הָיָה אִז שׁוֹרֵשׁ הַחֲכָמָה הַנִּמְצָא  
בְּאָדָם, וְזוֹנוֹת נִקְרָא שְׁטוֹת...וְעַל כֵּן אִז פָּנָיו חָפוּ.**

וע"ש שמאריך איך המן רצה לטעון כנגד קדושת ברית ישראל על ידי  
חכמתו, וזה היה מפלתו.

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<sup>10</sup> וע"ע בלקוטי תורה (שופטים ה):

ובזה אני מסופק אם אלו ה"ח וה"ג הם מאמא או מאבא ואיני זוכר אם  
שמעתי שכולם מצד אמא לכן נקרא המלך שלו יבין מלך כנען מלשון בינה  
או נאמר שהוא מצד אבא כי יבין גי' ע"ב שהוא חכמה ונקרא יבין לשון בינה  
שאינו מתגלה רק על ידי בינה כנודע.

## סיסרא

ועשכיו יכולים להבין דבריו בענין מפלת יבין וסיסרא שר צבאו (דברי חלומות שם) :

ומפלתו בסיסרא על ידי יעל ד"כרע שכב" וגו' (שופטים ה, כז) כמו שאמרו ז"ל (נזיר כג:) על דרך מפלת המן על ידי לקיחת אסתר לאחשורוש, כי ידוע כאשר אין הדור זכאי אז (שיר השירים ה, ד) "רודי שלח ידו מן החור" והקב"ה ממתיק המר במר שכאשר מראה שיש בעשיית חטא כזה דבר גדול גם כן ועבירה לשמה הגדול כמצוה שלא לשמה (כמו שאמרו שם) ועל ידי זה נעשים החטאים כשנים וכשלג.<sup>11</sup>

והיינו שמפלת יבין וסיסרא היתה דוקא על ידי נשים. ואם בני ישראל חטאו בנשים נכריות, כאן הוכיחה יעל שמה שנראה כפגם הזה אינו אלא התיקון של הפגם בבחינת עבירה לשמה.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> וכותב הרמ"ד וואלי על פי דרכו (שופטים ד) :

ה"מלך" הוא כנגד הת"ת, "ושר צבאו" כנגד היסוד. ולפי שאל אחר איסתרס ולא עבד פירין אולי ז"ס שבשמו של סיסרא אותיות "סריס". ולפי דברי הרב צדוק הכהן יש להוסיף שתחת אשר חטאו ישראל בנשים נכריות, נמסרו בידי איש שהוא סריס.

<sup>12</sup> וכותב עוד שם :

וניצוחו על ידי דבורה אשה נביאה [שהיא תיקנה קדושת היסוד דנוקבא וברק היסוד דדכורא דעל כן נקראת לפידות על דרך בית יוסף להבה שצריך להיות לפיד אש דקדושה שהוא אש אוכלת אש דיצר הבורע כתנור בוערה מאופה וחכמות נשים בנתה ביתה להוציא על ידי זה בלעו הוא היו"ד מפיו ועל ידי זה נפתח פיהם לומר שירה קדושת הלשון היפך חירופין וגידופין שלו].



ומה שמצטרף הרב צדוק את מפלת של המן למפלתו של סיסרא מיוסד על דברי האריז"ל שכותב (שער הפסוקים שופטים ה):

**"מן שמים נ'לחמו ה'כוכבים מ'מסילותם", ר"ת המ"ן עם סיסרא, ר"ל, כי כמו שסיסרא נפל ביד אשה שהיא יעל, כך המן יפול ביד אשה, והיא אסתר.**

ובשע"ג כותב (הקדמה לו מג.), כי המן וסיסרא שניהם ממקור אחד הם, ע"כ.<sup>13</sup> ואם כן מובן המדרש שהבאנו באות ג שכנס עמלק את כל אומות העולם, וכן נכנסו כל מלכי כנען ועשו מלחמה עם ישראל על ידי יבין, ששניהם משרש אחד הרוצים להחריב את קדושת הברית של ישראל.<sup>14</sup>

#### חצור

ועכשיו יכולים להבין למה היה צורך כל כך לשרוף את חצור. ובדברי הרב צדוק הכהן (שם):

**וזהו ששרף יהושע לחצור כמו שכתוב ביהושע דאותה לבד שרף... וידוע דבשריפת המקום נשרפו כל הקליפות אשר שם וזה טעם שריפת עיר הנדחת. ועל כן נצטוו לשרוף ולבער מהעולם שורש קליפת היסוד ובזה היה תיקון השלם. אלמלא גרם החטא**

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<sup>13</sup> ובלקוטי תורה שם:

ולכן תראה שרבי עקיבא בן יוסף שהיה משורש קין היה מבני בניו של סיסרא, אמנם רב שמואל בר שילת היה מבני בניו של המן והוא משרש קין והענין כי המן וסיסרא מסוד הדעת ולכן "הכוכבים" ממסלותם "נלחמו ר"ת המ"ן עם סיסרא כי שניהם מקום אחד.

<sup>14</sup> ומה שנכלל גם המרגלים שם מובן על פי דברי הרב צדוק הכהן שכותב שם איך ברית הלשון מקושר עם ברית המעור.

אחר כך (עיין זוהר ח"ב ג:)<sup>15</sup> וחזרו הכנענים להתגבר בחצור  
שהיא חצר הטומאה וסוד חצר מות<sup>16</sup> שמזה מקור המיתה ועטיו  
של נחש בזוהמא שהטיל והכל יורדין על עסקי הנם כמו שאמרו  
ז"ל (עירובין יט.).<sup>17</sup>

והיינו שכמו שיש מצוה למחות את זכר עמלק שהיה זורק מילותיהם  
של ישראל,<sup>18</sup> כן היה מצוה על יהושע למחות כל כחו של אלו  
המתנגדים לקדושת ברית ישראל. ואם היה מצליח לא היה קם יבין  
בפעם שניה בכח סיסרא שר צבאו, ואחריו המן שהיה מכחו. וממילא  
מובן שאין חצור מקום לישוב ישראל עד תיקון השלם בביאת משיח בן  
יוסף ומשיח בן דוד.

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<sup>15</sup> איתא שם:

ר' יוסי פתח ואמר (שמואל-א יב, ט) "וישכחו את ה' אלקיהם [וימכר אותם  
ביד סיסרא שר צבא חצור]" וגו' (שופטים ב, יב) "ויעזבו את ה'", מאי  
"וישכחו" "ויעזבו", דדחו מנייהו ברית קיימא קדישא, הוו גזרין ולא פרעין,  
עד דאתת דבורה ונדיבת בהאי לכל ישראל כמה דכתיב (שופטים ה, ב)  
"בפרוע פרעות בישראל בהתנדב עם ברכו ה'".

<sup>16</sup> עי' ברכות יח:

<sup>17</sup> וכן כותב:

והוא [ר"ל חצור] בגימטריא ש"ד חסר י' משם הקדוש המורה על מדת  
היסוד כנודע וכמו שידוע דאות י' מורה חכמה שעל ידי זה הוא קדושת  
היסוד. והטומאה מלך זקן וכסיל ואשת כסילות הומיה לפתאים ונער חסר לב  
כמו שכתוב במשלי (ט, יג-טו).

<sup>18</sup> וכותב הרב צדוק הכהן (דברי סופרים יט.):

שורש עמלק דכתיב בו "תמחה" שהוא שורש הקטרוג נגד הברית שכרת  
הש"י עם ישראל כמו שכתוב (תנחומא ס"פ תצא) דהיה זורק את הברית  
ואמר טול מה שבחרת, היינו דהראה דהם נחשלים ואף על פי שבאים בברית  
חותמו ית' עדיין המקטרג מוצא מקומו לקטרג דמה נשתנו אלו מאלו.

### רבי עקיבא

עד כאן בארנו את דרך הרב צדוק הכהן בהבנת ענין עיר חצור ומלכו יבין. ונוסיף נקודה אחרת בענין מלחמת סיסרא על פי דרכו.

שכתוב (שופטים ד, טז), וַיִּפֹּל כָּל מַחֲנֵה סִיחָא לְפִי חֶרֶב לֹא נִשָּׂאָר עַד אֶחָד. והמגלה עמוקות מפרש הענין של "עד אחד" (פרשת בא) :

הרי הוא אומר במצרים "לא נשאר בהם עד אחד", ואמרו במכילתא כי אחד נשאר והוא פרעה עצמו, וכן הפירוש אצל סיסרא "עד אחד" שנשאר והוא רבי עקיבא שיצאה נשמתו "באחד", כמו שאמרו מבני בניו של סיסרא למדו תורה, ומאן אינן רבי עקיבא (גירסת רבי ניסים גאון בברכות כז.).

וכן כותב העשרה מאמרות (חקור הדין ה, י) :

ומסיסרא, רבי עקיבא שאותיות שמו הן סופי תיבות (תהלים צז, יא) "אור זרוע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה" שהוא מיסוד תורה שבעל פה מן המקור שיש לה בפלא העליון מהארתו בה, וזהו שאמר סיסרא ליעל (שופטים ד, כ) "היש פה איש ואמרת אין".<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> ועי' דברי המהר"ם שיף שמקשה עליו (גיטין נז) :

ולא משמע לי כן מדלא מפרש בסיסרא גם כן מאן נינהו משמע דלא היו אנשים חשובים דבקיאי בשמייהו כשמעיה ואבטליון, ועוד דבהדיא קאמר בני בניו של סנחריב למדו תורה ברבים ואלו בסיסרא רק למדו תנוקות בירושלים וכי' על כל פנים לא הצליחו בלמודם כל כך.

אבל כותב החיד"א (פתח עינים גיטין נז) :

ואנכי עפר דל אומר אטו דבר זה אמרו הרמ"ע מסברא שיקשה עליו קושיות וידחה דבריו, וכי דברים אלו נאמרים מכח עיון ופלפול, הא ודאי קבלה היתה ביד הרמ"ע, ואני הצעיר מצאתי בספר הגלגולים לרבינו האר"י זצ"ל... כדברי הרמ"ע... ומה שהקשה על זה דלא מפרש בסיסרא כשמעיה ואבטליון לא קשיא דשמעיה ואבטליון באו כסדר דמבני בניו של סנחריב נחגגירו ומשם באות אבל ענין סיסרא שלא כסדר ולכבוד ר' עקיבא הסתירו הענין.

והיינו שנקודה זו של שרש התורה שבעל פה הבא ממדת "אין" של הקב"ה היתה טמונה בסיסרא. וכיון שלא יכול יהושע לעשות תיקון שלם נשתלשל הדברים עד שהוצרכו להוציא נקודה זו מסיסרא. ומוסיף החיד"א (פתח עינים יבמות קג.):

על פי האמור יש מי שפירש כוונת הכתוב מזמור צז "אוהבי ה' שנאו רע שומר נפשות חסידיו מיד רשעים יצילם" אור זרוע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה", הכוונה "אוהבי ה' " כמו יעל "שנאו רע" שונאים לרשע דטובתן רעה היא לצדיקים, וכי תימא איך באה יעל לעשות כדבר הזה, לזה אמר "שומר נפשות חסידיו" כלומר נפשות חסידיו "מיד רשעים יצילם" דהנשמות עשוקות בסט"א "יצילים" כמו הכא ביעל שהיו בסיסרא נשמות עליונות, ולזה הוצרכה יעל להיות עמו להוציא לאור הנשמות הקדושות אשר בו, וזהו שאמר "אור זרוע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה" סופו תיבות רב"י עקיב"ה, שמשם יצא ר' עקיבה.

#### תורה שבעל פה

ועל פי זה יכולים להבין יותר עומק במה שלא הצליח יהושע לתקן קדושת ברית ישראל לגמרי. דאיתא בגמרא (נדרים כב.):

אלמלא חטאו ישראל לא ניתן להם אלא חמשה חומשי תורה וספר יהושע לבד שערכה של ארץ ישראל הוא, מאי טעמא, (קהלת א, יח) "כי ברוב חכמה רב כעס".

ומבאר הרב צדוק הכהן למה לא היו צריכים לשום ספר אחר של תורה שבעל פה אילו זכו בימי יהושע (דברי סופרים ליקוטי אמרים מד, ע"ש ליותר אריכות):

ספר הוא חקיקות דברי חכמתו כמ"ש למעלה ורצה לומר חקיקות כח נפשו וכח נפשו היא ערכה וסדורה של ארץ ישראל, לא גוף

הארץ עצמה רק ערכה והנחלתה וסידורה לשבטי ישראל, ודבר זה הוא פרי התורה שבכתב עד שלא הגיע לכלל לידה שהוא גמר פירי שהיה בימי דוד המלך ע"ה... ואלמלא זכו ישראל להיות קולטים אז כל קדושת הארץ ולכבשה כולה וכל הגוים דהיינו על ידי כח ההכרה הברורה של השראת שכינתו בכל מקום מדרך כף רגליהם שבאור פני מלך חיים ויבולע המות לנצח והאלילים כליל יחלוף, והכרה הזו הוא על ידי השלמת כל כח החכמה שנתן השם יתברך ללכות בני אדם שזו לבדו ענין החכמה שמסר השם יתברך לבני אדם כדי שיכירו כבוד שמו, והשלמת כל סדר החכמה ההוא שסידר השם יתברך הוא השלמת תכלית ההכרה הברורה אשר יעברו אז גילולים לגמרי מן הארץ, ואלו זכו אז בעת כבישה שהוא התחלת הכניסה בהכרה הזו לגמרה כולה אז ממילא היו הם מוציאים לאור כל הנפשות מישראל.

וכן לא היו צריכים לשום ספר מתורה שבעל פה רק לתורה שבכתב שהיא אביך ושורשך וספר יהושע שהוא חקיקה זו של המשכת דברי חכמתם הכל מתוך התורה שבכתב והרמיזות באוריינת... ובספר זה לבד עם התורה היה די אלמלא לא חטאו שהיה כל התורה שבעל פה שהיא כל מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד לחדש גלוי להם, רק ששני דברים אלו היה צריכים מזולתם התורה וספר יהושע וכמו שנתבאר.

והיינו שהיו צריכים בכיבוש הארץ להכיר בחכמה איך הכל בא מיד ה' ואיך ששכינתו מצויה בכל מקום. ואז היו מולידים כל נפשות מישראל בתיקון השלם. ואז לא היה שום צורך לתורה שבעל הפה, והכל יהיה גלוי בתורת משה וספר יהושע. אבל כמו שהבאנו לעיל לא התחכמו כדי לשמור על קדושת הברית שלהם, ולא זכו לתיקון השלם. ועל כן הוצרכו תיקון של מלחמת יבין השניה עם סיסרא שר צבאו. ומזה

השתלשלה לידת רבי עקיבא שהיה הרבי של תורה שבעל הפה שצריכים  
עכשיו.<sup>20</sup>

וגם רבי עקיבא עמד בנסיון של קדושת הברית, דאיתא בגמרא (עבודה  
זרה כ.):

**ואף רבי עקיבא ראה אשת טורנוסרופוס הרשע רק שחק ובכה,  
רק שהיתה באה מטיפה סרוחה, שחק דעתידה דמגיירא ונסיב  
לה, בכה דהאי שופרא בלי עפרא.**

והר"ן ותוספות ביארו את המעשה הזה (נדרים נ):

היה רבי עקיבא מקפח [טורנוסרופוס] בקראי בפני קיסר ומקנטרו  
בדברים, פעם אחת בא לביתו סר וזעף, אמרה לו אשתו מפני מה  
פניך זועפים, אמר לה מפני רבי עקיבא שמקנטר אותי בכל יום  
בדברים, אמרה לו אלהיהם של אלו שונא זמה הוא<sup>21</sup> תן לי רשות  
ואכשיל אותו בדבר עבירה, נתן לה רשות ונתקשטה והלכה לה  
אצל רבי עקיבה, כשראה רבי עקיבה אותה רק שחק ובכה...  
אמרה לו כלום יש תשובה, אמר לה הן, הלכה ונתגיירה ונשאת  
לו לרבי עקיבה והכניסה לו ממון הרבה.

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<sup>20</sup> יש להוסיף שהרב צדוק מבאר (פרי צדיק ח"ה פח):

בענין מלחמת סיסרא שהוצרכו למלחמה מן השמים כמו שנאמר "מן השמים  
נלחמו הכוכבים ממסילותם", הוצרכה המלחמה שיהיה מן השמים נלחמו  
הכוכבים כדי שיוכלו להוציא נשמת רבי עקיבא שהוא שורש תורה שבעל פה  
שהיה בגלות אצל סיסרא.

והיינו שאותו הפסוק שהוציא נשמת רבי עקיבא הוא גם כן הרמז בטומאה על שם  
המן (ר"ת של "מן השמים נלחמו), שרצה להחריב תורת ישראל וקדושת הברית  
שלחם.

<sup>21</sup> וכן בקטרוג המן איתא במדרש (אסתר רבה ז, יג), אמר המן לאחשוורוש אלהיהם  
של אלו שונא זמה הוא העמד להם זונות ועשה להם משתה, ע"ש.

ורואים מזה שרבי עקיבא נתנסה בענין קדושת ברית ישראל וזכה לתקן הפגם של יהושע, כמו שזכה לתקן התורה שבעל פה במקום ספר יהושע.<sup>22</sup>

#### משיח

ויש להוסיף עוד איך רבי עקיבא תיקן מה שלא נשלם על ידי יהושע. שהבאנו למעלה מהרב צדוק הכהן, שיהושע הוא שורש משיח בן יוסף הנלחם וכובש לאומות, ואילו זכו אז שהיה כובש הכל ולא היה צריך דוד המלך ע"ה הבא אחריו ללחום ולכבוש עוד היה הוא משיח בן יוסף ותיכף אחריו דוד המלך ע"ה משיח בן דוד בונה הבית הקיים לעד, ע"ש.

אמנם מבאר הרב צדוק הכהן עוד בענין רבי עקיבא (פרי צדיק ח"ה כא:):

ואיתא מהבעל שם טוב זצ"ל שראה על ידי עליות נשמה שרבי עקיבא הוא שומר הפתח בהיכל משיח. והיינו דרבי עקיבא הוא שורש תורה שבעל פה כמו שכתב האריז"ל ואיתא (מנחות כט:): שאמר משה, רבנו של עולם יש לך אדם כזה ואתה נותן תורה על ידי וכו' כך עלה במחשבה לפני. והיינו דמשה רבינו ע"ה היה בחינתו שורש תורה שבכתב ורבי עקיבא שורש תורה שבעל פה. וזה מה שכתב הרמב"ם ז"ל הנ"ל שרבי עקיבא היה נושא כליו

<sup>22</sup> ומבאר הרב צדוק הכהן (תקנת השבין כ.):

ועל כן ר' עקיבא רקק אף דשחק וידע דשייכה לו, דעל כן נתעורר בה החשק מכל מקום בו לא פעלה כלום להעלות אף הרהור כל שהוא בלב ושיצטרך לאיזה כפיית יצר כלל כיון דבגיוותה אין לה שום שייכות עמו ודי היה לו ברקיקה לבד [שהוצרך לה להיותו בן גרים].

**של בן כוזיבא שהיה סבור עליו שהוא משיח וכלים של משיח  
הוא התורה שבעל פה.<sup>23</sup>**

וכותב עוד (פרי צדיק ח"ד פט.), והיה נקרא עקיבא בן יוסף שהיה כמו  
משיח בן יוסף דאיתא בגמרא (סוכה נב.) שיהרג, ע"כ.<sup>24</sup>

ורואים שגם בזה היה רבי עקיבא הממלא מקום ליהושע במה שלא  
השלים את התיקון השלם.

ונשלים הענין בנקודה אחרת בענין רבי עקיבא שמבאר הרב צדוק (פרי  
צדיק ח"ד מד):

לא הבין [משה רבינו] תורה שבעל פה של רבי עקיבא מה  
שהבינו תלמידיו וכמו שאמרו בגמרא (מנחות כט:) שהיה יושב  
בסוף שמנה שורות ולא היה יודע מה הוא אומר, שזה היה חלקו  
של רבי עקיבא שהיה שורש תורה שבעל פה שהיה בן גרים.<sup>25</sup> גם  
ברבי עקיבא עצמו מצינו (פסחים מט:) שאמר כשהייתי עם  
הארץ אמרתי מי יתן לי תלמיד חכם וכו', ואיתא (אבות דרבי נתן  
פרק ו) בן ארבעים שנה היה ולא למד כלום פעם אחת היה עומד  
על פי הבאר אמר מי חקק אבן זה וכו' אבנים שחקו מים, מיד

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<sup>23</sup> ועי' גם בתקנת השבין יח:.

<sup>24</sup> וע"ע בקנאת ה' צבקות עמ' קג.

<sup>25</sup> אכ"מ להאריך בענין גרות למאמר זה. אבל יש להעיר שיעל היתה אשת חבר הקיני  
שהיה מיתרו שהיה גם כן גר צדק. ובכתבים איתא (לקוטי תורה שופטים ה):  
ולכך תראה שרבי עקיבא בן יוסף שהיה משורש קין היה מבני בניו של  
סיסרא... ולכן כל נקמה זו לא בא אליו אלא על ידי אשת חבר הקיני שהוא  
משורש קין הנטוה מקליפות סיסרא לכן נמסר בידה.  
ואם כן אפשר לקשר התחלת הפרשה הזו "ויהי כשמוע בין מלך חזור" עם "וישמע  
יתרו".



**היה דן קל וחומר בעצמו וכו', והיינו שעל ידי דברי תורה יוכל לשחוק את הלב אבן. ולכן היה חלקו תורה שבעל פה שהוא הרוב חכמה לתקן הרב כעס לשחק את הלב אבן.**

נמצאנו למדים שתורת רבי עקיבא יכולה להחריב אפילו אבנים. ואם כן מובן מה שהקשינו באות ג למה דממו כל העמים דוקא כאבן בכיבוש יבין מלך חצור. שאם היה מתקן יהושע את קדושת הברית לגמרי וכובש את טומאת חצור לגמרי אז היה מתקן גם את ענין תורה שבעל פה שחזק הוא אפילו מאבן. ועל כן בכבוש זה דממו העמים דוקא כאבן.

ואם כן בשריפת חצור היה מקוה יהושע להחריב הכח המתנגד לקדושת ישראל, המביא מיתה לעולם והצורך לקבורה בחצר מות. ובכבוש כח רע של יבין מלך חצור יכולים לזכות ללוחות האבן<sup>26</sup> שמביאים חירות ממלאך המות.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> כותב הרב צדוק הכהן (פרי צדיק ח"ה כא):

**איחא (גיטין ס:) לא כרת הקדוש ברוך הוא ברית עם ישראל אלא בשביל דברים שבעל פה שנאמר "כי על פי הדברים האלה" וכו' וכתוב "ויכתוב על הלוחות את דברי הברית" מזה למדו שבלוחות שניות נכללו הלכות מדרשות ואגדות.**

<sup>27</sup> בשולי הגליון יש להעיר דאף על פי שלא נתיישב חצור על ידי ישראל אחר שנשרפה בימי יהושע, מכל מקום מוצאים בספר סדר הדורות שחוני המעגל ובן בתו חנן הנחבא נקברים ליד חצור. וצריכים להבין השייכות בין חוני המעגל ובן בתו לעיר חצור. וה' יאיר עינינו בתורתו.



# ***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 Family

In loving memory of  
our mother and grandmother

**Mrs. Shirley Levine, *a"h***

**לעילוי נשמת**

**שפרה בת ברוך, ע"ה**

by

**Boruch and Malka Sara Levine**

**& Family**

In memory of our grandparents

**פריידע בת שמואל ע"ה  
פייגע בת יעקב הלוי ע"ה  
בנימין חיים בן ישראל ע"ה  
יחזקאל בן אברהם הכהן ע"ה**

**חיה בת מרדכי ע"ה  
יוכבד בת ישראל הלוי שו"ב ע"ה  
שמואל יהודה בן חיים מרדכי ע"ה  
דב בער בן שלמה זאב ע"ה**

And in memory of our mother  
and mother-in-law

**הענא רחל בת בנימין חיים ע"ה**

by

Barry and Suri Reiner

**לעילוי נשמת**

**פסח בן מרדכי ע"ה**

**ישראל מאיר בן זאב ע"ה**

**דבורה חיה בת**

**נפתלי גדליה ע"ה**

**Mr. Paul Davidsohn, *a"h***

**Mr. Yisroel Meir Rock, *a"h***

**Mrs. Doris Rock, *a"h***

**by**

**Moshe and Lisa Rock**



**לעילוי נשמת**

**יואל בן יוסף ע"ה**

**עלקא פיגא בת חיים ע"ה**

**Mr. Eugene Hettleman, *a"h***

**Mrs. Elinore Silverberg, *a"h***

by

**Jeff and Leslie Silverberg**

In memory of

**Chester Hymen, *a"h***

**יחזקאל בן אשר זעליג הכהן, ע"ה**

by

**Moshe and Nanci Grossman**

לעילוי נשמת

**אליעזר בן שלמה, ז"ל**

**Louis Cooper**

by his son,

**Label Cooper**

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לעילוי נשמת

**הרב חיים אריה**

**בן יצחק אליעזר, ז"ל**

by

**Mr. and Mrs. Eli Friedman**

and family

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

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In honor of  
**Simcha and Leah Kossman**  
and  
In appreciation of  
**the Rav and the Shul**  
for making us feel welcome from the  
day we moved into the neighborhood  
**Shimmy & Chaya Weichbrod**

**In honor of  
Rabbi and Rebbetzin Naiman**

**by  
The Kaplans**

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**In honor of  
The Kiddush Committee  
for making Yitzchak's Bar Mitzvah  
celebration so beautiful**

**by  
the Kimelfelds**