

דברי נחמה

A Journal of *Divrei Torah*
in honor of Pesach 5776

Compiled by the Members of the



*Bais Medrash
of Ranchleigh*





A project of the
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**This *Kuntress* is sponsored
in memory of Nechama bas Moshe, a”h.**

Norma Dixler was strong, honest, and simple.
Never did she judge others – always accepting her loved ones.
She cared for her mother and father,
shared memories and experiences with her brothers,
and gave of her time, her smiles, and the loving gifts
she set aside for her nephews and their children.
She had a thirst for knowledge – learning, studying, observing.
She had a deep appreciation for musical and theatrical talents.
Norma held herself with a natural dignity
and was courteous in her conduct.
She wasn't here to take for herself.
Norma was a pure soul with the intuitive sense
of how to act in the presence of G-d.
May we be comforted from the loss of
Nechama bas Moshe,
and may her soul rest in eternal peace
with G-d.

זאת נְחֵמָה בִּי אֵת
כִּי אֶמְרָתָהּ הִיא

Dedicated by:
David and Michele Dixler
Harold Dixler
Yehoshua and Pnina Dixler
Mordechai and Tikva Dixler

Preface

You hold in your hands yet another Pesach *kuntress*, an expanded one *bs”d*.

This year’s edition includes several special features. These include a chapter from a new Sefer by Rabbi Nesanel Kasnett on page 87; my good friend and long-time ArtScroll colleague has graciously allowed us to include this chapter in our *kuntress*. I was surprised and touched by a joint effort of the Kehillah in recording some of the things they have gained at BMR. This piece, in our *Kabbalas HaTorah* section on page 117, is presented without my input; many thanks to Label Cooper for organizing it.

We again celebrated many Bar Mitzvahs this year, and we are fortunate to have contributions from the Bar Mitzvah *Bachurim* in a special section beginning on p. 120. This is followed by a new section this year, Navigating the *Chinuch* System, which includes much input from inside and out of our Kehillah. I hope this section help us appreciate and utilize the tremendous *Mosdos HaChinuch* we have in our community.

Finally, I have included in the Hebrew section at the end of this *kuntress* a *peirush* on a selection of the Ramchal’s *Derech Eitz HaChaim*, which we are currently learning in our *chaburos*; this piece gives insight into the proper appreciation of the Torah. And it is with great pleasure that the Hebrew section concludes with a *peirush* on the *Rambam’s Hil. Chametz U’Matzah*, by a familiar name to our Kehillah, R’ Shmuel Chaim Naiman. This is part of his *Giznei HaMelech*, in which he offers a new commentary on the *Rambam’s Yad HaChazakah*. We wish him *hatzlachah* in this endeavor, together with his other projects.

Our annual final word about the bulk of the *divrei Torah* in 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* who were indispensable in producing this work: R' Chaim Sugar, R' Moshe Rock, and R' Michoel Keidar. Thank you to Avi Dear for producing the beautiful new cover. Thanks also to the generous 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 II 5776

Table of Contents

SECTION I: *GALUS MITZRAYIM*

Tolerance in Our Communities

Jeff Silverberg 1

Even Among the Thorns

Avi Dear 7

Shifra and Puah

Louis Leder 15

SECTION II: *GEULAS MITZRAYIM*

Experiencing Personal Liberation Every Week

Rabbi Doniel Horowitz 16

Ten Plagues and Ten Utterances of Creation

Reuven Kaplan 22

The Percentage who Left Mitzrayim

Roman Kimelfeld..... 27

Will That Be Wheat Or Barley?

Louis Leder..... 31

Faith, Signs, and Redemption

Jeff Silverberg..... 33

Shalach Yad: Send Forth the Hand

Dr. Eli Lazar Singman 38

Three Lessons from the *Parshiyos*

Chaim Sugar..... 47

Kerias Yam Suf and the Beis HaLevi

Rabbi Yehudah Menchel..... 50

SECTION III: THE SEDER

The Four *Kosos*; the Four *Leshonos* of *Geulah*

Daniel Menchel 53

The Fifth Cup of Wine

Rabbi Moshe Grossman 55

A Berachah for *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*

Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman 59

Stolen Matzah

Chaim Sugar 61

SECTION IV: THE HAGADAH

The Hagadah's Relevance in Modern Times

Baruch Raczkowski 66

Mosheh Rabbeinu and the Hagadah

Yitzchok Raczkowski 70

SECTION V: Tefillah on Pesach and the Rest of the Year

Birkas Kohanim: Shiur Rav Y. D. Soleveitchik zt"l

Rabbi Yehoshua Cheifetz 71

Modim

Moshe Rock 74

Hitting the Rock: *Tefillas Geshem*

Shimon Weichbrod 76

SECTION VI: SEFIRAH AND SHAVUOS

***Sefiras HaOmer* before Nightfall**

Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman 83

Leviathan and Behemoth

Rabbi Nesanel Kasnett 87

Reading *Rus* on Shavuos

Dr. Ron Samet..... 97

The Aseres HaDibros

Michoel Cooperman 103

Lessons of the Mon

Moshe Kravetz 104

Access Trumps Ownership

Rabbi Paysach Diskind 107

A Real-Estate Deal

Rabbi Yitzchok Strauss 111

A Sampling of our Rav's Teachings

The Kehillah 117

SECTION VII: BAR MITZVAH *DIVREI TORAH*

The Lifecycle

Ben Vurgaftman 120

The Mitzvah to Remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim*

Avrumy Friedman 121

A Leap-Year Bar Mitzvah

Moshe Lauer 126

Shabbos Candles and *Gerama*

Moshe Chananel Rabenstein 131

Reward for Mitzvos

Shmuel Dixler 134

SECTION VIII: NAVIGATING THE *CHINUCH* SYSTEM

A Special Three-Part Section 138

HEBREW SECTION

***Derech Etz Chaim of the Ramchal* (The Essence of Torah)**

Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman 161

***Ginzei HaMelech* (Rambam, Hil. Chametz U'Matzah)**

Rabbi Shmuel Chaim Naiman 171

Tolerance in Our Communities

Jeff Silverberg ¹

Yosef HaTzaddik had a lot on his plate as the viceroy of Egypt, the most powerful country on earth. There were to be seven years of enormous plenty, followed by seven years of terrible famine. Yosef had to arrange for the storage of an unfathomable amount of grain, to supervise the transfer of almost all privately owned land to the throne, and to set up an arrangement of sharecropping to enrich Pharaoh's coffers while providing sustenance to his subjects. The Torah explains this in great detail so we can understand how the stage was set for the arrival of Yosef's family to Egypt.

But the Torah does not stop there. It relates further how as the famine in Egypt intensified Yosef ordered the residents of every Egyptian city to move to another city (*Vayigash* 47:21). *Rashi* there explains that he did this in order to solidify the power of the Egyptian monarchy for the trying times ahead. But why do we need to know Yosef's methods in strengthening his rule? *Rashi* answers that Yosef had an ulterior motive in this maneuver. That was in order to make the native Egyptians "strangers in a strange land," just as his family was. He wanted to remove any social embarrassment from his brothers by preventing any native Egyptians from calling them exiles. Accordingly, this effort teaches us another admirable decision of Yosef. He wanted his family members to be comfortable with the natives of the land (although of course while maintaining their identity through maintaining their names, clothing styles, and language).

¹ Editor's note: We are reprinting this piece from our first *kuntress* in response to an incident this past year where a public performance was widely viewed as inconsistent with the values of tolerance espoused by our community. However, this in no way condones the racial crime that our community has recently suffered, and we empathize with the innocent victims of the violence and theft.

The Baltimore Jewish community, thank G-d, is notable and renowned for its genuine *achdus*. The mutual respect that our rabbanim have for each other, the participation of leaders with different outlooks in community events, and the mixed attendance of different groups in all kinds of shuls, all demonstrate this *achdus*.

This is a wonderful *berachah*. However, I believe that we must also be tolerant of other Jews who are not as observant, towards our fellow citizens who are not of our faith, and particularly of those who are not of our color. My goal in this essay is to argue that tolerance, not just for other observant Jews, but for all Jews, and indeed for all people, is imperative.

The Gemara (*Taanis* 20a-20b) relates in great detail a story about the Tanna R' Eliezer ben Shimon. One day he was enjoying a ride along the bank of a river feeling quite proud of himself for his great Torah learning. An unattractive man approached and greeted him. But R' Eliezer did not return the greeting, and instead asked him, "Empty one, are all the people of your town as ugly as you?" The man answered, "I'm not sure. Why don't you ask the Craftsman who made me why He created such an ugly vessel?" Immediately, R' Eliezer realized that he had committed a wrong and begged the man for forgiveness. The man refused unless R' Eliezer agreed to ask HaShem what His purpose was in creating such an unattractive person. R' Eliezer followed the man back to the city, where the townspeople greeted their rabbi with great respect. "Who are you calling 'Rebbi, Rebbi'?" the man asked. "The one who is walking behind you," the townspeople answered. "There is no rabbi like him in Israel. Why do you ask?" After the man explained what R' Eliezer had done, the people urged him to forgive him for he was a great Torah sage. The man agreed to grant forgiveness for the people's sake, but only on the condition that R' Eliezer pledge never to act in this manner again. Immediately R' Eliezer agreed and taught the people that they should be "flexible as reeds, and not hard as cedars." *Tosafos* write that the unattractive man was Eliyahu HaNavi, sent to earth to arrange that R'

Eliezer correct this character defect. We see from here that proper behavior is not defined solely by Torah knowledge. In fact, the story proves that Torah learning is not enough by itself. Tolerance is also a requirement of proper conduct.

It is interesting that the Gemara does not reveal whether R' Eliezer believed that the unattractive man was Jewish. Perhaps not; it's not clear from the text. It is reasonable to say that this ambiguity teaches us another lesson: Tolerance isn't just required for other Jews, but for every person. A lack of tolerance, warrants a visit from Eliyahu HaNavi.

Another Gemara (*Berachos* 17a) informs us that it was said of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai that no one in the marketplace ever greeted him before he greeted them, even non-Jews. Never! Imagine! This tzaddik was a Tanna and the leader of the Jewish people. It is safe to say that he was a very busy man. But he took the time to say hello to all those that he passed, to all neighbors, and to all strangers at the store. He greeted all non-Jews as well as all Jews. Then, should we ignore those whom we pass on the street and fall prey to bigotry? I will cite three examples that I find egregious, all from my own experience.

- Many of us will remember the awful story of a woman in South Carolina who committed an unspeakable crime against members of her own family. Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, shlit"a, was the rabbi of Congregation Shomrei Emunah at the time this incident took place. He wondered that week at *shalosh seudos* how a mother could harm her own children. After offering some explanation, he stressed that it was important to remember that the worst murderer while detestable, the worst terrorist while it might be a mitzvah to kill him, was still *betzelem Elokim*, created in the Image of G-d. "Not the n____s," said the man sitting next to in a low but certain voice, and then repeated his words a second time. Is such an attitude a fulfillment of *ratzon* HaShem, the Will of G-d? Should not we, of all peoples in the world,

comprehend and abhor the ultimate danger and consequences of such dehumanization?

- Some time ago I was often in a yeshiva bais hamedrash. After one of the boys used the word “*shvartza*” and I objected, I became engaged in conversation with groups of young men on this topic. It was my experience that almost all of them were incredulous that I found the word objectionable and that I did not accept their casual putdowns of black people. I was even asked once why I didn’t know that Cham and his descendants were cursed. I asked the boys which of the *monei hamitzvos* count the fulfillment of this curse as one of our 613 obligations. They could not show me any source, but it was clear that to some of them casual bigotry was acceptable. But how could they find it so easy and attractive to use demeaning terms towards blacks? It is true that the word “*shvartza*” means “black.” But in 5772 it is less than honest to contend that it is not, by its very nature, a derogatory term, even without insulting adjectives attached. Any of us under seventy who did not grow up in a home where Yiddish was the primary language have no business using this word. The use of such language demeans us much more than those to whom it is directed.
- I have often witnessed the use of bigotry – sometimes real, sometimes feigned – by those who wish to avoid serving as a juror in a trial. Jury duty can be inconvenient and it is only fair to the system that prospective jurors answer truthfully. But is it really proper for an observant Jew to stand in a filled Baltimore courtroom and unashamedly make known his racial prejudice? Does convenience justify falsely asserting bigotry in order not to be selected? How do we feel when others publicly proclaim their disdain for Jews? Should we not be sensitive to the feelings of others to our displays of prejudice?

Some might counter that the halachah provides for different treatment of non-Jews. For example, the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 76b) criticizes those

who return a lost object to an idolater. However, according to most *Poskim*, this does not apply if *kiddush* HaShem will be achieved by the return of the lost object. Is it not true that greeting everyone *beseiver panim yafos* is a virtual guarantee of creating a *kiddush* HaShem?

There are those who may suggest that our prejudice is justified by the crime that occurs in our community. I have been told that victims of crime have an excuse to be prejudiced against an entire group if some members of that group have wronged them. But is this really so? Victims of a crime might certainly be expected to have a strong negative reaction to the actual criminals who personally harmed them. Every individual is created *betzelem Elokim*. How can it then follow that the actions of one of more members of a group justify bigotry against the entire group? Try that logic in reverse. Does the fact that a certain Jewish money manager ran a Ponzi scheme that defrauded his clients of untold millions of dollars, greatly damaging their lives in very profound ways, justify hatred of all Jews?

I have been the victim of crime more than once. I do not consider this to be a *p'tur*, a license, to adopt racist attitudes. Rather, it is a *nisayon*, a test, to avoid falling into that unhelpful and negative mindset.

Many years ago I learned a profound lesson from my father-in-law, Eugene Hettleman, *a"h*, who was a man who did not believe in allowing himself to become aggravated. A person had insulted me and caused me a fair amount of inconvenience. My father-in-law encouraged me to let it go. I insisted that I had a right to be upset. "Well, he said, looking at me over his reading glasses, if you have a RIGHT to be upset, please don't let me talk you out of exercising that RIGHT."

His point was simple and obvious. One who is insulted may have a "right" to be upset, but how does it benefit him to insist on being upset? Is it such a privilege to be upset? A victim of crime may think he has a right

to become prejudiced, but how does it benefit him to do so? It hurts a person to be upset. It hurts a person to insist on holding on to prejudice.

Hashem *Yisbarach* in His infinite wisdom found it fitting to create every single human being that inhabits this planet. We can raise ourselves only by improving ourselves, not by putting others down. May these be our goals and may it be Hashem's will that we succeed.

Even Among the Thorns

Avi Dear ¹

Day one of my second year in Ner Yisrael: moving all my belongings to my new room. I was dragging an overstuffed suitcase up the never-ending staircase to my new dorm room. Stair by stair. It was a long day of traveling and I was putting my last ounces of effort into pulling on the handle of this suitcase as I willed it to get up the stairs. Pulling desperately with both hands, each step was a victory! And suddenly, as I went in for another helpless pull, hoping for another step, the suitcase slowly lifted up off the ground! It hovered three feet off the stair. As if in slow motion, I turned my neck to look back and there was my friend from LA! With a big smile, my friend gripped the bottom of my suitcase in one of his massive paws. To him, the suitcase was a marshmallow. I didn't even know he was going to be coming to Ner Yisrael...and here he was in the stairwell hoisting my suitcase! We slowly walked up the stairs together, me holding on to the handle pretending I was helping, and him lifting it effortlessly in his one hand. He slowly placed the bottom wheels on the ground at the top of the stairs and we went to our rooms.

The slavery begins. Bnei Yisrael experience intense pain as a nation. But as we are introduced to this *שעיבוד*, as the Torah describes the terrible suffering that we endured — we are shown numerous examples of one vital *middah*. These *Parshiyos* are littered with lessons of being *נושא בעול*, *עם חבירו*, *carrying the burden of our friend*. Feeling our friend's pain as if it is our own and lending a shoulder to help lift that burden.

Let's take a look:

I. Baby Moshe flows down the river in his famous wicker basket. Pharaoh's daughter, Bisyah, notices this crying baby flowing toward her, "ותפתה ותראהו את הילד והנה נער בכה ותחמל עליו ותאמר מילדי העברים זה" (ב, ו).

¹ This was written *בן אברהם נטע*, ע"ה, my grandfather, לעלוי נשמת.

The *Ben Ish Chai* observes, that it seems from the *pasuk* that *because* of this baby's cries, she knew that it was a Jewish baby. How is that? The *Ben Ish Chai* answers with a story: there was once a decree to banish all the Jews in the city of בעהמץ. When the Jewish community found out about this decree, they decided to send one of the big Sages of their town to approach the king and plead for his mercy. When the Sage came before the king, he let out a string of tremendous wails! His powerful voiced cried and cried. The king was finally able to interrupt this screaming man, and asked him why he was crying so loudly. The Sage answered, "my voice is a combination of all the cries of my Jewish brothers, who are crying and pleading with you to annul your decree."

The same with baby Moshe, answers the *Ben Ish Chai*. The *pasuk* says "ותראהו את הילד והנה נער בכה". The Gemara asks on this why it firsts calls Moshe a ילד, *boy*, and right after calls him a נער, *lad*? The גמרא answers that although he was only a young boy of three months, the sound of his cries was of a much older child, of a נער. So when Pharaoh's daughter heard such intense cries coming from such a little baby, she wondered to herself, "how is it possible that such a little baby could have such bitter cries?" And then she realized, explains the *Ben Ish Chai*, he must be a Jewish child from a nation wailing from the pains of slavery. He is not crying for himself, but rather for his nation! His cry is a combination of the cries of all the Jews enduring their bitter slavery.

II. Our baby Moshe has now grown up. Literally and figuratively. The *pasuk* says, "ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם", *And Moshe grew up, and he went out to his brothers, and he saw their burdens*. Rashi famously says, "נתן עיניו ולבו להיות מיצר עליהם", *He focused his eyes and heart to feel their pain*. He not only saw their pain, but he deeply felt their pain as if it was his own and he lent a shoulder (as the commentators say) to help them. That is real *gadlus*! R' Dessler brings a Midrash that says: אמר הקב"ה סר וזעף לראות בצערן של ישראל במצרים לפיכך ראוי הוא להיות רועה עליהן" Only after Hashem saw his *middah* of being נושא בעול with his brothers did He deem *Moshe* worthy of leading them.

III. Hashem then appeared, years later, to Moshe in the famous “burning bush.” Why not a burning cedar?! Or a monstrous *redwood*?! As *Rashi* beautifully explains, Hashem resided in a puny thorn bush, כביכול, because of עמו אנכי בצרה. Hashem was with His nation in their pain, Hashem shared their pain.

IV. “And I have seen their pain,” Hashem tells Moshe, “I have heard their cries.” “כי ידעתי את מכאוביו” “I know their injuries.” Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch describes the meaning behind those four words: כי ידעתי את מכאוביו. He writes, “I have not ignored the personal suffering of the individual. I have felt every lash, every pain, every bitterness as though they had been inflicted upon Me.”

V. Moshe asks Hashem, “When Bnei Yisrael ask for your name, what should I tell them?” Hashem says, “אהי-ה אשר אהי-ה” “I will be what I will be.” And as *Rashi* says on those words, “I am with them in this calamity just as I will be with them in future calamities.” Hashem’s *Name* alone relays the message, the feeling that He is with us in our pain. And He always will be.

VI. In *Parshas Mishpatim*, when Moshe, Aharon, and the Elders see Hashem, the *pasuk* says how they saw אלוקי ישראל and under His feet, right under His Throne of Glory, was “כמעשה לבנת הספיר”, *sapphire brickwork*. Hashem placed this under His throne during the slavery of Egypt, explains *Rashi*, to remind Him of the צרות of Bnei Yisrael who were enslaved with brickwork. Hashem felt our pain! He fashioned His throne in order to forever remember the pain that His children, Bnei Yisrael experienced in Egypt.

So there you have it. Six instances, six clear and distinct examples of being נושא בעול עם חבירו brought out from the Torah’s description of the slavery. We saw (1) that baby Moshe’s cries as he floated down the river were not just any simple cries. They were the cries of a נער, an older

child, coming from the mouth of a little ילד. Pharaoh's daughter understood that he must be a Jew, and his cries are the combined cries of his people. As a young baby, Moshe apparently exhibited this trait of feeling and carrying the burden of his people. This trait continued into adulthood when (2) he went out and not only saw their pain, but lent a shoulder! This is the man I want, says Hashem! Hashem's הנהגה focuses much around this *middah* as well, thereby teaching us to emulate Him (As the Gemara says, מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום, "התדבק במידותיו, מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום") and live with being נושא בעול as well. We see (3) how Hashem chose to appear to Moshe in a thorn bush, relaying to him that עמו אנכי בצרה. I, Hashem, am with My nation in their pain. And (4) Hashem tells Moshe, כי ידעתי את מכאוביו, I know their injuries, as R' Hirsch beautifully says, I feel the pain of every lash! Hashem's name (5) as well, relays this message. אהי-אהי, I will always be with you, I will always share your pain. And lastly, (6) Hashem places sapphire bricks under his Throne to constantly remind Him of the bricks that His children bent their backs over.

Now that we recognize the many instances this *middah* of being נושא בעול surfaces around the slavery, let's fully understand this *middah* and all it entails...

Rabbi Kestenbaum, in *Olam HaMiddos*, brings a parable: Reuven wants to go to a wedding and finds a ride with Shimon who is going as well. Perfect. The morning of the wedding day, Shimon calls Reuven apologetically, explaining that he is not going to the wedding because his wife is sick. Reuven responds, "okay, not a problem, what can you do? That's life...have a good day!" And Reuven proceeds to scan through his contacts to find another person who can give him a ride. Did Reuven for a moment pause and try to feel what Shimon was experiencing? Did he pull himself out of his own selfish needs and goals and try to understand Shimon's situation?!

Well, tell Reuven to act his age! A young child only focuses on his/her needs. I'm hungry so you must feed me. Babies don't really care that it's three o'clock in the morning. I'm hungry. That is an explanation behind the words we say at a bris, says R' Kestenbaum. We proclaim "זה הקטן גדול יהיה" meaning that this 8-day old baby should grow up to be a גדול who cares about other's needs, who lives his life not for himself, but externally focused! Just as the ויגדל of Moshe communicated his shift of being נושא בעול with others, so too this child should grow up and graduate from being a self-focused ילד.

As it says in the introduction of the *Nefesh HaChaim*: וכה היה דברו אלי תמיד שזה כל האדם לא לעצמו נברא, רק להועיל לאחריו ככל אשר ימצא בכחו לעשות. "And so were his words to me always: 'this is the entirety of man; he was not created for himself. Rather, to help others in whatever way he can.'"

The entirety of man.

One of the four types of people the Gemara in *Nedarim* lists that are חשובים כמת, *considered dead*, is a blind person. The reason why this is so, explains the *Sichos Mussar* of R' Chaim Shmuelewitz beautifully, is that a blind person cannot feel and experience another person. It takes the sense of sight to fully grasp and understand another's situation and what they are experiencing. As we saw by Moshe, "ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא" בסבלותם. It was when Moshe *saw* their situation that he was able to feel their pain. And so a blind person is considered dead. For one who cannot feel and experience another's situation is living a life entirely alone in this world. He is therefore considered dead.

So our first point, and perhaps the most vital, is too **shift our focus, pull ourselves out of our selfish world, and genuinely feel the situation of another.**

There is a famous story of the *Beis HaLevi*, where a poor person came to ask him a shailah. It was Pesach time and this poor person wanted to know if he could use milk for the four cups of wine at the Seder. The *Beis HaLevi* answered his question according to the Halachah, but when Pesach came he sent the poor man a few bottles of wine and some meat. Somebody asked the *Beis HaLevi* why he was sending meat as well? The poor person clearly only had said he didn't have *wine*? The *Beis HaLevi* answered that if this man can't afford wine and is going to buy milk, apparently he doesn't have meat either...for he wouldn't drink milk with meat!

It is true, the poor person did not say that he didn't have meat. But the *Beis HaLevi* thought about it, it concerned him. He thought deeply to himself about this person's needs and realized that he must also need meat for Yom Tov. Such should our concern for our friend be! Being נושא בעול עם חבירו requires us to *think* about our friend, to put ourselves in his/her situation to fully understand our friend's needs. Rabbi Kestenbaum in *Olam HaMiddos* brings a story about himself. As a young man, he once needed precisely 5 shekelim to ride the bus. But alas, he only had a 20 shekel bill. He went around asking for change, but nobody seemed to have. Then, he turned to one man who said, "I don't have change, but I could lend you 5 shekalim?" It is so simple, but it teaches us a necessary piece in being נושא בעול עם חבירו.

We have to be מתבונן, we have to *think* about how to best help our friend. What does our friend need? He might be asking for something which I don't have, but maybe I could help him in some *other* way?

During high school, I volunteered for Chai Lifeline in their Big Brother program. I spent a few hours a week with three children whose father was battling cancer. I provided positivity and warmth to children going through a rough time. The beautiful thing about Chai Lifeline (as well as numerous other organizations — למי כעמך ישראל!) was that I was part of a tertiary need. The children I spent time with had no illnesses, *baruch*

Hashem. But they were affected by their father's illness! Such a need is not apparent. It is not the first thought when thinking about someone who is ill—but it must be dealt with nonetheless. It requires sensitive thought to realize and understand such a need.

It is said of the *Chafetz Chaim* as an older man, that he refused to sit on any armchair that was brought for him, “Bnei Yisrael are suffering, and I’m going to sit in an armchair?!” he would say. The *Oznaim LeTorah* describes Moshe’s *middah* of being נושא בעול as השתתפות גמורה בצערם של ישראל, *completely* joining in the pain of Bnei Yisrael. *Feeling* their pain as the *Chafetz Chaim* did.

The *Alei Shur* brings a story of R’ Avraham Grodzinsky that he once went to visit family in Warsaw. The family gathered together and they sat and talked. Suddenly, R’ Grodzinsky glanced at his watch, then began to sing! He stood up and started dancing around the living room for an hour. The rest of his family sat on the couches in amazement as they watched this spontaneous dance. When he finally sat down and met their questioning looks, he explained to them that right now, at this moment, there is a wedding of one of his students in Slobodka. “I can’t rejoice with him for I am very far from there, but I myself can rejoice, for it is also my *simchah*!”

We must feel another’s pain as well as another’s joy as if it is our own!

Everyone has their pain. Everyone has something that is eating at them, something that is troubling them. Each person’s situation is different. But try to understand. Try to be sensitive to each person’s situation. Try to pull out of your outlook, your world, and take their perspective. Lift their “heavy suitcase.”

Divrei Nechamah

It might be uncomfortable at times; you might be required to put yourself in a situation that you wouldn't prefer. But just as Hashem resided in a thorn bush, we must squeeze into that uncomfortable place and feel and understand the burden of our friend...and try to lift that burden three feet off the ground. Try to ease the burden from their shoulders.

As Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch writes, Hashem was telling Moshe and Bnei Yisrael,

"I am with them even among the thorns."

Shifra and Puah

Louis Leder ¹

In *Sefer Shemos* we are introduced to our great leader Moshe Rabbeinu and his family. Unlike the society we live in, which promotes fame and publicity, the Torah teaches us its antithesis. The identities of Yocheved and Miriam are hidden under the names Shifra and Puah. Furthermore, the historic remarriage of two giants, Amram and Yocheved, who bore Moshe Rabbeinu, is modestly referred to as the marriage between a man from the house of Levi and the daughter of Levi (bas Levi), with no names given. Moreover, the Torah does not even connect the fact that this bas Levi was the very same heroic Shifra mentioned a few *pesukim* earlier.

The *Maharal* explains that the Torah is teaching us that when it comes to leadership and serving the *klal*, we have to know that it's not about us and our legacy. The names Shifra and Puah describe the actions of Yocheved and Miriam of beautifying and caring for the babies, for that's what they focused on, and that is the only thing that counts. It is about our actions, not our name. When Yocheved finished her gallant mission of saving the Jewish children, she did not allow herself to retire and be satisfied with her past accomplishments. She was the very same bas Levi who was eager to accomplish more and more for Hashem and her people.

When our lives are focused on doing what is right and not establishing a reputation for ourselves, we will be able to faithfully help those around us. Then, and only then, will a true *keser shem tov* emerge.

¹ This is based on an article by Rabbi Moshe Don Kestenbaum, which originally appeared in *Yated Neeman*.

Experiencing Personal Liberation Every Week

Rabbi Doniel Horowitz

One of the overarching themes of the Seder and Pesach is that we not merely commemorate the liberation from bondage that occurred over 3,000 years ago, but internalize and experience our *own* liberation – as if the exodus is transpiring now and affecting every one of us living today. This is why the Seder is full of interactive mitzvos and references to our modern-day manifestations of those mitzvos. As we declare at the end of the *Maggid*: בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא, *In every generation, we are obligated to view ourselves as if we left Mitzrayim.*

Not only is this personalization of the mitzvah incumbent upon us on a yearly basis, but even on a weekly basis as well. By examining the intimate connection between Shabbos Kodesh and the story of Pesach and what it represents, we can discover an obligation to experience this personal feeling of liberation 52 times a year – every Friday evening as the Shabbos candles are lit and the feeling of serenity descends upon the Jewish home.

During the Shabbos night Kiddush we invoke two remembrances in relation to Shabbos: זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית and לִיְצִיאת מִצְרַיִם, a remembrance of creation and a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. The relationship between Shabbos and the creation of the world is straightforward. By resting on Shabbos and emulating what Hashem did on the seventh day of creation, we are giving testimony that Hashem created the world in six days. But on the surface, the connection between Shabbos and the Exodus seems quite tenuous. Why should Shabbos remind us of *yetzias Mitzrayim* more than any other day of the week?

In reality, there is quite a momentous connection between Shabbos and *yetzias Mitzrayim* – both in terms of the impact of Shabbos on the Exodus and the role of *yetzias Mitzrayim* in remembering Shabbos and making its observance more meaningful in our everyday lives.

According to the Midrash (*Shemos Rabbah* 1:28), when Moshe Rabbeinu was a young prince growing up in the palace of Pharaoh, he convinced Pharaoh to grant the Jews a reprieve from the slavery every Shabbos. The *Chasam Sofer* believes that this decree was operative for the final 67 years of slavery, which means that the Jews benefited from approximately ten years of respite by not working on Shabbos. And given that *galus Mitzrayim* was deleterious both to the body and soul of every Jew, Shabbos brought about a weekly redemption both on a physical and spiritual level. Hence, the Jews were not merely blessed with a ten year reduction in their sentence; they were given an unexpected berachah of *geulah* every week, which sustained them through the travails of the subsequent six days of the week.

At the end of *galus Mitzrayim*, when Hashem commanded Moshe to begin demanding the emancipation of the Jews, Pharaoh responded by ratcheting up the intensity of the work and persecution. At the end of *Parshas Shemos*, Dasan and Avirum accused Moshe of sabotaging their political capital with Pharaoh and held him responsible for exacerbating the slavery. Moshe then complained to Hashem that his attempt at freedom backfired. But according to the *Chasam Sofer*, Moshe wasn't *chas v'shalom* blaming Hashem for making the situation worse, rather he felt guilty and suspected that his intervention on behalf of the Jews 67 years beforehand played a role in Pharaoh's new harsh edict. Moshe was concerned that the ten years of time off due to Shabbos – the leniency that he personally secured from Pharaoh – had to be offset by a tougher level of slavery in order to fulfill the decree established at the *bris bein habisarim*.

This is alluded to when Moshe said to Hashem (*Shemos* 5:23): וַיִּמָּאֵז בְּאֶתִי אֶל פְּרַעֲהַ לְדַבֵּר בְּשִׁמְךָ הָרַע לָעַם הַזֶּה. Moshe feared that already 67 years ago when he *originally* interceded on behalf of the Jews by granting them freedom for Shabbos, it irrevocably harmed them on the back-end of the *galus*.

It wasn't until Hashem gave the Torah to the Jews at Har Sinai and commanded them to keep Shabbos that Moshe was comforted and reassured his innocence in the matter. According to the Tur (*Orach Chaim* §282), when Moshe heard that Hashem commanded them to keep Shabbos and invoked *yetzias Mitzrayim* in explaining the very foundation for this mitzvah, he knew there was no way the respite of Shabbos during the *galus* could have provoked such a travesty. This is perhaps why the Torah chose to mention *yetzias Mitzrayim* only during the second *luchos* mentioned in *Sefer Devarim*, which is *Toras Moshe*. It confirms that Moshe was justified and rewarded for his intervention on behalf of the Jews and Shabbos.

This, according to the Tur is why we say *יְשַׁמַּח מֹשֶׁה בְּמִתְּחַת הַלֵּקוּ* during Shemoneh Esrei of Shabbos morning. Moshe rejoiced not only because we were given the beautiful gift of Shabbos, but that Shabbos itself is *zecher leyetzias Mitzrayim* and was not at fault for extending or exacerbating the slavery.

Not only did Shabbos help the Jews cope with the *galus*, but in this symbiotic relationship between Shabbos and *yetzias Mitzrayim*, we experience the redemption of Mitzrayim every week before the arrival of Shabbos. As the *Shem MiShmuel* explains, just like the *geulah* from Mitzrayim was bifurcated into a spiritual and physical redemption; so too, we experience a spiritual and physical reprieve from *galus* every Friday evening. Throughout the week, we are not only physically taxed with our mundane responsibilities and hard work, we also languish from spiritual malnourishment. It's only once the Shabbos candles are lit, the Shabbos candles which are intended to usher in a sense of physical and spiritual serenity, that we can experience true *shalom bayis*. After all, how can we be at peace with our family unless we are at peace with our own body, soul, and mind?

The *Shem MiShmuel* takes this analogy between redemption from Mitzrayim and our weekly redemption a step further. Just like Hashem

proclaimed four declarations of redemption prior to *yetzias Mitzrayim*, there is a minhag to blow the shofar several times before Shabbos (*Shabbos* 35b). The same way the *geulah* of Mitzrayim occurred over several stages, as expressed in the promises from Hashem in the first three *leshonos* – *vehotzeisi*, *vhitzalti*, and *vego'alti* – the freedom from our physical labor on Friday was phased in through the first three shofar blasts. According to the Gemara, the first shofar blast was to stop the work in the field, the second blast was to close down the stores, and the third was to remove the food from the oven and start lighting candles. The fourth step in the Gemara – “*shovas*,” to rest – corresponds to the fourth *lashon* of *geulah*, *velakachti*. This is when the spiritual redemption was complete and Hashem took us for a nation, which, according to many *meforshim*, refers to receiving the Torah at Sinai. To continue the analogy, this is the moment we become at peace with our body and soul and accept the kedushah of Shabbos, engage in Torah study, sing Shabbos songs, and enjoy a festive meal.

There is actually a powerful connection between the spiritual and physical redemption experienced through the acceptance of Shabbos and the acceptance of the Torah, which completed the final stage of the *geulas Mitzrayim* – the fourth stage of *geulah*. In the popular Shabbos *zemer* we recite every Friday night, it is written **בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שִׂישׁוּ וְשִׂמְחוּ** **כְּמִקְבְּלֵי מַתָּן נִחְלִיאֵל**. We declare our excitement and level of happiness for the gift of Shabbos to be on par with what our forefather experienced when accepting the gift of the Torah. Again, the fourth and final stage of *geulah*.

In what respect is the joy of accepting Shabbos similar to that of accepting the Torah? According to the *Seforim*, the word *sasson* (שִׂשׂוֹן) is distinct from *simchah* (שִׂמְחָה) in that the former connotes a degree of joy upon obtaining something special unexpectedly, experiencing the newfound euphoria precipitously. *Simchah*, on the other hand, is experienced incrementally when expecting and looking forward to a known pleasurable time or event.

When our forefathers were at Har Sinai, although they knew they were about to accept the Torah, they were pleasantly surprised by its beauty and fulfillment beyond their wildest imagination. As such, they were overcome and overwhelmed with joy instantaneously, as if unexpectedly discovering a chamber full of treasures. As it says in *Tehillim* (119:162): עָשׂ אֲנֹכִי עַל אִמְרֹתֶיךָ כְּמוֹצֵא שְׁלָל רַב. This same sudden feeling of exhilaration is what Jews experience every Shabbos. Although we long for Shabbos and certainly anticipate its arrival every week with a degree of incremental *simchah*, there is a feeling of euphoria – *sasson* – that overcomes every Jew the minute their bodies and souls are free from the trials and travails of their daily grind and usher in the *kedushah* of Shabbos. The freedom from shutting out the world and obtaining the *neshamah yeseirah* is so fulfilling it's as if we never experienced it before. The excitement never ebbs from week to week. That is why we say in the *zemer* that our happiness and euphoria over Shabbos is akin to what the Jews experienced at Har Sinai when they came full circle and completed the *geulas haguf* and *geulas hanefesh*.

Even though Shabbos has been scrupulously observed by Jews for thousands of years, the challenges of the past decade have borne out an opportunity for greater appreciation of the day of rest, perhaps, more so than ever before in our history. With the advent of digital and mobile technology, many of us never escape our jobs and the sundry distractions and interests that keep us glued to the outside world and away from our family, spiritual growth, and our own internal peace of mind. The mundane world around us has become so fast-paced, intense, and interminable that we are living in our own personal “galus Mitzrayim.” We are robbed of our serenity and “down-time” for introspection, spiritual growth, and all-around relaxation. Our capacity for deep and relaxed thinking and placing our lives in proper perspective is stymied by the same קוֹצֵר רוּחַ, *shortness of breath*, the Jews in Mitzrayim incurred for 210 years.

Section II: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

This is where Shabbos comes into play. The minute the candles are lit and we sing Kabbalas Shabbos, our bodies and minds are free from the enslavement of our daily responsibilities and distractions, making them whole with our souls so we can appreciate our lives, families, and service to Hashem – both physically and spiritually. We experience our own personal redemption and salvation every week, again, now more than ever before.

The deep and poignant connection between the redemption from *galus* and Shabbos is especially salient this year with the first Seder falling out on Friday night. As we recite the Kiddush for Shabbos and Pesach and invoke the remembrance of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, we will be asserting a double entendre in the true sense of the word. We must remember that just like Shabbos reminds us of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, we should appreciate how every week Hashem has bequeathed us this gift of spiritual and physical redemption on par with what our forefathers experienced in Mitzrayim. And if all of us Jews truly internalized this appreciation for Shabbos, we would likely see the “fifth *lashon* of *geulah*” – *veheivesi*, and merit the ultimate Geulah when our entire existence is *yom shekulo Shabbos*, a time that is completely Shabbos.

Ten Plagues and Ten Utterances of Creation

Roman Kaplan

The ten plagues parallel the ten utterances/statements (עשרה מאמרות) made by *Hashem* in the beginning of creation,¹ in reverse order. Why reverse? עשרה מאמרות are words of *Hashem* that created the world, they are, in other words, creation of laws of nature. With every utterance *Hashem* created a veil of nature that would hide Him. The *Navi* says (*Yeshayah* 19:22): וְנִגַּף ה' אֶת מִצְרַיִם נִגַּף וְרָפוּא, *Hashem struck Egypt with a blow and a cure*. And the *Zohar HaKadosh* explains that this refers to “a blow for *Mitzraim* and a cure for *Yisrael*.” Every *makkah* (plague) was to punish the *Mitzrim* while at the same time to enlighten the *Bnei Yisrael* with *Hashem’s Shechinah*.

Furthermore, every *makkah* paralleled the ten statements of creation in reverse order, so that one by one, they removed the layers of nature that covered Hashem’s presence, until the tenth and final *makkah* when *Hashem’s* ultimate presence as the Creator of the World was felt. After the ten plagues, the Jewish people, the *Mitzrim*, and the whole world knew that *Hashem* controls all ten aspects of nature that He created.

¹ We learn about the ten utterances of creation from the Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 32a). There it is explained that the statements in the first *parshah* of the Torah (*Bereishis*) that begin with *Vayomer Hashem*, [and Hashem said], represent a statement of creation. However, there is a problem; there are only nine such statements. The Gemara answers that the first *pasuk*, *Bereishis bara Elokim...* is also one of the statements, as it also refers to an act of creation. Chazal teach us that these statements were not merely Hashem’s plans to create, but were actual forces of the creation. Hashem’s words became that creation (they materialized into the creation). Hashem used Hebrew to create the world and that is the beauty of Hebrew, the holy language of Hashem, as the words do not merely mean something, but they are the actual essence of that object – each letter corresponding to the spiritual force of the object. In Hebrew, the word דבר means “word” and “object,” as the name of an object is the essence of that object.

Section II: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

So how do the ten plagues reversibly parallel the ten statements? Let us examine the following chart:

עשרה מאמרות	עשר מכות	Parallel
10. "I grant you vegetation for food?"	1. Water turning into blood	Egyptians saw Nile as their source of food, as a source of sustenance. Hashem shows them that He is the Source of sustenance.
9. "Let us make man in our image?"	2. Frogs	The Gemara (<i>Pesachim</i> 53b) mentions an incident (<i>Daniel</i> Ch. 3) where certain <i>tzaddikim</i> gave up their lives for <i>Kiddush Hashem</i> rather than bow down to a statue of Nebuchadnezzar. It asks: Why did Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah [want to] enter the furnace and give up their lives?! (They did not expect that <i>Hashem</i> would miraculously save them.) The Gemara answers: They made a <i>kal vachomer</i> from the plague of <i>tzefardi'im</i> (frogs) – even though frogs are not commanded about <i>Kiddush Hashem</i> , they still entered ovens and kneading bowls (as it says in <i>Shemos</i> 7:28). Since we <i>are</i> commanded about <i>Kiddush Hashem</i> , all the more so we should enter!
8. "Let the earth produce living creatures."	3. Lice	Hashem created lice out of dust to show the <i>Mitzrim</i> that He is the Creator of even small creatures like lice, which cannot be seen by the naked eye.
7. "Let the waters teem with life...and let birds fly across the sky."	4. Beasts	Hashem created all the living things of the water, air and land prior to creating Man. When Man was created, he was blessed to "fill the earth and subdue it, and

		rule over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the sky and over all the beasts that tread upon the earth.” Instead, the Mitzrim stooped so low in their immoral behavior that animals were now ruling over them.
6. “Let there be lights in the sky.”	5. Pestilence	Just like there were those who worshipped the stars, Egyptians treated cattle and sheep as deities. Hashem destroyed their animal stock through a plague of pestilence. Message to the <i>ovdei kochavim</i> and the <i>Mitzrim</i> that they are worshipping nothing, that Hashem is the Creator of all.
5. “Let the earth produce vegetation.”	6. Boils	Vegetation is a form of productive growth, while boils are a non-productive growth on one’s body. Vegetation provides food, nutrition, shelter, filters the air, while boils are an unwanted painful nuisance.
4. “Let the waters gather for the dry land to appear.”	7. Hail with fire	The separation of water and dry land is a miracle that is present to this day. The nature of water is to flow; it does not like to be confined. Nevertheless, it stays within its boundaries due to Hashem’s will. Hail/water and fire, are opposite forces, but are able to co-exist at Hashem’s will. This principle is expressed in the statement of עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ, <i>The One Who makes peace above, will create peace for us here [as well]</i> . Hashem is the Creator of peace and co-existence of all forces,

Section II: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

		even of those that oppose each other.
3. “Let there be a firmament between the upper and the lower waters.”	8. Locusts	Hashem created a separation between Heavens and Earth. A sky – on a simple level, the separation of the lower and upper waters (air is also composed of water particles, evaporated; when water evaporates, its particles rise into the air). On a deeper level, that separation was spiritual – a division was made between the physical and spiritual realms. ² The locusts “covered the sight of the earth, and the land was dark” (<i>Shemos</i> 10:15), the locusts separated between the sun and the earth – the “new <i>rakia</i> .” This was a physical separation, representing the current world’s (especially the Mitzrim’s) existence being so far removed from reality of realization of existence of Hashem (the light is blocked). ³

² *Eretz* was separated from *Shamayim*. ר צ, *reish-tzadi* from ארץ is part of רצון, desire. ש מ, *shin-mem* of שמים, means “there.” While being here in the physical world, Man should strive (have desire) to reach higher (be “there” so to speak), to reach higher spiritual realms. As it says in *Tehillim*: “...*masbia le chol chai ratzon*” – Hashem satisfies everyone *with* desire (*not* that He satisfies every one’s desires). It is a blessing to have the ability to have the desire to reach for higher spiritual potential.

³ *Shlomo HaMelech* writes in *Mishlei* (30:27): מְלֹךְ אֵין לָאֶרֶץ וְיֵצֵא חֲצֵץ בָּלוֹ, *Locusts have no king, they go out together en masse*. Locusts represent a society without order, without a common goal or desire/aspiration.

The *makkos* are separated into two *parshiyos*, seven in the first and three in the next. Prior to the eighth plague of locusts, Hashem tells Moshe to go to Pharaoh, as He has hardened his heart, and He will make mockery of Egypt, so that we will tell of this to our children. Why does Moshe need encouragement now to go

2. "Let there be light."	9. Darkness	<i>Bnei Yisrael</i> are elevated through the light that was hidden away on the first day of Creation. This light was created before the luminaries (sun and moon), which we perceive as the source of light in the physical world. Thus the light created through <i>yehi ohr</i> is different, not the same, as the one from the sun.
1. <i>Bereshis Bara Elokim...</i>	10. Death of first born	Man may have a false image of himself as a creator. He farms the land and produces food, he creates children. Hashem reminded the world that He (and only He) is the Creator, everyone and everything else are His creatures.

to Pharaoh? Is Moshe suddenly fearful of doing it now?

The number seven represents the physical world: Seven days of the week; seven-year *shemithah* cycle; three dimensional objects have six sides and the seventh representing its entity, etc... Once seven plagues passed and Pharaoh did not release the Jewish people, Moshe began to worry. He did not, of course, question Hashem's ability to take out the Jewish people from bondage; he was questioning his understanding of what was happening. Moshe thought that seven *makkos* should be sufficient to break Pharaoh. Thus, Hashem explained to him that He has hardened Pharaoh's heart; there are still "signs and wonders" in store that need to be performed, not just to punish the Egyptians, but also for the Bnei Yisrael's sake (as explained above). The first seven plagues were of "physical" nature, crushing everything the Mitzrim perceived of the world as "reality." After the first seven *makkos* revealed a false conception of this physical world, the last (or next) three revealed a higher dimension. The *makkah* of locusts thus served as a bridge between the first seven "physical *makkos* and the last two "spiritual" *makkos*.

The Percentage who Left Mitzrayim

Roman Kimelfeld

In *Shemos* 13:18, the *pasuk* states: וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, *Bnei Yisrael went up from the land of Egypt “chamushim.”* *Rashi* cites two interpretations of the word “*chamushim*.” The first interpretation is “armed” (as *Targum Onkelos* explains). Then, *Rashi* brings the second interpretation, where he cites Midrash *Tanchuma* (*Beshalach* §1), which relates the term to *chamesh* – appearing to say that only one fifth of Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, whereas the rest of the nation perished in the plague of darkness.

While *Rashi* quotes only the first opinion from *Tanchuma*, *Tanchuma* actually brings several opinions on this topic. Here is the full text of this Midrash:

וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. One out of five. And there are those who say one out of fifty. And then there are yet others who say one out of 500. R’ Nehorai said: *Haavodah* [i.e. an oath], not even one out of 5,000.

[Midrash *Tanchuma* continues.] When did they die? In the days of darkness they [the Bnei Yisrael] would bury their dead while the Egyptians would sit in the darkness. The Bnei Yisrael praised Hashem that the enemies [i.e. the Egyptians] did not see [the death of Bnei Yisrael] and they did not rejoice in the calamity [that befell Bnei Yisrael].

As already mentioned, *Rashi* cites only the first opinion in *Tanchuma* (“One out of five”). The other opinions cited in *Tanchuma* appear even more implausible (especially R’ Nehorai’s opinion). While it is very difficult to accept that 80%

of Bnei Yisrael perished in the days of darkness – it is virtually impossible to imagine that this could have happened to 4,999 of out 5,000 Bnei Yisrael. So, how should we understand this *Tanchuma*, and especially R' Nehorai's opinion?

The commentary on *Tanchuma*, *Beur HaAmarim*, explains that the opinion that only 1 out of 5,000 survived cannot be taken literally. This is because this would have implied that originally there were 3 billion of Bnei Yisrael in *Mitzrayim*. (If we start with 3 billion – we would end up with 600,000 – after only one out of 5,000 survived.) Of course, this could not be taken literally, since there were not even nearly that many people in the world at that time. However, *Beur HaAmarim* points out that R' Nehorai's opinion could not be merely an exaggeration. This is because he says “*Haavodah*,” which is an expression of an oath. Since R' Nehorai uses an expression of an oath when he states his opinion, it must not be a mere exaggeration; rather we need to find a way to find true meaning of R' Nehorai's words.

Beur HaAmarim interprets Midrash *Tanchuma* in the following way. He points out that in the very beginning of *Parshas Beshalach*, Torah refers to the Jewish people three times as “*HaAm*” – i.e. “The Nation,” which is a derogatory way to refer to Bnei Yisrael. The word “*HaAm*” implies that the Jews completely resembled other nations. Then, the Torah says: *Bnei Yisrael went up chamushim*. *Bnei Yisrael* is an endearing way to refer to the Jews, implying that the people acted in the proper Jewish manner. According to *Beur HaAmarim*, all of the opinions in Midrash *Tanchuma* that we cited above merely debate what percent of the people deserved the endearing term of “*Bnei Yisrael*.” According to the first opinion in *Tanchuma* – only 20% of those who left *Mitzrayim* behaved like Bnei Yisrael. (This first opinion interprets the words “*Bnei Yisrael went up*

chamushim” – as saying that 20% of those who left Mitzrayim were acting as true *Bnei Yisrael*.)

Thus, according to *Beur HaAmarim*, there is no opinion in *Tanchuma* that holds that many Jews died during the plague of darkness. Rather, *Tanchuma* interprets the *pasuk* to mean: 20% (or 2%, or 0.2%, or 0.02% according to R’Nehorai) of those who left Mitzrayim were acting like *Bnei Yisrael*.

Now, *Tanchuma* that we cited above does mention that there were Jews who died during the plague of Darkness. *Beur HaAmarim* explains that this statement of *Tanchuma* refers to a relatively small number of the worst sinners who did not want to leave Egypt due to their great wealth and the position of high prominence. *Beur HaAmarim* bases this interpretation on a different section of *Tanchuma* (*Va’era* §12).

This section of *Tanchuma* describes the people who perished in the plague of darkness as follows: “*There were sinners among Bnei Yisrael, who had Egyptian patrons, and they had honor and wealth, and they did not want to leave Egypt.*” Clearly this section of *Tanchuma* refers to a very small number of *Bnei Yisrael*, since the great majority did not have great honor and wealth in Egypt. Thus, as *Beur HaAmarim* explains, only a very small number perished in the plague of darkness.

It emerges from our new understanding of *Tanchuma* that the great majority of *Bnei Yisrael* did indeed leave Egypt. However, at the time of the Exodus, most of them did not yet act as true *Bnei Yisrael*. The various opinions in *Tanchuma* debate what percent of those who left Mitzrayim did act like *Bnei Yisrael*. According to all opinions in *Tanchuma*, at the time of the Exodus, there was a great disparity in the spiritual level of those who left (i.e. some acted like *Bnei Yisrael*, but most did not).

Fortunately, this disparity did not last long. Less than fifty days later, when the Bnei Yisrael came to Midbar Sinai, they became completely unified in their desire to receive Torah. *Rashi* says in (*Shemos* 19:2) that they were like “one man with one heart.” They were no longer “*HaAm*,” they all became “*Bnei Yisrael*.”

Will That Be Wheat Or Barley?

Louis Leder ¹

As the *barad* rains relentlessly over Mitzrayim, Pharaoh reaches out to Moshe and beseeches him, in what was by now a familiar routine, to call the makkah off. "I have sinned this time," he proclaims remorsefully. "Plead before Hashem, and I shall send you out." Despite his skepticism, Moshe acquiesces, "As soon as I leave the city, I shall spread my hands in supplication to Hashem; the thunder will cease, and the hail will be no longer." Yet, before he leaves, Moshe makes sure Pharaoh understands that he holds no illusions about his true intent. "As for you and your servants," says Moshe, "I know full well that you have yet to truly fear Hashem."

At this juncture, the Torah digresses, interjecting two seemingly unrelated *pesukim* before picking up the narrative and describing how Moshe indeed interceded on Pharaoh's behalf. Describing the damage inflicted by makkas *barad*, the Torah tells how "the flax and barley were entirely crushed, for the barley was ripe and the flax in its stalks, while the wheat and spelt were not crushed, since they had yet to ripen." For generations, commentators have sought to make sense of this hail-casualty bulletin and its unusual placement. In fact, for lack of a better explanation, *Rabbeinu Saadiah* asserts that these words must have been uttered by Moshe himself in response to Pharaoh and are therefore a continuation of the earlier quote. Yet, even that, as the *Ramban* points out, merely gives way to another, more troubling question: Why would Moshe find it important to relay information about the plague's precise impact on different grains to Pharaoh?

¹ This is based on an article by Rabbi Elchonon Jacobovitz .

R' Akiva Eiger provides a most enlightening explanation. By telling Pharaoh which grains had been crushed and which had survived, Moshe was imparting a hidden yet pointed message to Pharaoh about his own conduct. What he meant to say was as follows: You and your ilk have yet to truly fear G-d, and I know it. Even so, it would be worth your while to take a lesson from the grains, and at least soften your naughty, time-hardened posture. Just look at what happened when the hail struck. The hard grains were crushed on impact, while the soft ones were able to avoid that fate by virtue of their flexibility, which allowed them to bend under bombardment rather than break. If you, Pharaoh, don't want to be crushed, don't be so tough and haughty. Adversity rarely succeeds in breaking the humble and unpretentious, and rarely fails at shattering the prideful.

The message is incisive. Rigidity breeds ruin, while flexibility ensures endurance. Yet the true lesson runs even deeper. What made the wheat and spelt so soft? The source of their elasticity was the fact that they were still engaged in the process of growing, while the flax and barley were already fully mature. When one is through with growing, he grows hard and lifeless. At that point, the slightest hint of adversity can crush him, throwing him off of the high perch he has established for himself, from which to disdainfully observe the rest of society still trying to make something of themselves. To one still actively engaged in the never-ending process of self-creation, on the other hand, adversity is nothing more than another crooked step in the obstacle-ridden ladder of growth. Survival is simple: Take a hit, bend momentarily, bounce back, and keep on climbing. Which one would we rather be?

Faith, Signs, and Redemption

Jeff Silverberg

The Slonimer Rebbe, *zt'l*, describes Pesach as the *Chag HaEmunah*, the Festival of Faith. “Chazal say, in the merit of *emunah* our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt and in the merit of *emunah* we will be redeemed in the future,” he writes in his fourth essay on Pesach in the *Nesivos Shalom*. The Jewish people believed that Hashem would redeem them and, as a direct result of that belief, He did so.

There is precedent for this cause and effect relationship in our daily prayers. Redeem us, we pray, *כי לישעוּתך קִיּוּנו כָּל הַיּוֹם*, “because we hope for your salvation all day long.” Save us, we beseech, *כי מַחֲכִים אֲנַחֲנו לָךְ*, “because we are waiting for You.” *וְתֵן שָׂכָר טוֹב לְכָל הַבוֹטְחִים בְּשִׁמְךָ בְּאַמֶּת*, “and give goodly reward to all who sincerely believe in your Name.” Our very faith, we assert, is the reason we should be saved.

It is therefore striking to the *Ramban* that when Moshe Rabbeinu encounters Hashem at the burning bush, he seems to show a lack of faith. Hashem instructs Moshe to return to Egypt to tell the people that Hashem has remembered them and that Moshe will be His messenger in taking the Jewish people out of slavery (*Shemos* 3:10) and into its destiny as a free nation. Hashem tells Moshe that the people will serve him at this place, at Har Sinai, (*ibid.* 3:12), an allusion to Revelation and the giving of the Torah. And He assures him that *וְשָׁעֲמוּ לְקוֹלִיךָ*, “**they will listen to you**” (*ibid.* 3:18) and the elders of the people will go to Pharaoh with Moshe to demand a three day sojourn. Once the people hear the phrase *פָּקֹדִי פָּקֹדֶתִי*, “I have surely remembered you,” they will recognize this code phrase that *Rashi* reminds us (*ibid.* 3:18) was a sign of the imminent redemption from the days of Yaakov and Yoseph. No one would question Moshe’s words, the *Ramban* on that *pasuk* assures us, since the people knew that the first person to assert this phrase would be genuine and not a charlatan. Hashem assures Moshe (*ibid.* 3:20) that He will

strike Egypt with His wonders, that Pharaoh will send the people out, and (ibid. 3:21-22) that the people will take the wealth of Egypt with them.

How, after all of these Divine assurances, *Ramban* inquires, can Moshe's response be explained? "And Moshe responded and said, 'Behold, they will not believe me and they will not heed my voice, for they will say, Hashem did not appear to you.'" (ibid. 4:1). In fact, *Ramban* says on the spot that "at that time Moshe spoke inappropriately, for HaKadosh Baruch Hu had told him that 'they will heed your voice.'" *Ramban* proceeds to provide several possible defenses for Moshe. In his opinion, the most likely justification is that Moshe thought the people's trust in him would be limited to their willingness to accompany him to confront Pharaoh as they had nothing to lose by doing so; however, the promise did not include a guarantee that the people would believe that Hashem had appeared to Moshe and that the redemption had arrived.

In any case, *Ramban* points out, Hashem answered as if Moshe's erroneous statement and/or misunderstanding was correct and gave him אותות, signs, with which he could convince the Jewish people that Hashem had indeed appeared to him.

The *Nesivos Shalom* (*Shemos*, p. 40, "Inyan HaOsos") raises several issues pertinent to this episode.

1. Why did Moshe suspect that the Jewish people, "believers, who are the children of believers" would not have faith in him and listen to his words?
2. Bringing a question from the *Ramban*, why did Moshe himself have to see the signs during his encounter, when he clearly knew that Hashem was speaking to him?
3. Why did Hashem ask Moshe what was in his hand and why did Moshe tell him a *mateh*, a "staff?" The staff was in plain view. What was the purpose of this exchange?

4. Why was it necessary to have more than one sign and what advantage did the second sign have over the first, that it would cause the people to believe if the first sign failed to do so?
5. What is the significance of the fact that the first two signs involved temporary changes to the staff and Moshe's hand, each returning to its original state, while the third sign was permanent – the water that turned into blood remained blood?

He offers a beautiful *mehalech*, a wonderful explanation. Moshe saw a bush burning with flame, and yet the bush was not being consumed by the fire. He turned aside because he wanted to understand how this could be *in order to understand* how it could be that his nation was enslaved and immersed in the most degrading levels of impurity in Egypt and yet still had survived. What was the secret strength of the bush and that of *Am Yisrael*? Hashem told him “Remove your shoes from your feet because the place where you are standing is holy land.” Hashem explained that the connection between the land on which the bush was situated and the Jewish people is that both are inherently holy. No matter how mighty the fire became, the bush would survive. No matter how terribly difficult the situation of the Jewish people was, they remained חלק אלקים ממעל, “a portion of G-d above.” Hashem instructs Moshe to describe the people as (Shemos 4:22) בני בכורי ישראל, “my son, my firstborn, Israel” in his very first meeting with Pharaoh, before any improvement in their spiritual state has begun. The Jewish people were still beloved by Hashem, they had the potential to return to their holy source, and they could not be destroyed.

This, asserts the *Nesivos Shalom*, is the essence of the purpose of the signs. The Jews believed in Hashem, but they no longer believed in themselves. They knew that Hashem had promised to take them out of Egypt, but they could not imagine that they had not forfeited this heritage by allowing themselves to sink so far. Moshe knew this about the people and perhaps thought that their hopelessness was well-deserved. That is why he had doubted that he would be believed.

How did Hashem reassure Moshe? He gave him the sign of the staff turning into a snake and then returning to being a staff. מָה זֶה בְּיָדֶיךָ, “What is that in your hand?,” He asks Moshe. Is it a “*makal*” or a “*mateh*,” both words referring to a stick or a staff. A *makal* is a staff made for the primary purpose of beating people. A *mateh* is intended for productive purposes. Moshe’s staff was a *mateh*, a “good” staff. Even though it turned into a snake, the very embodiment of unholiness, it was still inherently a positive creation. Its existence as a snake was just by chance and not intended to be permanent.

So too the Jewish people. Their involvement in impurity was also *mikreh* “by chance,” and temporary. Its essence remained holy and connected to Hashem. The nation could overcome the impurity to which it had sunk and return to its proper place.

The second sign was the transformation of Moshe’s hand into a leprous appendage, again the embodiment of impurity. Perhaps the people might concede that a return to holiness was possible, but limit this potential to inanimate objects. A staff yes, it is but wood no matter its source, but surely not a person or a people who have free choice and abuse this gift by willfully following after desires that are harmful to themselves and contrary to the will of Hashem!

This was the advantage of the second sign. Chazal tell us that a person with *tzaraas* “leprosy” is compared to a dead person. The people had committed sins that would have made them liable to the death penalty. Nevertheless, Hashem showed them with this sign that they could still return to their Source, to Hashem.

The third sign was different, the *Nesivos Shalom* continues. The water turned into blood and that blood remained blood. He explains that at that point הללו עובדי עבודה זרה והללו עובדי עבודה זרה, “that both they (the Egyptians) and they (the Jews) were idol worshipers.” The Jews’ final

concern was that the “gods” they had worshipped in Egypt now had dominion over them and would prevent them from leaving. Hashem showed them with this sign that these Egyptian deities were nothing and that He would destroy them all in the process of redeeming the Jews.

The Jewish people always had faith in Hashem, but had lost faith in themselves. The signs signaled to them that Hashem had not and would not forsake them and that they remained attached to Him as a result of their inherent holiness. The path to the redemption from Egypt, as a direct result of this faith, was now clear.

May we have faith in Hashem that He still loves us and always will, and faith in ourselves that we are still redeemable; with those merits, may we see the final redemption, speedily in our days.

Shalach Yad: Send Forth the Hand

Dr. Eli Lazar Singman

Every morning prior to Shacharis, we have the opportunity to study the *Akeidah*, one of the ten tests of Avraham. During that test, Avraham was prepared to *shecht* his son Yitzchak but Hashem stopped him. The phrase used in the Torah for this act was “send forth the hand.” This seems a curious choice of words. Is the hand a messenger that one can send forth to do work? Can the hand act independently without the continuous direction of the mind? Is this phrasing always used in a way that connotes a negative act?

When we explore the usage of this phrase in *Tanach*, we find 38 references. It is striking to see that most (28 of the 38, or ~ 74%) explicitly refer to a negative act, in which the hand would be sent to do harm, misappropriate items of value or obtain/prepare a weapon.⁸

Notably, one could suggest that at least 7 of the remaining 10 passages that do not directly fit this category could still be included.

Two of the passages (see 6 and 7 in addendum) refer to Moshe’s encounter with the *Shechinah* at the burning bush. Here Moshe sent forth his hand to grab the snake that formerly was his staff and turn the snake back into a staff. That staff became a weapon which helped bring plagues upon the Egyptians (Shemos).

One of the passages (see 20 in addendum) refers to one of Elisha’s *talmidim* who lost a borrowed axe head in the river and Elisha made it miraculously float to the surface so that the *talmid* could send forth his

⁸ For the sake of brevity, those 38 passages are provided in an addendum to this essay; however the reader is reassured that one can complete this essay without referring to the addendum.

hand and take the axe. Although this was certainly a positive event, the axe was a metal implement. Metal implements were associated with violence to the point where Hashem specifically prohibited stones cut with metal to be used in the construction of the altar (*Shemos* 20:25).

Another of the passages (see 22 in addendum) refers to Hashem putting words in the mouth of the prophet Yirmiyah. Thereafter, Hashem said “behold I have placed My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms to uproot and to smash and to destroy and to overthrow...” One could suggest that when Hashem sent forth his hand to put words in the prophet’s mouth, He was preparing a weapon if not, frankly, weaponizing His prophet!

One of the passages (see 27 in addendum) refers to the men of Yehudah rebuilding the defensive walls of Yerushalayim. They built with one hand (*yad*) while holding a weapon in the other, ready for battle. Notably the actual word for weapon is “*shalach*” and that is why the passage has a “*yad*” and “*shalach*” in it. While the phrase “*shalach yad*” is not explicitly present, the connotation about violence is obvious.

Finally, two passages (see 37 and 38 in addendum) refer to the tragic incident that occurred when David HaMelech was arranging for the *aron hakodesh* to be brought up from Kiryas Yearim to Yerushalayim. He mistakenly had the *aron* transferred by an ox-pulled wagon rather than carried by Kohanim. The wagon driver, Uzza, stretched his hand toward the *aron* when he thought it would fall; Uzza died as a result of that error, since the *aron* can actually support itself. Although Uzza was not taking anything, he certainly was putting his hand where it did not belong.

Adding these 7 phrases to the 28 already highlighted would mean that 35 of the 38 (or 92%) passages in Tanach containing “*shalach*” and “*yad*” are connected with violence, stealing, touching something that one should not, etc!

What of the 3 remaining passages containing “*shalach*” and “*yad*”? The first occurs in *Parshas Noach* (see 2 in addendum), where Noach sent forth his hand to take the dove back into the *teivah* after the dove flew around looking for dry land but found none. The second also occurs in *Parashas Noach* (see 3 in addendum), when the angels sent to save Lot and destroy Sdom had to stretch forth their hands to pull Lot into his house, thereby protecting him from an attack by the natives of Sdom. The third occurs in Shmuel II (see 17 in addendum), where the rebellious Avshalom would, in a show of false modesty, stretch forth his hand to prevent would-be followers from prostrating themselves in front of him. In each of the cases, the hands sent forth provide help! Specifically, Noach helps the dove, the angels save Lot, and Absalom prevented people from inappropriately prostrating themselves to him since he did not really deserve that level of honor (even though he probably believed that he did).

Looking at these three situations another way, however, suggests that they too might fit into the category of misappropriating.

- a. Concerning the dove, we can say that it truly belonged to Hashem rather than Noach. Indeed, Rashi tells us that when the dove returned after a second trip with an olive leaf, it was saying "Rather that my food be bitter as an olive but from the hand of G-d, than as sweet as honey from the hand of mortal men."
- b. Concerning Lot, it is sad to note how deeply he had sunken into the culture of Sdom. *Rashi* says that when Lot left Avraham, Lot thought to himself “I want nothing to do with either Avraham or His G-d.” Lot was so inculcated in the daily life of Sdom that he was appointed a judge. Furthermore, according to *Me’am Loez* (*Bereishis* II, *VaYera*, p. 224), Lot offered his betrothed daughters to the Sodomites so that they should not take his guests (the angels). Lot reasoned that even though the Sodomites would have committed adultery with the betrothed (but as yet unmarried) girls, this was the more minor infraction than handing over the guests. In the series *The Midrash Says*

(*Bereishis* p. 175), the *Midrash* indicates that when Lot offered his daughters to the Sodomites, *Hashem* said “I swear you keep them for yourself!”, proving adultery was not as major a concern as it should have been to Lot. All this being said, I believe we could argue that Lot really **belonged** to the Sodomites by the time the city was to be destroyed! He was actually the property of Sdom and the angels had to make a *kinyan* by pulling him inside his house, stealing him from the Sodomites, even if it were for his own good.

- c. Finally, concerning Avshalom, his act of reaching out to his would-be followers to prevent them from bowing was stealing in two ways. First he was fooling them into thinking (*geneivas daas*) that he would be a better king than his father David. Second, he was stealing David’s supporters, i.e., *Am Yisroel*.

If we accept these proposed interpretations, then every passage in Tanach with “*shalach*” and “*yad*” would connote either violence, reaching for/preparing/holding a weapon or reaching for something that one should not touch/have. The question remains why this phrase is used?

Perhaps it would be helpful to contrast passages with “*shalach*” **and** “*yad*” with those in which only “*shalach*” **or** “*yad*” is used. While there are many times “*shalach*” or “*yad*” are used throughout Tanach, I believe the following examples will be useful.

A. A passage with *shalach* but not *yad*:

In *Parshas Shemos* (2:5), we read that Bas Pharaoh sends forth her maidservant to fetch the infant Moshe from the river. Notably the *Midrash* explains that she actually sent forth her hands and her arms miraculously elongated. Therefore, the Torah could literally have written “send forth the hands”! However, if the thesis that “*shalach yad*” is always negative in some way, then it could not be used here. Bas Pharaoh intended no harm. On the contrary, the Torah makes it clear that

Bas Pharaoh was supposed to take the infant Moshe, i.e., the Torah chooses to employ Bas Pharaoh's name for the child she found.

B. Passages with *yad* but not *shalach*:

We encounter “*yad*” without “*shalach*” in a number of phrases that contain “*poseach yad*,” i.e., open hand.

- a. In *Tehillim* (145:16), we read that Hashem opens his hand to provide sustenance to all living things.
- b. In *Devarim* (15:11), every Jew is commanded to “surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor and to your destitute in your Land.”
- c. In the long *tachanun* we recite on Monday and Thursday during Shacharis, we declare to *Hashem*: “You who open Your hand to accept repentance, to receive transgressors and sinners.”
- d. In Shmuel II (24:13), David says to the prophet Gad “let me fall into *Hashem*’s hand, for his mercies are abundant, but let me not fall into the hand of man.”

Interestingly all of these circumstances represent situations diametrically opposed to violence or stealing. The “open hand” in these passages represents the greatest opportunities for man, i.e., *tzedakah* and *teshuvah*. Evidence of this is that in the Yom Kippur service, we declare that *tzedakah* and *teshuvah* (along with *tefillah*) are the steps we need to elevate ourselves to the levels of angels or even higher!⁹

Notably, all but one of the passages in Tanach employing “*shalach yad*” denotes the hand of man. And the one time “*shalach yad*” refers to *Hashem*’s Hand, the Torah states that He forbearingly refrained from

⁹ Nota bene: A computerized search of Tanach for the phrase “open hand” reveals five passages, of which four are listed above. The fifth is from *Yeshayah* (62:2), in which Hashem says concerning his chosen people that they “shall also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the open hand of their G-d”. It seems evident that “open hand” in Tanach always denotes something very positive!

sending forth His hand against the elders who ate and drank in the presence of the *Shechinah*, despite the fact that punishment was deserved (see passage 10 in addendum). This is the exception that proves the rule, i.e., that “*shalach yad*” means that **man** can and often does send forth the hand to do violence or inappropriate reaching. But because man should strive to be at the level of an angel or higher, and because every person has that great potential, it is not a natural act to do harm or misappropriate an item. Rather, man must “send forth his hand”, almost unwillingly, almost as if that hand were being forced to do a task that its owner would prefer, deep down, to avoid.

Addendum

- 1) *Bereishis*, Ch 3 V 22: Man would send forth his hand to take from tree of life, against the orders of Hashem.
- 2) “, Ch 8 V 9: Noach put forth his hand to take in the dove which found no resting place.
- 3) “, Ch 19 V10: The angels stretch out their hand to pull Lot into his house in Sdom.
- 4) “, Ch 22 V10: Avraham stretches out his hand and took the knife toward Yitzchak.
- 5) “, Ch 22, V 12: The angel of Hashem called to Avraham NOT to stretch out his hand against Yitzchak.
- 6) *Shemos*, Ch 4 V 4: Moshe was commanded to stretch out his hand and grasp the snake that was formerly his staff.
- 7) “, Ch 4, V4: Moshe stretched forth his hand and grasped the snake and it became a staff again.
- 8) “, Ch 22 V 7: The householder safeguarding property swears that he has not sent his hand upon his fellow’s property.
- 9) “, Ch 22 V 10: A *shomer* swears that he has not sent his hand upon his fellow’s property.
- 10) “, Ch 24 V 11: Hashem did not stretch forth His hand against the great men of Bnei Yisroel, who gazed yet ate and drank.
- 11) *Devarim*, Ch 25 V 11: To rescue her husband, a wife stretches her hand to his assailant’s embarrassing place will have her hand cut off without pity.
- 12) *Shoftim*, Ch 15 V 15: Shimshon stretched out his hand to take the jawbone of a donkey as weapon against the Pelishtim, killing 1000.
- 13) *Shmuel I*, Ch 17 V 49: Dovid stretched his hand into the sack and took a stone to sling at Goliath, killing him.
- 14) “, Ch 22 V 17: The servants of Shaul ha-melech did not obey the order to kill the Kohanim of Nov, i.e., they were not willing to send forth their hand against them. Doeg, however, did obey the order.
- 15) “, Ch 26 V 9: Dovid commanded Avishai not to kill Shaul ha-melech while the king slept, for “who can send forth his hand against the anointed one of Hashem and be absolved”?
- 16) “, Ch 26 V 11: David said it “would be sacrilegious before Hashem for me to send forth my hand against Hashem’s anointed one”.
- 17) *Shmuel II*, Ch 15 V 5: Avshalom was attracting followers in preparation for a rebellion against David HaMelech. He would tell them that he would right any grievances they had if they would

support his leadership. Further he would not let anyone bow to him but instead “and it was that whenever anyone came near to him to prostrate himself before him, he would stretch out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him”.

- 18) “, Ch 24 V 16: David asked for a plague of 3 days rather than 7 years of famine or 3 months of fleeing from enemies in battle when offered a choice of punishment for his sin of counting his people incorrectly. When the angel stretched out his hand against Yerushalayim to destroy it, Hashem told the angel to stay his hand, stopping at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. This was the site on Mt. Moriah where the Akeidah took place.
- 19) *Melachim I*, Ch 13 V 4: Jeroboam, king of Israel, established idol worship for political reasons. A navi denounced the king at his altar and told him that the house of Dovid will slaughter the kings idolatrous priests; as proof the king’s new altar would split and the ashes would spill. The king stretched out his hand from upon the alter ordering the navi to be seized but the hand that he had stretched forth became paralyzed and the altar then split.
- 20) *Melachim II*, Ch 6 V 7: One of Elisha’s disciples was felling a tree by the Yarden when his borrowed axe head fell into the water. Elisha made it float by throwing in a piece of wood and told the man to pick up the axe head, so the man sent out his hand and took it.
- 21) *Yeshaya* Ch 11 V 14: Ephraim and Judah will unify and send their hand over Edom and Moav.
- 22) *Yirmiyah*, Ch 1 V 9: Hashem extended his hand and touched the navi’s mouth and told him that he has placed His words in the navi’s mouth
- 23) *Yechezkel*, Ch 10 V 7: In Yechezkel’s vision, the Cherub stretched out his hand from between the Cherubim to the fire that was between the Cherubim and took the fire and put it into the cupped hands of the one clothed in linen. These cupped fire-coals were the ones to be thrown at Yerushalayim.
- 24) *Iyov*, Ch 28 V 9: Hashem stretched out his hand against Sdom and overturned it.
- 25) *Daniel*, Ch 11 V 42: Prophesying about the time of the end, [The king] will stretch forth his hand against lands, including Egypt, Lubia and Cush.

- 26) *Ezra*, Ch 6 V 12: Cyrus, king of Persia, ordered in a written decree that the temple may be rebuilt and asked Hashem to topple any king or people who may stretch out a hand to disobey the decree.
- 27) *Nechamyah*, Ch 4 V 11: The people of Yehudah were rebuilding the defensive walls of Yerushalayim. “Those who built the wall and those who lifted and carried the burdens would do their work with one hand, while one held a weapon”. Notably the word Shalach here means weapon!
- 28) *Shir HaShirim*, Ch 5 V 4: Hashem sent forth his hand in anger; i.e., He sent Aram against Achaz, king of Judah, because of Baal idolatry.
- 29) *Esther*, Ch 2 V 21: Bigsan and Seresh sought to send their hand against King Achashveirosh; Mordechai overheard their plot and informed Queen Esther who told the king, saving his life.
- 30) “, Ch 3 V 6: Haman was furious that Mordechai did not bow to him but thought it “was contemptible to send his hand against Mordechai alone”, and rather wanted to destroy all the Jews.
- 31) “, Ch 6 V 2: King Achashveirosh could not sleep so the records were read to him and he was reminded how Mordechai saved him when Bigsan and Teresh sought to send their hand against the king.
- 32) “, Ch 8 V 7: King Achashveirosh hanged Haman because he sent his hand against the Jews.
- 33) “, Ch 9 V 2: The Jews organized themselves in their cities throughout the Persian Empire to send their hand against those that sought to hurt them.
- 34) “, Ch 9 V 10: The Jews did not send their hand upon the spoils of their slain enemies or Haman’s sons.
- 35) “, Ch 9 V 15: In Shushan, the Jews slew their enemies but did not send their hand upon the spoils.
- 36) “, Ch 9 V 16: The Jews in the provinces slew their enemies on 13 Adar but did not send their hand upon the spoils.
- 37) *Divrei HaYamim I*, Ch 13 V 9: Uzza sent his hand to grasp the Aron “for the oxen (pulling the wagon upon which the Aron rode) had dislodged it”.
- 38) “, Ch 13 V 10: Hashem struck Uzza for sending his hand to the Aron when he thought it was falling off an ox-cart and Uzza died.

Three Lessons from the *Parshiyos* Chaim Sugar

I. The author, or better the compiler, of the Hagadah is not known. However, it is certainly clear that the Hagadah contains many statements made by, or about, *Tannaim* and *Amoraim*. One of these statements is a quote from the *Mechilta* in *Parshas Bo* 13:11. The *Mechilta* states, in part, “*One might think (that the obligation to discuss the Exodus commences) with the first day of the month of Nissan, but the Torah says: “You shall tell your son on that day...”*” In other words, initially the *Mechilta* was thinking that we perhaps need to start the Seder from *Rosh Chodesh*, the new moon, but since the Torah says “on that day” we know the obligation does not begin until the fifteenth of the month.

Often when learning Gemara we encounter this same structure of an “initial thought” and then an explanation of why that thought is not correct. This “initial thought” is called the Gemara’s *hava hamina*. And, even though the Gemara rejects its *hava hamina*, often much time is spent trying to understand what the Gemara had in mind that led it to this “initial thought.”

The word used in the *Mechilta* for “one might think,” is *yochol*. This word *yochol* can also mean “able” or “capable.” And this was the purpose of the *hava hamina*. To teach us that if we want to be able and capable of telling our children, during the Seder, the story of the Exodus, that can only happen if we begin the preparations at the start of the month. If we wait till the week before, or the day before, to prepare ourselves to correctly fulfill the obligation of “You shall tell your son,” it might be too late.

* * * * *

II. In *Parshas Va’eira*, the *pasuk* in Section 18:21, when talking about the plague of *barad*, hail, tells us that those Egyptians who “feared” the

word of Hashem brought their servants and livestock indoors. The next *pasuk* states that those whose “heart” did not listen to Hashem left their servants and livestock in the fields.

R’ Abba Zvi Naiman, our Mara D’Asra, noted that the two *pesukim* are not symmetrical. If the first *pasuk* is referring to those who “fear” Hashem, the second *pasuk* should have been worded as referring to those who “do not fear” Hashem. R’ Naiman pointed out that at this point there had already been six *makkos*; six times where the word of Hashem was executed exactly as Moshe said it would be, with devastating results for the Egyptians. It is not possible that after all of the destruction there were still Egyptians who did not fear Hashem. However, it is possible to fear Hashem but still not have it in your heart, to be fully aware of Hashem, to fully admit at all times that everything that occurs is not happenstance but rather an event directed by Hashem. The *pasuk* is telling us that we may think, intellectually, that we fear Hashem, but if we don’t have it in our hearts, we don’t have it.

* * * * *

III. The first *Rashi* in *Parshas Yisro* tells us that Yisro, Moshe’s father-in-law, had seven names. One of his names was Yesser, which means extra. *Rashi* explains the source of that name, explaining that Yisro was the cause of an additional *parshah*, “*she’yiteir*, which Yisro added to the Torah. And that is when Yisro advises Moshe how to operate the court system, the *parshah* of “*Ve’atah techezeh*, you shall seek.”

Now if you look at that *parshah*, you will discover that *ve’atah techezeh* is actually the ninth *pasuk* of the episode described there. For the episode starts at *pasuk* 13, and the *ve’ateh techezeh* is *pasuk* 21. Asks the *Kotzker Rebbe*, if the episode started at *pasuk* 13 why did *Rashi* write that the section of the Torah that was added because of Yisro begins with *pasuk* 21?

He answers that if you look at the *parshah* carefully you will notice that Yisro solution to the problem does not start until *pasuk* 21. From *pasuk* 13 through *pasuk* 20 what Yisro is doing is complaining about the situation, not offering any suggestions on how to correct it. Complaining without offering something constructive would not qualify for an additional *parshah* in the Torah.

Kerias Yam Suf and the Beis HaLevi

Rabbi Yehuda Menchel

Did you ever wonder why קריעת ים סוף gets its own individual attention? Don't ask me "It gets its own individual attention?" It does! Don't we *lain* about it separately? כלל ישראל sang a whole שירה about it – no such שירה was sung about יציאת מצרים! Don't tell me that what makes it unique is that it was such a huge נס, because during יציאת מצרים we experienced hundreds of ניסים מכה after מכה, each clearly showing Hashem's existence, His השגחה, the concept of שכר ועונש, and much more! Additionally, each מכה negated a certain concept of עבודה זרה.¹ It's true that the הגדה tells us more ניסים occurred at קריעת ים סוף than during יציאת מצרים, but does more of the same deserve special mention? There must be a unique lesson to be derived from קריעת ים סוף that compels us to give it such prominent display.

To answer this question, we must ask another question: The מדרש in ויושע ד' ביום ההוא...וייראו העם את ד' ויאמינו בד' פסוק on the פרשת בשלה relates that until this point in time they did not fear Hashem, but from herein (קריעת ים סוף) they did fear Hashem. This מדרש needs to be understood. All of כלל ישראל witnessed the עונש that the מצריים experienced through the מכות. It would seem inconceivable that this would not have given them יראה. It would seem to be that there was a new level of יראה that had been achieved by the ים. What was it?

The key to understanding this is the knowledge that there are three types of יראת שמים, each with its own motivations and characteristics. These are יראת הרוממות and יראת העונש, יראת השם. The first and simplest is יראת העונש – fear of the consequences of one's actions. This feeling of fear comes from being עבירות מתבונן regarding one's עבירות and their punishments. יראת השם however, is when one is מאמין with a deep recognition that

¹ See *Kli Yakar* (Shemos 7:17) at length.

Hashem is being מחדש בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית, that every millisecond Hashem is recreating the world anew. With this, a new fear sets in, a humbling fear, a fear which comes from one's recognition of his total dependency upon Hashem's Will. This fear however, is intertwined with a love and gratitude toward Hashem. למשל, a drowning man is grabbed out of raging waters by the rescuer's hand, and is slowly dragged from the current. As he is dragged out, he fears that the hand may let go. For every moment that the hand does not let go, he is filled with gratitude. The two, the fear and appreciation, is called יראת השם. It is called such because this fear and love together can only truly exist as it relates to Hashem.² This fear does not come naturally. Even if one were to achieve this level, with but a momentary loss of focus this highly achieved level can dissipate into thin air. יראת הרוממות, the third type, is felt when one focuses on the contrast between Hashem's exaltedness, and our astonishing insignificance.

Says the *Beis HaLevi*: In מצרים, at the time of the מכות, we were, as a nation, introduced to Hashem. We were saturated with יראת העונש. However קריעת ים סוף was a demonstration of a fundamental נקודה, a life altering perspective in our understanding of Hashem. We descended into the ים, and all laws of nature were instantly suspended. We saw the water forming tunnels for us to walk through and we were completely and totally aware of our utter dependence upon Hashem. The water could change back, and hundreds of thousands of gallons of water could envelop us, if He so desired. Think about it! Visualize yourself in the tunnel of water – is your heart pounding? Are you holding your children tight? Possible disaster is imminent! Glance behind you, and see it collapsing upon the hapless Egyptians! Yet, it continues to hold firm throughout. Right now you are terrified – yet you look around and see

² Well, why not of the hand that pulls you out of raging waters, you ask? Because in truth, that hand only exists due to Hashem, only has the ability to pull you out of the water due to Hashem, and only continues to exist due to Hashem. Furthermore, the raging waters themselves only exist due to Hashem! Without Hashem, there is no hand, no water, and... no you.

Moshe and all of Klal Yisrael calmly walking through the tunnels, with fruit hanging from the ceiling, spigots of fresh drinking water, available at arms reach. An overwhelming sense of gratitude to Hashem permeates your heart. Thank you Hashem! The entire nation experiences a new understanding of Hashem, a יראת השם. The יראת העונש was a סור מרע, holding us back from what we were not to do, an עיכוב. The יראת השם we experienced in the ים was an עשה טוב, creating within us a fierce motivation to be worthy of being created right now, imbuing within us a recognition the gift of every moment.

With such a valuable and crucial lesson to be learned from קריעת ים סוף, it is of no surprise that we give קריעת ים סוף its own unique focus. This day affords us the opportunity to focus on the unique aspect of יראת שמים that we gained in the ים סוף, and use it as a means to propel us forward into the upcoming preparation for קבלת התורה.

The Four *Kosos*; the Four *Leshonos* of *Geulah* ¹

Daniel Menchel

Rashi on the first Mishnah in *Arvei Pesachim* writes that the four *kosos* correspond to the four *leshonos* of *geulah* in our *parshas Shemos*. (Please note that *Rashi* later on *daf* 108a interestingly gives a different reason and says the four cups correspond to four times cups are mentioned in the dream of Pharaoh's *sar hamashkim*.) The *Mordechai* asks: why four cups and not four matzos? (Not a question according to the *Rashi* on 108a). The *Mordechai* answers that cups are mentioned in *pesukim* that relate to *geulah*, e.g. *kos yeshu'os esa*, so we use cups of wine.

The *Netziv* just slightly rephrases the *Mordechai*'s question. The way he puts it is why four cups and not four matzos or four pieces of meat *u'k'domeh*. In other words, if all we are interested in is representing the number four, who cares what we use or how we do it. That's a very broad way to read the *Mordechai*. You could read the question more narrowly: why did Chazal institute a new mitzvah of four *kosos* instead of building the representation of number four into an existing mitzvah? The *Netziv* answers that the idea of the four *leshonos* is that *geulah* is a gradual process. One does not go from being a slave to a free man overnight. Even if the shackles are off, there is a psychological adjustment, a social adjustment that has to take place. Chazal used four cups to represent this gradual shift because when a person drinks, there is a gradual change that happens as the person drifts closer to (or deeper into) inebriation.

R' Tzadok HaKohen (Pri Tzadik, Pesach §5) adds an extra twist to the question and formulates it like this: the four *kosos* are a Rabbinic requirement; matzah is a Biblical law. Why would Chazal incorporate the representation of four into a Rabbinic mitzvah when they could have incorporated it into a Biblical one?

¹ This is adapted from from <http://divreichaim.blogspot.com/>.

R' Tzadok sees the difference between Biblical and Rabbinic as not just a technical distinction, but as representative of the difference between what is ingrained in a person's *neshamah* vs. what can be achieved through *avodah*. The four steps of *geulah* are four stages in defining who we are as Jews. The pinnacle of all these stages is the permanent banishment of the *yetzer hara* from within. We achieved that level when we received the Torah, but lost it almost immediately – it did not become permanently ingrained in us. Three of the four *leshonos* of *geulah* were achieved, but we missed the final step. Therefore, when it comes to the Biblical, reflecting what is innately part of us, we only take three, but not four matzos. When it comes to *kosos*, we take four as a symbol of what we hope to achieve by the dint of our efforts, through the Oral Torah and Rabbinic law. Matzah, three, is about who you are now; *kosos*, four, is about where you are going and what you want to become.

The Fifth Cup of Wine

Rabbi Moshe Grossman ¹

Every Hagadah that I have seen, from Maxwell House to ArtScroll, mentions that we are obligated to drink four cups of wine at the Seder. The *Yerushalmi* in *Pesachim* (10:1) gives four reasons for this requirement.

The first reason is the well-known explanation that the four cups correspond to the four languages of redemption that are written in *Parshas Va'era* to describe the four phases of the redemption from Egypt. The first phrase used is, "I will take you out of the burdens of Egypt," meaning that Hashem will end the slavery. The second is, "I will save you from their labor," meaning that Hashem will take them out of Egypt's control. The third is, "I will redeem you," which is an allusion to the splitting of the *Yam Suf*. The fourth phrase is, "I will take you to be My people," which refers to the giving of the Torah.

The second reason given in the *Yerushalmi* is that the four cups at the Seder are a reminder of the four cups of wine mentioned in the Torah when the *sar hamashkim* [butler] related his dream to Yosef. The mentioning of a cup of wine four times at this point is an allusion to the redemption from Egypt.

The third reason is that the four cups are an allusion to the four kingdoms that will subdue and rule over the Jewish people: the *Kasdim*, the *Madiim*, the Greeks, and *Edom*, i.e. Rome.

The fourth reason for the four cups at the Seder is that they are an allusion to the four cups of punishment that Hashem will mete out to the nations of the world for their treatment of Jewish people.

¹ Dedicated in honor of my granddaughter, Tali Grossman, whose question brought about my writing this *dvar Torah*.

However, it is difficult to understand the last two reasons in that they do not refer to Pesach at all. The four cups of wine are one of the main symbols of the Seder ceremony. We would think that they would be some reference to the Exodus from Egypt.

I think that we can answer this question based on a comment of *Rabbeinu Bachya* in his commentary on the Torah in *Parshas Va'era* (6:6), where he discusses the four phrases of redemption. Then, he treats the phrase in *pasuk* 7, "I will bring you into the land," as another phrase of redemption. He says that this promise was supposed to occur soon after the Jewish people left Egypt. However, because of the sin of the *meraglim*, Hashem could not fulfill this promise at that time. This part of the redemption would have been the final redemption, which, of course, has not yet come. *Rabbeinu Bachya* is saying that we are still awaiting this part of the redemption. That is, the entire history of the Jewish people from the Exodus until today has been a continuing process to bring us to the final redemption. All the troubles, sorrow, and suffering that we have experienced are part of this process. On the other hand, all the mitzvos and *mesirus nefesh* of the Jewish people have contributed and continue to contribute to reaching the goal of the final redemption. Therefore, the four kingdoms and the four cups of punishment are part of the continuing story of the redemption. We celebrate Hashem's redeeming us from Egypt, His protection throughout the years, and His promise for a complete redemption.

With this understanding of the four cups, we can understand the meaning of the subject of this piece, the fifth cup of wine.

The Mishnah in *Pesachim* (117b) tells us that we should not have less than four cups of wine at the Seder. The Gemara (118a) then cites a *Baraisa* that R' Tarfon says that we should complete the recitation of Hallel on the fourth cup. However, there is another version of this *Baraisa* that the *Rif* brings, as follows: R' Tarfon says that we should complete the recitation of Hallel on the *fifth* cup of wine. The *Ran*

concludes, based on the Gemara, that drinking the four cups is an obligation and the fifth cup is optional. The *Rambam* also mentions that a fifth cup of wine is optional. The *Tur* in *Orach Chaim* brings a dispute among the *Rishonim* on this matter. The current practice is not to drink a fifth cup unless one has a great need to do so as is noted in the *Rama* §481). This is a very brief and incomplete presentation of this matter that is mentioned here only to serve as background for the next part.

We have seen that *Chazal* give reasons for the four cups. What is the reason for the fifth cup? The *Raavad* on the *Baal HaMaor* explains that the fifth cup is for the fifth expression of redemption, “I will bring you into the land,” which follows the first four. As we have mentioned, this expression refers to the final redemption according to *Rabbeinu Bachya*. However, I personally have not seen anyone drink a fifth cup at any Seder that I have attended, nor have I heard of anyone doing so.

Even though it is not the practice to drink a fifth cup of wine, we actually have a fifth cup at the Seder, namely the cup of Eliyahu. The *Vilna Gaon* explains that the reason for the cup of Eliyahu is because there is a dispute as to whether we need a fifth cup, which has not been decided. Therefore, this dispute – like all disputes – will be decided when Eliyahu comes. We pour a fifth cup and refer to it as the cup of Eliyahu since he will clarify whether a fifth cup is required or even allowed. Therefore, we do not drink this cup since its status is unclear.

However, the *Taamei HaMinhagim* cites the *Toldos Esther* that states that the purpose of the cup of Eliyahu is for the fifth expression of redemption, “I will bring you into the land,” similar to the *Raavad* in reference to a fifth cup that would be drunk. He also mentions that this expression refers to the final redemption. Based on the *Toldos Esther*, we would conclude that we do not drink this cup since the final redemption has not yet occurred.

It appears from these sources that the cup of Eliyahu is to remind us that the redemption is not yet complete and will not be complete until the final redemption. The Seder should instill in us the confidence and faith that just as Hashem redeemed us from Egypt, so too will He bring the final redemption. Furthermore, we must understand that since we did not merit the final redemption immediately following the Exodus, the redemption process has continued throughout our history from Egypt on. We must realize and consider at the Seder that all the events, whether good, bad, joyous, or tragic, are, in some way, necessary to bring us to the final redemption.

A Berachah for *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*

Rabbi Yitzchak Friedman

The Rishonim wonder why there is no berachah recited on the mitzvah of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. There are a few answers to the question that “wow” me.

(1) The *Chasam Sofer* quotes the *Abarbanel* who says that the berachah at the end of Maggid, אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותנו ממצרים, constitutes the *birchas hamitzvah* enacted for *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. The *Chasam Sofer* wonders that in light of the halachic requirement that the berachah be recited prior to the actual performance of the mitzvah, why we wait until after Maggid to recite the blessing. Our goal at the Seder is to recreate the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* narrative. חייב כל אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו יצא ממצרים. To accomplish this feat, one needs to recreate the pre-redemption state of mind. At that point, the Jews were still subordinate to Pharaoh and not able to be commanded in mitzvos. Hence, prior to the Hagadah recitation, a berachah is inappropriate. Once we recount our being freed from bondage and our commitment to serve the Almighty, then, and only then, is a berachah recited. This is similar to the law that a Jewish woman who goes to the mikvah recites her berachah before immersion, and yet a convert recites the berachah after immersion!

(2) A berachah is not recited on a mitzvah that is accomplished through speech! For example, there is no berachah on the mitzvah of Shema and Birchas Hamazon. Similarly, *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* is accomplished through the recitation of the Hagadah, no berachah was established to precede this mitzvah.

(3) Two years ago, I heard Rabbi Sholom Rosner’s Hagadah shiur, through OUTorah.org. He quoted Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurebach, as saying the following. When one experiences an awesome act of benevolence, such as *yetzias mitzrayim*, it would be inconceivable that

one would not be filled with a sense of gratitude. It is unnecessary to command the Jewish people to thank Hashem for such kindness. Moreover, the thanksgiving that is expressed via command is contrived.

One might wonder: it is a no brainer for those who were actually the beneficiaries of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, to recognize the enormity of the gift of redemption. However, for us in the 21st century (3,828 years later) how do we engender this deep feeling of gratitude that is due the Almighty for our deliverance?

Many ideas have been suggested. However, these methods are usually divided between those that are addressed to young people and those addressed to adults. The methods that are aimed at the youth are subsumed in the dictum of *כדי שישאלו התינוקות*. They are usually experiential, for example, make believe props etc. Adults spend time looking at the numerous works on the Hagadah or the *meforshim* on the Chumash on the *yetzias Mitzrayim* story.

A friend of mine witnessed the novel approach taken by Rav Shlomo Wolbe *zt"l*. This friend came back to Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov in the days before Pesach. The yeshivah was on *bein-hazmanim* break and Rav Wolbe was not expecting anyone to be around. My friend found him on a lawn chair (Rav Wolbe had hearing issues, and he didn't realize that my friend was approaching), replicating with his hands frogs jumping all over his body. He was trying to recreate the joy that Jews felt when the plagues miraculously arrived to afflict the Egyptians.

In other words, adults do well by also using their senses to recreate the life in Egypt, approximate what slavery looked and felt like and what it must have felt like when G-d rained down plagues on our arch-enemy. In a decade, where even adults feel a need to watch videos/movies, we can relate to their need for visual/experiential props. Perhaps, in next year's Kuntress, we can have a collection of ideas that enabled the Seder to come alive for adults and kids alike. Gut Yom Tov!

Stolen Matzah ¹

Chaim Sugar

The *Shulchan Aruch* in *Orach Chaim* (454:4) writes that one cannot fulfill his requirement to eat matzah on the night of Pesach with matzah that was stolen. He then qualifies this statement and explains that this is true if the individual stole a matzah. However, if someone stole flour and then made a matzah with this stolen flour, that matzah can be used to fulfill the requirement to eat matzah on the night of Pesach, because the thief acquires the matzah through the change that was made to the flour. The *Mishnah Berurah* §15 points out that this rule of not being able to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah applies only to a stolen matzah, whereas if one borrowed a matzah there is certainly no problem. (In recent years, using a borrowed matzah has become an issue. Perfect for those who need a new *chumrah*.)

In the *Beur Halachah*, the *Chafetz Chaim* notes that the Poskim write that specifically with a stolen matzah one cannot fulfill the requirement to eat matzah because *המצה גופה בא בעבירה*, *the matzah itself got here through a non-permitted act*. However, if on Shabbos, one carries a matzah from a private domain to a public domain (or more than four *amos* in a public domain; for this writing the two will be used interchangeably), that matzah can be used to fulfil the mitzvah and a *berachah* can be made on that matzah. The reason is *שהוא עבר העבירה ולא המצה גופה בעבירה*, *He committed a sin, but the matzah itself was not with a sin*. To help us understand the distinction between a stolen matzah and one that was carried from one domain to another, the *Chafetz Chaim* instructs us to look at the *Mishnah Berurah* 318:1 and in the *Beur Halachah* there.

¹ The following is an excerpt from a *Minchas Chinuch Shiur* (Mitzvah §120) given by HaRav Yosef Dovid Schleizinger on the 9th of Nissan, 5772.

Section §318 in the *Shulchan Aruch* deals with the issue of the permissibility of using an item with which a forbidden *melachah* was performed on Shabbos. Various circumstances are discussed, i.e. if the Shabbos violation was done by accident or intentionally, when may the item be used and who can use the item. At the beginning of this section, the *Beur Halachah* quotes the *Chayei Adam* who says that the rules of Section §318, regarding using items that were used on Shabbos in a way that violates a Shabbos prohibition, applies only to items where the violation effected a change in the body of the object, such as cooking; but if the violation did not cause a change in the object, such as carrying the object from one domain to another, and the carrying was done unintentionally, the object may be used even on that Shabbos and even by the one who unintentionally committed the violation.

With this in mind we can get to a question that is especially relevant to Pesach in the year 5776, when the first Seder falls on Shabbos.

The Gemara in Tractate *Succah*, at the bottom of page 42b, writes “Rabbah said: The Rabbis issued a decree against taking a lulav on the Sabbath, lest one take it in his hand and go to an expert to learn the laws involved in its use.” *Rashi*, writing to explain the words “to learn,” points out that the Gemara is referring to the laws of waving the lulav or the blessing to made on taking the lulav.

Based on this Gemara, the *Sedei Chemed* (Rav Hezekiah Medini, 1834-1905) in *Marareches Chametz v'Matzah* asks why the Rabbis did not also invoke this decree regarding not eating matzah on the first night of Pesach that falls on Shabbos. The *Sedei Chemed* first gives an answer from the *Haamak She'eilah* that people do not go out at night.² The *Sedei Chemed* does not like this answer and suggests that a decree was not put

² Rav Schleizinger noted that even if people are afraid to normally go out at night, since the night of Pesach is a “protected night”, this concept might not apply to the night of Pesach.

into place because there really is nothing one needs to ask when it comes to the matzah.

The *Sho'el U'Meishiv* (Rav Yosef Shaul HaLevi Nathanson, 1808-1875), rites (Volume IV §5) that he was asked by a Rabbi Shimson why the Rabbis did not make this decree on eating matzah Pesach night that falls on Shabbos. Rabbi Shimson quotes the Rashi in the Gemara in Succah and says that for matzah a person might also need to ascertain the proper *berachah* one makes on the mitzvah of eating matzah (for a *berachah* different from the one we normally make – see *Rambam*). There are in fact other possibilities as to why someone would carry his matzah to an expert. For example, is the matzah kosher with no parts folded over, and how much matzah has to be eaten to qualify as olive size?

Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (1870-1960), in his sefer *Mikra'ei Kodosh* (13:2), tells that this question was asked by Rabbi Yitzchak Yeruchem Diskin (a son of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin). Rabbi Diskin answered that since to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah all you need is a piece of matzah the size of an olive, and to violate the prohibition of carrying in public on Shabbos the size of the item needs to be the size of a date, so a person would not be in violation of the carrying in a public domain if he is only carrying a piece of matzah the size of a olive. Rabbi Tzvi Pesach does not accept this answer. He is concerned that since in this situation an olive sized piece of matzah is significant, you can use it to fulfill your obligation to eat matzah, it might also be considered large enough to make one liable for “carrying” on Shabbos. Rabbi Frank gives his own answer that since the mitzvah of lulav is performed in the morning a person might carry it to an expert the evening prior to learn how to properly perform the mitzvah. However, since the time for the mitzvah of matzah is in the evening, a person with questions would have taken the matzah to the expert during the daytime, before Shabbos.

Earlier we mentioned a *Beur Halachah* that says that if one carries a matzah on Shabbos in a public domain, that matzah can still be used to

fulfill the mitzvah. This is based on a *Pri Chadash* (Rav Chizkiyah De-Saluha, 1659-1698) in Section 454, which in turn is based on a *Yerushalmi*. The *Yerushalmi* in *Shabbos* (13:3) discuss a situation where, on Shabbos, an individual tore his clothing in mourning for the dead, *Chas VeSholom*. Does that person fulfill his requirement of tearing his clothing or does he have to repeat the tearing after Shabbos? When the Gemara attempts to say that the tearing obligation has been fulfilled, the Gemara asks how this can be so: did we not say that a person cannot fulfill his obligation to eat matzah on the first night of Pesach with a stolen matzah? So too, one should not be able to fulfill the requirement of tearing “*keriyah*” if it was done in violation of Shabbos laws. Both the matzah and the *keriyah* should be considered a mitzvah that was performed through an *aveirah*. The Gemara answers that concerning the matzah, the matzah itself is connected to a sin. But the case of the mourner, the mourner committed a transgression, but the garment itself is not considered an item connected to a sin. The Gemara ends with the following statement: **“Do we say the following: that if one took out matzah from a private domain to a public domain on the Sabbath, he cannot then fulfill with it his obligation to eat matzah on Pesach because it is a mitzvah brought about through a transgression?”**

This last statement matches up with the *Beur Halachah*; we do not say that a matzah that was carried across domains on Shabbos cannot be used to fulfill the obligation of eating matzah on the first night of Pesach. However, this works out well if the last statement of the Gemara ends with a question mark. If you remove the question mark, the statement is saying just the opposite of what the *Beur Halachah* said. Sometimes, with a *Yerushalmi*, it is hard to tell if the statement needs a question mark at the end or not. Both the *Korban HaEidah* (Rav Dovid Fraenkel, 1704-1762) and the *Pnei Moshe* (Rav Moshe Margalit, 1710-1780), commentaries on the *Yerushalmi*, say that the question mark belongs at the end of the statement. However, the *Pri Chadash* quotes a sefer called the *Beis Moed*, who writes that the question mark does not belong there, and the Gemara means that, in fact, you cannot use a matzah that was

carried in public just like you cannot use a matzah that was stolen. He is of the opinion that as far as the matzah's status as kosher for fulfilling the obligation of eating matzah, there is no difference between a stolen matzah and one that was carried in public.

So where does this leave us? We now know that you cannot use a stolen matzah but you can use a matzah that was carried from one domain to another. We know why this is so and the distinction between the two. We listed a number of reasons why the Rabbis did not institute a decree not to eat matzah on Pesach night that falls on Shabbos. Putting everything together, let's list just one more reason.

In a famous Rabbi Akiva Eiger, he asks a "what if" question. What if someone does blow shofar on Rosh Hashana that falls on Shabbos? When that person reaches the next world, will he get credit for performing a mitzvah? In other words, when the Rabbis said not to blow shofar, does that completely uproot the mitzvah, or is it that the mitzvah is still there but it does not need to be performed? He seems to lean towards the idea that the mitzvah no longer exists and no reward will come to the individual who performs an act that the Rabbis forbid. Another of the great Achronim noted that this great power the Rabbis have to uproot a mitzvah is only for mitzvos that were given at Sinai, not for those that were given before Sinai.

Now the rest is easy. Matzah is a mitzvah that was given before Sinai. It goes together with Korban Pesach, which was before Sinai. When the Rabbis tell you not to perform a mitzvah, they are uprooting the mitzvah. The Rabbi's authority to uproot a mitzvah is only for mitzvos that were given before Sinai. Therefore, the Rabbis were not able to make a decree that would uproot the mitzvah of eating matzah on Pesach night that falls on Shabbos.

The Hagadah's Relevance in Modern Times

Baruch Raczkowski

Last year at our Seder we decided to focus on what we can learn from the Hagadah that applies to us today. While I was preparing for our Seder, I came across a beautiful *Shem MiShmuel* that talked about the last interaction between Pharaoh and Moshe before *makkas bechoros*. I also found a number of interesting articles about that last formal meeting between Moshe and Pharaoh. It was intriguing to me how the dynamics of that last meeting had effects that reverberated throughout the centuries, and if you listen carefully, that same dynamic still exists today. I used the Artscroll *Midrash Rabbah on Parshas Bo* (Chapter 18 page 1) for the insight and the following translation.

This discussion took place before the final *makkah* was about to occur, giving birth to a nation. It is just after the plague of darkness had ended. Moshe was standing in front of Pharaoh, demanding that Bnei Yisrael be set free. The discussion according to the Midrash went as follows:

Narrator: Pharaoh was very angry after the plague of darkness and he made sure that Moshe understood his displeasure.

Pharaoh: Go and serve your G-d; only your cattle and your sheep will remain here (i.e. a security to ensure you return).

Narrator: Moshe could not accept this because Pharaoh would think to himself: "I, Pharaoh negotiated with the G-d of the Jews and cut a deal. We negotiated as equals; I gave him the people and kept the animals." Moshe could not let that happen so he upped the ante. Pharaoh needed to understand that in the grand scheme he was only a man that ruled over men. There is only one God and that is the King of Kings, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* (see R' Yisroel Miller's book *What's wrong with being happy?* Pharaoh Fantasy pp. 91 - 104).

Moshe replied: *בחיך, וגם מקננו ילך עמנו, לא תשאיר פרסה*, "By your life, even our livestock will go out with us, not a hoof will be left behind." *כי ממנו נקח אנחנו לא נדע מה נעבוד אתה*, "For from it we shall take to serve Hashem

our G-d; and we will not know in advance with what we are to serve Hashem." Even an animal partially owned by a Jew will be taken.

Moshe continued: (I am paraphrasing this; see the *Midrash Rabbah* for the exact text) "If you, as Pharaoh, a king of flesh and blood, were to say "Collect for me a certain amount of taxes," the world would do it for you. Certainly if the King of all Kings, Hashem, tells us to make up all 210 years that we could not sacrifice, we would have to do it. We therefore do not know how many sacrifices we will be asked to bring.

Narrator: Pharaoh was angry. Moshe just told Pharaoh that he was flesh and blood and finite, whereas Yisrael is the servant of Hashem who has no bounds! Pharaoh's plan was to force Yisrael to leave behind their cattle as security to force them to return. Pharaoh did not appreciate having his plans thwarted.

Pharaoh replied: For how long will you continue to come before me, go and beware, אל תספ ראות פני, "Do not see my face anymore!"

Moshe answered: You have spoken well. I shall never see your face again.

This Midrash started by mentioning the pasuk in *Yeshayah* (44:26): מקיים דבר עבדו ועצת מלאכיו ישים, *Who confirms the words of his servant, and fulfills the counsel of his messengers*. R' Abahu says that this *pasuk* is referring to this final meeting between Moshe and Pharaoh. It was at this meeting that Hashem confirmed his servant's words. Hashem did not want to make Moshe a liar by making him go back to Pharaoh with the final prophesy of ויהי כחצת הלילה כה. Rather, Hashem appeared to Moshe in Pharaoh's palace and gave Moshe his final warning to Pharaoh. This was done in Pharaoh's Egyptian palace filled with all sorts of idols and objects full of *tumah*.

This aspect of the final exchange is difficult to understand. For all of the other *makkos*, Moshe would appear before Pharaoh, negotiate with him, and then leave to daven to Hashem outside the city in order that Hashem should not have to respond to Moshe in the *tumah* of the palace. Why in this case did Hashem appear to Moshe in Pharaoh's palace?

The *Shem MiShmuel* (Bo 5676 pp. 141-142) answers in depth. Moshe wanted to set a precedent at the very beginning of the relationship between Hashem and the new nation Bnei Yisrael. Moshe wanted to establish the concept that Hashem remains close to the Bnei Yisrael at all times, even when they have sinned (and do not deserve to have Hashem with them). Moshe wanted to establish an unconditional commitment from Hashem at this early stage of their relationship so that in all generations, Hashem will be with Yisroel even in the contaminated environments the *galus* brings us.

Centuries later, a queen entered the inner chambers of a king's palace which was filled with idols, where she lost her *ruach hakodesh* in that environment. She cried out *אלי אלי למה עזבתני*, *My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?* Queen Esther lost her *ruach hakodesh* in the *tumah* of Achashveirosh's inner chambers. Scared and surrounded by Achashveirosh's guards who were ready to kill her, Queen Esther turned to Hashem to come and help the Bnei Yisrael. Achashveirosh was angered by the thought that Queen Esther would enter the inner chambers without being called and was ready to have her killed. After all, it was an affront to his honor! As we know from the story of Purim, Hashem caused his presence to rest on her and came to help Bnei Yisrael. This is similar to how He helped Moshe deal with Pharaoh before the last plague. He caused an unwilling king Achashveirosh to stretch out his royal scepter, saving Esther so that she could help bring about a *yeshuah* for Bnei Yisrael.

There is a famous story told about the Chafetz Chaim. A bill was passed by the Polish Legislature that required all Polish Rabbis to speak the Polish language or they would not be permitted to represent their congregants. The bill was waiting for a likely signature of the Polish President. The Chafetz Chaim led a group of Jewish leaders to stop the President from signing the bill. The Chafetz Chaim explained that the Torah says to daven for the kingdom you are in, and that he did daven for

the Polish government each day. He also described to the President that if you interfere with our religion, the nation would experience a downfall like all our enemies have experienced. The interpreter for the Chafetz Chaim did not know what to do. If he translated the words of the Chafetz Chaim, the President would take it the wrong way. Translating the words differently was not an option either; it was the Chafetz Chaim's words. Baruch Hashem, before the interpreter began, the President of Poland said he did not have to translate the Chafetz Chaim's words because he knew it came from the heart. He then told the Chafetz Chaim he would not sign the new legislation into law. This is a twentieth-century example of Hashem giving assistance to a Jewish leader to help prevent a terrible calamity from befalling our nation. While in the presence of the *tumah* of the seat of Polish government.

This special *hashgachah* of Hashem began in Mitzrayim, when Hashem appeared to Moshe in Pharaoh's palace, the epitome of *tumah*. We can therefore rest assured that Hashem is with us even in our *galus* today, may it speedily end **במהרה בימינו אמן**.

Mosheh Rabbeinu and the Hagadah Yitzchok Raczkowski

Although the *Kli Chemdah* is a commentator who focuses on the *pesukim*, in his introduction to one of his *seforim*, Rabbi Meir Plotzki talks a little about Pesach, because when he published this work it was around Pesach.

Someone asked him the following question: Why is Moshe Rabbanu's name not mentioned throughout the entire Hagadah? He was the one who led us out of Egypt and it would only be fitting for his name to be mentioned at least once.

Rabbi Meir Plotzki's initial response was that any redemption by man will always be flawed and therefore will never last for eternity. So we try to avoid the fact that this redemption would not last for all of eternity. He then proceeded to think about the matter a little more and thought of a bomb kasha. Chazal said Hashem would take us out of Egypt. So, was it Moshe or did Hashem who took us out of Egypt? Really they both took us out. How is that possible? The answer that Rabbi Meir Plotzki gives is that there were two redemptions; one was physical and one was spiritual. Moshe did take us out but only physically; Hashem took us out spiritually.

Rabbi Meir Plotzki proves this point by asking another question. Why do we sometimes say הלל like we do on Chanukah and sometimes, as on Purim, we do not say הלל? The answer is that we say הלל when there was a spiritual redemption and we don't say הלל when it was a non-spiritual redemption. Let's take a closer look. On Chanukah, we see that the Greeks wanted the Jews to assimilate into the Greek culture so that was spiritual and we say הלל. However, during Purim when the Persians wanted to kill us, not necessarily to assimilate, this is not spiritual redemption – which is why we don't say הלל.

Shiur HaRav Y. D. Soloveichik zt"l

on *Birkas Kohanim*

submitted by Rabbi Yehoshua Cheifetz ¹

"Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying: So shall you bless the children of Israel, saying to them (*amor lahem*)" (*Bamidbar* 6:23). *Rashi* says (1) *amor* is similar in form to *zachor* and *shamor* (in the Ten Commandments); (2) *amor* is written in the full form (with a *vav*), [to teach us] that they should not be in a hasty or bewildered state when they bless the people, but rather they should bless them with the proper intent and with a full heart. The Rav examined both of these ideas.

Why did *Rashi* compare the form of the word *amor* to that of *zachor*? *Zachor* is the infinitive form (the root form of the word). The imperative form (*tzivuy*) would be *zichor*. If Hashem was commanding us to keep the Shabbos or to remember the Shabbos, why not use the imperative form of the word, *zichor*, *shimor*? *Rashi* (*Shemos* 20:8) says that the infinitive form teaches that one must always be thinking of Shabbos. *Rashi* quotes the opinion of Shammai to set aside the choicest objects encountered during the week for Shabbos. The Gemara (*Beitzah* 16a) says that Hillel had a different approach, that he would dedicate all his actions to the glory of Hashem and use the best that he had available before Shabbos. *Rashi* and the *Rambam* agree with the opinion of Shammai in this case, even though we have a principle that we always accept the opinion of Beis Hillel, because in this case Shammai's opinion matches the commandment as written in the Torah. *Zachor* teaches that no matter what day of the week it might be, one must always think of, and look forward to, Shabbos.

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In the *Parshah* of *Birkas Kohanim*, the Torah says *amor lahem* and not *emor lahem*. From the use of the infinitive form instead of the imperative form, we learn that once a Kohen is *oleh leduchan*, goes up to bless the people, he retains a perpetual obligation to bless the people whenever he is asked to. (This is *Rashi's* opinion, *Tosafos* disagree, see *Sotah* 38a). This perpetual obligation to bless the people is similar to the perpetual obligation to constantly remember the Shabbos. That is why the form *amor* is used, similar to the use of the form *zachor*.

The Rav explained the other statement of *Rashi* as to why *amor* is written in the full form, with a *vav*. Prior to blessing the people, the priests recite a blessing that Hashem sanctified them and commanded them to bless the people with love, *be'ahavah*. It would appear from the text of this blessing that the true fulfillment of the biblical obligation to bless the people requires that they do it with *ahavah*. The *Shulchan Aruch* notes that a priest who is in mourning for one of the seven relatives, does not bless the people during the *shivah* period. The *Rama* extends this, and says that a priest who has lost a close relative should not *duchen* for the full year extended period of mourning. Had *birkas Kohanim* been a Mitzvah of simple recitation of some text, it should have been treated the same as *tefillah* and *Kerias Shema*, which are mitzvos that the mourner must fulfill despite his depressed frame of mind. Apparently the requirement to perform *Birkas Kohanim* "*be'ahavah*," prevents the Kohen mourner from being *oleh leduchan*.

The *Rama* rules that in *Chutz Laaretz* the Kohanim do not perform *Birkas Kohanim* daily because they are preoccupied with thoughts of daily survival and the need to earn a living, [which precludes them from fulfilling their obligation with its proper intent]. We do not find that similar pre-occupation removes the obligation to recite *Kerias Shema* or to pray on a daily basis. The word *amor* teaches that there is a Biblical obligation to perform this mitzvah *be'ahavah*, which is different than other Mitzvos. The fulfillment of *be'ahavah* requires the priests to bless

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and the Rest of the Year

the people with the proper intent and with a full heart and not to bless them while in a hasty or bewildered mood.

The perpetual obligation to bless the people indicated by *amor* (similar to *zachor*) is connected to the obligation to bless them *be'ahavah*. *Amor* teaches that the Kohen must always be ready to bless the people based on this perpetual obligation, just like the Jew must always think of Shabbos. *Amor* also teaches that it must be done through *ahavah*, that this perpetual obligation can only be fulfilled when the Kohen is of a clear frame of mind.

Modim

Moshe Rock

Reading the *Modim* every day, I am intrigued by the wording at the end. It says: הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו, וְהַמְּרַחֵם כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חַסְדָּיו, *The Beneficent, (or Good) One, for Your compassion never cease, and the Compassionate One, for Your kindnesses are never exhausted.*”

From the basic reading it almost sounds like *Good* (טוב) begets or is defined by *compassion* (רחמים), and *Compassion* (המרחם), begets or is defined by *kindness* (חסד). As if there is some sort of hierarchy with the words building up from *Good* to *Compassionate* to *Kindness*.

I asked my son-in-law, Avi Dear, if he ever heard anyone talk about this and he replied with something he had heard said over from R’ Elya Lopian *zt”l*.

Let me elaborate using two scenarios.

Scenario 1:

Imagine a friend in need asks to borrow \$100 dollars from you. Happily, you turn over the money to him. The next day he comes back for another \$100. This time, however, while you still feel badly for him it is a little weaker of a feeling so you give him \$80. The third day \$60...

Scenario 2:

Imagine a friend in need asks to borrow \$100 dollars from you. Happily, you turn over the money to him. The next day he comes back for another \$100. You still have the same level of compassion for him and an equal desire to give him another \$100 but you simply don’t have the funds. The next day as well, you wish you could help him out but you are unable to.

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and the Rest of the Year

These scenarios can help us to understand the love and compassion that Hashem has for us.

הטוב, He is good. כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו; His compassion does not cease. In Scenario 1, We are being good to lend our friend the \$100 dollars on day 1, but after that, our compassion for his situation diminishes and we lessen the amount of support that we give. But with Hashem, His compassion does not cease. Not Ever!

וְהַמְּרַחֵם, The Compassionate One, כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חֲסָדָיו; His kindness is never exhausted. In Scenario 2, We maintain the same level of compassion for his situation and would like to continue giving him \$100, but we don't have the physical means to maintain that amount. But with Hashem, His Kindness, His means are never exhausted. Not Ever!

This point is also beautifully stated by R' Hutner ז"ל, who said regarding the Tefillah, *Avinu Malkeinu*:

Sometimes a father wants to give to his child but is unable;
A king is always able but he may not have the desire to give.

Hashem, however, is different.

As a Father - He wants to give!

As a King - He can give!

There is no end to G-d's compassion and G-d extends Himself to us in limitless ways.

Hitting the Rock: *Tefillas Geshem* ¹

Shimon Weichbrod

In the Tefillah of *Geshem*, recited by the Chazan at Mussaf on Shemini Atzeres, the *paytan* utilizes famous Torah personalities, and situations that involved them and water. One of these is the story of Moshe and the rock – the *paytan* mentions that he hit the rock and water came forth.

זְכוֹר מֹשֶׁה בְּתִיבַת נֶמָּא מִן הַמַּיִם. נִמּוּ דְלָה דְלָה וְהִשְׁקָה צֶאֱן
מַיִם. סְגוּלִיךְ עֵת צִמְאֻ לַמַּיִם. עַל הַסֵּלַע הָד נִיִּצְאוּ מַיִם:
בְּצִדְקָן חֵן חֲשֵׁרַת מַיִם:

The obvious question is, when asking Hashem to recall our forefathers and have mercy and provide rain for us, why would we specifically mention something that, according to most commentators, was an error on Moshe's part – when he hit the rock instead of speaking to it. Even if we assume that the *paytan* is referencing the story in *Beshalach*, where Moshe was instructed to hit the rock, why is that not clearly identified. When recalling the story, does it not bring to mind the version in *Chukas*? Additionally, the *paytan* uses the word סֵלַע, which is how the rock is identified in *Chukas*. In *Beshalach*, it is called a צוּר – thus making it clear which story is being recalled.

Secondly, the *paytan* uses the term בְּצִדְקָן, with his “righteousness.” Whichever water/rock story you choose, what was the righteousness? In *Beshalach*, he did what Hashem commanded, and in *Chukas* he did not – which of these can be deemed righteous?

¹ This Dvar Torah is based on *Kemotzei Shalal Rav* on *Parshas Chukas*. Although it does not directly relate to Pesach, I'd like to apply the *gezeirah shavah* of *Chamisha Asar-Chamisha Asar* (*Succah* 27a) to repeat a Dvar Torah I had seen relating to Succos (or more specifically, Shemini Atzeres).

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and the Rest of the Year

The *Tzitz Eliezer*, based on how the *Lev Aryeh* explains the entire story of the *Mei Merivah*, answers these questions, by first looking at the common questions asked by many commentators on the two stories themselves.

1. How could Moshe have directly defied Hashem's commandment? Hashem said to speak to the rock, and Moshe hit it.
2. Why in Beshalach was Moshe instructed to hit the rock, and then in Bamidbar he was told to speak to it? What changed, that caused the mechanism of obtaining water from the rock (presumably the same rock) to change?

There are many answers to these questions. However, the *Lev Aryeh* introduces a novel approach. He does this by first explaining the mechanics of miracles. In general, *nissim* follow *teva* as much as possible, and the miracle is minimized. A person's spiritual level, however, can directly affect how much a nes can deviate from *teva*.²

As an example of the miracle relating to the greatness of the person, the Gemara in *Chullin* (7b) states:

אמר ר' חמא בר חנינא, גדולים צדיקים במיתתן יותר מבחייהן, שנאמר (מלכים-ב יג, כא), "ויהי הם קוברים איש והנה ראו [את] הגדוד ושליכו את האיש בקבר אלישע וילך ויגע האיש בעצמות אלישע ויחי ויקם על רגליו".

Rav Chama said: *Tzadikim* are greater after they have passed away then when they are alive. He proves his point from Elisha. *Sefer Melachim* tells the story where the people were burying someone and they placed

² In fact, the *Ramban* in *Devarim* (20:9) writes the following:

"וצוה ופקדו שרי צבאות בראש העם" כי התורה תצוה בדרך הארץ, ותעשה הנסים עם יראיו בהסתר ואין החפץ לפניו לשנות טבעו של עולם, זולתי כאשר אין שם דרך בהצלה אחרת, או להודיע שמו לצריו לעתים, כאשר היה בקריעת ים סוף וכיוצא בו.

Hashem will hide the miracle and does not want to change the natural order of the world unless there is a great need, or in situations of Kiddush Hashem.

the man in the *kever* of Elisha and the man touched Elisha's body and came back to life. Rashi comments on this Gemara:

ויגע האיש בעצמות אלישע ויהי. ואילו בחייו כשרצה להחיות בן השונמית הוצרך לשום פיו על פיו ועיניו על עיניו ולבקש רחמים.

Rashi contrasts this story with the story of the Ben HaShunamis, where Elisha had to place his face up against the child, his mouth to the child's mouth and his eyes to the child's eye and beg for mercy. (He rested on top of him to warm his body, according to the *Mefarshim* – and it even sounds somewhat like CPR). This, says *Rashi*, is how we see that Elisha was greater after he passed than when he was alive – when he was alive, it required a more “natural” approach, but after his death, the other person only needed to touch his body – an open miracle. A larger miracle requires a greater person, and Elisha, the *Gemara* tell us, was greater once he had died.

This, the *Lev Aryeh* explains, is the difference between obtaining water from the rock in *Beshalach*, and in *Chukas*. We all know that the well was present in the merit of Miriam and disappeared when she died. This well is the rock in the *pasuk*. If the well was following Bnei Yisrael for forty years in the *zechus* of Miriam, once she passed away, in whose *zechus* did it to return? It must be, says the *Lev Aryeh* that the well reappeared in the *zechus* of Moshe. This, then, is the difference in the two miracles. Moshe being on such a much higher level was able to accomplish (maybe require) a greater miracle and speaking to the rock was sufficient, whereas in the *zechus* of Miriam, a more *teva*-like miracle of hitting the rock was the appropriate action.

However, says the *Lev Aryeh*, Moshe's humility was his error. He did not want his sister to be considered of lesser greatness than himself, therefore he wanted the miracle to be the same for himself as it was for her, and occur only with the hitting of the rock. The error was that this was not the time for humility, and instead Hashem wanted all of Bnei Yisrael to

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and the Rest of the Year

see how great Moshe was, and what miracle could be performed in the merit of his greatness.³

This explains the story of the two rocks, but does not yet explain why we mention it during *Tefillas Geshem*. For that, the *Tzitz Eliezer* brings a *pshat* from Rav Yisrael Salanter on a very famous Gemara in *Taanis*. The Gemara (25b) states:

מעשה ברבי אליעזר שירד לפני התיבה ואמר עשרים וארבע ברכות ולא נענה ירד רבי עקיבא אחריו ואמר אבינו מלכנו אין לנו מלך אלא אתה אבינו מלכנו למענך רחם עלינו וירדו גשמים הוּו מרנני רבנן יצתה בת קול ואמרה לא מפני שזה גדול מזה אלא שזה מעביר על מדותיו וזה אינו מעביר על מדותיו.

There was a story where Klal Yisrael had no rainfall. Rabbi Eliezer went up to daven and said the standard 24 berachos for this situation, but no rain fell. Rabbi Akiva went up and stated two *Avinu Malkeinus* where upon it began to rain. The sages of the time were starting to wonder about Rabbi Eliezer, when a *bas kol* came out and said, “it is not that this one (Rabbi Akiva) is greater than this one (Rabbi Eliezer), only that Rabbi Akiva was a man that was willing to forgo his honor and Rabbi Eliezer was not.”

To the average reader this last line of the Gemara should seem very odd. If one were to ask anyone: who is a greater person, someone who would forgo his honor or someone unwilling to do so, which would you choose?

³ This could fit nicely with the Ramban mentioned in footnote 2. If the purpose was simply to provide water for Bnei Yisrael, then Moshe's approach could be correct – minimize the *nes* while at the same time honoring Miriam. However, it would appear that Hashem's intent was, in fact, to create a Kiddush Hashem through Moshe's act of speaking to the rock. If this is the case, then the bigger miracle, *shelo b'derech hatevah*, was required, and the pasuk testified to this fact as it states (20:8): ודברתם אל הסלע, וימטה והקהל את העדה אתה ואהרן אחיך, ויבטח יעקב ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן יען לא האמנתם: לעיניהם. And after hitting the rock (20:12): בי להקדישני לעיני בני ישראל.

The unanimous answer would be – someone who doesn't stand up for his personal honor would be the greater one. So, what is the *pshat* in this *bas kol*? Rabbi Akiva, a person willing to forgo his honor, is the greater person – and the fact that his Tefillah caused rain to fall proves it!

In fact, to understand the difference between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva, one must first know their educational background. Rabbi Akiva was a student of Hillel, and Rabbi Eliezer, a student of Shammai.

We know that Shammai was known as a קפדן, and refused to forgo the honor of Torah, whereas, Hillel was known as a סבלן and was more accepting and willing to accept everyone gracefully and forgo the honor of the Torah for the greater good. The *Gemara* in Shabbos (31a) gives four examples of this: Three people on three different occasions came to Shammai to convert with stipulations⁴, and each time Shammai chased them away, yet in all 3 cases, Hillel accepted them and also showed them the errors in their ways. The fourth situation was regarding the man who wagered 400 *zuz* that he could make Hillel get angry, but failed after many attempts.

At the same time, we need to understand that this was a difference in approach only – just like Hillel and Shammai argued in prohibitory law they argued in the approach to Torah learning, but as Chazal state: “*Eilu V'eilu divrei Elokim Chayim*” there was no right or wrong approach – just different approaches to serving Hashem. Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva, being talmidim of these yeshivos, would have developed similar approaches to their teachers. This is what the first half of the *bas kol* meant. Both Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva were equals.

However, there is one place where the approach to Torah makes a difference, and can affect the outcome. When Hashem holds back rain in

⁴ One refused to accept *Torah SheBaal Peh*, one wanted to learn all of *Torah* on one foot, and the third only wanted to be a *Kohen Gadol*.

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and the Rest of the Year

Eretz Yisrael, it is because of the sins of the nation. Both Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer were standing in the presence of the Kehilah to ask Hashem to have mercy, and go *Lifnim Meshuras Hadin* and grant Bnei Yisrael something that they do not deserve. In this case, it takes a certain type of person to make this happen. As Chazal state: כל המעביר על מדותיו, מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו, *someone who can forgo his honor, Hashem forgoes his sins.*

The *bas kol* in fact is clearly stating that neither Rabbi Eliezer or Rabbi Akiva is greater, however, everyone knows, if there is skilled work to be done, the right tools are required. To ask Hashem to forgo Bnei Yisrael's sins, you need someone who constantly forgoes their honor – and this is Rabbi Akiva.

This, then, can be related back to our story with Moshe and the rock, and why it is mentioned during Tefilas *Geshem*, says the *Tzitz Eliezer*. When Moshe hits the rock he is doing it specifically in deference to his sister Miriam. Initially, in Miriam's *zechus*, the rock had to be hit – because of her lower status as a *tzadeikess* compared to Moshe. However, for someone as great as Moshe, speaking to the rock is sufficient to make the miracle come about. However, how would it look for the honor of Miriam, if a greater miracle would come about through Moshe? (Note: this doesn't quite explain how Moshe could go against a direct order from Hashem to save face for his sister Miriam, it would only explain the rationale of wanting to do it).

On the day that we are asking Hashem to grant us rain, and to overlook our mistakes – we are not remembering Moshe's error, rather we are invoking the special kindness that Moshe had to overlook his own honor in order not to embarrass his sister, and asking Hashem to overlook our mistakes – and that is precisely why the *paytan* chose the words “Btzidko Chon Chashras Mayim” it was his *Tzidkus* in deference to Miriam that we are evoking when asking Hashem for rain.

As Pesach begins the days of *Sefiras HaOmer* – where the lack of respect between the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva caused the loss of 24,000 of them, it is an opportune time to think about forgoing our personal honor and respect others, and in this *zechus*, may we merit to have Hashem overlook our mistakes as well.

***Sefiras HaOmer* before Nightfall**

Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

Counting *bein hashemashos*

There are various views among the Rishonim about the proper way to count the *omer* when one is davening Maariv during *bein hashemashos* (i.e. between sunset [*shekiyah*] and nightfall [*tzeis hakochavim*], 45 minutes after sunset according to the Rosh HaYeshivah, Maran HaRav Y. Y. Ruderman ז"ל).

At first glance, we would think that since the mitzvah is to count at night (see *Menachos* 66a), and the legal status of *bein hashemashos* as day or night is uncertain, one must wait until *tzeis hakochavim* to count. In fact, *Beur Halachah* (489:1 ד"ה לספור) writes that our custom is to take care not to count until nightfall because according to *Rambam* and other Rishonim the mitzvah to count nowadays is still Biblical and you cannot perform a Biblical mitzvah that needs to be performed at night [e.g. eating matzah] during *bein hashemashos*.

Tosafos (*Menachos* 66a), though, hold that counting the *omer* nowadays is only Rabbinic, as a remembrance to the times of the Beis HaMikdash when the *omer*-offering was actually brought. Accordingly, they write that the *omer* may be counted even during *bein hashemashos*, when it is uncertain if night has yet arrived because it is a doubt in a Rabbinic obligation. This view is supported by other Rishonim as well.¹

¹ However, they may not all agree with the reasoning of *Tosafos*. For example, *Piskei Tosafos* (authored by *Tur*) there leaves out the part of counting being only Rabbinic and writes only that one may count when it is uncertain if it is dark and one need not wait until night. It could be that is relevant to a shiur I recently heard from Maran Harav Moshe Shapira *shlit"a*, on the *Beur HaGra* to *Mishlei* (7:9), where the *Gra* ז"ל says that at sunset the day has ended and the next day has begun, but it doesn't become night until later when the stars come out. The *Piskei Tosafos* might therefore hold that it is not necessary to count the *omer* at

Shulchan Aruch (489:2) writes that those who are meticulous do not count until *tzeis hakochavim*, and this is the proper way to act. And *Mishnah Berurah* (§14) explains that although one could conceivably act leniently to count during *bein hashemashos* since according to most Poskim counting is only Rabbinic nowadays, it is nevertheless not proper to count initially [לכתחלה] in an uncertain time period; meticulous people therefore wait until *tzeis hakochavim* when it is certainly night. He writes further (§15) that from *Shulchan Aruch* it appears that if one did count during *bein hashemashos*, he has fulfilled his obligation after the fact [בדיעבד]; however, *Elyah Rabbah* argues that one must count again without a *berachah* after *tzeis hakochavim* if he counted during *bein hashemashos*.

Davening Maariv *bein hashemashos*

What should you do if you are davening Maariv in a shul after sunset, but during *bein hashemashos*, and the chazzan counts the *omer* then in conflict with the aforementioned ruling? *Shulchan Aruch* (489:3) rules that you should count then without a *berachah* and after nightfall you should count again with a *berachah* if you remember.

Mishnah Berurah (§16), following *Magen Avraham* (§7), explains that *Shulchan Aruch* is addressing someone who wants to follow the halachah meticulously and count after nightfall. However, there is a chance that he might forget to count later and he now has an opportunity to count, albeit not at the primary time. So to avoid any problems, he should count at the minyan without a *berachah*, and with the following mental stipulation: “If I remember to count at the proper time after nightfall, I don’t want to fulfill my obligation with this count.” This allows him to count later with

night. It is necessary to count after the day has ended and that can be done during *bein hashemashos*.

a berachah, since he now retroactively did not fulfill his obligation in the questionable time period of *bein hashemashos*.²

Although this seems like a nice solution to the problem of possible forgetfulness, it is not without its disputants. For example, *Taz* (§6) writes that such a stipulation is not effective at all because the mitzvah is to count the day of the *omer*, and you are not doing so if you are saying that you might not want this count to count. He therefore explains that *Shulchan Aruch* says to count with this early minyan only so people will not think that you do not plan on counting at all.

However, despite the disputants, most Poskim agree with *Magen Avraham's* understanding of *Shulchan Aruch* in addition to *Mishnah Berurah*, including *Maamar Mordechai*, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, and *Kaf HaChaim*. It would therefore seem proper for someone faced in such a situation to count without a berachah using the aforementioned stipulation. And although the Poskim write that it is proper to count the *omer* with a minyan, *Sefer Sefiras HaOmer* (p. 21) rules that it is better to count alone after nightfall than to count with a minyan during *bein hashemashos*.

Seventy-two minutes

There are many people who follow the view of *Rabbeinu Tam* in considering nightfall to being 72 minutes after sunset. Do they have to wait 72 minutes to count the *omer* as well?

Minchas Yitzchak (Vol. 9 55:1) writes that for someone who accepts the stringency of *Rabbeinu Tam* only regarding ending Shabbos but during the week keeps the regular *tzeis hakochavim*, it is better for him to count

² I was once at an early Maariv minyan out-of-town, where the Rabbi announced that everyone – including the chazzan – should count without a berachah with the stipulation described above. This would seem to be a preferred method for a shul worried about forgetfulness than having the chazzan be a “korban” by counting with a berachah and everyone else counting without a berachah and with the stipulation.

the *omer* before 72 minutes with a minyan even on *Motza'ei Shabbos* than to count alone after 72; However, he writes elsewhere (Vol. 10 43:1) that someone who always act stringently like *Rabbeinu Tam* should use his judgment whether not to count with the minyan before 72.

Kovetz Halachos (2:4, end of note 7) writes that in this latter case it would be preferable to count later (i.e. to count without a berachah with the minyan using the aforementioned stipulation). See also *Sefer Sefiras HaOmer* (3:10), *Piskei Teshuvos* (489:12), *Mekadesh Yisrael* (§13), and *Nitei Gavriel* (p. 105).

Possible exceptions

Children. *Nitei Gavriel* (p. 106) rules that one may allow a minor to count the *omer* during *bein hashemashos*, especially during the summer when *tzeis hakochavim* is late. *Mekadesh Yisrael* (§27) writes the same, but adds (§26) that one should not allow a minor to count the *omer* before sunset after *plag haminchah*.

Erev Shabbos. The *Aruch HaShulchan* (489:7) writes that all the Poskim rule that one should initially not count until dark, and we do not rely on those who say that one may count *bein hashemashos*. However, for *Kabbalas Shabbos*, we do rely upon those who say to count then because there is a mitzvah and obligation to accept Shabbos while it is still day.

This entire discussion applies to those living in *chutz laaretz*. In *Eretz Yisrael*, where the custom is to follow the rulings of the *Gra z"l*, many people count earlier than what we would consider *tzeis hakochavim* in *chutz laaretz*.³ See *Teshuvos Yechaveh Daas* (Vol. 1 §23) for his view on the matter.

³ In the same shiur mentioned above, Harav Moshe Shapira related that the custom among the early inhabitants of Yerushalayim was to daven Maariv six minutes after *shekiyah* on *Motza'ei Shabbos Chanukah* and light Chanukah *licht* immediately after Maariv, certainly well before 45 minutes.

Leviathan and Behemoth ¹

Rabbi Nesanel Kasnett

The Midrash¹ speaks of a remarkable reward awaiting the righteous in the World to Come:

R' Yudan son of R' Shimon said: The Behemoth² and the Leviathan³ are “beasts of contest” for the righteous in the Future Era;⁴ and whoever did not see a contest of beasts staged by the nations of the world in this world will merit to see [that great battle] in the World to Come.⁵

Since the righteous will afterward feast on the meat of the two slain creatures (as taught below), the manner of their deaths becomes an issue. The Midrash states that the Behemoth will gore the Leviathan with its horns, and the Leviathan will slaughter the Behemoth with its fins, but this explanation is immediately challenged:

Is this a proper ritual slaughtering?! But did we not learn thus: “We may slaughter with anything ... except a harvesting sickle, a saw ... because they tear” (Mishnah *Chullin* 1:2).⁶

The Midrash then resolves the difficulty:

R' Avin bar Kahana said: The Holy One, blessed is He, said, “A new instruction will go forth from Me,”⁷ (which implies:) a novel instruction will go forth from Me.⁸

¹ Editor's note. This is an excerpt from the newly published work, *Anointing at the Gichon*, authored by my good friend and ArtScroll colleague. As in the original work, the notations in the article are for endnotes that follow it. We have placed it in our Shavuot section since it deals with an important aspect of the *Akdamus piyut* and gives instruction to the Aggadic section of Torah.

The Midrash concludes with a discussion of the banquet itself:

R' Berechyah said in the name of R' Yitzchak: The Holy One, blessed is He, will make a feast for His servants, the righteous, in the Future Era; and anyone⁹ who never ate *neveilos*¹⁰ in this world will merit to [eat] from it¹¹ in the World to Come.

This is such an astonishing and inscrutable *midrash* that one is compelled to ask whether the Behemoth and Leviathan are real creatures, or representations of two profound spiritual concepts instead. For if they are actual creatures, the following serious and obvious questions must be addressed: What reward and spiritual delight will it be for the righteous to witness the gladiatorial contest between the Leviathan and the Behemoth, a bloody and barbaric entertainment of the nations such as they shunned during their earthly lives? And, by the same token, what reward and spiritual delight will it be for the righteous to eat the flesh of the Behemoth, which despite the special dispensation is essentially nonkosher, *tereifah* meat — something they scrupulously avoided all their lives? Further, given that the future “contest of beasts” is just as illicit as this nonkosher meat, why is no “novel instruction” required to permit the former when one is indeed required to permit the latter?

We begin our quest for answers with a brief study of the nature of Midrash (or Aggadah) itself. In his renowned “Essay on the Aggados,”¹² Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal) notes that there are two types of aggadic statements: (a) לְיָמִידִים (*teachings*), which are principles of wisdom, whether ethical or theological; and (b) בְּאֵרִים (*commentaries*) — i.e., explanations of Scriptural verses. Now, this material is part of the Oral Law, and initially recording it was forbidden. However, as the exile lengthened, the quality of learning diminished and the Torah was being forgotten. The Sages therefore decided to write down the entirety of the Oral Law — the halachic part and the aggados as well.¹³ But this created another difficulty: since the Aggadah contains esoteric teachings (סְתֵרִי

תורה) and deep theological principles (עיקרי האלקיות), the Sages were loath to make it accessible to the flawed of character and coarse of mind, lest those parts be misconstrued or ridiculed. They therefore decided that this material would be written cryptically and as riddles, and the “keys” (principles of Kabbalah) to decipher it would be given only to the most worthy.

The Sages concealed these profound and esoteric concepts in three ways. First, by means of “borrowed expressions” (השאלות) and parables (משלים), i.e., metaphor and allegory, whereby events and deeds are ascribed to a person or thing for whom such events and deeds are not at all fitting. Examples of this method are the Rabbah bar bar Chanah stories in *Bava Basra* 73a ff.,¹⁴ and the moon’s “arguing” with God about two kings wearing one crown (*Chullin* 60b).

The second method of concealment was omission (העלם), whereby the Sages failed to mention the specific conditions under which their teachings apply. This leads to obvious obfuscation and error. For example, the Gemara teaches that anyone who walks four *amos* in Eretz Yisrael is assured of attaining the World to Come (*Kesubos* 111a). Taken at face value, the statement implies that simply living in the Land suffices, but the Sages left out the condition that one must also internalize its sanctity by observing all the mitzvos that are possible there.¹⁵

The third way was by use of “simple sayings” (קלות), whereby the Sages alluded to lofty and sublime matters in trivial terms, such as in simple folk aphorisms.¹⁶ Only the righteous and wise can divine the saying’s true meaning.

It would seem, then, that our Midrash — which describes the fabulous battle between the Leviathan and the Behemoth, the grand feast from their flesh, and the incongruous spectacle of the righteous delighting in both — fits neatly into Ramchal’s first category, concealment by

metaphor and allegory.

However, *Shelah HaKodesh* makes a remarkable statement:¹⁷ אין מקרא ואין דברי רז"ל יוצאין מידי פשוטן, *Neither Scripture nor the (aggadic) words of the Sages depart from their plain meaning.*¹⁸ He applies this principle to the Gemara in *Moed Katan* 18a:

Avital the scribe said in the name of Rav: The pharaoh who lived in the days of Moses was an *amah*¹⁹ (tall), and his beard was an *amah* (long), and his male organ was an *amah* and a *zeres*²⁰ (long) — (which serves) to fulfill that which is stated (*Daniel* 4:14): [*God rules over the kingdom of man ...*] and He appoints the lowest of men over it.

Although some commentators opine that these measurements are intended metaphorically,²¹ *Shelah HaKodesh* clearly does not (and he understands that “lowest” of men refers to actual physical size). We can therefore assume that, similarly, he would hold that all the events described by our Midrash are to be understood literally. Nevertheless, there are those who wish to reconcile *Shelah* with Ramchal, arguing that *Shelah*’s principle applies to straightforward aggadic statements such as in *Moed Katan*, whereas Ramchal speaks of fantastical statements (allegory, parable, figure of speech) like those in our Midrash. Hence, *Shelah* would agree that the Midrash is an allegory.

But this view, in my opinion, is incorrect, for to justify the future consumption of the nonkosher Behemoth, God (in the Midrash) declares: חדוש תורה מאתי תצא, “A novel instruction (שעה) will go forth from Me” — which is clearly a straightforward (even halachic!) statement. Accordingly, we can say that, in *Shelah*’s opinion, the Leviathan and Behemoth are actual creatures, that their epic contest in the Future Era will be an actual fight to the death, and that the banquet afterward will be an actual feasting from their flesh.

And that being the case, the other questions we asked at the beginning of

this essay²² now demand our attention.

In truth, this entire matter is the subject of a dispute between Rishonim. Rambam writes, in obvious reference to our Midrash: “And the Sages *metaphorically* call this goodness that is prepared for the righteous (in the Future Era) a ‘feast.’”²³ Rambam thus places our Midrash in Ramchal’s first category of concealment.

Shelah, on the other hand, follows the approach of Rashba, who writes²⁴ that our Midrash should indeed be taken literally, for it is not far-fetched to say that the righteous will partake of an actual meal in the World to Come.²⁵ Obviously, that feast is not intended for their physical enjoyment, since the World to Come offers no such pleasures. Nevertheless, it is well-known that food and drink can stimulate certain physical forces, which in turn stimulate various spiritual forces. Thus, e.g., Isaac requested of Esau, “*Make me delicacies such as I love ... and I will eat, so that my soul will bless you*” (*Genesis 27:4*), for a fine meal satisfies the body, which in turn arouses the state of joy required for the prophetic soul to bestow blessings.

According to Rashba, then, the ingested flesh of the Leviathan and Behemoth will physically nourish the righteous, unleashing in them two critical spiritual potencies — whose natures we must now investigate.

Rav Tzaddok HaKohen writes that the Leviathan and Behemoth embody the two fundamental manifestations of the *yetzer hara*, the evil impulse in man. The Leviathan is תאוה, *lust* incarnate, and the Behemoth is כעס, *anger*.²⁶

The Leviathan personifies lust and desire, for Egypt is called ערות הארץ, *the carnality of the earth*,²⁷ and therefore Pharaoh, because as king he embodies the nation, is called “Leviathan” — as in אתה רצצת ראשי לויתן, *You crushed the head of the Leviathan*,²⁸ and in לויתן נחש ברה, *Leviathan, the bar-like serpent*.²⁹ And, further, the Gemara declares: דגים פריצי, *Fish*

are unrestrained in their sexual desire, and therefore God had to kill the female Leviathan to save the world and not just cool her ardor down.³⁰

And the Behemoth personifies anger and the concomitant killer instinct, as the Gemara states: “Now then, (shall we infer that) a beast ... has no (evil) inclination?! But we see that it damages and bites and kicks!”³¹

We recite every morning in the *Shacharis* prayer: ואתה מחיה את כולם, *and You give them all life*,³² which means that God implanted in every thing and being, even the most defiled and impure, a *spark of holiness* (ניצוץ הקדושה) that sustains it. The death struggle between the Behemoth and Leviathan will reduce those two figurations of the *yetzer hara* to their respective sustaining sparks, which perforce are holy. This is an event that the righteous can and will desire to witness — a fitting reward for them — and therefore no special dispensation (הוראת שעה) will be needed to permit it.

And what is the nature of each holy spark? The Leviathan embodies the *yetzer hara* of lust, as we have written. Yet entrenched somewhere in that awful ‘husk’ of impurity lies the spark of holy desire. Rav Tzaddok writes³³ that even in the Messianic future, when all evil passions will have been extinguished, one desire will and must remain — the חמידו דאורייתא, the visceral passion for learning Torah, without which conceiving original interpretations (חידושים) of the Torah would not be possible.

And the holy spark of anger, embedded in the Behemoth? It is wisdom, for Scripture states: כי ברב חכמה רב כעס, *For with much wisdom is much anger*,³⁴ which Rav Tzaddok interprets to mean: “the *much anger* brings to *much wisdom*, which is the Oral Torah.”³⁵ And by this he means: for anger stems from דקדוק/exactness, גבורות/might, אש/a fiery temperament, and הקפדה/strictness and insistence; and wisdom — which is the Oral Law — is the application of דקדוק גבורות אש והקפדה to plumb the Halachah for all its details.³⁶

And so, by feasting on the flesh of the Leviathan and Behemoth in the Future Era, the righteous will ingest a pure desire for the Oral Torah (חמידו דאורייתא) and the prowess (דקדוק גבורות וכו') to plumb its profundities — and this, too, is a fitting reward for them.³⁷ Moreover, attaining this prowess justifies God's proclaiming, "A new instruction will go forth from Me," for the *yetzer* of anger embedded in the Behemoth's nonkosher flesh will be sublimated to a holy purpose.

Endnotes:

1. *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:3.
2. A monstrous beast of the land, described in *Job* 40:15-24.
3. A monstrous creature of the sea, described in *ibid.*, vv. 25-32.
4. They will engage in a fight to the death at that time, and both will be slain.
5. Even to this day gladiatorial events are staged for public entertainment, but a Jew is forbidden to witness such spectacles, for it says: *Rejoice not, Israel, like the exultation of the peoples* [*Hosea* 9:1] (see *Maharzu*). Only those individuals who never attended such a contest in this world will be allowed to witness the fight between the Behemoth and the Leviathan in the World to Come.
6. Ritual slaughter (*shechitah*) is performed by smoothly cutting a majority of the animal's trachea and esophagus. A harvesting sickle and a saw have serrated edges, which tear rather than smoothly cut. So even if the Leviathan is considered a fish and therefore will not require *shechitah*, the Behemoth certainly will. However, because the Leviathan's fins are serrated, they will render the Behemoth a *tereifah* and the righteous will be eating unkosher meat!
7. This is a paraphrase of *Isaiah* 51:4, which states: *כי תורה מאתי תצא*, *for instruction will go forth from Me*. However, the future-tense *תצא* (*will go forth*) indicates a "new" instruction, one not already given at Sinai.
8. That is, God will issue a *הוראת שעה*, a special *one-time dispensation* allowing the righteous to consume the Behemoth's nonkosher meat (*Eitz Yosef*, et al.).
9. Among the righteous — and a righteous person (*צדיק*) is defined as one whose merits outweigh his iniquities (*ibid.*; see also Rambam, *Hil. Teshuvah* 3:1).
10. A *neveilah* is an animal that died without ritual slaughter. With this example the Midrash intends all forbidden foods.
11. I.e., to partake of the feast (see *Maharzu*).
12. "מאמר על ההגדות", which appears in Ramchal's *Yalkut Yedios HaEmes* and is printed at the beginning of standard editions of *Ein Yaakov*. For a

brilliant English translation and treatment of this essay, see *Elucidated Maamarei HaRamchal* (pp. 193-228) by HaRav Abba Zvi Naiman, a leading Ramchal scholar and Schottenstein Talmud translator.

13. They acted in keeping with the verse: עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך, *It is a time to act for Hashem; they have nullified Your Law* (Psalms 119:126; see *Gittin* 60a, et al.).

14. In the fifth story (73b), for instance, Rabbah bar bar Chanah relates having seen a frog “the size of Akra of Hagrunia,” a city comprised of “sixty houses” — an obvious impossibility!

15. See *Sifsei Chaim, Emunah U'Bechirah II*, p. 387.

16. Ramchal himself offers two examples: “Youth is a crown of roses; old age is a crown of nettles” (*Shabbos* 152a), and: “For that which I have not lost I am searching” (ibid.). The Sages intended that “youth” and “old age” (in the first saying) and “lost” (in the second) be interpreted esoterically.

17. *Shemos, Parashas Va'eira, Torah Ohr* §3.

18. I.e., even though these teachings can be understood on multiple levels, their “plain,” self-evident meaning cannot be dismissed.

19. A little less than two feet.

20. A *zeres* is half an *amah*.

21. See *HaBoneh (Ein Yaakov)* and *Ben Yehoyada* ad loc.

22. Namely, what reward and delight is it for the righteous to witness the brutal gladiatorial combat, and to partake of the essentially nonkosher meat; and why will a special dispensation (הוראת שעה) not be needed to permit the former as well?

23. *Hil. Teshuvah* 8:4.

24. In *Chiddushei HaRashba al Aggados HaShas* (on *Bava Basra* 74b). Rashba's exposition is recorded virtually verbatim in R' Bachya's commentary on *Genesis* 1:21 (pp. 39-41), and with slight modification in *HaKoseiv* in *Ein Yaakov* to *Bava Basra* ibid.

25. Rashba writes further on that his interpretation does not conflict with Rav's famous dictum [“In the World to Come there is no eating and no drinking ... Rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the Divine Presence” (*Berachos* 17a)], for (in

Rashba's view) the World to Come consists of two periods — a preliminary stage in which the physical acts of eating and drinking continue, and then the purely spiritual state of which Rav speaks. The great banquet tendered for the righteous will occur toward the end of the first stage.

26. *Pri Tzaddik*, *Shemos* p. 129; and *Likutei Maamarim* pp. 156-7.

27. *Genesis* 42:9,12.

28. *Psalms* 74:14; see Rashi there.

29. *Isaiah* 27:1; see *Targum Yonasan* there.

30. *Bava Basra* 74b. See there at length.

31. *Berachos* 61a.

32. From *Nehemiah* 9:6.

33. *Pri Tzaddik*, *Bereishis* pp. 211-12.

34. *Ecclesiastes* 1:18.

35. הרב כעס מביא לידי רב חכמה, שהוא תורה שבעל פה (*Pri Tzaddik*, *Devarim* p. 121).

36. Heard from HaRav HaGaon R' Nachum Lansky shlita, rosh yeshivah in Yeshivas Ner Yisrael in Baltimore.

37. Since the feast comes toward the end of the World to Come's physical period (see note 25 above), the Oral Law will still require intensive study, although at a much deeper level than before. Only afterward comes the sublime state of "sitting and delighting in the radiance of the Divine Presence."

Reading *Rus* on Shavuos

Dr. Ron Samet

There is a prevalent although not universal minhag to read *Rus* on Shavuos. Many have suggested reasons behind the minhag connecting the story of Rus, the birth of Dovid HaMelech, and the day the Torah was given. But perhaps there is another connection.

One of the central themes in the story of Rus is the concept of *yibum*. While many have argued that there is no true *yibum* in the story, many allusions to the concept of *yibum* are made. On her way back to Beis Lechem, Naomi tells Rus and Orpah to return to their original homes, saying (*Rus* 1:11-13):

(א) ...לָמָּה תֵּלְכִי עִמִּי הָעוֹד לִי בָנִים בְּמַעֲי וְהָיוּ לָךְם לְאֻנָּשִׁים:
 (ב) שִׁבְנָה בְּנִתִי לְכֹן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מִהָיִוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אָמַרְתִּי יֵשׁ לִי תַקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלֵּילָה לְאִישׁ
 וְגַם יִלְדָּתִי בָנִים:
 (ג) הֲלֵהוּ תִשְׁבְּרֶנָּה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הֲלֵהוּ תַעֲגֶנָּה לְבִלְתִּי הָיִוֹת לְאִישׁ אֶל בְּנִתִי כִּי מֵר לִי מָאֹד
 מְכֹם...

'...Why should you go with me? Do I still have children in my womb that will be for you as husbands? Return my daughters, go, for I have become too old to be with a man, for I had said, had there been hope, even if tonight I were to be with a man and bore sons, would you wait for them until they grew older? Would you remain single for them and not marry others? Please do not do this my daughters for it will be too bitter for me...'

The Midrash in *Rus Rabbah* (2:15) explains that Naomi was alluding to the halachah of בעולמו שלא היה – inferring that *yibum* does not apply when the dead husband has no living brothers at the time of his death. Naomi was telling her daughters-in-law that there is no requirement that they remain with her as even if Naomi were pregnant or

were to give birth at this time – since their husbands died before Naomi were to give birth – they were absolved of waiting for a potential *yavam*.

Later on, we find that Boaz plays the role of a גואל, *redeemer*, but seems to give preference to a redeemer who is closer to him and suggests that he be required to marry Rus as part of the deal. This too alludes to a *yibum* concept.

Clearly, as we stated before, the story of Rus is not a classical *yibum* for several reasons (אשת אחיו שלא היה בעולמו, אחים מן האם, גיורת) but the *Radal* on the side of the Midrash (2:15) provides a plausible understanding. He explains that the *yibum* referred to in *Rus* is patterned after the non-traditional *yibum* performed in ancient times. He points to a *Ramban* in Parshas *Vayeishev* (*Bereishis* 38:8 referring to the incident of Yehudah and Tamar) which states והיו נוהגים לישא אשת המת, האח או האב או *They used to marry the widow, either the brother, or the father, or another close relative (of the dead husband).*

Explains the *Radal* that *yibum* was a concept of דרכיה דרכי נעם (*Mishlei* 3:17) – the ways of the Torah are sweet – (referencing a *Tosafos* in *Yevamos* 17b) and its purpose was to perpetuate the name of the dead childless husband. In fact, the *Ramban* (ibid.) continues and says *chalitzah* is considered אכזריות, *cruelty*, being that the *yavam* chooses to abandon his brother's childless widow. (As we all know the *chalitzah* is in fact a biblically-mandated quite degrading procedure with the woman spitting in the direction of her brother-in-law.) Hence, *yibum* as described both in the story of Rus and in fact by Yehudah and Tamar as explained by the *Ramban* – is not the traditional form – but rather a form of *chesed* that any member of the deceased family can fulfill with the widow – all in the rubric of דרכיה דרכי נעם.

To understand the conversation between Naomi and her daughters-in-law a little better, let's digress to learn another story in *Nach* that is extremely perplexing.

In *Melachim I* Chapter 3, we are told that HKBH offers Shlomo HaMelech anything he desires. He chooses חכמה ובינה, *wisdom and understanding*, and we are told that overnight he became the smartest human to have ever lived. Shortly thereafter he is sitting on his throne and the famous case of one live baby being claimed by two women comes before him. He provides the famous decision to cut the baby in half. One woman pleads for the baby's life and concedes to give the baby to the other woman, while the other woman agrees to Shlomo's decision. He thereby identifies the true mother as the merciful one, and the entire world hears how Shlomo is in fact infused with חכמת אלקים, *wisdom of Hashem*.

Granted this was a brilliant *psak*, but is this really חכמת אלקים? There is another detail that seems interesting. The Midrash in *Rus Rabbah* (2:2) states that there were two women on Shlomo's side when he made this *psak*. His mother, BasSheva, and his great-great-grandmother Rus!

מכאן אמרו לא מתה רות המואביה עד שראתה שלמה בן בנה יושב ודן דינו של זונות הדא הוא דכתיב "וישם כסא לאם המלך" זו בת שבע, "ותשב לימינו" זו רות המואביה.

Now what value is there that Rus was sitting next to him? She has to be well over 100 years old if not in the hundreds of years old? Did she influence his decision?

Let's review the case and make mention of an incredible *Meiri* in *Yevamos* 17b that was pointed out to me by R' Yitzchok Kinzer *shlit"a*. Both women claimed to have been the only ones in the house, each with their newborn baby. On day three, one mother catastrophically smothered her own baby in her sleep. She then, according to the claim of the other woman, exchanged her dead baby for the live one. She herself denied these events and claimed that the other woman in fact smothered her own child, and the live baby is her own child. Shlomo HaMelech, apparently setting up a bluff, asks for a sword to divide the baby in half for equal distribution. Then, read carefully, the real mother begs for mercy not to kill the child but rather concedes to give the baby to the other woman. Now, what would you have expected the other woman to say at this point? She should have said, "Great, as I said and claimed this is my baby! I'll take him!" But instead she falls into Shlomo's trap and in

fact agrees to slaughter the baby. Why? How did Shlomo know she would take the bait?

So listen to this eye-opening *Meiri*. The *Meiri* claims that the two women were in fact both recent widows (hence there was no one else in the house with them). Moreover, they were mother-in-law (MIL) and daughter-in-law (DIL). The DIL by accident smothered her own baby. Then she looks up and sees across the room her own three-day-old brother-in-law to whom she is now a *yevamah*. She realized that she will now have to wait at least a decade for him to perform *yibum* - so she is stuck as a widow for an excessive period of time. A horrible turn of events – she lost her father-in-law, her husband, her only son and is now stuck as a *yevamah* for a long time. This is not fair. The Torah is not fair! I want out. But how? So she chooses to exchange babies – claim that her brother-in-law is her own baby in which case she is no longer a perceived *yevamah* and she will marry (unlawfully) rather than wait to marry her brother-in-law. Yet when Shlomo offers to kill the baby – she jumps on the opportunity – as now she can lawfully marry another without any guilt.

Before we fully explain the brilliance of Shlomo, I believe there is an important *Tosafos* to review.

Tosafos in *Yevamos* there ask why we need a special *pasuk* to teach us (אשת אחיו שלא היה בעולמו) that a woman who loses her husband without having any children is not required to remain single until she is certain that her MIL is no longer of child bearing age? Why not just learn this out from the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* דרכיה דרכי נועם? The Torah is a kind and sweet way of life and would never be so cruel to require a widow to wait so long to marry another. *Tosafos* answer that for the widow to wait when her MIL is not even pregnant – that would be cruel and not consistent with דרכי נועם; however, if the MIL is pregnant, for the widowed DIL to wait (a long but definitive time) is consistent with דרכי נועם. It is specifically when the MIL is pregnant that we require the extra *pasuk* for even in that case – the widow is absolved of waiting and can

Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuot

marry anyone she wants. So according to Tosafos, when the MIL is not pregnant, דרכי נועם teaches us to set the widow free, but when the MIL is pregnant דרכי נועם would theoretically dictate to have the widow wait if it were not for the extra *pasuk*.

Now let's refocus on the conversation between Naomi and Rus and Oprah. Naomi, whose very name means sweetness, tells her DILs to go home – for the Torah, which is sweet, dictates that they not wait. Does she even have a child in her womb – which might have made it still within the confines of דרכי נועם? No! So go; you are free.

Now let's fast forward to Shlomo. Two women come before him and present their story. According to the *Meiri*, Shlomo listens to a MIL and DIL arguing over a live baby. He begins to sense that the DIL is fighting for the baby because (on the chance she is lying and this baby is in fact her brother-in-law) she feels it is unfair to have to wait. With Rus at his side, could it be that Rus shared her experience with her great-great-grandson and recalled the argument Naomi made to her: The Torah is sweet and is never unfair. (As Tosafos intimated) Naomi told me to go home because I had no live brother-in-law nor was Naomi pregnant – hence the sweet Torah set me free. But, the case in front of you has a widow and her live brother-in-law. While it may not be comfortable for her to wait until he grows up, in G-d's infinite wisdom there is great value to *yibum* and this would fall in the purview of דרכי נועם.

Now armed with חכמת אלקים – which refers to the wisdom of *Toras chesed* and has at its very core דרכי נועם – Shlomo needs to divulge this DIL's sentiment to the sweet Torah. He recognizes that she feels the Torah is cruel and unfair. So he comes up with the cruelest decision – slaughter the baby!! The only person in the world that would fall for this *psak* is one who already believes the Torah is unfair and cruel. If in fact they kill the baby, she walks away free and unbound, able to marry immediately! So she plays right into his ploy even after her MIL concedes the baby to her and agrees to Shlomo's seemingly vicious

psak. Now that was real חכמת אלקים! And where did he get such חכמה? Well the very Midrash that discusses the conversation between Rus and Naomi regarding *yibum*, starts off:

"יתן ה' לכם" א"ר יוסי כל אותן הטובות והנחמות שעתיד הקב"ה ליתן לשלמה דכתיב "ויתן אלהים חכמה לשלמה" יהיו מכם.

The wisdom that Shlomo received was in fact from Rus!

To bring it all together, *yibum* itself is an incredible chesed – a product of דרכיה דרכי נועם (the word *yibum* in gematria = 58 the gematria of חן and the gematria of the first letters of נועם דרכיה דרכי נועם). The reason we read *Rus* on Shavuot is because the only thing we truly received on Shavuot were laws. We did not get the *luchos* nor the Torah; we were only we told the *Aseres HaDibros*. At the time we merited to hear Hashem give us commandments, we must always keep in mind דרכיה דרכי נועם, it is a sweet and kind Torah – every single law in every circumstance. We may not appreciate it at times and we may feel it is unfair to be a Torah observant Jew – but that is due to our own limitations. This is the true lesson of *Rus*, and the true lesson of all of Hashem's Torah: דרכיה דרכי נועם. May we only experience the true sweetness of Hashem's Torah and merit to revel in true חכמת אלקים.

The Aseres HaDibros

Michoel Cooperman

The *Kli Yakar* compares the first five commandments of the *Aseres Hadibros* with the last five so that each of the ten is matched up with a partner, so to speak. Number 1 corresponds to number 6, number 2 to number 7, and so that number 5, *kibud av v'eim* (honoring one's parents) corresponds to number 10, *lo sachmode* (do not covet). The obvious question is, what is the connection between honoring one's parents and not coveting another person's property or wife? The *Mechilta* strengthens the question by stating that anyone who covets will eventually give birth to a son who will curse him. Why should this be an appropriate punishment for one who covets?

The *Kli Yakar's* answer is astounding. He says that anyone who covets his neighbor's wife is certainly thinking about her and it almost as if his son was born from another mother – i.e. the woman that this man is coveting and thinking about because the father had “brought” another woman into his home. The son recognizes this at some subliminal level and will consequently not give his true mother the honor she deserves.

The *Kli Yakar* continues that the son will not honor his father properly as well. For if his father covets other women, his intention in his relationship with his wife is not to have children, but rather to fulfill his physical desires. Therefore, if we again follow the father's intent, in a certain way his son is not really his. Again the son will subliminally recognize this and not honor his biological father properly.

Finally, *Kli Yakar* concludes, one who covets money will also become deficient in honoring his parents because he who covets money will be focused on accumulating money to buy things for him and will not spend his money on his parental obligations such as providing his parents with food, drink, and clothing.

Lessons of the *Mon*

Moshe Kravetz

Part I

It is told, in Rav Shimon Schwab's *Maayan Bais Hasho'eivah* (*Parshas Beshalach*), that before Rav Schwab left Europe in 1930 he went and spent Shabbos with the Chafetz Chaim.

Friday night a group of students came over to the home of the Chafetz Chaim and he said: The Gemara in *Yoma* 75a tells us that the *mon* was able to take on the taste of whatever food one wished. [However there were five exceptions. The Gemara says that the *mon* could not have tasted like gourd, cucumbers, leeks, onions, and garlic – see *Rashi* for reason.] There is actually a dispute between Rav Ami and Rav Assi as to what happened when someone thought of a specific food when eating the *mon*. One opinion says that the *mon* transformed into the actual consistency of that particular food, and tasted like that food. The other opinion says that the *mon* only took on the taste of that food while it did not undergo any actual changes in its makeup. Regardless, asked the Chafetz Chaim rhetorically, what was the taste of the *mon*, if the person eating it had no thought in mind whatsoever? That was the question the Chafetz Chaim posed to the young Rav Schwab.

After not getting a response, the Chafetz Chaim answered his own question with these words, “*Az min tracht nisht, hut is nisht kein taam*” [if one does not think, there is no taste]! Only one who meditated his actions and truly gave thought to what he was eating tasted the delicacies of the *mon*.

The Chafetz Chaim went on to explain and elaborate that the *mon* is symbolic of everything spiritual; whatever efforts we put into spiritual things determines what the taste of the outcome will be. If a person learns Torah or performs mitzvos with enthusiasm, then his enjoyment

and fulfillment will be apparent. However, if a person does it as if it is a chore, with no feeling, his actions will be dull and tasteless.

The *mon* was a spiritual food. A spiritual entity receives its taste in accordance with the thought one puts into it. This is why we ask Hashem daily in our *birchas HaTorah*: והערב נא ה' אלוֹקֵינוּ אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ, *Please, Hashem, our Lord, sweeten the words of Torah in our mouth*. If one sits in front of a sefer or siddur and simply reads the words by rote without applying his mind and thought process to this, his learning or davening will have no *taam*, taste. It will be bland and uninspiring. He will not be stimulated by the learning experience, because he did not apply his mind to it. Torah study is *ruchniyus*, spiritual in nature, and one must, therefore, engage his mind as he utters the words, so that he tastes the sweetness of Torah. Mitzvos have a beautiful *taam*. But that takes *kavannah*, concentration, and knowing what we're doing and why we're doing it.

[If I can digress and apply this to chinuch, that although difficult to maintain, a Rebbe has to give over the *taam* to his students when he teaches Torah and should not come across as a rote performance of a job.]

The same is true of the arrival of Mashiach. At that time, Hashem will reveal the Shechinah to the entire world, but only those who consider the historical processes unfolding before their very eyes will sense the extraordinary nature of the times in which they live. The Chafetz Chaim ended with these sharp words "He who does not reflect upon the coming of Mashiach will not feel anything at all."

As such, in regard to our Yiddishkeit, sometimes in life we all must slow down to think and reflect on why we do certain mitzvos and not perform like a robot. We have to put thought into what we do and taste the *taam* so we won't G-d forbid be numb when Mashiach comes. May we all be worthy to merit and 'feel' the arrival of Mashiach in our days!

Part II

The *mon* had several amazing characteristics. One was the ability to taste like anything a person wished for, as already mentioned above. Another detail about the *mon* was that each person received exactly the proper amount that the family needed. This idea of *mon* expresses a fundamental principle in *emunah* and *bitachon* – that a person must believe that Hashem gives everyone exactly what they need.

Even if we believe that everything is in Hashem's hand, we still tend to think that our own efforts also play a role in acquiring our physical sustenance. In contrast, *mon* was not acquired through human effort, and so left no room for such errors.

Even so, Hashem did not allow the people to collect more than one day's worth of *mon* at a time, for whenever the pantry would have been full; the people would not have felt dependent upon Hashem.

On the other hand, Hashem did require that the average person go out and gather the *mon*, rather than deliver it to their doorsteps. In this way, He prepared them for their eventual entry into the real world. If acquiring the *mon* had not required any human effort, the people would have dismissed it as an isolated miracle, irrelevant to real life. By being required to collect the *mon* they learned that human effort and Hashem's *hasgachah* work together.

The *mon* taught us that our livelihood comes from heaven. Even when it appears to be the fruit of our own labor, it is in fact a gift from Hashem.

Having lost a job I had for close to fourteen years last year and being unemployed for a bit, I experienced that ultimately our efforts will not pan out if not for Hashem's will. I also saw first-hand that Hashem does provide the precise amount that one needs at the precise time.

Understanding the significance of the *mon* will strengthen our belief in Hashem and our faith that He will take care of us both physically and spiritually.

Access Trumps Ownership

Rabbi Paysach Diskin¹

In *Parshas Mishpatim*, the Torah guides us in building the legal infrastructure for the founding of the Jewish State. A significant portion of the Parshah addresses the legal relationships between lender and borrower, between thief and victim, between master and servant, between immigrant and native, between the rich and the poor and so on.

Let us consider what the Parshah says regarding the lender-borrower relationship. *“If you shall lend money to My people, to the poor that be with you, you shall not be to him as a demanding creditor, neither shall you place upon him any interest.”* The Hebrew word for interest is *neshech* which translates as biting. The implication is that the interest you take from him is biting your borrower. This seems strange. Biting implies taking something that is inherently not mine, a piece of my friend’s body. Why should this be, did I not give up **my** money to him? Did **I** not incur a loss, I could have placed **my** money in an investment that earns 5% annually and instead I lent it to him. Am I not entitled to charge him a mere 3%? Why does the Torah call it biting?

I believe the Torah is teaching a profound lesson. There are two basic paradigms by which Man views his world. These two ways are exclusive to each other. One leads to world harmony and the other leads to world destruction. These divergent mindsets result from the answer one gives to the following question. *How should I relate to this world in which I find myself?* (1) Is this world here **for me to own**? To work hard and make it mine? Or perhaps (2) the world does not belong to me and it

¹ In the spirit of sharing resources, I wish to credit Simcha Gluck and Ronen Gafni from FreshBizgame.com for inspiring me to contemplate the above and thereby find this refreshing new look in the pages of The Book. (The name of this article comes from the creators of FreshBiz. Page 55 of The New Entrepreneurz.)

never will. There is a Creator to whom everything belongs, including myself. Rather, the world is here for me to use, or **for me to access**.

The nature of ownership is by definition exclusive. Namely, only the owner can own it. Nobody else can have ownership. Although others may be able to use it with the permission of the owner, if the world is here to be owned by Man then every man is on his own. While partnership is a possibility, it nevertheless remains exclusive to the rest of mankind. Furthermore, it makes ownership a goal and an objective on its own with no further justification. It becomes an end of its own. The more I own the more I am. If someone else has more than me, then he is greater than me and I am smaller than him.

Hence, if we address the question of how we should relate to the world with the first answer, the world becomes a game of competition where every person is an opponent to the next. Every person must hold his cards close to his chest and certainly not share them with his neighbor. Every man is driven to acquire for the sake of acquisition alone. When I meet a person, I look for his faults and shortcomings because it advances my goal of competition.

While this will certainly inhibit Man from sharing his wealth with others, nevertheless the spirit of philanthropy can still flourish. However, it will be limited to only those situations where the philanthropist gains from it. If the world is here for me to own, then why should I give away my ownership, unless I stand to gain further ownership. Further ownership is not limited to material matter; it also includes dignity, respect and honor as well as other forms of pleasure.

The nature of usership or accessibility is by definition inclusive. Namely, there is no finite number to which it is limited. Everybody can use the world. It is accessible to everybody without limiting its use. Furthermore, usage is not a goal and objective of its own. Rather, it becomes a means to accomplish something greater. The energy that drives a person will no

longer be ownership; it will be a goal that he has discovered on his own. Every man must identify for himself what he finds worthwhile and meaningful to use and access in this world. It is definitely more difficult to identify one's goal in this mode, but once that meaningfulness is discovered everything he does becomes meaningful.

Hence, if we address the question with the second answer the world becomes a game of collaboration and sharing where every person is an asset to his neighbor. Every person is pursuing their personal goal of achieving what they define as meaningful. No two goals are the same and nobody is going to take away the other fellow's accomplishment. There is no source of competition and no need to be afraid of the other person.

I am therefore willing to share my resources and opportunities with my neighbor to support him in achieving his goal, and he is willing to share his resources and opportunities with me. When I meet another person, I look to find his qualities to see what I can learn from him. The more qualified my neighbor is, the more grateful I am. I can rejoice with my neighbor in his success and cry with him in his failure.

An amazing picture of world peace and true harmony emerges replacing a world of competition, discord and distrust.

Let us return to the biting question. The Torah is teaching us that we should take the second alternative as our world view. We must see our assets as belonging to Hashem, given to us to use and access to accomplish our self determined goals. When my neighbor needs money and I have available money, I should make it accessible to him. If he cannot pay it back at this time, I may not be a demanding creditor. I shall wait until he has it. There is nothing I lose by sharing my assets with him. And since Hashem instructed me to lend my available funds to the needy Jew I **could not** have used it to make 5%, because my money is not mine,

it is Hashem's. Therefore, any interest that I take would be biting my friend.

Unfortunately, the world we currently live in has adopted the first world view. Even in the field of education we find ourselves placed in a world of competition. I know serious educators who truly believe that competition between children in racing to the top of the class is a good thing that must be harnessed. When in fact the Torah teaches us that the reverse is true.

A Real Estate Deal ¹

Rabbi Yitzchok Strauss

Reuven and Shimon had a business deal where Reuven would provide \$95,000 to purchase and renovate a property for the purpose of renting it out for profit. Shimon would provide \$10,000, as well as his expertise, in renovating the property and managing it while it was being rented. They agreed upon a profit split of 75/25. Normally, Shimon would charge a fee for locating the property and managing the renovations, and he would take 15% for managing the property. However, Reuven felt that Shimon would work harder if he had his own money in it and would get a larger percentage. In addition, Reuven told Shimon that he planned to invest in nine other properties, so it was worth Shimon's time to adjust the deal and take a percentage of the profit rather than a flat fee.

Initially, Shimon told Reuven that it would take three months to locate a property and renovate it to have it ready for rental. They had a rough start when the original property that was found fell through. It took two months until a new property was found and another six weeks until they closed on it. The property required a complete rehab. It had been converted to a duplex and in order to have it suitable for rental they needed to gut it and convert it back to a single family residence. Another time delay was that the contractor selected for the project needed six weeks to complete his current job, so in all it was about nine months before they were ready for renting. Reuven is a business man and his patience in this six-month delay was growing thin. To make matters worse, there were unexpected costs, and Shimon needed more money to complete the project. They were \$4,500 short for the contractor and other expenses for a total of \$15,000. Reuven ignored Shimon's pleas for the money and Shimon needed to put it on his personal credit card.

¹ Editor's note: We have included this *teshuvah* in the Shavuos section because the *Parshah* of monetary law, *Mishpatim*, immediately follows *Kabbalas HaTorah*.

Although after a year they were now ready to rent the property, Shimon had an ambitious idea. He heard that there was a tremendous profit potential in making the property a half way house for people with mental disabilities. When Shimon approached Reuven with the prospect of making a lot more money, Reuven's frustrations subsided and he agreed to the change in plans. Shimon told him he had never done this before but he was excited about the prospect and thought it would not be too difficult. In addition, he had a family member who worked for the department of aging who would possibly be able to provide some guidance.

Implementation of the new plans was slow in coming. In addition, Shimon realized that this project required a lot more work, and Reuven did not want to increase Shimon's percentage. So in all they never came to terms on the new project. After an additional year, Reuven confronted Shimon and stated that he had had enough and wanted to get a refund of his money. Shimon was surprised and argued that Reuven had agreed to the change, but if he wanted they could go back to the original plan and rent it. Reuven was fed up and said he no longer wished to be a partner and wanted his money back. Unfortunately, at this point if they were to sell the property they would not cover their initial investments. Shimon said that he wanted to rent it according to the original plan. He did not want to take a loss on the property. He also argued that since he had put two years work into it, he wanted to be compensated for his time. Reuven countered that Shimon had dragged his feet way too long despite the fact that he agreed to it. Not only did Reuven refuse to pay Shimon, he also wanted Shimon to eat all the losses because this it was entirely his fault.

What would be a fair resolution to this dispute taking the general Beis Din stance of a פשרה קרוב לדין, *compromise close to the [strict] Jewish law*? There are two basic halachic issues that need clarification. One, when may a partner unilaterally withdraw from the partnership? And

second, if dissolution does occur, how do they allocate the remaining funds?

(1) First, in regards to the unilateral withdrawal of a partner, it is stated in *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* (171:1):

אחד הקונה מחבירו חצי שדה, או שנים שקנו מאחד שדה, או שירשו או שניתן להם במתנה או שהחזיקו בו מהפקר, וביקש אחד מהשותפין לחלוק וליטול חלקו לבדו, אם יש באותו קרקע דין חלוקה כופה את שאר השותפין וחולקין עמו. ואם אין בו דין חלוקה, אין אחד מהם יכול לכופ את חבירו לחלוק. וכן הדין במטלטלין.

When a partner in a piece of property no longer wants to be a partner with the joint owner, he can force his friend to divide the property as long as it is dividable. The *Rama* (171:5) states many situations which would render the property unfit for splitting. It is pretty clear this property cannot be split. It is not like merchandise that is divisible. In this case it is not practical to split the property.

Shulchan Aruch (171:6) states further:

אחד מהשותפין שאמר לחבירו במקום שאין בו דין חלוקה או בדבר שאי אפשר שיחלוקו, כגון שפחה או כלי: מכור לי חלקך בכך וכך או קנה ממני חלקי כשער הזה, הדין עמו וכופין את הנתבע למכור לחבירו או לקנות ממנו. (אפי' אמר ליתן בו הרבה יותר מדמיו, צריך השני לקנות או למכור) (טור בשם הרא"ש ומרדכי ספ"ק וב"ב והמגיד פ"א דשכנים וריב"ש סימן תפ"ג וב"י בשם הרמב"ם ותשובת רמב"ן סימן מ"ג ורש"י ותוס'). אבל אם אין התובע רוצה לקנות, או לא ימצא במה יקנה, אינו יכול לכופ את חבירו לקנות ממנו אפילו בשער הזול, שהרי חבירו יכול לומר לו: איני רוצה שאקנה אלא שאמכור.

In a case where one cannot split the property, one can force his partner to either sell his portion or buy him out. However he cannot say “buy me out and I will not buy you out” because then the other partner can say “I do not want to.” So here, where Reuven says he only wants to sell and not buy, he has no right to do so.

The *Rama* writes on this halachah:

ואין אדם יכול לומר לחבירו: גוד או אגוד בפחות משווי, דאם לא כן ידחוק העשיר את העני למכור את שלו פחות משווי.

One cannot tell his fellow either sell his portion or buy him out for less than its value, for if not so a wealthy [partner] would force the poor [partner] to sell his share at less than its value.

In the same vein the *Chazon Ish* (*Bava Basra* 9:4) states that in a case of a partnership between two people, where one partner decides he can invest the money in another place that will produce more income, he cannot just pull out since they are obligated to each other. However, if there is a problem with the business model they can force to split or sell their partnership interest to one another through the precept of *gud o agud* as stated in *Shulchan Aruch* 171:6 (where one offers to buy the other out at a set price or buy him out). In this case, there is a definite flaw in the second model. Furthermore, they never came to an agreement. It would seem logical that if a new agreement was never agreed upon the default would be the first agreement.

Another concept to consider is that it says further in *Shulchan Aruch* (176:15):

השותפין שהתנו ביניהם שיעמדו בשותפות זמן קצוב, כל אחד מהם מעכב על חבירו, ואינו יכול לחלוק עד שיגיע הזמן או עד שיכלה ממון השותפות; ואין אחד מהם יכול ליטול מהקרן ולא מהשכר, עד סוף הזמן: הגה - ואם שינה או פשע תוך הזמן, או עבר על תנאו, אפילו הכי אינן יכולין לחלוק, אלא משלם מה שהפסיד (ב"י לדעת הרמב"ם); ודלא כיש חולקין בזה (מרדכי פרק מי שהיה נשוי).

In a case where partners have an agreement for a specific time frame, each one can stop the other person from pulling out until the period is complete. The *Rama* adds that even if one side is negligent he only has a claim to damages but not to pull out.

If they came into the partnership plainly without setting a time frame they can split up and sell the property whenever either one wishes, as stated in the next *si'ef* (176:16):

Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuos

נשתתפו סתם, ולא קבעו להם זמן, הרי אלו חולקין כל זמן שירצה אחד מהם, ויטול כל אחד חלקו מהסחורה. ואם לא היה באותה סחורה דין חלוקה, או שהיה בחלוקתה הפסד, הרי אלו מוכרים אותה וחולקים הדמים.

The *Pischei Choshen* (*Shutfim* 3:2 §5) quotes the *Kenesses HaGedolah* that where the partnership never began neither partner has a right to unilaterally pull out. This would imply that they need to go through with the agreement. However, in the same place, the *Pischei Choshen* brings a seemingly counter opinion (*Erech Shai*) that once they begin the partnership for even a little bit a partner can pull out immediately since he did not have a definitive time. In this case they never began the rental process. Reuven can argue that once they start the rental process then he can back out since there was no set time, and even a minimal rental will suffice. On the other hand Shimon states that the partnership was forever and they never even started; and the standard rental period is for a year. Neither argument is persuasive. Generally, the standard lease period of a house is one year. Working through *pesharah* it could be proposed that only after the initial first year tenant, one or the other can demand to disengage from the partnership.

(2) Second, assume they agree to sell the property after the first year what is the general rule of liquidating a partnership? In this case if they were to sell the property versus rent it they would incur a significant loss. Both sides argue that they should not take the loss from the sale. Reuven says Shimon took too long and spent too much money. Shimon says it was not an exceedingly long amount of time; the contractors were effective and Reuven agreed in theory to the new plan. Shimon argues that if Reuven insists on selling the property he should swallow any losses.

In *Shulchan Aruch* it states (176:5):

השותפין שהטילו לכיס, זה מנה וזה מאתים וזה שלשה מאות, ונתעסקו כולם בממון, סתם, ופיחתו או הותירו, השכר או הפחת ביניהם בשוה לפי מנינם, לא לפי המעות. ואפילו לקחו

שור לטביחה, שאילו (טבחוהו) היה נוטל כל אחד מבשרו לפי מעותיו, אם מכרוהו חי ופחתו או הותירו, השכר או הפחת לאמצע.

Generally, if people give different amounts of capital and they do not discuss the terms beforehand then it is assumed that the profits and losses are split equally. A theory for this outcome is that the one investing less capital is also providing expertise. That can be true in this case where they provide 90/10 split in capital but profit is 75/25. The *Shulchan Aruch* (176:5) states that if the merchandise is still in existence you liquidate based on capital. Furthermore, the *Pischei Choshen* (*Shutfin* 3:17 §39) writes although there are many opinions on how to split up the profit and losses it is an obvious conclusion that one would split up the original capital invested based on the percentage of initial contributions. This would also be consistent with secular law following *dina demalchusa*.

The *Rama* (176:6) states:

והוא הדין אם שינו ממה שהתנו בתחלה, נוטלין לפי מעותיהן.

If they change the original agreement that the profit and loss percentage reverts back to a percentage based on the capital contributed.

So even if Reuven would be correct that the first deal is out the window, they would still split the money based on the capital contributed. Shimon should not be responsible for 25% of the loss but rather the percentage of his capital contribution. The loss of Reuven's potential profit is only a *gerama* (an indirect cause of action which is not collectible in court) and is not a collectible damage in Beis Din.

Therefore I would propose that upon liquidation we look at the amounts contributed and split the loss along the same percentage as capital remaining in the investment at time of liquidation.

A Sampling of our Rav's Teachings

Written and edited exclusively by the Kehillah

Who we are, what is important:

- Recognize the potency found within the day to day davening and mitzvos
- Disguised as intriguing quick methods to specific spiritual successes, notice and avoid gimmicks
- Review the validity of decisions you once made and thus live by, for the person you are today
- How can I tell if doing XYZ is ok? Consider how it would be if everyone else were to do it
- Shouldn't it be permitted to do XYZ while at work? Ask your Work!
- We're not just mitzvah doers, we're *ovdei Hashem*
- Don't be just 'Yotzei' (i.e. Select any Esrog), look to whom you are serving and why
- How much learning can be accomplished in a 10 minute period near Motzei Shabbos
- If you are serving Hashem, just be humble and deliberate, no 'shtick' necessary
- Be outright and firm to not be swayed by 'lashon hara'
- Long for and truly consider return to Eretz Yisrael, as 'we' are part of the Geulah process
- Do things because they are right
- Set a living example of being *yashar* in all matters of daily life
- Gently encourage all Jews to grow
- Change and self improvement are not options, but constants to true Jewish living
- Understand that each person has unique needs that must be respected

Things our Rav has taught/offered:

- Give most any chaburah in which we have at least five attendees
 - Any common Sefer that is needed or desired ought to be purchased for the Kehillah
-

- Bring people together to learn, be it chavrusa, shiur, outreach, etc. . . .
- Being an example so that we want to be more serious, humble, and have great respect for one another
- Not demanding respect is sometimes the best way to get respect. When deserved

The ambience of shul and prayer:

- A modest sponsorship for a morning Kollel creates a makom of Learning plus enhanced Tefillah
- How beautiful is a makom tefillah when you recognize that you wouldn't even want to talk
- Subtly raise the davening experience so it doesn't feel right to leave early
- (but don't frown on someone who does)
- Take seriously the privilege to speak directly to Hashem (don't let your mood get in the way)
- Tefillah is not just a “matir”, so I could start doing other important things (like going to work)
- Don't allow yourself to sit in an area where you can't be seen
- Start davening on time
- Don't rush your davening (especially since it always starts on time)
- Mutual sensitivity; certain tefillos we must wait for the Rav, certain tefillos we're not expected to
- Make sure the women are comfortable; enough chairs, they can hear, all have room in the shul
- Corrections to the Baal Korei should only come from the Gabbai or the Rav
- Saying Kaddish is not like shooting ducks (more points), we don't try to add a superfluous Kaddish
- Even after davening, avoid political conversation and idle talk inside the shul walls
- Appreciate the congregation; remember good qualities and deeds of each and every member

Section VI: Sefirah and Shavuot

- Encourage and support the 'aveil' to lead the congregation for the year, but no pressure to do so
- Daven during davening times, Learn during learning times

Children:

- Don't push your children, guide them
- They don't need to do what others have been expected to do (i.e. Read entire Bar Mitzvah parshah)
- Encouraging Bar Mitzvah boys to lead davening and participate in significant ways
- For those too young to daven, supply a playground, books to read, things to do
- Be sure they are watched, not interrupting those in shul

You probably didn't know:

- The power of Askinu Seudas before each of the three Shabbos seudos
- The importance and the beauty of the Yerushalmi Talmud
- When, whether, and how to approach a school to intervene for your child's personal situation (examples withheld, but guidance readily encouraged and available... many have benefited)

Easy to overlook:

- A new person in shul always gets a warm Shalom Aleichem (at the very least)
- Take notice if someone hasn't been showing up to shul, are they ill? Do they need help?
- Think of others even at your own expense (i.e. Shovel your sidewalk so others can use it)
- Walk the elderly home from shul
- Be examples of proper behavior toward our non-Jewish neighbors
- Share in someone else's kiddush, shalom zachor, etc.. just like you would want them to share in yours

The Lifecycle

Ben Vurgaftman

The *parshos* of *Tazria* and *Metzora*, are very important in the lifecycle of each family. *Parshas Tazria* explains the definitions of “*tahor*” and “*tamei*.” These events Hashem controls by Himself. The relationship between mother and newborn child transforms from “souls in one body” to the “souls in separate bodies.” The new relationship results in the “*tamei*” status for the mother. During this period of thirty three or sixty six days, the mother’s soul comes to normal condition. It “cools down.” To help “cool down” the mother brings *korbanos* to the Beis Hamikdash. *Parshas Tazria* also explains the law of *bris milah*. *Bris milah* shall be performed on the eighth day, so the newborn will meet one Shabbos and feel its holiness before being ready for his *bris*. The holiness of *bris milah* is so great, that when some people don’t have enough mitzvos, then *bris milah* keeps them united with the rest of the Jewish people.

Parshas Metzora is explaining the reasons for people become sick with “*tzaraas*”. The main reasons causing this terrible illness are *lashon hara* and greediness toward others. This connection points out that such behavior is destroying *neshamah*, finally causing person to get sick physically. *Parshas Metzora* also explains the procedure for purification after *tzaraas* has ended. The purification procedure with two birds was sparking the person’s thoughts about the cause of his illness. This way, he has an opportunity to do *teshuvah*.

I wish all of us to stay on the *derech haTorah*, so we will never suffer from such illnesses.

The Mitzvah to Remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* Avrumy Friedman

The Mishnah in *Berachos* (12b) cites the dispute between Ben Zoma and the Chachamim. Reb Elazar ben Azaria said "That I wasn't *zocheh* to bring a proof that מצרים בלילות יציאת, that we mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* by night-time until the *derashah* of Ben Zoma. And he brings it down from the *pasuk* in *Parshas Re'eh* (16:3): לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ: מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, *in order that you should remember the days of the going out of Mitzrayim all the days of your life*. The *derashah* is that יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ means "the days of your life," and כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ "all the days of your life" comes to include the night. The Chachamim hold that יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ refers to Olam HaZeh and כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ comes to include the times of Mashiach.

Rashi on the Mishnah understands that this necessity of remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is referring to the third *parshah* of *Kerias Shema*. That although at night there isn't a mitzvah of *tzitzis* to necessitate the saying of this third *parshah*, nevertheless, Ben Zoma demonstrates that it must be said on the account of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*. The *Rambam* in *Hilchos Kerias Shema* echoes the approach of *Rashi*.

However, from *Rabbeinu Miyuchos's* commentary on Chumash it would seem that he understands the Mishnah totally referring to the mitzvah of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*. And this approach is clearly stated by the *Gra* in the *Shenos Eliyahu*, that the third *parshah* of *Kerias Shema* is totally irrelevant to our Mishnah.

The basis of this *machlokes* is whether it refers to just the remembering of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* itself, or it refers to the third *parshah* of *Kerias Shema*, needs an explanation, and *bs"d* I'll come back to this point.

There is a second issue we need to discuss. In *Hilchos Kerias Shema*, the *Rambam* says "it is a mitzvah to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* both day

and night." However, the *Rambam* omits this mitzvah from his *Sefer HaMitzvos*. Why does he omit it there?

Let us first see why the *Gra* holds that there is no *inyan* of remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim* by saying the third *parshah* of *Shema*. As we said before, the *pasuk* says: לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, *in order that you should remember the days of the going out of Mitzrayim all the days of your life*.

The *Gra* understands the *pasuk* simply to be the source of the mitzvah of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*. And it doesn't say anywhere that it has to be remembered in the *parshah* of *Shema*. Similarly, the *Gra* on the Hagadah understands that in the *pasuk* the word '*kol*' can apply two ways; either qualitatively, meaning all the day, the whole day, because the word '*kol*' has a *mashma'os* of meaning whole. Or, it could be understood in a quantitative sense, meaning all these things, all these days. This is the *machlokes* between the *Chachamim* and Ben Zoma. Ben Zoma looks at *Kol* referring to the whole day. Including the night. And the *Chachomim* look at *kol* to mean all your days, including the times of *Moshiach*.

So, the *Gra* understands that the *pasuk* is literal and has no reference to *Kerias Shema*. And the Mishnah as well has no reference to *Kerias Shema*, even though this Mishnah follows other Mishnayos that deal with *Kerias Shema*. But this mitzvah itself does not say anything about *Kerias Shema*, and the Gemara itself does not have any reference to *Kerias Shema*.

Therefore, his position simply is: just as there is a mitzvah of זְכוּר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ, there is a mitzvah of a voicing of the remembrance of Shabbos, and there is also a mitzvah of *zecher michias Amalek*, which is also a voicing of that remembrance of the destruction of Amalek. So too *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the remembrance of going out of Mitzrayim is also such a *zecher*. It is a mere voicing and a mitzvah unto itself. This is the position of the *Gra*.

The position of the *Rambam* and *Rashi* is more complicated. The *Rambam* in his *Sefer HaMitzvos* does not include *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* because the *Rambam* is sensitive to the fact that this *pasuk* of לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר is not written in the imperative sense, it is not a *lashon* of *tzivuy* that you must do it, but rather this לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר, in order that you should remember is a *taam hamitzvah*, a reason for a different mitzvah. It is for the mitzvah of *achilas matzah* and *korban pesach*. The whole idea behind eating the *korban pesach* and *matzah* has to do with the going out of Mitzrayim. That is לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר, in order that you should remember it. So you see from the simple meaning of the *pasuk* it is not a mitzvah unto itself or a *din* unto itself of that you have to be *zocher*, but לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר. This is why the *Rambam* doesn't include it in the *Sefer HaMitzvos*.

Similarly, we find that *Chazal* derive two laws from this *pasuk*. The first is the Gemara in *Pesachim* (27a) where the Gemara makes a comparison between the *Zechiras* of kiddush and *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*, creating the halachah that you should remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* during kiddush. So, here in this *pasuk*, *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not a halachah unto itself, but rather *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* becomes a part of kiddush; not two separate *dinim*. Therefore, in this *derashah* in *Pesachim*, *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* becomes a part of kiddush.

Similarly, the *Yerushalmi* in *Berachos*, (3:1) derives from the phrase, יְמֵי הַיָּדָא to exclude *yemei hamisah* which means, if the dead body is in front of the person responsible for burial, he is exempt from *Kerias Shema* and tefillin.

These two Gemaras don't deal with *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* as an isolated mitzvah, but rather as being a part of another mitzvah, as we explained in the simple meaning of the *pasuk*. This is particularly true of the *Yerushalmi*, which connects it to *Kerias Shema*. This is why the *Rambam* doesn't understand *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* as a unique mitzvah, but rather as connected to other mitzvahs.

We have demonstrated that *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not a unique mitzvah unto itself, but rather as a part of *Kerias Shema*. However, we don't understand as of yet conceptually what is the connection between *Kerias Shema* and *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Rav Chaim Brisker furnished a *sevarah* for this. Rav Chaim said that *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is in fact the basis for *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim*. The *yesod* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is a basis for *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim*, in the fact that the justification for our *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim* which is *Kerias Shema* is *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, and this supports and is the basis for our commitment to Hashem. Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim; now we are to be *mekabel* his *malchus*.

That's what we do in response to *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. That is why *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is connected to *Kerias Shema*. It's the basis for the *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim*.

The source for this is the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (32a) where the Gemara is trying to find a source for the *birchas malchus* that we say on Rosh Hashanah. The *birchas malchus* is dealing with the *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim* from which we take upon ourselves His *malchus*. And it proves it from אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים. So again here is the basis for the *malchus* is *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

This is the *sevarah* of the *Rambam* to put it in *Hilchos Kerias Shema*. This is also perhaps why both the *Rambam* and the Chumash itself in the *asseres hadibros* picks as the basis for אֲנֹכִי, for the belief in Hashem, not just Hashem as the Creator, but Hashem that took us out of Mitzrayim. That is, our basis for this acknowledgement and for this perception is from *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

This answers the *Ibn Ezra's* question: "Why in the *asseres hadibros* does it bring אֱלֹהֵי from *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and not from Hashem Who created the heavens and the earth?" Also the *Maharal* and other *meforshim* ask on the *Rambam* why he picks *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the אֱלֹהֵי of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* as the proof of our belief in Hashem.

We now know that our believing in Hashem is not just a blind belief. Rather, it is a belief in Hashem that is the basis for our *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim*.

A Leap-Year Bar Mitzvah

Moshe Lauer

The Bobover Rebbe was known to have remarked that he personally started wearing tefillin one day before his actual bar mitzvah. His intent was not that the Bobover minhag was to start putting on tefillin only one day before a bar mitzvah, but rather that he himself was a full-fledged *gadol* before the actual date of his bar mitzvah. The reason for this is quite interesting due to a cosmic quirk in our calendar.

As is well known from Chazal, and much later confirmed by NASA, the lunar month consists of 29 days, 12 hours and 793 *chalakim*. Because of this, the months in our calendar will fluctuate between being 29 days and 30 days long. It is a given that Tishrei, Shevat, Nissan, Sivan, and Av will be 30 days, while Teves, Tammuz, Iyar, Elul, and Adar will be 29 days. However, you might have noticed that Cheshvan and Kislev are missing from this list. This is because there is no hard and fast rule regarding them. Sometimes they are both *malei*, sometimes they are both *chaser* and sometimes one is *malei* and one is *chaser*. This is one of the changing variables in our calendar and it is because of these variables that allow a bar mitzvah to occur before the actual bar mitzvah date.

For instance, if in a year that Cheshvan is *malei*, a boy is born on 30 Cheshvan which is also the first day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and in his bar mitzvah year Cheshvan is *chaser*, meaning there is no thirtieth day, according to the consensus of Poskim, including the *Mishnah Berurah*, this boy will not be a bar mitzvah until 1 Kislev. The reason is that *halachically* one cannot truly become a Bar Mitzvah until he completes thirteen entire years. Since there is no thirtieth day of Cheshvan in his Bar Mitzvah year, he does not actually reach that milestone until the next day, which is Rosh Chodesh Kislev. Yet, when the flip side of that equation occurs, it gets really interesting. The *Elyah Rabba*, based on a ruling of the *Bach*, maintains that if a boy is born on the first of Kislev in a year when Cheshvan had only 29 days, and in his Bar Mitzvah year

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

Cheshvan has 30 days, then the boy becomes Bar Mitzvah on the first day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, which is actually the thirtieth of Cheshvan! Since he completes 13 full years on that day (as there now is an extra day added to that year), he is obligated in Mitzvos on the day prior to his birthday! So, although his birthday might be *1 Kislev*, his Bar Mitzvah would be *30 Cheshvan*. Nevertheless, the *Berur Halachah* from Rav Yitzchak Zilber, comments that it is still preferable not to count this boy for a minyan or a zimun until the next day unless it is a *shaas hadchak*.

This is why the great Bobover Rebbe zt"l claimed he became Bar Mitzvah one day before his Bar Mitzvah date. He was born on 1 Kislev in the year 1907. In 1907 Cheshvan was chaser, and in his Bar Mitzvah year 1920, Cheshvan was malei. Therefore, he became bar mitzvah on 30 Cheshvan, a day before his actual birthday on 1 Kislev.

This year we have an extra month of Adar. The *Mechaber* says (55:10) that if someone was born in Adar of a leap year and his bar-mitzvah year is not in a leap year, he celebrates his bar-mitzvah on whatever date of Adar he was born on. The *Rama* adds (based on the *Mahari Mintz*) that in the reverse case, if someone was born in Adar of a non-leap year and his bar-mitzvah is in a leap year, he does not celebrate his bar-mitzvah until Adar Sheni.

The implication of the *Mechaber* is that if both the birth and the bar-mitzvah are in leap years, such as mine, then one born in Adar Rishon would also celebrate his bar-mitzvah in Adar Rishon. The *Magen Avraham*, however, argues on this point. Since we require thirteen FULL years to become bar-mitzvah, as the *Rama* writes, to wait until Adar Sheni, what is the difference whether I was born in a regular year or a leap year? After all, I turned twelve last Adar, and so a full year later is only in Adar Sheni since this year is thirteen months long? He therefore concludes that even if someone was born in Adar Rishon, if his bar-mitzvah is in a leap year, he must wait until Adar Sheni. The *Magen Avraham's* position, however, is very difficult. His whole question is

based on the *Rama's* quote of the *Mahari Mintz*, but the *Mahari Mintz* explicitly writes that if someone is born in Adar Rishon of a leap year and his thirteenth year is also in a leap year, he is bar-mitzvah already in Adar Rishon. How are we to explain this dispute between the *Magen Avraham* and the other Poskim?

Furthermore, we explained before, that if someone was born on 30 Cheshvan, and in the bar-mitzvah year Cheshvan is *chaser*, he does not become bar-mitzvah until the first of Kislev. The obvious rationale is that since his actual birthday does not exist in that year, he is delayed until the next day, the first of Kislev. We need to clarify, however, how this case differs from the case of someone born in a leap year. There, the *Mechaber* ruled that if he was born in Adar Sheni, and the thirteenth year is not a leap year, he becomes bar-mitzvah in Adar, and he is not delayed until Nisan! Why not? It should be the same as someone born on 30 Cheshvan that the bar mitzvah is delayed until the first of Kislev.

To answer these questions, let's look at the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (12a), which says that only the month of Adar can be doubled in a leap year. *Tosafos* explain that the reason why the other months cannot be doubled is because it says in the *pasuk* in *Esther* (3:7), שְׁנֵי יָמִים-עָשָׂר-הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ אֶדָר, *in the twelfth month, the month of Adar*. If we were to double a different month, Adar would no longer be the twelfth month, but rather the thirteenth! The implication of *Tosafos* is that if it were possible to double a different month, the entire count of the months would be delayed. For example, if they were to double Elul, the second Elul would be the seventh month of the year and Tishrei would be the eighth month. In such a hypothetical case, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succos should all occur in the second Elul and not in Tishrei, since the Torah does not establish these Yom Tovim in "Tishrei," but rather in "the seventh month"!

However, the *Yad Ramah* argues with *Tosafos* and says that even if we were to double Elul, the Yom Tovim would still be observed in Tishrei.

This position seems difficult, though, since the Torah says, "in the seventh month," not "in Tishrei!"

It would seem from this that *Tosafos* and the *Yad Ramah* disagree about the definition of a leap year. *Tosafos* assume that a leap year means making the year bigger by adding a month, so that the year is thirteen months long. The *Yad Ramah*, however, would seem to hold that a leap year means one of two things. Either it means lengthening the doubled month. Instead of a thirty day month, the doubled month is sixty days long. As such, even if we were to double Elul, this would not mean that Elul Rishon is the sixth month, Elul Sheni the seventh, and Tishrei the eighth. Rather, there is one Elul of sixty days, so that Tishrei would still be the seventh month. Or it means that we don't add a month nor do we lengthen the month, but rather we simply repeat the month. This repetition, however, is not considered a distinct, independent month. Thus, hypothetically, if we were to repeat Elul, both Elul Rishon and Elul Sheni would be defined as the sixth month. Tishrei would then be defined as the seventh month, so that Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succos would still occur in Tishrei.

What remains to be explained according to the *Yad Ramah* is why it is only possible to repeat Adar. He cannot use *Tosafos*'s source of the *pasuk* in Esther, since he argues and maintains that even if we were to repeat another month, Adar would still be the twelfth month, as we just explained. The *Yad Ramah* offers two other reasons. The first is a concern that it is often difficult to properly evaluate the need for a leap year until Adar, and so Chazal decreed for the sake of uniformity to double only Adar. The second reason is based on a *derashah* in the *Mechilta* in *Parshas Bo*: R' Nassan says, אֶת-חֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב, *Observe the month of spring*. The month adjacent to spring needs to be doubled, and what month is that? Adar.

What emerges is that there is a fundamental dispute between *Tosafos* and the *Yad Ramah* regarding the definition of a leap year. *Tosafos* maintain

that in a leap year there are thirteen distinct months; Adar Rishon is the twelfth month, and Adar Sheni is the thirteenth month. The *Yad Ramah*, maintains, however, that Adar Sheni is also considered the twelfth month.

According to the approach of the *Yad Ramah*, the difference between a leap year and adding a day to Cheshvan is clearly understood. Whereas in a leap year we merely repeat the month of Adar (and both months are considered the twelfth month), in Cheshvan we add a thirtieth day to the month. Therefore, if someone is born in Adar Sheni of a leap year and his thirteenth year is a non-leap year, the bar-mitzvah will still be in Adar. Although no Adar Sheni exists then, since he was born in the twelfth month, he becomes bar-mitzvah in the twelfth month. However, in Cheshvan, if he is born on 30 Cheshvan, it is impossible to say that he should become a bar-mitzvah on the 29th, since his time has not arrived yet, and the thirtieth of Cheshvan does not exist that year, so he must wait until the 1st of the next month, Kislev.

Based on this we can return to explain the positions of the *Mechaber* and the *Magen Avraham*. The *Rama* and the *Mechaber* follow the *Yad Ramah*, that both Adar Rishon and Adar Sheni are considered the twelfth month, so that either can represent the completion of the year. According to this logic, however, we would expect that if someone was born in Adar of a regular year and the thirteenth year is a leap year, he should become a bar-mitzvah already in Adar Rishon, since it is also considered the twelfth month! Why, then does the *Rama* rule (based on the *Mahari Mintz*) that he becomes a bar-mitzvah only in Adar Sheni? Apparently, the *Rama* maintains that, in general, Adar Sheni is the primary Adar since it is the one adjacent to Nisan, just as we find in the Gemara in *Megillah* (6b) in regards to reading the *Megillah*. However, for someone who was born in Adar Rishon of a leap year, we are not concerned with the Adar adjacent to Nisan. For him, Adar Rishon is the primary Adar, just as his birth was in Adar Rishon. The *Magen Avraham*, however, follows *Tosafos* that a leap year means increasing the year by adding a month, so

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

that the bar-mitzvah year is thirteen months long. Therefore he says that we should require the passage of a full year of thirteen months since the boy's twelfth birthday. It would come out according to his opinion that my bar mitzvah would be next month instead of now.

Shabbos Candles and *Gerama*

Moshe Chananel Rabenstein

The Gemara in *Bava Kamma* has a *machlokes* about how we view the damages caused by a fire that traveled from one person's backyard to someone else's backyard. We know that if someone's fire damages something, that person is responsible for the costs. However, halachically, that is not such a no-brainer. This is because there is a concept called *gerama*, which means: if someone damages another person when there are other forces assisting the one doing the damage, he is exempt from paying for the damage.

For example, in this case, where someone's fire traveled from his backyard to someone else's backyard with the wind assisting the fire's movement, I would have thought that this is a case of *gerama*, and a court cannot obligate him to pay (although it is proper for him to pay to fulfill the will of Hashem). Therefore, the Torah must state explicitly כִּי תִצַּא אֵשׁ – that the damager is liable even for a traveling fire. That is, there is no concept of *gerama* when it comes to fire.

There is a dispute between R' Yochanan and Reish Lakish regarding a fire's damages: R' Yochanan holds that אֵשׁוֹ מְשׁוֹם חֲצִיזוֹ, *his fire is like his arrows*; just like when someone shoots his arrows and damages property he is liable to pay because it is as if he is pushing the arrow through the air, so too when a person's fire causes damage he is liable because it is as if he is relighting the fire every step of the way as it travels. In this case, it would be as if he personally lit everything the fire ignited in its travel. However, Reish Lakish holds that אֵשׁוֹ מְשׁוֹם מְמוֹנוֹ, *his fire is like his property*; just like when someone's animal damages he is responsible even though it was his animal and not him that caused the damage, so too here, when his fire damages, he is responsible. This would be a lesser level of responsibility.

The *Nimukei Yosef* poses a question on R' Yochanan's point of view. He writes: If it is really true that when you light a fire, it is as if you are relighting it every second as a new action, what about Shabbos candles? If it is considered to be a new action of lighting every second into Shabbos then you would be desecrating Shabbos every second that the candle is burning.

The *Nimukei Yosef* answers that the act of lighting the fire, and also the act of the fire burning everything that it burns, is the same thing, it is as if it occurred at the same time, thereby answering the question of Shabbos candles. The burning of the candles on Shabbos IS the action of lighting the candles during the week. In other words, even though the candles continue to burn on Shabbos, every new action of relighting the candles on Shabbos is considered to have happened before Shabbos started, at the very second that it was lit the first time.

The *Nimukei Yosef* then supports his answer. He writes: If my answer is not correct, then you could also ask the following question. If it is correct that the fire is being relit every second then why is anyone EVER responsible for damages of fire? If the last action that he "did" is considered his wrongdoing, he had no way of stopping it? Clearly, that is not the case.

Reward for Mitzvos

Shmuel Dixler

One of the nice things about becoming bar mitzvah in the week of *Parshas Netzavim* is the wealth of well-known and oft-quoted *pesukim* in the *parshah*. The *pasuk* with all the many extra dots is one of these (Devarim 28:29):

הַסִּפְתֵּרְתָּ לָהּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהַגַּלְתָּ לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ, עַד עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת.

This *pasuk* writes that the “secrets” are for Hashem but the revealed things are for us and our children: “לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ”. These happen to be the two words with the dots on top, but we are not going to talk about that. Instead we ask: Why are these two words written at all? Why is it important for the Torah to specify the revealed parts are both for “us” and “our children”?

To answer this question, the sefer *Mayanah Shel Torah* brings a Midrash from *Parshas Ki Seitzei*. The Midrash is written on the *pasuk* talking about the mitzvah of *shiluach haken*, chasing away the mother bird before taking the eggs:

למה הדבר דומה, למלך ששכר לו פועלים והכניס אותן לתוך פרדסו סתם ולא גילה להן מהו שכרו של פרדס, שלא יניחו דבר ששכרו מועט וילכו ויעשו דבר ששכרו מרובה.

The Midrash says: this is comparable to a king who hires workers to tend his orchard. Although the wages for working on each species of tree are different, he doesn't tell this to the workers. At the end of the day, the workers approach the king for their wages. The king asks the first one, “What tree did you tend?” When he responds that it was the olive tree, the king pays one gold coin. The next worker approaches and says he tended the carob tree. To this one the king only gives one half gold coin. Of course the workers complain that the king should have informed them ahead of time which trees would pay the most. The king explains that he

did not do so, so that they won't all leave the lower paying trees in order to work on the higher paying trees, thereby guaranteeing that all the trees will be tended.

The Midrash compares this to the way Hashem deals with us. The text of the Midrash is:

הקב"ה לא גילה לבריות מהו מתן שכרה של כל מצוה ומצוה כדי שיעשו כל המצוות בתום.

He also does not reveal the reward for each mitzvah to us so that all will be performed with purity.

There are two exceptions where the Torah does reveal the specific reward. The Midrash itself specifies these as *shiluach haken* and *kibud av v'em*. Both of these mitzvos have the same reward of long life.

Mayanah Shel Torah explains that these two mitzvos are hinted at in the *pasuk* we quoted earlier. The “hidden things,” meaning the reward for each mitzvah, only Hashem knows, but the “revealed things,” meaning the two mitzvos for which the Torah tells us the reward, are for “us and our children.” He further explains that the mitzvah of *kibud av* is hinted in the words “for our children” while the word “us” hints to the mitzvah of *shiluach haken*.

With this explanation in mind, the reason Hashem revealed these two mitzvos is plain: While the performance of *kibud av* is very different than *shiluch haken* they both have the same reward, teaching us that the nature of the mitzvah does not determine the reward.

The problem is, this Midrash appears to contradict a well-known statement in *Pirkei Avos* (5: 21): *בן הא הא אומר לפום צערא אגרא*, which means the greater the trouble or difficulty of a mitzvah, the greater reward. Since we know that some mitzvos are more difficult than others, we should be able to rank the mitzvos based on the difficulty to perform

them. This undermines the purpose of Hashem hiding the reward for the specific mitzvah from us.

The *Maharal* in his commentary *Derech Chaim* on *Pirkei Avos* (2:1) provides an answer. There are really two parts to the reward for each mitzvah: one part is for the *tirchah* (the effort or trouble) to do the mitzvah while the other part is for the mitzvah itself. For example, when a person walks to shul for davening, we say he receives *schar halichah*, reward for the walking. The effort to do the mitzvah, in this case walking, merits reward, while the mitzvah of davening itself also merits reward. Contrary to popular belief, *schar halichah*, because it is a type of effort, applies to all mitzvos, not just to davening. When the Midrash teaches us that Hashem hides the reward, that is for the mitzvah itself, but the reward for the *tirchah* is indeed revealed to us.

While this *Maharal* does answer the contradiction, the answer still leaves us with a question on the Midrash. Since we know more effort equates to more reward, won't people still seek out and focus on those mitzvos that are more difficult so they will receive the highest reward, while neglecting the other mitzvos?

To finally answer this question, we turn to the *Mesillas Yesharim*. In the first chapter he states that the purpose of mitzvos is three-fold: (1) to receive reward, (2) to bring us closer to Hashem and (3) to repair the world, which is otherwise known as *tikun olam*. Whether a mitzvah is able to accomplish one or all three of these will depend on how well one does the mitzvah. This includes: preparation for the mitzvah, the *maaseh hamitzvah* (the performance of the mitzvah), and one's *kavanah* (intention) during the mitzvah. The rest of the sefer goes on to explain the importance and provide strategies on how to enhance mitzvos beyond simple performance. The more one does in these areas, the greater effect it will have on the person and the world.

We learn from *Mesillas Yesharim* that ideally Hashem does not want us to focus on reward at all. The lesson we learn from the hiding of the amount of reward for the mitzvah itself should be applied to the reward for *tirchah* as well. We learn that reward is not the point; rather serving Hashem with pure intent is the point and the true purpose of mitzvos.

In fact, if you read carefully, the Midrash actually makes this point. The *Midrash Rabbah* uses the word בתוֹם: “in order they perform all the mitzvos בתוֹם” The word בתוֹם means with purity. When the *Maharal* quotes the same Midrash, he brings it from the *Midrash Tanchuma* which uses a slightly different word: “in order they should perform them מושלם. The word מושלם means completely. In both cases the point of the Midrash is to say: don’t just do the act of the mitzvah, but do the whole, complete mitzvah, including the proper preparation and intent. Hashem is teaching us there is much more to mitzvos than reward.

Navigating the *Chinuch* System ¹ (part 1)

Introduction

At the outset I must express deep, sincere *hakaros hatov* for the outstanding bastions of *chinuch* with which we are blessed in our town. They are led by outstanding individuals who put their entire being into providing the best education for our children. I personally have been privileged over the years to talk with the administrators of most of our institutions – about either my own children or on behalf of parents who requested my input – and have found them all – without exception – to be perceptive and patient, sensitive and sagacious.

This special section of our annual *kuntress* is meant as a guide to taking full advantage of the wonderful opportunities we have as well as to avoiding possible pitfalls.

Outstanding Mechanchim

Members of the community have offered anecdotes to their experiences in the world of *chinuch*. Here are two:

[1] I don't remember much from when I was seven years old... but I do remember the way my second grade rebbi used to call me tzaddik. The smile that shone on his face, the way he looked at me each time I spoke to him. He always, always called me tzaddik. He called all of the boys tzaddik, but it didn't feel like that – when he said it I really felt that I was his little tzaddik. The feeling stays with me till today. This rebbi is battling cancer, and I can't tell you how pained I feel, how close I feel to him. Neshamos like these are fashioned to be mechanchim.

¹ Editor's note: This section is the result of a cumulative group effort, so I am not putting my byline to it. May it help us take full advantage of the tremendous resources we have in our town for the *chinuch* of our children and not get flustered by the challenges that might arise.

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

[2] One rebbi saved my boy. His previous rebbi, with whom he did not connect, said he needed to go to Ptach for remedial instruction. The principal said, “He is a bad boy; we don't want him in the school.” But his new rebbi believed in him, connected with him, and taught him. This boy is now a Rosh Kollel.

But I don't think it can be said any better than by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer in his two volumes of *Class Acts* (ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications). Those books should be required reading for anyone who wants to fully appreciate the efforts our teachers and administrators put into their work. In the next segment of this section, we present part of his introduction to *Class Acts Volume 2*.

Class Acts

Rabbi Nachman Seltzer¹

Rabbi Binyomin Ginsberg of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, penned a *chinuch* column in *Hamodia's Inyan Magazine*, in which he discussed the need on the part of parents to recognize the greatness inherent in the vast majority of our *mechanchim* and to show tangible appreciation to their children's educators with a handwritten card whose message has clearly been invested with much thought. "Show sincere appreciation ..." he wrote. "The results will be powerful... and it is a relatively easy contribution to make – but one that will create a huge dent in the area of *chinuch* challenges."

Rabbi Ginsberg quoted a few examples of exceptional educators and posited that rather than being the exception, they are much closer to the norm. With his kind permission, let me share some of these stories of teachers' "class acts."

He told of a certain rebbi who meets with every student before they graduate from eighth grade and go on to high school. During the meeting, the rebbi imparts *divrei chizuk*, prepares the boy for the realities he can expect to face in the future, and wishes him the best. The rebbi then hands his student a small wallet. In the wallet is a card with instructions for contacting the rebbi twenty-four hours a day, a long-distance calling card, a \$20 bill, a *Tefillas HaDerech* card, and a handwritten, personal *berachah* from the rebbi to the *talmid*. How incredible is that? What a class act!

¹ Reproduced from the introduction to "Class Acts Vol. 2" by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer, with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

He told of another rebbi who has the names of all his *talmidim* pasted on the inside of his siddur so that he can include them in his *tefillos*.

Class act!

He told of a *morah* who took a student shopping for shoes because the girl's parents couldn't afford to do so themselves.

Class act!

He told of another rebbi who personally paid for professional testing for one of his students so that he could ascertain how to best meet the boy's educational needs.

Class act!

He told of another *morah* who makes house calls to assist her students with their homework.

Class act!

He then wrote the following: As you read the above list, you may be wondering where these heroic *rebbeim* and *morahs* are, and asking yourself how come *they* are not the ones teaching *your* children. I can tell you that, while not every teacher goes the extra mile, I have met many just like them; some of them may very well be in your children's schools and you don't even know it. I would like to suggest that if we begin showing proper appreciation to our *mechanchim*, we will see the cumulative quality of *all* the *rebbeim* and *morahs* improve beyond measure.

Rabbi Ginsberg described an event that takes place annually in Minneapolis. Toward the end of the school year there is a special *kiddush* known as the "*mechanchim kiddush*." Parents sponsor a special *kiddush* for all the *mechanchim* and *mechanchos* in town. Not a *kiddush* that merely pays lip service to the concept, but one that shows their sincere appreciation to their children's dedicated teachers. How special!

Let me end with Rabbi Ginsberg's own inspirational words: In conclusion, it is time for us to tell our *rebbeim* and *morahs* how much we value them ... because they really are so incredibly valuable. It is time for us to recognize how much we owe them ... because we owe them a debt that can never be repaid. And it is time for us to go out of our way to show them *hakaras hatov* ... *because* they are truly deserving of our sincere thanks and appreciation.

Rabbi Nachman Seltzer
Ramat Beit Shemesh, 2015

Navigating the *Chinuch* System (part 2)

Having seen the types of mechanchim with which we are blessed, let's try to understand why people sometimes grumble about the chinuch system. I think there are two basic explanations of this conundrum.

The Takanah of R' Yehoshua ben Gamla

The first lies in what I heard from the Rosh HaYeshivah, Moreinu HaRav Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg z"l. If universal education is such a great idea, why was it not instituted until R' Yehoshua ben Gamla came along? The answer is that a school system is not the ideal method of educating our children. How can it be that twenty different children (hopefully not too many more) can learn from a single teacher, when they each have differing intellects, preferred methods of absorbing the material, and a wide range of interests? However, R' Yehoshua ben Gamla held that it was worth sacrificing the age-old preferred method of individual instruction from parent to child because of the orphans who did not have the luxury of such an education.

Therefore, as simple statistics show, we are left now with a good chance that your child will not connect with a particular teacher in a particular school year. And when you multiply that by twelve grades, and then by another five to ten teachers per year, and then by the number of children you have, it is impossible that every one of your children will have a positive experience with every teacher he or she will have during his or her school career.

Money

The second explanation can be summed up in one word: "money." The underlying problem of the great majority of issues is lack of funding. If the schools had unlimited resources, the administrators would not be stretched so thin; teachers could be paid decent salaries, allowing them to devote their talents exclusively to teaching rather than having to find other ways to make ends meet; the books and curriculum could be

brought up to date; and there would be sufficient funds to provide for children with special needs. Instead, in many cases, the same administrators are required to oversee a student body and teaching staff that has more than doubled in times that become more challenging as the years go by; burnt-out teachers who would be better off retiring cannot afford to because the schools cannot offer a retirement plan for them; and some children cannot be serviced properly because the resources needed for their education is too expensive.

Whose fault is it? This would require an entirely new article.¹ But briefly, the fault lies in the flawed approach that the parent body is responsible to fund the school, just as the consumers are required to pay for all their groceries at the supermarket.² In truth, schools are community requirements for which every member of the community should contribute – just as they contribute to build a community mikveh, even though they will not all be using it.

¹ There is in fact a very excellent article by Rabbi Mordechai Willig, *Jewish Education, Family, and Community*, available at torahweb.org. I tried to get permission to reprint it for our kuntress but was unable to elicit a response from the site.

² Not exactly like the supermarket, because some schools claim that even the so-called “full tuition” does not really cover the total expenses of educating the child, besides the fact that some children require more resources than others. (Dyslexia, ADHD, and bad *middos* are not limited to low-income families.) I have often asked that this being the case, why is it that lower income families are forced to part with a greater percentage of their earnings than comparatively wealthy families? If you are a Democrat, the wealthy should pay a greater percentage of their earnings, as they do to keep the country running with their taxes. And even according to the extreme Republican model, the wealthy would pay the *same* percentage as the lower income. To add insult to injury, some schools “punish” the lower income families with other tasks to make up for the loss they cause.

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

Issues that can be faced

Lest you should not think that I am naive in my praise of our schools and administrators, I will list some real-life experiences that have been shared with me over the years. These are actual occurrences although some facts have been changed to respect anonymity.³

- It is very easy for a teacher who is not technologically savvy or competent to simply lambast any technology, without having any understanding of how his or her students are using it. However, this will not earn the respect of the students, and it will not lead to proper use of technology – which is what the goal should be.
- Our children experience teachers who claim that the troubles of the world derive from their being too interested in sports or their lack of *tziniyus*. One teacher even attributed our failure to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash to one girl's lipstick! By the same token, there are teachers who attribute something good to our children's heart-felt prayers at school, only for the children to discover when they get home that the person for whom they were davening had suddenly died.
- There are teachers who cannot manage their tempers, and their pupils are subject to their ridicule or yelling. And it does not have to be a loud, physical scream; it can be a softly-spoken message of disdain for your child.
- Most veteran teachers have the invaluable experience needed to help them reach any kind of student in the best possible manner, and they don't feel that their tenure absolves them from learning new skills. However, there are some who are stuck in the past and still use the same mimeographed stencils they used 30-40 years ago in their classes. While they should be endorsed for

³ Furthermore, some of these experiences come from out-of-town, so do not try to attach a certain one to any specific case about which you think you know.

their organizational skills, one wonders if they expect students two generations later to learn the same way as their predecessors. This also goes for school curricula and policies that might be outdated.⁴

- Some schools consider it in their domain to admonish their female students on their mode of dress, appointing an “enforcement officer” and expecting teachers to act as policemen “on the beat.” However, the standards chosen are often far beyond those of the majority of the students and their parents. This is clearly a case of individuals presenting and requiring what they find on their level of observance as “the truth.” A very dangerous stance to take when children are endowed with a heightened awareness of hypocrisy.
- Some teachers who perhaps come from out of town feel that it is their mission to imbue our children with their native outlook on life. This includes statements like, “Anyone who goes to college will go to Gehinom”; “I would rather shoot my husband that go to a mall”; “The purpose of women is to have as many babies as they can.” And to the boys, “You can’t be *frum* if you don’t go to yeshivah and learn in Kollel for ten years”; “Working is only for *baalei batim*.” Again, when positions are presented as truth and as Torah, the situation becomes dangerous, when our institutions’ goals should be to develop Jews who are happy to observe the Torah.

⁴ A personal note. I find it a lack of *kavod HaTorah* when our holy Torah or Nach is used like להבדיל a telephone book to sharpen our children’s memories by asking them countless למי אמר למי’s and “what word in *Rashi* teaches you this lesson?” I also find it objectionable to use our holy works as a means of teaching *dikduk*. Yes, *dikduk* is important, but there are fresh ways of teaching this subject. Torah and Nach should be used to teach values, nothing else. [Yes, I know *Rashi* uses *dikduk* in his commentary. But he is not doing it to teach *dikduk*; he is doing it so we will understand the *pasuk*’s lesson properly.]

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

How to deal with issues

Before we start, let's first put things in perspective. I think we would all be grateful if we could say that we make the correct decisions in our interactions with people ninety percent of the time. However, even if we were on the mark ninety-five percent, that would leave us with five percent of our interactions below par. We therefore do not have to be talking about teachers or administrators who are evil human beings. Most everyone in *chinuch* has exhibited much self-sacrifice to enter a profession that provides more spiritual satisfaction than financial security. We can therefore reframe our question as to how to react when we feel our child has been wronged or is in a dangerous position.

Let's list some ideas:

(1) Most importantly, take your child seriously. Many children can be and have been emotionally and spiritually harmed by inappropriate *chinuch* methods. The worst thing you can do is ignore your child and assume things will work themselves out. They most likely will not, even if the damage may not be the most extreme.

(2) Give the administrator or teacher the respect he or she deserves. You can assume that they are underpaid and overworked, and it is not their fault. Most of them are genuinely sincere, and will work out things to your satisfaction if you do not belittle them. They may even be able to identify problems for you that stem from outside the school.

(3) Do not threaten to take your child out if your demands are not met. You will get a better response if the administrators feel that you are with them and not against them. Schools are not a fish market where you can hop around to get the best bargain. Make your loyalty to the school of your choice clear at all times so that you will all be in it together.

(4) Identify the administrator with whom you can work best. If a school has an administrator with whom you cannot relate, do not try to change

him or her. When you choose a school, ensure that there is someone there that is on your wave-length, who will be your partner in the *chinuch* of your child. Your LOR should be able to help you identify the best administrator for you in each school.

(5) Use your relationship with the administrator to get the teachers that are best for your children. If one of your children is “blessed” with a screamer et al., discuss it with this administrator. If he/she has earned your trust, he/she will deal with you frankly and try to work out a switch or some other innovative idea.⁵

(6) Recognize that the administrator has much experience in *chinuch* and seek out his or her advice when practical. This cements the relationship, and you might even get some good ideas about an issue you face with your child.

(7) Even a teacher who is the greatest mismatch for your child has something valuable to offer. Have your child try to recognize the one or two things each day that he or she has gained from the teacher.

(8) Mental health days. When a child has a virus, he stays home from school until he’s better. Consider the child’s mental health as well, and you might decide to let him or her stay home for a day instead of facing a teacher or a substitute who will be unbearable.

(9) Reading this article might be the best help because it is important for you to realize that you are not crazy, too emotional, and fooled by your children. Yes, our teachers and even administrators make mistakes just

⁵ I still remember a difficult teacher I had in my schooling, and when my parents went to discuss this with the *menahel*, he first confided with them that the teacher was under stress, and he then made some arrangement to decrease the tension. I don’t remember the arrangement, but I do remember having my feelings validated; and that is what probably solved the issue more than the arrangement.

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

like we do. So when you are faced with a difficulty coming from the school, realize that you are not alone. There is nothing wrong with you or your child. And your entire family will recover, realizing that *mechanchim* make mistakes like we do, and why they all might not meet the standards we expect and deserve.

We will now present an excellent article involving one potential issue in boy's schooling and how the author advises dealing with it. You will note that the author presents a serious issue that a child can face, but instead of having you waste energy in a useless direction, he suggests a practical solution that will most likely be effective. Let this be a model for our interactions with the wonderful bastions of *chinuch* that we have in our town.

Lost in Gemara

Rabbi Allon Yisroel Bruckenstein ¹

What I am going to say might surprise you. But according to my assessment of the situation, your son is not alone. In a typical classroom, approximately 20% of the students actually understand the Gemara and another 20% are completely lost. The remaining 60% know how to "play the game," which means that they know how to repeat what they heard, get the right answers, and memorize the material without really understanding a thing. I have spoken with many educators and they support my premise. Some in fact claimed that my figures are too generous.

What can we do about this situation that is leaving our youth uninterested and frustrated with the "meat and potatoes" of Jewish education?

Firstly, I believe that our focus is misdirected. Instead of trying to teach material, we should be focusing on showing our students the beauty of Torah. The average student views Gemara as an exercise in futility. For example, Yosef needed help with 5th grade Gemara. He was at the bottom of the class and getting extremely frustrated.

At one point I asked Yosef what the goal of the Gemara was. In all sincerity, he asked me, "You mean the Gemara has a goal?" To which I responded, "What do you think, they're just trying to drive you crazy?" His smirk and shrug of his shoulder indicated that, in fact, that is exactly what he thought. From then on, we spent every session developing an understanding of the Gemara's goals, logic, and thought processes. By the time he finished 8th grade, he was at the head of the class.

¹ Rabbi Allon Yisroel Bruckenstein is an educational psychologist based in Yerushalayim and a son-in-law of Rabbi and Mrs. Tzvi Shur of our town. This article is reprinted with his permission. It first appeared in *Tachlis* magazine.

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

Secondly, our teaching methods, in general, are inappropriate for the majority of our students. The typical way that Gemara is taught involves reading the text and explaining it as you go along. This works well for students whose thought processes function in a sequential fashion. The subject is built one step at a time in a very logical order. To follow the process, the student's mind must be flexible enough to juggle several options and factors simultaneously.

Many students, however, do not think in this manner. Rather they need to see the whole picture and then break it down into its component parts. In order to do this, the teacher must have a complete handle on 'the entire subject, enabling him to approach the problem from different angles. This global approach encourages analysis, comparing, and contrasting, before getting bogged down by the textual skills.

Thirdly, it is often assumed that the students will pick up the necessary thinking skills automatically through the learning. Unfortunately this is not true. The thinking skills mentioned above, as well as summarization and reading comprehension skills, must be taught, like any other skill. We often take for granted the workings of a *kal vachomer*, assuming that the students will understand it just by hearing it. Deductive reasoning is also very difficult to teach by reading and explaining. Instead the students should be given examples, where they themselves can get the experience of making their own deductions.

In general, we want our students to be active participants in the learning process. The aforementioned methods lend themselves to greater involvement and interest, leading to a true appreciation of Our Sages' wisdom and consequently a true enjoyment of learning. Since your son's rebbe will probably not be reading this article, I suggest that you, or a tutor, prepare him for class using these suggestions. Going into class with a general picture of the inner workings of the Gemara will enable him to tackle the more textual aspect of learning and follow the methodology presented in class.

Navigating the Chinuch System (part 3)

Unfortunately, there are times when there is no practical solution for your child to succeed in the school he or she is attending. This could be because there is no one in the administration that you can relate to, there are no compatible teachers available, or there are social issues such as bullying that the school is not able to handle.

If you are faced with such a scenario, first get expert advice that the problem is actually with the school and not with your child – or you. Once that is done, you might have no other option than to take him or her out of school. What will you do then? First, consider another school in town or close by that you might have dismissed at first for the wrong reasons, such as wanting your child to be someone who he or she isn't. But if there is no viable alternative, you might have to consider homeschooling.

This is not for everyone, and it certainly presents its own set of challenges. In other words, it is not the easy way out; it requires a serious financial and time commitment to replace the educational and social systems that a school provides. Nevertheless, you should not think that the entire concept is foreign to Torah ideas. If you recall, we have previously mentioned that this is how the original *chinuch* worked in *Klal Yisrael*, and it was only because of R' Yehoshua ben Gamla's enactment on behalf of orphans that a school system was established. (This should prevent wholesale embracement of the homeschooling idea because as a community we have to follow the *takanos* of Chazal.)

To introduce this concept, we now present a thoughtful article that addresses some of the many issues that need to be explored when considering homeschooling. Of course, inclusion of this article is not a blanket endorsement of everything contained in it. Rather, if you do decide to go along this path, make sure that you have expert advice to guide you.

Home Schooling: A Growing Trend ¹

Mrs. Avigayil Perry

Every morning, the four Aldrich children do not rush out the door to catch a bus or carpool—they head to the living room.

Ranging from the age of five to fourteen, the Aldrich children, who live in Indianapolis, Indiana, are part of a growing number of Orthodox kids across the country who are being homeschooled—that is, they are taught by parents who have made the decision not to relegate their children’s education to others, but to fulfill the mitzvah of *chinuch* themselves.

Homeschooling in the general US population is on the rise, becoming more mainstream and accepted, as is evident from the increasing number of resources available to homeschooling families. In the Orthodox community, it is still a small but growing trend.

Yael Aldrich, who is viewed by many as a leader in the Orthodox homeschooling community, sees homeschooling becoming increasingly popular among Orthodox families with young children. “More people are interested and actually putting homeschooling on the table of possibilities. It will be interesting to see if they continue homeschooling as their children enter elementary and middle school,” Aldrich says.

“A lot of people don’t realize that homeschooling these days is a lot easier than it used to be,” says Yael Resnick, a forty-seven-year-old mother of five in Sharon, Massachusetts, who has homeschooled her children for fourteen years. “It’s actually overwhelming how many

¹ Reprinted with permission from the Fall 2015 edition of *Jewish Action*, the magazine of the Orthodox Union. Thank you to the Assistant Editor, Sara Olson of Ranchleigh, for facilitating the authorization.

classes and activities are being offered to homeschoolers now—at museums, libraries, schools, parks and community centers.”

In Baltimore, for example, home to many *frum* homeschooling families, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra offers midweek daytime concerts that attract homeschooling families.

Technology has also created an upsurge in Jewish homeschooling as online programs like Room613.net gain popularity. Six years ago, Resnick’s husband, Rabbi Yosef Resnick, who has a master’s degree in education, founded Room613.net, an online program with, he explains, “a relaxed and inviting atmosphere that encourages all students to learn at their best and feel confident.” Rabbi Resnick says he usually forms deep relationships with his students. “I really love and care about my students just like any teacher,” he says. “After a while, you forget that you are meeting in a virtual classroom.”

A Homeschooling Network

About two million children in the United States are homeschooled, according to the National Home Education Research Institute. The number of Orthodox Jewish homeschoolers is more difficult to determine. Aldrich, forty-one, runs an online support network via Yahoo for 450 homeschooling families—but the group doesn’t encompass everyone. She sees about 200 Orthodox homeschooling families in Facebook groups who are not in her Yahoo group. “Then people always tell me of other people who homeschool whom I do not know at all,” she says. “So I estimate two to three thousand Orthodox Jewish homeschoolers, and it’s growing!”

Aldrich coordinated the Sixth Annual Torah Home Schooling Conference over a year ago. Held in the spring of 2014, the conference, which took place in Englewood, New Jersey, drew about 100 participants from across the country, from young couples considering homeschooling their children to veteran homeschoolers. The presenters—most of whom

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

are experienced homeschoolers—covered a variety of topics, such as “Homeschooling from a Father’s Perspective,” “Homeschooling Children with Special Needs,” “Finding Your Homeschooling Kodesh Style,” “Technology and Your Homeschool” and “Homeschooling the Preschool Years.”

What motivates these parents to turn home into school, to spend their days with pencils and textbooks, worksheets and word problems? Of course with escalating tuition, some families choose homeschooling as a survival tactic. But for quite a few Orthodox parents around the country, the decision is based on ideology, not finances.

Rebecca Masinter, a thirty-four-year-old mother of six living in Baltimore, has never sent her children, ranging between the ages of five months to twelve years, to school. She describes Baltimore as a very accepting and inclusive community. “This is a bonus when choosing an alternative path for one’s family,” she says. “Because it’s a large community, you don’t experience the same pressure to put children in the local day school for the sake of supporting a [community institution], as is the case in some smaller communities.”

Masinter began homeschooling in order to have more quality time with and a greater influence on her children. Having worked as a classroom teacher prior to homeschooling, she was no stranger to teaching. However, homeschooling, she says, is very different from teaching in a regular school. “Homeschooling is mothering, twenty-four hours a day,” she says.

Homeschooling appeals to Aldrich because she can customize her children’s education to fit their needs. Aldrich has clear goals: to provide her children with a “broad education that gives them the ability to think critically about issues in the Jewish and secular world,” and to enable them to “become self-learners.”

One Family's Homeschooling Journey

Aldrich, who holds master's degrees in management and Jewish communal services, first discovered homeschooling when she and her family moved to Japan. Her husband, Rabbi Dr. Daniel Aldrich, a political science professor at Purdue University, needed to move there for research purposes. The Aldriches were not thrilled with the school options in Japan for Gavriel Tzvi, their oldest son who was then a first grader. (No Jewish schools exist in Japan.) "Some Orthodox kids went to the Japanese international schools or public schools, while others were homeschooled," Aldrich explains. The Aldriches decided to homeschool. After their year in Japan came to a close, the family moved to Indiana. Even though a community day school exists where they currently live, they decided to continue homeschooling.

Aldrich uses a rigorous curriculum based on *The Well-Trained Mind* by Susan Wise Bauer. She feels drawn toward classical education and chose this particular curriculum because of its focus on "language, literature and grammar." Her older children study Latin.

Homeschoolers often find tutors or teachers to teach their children Judaic studies, science, art or other subjects. They also make extensive use of online resources. For example, Gavriel Tzvi spends time each day learning Gemara with the community rabbi, giving Aldrich time to work with her other children. Each child works independently while waiting for his or her turn with Aldrich. Aldrich appreciates the flexibility of homeschooling.

"We can always adjust our schedule according to the kids' needs," she says. And on nice days, the family will drop their lessons and take an outing. "Instead of snow days, we have sunny days." How do homeschoolers get their kids to actually sit down and learn? "My kids are not angels," Aldrich admits. But she motivates them by reminding them that homeschooling is a "privilege." Since her kids feel that their

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

education is “superior,” and that they would rather be homeschooled, they are inspired to buckle down and get to work.

When Yeshivah’s not a fit

Some parents turn to homeschooling after experiencing problems in the yeshivah system. When Rivkah Harper, a forty-one-year-old mother of four boys who recently relocated to Dallas, Texas, sent her oldest son to preschool, she saw it was not a good fit. “He is very active,” explains Harper. “Had we kept him in school, he would have been the kid [who is constantly] in the principal’s office. Instead of focusing on his schooling, we would be focused on trying to keep him out of the office.” Harper, who holds a bachelor’s degree in music and was a stay-at-home mom, initially felt reluctant about homeschooling. After many months of research and her husband’s encouragement, she decided to take the plunge.

Leah Samuels, a forty-something-year-old mother of four in Baltimore, also never thought that she would homeschool. Her two sons are both dyslexic. Her nine-year-old is “bright and creative” but cannot recall material. Because he could grasp material when initially presented but could not recall it the following day, teachers believed this behavior was intentional, and called him lazy, Samuels explains. He began getting bullied by his classmates as well. After many attempts at resolving the issues, Samuels realized that she needed another option. Initially, the Samuelses looked into public school as well as a private school for children with severe learning disabilities. The public schools could not offer the appropriate services for the high level of remediation that her two boys required. Nor could the Samuelses afford the high tuition costs upward of \$35,000 for the private school. They seemed to have only one option: homeschooling.

During the typical day at home, her sons’ schedules include sessions with a reading specialist and speech therapist, enabling Samuels to work with each kid individually. Her older son has a tutor for Judaic studies while

her second son took a year off from Hebrew reading as per a psychologist's recommendation. In the afternoons, the boys attend group co-op classes for physical education, art and music.

"My kids used to be afraid to speak up in group settings, but now they feel confident and do not fear being themselves," she says. Samuels hopes to go back to school to pursue a degree in special education, both to better help her own children and other families.

Is Homeschooling Always the Answer?

Homeschooling does not work for everyone. Kate Friedman, a thirty-one-year-old stay-at-home mother of two girls in St. Louis, Missouri, initially felt drawn toward homeschooling for many of the same reasons others do. "I saw that family life can be hectic between school, homework and activities, leaving very little family time," she says. However, she eventually realized that homeschooling is not necessarily "a perfect alternative." She kept both her daughters home until age three, and initially anticipated keeping them home longer until she realized that in the *frum* community, all the other playmates for her older daughter, now age five, were in school. "Above age two and a half, a child needs so much social interaction, and it's difficult when the child only depends on the parent," she says.

Similarly, this past year, the Aldriches realized that Gavriel Tzvi, who is turning fourteen, has few *shomer Shabbat* friends to hang out with in their community; the local school only goes through eighth grade. While the parents would have loved to educate their son at home longer, this fall, he will be attending a yeshivah high school in Boston, where the whole family will be relocating.

Gavriel Tzvi applied to three yeshivah high schools, all of which accepted him. Interestingly enough, the application process for him was almost identical to that of boys who attend day school or yeshivah. He submitted a parent-created transcript, as well as recommendation letters

Section VIII: Navigating the *Chinuch* System

from his Gemara *rebbe*, bar mitzvah tutor, principal (Rabbi Dr. Aldrich) and teacher (Mrs. Aldrich). At each school, he was tested in Gemara as well as in math and English. “We were worried that our unusual situation would place him at a disadvantage, but due to hard work and *siyata d’Shmaya*, Gavriel Tzvi succeeded beyond our wildest dreams,” Aldrich says. “We feel even more confident that homeschooling can produce a quality human being and *ben Torah*.”

The Critics

Most yeshivah educators and administrators strongly oppose homeschooling. Rabbi Shneur Aisenstark, dean of Bais Yaakov Bnos Raizel Seminary of Montreal, believes that homeschooling should only take place when “a child has a personality disorder or severe learning disability that cannot be helped with a resource room or other professional assistance,” he says.

“Even if the education in the school is inferior and you think that you can do better at home, it is not worth the exchange of knowledge for loss of social interaction that helps build the personality.”

Rabbi Mordechai Wecker, senior consultant at Toras Chaim, a day school in Portsmouth, Virginia, who has been in education for over thirty years, cites eminent social psychologist and philosopher David Emile Durkheim, who referred to the classroom as a “small society.” With the technological explosion, children have far less opportunities for interpersonal interactions, he says, a problem that is only exacerbated for the homeschooled child. Furthermore, he says, “Classroom facilitation by a competent teacher encourages cross-fertilization of ideas that promotes out-of-the-box thinking.”

Homeschoolers maintain that homeschooling families get together regularly for various outings such as bowling, art museums and other trips, and children get to socialize by attending shul and participating in youth groups such as NCSY.

Social issues aside, critics note that homeschooling parents lack teaching credentials and, if the families live in a small Jewish community, by homeschooling their children they are failing to support the local community school.

Still others claim that because kids are not tested or assessed in any formal way, it is difficult to gauge whether or not they are actually learning. Masinter is not against testing and grading in a school setting but feels that in a homeschooling situation, there's no real need for grades or report cards. "As the educating parent, I am already familiar with what each child has and has not mastered at a given point," she says. "I see no need to give an artificial label based on how others perceive growth." She also believes it is "highly dangerous to assign a poor grade in *limudei kodesh*. It's simply not true that a child can't be good at Chumash, because it's our inheritance and lifeblood. If a child is struggling with the material, I am not presenting it in a way that he needs to learn it."

Many parents concur that if homeschooling were more accepted in the *frum* community, more families would be interested in pursuing it. "Usually community leaders request everyone's enrollment [in the local school] to make the school [stronger], and they lack passion for homeschooling," Friedman says. "Each family adds a new dimension to a school. But then, how do you balance what's best for the kid and family versus what's best for the community?"

Of course homeschooling requires that one parent stays home full time. This obviously does not work for many families, given the high cost of living a *frum* lifestyle. While homeschooling is growing, Aldrich predicts that it will always be a small movement within the Orthodox Jewish community.

Derech Etz HaChaim (of the Ramchal)

Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman¹

דרך עץ החיים

מאת רבינו הרמח"ל

על התורה נאמר (ירמיה כג, כט) "הלוא כה דברי כאש נאום ה'". והודיענו בזה, כי אמת הדבר שהתורה היא ממש אור אחד ניתן לישראל לאור בו, כי לא כחכמות הנכריות וידיעות החול שאינן אלא ידיעת דבר מה אשר ישיג השכל בטרחו. אך התורה הנה קודש ה', אשר לה מציאות גבוהה בגבהי מרומים.² וכאשר יעסוק בה האדם למטה אור היא אשר תאיר בנשמתו להגיע אותו אל גנוי מרומים,³ גנוי הבורא ית"ש,⁴ בדרך הארה ופעולה חזקה אשר היא

פירוש הקצר

¹ מדפיסים בקונטרס שלנו החלק של הקדמת רבינו הרמח"ל בספרו דרך עץ החיים שעוסק בחשיבות התורה, ע"פ הקצר וגם מילואים שמקווים להוציא לאור בשעה טובה ומוצלחת בס"ד. ונשמח לקבל הערות.

² בענין השפע המיוחד שבא מן התורה כותב רבינו בספר דרך ה' (ח"ד ב, א), בכלל ההשפעות הנשפעות ממנו יתברך לצורך בריותיו יש השפעה אחת עליונה מכל ההשפעות, שענינה הוא היותר יקר ומעולה מכל מה שאפשר שימצא בנמצאים. והיינו שהוא תכלית מה שאפשר שימצא בנמצאות מעין המציאות האמיתי שלו יתברך ויקר ומעלה מעין אמיתת מעלתו יתברך, והוא הוא מה שמחלק האדון יתברך שמו מכבודו ויקרו אל ברואיו. ואמנם קשר הבורא יתברך שמו את השפעתו זאת, בענין נברא ממנו יתברך לתכלית זה, והוא התורה. ע"כ. והיינו שמציאות התורה בא ממה שמחלק ה' מכבודו. וע"י מילואים א.

³ אפשר שזה מרמז לאור הגנוז, שאותו אור גנוז בתורה כידוע מנפש החיים (הגה"ה בסוף שער א) ועוד כמה ספרים, וא"כ אותו אור הגנוז בתורה מעלה את נשמת האדם למקורו בגנוי הבורא. וע"י מילואים ב.

פועלת בה. והוא דבר החכם (משלי ו, כג) "ותורה אור" אור ממש, ולא חכמה לבד. ולא שמראה אור בדרך דמיון אלא אור ממש כי זו מציאותה למעלה, ובהיכנסה בנשמה יכנס אור בה כאשר יכנס ניצוץ השמש באחד הבתים.⁵

אותיות התורה כגחלת שיש לו שלהבת בתוכה ואף גם זאת הנה בדקדוק גדול נמשלה לאש ובהשוואה מדוקדקת,⁶ כי אשר תראה הגחלת שאינה מלובה, השלהבת היא בתוכה כמוסה וסגורה, אשר בהפיח בה אז תתפשט ותתלהב⁷ ותצא מתרחבת והולכת. ובשלהבת ההיא נראים כמה מיני גוונים מה שלא נראה בתחילה בגחלת, והכל מן הגחלת יוצא.⁸ כן התורה הזאת אשר לפנינו, כי כל מלותיה ואותיותיה כמו גחלת הן, אשר

פירוש הקצר

⁴ ומפרש הגר"י ליוושטיין (אור יחזקאל, תורה ודעת עמ' ע), וכפי שהיה במעמד הר סיני כמו כן יכול להיות אש בקרב כל לומד תורה, וכדחזינו ביונתן בן עחאל שכל עוף הפורח עליו היה נשרף (בבא בחרא קלד). כי היתה אש מתלקחת סביבו כבמעמד הר סיני, ובאמת פשוט הוא שהרי אורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא חד הוא (זוהר אחרי עג) וממילא העוסק בתורה יש לה מציאות בגבהי מרומים (תהלים לו, י) "כי עמד מקור חיים באורך נראה אור" ואותו אור נמצא אף בתורה, וכאשר יעסוק בתורה תאיר נשמתו אף בגני מרומים. כי עלינו להבין שאף שנשמת האדם ירדה לארץ אין זה אלא רק חלק קטן מנשמתו ועיקר נשמתו למעלה ומשוי"ד כיון שהאיר נשמתו אף החלק שבגני מרומים נעשה לאור גדול ודו"ק, והוא דבר החכם "ותורה אור" אור ממש וכו'. ועי' מילואים ג.

⁵ זאת אומרת שהיינו יכולים להבין שמש"כ שהתורה היא כמו אור ר"ל שכמו שהאור מאיר החשך כן התורה מאיר הדרך לבני אדם. אבל באמת תורה היא אור ממש של מעלה הנכנס לנשמת האדם כנ"ל. ובזה שונה אור התורה מחכמות אחרות. ועי' מילואים ד.

⁶ והיינו שהתורה אינה דומה רק לאור, אלא לאש.

⁷ ענין שלהבת הקשורה בגחלת איתא בזוה"ק (ח"ג רמז:).

⁸ וזה הדקדוק גדול, שמלבד מה שאור התורה מאיר נשמת העוסק בו, יש לתורה דמיון לאש במה שאור טמון בתוכו וצריך השתדלות לגלות אותו כמו שמבאר. ועי' מילואים ה.

בהצית אותן כן כאשר הן, לא ייראו כי אם גחלים וגם כמעט עמומות. ומי שישתדל לעסוק בה, אז תתלהב מכל אות שלהבת גדולה, ממולאה בכמה גוונים, הן הידיעות העומדות צפונות בתוך האות ההיא.⁹ וכבר פירשו זה בספר הזוהר על אל"ף ב"ת.¹⁰

ואין הדבר משל אלא עצמי כפשוטו ממש, כי כל האותיות שאנו רואים בתורה כולן מורות על עשרים ושנים אורות הנמצאים למעלה, והאורות ההם העליונים מזהירים על האותיות.¹¹

ומכאן נמשכה קדושת התורה קדושת ספר התורה ותפילין ומזוזות וכל כתבי הקודש. ולפי הקדושה שבה נכתבים כך תגדל ההשראה וההארה של האורות ההם על אותיותיהם.¹² ולכך ספר התורה שיש בו פיסול אחד נפסל כולו, כי אין ההארה עומדת עליו כראוי, שתימשך ממנו הקדושה לעם בכח הקריאה בו.¹³

פירוש הקצר

⁹ ע"י דברי הגר"ח פרידלנדר (שפתי חיים, מועדים ח"ג עמ' קלט) שמבאר איך שהלוחות ראשונות היו שלהבת והלוחות אחרונות רק גחלת. וע"י מילואים ו ליתר דבריו בענין זה.

¹⁰ ראה למשל ח"ב קעט: וח"ג עג. וע"י מילואים ז.

¹¹ והיינו שאין האש רק דמיון לכח התורה, אלא יש בכ"ב אותיות התורה מציאות ממש של אש. וכותב רבינו בקנאת ה' (גנזי עמ' קלב), והנה כ"ב אותיות הם המקורות לכל המציאות, וראשית התחלקם הוא לחמשה מוצאות [הפה], ע"ש עוד. וע"י לקמן עמ' מט. וע"י מילואים ח.

¹² מוסיף רבינו בקטע זה שלפי דבריו הנ"ל יכולים להבין איך יש קדושה בספרי סת"ם. ויש להביא מש"כ הבאר היטב (קלד, ה), האר"י ז"ל היה מסתכל היטב באותיות עד שהיה מכירם לקרותם, והיה אומר שיהיה נמשך אור גדול אל האדם על ידי הסתכלותו בס"ת מקרוב עד שיכול לקרות האותיות היטב, ע"כ. וע"י מילואים ט.

¹³ הגר"ש הלוי ואזנר ז"ל מביא דברי רבינו ומוסיף (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ז סימן ב), פוק חזי עובדא דר' חזקי' ור' ייסא בזוה"ק פ' אחרי שפעם אחת היה העולם שרוי בצער והלכו עם ס"ת לבית החיים

ונשוב לענין,¹⁴ כי האורות עומדים על האותיות, ובאותם האורות כלולות כל הבחינות הפרטיות שיש על כל אות ואות כאשר זכרתי. אך אין מגיע לנשמת הרואה את האותיות ההן אלא אור אחד סתום כמו הגחלת. אך כשמשתדל האדם להבין וקורא וחוזר וקורא, ומתחזק להתבונן, הנה כל כך מתלהטים האורות ההם ויוצאים כמו שלהבת מן הגחלת. ועל זה אמר התנא (אבות ה, כא), הפוך בה והפוך בה דכולא בה, כי צריכים העוסקים להיות הופכים והופכים עד שתתלהב כמעשה האש ממש.¹⁵

התורה מתפוצצת לניצוצות

והנה בהיות השלהבת מתלהטת, כבר אמרתי שיש בה כמה גוונים מרוקמים, וכן נמצאים כמה ענינים גדולים נכללים בשלהבת של האור הזה.¹⁶

פירוש הקצר

להתפלל ולבקש מן המתים לעורר ישיני חברון, ונדחו המתים ממתיתבא לרקיעא בגלל וי"ו יתירה שהיה בס"ת והוי הס"ת פסול ומשקר בשמא דמלכא, עד שהלכו והביאו ס"ת אחרת שנכתבה ע"י רב המנונא סבא, ומיד נתעורר רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון והלך להתפלל עמהם בג"ע ונרפא העולם. ע"כ.

¹⁴ והיינו שהפסיק דבריו אודות אורם של אותיות לבאר ענין קדושת סת"ם. ועכשיו חוזר לביאור האורות של האותיות.

¹⁵ ענין זה של הצורך להשתדל להבין התורה יהיה נוגע בסמוך בביאור רבינו לשכל האדם הדומה לתורה כמ"ש בתחילת דבריו. וכותב הגר"י סרנא בעיונים כאן, אנו למדים כי החזרה בלימוד התורה לקרוא ולחזור ולקרוא אין בזה רק הסגולות שנתבארו בספר מסלת ישרים בהקדמה ובכמה פרקי הספר. אלא שיש בזה מעלה בעצמותה בעצמות לימוד התורה שע"י מתלהטים האורות ויוצאים כמו שלהבת מן הגחלת, ולפי"ז הלא החזרה והקריאה פעם אחר פעם אותו הדבר בעצמו פועלת להאיר הנפש באור התורה. ע"כ.

¹⁶ כאן מוסיף רבינו לבאר נקודה אחרת בדמיון התורה לאש, והיינו שיש באש כמה חלקים שונים זה מזה, וכן בתורה יש כמה פירושים הכלולים בדבריה. ועי' מילואים י.

אמנם עוד ענין אחר נמצא, כי יש כמה פנים לתורה, וכבר קבלו הקדמונים שלכל שורש מנשמות ישראל יש כולם בתורה, עד שיש ששים רבוא פירושים לכל התורה מחולקים לששים רבוא נפשות של ישראל.¹⁷ וזה נקרא שהתורה מתפוצצת לכמה ניצוצות, כי בתחילה מתלהטת ואז נראים בה כל האורות הראויים לענין ההוא, ואותם האורות עצמם מאירים בששים רבוא דרכים בששים רבוא של ישראל.¹⁸ וזה סוד (ירמיה שם) "וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע".¹⁹

סיום ענין התורה

הרי לך שאף על פי שהתורה היא בלי תכלית, ואפילו כל אות ממנה היא כן, אך צריך ללבושה ואז תתלהב.

פירוש הקצר

¹⁷ הם הנשמות השורשיות כמו שכתב רבינו בדרך ה' ח"ב ד, ה (שפתי חיים אמונה ח"ב עמ' רנז). ועיי' מילואים יא.

¹⁸ וכן כותב הרמח"ל בקנאת ה' (גנזי עמ' קלג ד"ה ואשוב), בני האדם מתקנים בתורה על ידי העסק בה לפי צירוף עבודתם, ע"כ. וכותב עוד באדיר במרום (עמ' קיא), יש [בתורה] כל כך חלקים כמו הנשמות היוצאות מהם, ע"כ. ועיי' מילואים יב.

¹⁹ עיי' רש"י בראשית לג, כ ושמות ו, ט. והיינו הענין אחר הנזכר בהתחלת קטע הזה. שמלבד שיש כמה דרכים להבין אותיות התורה שהם הגוונים המרוקמים בשלהבת, יש גם דרך מיוחד לכל אחד מישראל להבין התורה ולעסוק בה. והיינו שיש גוונים המרוקמים וקשורים יחד, אבל יש גם הניצוצות הנפרדים זה מזה.

והגר"ח פרידלנדר מבאר דברי רבינו כזה (שם עמ' קמ), כל אחד מישראל יש לו את חלקו המיוחד לו לבדו לפי שורש נשמתו בתורה כדי להוציא לפועל את כח אור התורה לפי חלקו המיוחד. זקוק כל אחד מתוך הששים ריבוא לעמל ויגיעה להצתת אור הגחלת שהיא גחלתו המיועדת לו לבדו, ואין הכח והאפשרות בהצתת גחלתו ע"י עמל ויגיעה של חברו, כי גחלת זו היא חלקו לו לבדו. ע"כ. ועיי' מילואים יג.

מילואים

[א] במאמר החכמה בפירושו על תפילת עלינו (מלכיות זכרונות שופרות) כותב רבינו :

והנה הכבוד מתגלה בראש עולם הבריאה על הכסא, והוא עצמו מתעלה בבחינה יותר מרוממת והוא באצילות ועליו נאמר ושכינת עוזו בגבהי מרומים.

וא"כ מש"כ שהתורה יש לה מציאות בגבהי מרומים ר"ל שמקורו בעולם האצילות ששם יש רק אלקות בלי שום נבראים. ומ"מ כאן כותב רבינו, "כי שנים הם בתכונה אחת נבראו, שכל האדם והתורה", ע"כ, שהתורה כמו שהשכל נחשב נברא. וכן בדרך ה' המצוין למעלה קורא רבינו תורה "ענין נברא". כי אע"פ שבאמת התורה כן היא נברא, מ"מ יש לה שורש גם בעולם האצילות.

[ב] אלו דברי הגה"ה מהרי"ץ בנפש החיים שם :

ומבואר בזוהר שהאור נגנז באורייתא... ועיין זוהר ל"א ב' שהאור נגנז לצדיקים, ומסיים שם והוא טמיר לצדיקא לצדיקא דייקא, פירוש "צדיק" בכל מקום הוא במעשה כי דוקא על ידי מעשה המצוות בפועל ממש מעוררים אור העליון הגנוז בתורה.

ועי' שפתי חיים (אמונה ח"ב עמ' שסו) לביאור דבריו. ובאמת מוצאים רמז גם בדברי הבעל הטורים, שכותב על הפסוק (א, ד) "וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב", וז"ל, "את האור" בגימטריא בתור"ה, ע"כ. ולביאור באריכות בענין זה, עי' ספר ימי חנוכה, מאמר כא (הוצאת תשע"ה).

[ג] אלו דברי רבינו בדרך ה' שם :

כי הנה חיבר האדון ברוך הוא כלל מלות ומאמרים שהם כלל חמשה חומשי תורה, ואחריהם במדרגה נביאים וכתובים, וקשר בהם ההשפעה הזאת באופן שכשידוברו הדיבורים ההם תמשך ההשפעה הזאת למדבר אותם... וכן בהשכלת מה שנכלל בדבורים ההם לפי דרכיהם האמיתיים תמשך ההשפעה הזאת למשכיל אותם.

[ד] וכן מבאר רבינו בדרך ה' (שם ב, ה) : **כי הנה כל כוחה של התורה אינו אלא במה שקשר ותלה יתברך את השפעתו היקרה בה, עד שעל ידי הדבור בה וההשכלה תמשך ההשפעה הגדולה ההיא, אך זולת זה לא היה הדבור בה אלא כדבור בשאר העסקים, או ספרי החכמות וההשכלה ככל שאר משכלות המציאות הטבעי למיניהם, שאין בהם אלא ידיעת הענין ההוא, ואין מגיע ממנו התעצמות יקר**

ומעלה כלל בנפש הקורא המדבר והמשכיל, ולא תקון לכלל הבריאה.

וכותב הגר"ח פרידלנדר ז"ל (שפתי חיים, מועדים ח"ג עמ' קלח) :
חכמות העמים אינן מוסיפות אור כלשהו באדם כדי לשנות את מהותו. ולהיפך מצינו אצל משכילי אומות העולם שהיתה השחתת נפשם גדולה יותר מאשר אנשים פשוטים, ההשחתה היתה כפשוטה על פי גדלות שכלם. אולם חכמת התורה אינה רק חכמה תוספת ידיעות והשכלה אלא אור המאיר מגנזי מרומים לעמקי נשמתו של האדם, וגם בניצוץ אחד של אור התורה יש את היכולת להקטין ולמעט את חשכת היצה"ר.

ובמשנת ר' אהרן (שיחות מוסר ח"א עמ' פא) מבאר החילוק בין תורה וחכמות הנכריות הנובע מדברי רבינו :

יש להביא ראיה להיסוד הזה של המס"י שהתורה היא מציאות ממש מהמבואר בכמה מקומות בחז"ל כי התורה קדמה לעולם, וקרא כתיב (משלי ח, כב) "ה' קנני ראשית דרכו קדם מפעליו מאז", והרי קודם הבריאה וקודם שהיו כל העולמות לא היו במציאות כל אותם הענינים שהתורה מדברת עליהם, והגע עצמך האם שייך חכמת הטבע לפני היות הטבע, אך התורה בשורשה העליון היא מציאות ממש ומציאות זאת היתה קיימת לפני שנברא העולם, ואדרבה לפי המציאות הזאת נבראו כל העולמות.

[ה] בספר אדיר במרום (עמ' לט) מבאר פנימיות הענין של משל הגחלת והשלהבת :

הנה כתיב, הלא כה דברי כאש נאום ה' (ירמיה כג, כט). והענין כי מי שמשים עצמו להשכיל על דבר אחד ולהתבונן עליו הנה הענין ההוא נעשה אליו בסוד ה' אחרונה של השם, דהיינו נוק', וזאת שורה עליו. כי כל ההשגות והפעולות הם הכל על ידי הנוקבא תמיד. וכמו השלהבת העומדת קשורה בגחלת וכל גוניה מתקשרים בה, כי היא להם כבסיס, כך בכח ההשכלה מתלהטים אליו כל הגוונים בה' הזאת. וסוד הגוונים הם יה"ו, והם מתלהבים והולכים והאדם משיג מהם מה שיוכל להשיג. והוא מה ששיג באותו הפעם בדבר ההוא. ועוד יאיר היסוד בזה הבסיס שהוא הפסוק או המאמר שזכרנו, שהוא הגחלת, ואז יתפשטו ניצוצות לכמה צדדים. וכל ניצוץ נקרא עולם אחד, והם כמה עולמות מתלהטים מן הפסוק ההוא, בסוד ע' אנפין, ובסוד מ"ט פנים טמא ומ"ט פנים טהור, ומשיגים מכל אלה מה שמשיגים.

[ו] הגר"ח פרידלנדר כותב עוד שם :

ההבדל שמצייר הרמח"ל בין הגחלת לשלהבת הוא ההבדל שבין לוחות ראשונות פנים בפנים ללוחות שניות בצנעה. בלוחות ראשונות היתה התורה בגילוי פנים בפנים, אור התורה נמסר לנו כשלהבת המאירה ומבטלת את החושך מאליה, אולם לוחות שניות שניתנו בצנעה תורה נמסרה לנו כגחלת, אבל כח השלהבת טמון בתוכה ואלולי שיפיח בה האדם רוח להלהיב ממנה אש אין בכוחה להאיר. מעתה העבודה מוטלת עלינו להצית את השלהבת הטמונה בגחלת וזאת ע"י העסק והעמל בתורה. זהו תפקידנו להוציא את האש, אור התורה, הטמון בכח בתוך הגחלת.

[ז] בספר אדיר במרום כותב (עמ' שעד) :

כל מציאות הבריות בכח האותיות הוא, בחיבורי האלפא ביתות. והם עצמם נעשים מאותיות כמבואר בכמה מקומות. ובספר הכללים כותב (כלל ט, וכן ע"י קל"ח פתח לה עמ' קלג) :
והנה כל מקום שיש אותיות סימן הוא לכלי או לשורש כלי.
וע"ע קל"ח פתחי חכמה (פתח יט והלאה), בקנאת ה' צבאות (גנזי עמ' קלב והלאה), ובספר משכני עליון (גנזי עמ' קצ).

[ח] איתא באדיר במרום (עמ' קסא-קסב) :

הנה הפה עצמה הוא שורש הכ"ב אותיות, והם מושרשים שם בבחינה זו של הגלוי שיוכלו כולם להתגלות על ידה והן הצירופים של האותיות כולם.
ואיתא בקל"ח (פתח יט) :
כללות האותיות הם כ"ב מיני סדרים, שאין פחות מהם ולא יותר מהם, לתת פעולה לאורות.
וז"ל הירח האיתנים (חנוכה עמ' תקיז) :

לפי מה שהביא מהרמח"ל הרי שורש מציאות זו של התורה היא באותיות הקדושות של התורה, שהם הכ"ב אותיות של לשון הקודש, והם גופה של תורה עצמה, וזה לא שייך בשאר לשונות... ועפ"י יש לבאר כוונת היוונים לתרגם את התורה ליוונית, שרצו לעקור מעלה זו של ישראל שנבחרו רק הם שתניתן להם תורתו של הקב"ה בלשון הקודש שהיא עצמה של תורה, ששאר האומות לא היו זוכים לזה, וע"י תירגום התורה ליוונית נטלו מעלה זו מישראל, כי תורה זו היא התורה שבלשון הקודש, וע"י תירגומה ללשון אחר יאבדו ישראל תורתו של הקב"ה שזכו לה.

[ט] כותב רבינו באדיר במרום (עמ' שעד) :

והנה תבין בזה ענין ספר תורה בכתבו והקריאה בו וההגבהה שמראים האותיות לעם. כי היות ספר תורה כתוב באותיות אלה, הוא תיקון גדול לישראל להיות בנינם בסוד האותיות האלה. וכשמגביהים אותו ומראים הכתב, נמשך אור לקהל מבחי' זו. וה"ס (תהלים לא, כ) "מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך", שאמרו בזוהר פ' שלח לך [ח"ג קסד] : שאומרים הכרובים בהגבהת ס"ת. ואיתא בשבעים תיקונים (תיקונא תנינא) :

ישראל קראן בס"ת בציבורא, וכדין נהורא אתנהיר לגבייהו מגו ההוא ספרא דמשה. ובג"כ אמרין (דברים ד, מד) "וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל" לאתערא ההוא ספרא דקאים ודאי למהוי ידיעה לישראל באוריתא, כל חד כדקחזי. ועל ההוא ספרא אתמר אותיות מחכימות, דהא נהירו דדרגין עלאין נהרן בהו, ואתחזיין תמן כלהו רזין כמה דאתמר. ועם כל דא כל שאר אתון דקדושה נמי אתמר בהו הכי, דירותא ירתין מגו ספר דא.

[יא] איתא שם במאמר החכמה (ענין כתבי הקודש) :

ואמנם דומה לזה הוא ענין כתבי הקדש, כי הנה הוא ית"ש בחכמתו הקיף וכלל כל הענינים האמיתים שבנושאים האמורים בכתבי הקדש, ואולם אחרי שערו כל הענינים האלה, ערך ערך מלות, שהם מלות פסוקי המקרא והנה הן מסודרות בתכונה זו שכאשר יתפרשו בכל הפירושים ששייך בהן כפי מדות ידועות, יצאו מהן כל הענינים האמיתים שבנושא שהם נכללים במלות ההן עם כל ביאוריהן.

[יא] אלו דברי רבינו באדיר במרום (עמ' נ) :

והבן היטב כי כל אלה הם תיקונים גדולים שנתקנים תמיד למעלה על ידי הס"ר נשמתין דמתיבתא עילאה ומתיבתא דרקיע, וסודם שורש כל נשמות ישראל. והיינו כי כבר נתבאר במקומות רבים איך הנשמות הם כפולות, והיינו שיש חלק אחד עליון והוא עומד למעלה, וחלק אחד עומד למטה בתוך הגוף וסביבו בסוד נר"ן ונשמה לנשמה... והנה בסוד השרשים האלה עומדות כל הנשמות של ישראל בסוד ס"ר, אע"פ שלמטה נתפשטו הנשמות לפרטות הרבה, אך בשרשם הם רק ס"ר.

ואלו דברי רבינו בדרך ה' שם :

וצריך שתדע שכמו שכלל תולדות האדם מתחלק לאילנות שרשיים וענפיהם עמהם כמ"ש, כן כל אילן ואילן בפני עצמו יכחנו בו

הענפים הראשיים שמהם נמשכים ומתפרטים כל שאר הפרטים. ואמנם ענפי אילנו של אברהם אבינו ע"ה הכוללים הנה הם עד ששים רבוא, שהם אותם שיצאו ממצרים ונעשית מהם האומה הישראלית, ולהם נחלקה ארץ ישראל. וכל הבאים אחריהם נחשבים פרטים לתולדות הכוללים האלה.

[יב] למקור ענין הששים רבוא פירושים לתורה, איתא בשער רוח הקודש (שער ז' הקדמה ג'; וע"ע שער הגלגולים הקדמה יז):

יש ס' רבוא פירושים רבים לתורה שבכתב על כל פסוק ופסוק. וכן נודע כי ד' מיני דרכי פירושים יש לתורה, וסימנם פרדס פשט רמז דרש סוד. וכל דרך מארבעה דרכים אלו יש בו ס' רבוא פירושים. נמצא כי כל נשמה ונשמה שבס' רבוא נשמות ישראל יש לה דרך אחד בכל התורה כפי בחי' שרש מציאות נשמתו הנקשרת בתורה. ולכן כל אדם מישראל יכול לחדש חדושים בתורה כפי חלקו מה שאין חבירו יכול לחדש.

ורבינו מביא ענין זה גם בשבעים תיקונים (הקדמה עמ' יג):

ועוד ע' אנפין לאוריתא מסטרא דאי', וברזא דא שכינתא דאיהי שבע סלקת נמי לשבעין, ושבעין אנפין אינון מאי' כמה דאמינא. ועוד, מ"ט פנים טמא מ"ט טהור, ורזא שער החמישים טמיר וגניז, מתמן ולהלאה טהור וטמא בימינא ושמאלא. וכד מתפשטן מילין אינון ששים רבוא כגונא דנשמתין, ולכל נשמתא אית באוריתא חולקא דיליה ודאי.

וכן במאמר יחוד היראה כותב רבינו (קיצור הכוונות עמ' שט):

והאמת, שלמעלה מן הכל יש ז' ניצוצין, וסודם ז' ניצוצין דאלקים, והם מתפשטים לע' אורות, שהם המאירים אח"כ לישיבות בכח התכלת הפרוש עליהם. וזהו "סוד ה' ליראיו". והם ע' תיקונים שפירש רשב"י על בראשית, להאיר ע' אורות אלה באלה הע'. אח"כ מתפשטים לס"ר, ומשם ס"ר פירושים לתורה שמאירים לישיבות.

[יג] אלו דברי הר' ירוחם ז"ל (בדעת חכמה ומוסר ח"א עמ' קפח):

היינו הס' ריבוא של ה"מנין", ס' ריבוא אלו הם ס' ריבוא הפירושים של תורה, ז"א שקבלת התורה לא היתה קבלה כללית של הכלל ישראל כולו, רק שכל פרט ופרט שבישראל זכה לקבלת התורה קבלה פרטית, שכל פרט ופרט קבל את התורה הק' עם הפי' שלו, וישנם ס' ריבוא פירושים משום שיש ס' ריבוא של ישראל.

Ginzei HaMelech **R' Shmuel Chaim Naiman**

רמב"ם, הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז הלכה ו

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים שנאמר (דברים ו) ואותנו הוציא משם וגו'. ועל דבר זה צוה הקב"ה בתורה (דברים ה) וזכרת כי עבד היית כלומר כאילו אתה בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדית:

א. כמה חילוקים במאמר "בכל דור ודור" בין הנמצא לפנינו להנוסח של רבינו

מקור הלכה זה הוא מהמשנה בסוף מס' פסחים (קטז:): "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר (שמות יג), והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר, בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים". וכך סידר בעל ההגדה, וזה הנוסח בהגדות שלפנינו: "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים. שנאמר, והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה יהוה לי בצאתי ממצרים. לא את אבותינו בלבד גאל הקדוש ברוך הוא, אלא אף אותנו גאל עמהם. שנאמר, ואותנו הוציא משם למען הביא אותנו לתת לנו את הארץ אשר נשבע לאבותינו".

אולם כד נדקדק נראה דרבינו גרס ופירש המאמר הזה בדרך אחרת לגמרי מהמבואר מהמשנה והגדה הנמצאים אצלנו. דבהגדה שלפנינו איתא "חייב אדם לראות את עצמו" דהיינו שהחיוב נאמרה על הראייה הפנימי של האדם, שחייב לראות את עצמו כאילו יצא ממצרים. אבל רבינו, בין בהלכה זה ובין בנוסח ההגדה שהעתיק בסוף הל' חמץ ומצה, כתב "חייב אדם להראות את עצמו", כלומר לגלות ולהופיע החוצה כאילו יצא ממצרים. ויש להתבונן בעומק החילוק בין שני הנוסחאות.

וגם במקור ההלכה מצינו ששיטת רבינו חלוק הוא מהמשנה והגדה שלפנינו. דבין במשנה בין בהגדה אמרו: "שנאמר והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים", והוא השורש לעיקר החיוב לראות את עצמו כאילו יצא ממצרים. פסוק זה מצוה אותנו על סיפור יציאת מצרים, ודרשת חז"ל מוסיפה דלא

גנוי המלך (הל' חמץ ומצה)

מספיק לספר על הדורות הקודמים בכל הניסים שהיה להם, אלא דצריך לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא היה שם וראה בעצמו את כל הנסים והנפלאות.

אבל רבינו לא הזכיר פסוק זה בשום מקום בעניינו, אלא כך הוא הנוסח בהגדה שלו: "ובכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים, שלא את אבותינו בלבד גאל אלא אף אותנו גאל, שנאמר (דברים ו') ואותנו הוציא משם למען הביא אותנו לתת לנו את הארץ אשר נשבע לאבותינו". והיינו שלדעתו הטעם שחייב להראות כאילו יצא ממצרים אינו מהפסוק ד"והגדת לבנך...", אלא רק משום דכך הוא האמת שגם אנחנו יצאנו ממצרים וכמ"כ "ואותנו הוציא משם". וגם כאן בהלכותיו הביא רק הפסוק השני ד"ואותנו הוציא משם". וכך מבואר במקום שלישי בדברי רבינו, והוא בהמשניות בכתב ידו (הנדפס ע"י מכון המאור עם פיה"מ), שבמשנה הנ"ל בפסחים לא גרס כלל "שנאמר והגדת לבנך...", והדין נאמרה בלי שום מקור. וצריכים לבאר לדעת רבינו מהו המקור להלכה זה, דבשלמא מ"והגדת לבנך" י"ל דזהו חלק ממצות סיפור יצי"מ לחיות את הנסים והנפלאות כאילו הוא בעצמו היה שם [ונבאר זה עוד באות הבאה], אבל איזה חיוב אפשר ללמוד מהפסוק ד"ואותנו הוציא משם" שהוא רק גילוי לעצם העובדא דיצאנו עמהם (וכמבואר מנוסח ההגדה של רבינו), ואפילו פסוק זה לא מובא בהמשנה בפסחים.

ועוד יש לדייק, דבהגדה שלפנינו הנוסח הוא "לא את אבותינו בלבד.. אלא אף אותנו גאל עמהם", דמשמע שהגאולה שלנו הוא מחמת השייכות עם הגאולה שלהם, ולא שאנחנו מצד עצמנו יצאנו משעבוד לגאולה. אבל רבינו העתיק בהגדה שלו "אלא אף אותנו גאל" ולא את המילה "עמהם", ויל"ע מה משמעות השינוי.

ונראה דשורש כל החילוקים האלו מענין אחד. והוא באיך להבין עיקר דבריהם ז"ל כאן הנראים תמוהים מאד, איך יתכן לחייב אותנו לראות או להראות את עצמנו כאילו יצאנו עם אבותינו במצרים לפני כשלש אלפים שנה, דאף שמקורם טהור מדרשת הפסוקים, אבל מהו המצוה הזאת – הרי מעולם לא היינו במצרים ולא יצאנו עמהם. ואפשר לבאר הדבר באחד משני דרכים. דהנה יש לחקור, האם המצוה הוא להחזיר את עצמו אחורה אל שעת יצי"מ ולראות את עצמו כאילו היה שם וראה את כל הנסים ונפלאות, או להמשיך את יצי"מ קדימה אל הדור שלנו דגם אנחנו יצאנו משעבוד לגאולה. וכמובן דלכל צד יהיה דרך אחרת בהבנת החיבור של הדור שלנו לדור יוצאי מצרים, וכמו שיתבאר.

ב. פירוש נוסח ההגדה שלפנינו ע"פ הצפנת פענח – מצד מערכות הטבע גלות מצרים היה צריך לימשך לעולם, ורק ע"י הנס של יצי"מ אנחנו היום בני חורין. ולפ"ז החיוב הוא לראות את עצמו כאילו יצא עמהם ממצרים עם כל הנסים ונפלאות, והוא פרט ממצות סיפור יצי"מ

ונתחיל לעיין בהצד הראשון שהדור שלנו שייכים ומחוברים ליציאת מצרים שהיה בימים ההם, להבין איך האירוע של לפני כשלש אלפים שנה הוציא גם אותנו ממצרים.

ה"צפנת פענח" (פירוש על ההגדה מהר"י גיטקליא בעל השערי אורה) מבאר בזה ע"פ יסודו הגדול בשיעבוד מצרים וגאולתה. דהקב"ה אמר ליעקב "אל תירא מרדה מצרימה", וראוי לדעת ממה היה מתיירא עד שיצטרך לומר "אל תירא", אלא דראה מידת הדין מתוחה כנגד בניו שלא יהיו ראויים מצד מערכות הטבע לצאת משם לעולם. ולכן היה מתיירא, עד שהוצרך הבו"ע להבטיחו שהוא ישנה מנהגו של עולם ויוציאם מצד הפלא והגבורה, ולא מצד הטבע או המזלות. הרי נמצא דאילו לא הוציא הש"ת את אבותינו ממצרים גם אנחנו היינו נשארים משועבדים שם לעולם, וכמו שאכן פחד יעקב אבינו מהירידה למצרים, וא"כ אף אותנו ממש הוציאנו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה. עיי"ש עוד. וע"ע בגבורות ה' להמהר"ל.

וכדברים האלו נאמרו ונשנו בהרבה דרכים שונים, והצד השווה שבכולם שהגאולה של יצי"מ לא היה רק לדור ההוא, אלא שבאותו זמן הקב"ה הוציא גם כל הדורות העתידים מהשיעבוד של פרעה.

ולכא' כל הדיוקים הנ"ל מנוסח ההגדה שלפנינו מורים להצד הזה. שנמצא דההלכה לא נאמרה לחדש עוד מציאות של גאולה דבכל דור מתגלה דרגא נוסף של יצי"מ, אלא ללמד דהגאולה בדור ההוא חלה גם על הדור שלנו. ולכן אין מכאן מצוה להראות החוצה שגם אני יצאתי ממצרים עכשיו, דלא ניתוסף היום שום חירות יותר ממה שהיה קודם, אלא הוא מחובות הלבבות לראות בעין השכל ולהרגיש שגם אני יצאתי מעבדות לחירות ע"י יצי"מ. ומקור החיוב הוא ממצות סיפור יצי"מ, דיש פרט בהמצוה לספר על כל הנסים ונפלאות שהאדם חייב גם להרגיש שבזמן ההוא הקב"ה הוציא גם אותי מעבדות לחירות. ובסיפא גורסים "אלא אף אותנו גאל עמהם", ומשמע להדיא כמש"כ שהגאולה בדור שלנו הוא מחמת השייכות להגאולה הראשונה ממצרים, ולא שאנחנו מצד עצמנו יצאנו ממצרים.

גנזי המלך (הל' חמץ ומצה)

ג. ביאור שיטת רבינו – הגאולה ממצרים ממשיכה הלאה עד הדור שלנו, והמצוה הוא להראות שגם אנחנו יצאנו משעבוד לגאולה, והוא השורש למצוות ד' כוסות והסיבה

אולם מדברי רבינו נראה ברור כהצד השני שהזכרנו, דהגאולה של הדור ההוא ממשיכה להתגלות בכל דור ודור, עד שגם אנחנו יוצאים בכל שנה משיעבוד לגאולה. כך כתב כמעט מפורש בהלכה שלנו: "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים... ועל דבר זה צוה הקב"ה בתורה (דברים ה) וזכרת כי עבד היית כלומר כאילו אתה בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדית". לא שהדור שלנו שייכים להגאולה ממצרים ע"י שיצאנו "עמהם" (כהגירסא שלפנינו בהגדה), אלא דהיציאה משיעבוד מצרים חוזר וניעור גם אלינו "עתה" בכל דור ודור. וזהו מה שהוסיף לפרש "משעבוד" מצרים ולא ממצרים בעצמו, ובהמשך מבאר באופן עוד יותר כללי ד"אתה בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדית", דדין זה אינו לחבר אותנו אל המעשה שהיה בדור ההוא כשיצאו אבותינו ממצרים, אלא לחייב אותנו להתנהג כאילו גם אנחנו – בדור שלנו – היינו עבדים ויצאנו להיות בני חורין, כי היציאה ממצרים הוא השורש לכל הדורות שיוצאים משעבוד לגאולה.

ולכן רבינו גורס דהמצוה הוא "להראות" ע"י מעשה שהוא בעצמו יצא ממצרים, דבכל שנה ושנה בליל ט"ו ניסן יש "יציאת מצרים חדשה", וההלכה מחייבת להתנהג בפועל כדרך הזה "כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים".

ונפלא מאד מה שלדעת רבנו המקור אינו מ"והגדת לבנך" דהוא מצוות סיפור יצי"מ, דשם הענין לספר את הנסים ונפלאות שהיו לאבותינו בדור ההוא, אבל כאן התחדש דגם אנחנו בדור שלנו יצאנו ממצרים מצד עצמנו. ויתכן מאד דלדעת רבינו המקור להחייב להראות עצמו כאילו יצא ממצרים לא נלמד מהפסוק ד"ואותנו הוציא משם", וכמו שהערנו דאינו בלשון ציווי כמו "והגדת לבנך", ובכלל אינו מובא בהמשנה בפסחים. אלא דפסוק זה הוא רק המקור לעצם היסוד דבכל דור יש יצי"מ חדש, וכמו שנראה מהנוסח שלו בהגדה. וגם בהלכותיו נל"פ כזה, דה"שנאמר..." לא הולך על מש"כ ש"חייב להראות את עצמו", אלא על עיקר העובדא שגם אנחנו יצאנו, אבל החיוב להראות את זה הוא מתקנת חז"ל לעשות פעולה חיצונית מחמת האמונה בעיקר האמיתי הזה.

והדרך איך מקיימים את ה"להראות" הוא הנושא של ההלכות הבאים (ז-י) על הסיבה וארבע כוסות, וכמו שממשיך רבינו בהלכה הבאה (הל' ז) "לפיקך כשסועד אדם בלילה הזה צריך לאכול ולשתות והוא מיסב דרך חירות..." וגם בזה נתבונן,

דהרי לא מצינו שאבותינו הסיבו או שתו ד' כוסות בשעת יצי"מ, ואם הלכה זה היה משום שאף אנחנו יצאנו "עמהם" לכאור' היה יותר ראוי לאכול מצות ומרור מדין זה, אלא נראה כמש"כ דלדעת רבינו בכל דור יש יצי"מ בפנ"ע במקומם ובזמנם, וזה שפיר מחייב לנהוג בדרך של חירות [ועי' פחד יצחק מאמר עו].

ושור' ברבינו מנחם (כאן) דפירש בדברי רבינו כעין דברינו דהגאולה ממצרים נאמרה על כל דור ודור בשעתו, וז"ל: "ובזכירה הזאת תהיה יראת השם על פניו תמיד בראותו השגחת השם שהיתה בישראל ואל יסור לבו ממנו ית' לעולם. ואם יצר לו זמנו מאד יבטח בשם מקוה ישראל מושיעו בעת צרה, וכמו צרת גלות מצרים היתה סבה להטיב להם באחריתם כן כל צרות הגלות הזה הם סבה לישראל להושיעם תשועת עולמים".

ד. מקורות נוספים להנתבאר בדעת רבינו מהרמח"ל ואור החיים הק'

וכדי להבין עוד בשיטת רבינו, איך נמשך הגאולה של יצי"מ לאורך כל הדורות, יש לצרף דבריו העמוקים של הרמח"ל במאמר החכמה. וזה לשונו (ענין סדר ליל פסח): "אמנם ענין הד' כוסות הוא שהנה ידוע שמדריגות הס"א הם ד', וכלן שלטו מאחר חטאו של אדם וכלן היו מתנגדות אל הקדושה והטוב שלא ימצא בעולם, והיו ישראל סגורים בתוכן שלא היו יכולים לצאת כלל, עד שהאיר עליהם הקב"ה בכחו הגדול ושבר ד' הקליפות והוציא ישראל מתוכם. וזה ענין ד' גאולות המוזכרים בפרשה, ואולם זה עשה בהאיר על ישראל ד' אותיות השם ב"ה. והנה ענין זה במצרים היתה התחלה לבד לשיצאו ישראל מהם אך סוף הכל צריך שיהיה שישלטו ישראל עליהם ויכבשום לגמרי, וזה יהיה לעתיד לבא. אמנם הנה זה כמי שקוצב עץ אחד שמכה בו הכאה אחר הכאה עד שקוצב אותו לגמרי, וכן עושים אנו בכל שנה ושנה מתעוררים בכח הא' שהאיר ובתיקון שנתקן אז ומתחזקים להמשיך הדבר לפנים עד שיגמר. והנה בסוף הכל הד' קליפות עצמם תתהפכנה על האומות ותאבדנה אותן והם ד' כוסות של פורענות שלהן, ולישראל יהיו ד' כוסות של ישועה בהארת ד' אותיות השם ב"ה שזכרנו. והנה מעיקר התיקון של הלילה הזה הוא להראות חירות של הנצחון שנצח הטוב את הרע, ועל ידי זה נשבר כח הס"א ונכנעת הכנעה גדולה".

הרי מבואר מהרמח"ל דהגאולה של יצי"מ אינו אירוע 'חד פעמי' שהתחיל ונגמר לפני כשלש אלפים שנה (וכמו שאכן יש לומר על מתן תורה בשבועות שהתורה עכשיו נמצא בידנו לעולם, ועד"ז בשאר היו"ט), אלא דהוא התחלה לתהליך ארוך של הכנעת כחות הטומאה שיש בעולם כדי לגלות המלכות של קדושה, וזה לא יגמר עד ביאת גואל צדק. אבל כל שנה ושנה מתעורר עוד תיקון חדשה וכהמשל

גנזי המלך (הל' חמץ ומצה)

הנפלא לעוד הכאה של הקוצב עץ, והוא הטעם של מצוות ד' כוסות ו"להראות חרות של הנצחון" בלילה הזה.

ונראה דיסוד דבריו כבר מבואר בדברי רבינו כאן, דחז"ל דרשו מהפסוק "ואותנו הוציא משם וכו'" שיצי"מ מתחדש "עתה" בכל דור ודור, וכיון דבכל שנה בליל ט"ו ניסן יש גאולה חדשה, חייבו להראות את זה במעשה ע"י המצוות של הסיבה וד' כוסות.

והרה"ג ר' ישעיה קניג זצ"ל הראה לי דברי האוה"ח (במדבר כג, כב) עה"פ "אל מוציאם ממצרים", דמפרש להדיא את המאמר ד"בכל דור ודור" ע"ד הנתבאר בדעת רבינו, וז"ל: "אמר מוציאם, ולא הוציאם, הגם שרבותינו ז"ל אמרו (שם לח) דאפיק משמע והוכיחו מכאן, אף על פי כן יותר משמע לשון עבר, אם היה אומר הוציאם. ונראה על דרך אומרם ז"ל (פסחים קטז:) בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים, על כן אמרו יודעי פנימיות התורה, כי כל ליל פסח מתבררים כוחות הקדושה מהקליפה, ונוספים בעם בני ישראל, והיא הבחינה עצמה של יציאת מצרים, והוא אומרו אל מוציאם, כי לא יציאה ראשונה לבד, אלא בכל שנה ושנה מוציאם כנזכר".

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

לעילוי נשמת

Our parents, grandparents,
and great-grandparents

אליעזר בן שלמה, ז"ל

Mr. Louis Cooper

and

רחל בת זלמן, ע"ה

Mrs. Ruth Cooper

לעילוי נשמת

**שרה רבקה בת
יהודה אריה ליב, ע"ה
שמחה בן יצחק קלמן, ז"ל**

* * *

**The Raczkowski Family
wishes the community
חג כשר ושמח a**

**In appreciation of the
Rav and the Rebbetzin**

by
The Solomons

In honor of all of wonderful children

Rabbi and Mrs. Dovid Meyer
Rabbi and Mrs. Yehuda Menchel
Mr. and Mrs. Shlomo Menchel
Mr. and Mrs. Chezki Grunwald
Rabbi and Mrs. Yehuda Levenson
Mr. & Mrs. Yaakov Eliyahu Rayman
Shira Menchel

We both deeply appreciate your hard work, chesed and dedication to the family(ies). Each one of you is a constant inspiration to us and we wish you unlimited *berachah, hatazlachah, kedushah, and nachas.*

Mommy and Daddy

Wishing a
refuah sheleimah
to the *cholim*
in our community

by
The Singmans

לזכר נשמת

יצחק מאיר

Irving “Itch” Zeidel

by the

**Zeidel, Igel, Gershon, and
Leder families**

**In honor of Rabbi Naiman and his
devotion to the shul**

by

Rabbi and Mrs. Yitchok Strauss

**In honor of the Rav
for the countless hours
put into the *kuntress*
every year**

Shimmy & Chaya Weichbrod

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

Anonymous



In 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*.