

למען תספר

**A Journal of *Divrei Torah*
in honor of Pesach 5777**

Compiled by the Members of the



***Bais Medrash
of Ranchleigh***





A project of the
Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu Fund
of the Bais Medrash of Ranchleigh

6618 Deancroft Rd
Baltimore, MD 21209

No rights reserved
Make as many copies as you like

**For your convenience, this *Kuntress*
along with other Torah works and Shiurim
associated with the Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu Fund
are available online for free download at
www.zichronyaakoveliyahu.org
[Of course, web devices should be used only with effective filters.]**

למען תספר

Amongst the first tasks commanded of Bnei Yisrael before their geulah from Mitzrayim was to take (*Bo* 12:21): צֹאֵן לְמִשְׁפַּחוֹתיהֶם, *one of the flock for your families*. There was a particular and purposeful emphasis on Klal Yisrael's first religious experience to be celebrated as a family unit.

Indeed, we find that the entire purpose of Yetzias Mitzrayim was to strengthen the mesorah of parent to child (*ibid.* 10:2): וְלִמְעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בֶןךָ וּבֶן בֶּןךָ, *in order for you to tell into the ears of your children and your children's children*. Hashem specifically desired a bond, a mesorah connection, from grandparent, to parent, to grandchild. Therefore, we find our entire Pesach Seder centered around family members, children, and the mitzvah of *V'higadta l'bincha*.

This emphasis on the strength of the family unit is the secret behind Klal Yisrael's immortality. It is what maintains our existence and is the building block of our future.

We witness in our own society, sadly quite evidently, that the breakdown of family and the withering of respect for family elders is at the root of the moral decay of our times. From the first Pesach in Mitzrayim until today, the mitzvos of Pesach underscore the centrality of family in maintaining our mesorah.

It is therefore with great satisfaction that I join with my children, Avi and Dina, in dedicating this volume of Divrei Torah, in memory of my father, Yeshaya ben Avraham Nuta, *a"h*. My father truly loved his grandchildren and great grandchildren. He infused our family with a dedication to performing acts of chessed and for caring for all people. Many of his acts of chessed will never be known due to his humility.

I am grateful to Hashem that I am now *zocheh* to see my own children building their own mishpachos, *ka"h*. I am also indebted to Avi's in-laws, Moshe and Lisa Rock, who also exemplify the meaning of family and chessed.

May we all see nachas from our mishpachos and experience the *geulah sheleimah bekarov*.

Moshe and Sara Lea Dear

Preface

You hold in your hands yet another Pesach *kuntress*, the work of members of our *chashuvah kehillah*, *bs"d*.

Over the course of the year we host many important guests, including those from Eretz Yisrael. This year we were fortunate to have Rabbi Chaim Morgenstern, a well-known educator, daven with us during the Shabbos he was in Baltimore. He gave us permission to reprint his advice on how to prepare for a successful Seder, which leads off this year's *kuntress*.

Our members 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. 98. You can even see two ways of looking at the issue of reciting *Shehecheyanu* on tefillin. This is followed by an update to last year's *Chinuch* section with three articles that highlight the important issues of tuitions, the proper way to teach *tzenius*, and an inspiring story to help us combat racism.

On Asarah BeTeves this year we suffered the unfortunate loss of HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shapira, *z"l*, from whom I gained much guidance over the decades. To offer a comprehensive appreciation of his *gadlus*, I have received permission from one of his close *talmidim*, Rabbi Menachem Nissel, to reprint his reflections of his Rebbe. This is followed by memories of Rav Moshe by my esteemed *chavrusa* and partner in many of my projects, Dr. Michael Elman, who had a very special relationship with Rav Moshe and his family.

This year's Hebrew section highlights a *maamar* by our esteemed *Maggid Shiur* of our weekly *Yerushalmi Shiur*, and *Rosh Chaburah* of our weeknight Shviti Seder, HaRav Ori Millrod, *shlit"a*, *Mara D'Asra* of Kehillas Mevakshei Torah. It also features two *sugyos* from our "alumni" R' Yehoshua Silverberg and R' Shmuel Chaim Naiman. Together with a *maamar* of mine regarding Har Tavor at *Matan Torah*, we have

formatted the Hebrew section so that it reads like a Hebrew *sefer*, right to left.

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 another beautiful cover this year. Thanks also to the generous sponsors who made the printing possible. And very special thanks to the Rabbi and Mrs. Moshe Dear and family for sponsoring the *kuntress* name this year; may it be a *zechus* for their entire family.

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 5777

Table of Contents

SECTION I: PREPARING FOR PESACH

Achieving Harmony at the Pesach Seder

Rabbi Chaim Morgenstern 1

Shabbos Hagadol

R' Eliezer Shames 9

SECTION II: *GEULAS MITZRAYIM*

A Three-Day Journey?

Jeff Silverberg 14

Time for Redemption: 400 or 430 Years?

Yehoshua Dixler 19

Don't Be a Bystander: The Frogs

Avi Dear 21

The Importance of Time

Louis Leder..... 24

The Tenth Plague

Rabbi Moshe Grossman 26

The Dogs at *Makkas Bechoros*

Michael Cooperman 29

Firstborn, a Tough Position

Dr. Eli Lazar Singman 31

SECTION III: THE SEDER

The Three Seder Matzos

Rabbi Simcha Baer 35

The Missing Matzos

Yehoshua Dixler 42

Kiddush at the Seder

Reuven Kaplan 48

No Berachah of *She'asa Nissim* at the Seder

Moshe Kravetz 49

SECTION IV: THE HAGADAH

Lavan

Chaim Sugar 52

Your Protective Wall

Moshe Rock 56

A Kosher *Bris Milah*

Shimon Weichbrod 58

SECTION V: TEFILLAH ON PESACH AND BEYOND

Tips to Improve Your Worrying

Label Cooper 62

Waiting to Begin *Chazaras HaShatz*

Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman 64

SECTION VI: LAST DAYS OF PESACH THROUGH SHAVUOS

Bekias Yam Suf* or *Kerias Yam Suf

Dr. Michoel Keidar 71

***Kerias Yam Suf*: Jumping In**

Rabbi Paysach Diskind 74

This Cannot Be How It Ends!

Daniel Menchel 76

Pesach Sheni: Shiur Rav Y. D. Soleveitchik zt"l

Rabbi Yehoshua Cheifetz 79

Ploni Almoni

Roman Kimelfeld 88

National Revelation

Yirmiyahu Lauer 92

SECTION VII: BAR MITZVAH *DIVREI TORAH*

A Bar Mitzvah

Noam Rock 98

Tefillin on Chol HaMoed

Yosef Kimelfeld 100

***Shehecheyanu* on Tefillin**

Josh Weichbrod 103

***Shehecheyanu* on Tefillin**

Paysie Stein 107

Korach "Took"

Eitan Schulman 111

SECTION VIII: THE CHINUCH SYSTEM REVISITED

A Special Three-Part Section 114

SECTION IX: IN MEMORIAM

Looking into the Sun: Personal Reflections on my Rebbi, HaRav HaGaon Rav Moshe Shapira *zt"l*

Rabbi Menachem Nissel 126

My Reflections on Rav Moshe, *zt"l*

Dr. Michael Elman 135

חלק י: מדור לשון הקדש

עיצומו של חג השבועות והדרך לעליה במעלות התורה

א הרב אורי משה מילרד 126

הר תבור ומתן תורה

ח הרב אבא צבי ניימאן 127

סוגיא דמין במינו

יד הרב יהושע שמואל יעקב הלוי סילברברג 128

דבר שיש לו מתירין

יח הרב שמואל חיים ניימאן 129

Achieving Harmony at the Pesach Seder ¹

Rabbi Chaim Morgenstern

[1] THE GOAL

“How was your Pesach Seder?”

This is likely one of the most commonly asked questions during the first days of Pesach. Let’s take a look at some of the most common answers.

Firstly, people are curious to know how long another person’s Seder was and if they succeeded in finding the *afikomen*. Then there’s usually a discussion of *divrei Torah* on the *Hagadah*, and women will probably exchange some of their latest recipes.

However, one vital area in the Seder, which seems often neglected or overlooked, should concern each father: Properly fulfilling the obligation of “*Ve’hegad’ta le’vincha*” (cf. *Sefer Hachinuch, mitzvah* §21).

Rav E. Dessler writes: “The Pesach Hagadah was formulated by the great Torah sages in order to fulfill one’s obligation of ‘*Ve’hegad’ta le’vincha*’ – And you shall tell your son about the miracles in *Mitzrayim*, and how Hashem freed the Jewish nation from the Egyptian slavery” (*Michtav M’Eliyahu*, Vol. 4 p. 239).

Rav Chaim Friedlander terms the Seder night as “A night of *chinuch*” in which we transmit to our children the fundamentals of *emunah*, which

¹ Practical Advice for Conducting an Organized and Meaningful Pesach Seder. This presentation is adapted from Rabbi Morgenstern’s pamphlet “Achieving a Harmonious Shabbos Table and Pesach Seder.” We were honored to have Rabbi Morgenstern spend Shabbos in our Bais Medrash this winter. For more of his presentations, see www.toras-chaim.org.

we received by a continuous tradition for over 3,000 years from our forefathers (*Mesilos Chaim B'chinuch*, p. 65).

Achieving a harmonious Seder table with a bunch of young children is not a simple task. At a table with small children, the normal restlessness and disorder that are quite normal for large families seem to make the role of the parents more like policemen rather than Seder leaders who are trying to transmit the feeling of *yetzias Mitzrayim* to their children.

Although there are no simple or magic solutions for parents to attain a peaceful Seder, the following advice can significantly help parents to make the Seder more orderly, thus making the concept of *yetzias Mitzrayim* more a reality to their children and to themselves.

[2] PREPARING YOURSELF

Since the responsibility of conducting the Seder is on the parents, they must prepare themselves both physically and emotionally in order to manage the Seder properly.

One of the common causes of being both physically and mentally exhausted at the Seder is overdoing the pre-Pesach cleaning. For example, if you sell your *chametz*, it isn't necessary to wash pots and dishes that are going to be put away. Being *machmir* to do unnecessary cleaning, causes a person to enter Pesach under stress and strain.

Moreover, many women have turned the pre-Pesach cleaning into their annual spring-cleaning, spending much time cleaning for dirt and ridding the home of unnecessary items. This overexertion can easily prevent parents from being properly focused on the themes of the Seder and giving proper attention to their children.

Additionally, the tension caused by the added *chumros* and unnecessary cleaning can easily cause parents to become irritable and angry at their

Section I: Preparing for Pesach

children, increasing the potential for them to overdiscipline their children unnecessarily and to transgress the *aveiros* of *kaas* and *ona'as devorim* – hurting another with words, (based on *Mesilos Chaim B'chinuch*, p. 67, and remarks by Rav Ch. P. Sheinberg).

Simchas Yom Tov, feeling happy and joyful on *Yom Tov*, is a *mitzvah d'oraisa*. If parents display happiness when cleaning for Pesach, they will create a happy atmosphere in the home, enabling the children to also feel this joy. However, if parents become moody and dread the pre-Pesach cleaning, they will automatically cause themselves and their children to enter the Seder in the same frame of mind, thus hindering themselves and their children from properly feeling *Simchas Yom Tov*.

Although the *Mishnah Berurah* (442:28, *Shaar HaTziyun* §51) writes that we should not ridicule any *minhagim* as our intentions are *lesheim shamayim*, He certainly wasn't referring to *chumros* that cause one to be lax in fulfilling the obligations of the Seder or transgressing *aveiros*.

It is also important to know what one is physically capable of doing. Physical exhaustion due to pregnancy, childbirth, illness or marrying off a child can limit one's ability to do the same Pesach cleaning that she is accustomed to do.

It is therefore of utmost importance for parents to clarify with their Rav what they are obligated to do and what is a *chumra*. The Rav should also be informed of the family's situation, as this can drastically change the *psak*, for example, if the mother is in a weakened state, if there are many small children to tend to, the family has a special child that requires much attention or not enough household help.

The Pesach cooking also adds tension to the existing stress of the pre-Pesach preparation. This is especially true if it is left for the last minute, and the housewife is on her feet cooking the entire day before Pesach, while constantly supervising the children. Therefore, it is highly

advisable for the parents to make the kitchen *Pesachdik* as early as possible and designate a corner to eat the *chametz*. The younger children should be given kosher *lePesach* or *kitniyos* snacks to minimize the possibility of bringing chametz into the kitchen.

On *Shabbos HaGadol*, the entire meal could be prepared without *chametz*, and pita bread, which is hardly crummy, can be individually wrapped in plastic bags and used for the meals. This idea is not so far-fetched because this is exactly what is done when *erev* Pesach falls on *Shabbos* – a time when all the Pesach preparations are completed a day in advance and we are able to relax on *erev* Pesach.

[3] THE SEDER PREPARATIONS

Several pre-Seder preparations can help make the Seder run more smoothly:

1. Review the *halachos* of the Seder, e.g., when to cover the matzos and hold the cup, the requirements for drinking the four *kosos* and eating the matzah, the *halachos* of the *afikomen*, etc.
2. Prepare pre-measured *kezaisim* of matzah and maror for each person.
3. Have the proper size cups for the four *kosos*.
4. Organize the seating arrangement (separate rival siblings).
5. Require the entire family to take naps on *erev* Pesach.
6. Distribute nuts and other treats to the younger children (*Shulchan Aruch O.C.*, 472:16).
7. Each child should have a Hagadah that will keep his interest during the Seder; the smaller children should have illustrated Hagados and the older ones should have Hagados with commentaries suited for their age.
8. Start on time (*Shulchan Aruch ibid.* §1).

[4] CHINUCH TECHNIQUES

The *Seforim* write that a father has a unique divine power on the night of Pesach to inspire his children with lasting *emunah* in *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* (*Yalkut Lekach Tov, Hagadah Shel Pesach*, p.43). Therefore, even if one's children already know the stories of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the father should make every effort to retell them enthusiastically.

The Torah states that Hashem performed the ten plagues in Egypt “*Le'ma'an te'sapeir be'oznei vincha u'ven bincha...*” so that we will relate to our sons and our son's sons how *Hashem* smote the Egyptians (*Shemos* 10:2).

Why are our grandchildren mentioned? The answer is that when we tell our sons about the miracles in *Mitzrayim*, the story must penetrate with such an impact that our sons will be able to pass what we tell them to their sons. To accomplish this, Rav Dessler writes that we can learn *chinuch* guidelines from the way *Chazal* formulated the Hagadah (*Michtav M'Eliyahu* Vol.4, p. 239). The following are some examples:

1. Encourage the child to ask questions. *Chazal* realized that the best way for children to retain information is through question and answer. This is why the Seder starts with the four questions and requires that certain actions throughout the Seder be “*Kedai she'yishalu hatinokos*” – in order that the young children should ask (*Shulchan Aruch O.C* 473:6, *Mishnah Berurah*, 471:50). Therefore, the father should prepare stories or questions that will stimulate the children's minds.
2. Dramatize the Seder. Children learn more from what they see than from what they hear. (This is why role modeling plays such a vital part in a child's *chinuch*). Rav Chaim Friedlander remarks²⁷ that the entire *Hagadah* was formulated in a manner to illustrate (*lehamchish*) the events of *yetzias Mitzrayim* (*Sifsei Chaim, Moadim* vol. 2 p. 357). For example, the *charoses* is a thick

mixture to simulate the texture of the clay that the Jews worked with. The cinnamon sticks represent the straw that they put into the bricks, and the red wine is a reminder of the spilled blood of the Jews. The salt water represents the tears that the Jews shed because of the Pharaoh's oppression. We eat maror to feel the bitterness of the slavery, and we recline as a symbol of freedom. Also, in the section "*Rabban Gamliel omeir*," we lift the matzah and maror when saying "*Matzah zu*" and "*Maror zeh*" (*Shulchan Aruch O.C.*, 473:7, *Mishnah Berurah ad loc.*).

3. Prepare appropriate *divrei* Torah. One of the most essential factors necessary to conduct a meaningful Seder is to ensure that the *divrei* Torah be diversified to correspond to the intellectual levels of the different children. Only then will they be properly understood and have long-lasting effects. This is obvious from the *pasuk*, "*Chanoch l'naar al pi darko...*"— educate a child according to his way (*Mishlei* 22:6), as well as the reason for the different answers given to the four different sons.
4. Keep the *vorts* short and to the point. The section of "*Dayeinu*" is divided into individual parts to teach us that we should explain each concept separately. Children have short attention spans, and unless the father is telling a story, they will probably start to daydream if the *vort* is too long.

[5] KEEPING THE CHILDREN'S ATTENTION

Keeping the children attentive during the Seder is no easy task. The following are some proven methods:

1. Don't draw out the Seder, and keep the Seder moving. The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that parents should try to hasten the Seder so that the children will be awake for the eating of the matzah and maror (472:3, *Shaar HaTziyun* §3). Long *vorts*, discussions or questions that involve lengthy answers should be saved for the meal, as they

Section I: Preparing for Pesach

will cause the younger children to become restless. (If there are guests, they should be informed of this practice beforehand so they do not feel offended).

2. Allow each child to participate by briefly telling the family what he/she learned in school, and ensure that the entire family is listening.
3. Encourage the children to ask and participate by praising and giving treats to a child that asks a good question or says a good *vort*. If the child asks a question that the parent does not know the answer to, don't ignore it and carry on from embarrassment. On the contrary, applaud, give the child extra praise and tell him that you'll either seek an answer afterward or that it's such a good question you must ask the Rav. This will tremendously raise the child's self-esteem and encourage him to be more attentive. Don't forget, each question asked is scoring another win. If a child is shy or too young to ask or say anything, then "*At p'sach lo*" – the parent must take the initiative and speak to him about the Seder.
4. Break the monotony by rotating children who say *vorts*, singing, asking questions and every so often making attempts to find out where the *afikomen* is.
5. For toddlers, it is usually best to feed them before the Seder and to have them participate for only short periods during the main parts of the Seder.
6. Needless to say, parents must do their utmost to be awake and attentive to their children's *vorts* and questions. If needed, they should take coffee to stay awake.

[6] NO MAGIC SOLUTIONS

Even after trying their utmost to implement the advice presented in this essay, some parents may still have great difficulty creating a Pesach Seder. Often, with large families, there is never a dull moment. One child may be constantly teasing his sibling, while another is making a mess with the food and yet another is singing at the top of his lungs. Adding to

the excitement are the infants, who constantly *kvetch* to be diapered or fed. When a Pesach Seder resembles a Purim party, parents may feel hopeless and struggle to survive the meal in one piece.

Although there are no magic or instant solutions for successful child-raising, following the aforementioned advice can help parents to better cope with the situation, relieve some of their frustration and be optimistic in achieving success.

After all is said and done and there is still a *balagan* at the Pesach Seder, parents should not forget one of the most important concepts in child-raising – Baruch Hashem, they have healthy children. A childless couple would do anything to have just one healthy child. Crying and *kvetching* would be music to their ears, and they would not be bothered by a disorderly house caused by their only child.

How much more grateful must parents be when Hashem rewards them with a bunch of happy, healthy children. Active children are a sign of a normal home, and parents must be extremely grateful to Hashem for being blessed with a home full of vitality and vibrancy.

May we all be *zocheh* to eat from the *Zevachim* and the *Pesachim*
B'Yerushalayim ha'benuyah, bimheirah beyameinu, amen!

Shabbos Hagadol

R' Eliezer Shames¹

Most of us know that the Shabbos preceding Pesach is referred to as Shabbos Hagadol. The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* §430) states that the reason behind Shabbos Hagadol is that on the tenth day of Nissan, the children of Israel placed their oxen by the door post as commanded by Moshe. While doing so, the Egyptians asked the children of Israel what are these actions for, to which the children of Israel responded they were going to slaughter the oxen for Pesach, and, miraculously, the Egyptians could not do anything about it.

Tosafos (*Shabbos* 87b) explain the reason behind Shabbos Hagadol in a different vein. When the children of Israel were collecting the animals in Egypt on the tenth of Nissan, the firstborn Egyptians asked what the children of Israel were doing, to which they responded that the animals were being used to offer a sacrifice to Hashem and that Hashem was going to kill the firstborn. The firstborn Egyptians, frightened by that response, asked Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of Egypt but Pharaoh declined. Lacking any other viable options, the Egyptian firstborn waged war against Pharaoh in which a great number of firstborn Egyptians were killed.

Irrespective of the precise dialogue, that year, the tenth of Nissan fell out on a Shabbos, which was the Shabbos preceding Pesach. We therefore commemorate this miracle on the Shabbos preceding Pesach.

This begs the obvious question: Why don't we commemorate this miracle on the tenth day of Nissan regardless of the day of week it falls out on like we do with all other commemorations, as opposed to commemorating this miracle on the day of the week the miracle occurred? This is a rather famous question and there is a bevy of answers

¹ R' Eliezer is a member of our morning Kollel Zichron Yaakov Eliyahu.

amongst the Rishonim and the Acharonim.² However, while possible answers will be stated later in our discussion, we will discuss a less famous question, namely, why do we use the word “*gadol*” in describing this Shabbos? In fact, the *Machzik Berachah*, (*Orach Chaim* 430:2) writes: “in locales where people are careful to wish each other every Shabbos a *Shabbos shalom mivorach*, on Shabbos Hagadol one should say to their fellow peers: *Shabbos hagadol mivorach*.” Hence, if one must alter his friendly wishes to incorporate the word “*hagadol*,” there must be a distinct reason behind the name.

The *Chochmas Shlomo* (*Orach Chaim* 430:1) explains that Shabbos and Yom Tov have two different sanctities, such that the sanctity of Shabbos is greater than the sanctity of Yom Tov. As stated in the Torah,³ Nissan is the head of the year in regards to Yom Tov, and, Chazal say that the Yom Tov in Nissan – Pesach – is the head of the year in regards to Yom Tov. Thus, prior to the commencement of the first Yom Tov of the year – Pesach – we want to portray that Shabbos has more sanctity than Yom Tov. However, there are times where Yom Tov is referred to as Shabbos; we therefore call the Shabbos preceding it “Shabbos Hagadol” to demonstrate that the Shabbos day has more sanctity than even the head of Yom Tov.

Now, the question falls upon the *Tur*: why didn’t the *Tur* – who said that Shabbos Hagadol commemorates the Egyptians failure to prevent the children of Israel from bringing the Pesach offering – understand like the *Chochmas Shlomo*? After all, the *Chochmas Shlomo* demonstrates both why it is called Shabbos Hagadol and why it always falls out on Shabbos, whereas the *Tur*’s reason does not explain why Shabbos

² *Bach*, *Perishah* and *Derishah*, and *Chidushei Hagahos* (to the *Tur* there) all offer explanations why Shabbos Hagadol is commemorated specifically on Shabbos regardless of what day of Nissan it falls out on.

³ In *Parshas Bo* (12:2) it says “This month will be for you the head of all months, the first for you, for the months of the year.” As derived from the context, the *pasuk* is referring to Nissan.

Section I: Preparing for Pesach

Hagadol always falls out on Shabbos?⁴ (While the *Bach*, on behalf of the *Tur*, explains that Shabbos Hagadol is always on Shabbos to avoid confusion with the miracle of the Jordan splitting when the children of Israel were entering Israel, the *Bach* is coming up with another rationale why it is always on Shabbos whereas per the *Chochmas Shlomo* there is no need to come up with a separate rationale.)

The *Chochmas Shlomo* offers an explanation why the *Tur* could not understand like him. There is a dispute whether the needs of Shabbos can be performed on Yom Tov, which at its crux, is a dispute regarding Shabbos having a different sanctity than Yom Tov. It follows that if we say Shabbos and Yom Tov have the same level of sanctity, the needs of Shabbos may be performed on Yom Tov, whereas, if we say Shabbos has a different level of sanctity than Yom Tov, the needs of Shabbos may not be performed on Yom Tov.⁵

Hence, if one takes the position that the needs of Shabbos cannot be performed on Yom Tov, one can cook Shabbos food on Yom Tov only if there is sufficient time to consume the food on that day. Conversely, if one takes the position that the needs of Shabbos may be performed on Yom Tov, one may cook Shabbos food even when there is no potential to partake of the food on that day.

⁴ It should be noted that we could also ask on *Tosafos* why they did not want to learn like the *Chochmas Shlomo*. However, as explained below, the *Chochmas Shlomo* proposes a reason why the *Tur* could not say like him, which only works for the *Tur* but not for *Tosafos*. But it still is a question why *Tosafos* did not say the more straightforward reason of the *Chochmas Shlomo*.

⁵ While it is true that Shabbos has a greater level of sanctity than Yom Tov, it would still not permit preparations performed on Yom Tov for Shabbos because since the sanctities are different one cannot perform preparations on Yom Tov for after Yom Tov. However, if both Shabbos and Yom Tov have the same level of sanctity, then, in a certain sense Shabbos and Yom Tov are the same thing, and it would be akin to preparing on Yom Tov for a meal later that day which is permitted.

The *Chochmas Shlomo* says that the title “Shabbos Hagadol” implies that there is a small Shabbos, namely, Yom Tov, which means that Shabbos and Yom Tov have two different sanctities such that Shabbos has a greater level of sanctity than Yom Tov. Consequently, the needs of Shabbos may not be performed on Yom Tov when there is no time to partake of the food on Yom Tov. However, the *Tur* maintains that the needs of Shabbos can be performed on Yom Tov even when there is no potential to eat the food that day because Shabbos and Yom Tov have the same level of sanctity. Therefore, the *Tur* cannot learn like the *Chochmas Shlomo* and must come up with another reason for Shabbos Hagadol.

The *Chochmas Shlomo* says that some read the Haftarah of Shabbos Hagadol only when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbos. He suggests the reason is because when the Mishkan was made in the Midbar, Erev Pesach fell on Shabbos. Therefore, nowadays when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbos, we read from the Haftarah of Shabbos Hagadol (*Malachi* 3:4): *...And renew our day like those that preceded...* such that it should be a replica of how it was when the first Pesach occurred. On the other hand, when Erev Pesach does not fall out on Shabbos, it would not be a replica of how the first Pesach occurred.

The *Levush* (*Orach Chaim* 430:1) explains that it is only read if Shabbos Hagadol falls on Erev Pesach because the Haftarah for Shabbos Hagadol says (*Malachi* 3:10): *They brought the tithes from the storehouses...* which is talking about the burning of tithes in the fourth year of the Jubilee cycle, and as explained by *Rashi* (*Ki Savo* 26:12), that was performed on Erev Pesach.

While Erev Pesach this year falls out on a Monday, most places read the special Haftarah regardless of whether or not it is Erev Pesach. Moreover, the *Levush* (ibid.) proposes a rationale that it says in the Haftarah (*Malachi* 3:23): *Behold I send to you Elijah the Prophet...* which is tantamount to Moshe informing the children of Israel about the redemption while they were in Egypt. Therefore, we should read the

Section I: Preparing for Pesach

Haftarah for Shabbos Hagadol even when Shabbos Hagadol does not fall out on Erev Pesach.

In closing, regardless as to whether we are supposed to recite the special Haftarah on this year's Shabbos Hagadol, we can assume that everyone is in agreement that we should hope and pray that our days should be renewed like the days of old, in Israel, with third Temple, speedily in our days.

A THREE-DAY JOURNEY?

Jeff Silverberg

Our Jewish heritage is built upon lofty principles, not the least of which is the Torah's insistence on ethical and truthful behavior. מדבר שקר תרחק, *distance yourself from falsehood*; צדק צדק תרדוף, *pursue righteousness in a righteous way*, which instructs us that desirable ends do not justify improper means, and many similar instructions are found in the Torah and in the statements of our Sages. We can make these choices because we have “*bechirah chofshis*” (free choice) to make our decisions and choose our actions. And yet, in one of the signature periods of our people's history, the process of *Geulas Mitzrayim*, requests are made and actions taken that do not seem to comply with these standards. Rabbi Avraham Rivlin, *shlit”a*, past Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Kerem B’Yavneh, addresses these issues in his sefer, “*Iyunei Parshah*” on *Sefer Shemos*. This article is an adaptation of his words.

The first question raised by Rabbi Rivlin arises from the instructions given to Moshe Rabbeinu when Hashem first appeared to him at the sneh, the burning bush, and told him that he was to return to Mitzrayim to bring the Jewish people out of their servitude. ובאת אתה וזקני ישראל אל מלך מצרים ואמרתם אליו ה' אלקי העבריים נקרה עלינו ועתה נלכה נא דרך שלשת ימים במדבר ונזבחה לה' אלקינו, *And you and the elders of Israel shall go the king of Egypt and say to him: Hashem the G-d of the Jews called to us (saying): and now please go a distance of three days into the wilderness and bring sacrifices to the Lord Our G-d.* The Abarbanel questions this passage sharply: “How can the Blessed One command Moshe to say in His name words that are false and untrue? It would have been better to have told Pharaoh clearly that he must send out the nation from under the oppression of Egypt. What was the benefit of this story (since the intention was never that the Jews would have a three day holiday to offer sacrifices and then return), when ultimately Pharaoh would anyway send the Jews away against his will and not in response to Moshe's series of requests?

The *Ran* (*Drashah* §11) adds another dimension to the question, stating that the deception seems unseemly. Why request anything from Pharaoh, he asks, and suggests that this type of request is to be expected from slaves who have given up hope and wish to flee by deceiving their masters. Moshe and Aharon, the *Ran* emphasizes, were *shiluchei Hashem*, messengers of the all-powerful Hashem. Why should they not have told Pharaoh in no uncertain terms that the time had come for the Jews to be redeemed and that the servitude was over? Hashem's power was certainly sufficient to humble Pharaoh and accomplish this result.

The *Abarbanel* (supported by the *Chizkuni* and *HaKesav V'HaKabbalah*) offers an answer to his own question. A second glance at Hashem's instructions to Moshe allows for the conclusion that Moshe never said anything untruthful to Pharaoh. Moshe asked only that the people be allowed this three day holiday, but he never said that after three days the Jews would return. Pharaoh could assume whatever he wished, but a promise to return was never made. Therefore, there were no lies told, albeit it was certainly not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* acknowledges this answer, but still wonders why Hashem gave instructions that were deceptive and intended to commit *genevias daas* to trick Pharaoh. He mitigates this somewhat by suggesting that Pharaoh still might have been under the impression that the request was only from Moshe and not Hashem, and therefore the trickery might be less questionable. Nevertheless, he asks: סוף סוף אנו יודעים מה שפרעה אולי לא יודע שה' הוא שיזם את הערמה והשקר הללו, *We still know what Pharaoh did not know, that it was (in fact) Hashem who created this deception and these untruths.*

The *Ran* gives another explanation, suggesting that the three day story was intended to coax Pharaoh to pursue the Jews to the *Yam Suf* to meet their ultimate destruction. וה' יתברך כיוון ורצה לדון כל המצרים אשר זרו על ישראל שהם בבחירתם יכנסו למים וימותו שמה, *Hashem, intended and wished to*

judge all the Egyptians who were violent against the Jews that by their choice they should enter the waters and die there. ואילו הודיע משה לפרעה העניין בתחילה שהגיע קיצם להגאל לא היה רודף אחריהם עוד כי למה ירדפם אחרי העניין בתחילה שהגיע קיצם להגאל לא היה רודף אחריהם עוד כי למה ירדפם אחרי *Had Moshe made known to Pharaoh the (truth of the) matter in the beginning, that the time had arrived for the redemption, he would not have pursued them. Why would he pursue them when he had given them permission to be separated and had sent them out himself?* לכן לא רצה השי"ת שיאמר משה לפרעה העניין כאשר הוא את האמת אבל שיאמר שהם הולכים דרך שלשת ימים שכאשר יגידו לו אחר כך כי ברח העם יחשוב פרעה מה שחשב שכל מה שעשה משה לא בא מאת השי"ת אבל נעשה בחכמה ורמיה, *Therefore Hashem did not want Moshe to tell Pharaoh the true plan, but (instead) to tell him that they were going on only a three day journey. As a result, when Pharaoh was told afterwards that the people had fled, he would not think that this permanent escape was the plan of Hashem, but instead that Moshe had knowingly and dishonestly made his own plans.*

Further, the *Ran* suggests, that Pharaoh would believe that the people's "borrowing" of the gold, silver, and raiment of the Egyptians was intended to fund the fleeing of the Jews. When Pharaoh was told that the Jews were fleeing, he became convinced that Moshe and the Jews were a deceptive and violent people. He may have been humbled by and terrified of Hashem, but now he was certain that Moshe and the Jews were now acting of their own accord, not according to Hashem's instructions, and were no longer under Hashem's protection. He determined to pursue them to the Yam Suf, where Mitzrayim would receive its just punishment. Ironically, this fulfilled Hashem's true plan, which would not have come to fruition without the ploy of misleading Pharaoh.

Another, somewhat simpler approach is taken by the *Chumash Rav Pninin*. He contends that in war it is permissible to use *any and all* deceptions and trickery against the enemy, even blatant lies, as Yehoshua did when he attacked the City of Ai. This falls under the category of הבא להרגו, *If someone comes to kill you, hurry to kill him (before*

he can harm you). Misleading Pharaoh by telling him in this manner gave the Jewish people a tremendous advantage in that it caused the Egyptians to pursue the Jews and ultimately be drowned in the Yam Suf; it was therefore completely permissible to do so.

This also demonstrates, continues the *Rav Pninim*, that even when Hashem is making great, revealed miracles, he still works within the ways of man, making use of psychological warfare and false information in order to reach His ultimate result.

The *Ran* offers an additional approach. Hashem directed Moshe to request only an excursion of three days כדי להראות קושי עורפו של פרעה שגם בדבר הקל ימאן לשמוע בדבר השי"ת, *In order to demonstrate the stubbornness of Pharaoh, that even for a small matter he refused to listen to the words of Hashem.*

The *Abarbanel* picks up on this thought: ויותר נכון אצלי לפרש שעשה הקב"ה כן כדי להראות לבני אדם חוזק לב פרעה וקושי עורפו ושעליו יצדקו משפטיו ודיניו על פרעה, *It seems correct to me to explain that Hashem may He be blessed did so in order to teach mankind the hardness of the heart of Pharaoh and his strong stubbornness, and to justify the judgment against him.* יען וביען לא בקשו ממנו ללכת כי אם דרך ג' ימים לזבוח לאלוהיהם ומסתמא יובן מדבריהם ושאלה"כ ישובו ובכ"ז לא שמע אל תפילתם ותחינתם *To understand that all that was requested from him was a three days' journey to offer sacrifices to their G-d – and it seems clear that from this request Pharaoh believed they would the return – and with all this he refused to listen to their request.* ומפני זה צוה למשה רבינו ע"ה שתהא בראשונה שאלתו ובקשתו לדבר מועט *And because of this Moshe, of blessed memory, was commanded that his first request was modest, to show (Pharaoh's) strong stubbornness.* The *Malbim* also offers a similar explanation.

Finally, the *Ohr HaChaim* inquires as to why Hashem chose to have the Egyptians pursue the Jews to the Yam Suf – why not simply lift them

into the Nile and drown them there? (That would have fulfilled the *middah keneged middah* of punishing the Egyptians with water just as they drowned the Jewish baby boys). He brings two answers: Firstly, the splitting of the Yam Suf was known across the world and was a revelation of Hashem's existence, power, and greatness that would not have been accomplished by the more local and less spectacular event of drowning the Egyptians in the Nile. Secondly, the servitude, slavery, and persecution of the Jewish people was well-thought out and carefully planned by the Egyptians. Initially they used a *peh rach*, a gentle persuasion, to entrap the Jewish people. Only later did this become *bferech*, a strong, cruel subjugation. Therefore, the deception employed by Moshe at Hashem's instruction was an expansion of *middah keneged middah*, as was the "borrowing" of the Egyptians' treasures. Nevertheless, the *Ohr HaChaim* emphasizes, the return of the Jews was never discussed and there was no real untruths told. תתן אמת ליעקב, *ascribe truth to Yaakov*, remains a hallmark of our people.

Time for Redemption: 400 or 430 Years?

Yehoshua Dixler

In the Hagadah we read about the *Bris Bein Habesarim* at which Hashem promised Avraham that his offspring would be strangers and slaves for 400 years and then go out with great wealth (*Bereishis* 15:13). However, at the time Bnei Yisrael actually leave Mitzrayim, the Torah records the duration of their stay was for 430 years (*Shemos* 12:40). While others, including Ramban, ask this question and provide satisfactory answers, the *Abarbanel*, in his commentary *Zevach Pesach* on the Hagadah, provides a thought provoking explanation.

Abarbanel says that Hashem's time-based promises, such as the one to Avraham, are contingent on the recipients being ready and fit to accept it at the stated time. When Hashem told Avraham that his offspring would leave at a specific time (400 years) that was not meant to be an automatic occurrence; rather, they would only be able to leave if they did not have a significant spiritual impediment that would prevent them from deserving the redemption. Unfortunately, many of the Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim at the time were idol worshippers, one of the most severe sins that exist.

Hashem, seeing they would be unfit for the 400 year mark, provided a prophecy to Aharon, who was a prophet in Mitzrayim before Moshe (as implied by *Rashi Shemos* 4:13), to tell the Bnei Yisrael to mend their ways in order to merit the redemption. Because they did not comply, the redemption did not occur in year 400 and, in fact, would have been delayed indefinitely if their sinful ways would continue.

Eventually, redemption did occur at the 430 year mark. When after a new Pharaoh took control of Mitzrayim, he leveled increasing pain and suffering upon the Bnei Yisrael causing them to cry out (*Shemos* 2: 23-25): "And they cried to Hashem due to the pain and they moaned from the work and their cries went up to Elokim." They cried, not only from

the pain, but also in repentance and prayer to Hashem. This is what Hashem was waiting for all along. He now “remembered” the promise to Avraham, meaning He determined the promise to redeem them was now able to take effect. Hashem then had mercy on the Bnei Yisrael, sending Moshe to redeem them through the miracles we read of in the Hagadah.

Those Rabbis in prior generations who specified a date for the redemption, which we know did not occur, were not mistaken. Rather, the generation at the time did not deserve to be redeemed, just like the Bnei Yisrael at the year 400.

There are many blessings Hashem, Who loves us as children, wants to give us, but he will give them only if we are ready for them. Good deeds, repentance and prayer are often necessary to activate these blessings. We should merit that we improve our deeds and cause Mashiach to come soon.

Don't Be a Bystander

Avi Dear

There is an all-too famous social psychological phenomenon termed the *Bystander Effect*. Originally coined by Darley and Latané in 1968, the term refers to the phenomenon that occurs in an emergency situation, where bystanders observing the scene do nothing to intervene. There are countless disturbing events where the Bystander Effect sadly played out.

The main concept at work that facilitates the Bystander Effect is something called Diffusion of Responsibility. When there are many people witnessing a scene that requires action, everyone watching thinks: *the other guy will do it*. But then no one does. You see, if everyone is busy pointing fingers at somebody else, expecting the person next to them to act, well, then, nobody acts.

ושרץ היאר צפרדעים ועלו ובאו בביתך ובחדר משכבך ועל מטתך ובבית עבדיך ובעמך
ובתנורך ובמשארותך

And the Nile will swarm with frogs, and they will come up and enter your house, and your bedroom, and on your bed, and in the house of your servants and your nation, and in your ovens and kneading bowls.

There is a famous Gemara in *Pesachim* (53b) that asks what inspired Chananyah, Misha'el, and Azaryah to risk their lives for Kiddush Hashem and jump into Nimrod's fiery furnace? They made a *kal vachomer* from the frogs: if the frogs that were not commanded in the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem jumped into the fiery furnaces, then surely, we who *are* commanded in the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem should jump into the furnace!

The *Shaagas Aryeh* questions their logic, because the *pasuk* says: ועלו ובאו, *They will come up and enter...* into the homes, beds...and furnaces! So the frogs *were* commanded?! Therefore, the logic of Chananyah, Misha'el, and Azaryah that if the frogs who were not commanded jumped

into the furnace, surely we who are commanded (in Kiddush Hashem) should jump in—is flawed!

At the age of seven, the Vilna Gaon approached the *Shaagas Aryeh* and told him the following answer: Yes, the frogs were commanded, but not specifically to jump into the furnace. The furnace was simply one aspect of the commandment. Each frog could have turned to the frog next to him, point to the furnace, and said, “*you* go in.” But that’s not what happened. Even though each frog could have fulfilled the commandment of Hashem by going any place other than the fiery furnace, we find that countless frogs ended their lives by jumping into the Egyptians blazing ovens. I guess you could say that the frogs did not fall prey to the Bystander Effect. Chananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah recognized this and were inspired by the frogs’ action to jump into the furnace of Nimrod.

It doesn’t matter what others are doing. Our commitment to Avodas Hashem has to rise above the expectations or the actions of those around us. Each moment in our lives requires us to act or to do. Let us not be Bystanders. We may be required to crawl out of our comfort zone; serving Hashem might sometimes be difficult and even unnatural. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch says that frogs are “normally so shy of light and noise.” Frogs are timid. Yet we see that the frogs during the plague in Mitzrayim acted wildly, jumping all over... even into the ovens.

While Bnei Yisrael were collecting the treasures of Mitzrayim before they left, we find one man who was not. Moshe Rabbeinu searched for the coffin of Yosef HaTzaddik. Chazal praise Moshe for this, as the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* says: חכם לב יקה מצות, *The wise-hearted grabs mitzvos*. Although Hashem commanded them to collect the treasures from Mitzrayim, Moshe is specifically praised for running to do a mitzvah that he didn’t need to do, a mitzvah that did not bring with it any physical enjoyment. He took a different route than every other Jew during that time. The *chacham lev* does not do what others are doing, nor does

Section II: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

he/she do what is easy or enjoyable. The *chacham lev* looks inward and decides what is the right thing for him/her to do.

I think we need a certain paradigm shift. We cannot go through our lives of Avodas Hashem simply fulfilling what we must. We have to learn from the frogs. We are in this world to act, not to expect others to. Just as when your father asks you for a drink, you don't fill a plastic cup of lukewarm water from the tap and leave it on the counter for him to get. But why? You *got* him a drink just as he asked? Such an action is inappropriate because when you love and respect somebody, you try to do for them in the best possible way. You put in all your effort. In fact, an accurate *mashal* for the lesson from the seven-year-old Vilna Gaon would be that you should *notice* that your father is thirsty and pour him delicious filtered water in a glass. To act, to not be a Bystander in your Avodas Hashem and to serve Hashem in the most ideal and beautiful way.

Now is the time of לידת עם ישראל, *the rebirth of Israel [i.e. ourselves] as a nation*. Just as we were reborn during the times of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, so too the same *oros* surround us nowadays. Now is a time for change. Now is the time to not look right or left, but rather inward. What is my responsibility now? Just as the *pasuk* says regarding Moshe: ויפן כה וכה, *Moshe turned this way and that way and saw that there was no man*, and only then killed the Egyptian. I think that we must learn metaphorically from this *pasuk* to say, “there is nobody to my right and nobody to my left. It does not matter what others are doing. All that matters is inside of me.” We must be able to say: אין הדבר תלוי אלא בי, *it is all up to me*.

Let us not be Bystanders.

The Importance of Time

Louis Leder

"This month shall be to you the head of the months; to you it shall be the first of the month of the year." (According to the *Sforno* the word *lachem* – to you – appears twice in the *pasuk* to stress the relationship between the Jewish people and time. As slaves in Egypt, time belonged to their masters because they didn't have the freedom to come and go as they pleased. However, from now on the Jewish people would be masters of their own time and their only master would be Hashem.)

This is something powerful to think about: how we control our time. What do we fill our days with? How do we use the time allotted to us? Is it time well spent or is simply time spent?

Before Yaakov Avinu was *niftar*, he asked Yosef to please not bury him in Mitzrayim (*Bereishis* 47:29). *Rashi* gives three reasons for this. Less known is a reason mentioned in the *Yerushalmi* that Yaakov wanted to be buried in Eretz Yisrael because the dead in Eretz Yisrael will awaken at *techiyas hamesim* before the dead of *chutz laaretz*. Rav Avrohom Pam, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, points out that this reason is astounding. Yaakov Avinu would be dwelling in the highest spheres of heaven, on the highest level of Gan Eden, where the enjoyment is beyond our imagination. And yet, before he left *olam hazeh*, he was making plans for getting back to this world at the earliest possible moment so that his neshamah could re-enter his body. This shows us how precious every second on this world is. For every moment is another opportunity to bring *kedushah* into the world.

This corroborates the words of the Tanna: "Better one hour of repentance than the entire life of the World to Come" (*Avos* 4:22). Rav Chaim Volozhiner writes: "I heard numerous times from the holy mouth of our Rebbe, the Gaon and Chassid, the Gr"a, how *choshuv Olam Haba* is. And yet it cannot be compared to one moment in *olam hazeh* of being

Section II: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

engrossed in Torah and mitzvos, for in the World to Come we don't have the opportunity to serve Hashem in Torah."

It is related that just before the Vilna Gaon left this world, he started crying. His talmidim asked, "Why is the Rebbi crying when he knows full well that he will receive endless reward in *Olam Haba*?" The Gaon held onto his tzitzis and said, "What a wonderful world this is that for a few coins one can acquire this most precious mitzvah... This and the many other opportunities to do mitzvos only exist in *olam hazeh* and not in the World to Come."

How important it is, then, to cherish every moment of life and utilize it to its fullest potential.

The Tenth Plague

Rabbi Moshe Grossman

The Torah enumerates and describes the ten plagues that Hashem brought upon the Egyptians. The *Ramban* (*Shemos* 13:16) says that the plagues, in general, served to demonstrate that Hashem exists, that He created the world, that He is involved in the world, that He alone controls the world, and that He maintains and guides the world.

Rabbeinu Bachaye (*Shemos* 12:29) remarks that the plagues were also punishments meted out to the Egyptians for the evil that they did to the Jewish people.

The first nine plagues were carried out through Hashem's messengers. However, Hashem, Himself, passed through Egypt and carried out the tenth plague, *makkas bechoros*, the killing of the first-born Egyptians. Why did Hashem have to perform *makkas bechoros* Himself?

Rabbeinu Bachaye (*Shemos* 12:12) explains that if *makkas bechoros* had been executed through a messenger, it would have to be carried out through Hashem's attribute of justice. Since the Jews did not merit being saved, they, too, would have died since in accordance with strict justice they deserved to perish. Hashem carried out the plague Himself in order that the execution of the plague be performed through both His attribute of justice and His attribute of mercy, allowing the Jews to be spared. Only Hashem, Himself, can show true mercy, not His messengers.

It is difficult to understand this answer because the previous plagues were carried out through Hashem's messengers, and yet the Jews were spared. What is the difference between *makkas bechoros* and the other plagues? How could they have been spared in the other plagues if they were performed through a messenger and, therefore, presumably with the attribute of justice?

All the other plagues occurred as extreme phenomena in nature. Even though the plague of blood was unnatural in that water turned to blood, both substances are found in nature. As such, the Egyptians could rationalize that Moshe and Aharon were just very clever magicians and that Hashem had nothing to do with the plagues. Messengers can perform such plagues since they only have to limit the extent of the plague. However, *makkas bechoros* was very different. As the *Netziv* (*Birkas HaNetziv* to *Mechilta*, *Parshah* 11 and *Haamek Davar* to *Shemos* 11:4) explains, Hashem did not kill the Egyptians through a disease or some other physiological failure. As His *Shechinah* passed close to the Egyptian first-born, their souls were drawn to Him. Since they were unworthy of such an encounter, they ceased to live. This plague showed Hashem's full and undeniable control and involvement in the world. In particular, all human life is only dependent on Hashem.

Based on this idea from the *Netziv*, we can answer these questions on *Rabbeinu Bachaye's* explanation. If Hashem had sent a *malach*, he would simply carry out his mission, which would be to draw the first-born to *kedushah*. He could not distinguish between non-Jew and Jew since he is only able to perform the mission given to him through the attribute of justice. Since the Jewish first-born were also not on the level to accept such *kedushah*, they would have died. Sparing the Jewish first-born could be done only by Hashem since He alone is the Merciful One.

Since the Jewish first-born were saved, this plague also taught us that Hashem provides and cares for the Jewish people as His own. In these difficult times, we need to focus on this fact. Whatever happens, we must remember that it is all for our good. Retelling the story of the Exodus can remind us and allow us to internalize Hashem's power and control and our relationship with Him.

We must remember what *Rabbeinu Bachaye* has told us that Hashem showed us mercy and saved our first-born even when we did not deserve it. Although we have many faults and are not as great as previous

Lemaan Tesapeir

generations, we must remember and internalize the fact that Hashem loves us unconditionally and always does only what is best for us, both personally and as a nation.

The Dogs at *Makkas Bechoros* ¹

Michoel Cooperman

During *makkas bechoros* the Torah says that while the firstborn Egyptians were dying, the dogs did not bark, *lakol Bnei Yisroel lo yechratz kelev leshono*. Usually the Torah does not tell us about the animals and what they were doing at any certain point. Why does the Torah go out of its way to tell us that the dogs did not bark? The *Yalkut Shimoni* addresses this question and says that Rabbi Yeshayah, a Talmud of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Dosa, fasted eighty-five fasts. Why? Because he said he didn't understand why it is said that in the future the dogs will be rewarded with being able to sing a *shirah* to Hashem because they did not bark. Not only that, dogs are considered brazen. A brazen animal like a dog will sing *shirah* to Hashem? Why should they merit such a thing?

The *Yalkut* continues and says that a malach came to Rav Yeshayah and said 'Until when are you going to fast because of this phenomenon, it's a *gezeirah* from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hashem said that the dogs will sing *shirah*."

Now the dogs actually received two rewards. For *Rashi* says that the dogs received the *treifah* meat for not barking, while the *Yalkut* says they will merit to sing *shirah* to Hashem. Why should they receive such reward?

Of the 613 mitzvos in the Torah, for how many does the Torah state the reward for doing that mitzvah? A few... honoring one's parents, sending away the mother bird, keeping honest weights. If we keep those three mitzvos we will have longevity. But for the other mitzvos the Torah states no reward. Why? Obviously if we knew the rewards for different mitzvos we would pick and choose. I'll do this mitzvah because there's a

¹ Inspired by Rabbi Ari Neuwirth.

greater return or reward. This one, not so much. Hashem does not want us to operate this way and therefore hides the reward system from us.

However, we do know that there is a concept called *lephum tzaara agra*, meaning that reward is given corresponding to the amount of effort used to carry out the mitzvah. The greater the effort exerted, the greater the compensation. Examples of this are: there are certain people who find it easier than others to sit and learn. Others are naturally more generous with their money, others are more generous with their time and will do chesed all hours of the day or night. These things are called tendencies, propensities, and inclinations. If we know we have a certain trend to our lifestyle, that's not what we have to focus on. Rather the things that come with difficulty for us, those are the things we need to work on. So, if we know that giving of our time is difficult for us, that's the thing we should be working on. Whatever it is, if it's a mitzvah which is difficult for us to do, that's where we need to focus our attention.

Coming back to the *kelev*, the natural tendency for a dog is to bark. If you pass the door of a neighbor who owns a dog, the dog will naturally bark at you. That is its natural inclination. During *makkas bechoros* the dogs should have barked. There was a crisis going on. However, they went against their natural inclination and did not bark, but remained silent. And they will be rewarded. What do we learn from this? If dogs can go against their nature and be rewarded for it, so much more so we as humans who go against our nature will be rewarded. Every mitzvah has its own reward. We do not know what it is, however *lephum tzaara agra*, for those areas most challenging for us. Those are the areas we should be focusing on.

Firstborn, a Tough Position

Dr. Eli Lazar Singman

As we read through Tanach, we see that while there is a special status to being firstborn, the reward a firstborn or older child might expect is not guaranteed.

1. Kayin, Adam HaRishon's firstborn, brought the first offerings. However, he did not choose the best of what he had, so his was not accepted, while his younger brother's Hevel's were.
2. Noach's firstborn son, Yephes (*Bereishis; Sanhedrin* 69b) did not receive the Kehunah; that went to Noach's second son, Shem, who initiated the act of covering Noach when he lay drunk.
3. Terach's firstborn son, Haran (who was 32 years older than Avraham) secretly believed in Hashem as Avraham did, but outwardly waffled, leading him to perish in the same fires survived by Avraham.
4. Yishmael was the first son of Avraham, born through Hagar at the behest of Sarah, who was old and believed herself to be past the years of giving birth. Sarah hoped to raise Yishmael in the path of Torah. This arrangement could not supersede Hashem's plans, who returned youthfulness to Sarah so that she could give birth to Yitzchak, whom Hashem then declared to be Avraham's firstborn.
5. Yaakov purchased the *bechorah* from Eisav, who spurned it. Hashem confirmed this status when He declared to Moshe "Israel is my firstborn" (*Shemos*).
6. Reuven was the *bechor* and should have received the double portion due someone with that status as well as the *malchus* and *Kehunah*. His impetuosity cost him all three. Yoseph received a double portion through having his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe, recognized as two Shevatim. Yehudah received the *malchus*, which he earned when he accepted responsibility, and

Levi cemented the *Kehunah* when his tribe chose Hashem at the *cheit ha'eigel*.

7. Menashe was Yoseph's firstborn who ably served as Yoseph's chief of staff in Mitzrayim. Yet Ephraim, who studied Torah with Yaakov, received the blessing from Yaakov's right hand because Yaakov declared that the younger would be greater. Indeed, in *Yirmiyah*, Ephraim is referred to as Hashem's firstborn.
8. Moshe was younger than his brother Aharon by three years, but Moshe became leader of the Hebrews.

Is there a common thread to explain why the younger brother superseded the elder? It certainly seemed that Kayin, Yishmael and Eisav had *middos* that lowered their esteem in the eyes of Hashem; they lost their status through their own negative deeds and traits. Although Reuven was a tzaddik and a paragon of teshuvah, his impetuosity with his father's private affairs and also in offering the lives of his sons as a *mashkon* for Binyamin suggested that he did not have the temperament to rule. Haran was following Avraham's lead but was not sufficiently committed. Yephes also seemed to have been following his younger brother's lead. This suggests that they lost status because merely being good was not valued as being good for something. Menashe was a capable governmental leader. It appears he did not lose status but rather, because in Yaakov's perspective greatness lay in the world of *ruchniyus* not *gashmiyus*, the younger Ephraim, grew past him by becoming the talmid chacham.

This brings us to Moshe and Aharon. Moshe was raised in privilege as a prince of Mitzrayim. Moshe was clearly an able leader of men in public. But Hashem saw him also as a gentle shepherd in private and for this He decided that Moshe should be the vehicle to redeem the Hebrews. Aharon, on the other hand, remained in Mitzrayim. He saw the suffering of his brothers and was their guide and support during

their descent into bitter servitude. He was a great man every bit worthy of becoming the first Kohen Gadol. Yet he would not have received the *Kehunah* had Moshe simply agreed to Hashem's command to go to Mitzrayim and tell Pharaoh to free the Jews rather than argue with Hashem that he was not the right man for the job.

Of these brothers mentioned here, some were diametrically opposed, some were like the moon radiating the light of the sun and some were barely distinguishable. But in every case, the younger brother(s) revealed the ability to shoulder the burdens assigned by them from Hashem through his Torah better than the older ones.

Being a firstborn or older brother is a *nisayon*, perhaps one of the most severe. There is so much expected of that child. His parents are usually terribly inexperienced in their duties, more so than for any subsequent children. The firstborn brother must not only be dutiful to his parents but also responsible for his younger siblings who may not express the *kavod* due the firstborn. The psychological literature suggests that "firstborns tend to be responsible, competitive, and conventional, whereas laterborns have to "distinguish" themselves and create a specific niche by being playful, cooperative, and especially, rebellious."¹ Firstborns often seem to be the most successful of their siblings and it seems that their ability to handle responsibility and their higher aspirations (stemming from the greater expectations of them) play a role in this.² While this sort of research must be taken with some degree of skepticism, it is interesting to note that the younger siblings described herein all did strive to distinguish themselves. They could not rely on their firstborn status for greatness so they had to achieve that greatness in some other way. And when they strove for greatness by their obedience to Hashem and their growth in Torah, they became greater than their older siblings. This is reflected in the phrase "*ein mazal leYisrael*" (there is no mazal in Israel); it may be that our birth order comes about from mazal, but all Yisrael can rise above their mazal.

1. Vassilis Saroglou, Laure Fiasse. Birth order, personality, and religion: a study among young adults from a three-sibling family. *Personality and Individual Differences* 35 (2003) 19–29.
<http://www.uclouvain.be/cps/ucl/doc/psyreli/documents/2003.BirthOrder.pdf?spnCategory=525&spnDomain=17&spnContent=23&spnContent=28&spnID=41021>
2. Feifei Bu. Sibling configurations, educational aspiration and attainment. No 2014-11, ISER Working Paper Series from Institute for Social and Economic Research.
<http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/eseiserwp/2014-11.htm>

The Three Seder Matzos

Rabbi Simcha Baer

We use three matzos at the Pesach Seder. They correspond to Kohen, Levi and Yisrael. What is the significance of this?

There are three reasons that we eat matzah on Pesach. We eat matzah because Bnei Yisrael had to eat matzah with their *korban pesach* in Mitzrayim. We eat matzah because when they left the next day they baked matzos for their trip because there was insufficient time to let their dough rise. And we eat matzah because the Torah tells us to celebrate *Chag HaMatzos shivas yamim*. These three reasons are represented by the three matzos at the Seder.

The Kohen matzah represents the idea of *Chag HaMatzos shivas yamim*. Every *shannah peshutah* (a nonleap year) Shabbos Hagadol falls out on Parshas Tzav. In Parshas Tzav the Kohanim were transformed to become existentially connected to Hashem at the life force level. When they are on duty they sleep in the Beis HaMikdash and eat *miShulchan Gavoha*. The *Divrei Chaim* explains in his *derashos* for *Chag HaPesach* that animal life corresponds to man's animal instinct and plant life to his essential life force. By bringing a *minchas chinuch* from vegetation and from the *sal HaMatzos* that was the centerpiece of the seven days of *miluim*, the Kohanim were transformed at the life force level to be connected to Hashem. That is why when a Kohen brings a *korban minchah* it is worthy of being consumed in its entirety by the *mizbeiach*. The seven days of Pesach presented as *Chag HaMatzos* are the seven days of *miluim* of the Jewish people that transforms them too to be existentially connected to Hashem as a nation at the life force level. There is a single criterion that defines a Jewish person. Theoretically anyone can be Jewish regardless of race, color, ethnicity or even the religion that they practice. To be a Jew one must be existentially and irrevocably connected to Hashem. This transformation is what we celebrate on *Chag HaMatzos*, and it is symbolized by the Kohen matzah.

The Levi matzah is the middle one which is broken at *yachatz* and is raised in *maggid* and upon which we recite the words of Rabban Gamliel that it corresponds to the haste with which Hashem took them the 130 miles (roughly 130 kilometers) from Raamses to Succos and enveloped them there within the *ananei kavod*. The *pasuk* tells us that they had no time to bake prior to leaving Mitzrayim and they left with their dough on their shoulders. They should have had ample time to let the dough rise prior to baking it, but they didn't have ovens and because they were enveloped within the *ananei kavod* in less than 18 minutes and once they were protected by the *ananim* they could no longer bake in the sun, they had to bake their dough as matzah. This is a reflection of how quickly Hashem came to their aid and brought their *geulah* within moments when the time came. This corresponds to Levi who represents that Hashem is *nilveh* with them. That is why this matzah is broken and the larger half is *tzafun* for the *geulah haasida* which will parallel Geulas Mitzrayim, but on an even higher plane. The *shulchan* in the Mishkan was in the north (*tzafon*) because it is representative of a person's *parnasah*, which is *tzafun*. Really that which finds itself on your plate had your name on it while it was still on the tree. It was created specifically for you and was earmarked for your enjoyment. But that was hidden and is only discovered once it is on your plate. So too the *geulah* from Hashem is all planned and earmarked and waiting for the proper time to occur, but when the time comes it will be immediate. Until then it is hidden.

The Yisrael matzah corresponds to the matzah that was eaten with the *korban pesach* in Mitzrayim. The *pasuk* says in *Parshas VaYechi*:

וְאֵנִי בָּבֶאֱי מִפְּדוֹן מִתָּה עָלַי רָחֵל בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּעוֹד כְּבָרִית־אֶרֶץ לְבֹא אֶפְרָתָה וְאֶקְבְּרָהּ
שָׁם בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרָת הוּא בֵּית לָחֶם:

Rashi quotes from the *Targum Onkelos* who defines *Kivras Eretz* as the distance that you plow in a single day. Why is the Torah employing that sort of obscure imagery here? Yaakov is explaining to Yosef at this point why he made Ephraim and Menasheh *shevatim*. *Shibud Mitzrayim* is

unavoidable and he needs their qualities to define the *shibud Mitzrayim* experience for Klal Yisrael. There were two constructive aspects to the difficult process that Klal Yisrael suffered through in Mitzrayim. One was that Terach and his forbearers were excised from our lineage. Our line starts from Avraham and this is embodied in Menasheh, who was given that name as an expression that Yosef had forgotten his father's house and had gotten past it. He was ready for a new beginning. The other constructive aspect was the relationship forged with Hashem attendant to the incredible *nissim* that he made on our behalf during the ten *makkos*. This is embodied in the name of Ephraim which refers to the goodness showered on Yosef by Hashem in the land of his suffering.

Yaakov is saying that *shibud Mitzrayim* is inevitable because although he came close to voiding the *gezeirah* (of the *Bris Bein HaBesarim*) he fell one day short in his plowing from accomplishing his objective. The *pasuk* starts with a reference to Padan. *Rashi* in the beginning of *Toldos* explains that Padan refers to a brace of yoked oxen which is a metaphor for the district of Aram which has twin parts, Aram Naharayim & Aram Tzova. When one yokes up oxen, his ultimate objective is to bake bread. The beginning of the process that culminates in the production of bread is yoking up oxen to plow so that one can sow the wheat and harvest it and make it into bread. Yaakov understood that his journey from Padan would culminate in Beis Lechem.

The *gezeirah* of *shibud Mitzrayim* was because Avraham couldn't comprehend how he was competent to inherit Eretz Yisrael from Hashem (as a son inherits from his father) because he felt stigmatized that he was a child of idol worshippers. How could we be considered *banim laMakom* when in fact *Mitchilah ovdei avodah zarah hayu avoseinu*. Hashem's response was that his descendants would be forced into servitude and Hashem's intercession would liberate them and they would be reborn as *banim laMakom*. Hashem proclaims in Mitzrayim, *Bini bechori Yisrael*.

Yaakov went back to Padan Aram and everything he had, his wives, his kids, his property all came ostensibly from Lavan and yet he left without even saying goodbye. He felt that Lavan had just tried to cheat him every step of the way and didn't feel beholden to him at all. He felt he got everything only through the intercession of Hashem and felt no connection to the family in Aram. He felt that the need for *shibud Mitzrayim* was now nullified. It gave him the confidence to acquire property in Eretz Yisrael (Shechem) even though his father and grandfather were careful to live their whole lives as *geirim* to run the clock on the *gezeirah* of 400 years.

But Yaakov was unsuccessful as the Torah tells us:

אָרַמִּי אֲבִד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם:

Lavan with incredible trickery got the best of Yaakov and forced him into *shibud Mitzayim*. Lavan chased him to Har Gilad and Yaakov built a pile of rocks and called it GalAid saying that Hashem should watch over us and protect each of us from the other. Lavan's rejoinder was to call the rocks Yigar Sahadusa which ostensibly is simply the Arami translation of GalAid. But there is a subtle difference. Aramis is a *lashon chol*. His rebuttal was that this has nothing to do with Hashem; it is simply a business deal. Eretz Canaan was apportioned at the *Haphlagah* to the descendants of Shem. Terach was the delegate from Shem's family who was sent there, as it is reported at the end of Parshas Noach. But Terach didn't get all the way there and the Canaani people took over the territory, but the land records still accorded it to Terach's family. Lavan who also was descended from Terach was agreeing not to go south of this marker on Har Gilad and ceding to his grandchildren his ancestral homeland in Canaan. He is forcing them to acknowledge again their territorial rights there from Terach and not as an inheritance directly from Hashem. So that sealed their fate to become slaves in Mitzrayim so they would lose their erstwhile territorial rights and regain their connection to Eretz Canaan only from Hashem.

Nevertheless, Yaakov had one last chance to void the *gezeirah* and that is recorded in *Parshas Vayishlach*. When the Torah tells us how Reuven subverted his father's plan it says:

וַיְהִי בַשָּׁכָן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ הַהוּא וַיֵּלֶךְ רְאוּבֵן וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת-בְּלֵקָה פִּילְגֶשׁ אִבְיוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל פ וַיְהִי בְנֵי-יַעֲקֹב שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר:

Strangely, the *parshah* ends in mid *pasuk*. The *parshah* that ends so abruptly starts with Yaakov's arrival to Beis El and Hashem's formally naming him Yisrael. Hashem tells him two things.

כָּרָה וְרָבָה גוֹי וְקָהַל גּוֹיִם יִהְיֶה מִמֶּנָּךְ וּמִלְכִּים מִמֶּלְצֶיךָ יֵצְאוּ: וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם וְלִיְצְחָק לָךְ אֶתְנַנֶּנָּה וְלִיְרֵעָה אֶתְרִיד אֶתֶּן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ:

First he tells him that he is going to have a child as Yisrael. Then he adds that he has raised the bar and the promise to Avraham and Yitzchak is only to his children after him; that they have to be Bnei Yisrael, not just Bnei Yaakov to be the beneficiaries of Hashem's promise. He duly has Binyamin, his first child as Yisrael, but he has to get the rest of the kids on board. Rachel is the only wife who has experience bringing Yisrael into the world and he hopes she will help him reformat his family and transform all his kids into Bnei Yisrael, but alas she dies. So the *pasuk* tells us:

וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּט אֹהֶלָה מִהֶלְאָה לְמִגְדַּל-עֵדֶר:

You have to wonder what business he has in Migdal Eider. He should have gone home already to Yitzchak. What the *pasuk* is saying is that he moved his bed out of Leah's tent (מִהֶלְאָה) into Bilhah's tent because she was Rachel's understudy in order to upgrade his flock (לְמִגְדַּל-עֵדֶר).

When Reuven removed his bed from Bilhah's tent he subverted that plan and there is an abrupt halt in the narrative and the postscript is וַיְהִי בְנֵי-יַעֲקֹב שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר, that they remained the children of Yaakov and didn't become Bnei Yisrael. The Torah characterizes what Reuven did as if he slept with his father's *pilegesh* because when a married woman gets involved with another man people tend to cast aspersions on the kids and

question whether they are really his. His intercession didn't allow the kids to be *meyuchas* to Yisrael.

Had they become Bnei Yisrael it would have been unnecessary to go down to Mitzrayim because although Lavan had made a land grab to Bnei Yaakov, Hashem had superseded it with a new one to Bnei Yisrael. By recharacterizing them as Bnei Yisrael the *gezeirah* that applied to Bnei Yaakov would no longer be relevant to them. In his retrospective in *Parshas Vayichee*, Yaakov is bemoaning the fact that he fell one day short in his journey from Padan. Had he brought his entire family intact to Beis Lechem, Rachel would have transformed his family into Bnei Yisrael. The metaphor of Beis Lechem is because when one plants wheat, whatever attributes the kernels have are not manifest in the new crop. The wheat kernels disintegrate and the new crop is entirely recharacterized. If the wheat kernels were *tamei* or *terumah* or *kodesh*, these attributes would not affect the new crop. Yaakov was not permitted to void the *gezeirah*. He was *annus al pi hadibur*. The advent of Bnei Yisrael in their relationship with Hashem is symbolized by bread.

Tefillin are called *totafos* which is a word coined by the Torah to capture the relationship of Hashem and Klal Yisrael. It is made up of two obscure words; *tot* in the language of Kasfi and *pas* in the language of Afriki. Each word means two in their respective languages because tefillin is the symbol of a mutual relationship between two parties that have alternate perspectives. There are two different concepts embodied in the number two. You can have a matched pair or a disparate couple that comes together. *Tot* in the language of Kasfi is two of the same. This is Hashem's perspective on the relationship. *Kasfi* is the language of porters and stevedores where two bear a load on their shoulders (*kasef*). They know better than anyone that the two partners must be evenly matched. If one is taller than the other or stronger it won't work well. From Hashem's perspective we share with Him the burden of shouldering the world. But from our perspective we are a disparate couple as personified by *pas* which is bread and has two primary ingredients. The water is completely stable and the grain has to undergo

many different processes until it can be immutably incorporated with the water into bread, the magical substance that sustains the world. We are the grain to Hashem's water. We have this unique relationship with Hashem that allows us to gain sustenance for the world through our collaboration with Him.

The *Navi* says:

קִדֵּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לַה' רִאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ כֹּל-אֲכָלֶיךָ יֵאָשְׁמוּ רְעָה תִּבְאֵ אֲלֵיהֶם נָאם ה'.

Rashi explains that we are like *chadash* before the Omer is brought which can't be eaten without retribution, so if the nations attack us they will pay for it. Why are we characterized as *chadash* before the Omer? Because like the grain in the metaphor we have to undergo so much processing before we can cleave to Hashem perfectly. The *chadash* is incapable of going through those processes because it is still moist and hasn't dried out yet. If we are vulnerable to the nations it is only because we haven't gone through the processes necessary to cleave to Hashem properly, but he still promises to exact from them retribution.

The symbol of Yisrael coming together with Hashem immutably is the baking of matzah with its two ingredients which can never be isolated once they are baked together. This is why Klal Yisrael had to eat matzah with the *korban pesach*, the moment they became immutably identified with Hashem and that is symbolized by the Yisrael matzah at the Seder.

The Missing Matzos

Yehoshua Dixler

A simple reading of the halachah indicates that matzah should not only be on the Seder Plate, but have the primary location and role amongst the other plate elements. However, it seems that many people do not place the matzah where it belongs. This article will explore a possible justification for this practice.

Source for the Seder Plate

The first hint to the use of a Seder Plate is found in the commentaries on the Gemara in *Pesachim* 115b. The Gemara mentions that at the start of the Seder the table, which has food for the Seder, should be removed from before the leader. This should prompt the children to ask why the food is being removed before the meal has started. While in those days, when all people were served on individual tables, this practice made sense, now this is impractical as we all eat together at a large table. Instead we should remove the Seder Plate which contains the matzah, maror, and the two cooked foods, i.e. the *zeroa* and *beitzah* (*Rashi, Tosafos, Rosh*). Matzah is not only mentioned as being on the plate, it is listed first!

Contents of the Seder Plate

The matzah is also mentioned repeatedly by the halachic sources as being on the Seder Plate. In his first mention of the Seder Plate, the *Tur* (§473) writes, “They bring before him the plate, which contains three matzos, maror, charoses, other vegetables... and two cooked items.” Later in the same chapter he writes, “Lift up the plate that contains the matzos and say ‘*Ha Lachma Anya*’... Then he should tell them to remove it from the table as if eating has been completed.” *Tur* includes the matzah on the Seder Plate.

Shulchan Aruch (473:4) records this practice as well writing, “Bring in front of the leader a plate that contains three matzos, maror, *charoses*, *karpas* or other vegetable (*Rama*: and vinegar or salt water), and two cooked items.” Later (473:7) he writes, “When *Avadim Hayinu* is started, return the plate that contains the matzos.” When the *Shulchan Aruch* records the practice of removing the plate from the table, *Pri Megadim* (473:26) writes, “Do not put matzos on the table except for the three matzos that are in the plate before the Hagadah.” Again we see matzos are assumed to be on the plate.

Wherefore Matzos?

Where should the matzos be located amongst the many other items on the Seder Plate? *Rama* and *Arizal* record two divergent approaches to this. In compliance with the halachic principle of “*ein maavirin al a hamitvos* – we don’t pass over mitzvos,” *Rama*’s (473:4) approach requires the items that are used earlier be placed closer to the leader. He writes (based on *Maharil*), “*karpas* should be up front (*l’malah*) from them all, with the vinegar close by, more than the matzah. The matzos [closer] than the maror and *charoses*, and they should be closer than the *zeroa* and *beitzah*.”

The *Arizal* gives spiritual meaning to each of the items through the kabalistic approach equating each item with one of the ten *sefiros*. *Etz Chaim* quotes *Arizal* (as quoted by *Be’er Heitev* 473:4) that the order starts with three matzos on the bottom, with the other items arranged on top of the matzos as two triplets (right, left, center): *zeroa*, *beitzah*, maror followed by *charoses*, *karpas*, *chazeres* below and closest to the leader. This accounts for nine items. The tenth item is the Seder Plate containing all the others items.

Whether one follows the custom of the *Rama* or the *Arizal*, the matzos are on the Seder Plate. According to *Rama* they are in the middle of the other items, and according to *Arizal* they are underneath the others.

Who does this?

The *Arizal's* arrangement with the matzos on the plate, underneath the others items, is the accepted custom (*Aruch HaShulchan* 473:11). The end of the sefer *Nitei Gavriel* records 21 arrangements of the Seder Plate items. The diagrams show many variations: the other items on top of the matzos, either with a cloth in between or directly on the matzos, or on a platform that elevates the items above the matzos.¹ Some diagrams show the matzos in the middle of the plate surrounded by the other items while others show the matzos next to the other items all placed on a large plate. In all but two of these arrangements, the matzos are either on top of or contained within a Seder Plate.

If putting the matzos on the plate is the prevailing custom, it's strange that more than half of the people I asked (including my family) put the matzah on the table *next to* the Seder Plate. This custom has items arranged on the Seder Plate according to the names printed on the plate, which usually follows *Arizal*. The matzos are on the table closer to the leader than the plate which contains the carpas. This new custom violates both the *Rama's* requirement to not pass by the mitzvot, since *karpas* is used first while the matzos are placed closer, and the *Arizal's* kabalistic arrangement, since the matzos are not on the plate.

Why are so many people today not following the accepted custom? Analysis of the *Rama's* opinion can clarify, and perhaps justify, this common practice.

Analysis of the *Rama*

The *Rama's* reason for putting the matzah on the plate is very different than that of the *Arizal*. The *Arizal's* emphasis of a kabalistic arrangement requires the specific placement of all the items in the familiar "tree" structure of *sefiros*. For this to work, his approach requires all the items to be placed in a specific way; any deviation straying from the prescribed

¹ These are the "parking lot" Seder Plates that have slots for the three matzos underneath the other items.

arrangement would lose the kabalistic benefits. However, *Rama* does not bind himself by the kabbalah, instead the order is only important to prevent passing by a mitzvah. In theory, this would allow for other arrangements that do not violate this halachic principle.

Rama also assigns a different role to the Seder Plate. While the *Arizal* requires all items to be on the plate, corresponding to the tenth *sefirah*, *Rama* requires a plate only as an instrument to remove and return the items from the table so that the children will ask questions. If in theory this practice will not elicit questions, then there would be no need to remove the items from the table and consequently no need for a plate.

These two points are made by the *Magen Avraham* (473:25). He writes, “Now we do not have the custom to remove the plate at all... because the items are not there for eating. This is not similar to the custom at the time of the Gemara to remove the entire table.” According to *Magen Avraham*, there is no longer a need for the plate to aid in the removal of the matzos and other items. Accordingly, I suggest that unless one is following *Arizal* there should be no requirement to include the matzos on the plate.

What are We Doing?

This new custom appears to be a hybrid between the *Rama*, *Arizal*, and *Magen Avraham*.

We are not fully following the *Arizal*. Today’s Seder Plates have labels indicating the placement of six items usually in the order specified by *Arizal*. Although we may arrange the six items to follow the labeling, we are not following the *Arizal*, whose custom required a total of ten items, including three matzos, in a specific order. Without matzos actually on the plate, we are unable to achieve the kabalistic structure he required.

In contrast to prior times when the contents of the plate were used during the meal, today we treat the contents as a pure symbol. It’s obvious the

contents of the Seder Plate are insufficient to provide the needs of all the people attending the Seder. Consequently, we tend to not use the items from the plate for eating, opting instead to dole out *karpas*, salt water, maror and *charoses* from supplies off to the side of the leader. This non-use of the plate for eating follows the *Magen Avraham*.²

Many people place the three matzos closer to the leader than the Seder Plate, often contained in a fabric cover which contains pockets for the three matzos labeled “Kohen,” “Levi,” “Yisrael.” Since the matzah is the only item actually used, it makes sense for this mitzvah to be closest to the leader, like the *Rama*.

Does custom matter?

Rivevos Ephraim (Vol. 10 235:5), who was ordained by R’ Moshe Feinstein, cites an interesting story. When R’ Moshe visited the *Chazon Ish* for Pesach, he asked what minhag he should follow for the Seder Plate. *Chazon Ish* responded that the arrangement didn’t matter so he should arrange the plate as he pleased, since there are many divergent customs, each with its particular reasons for arrangement. *Nitei Gavriel* (Pesach:66, note 3) is astounded by this response. However, *Nitei Gavriel* seems conflicted as he quotes, but doesn’t question, a contrasting custom of the *Hisorerus Teshuvah* who followed *Rama’s* arrangement for the first Seder, but then *Arizal’s* at the second.

The *Chazon Ish* and *Hisorerus Teshuvah* provide room for flexibility as their opinions indicate the order is not exclusive to establishing one’s

² Editor’s note: Many people do use the items on the Seder Plate for the mitzvos, but supplement them with other supplies so that everyone will have a small portion of Seder-Plate mitzvah along with the outside supply to equal the minimum amount needed for the mitzvah. It could be that these same people use the “parking-lot” Seder Plates that accommodate the matzos underneath the other items.

For other possible justifications of those who keep the matzos off the Plate, see *HaSeder HaAruch* 15:5.

custom to be like either the *Rama* or *Arizal*. This leaves room for the new, hybrid custom that removes the matzos from the plate.

Conclusion

In this article we have reviewed the traditional opinions of the *Rama* and *Arizal*, both of which include matzah on the Seder Plate. I have attempted to justify the custom for the many families today that place the matzah in a cover on the table instead of on the plate. Whether the rationale I provided is the reason for the change in custom, or there is a practical reason, such as the matzos being too large for the plate, the fact remains there is a custom in practice today that is not accounted for in the Poskim.

Whatever your custom, let us hope that we will all celebrate the next Pesach together with Mashiach and see where he places the matzah.

Kiddush at the Seder

Reuven Kaplan

What is the connection between Kiddush and “*v’hotzeisi*,” the first of the four expressions of *Geulah*?

Kiddush is sanctification of the holiday, done over a cup of wine, and in the case of the Pesach Seder, being the first cup of wine. It is done by the Jewish people whom Hashem has commanded to sanctify themselves.

In the beginning of *parshas Kedoshim* Hashem says that the Jewish people have to be holy: *Kedoshim tihyu*, and right after that it talks about *arayos*, the separation from illicit relationships. Rabbi Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, the *Ohr Sameach*, connects this idea with the kiddush. He quotes Chazal who state that even though the Jewish people were affected negatively by their Egyptian neighbors and lowered themselves to the 49th level of *tumah*, they still never transgressed the commandment of *arayos* (and it was not even commanded to them yet). Egyptians were very promiscuous and immoral, yet the Jewish people never became like that. R’ Meir Simchah suggests that it is this special *kedushah* that saved the Jewish people. There are four expressions of redemption in the Torah (*arba loshonos shel geulah*) that correspond to the four cups of wine. The first cup, kiddush, corresponds to “*v’hotzeisi*” – “and I will take you out.” We were worthy of being taken out from Egypt due to our special sanctification of separation of *arayos*, that made us worthy of being redeemed. As we are holy on this night by keeping this commandment, we are able to sanctify this night through kiddush.

No Berachah of *She'asa Nissim* at the Seder

Moshe Kravetz

During this year's Chanukah Sugya of our Kehillah's Shivti program we learned about the importance of the concept of *persumi nisa*. According to the Gemara and *Shulchan Aruch*, if someone does not have an opportunity to light Chanukah lights that night, he may recite the berachah of *She'asa Nissim* just by seeing someone else's menorah and fulfill his obligation as *birchas hariah* because he is acknowledging the miracle. (There are different opinions and parameters beyond the scope of this writing – see Shivti *kuntress*, week of *Parshas Vayishlach*.)

This led me to wonder why we do not make the berachah of *She'asa Nissim* at the Seder. Although we say the Hagadah that recounts the miracles, I felt that we should have a dedicated berachah acknowledging the miracles as we do on Chanukah and Purim.

In discussing this with the Rosh Chaburah, Rabbi Ori Milrod, his insight was that *She'asa Nissim* was instituted specifically on Chanukah and Purim, as the military victory could plausibly be attributed to *teva* – a natural turn of events. As such, Chazal wanted to make it known that Hashem performed a miracle for us, so they instituted the berachah of *She'asa Nissim* and *Al HaNissim*. On the other hand, the *makkos* and events leading up to and including Yitzias Mitzrayim were **unequivocally** from Hashem and there was no need for a special berachah of *She'asa Nissim*.

R' Yaakov Grossman subsequently showed me a Rav Tzadok (*Pri Tzaddik, Zos Chanukah, Page 176*) who quotes the *Kedushas Levi* asking this very question. Rav Tzadok answers that on Pesach we say the berachah of *Asher Ge'alanu* because the main goal and purpose of Yitzias Mitzrayim was the *geulah* that occurred on that night. While it is certainly true that there were miracles involved in Yitzias Mitzrayim, if not for the *geulah* we would still be in Mitzrayim and would not have

reached the goal of Matan Torah – and would not even be at the Seder. Therefore, the berachah of *Asher Ge'alanu* is more appropriate. As opposed to Chanukah, where there were miracles but no Geulah; the main emphasis is on the miracles that occurred to our forefathers in those days, and therefore *She'asa Nissim* is more appropriate.

After doing further research, I found an *Aruch HaShulchan* (*Orach Chaim*, 473:2-3) that really *encapsulates* some of the points of the other two answers above, while adding a new dimension.

The *Tur* writes that we do not make the berachah of *She'asa Nissim* at the Seder because we will say it later in the Hagadah; meaning that just as we make the berachah on Chanukah and Purim, it is obvious that we should on Pesach as well, but because of the fact that in the Hagadah we discuss all the miracles and wonders and then we make the berachah of *Asher Ge'alanu* at the end of Maggid, this is like making the berachah of *She'asa Nissim*, and there is no need for two berachos. However, he asks, this reason is not enough, as by the Megillah, we make the berachah of *She'asa Nissim* before reading the Megillah, and another berachah after the Megillah (*Harav Es Riveinu*), so if we say two there, why do we not say two here?

The *Aruch HaShulchan* first mentions an answer offered by the *Maharil*. The *Maharil* said one only makes the berachah of *She'asa Nissim* on a Mitzvah Derabanan, which means that we would make the berachah on Purim and Chanukah, but not on Pesach which is *DeOraisa*. The *Aruch HaShulchan* writes that he does not understand this answer, so he offers what he thinks is the true answer. The Rabbis, who instituted and formulated the Berachos, only established Berachos when we are blessing Hashem for commanding us to do THIS mitzvah, such as eating Matzah, sitting in the Succah, blowing Shofar. They did not make Berachos out of the mitzvah itself. As we are commanded in the Torah to tell about the miracles of the night, and THIS is the mitzvah of the night, if we had a berachah which would in fact amount to fulfilling the same

Section III: The Seder

obligation (remembering and mentioning the miracles) it would be a berachah composed of a mitzvah *DeOraisa*. The Rabbanan did not make this type of berachah. Only by a mitzvah *DeRabanan* could they formulate such a berachah.

Lavan¹

Chaim Sugar

“Go and learn what Lavan, the Aramean, attempted to do to our father Yaakov... Lavan attempted to uproot everything, as it is said: An Aramean attempted to destroy my father. Then he descended to Egypt...”

The *Aruch HaShulchan*, in his explanation of the Hagadah on this section, notes that the Hagadah then begins to analyze this verse and begins with, “Then he descended to Egypt.” The Hagadah does not attempt to explain the words, “*An Aramean attempted to destroy my father.*” He explains that this is because it would take much effort and space to explain where in the Torah we find that Lavan wanted to destroy the Jewish people. The *Aruch HaShulchan* interprets the Hagadah’s instruction to “Go and learn” as our obligation to study the Torah’s narrative regarding Lavan and discover Lavan’s true character.

The *pasuk* “*An Aramean attempted to destroy my father*” is in *Devarim* 26:5. *Rashi* there explains this phrase to mean that Lavan attempted to destroy all when he gave chase after Yaakov left Lavan’s house, applying the term *Aramean* to Lavan. The *Seferorno* explains that the verse refers to Yaakov; Yaakov was a lost Aramean. The *Chizkuni* also interprets the term *Aramean* as referring to Yaakov. The *Rashbam*, however, explains that the verse refers to Avraham as the lost Aramean. Clearly, determining what and who is referred to by this phrase requires the expenditure of much time and energy.

The *Maharal* asks why the Hagadah focuses on Lavan instead of Eisav, who the Torah makes clear wanted to kill Yaakov. This same question is asked in a *peirush* on the Hagadah called *Marba LeSapeir*, written by a son of the *Korban Nesanel*. They both give a similar answer: Eisav’s hatred for Yaakov had a basis, at least in Eisav’s mind. Yaakov took the

¹ Based on a Chumash shiur given by Harav Yisroel Dovid Schlesinger in 5771.

bechorah from Eisav and stole the berachos from Yitzchak. However, Lavan's hatred for Yaakov had no basis. It was completely irrational, a type of hatred far worse than Eisav's.

The *Halachos Ketanos* asks how it was possible for Lavan to harbor such hatred toward his own family, to destroy all, even his own daughters and grandchildren. So, what did Lavan want? What was driving his hatred? And where does the Torah present the motivation for Lavan's hatred? The answer begins with *Bereishis* 31:30. Yaakov leaves Lavan's house and Lavan gives chase. When he catches Yaakov, one of Lavan's complaints is that Yaakov left Lavan to go to his father's house and Yaakov stole Lavan's idols. The *Sefer Maasaeh Hashem* asks why Lavan needed to mention that Yaakov is going to his father's house. Lavan's complaint was about his idols. That is all Lavan should have mentioned. Why did it make a difference to Lavan where Yaakov was headed? The *Sefer Maasaeh Hashem* answers that Lavan's goal was to get Yaakov to serve *avodah zarah*. Had Yaakov stolen the idols and run away with them somewhere other than to his father's house, Lavan would have been fine with that. Why? Because as long as Yaakov had the idols in his possession, Lavan had hope that Yaakov would be drawn to them. But if Yaakov is going to the house of his father where the idols would certainly not be tolerated and would be destroyed, then Yaakov had no need for the idols. So Lavan wants to know why Yaakov took them. Continues the *Maasaeh Hashem*, this is what it means that Lavan wanted to "uproot everything." Lavan's goal was not to physically destroy his family and children, but rather to have them give up their belief in Hashem.

This is also why, in *Bereishis* 42:2, Yaakov tells his sons to go to Mitzrayim to buy food "so that we will live and not die." Yaakov could have sent his sons to Lavan to get food, but Yaakov wanted to ensure that they "live and not die," that his sons stay alive in this world and also not "die," not lose their Olam HaBa. Going to Lavan would certainly have put their Olam HaBa in danger.

In *pasuk* 31:53, after the peace agreement made between Lavan and Yaakov, the Torah mentions Lavan's *shevuah* that "The G-D of Avraham, the god of ... and the god of ..." *Rashi* on that *pasuk* writes that the first use of the word Hashem is *kodesh*, holy, and the next two are *chol*, profane. There are other *meforshim* that explain that the first is *kodesh*, the second profane, and the third a combination of the two. The *Toras Gavriel*, a *peirush* on *Chumash* published about 107 years ago by the Rav of Boston, Massachusetts, asks why the Torah has to mention Lavan's *shevuah*, especially since he used profane names for the deity, the same names he used for his idols. The *Toras Gavriel* tells us that the point the *Chumash* is making is to show the nefarious nature of Lavan. Even after agreeing to live peaceably with Yaakov and setting up a monument to this peace agreement, Lavan still uses trickery and slyness to get Yaakov to at least acknowledge the veracity of the idols. Therefore, when making the *shevuah*, Lavan begins with a holy name for Hashem, but follows that with the inclusion of profane names, either two profane against one holy according to *Rashi* or a name that is a combination of the holy and profane. Why is Lavan doing this? Because if he gets Yaakov to say that he agrees with the *shevuah* as Lavan worded it, then Lavan would have been victorious in getting Yaakov to agree to the existence of other gods. Lavan's hope is that if Yaakov accepts Lavan's wording, then even if Yaakov himself does not really accept the idols, maybe his children will be influenced by Yaakov's inaction.

So, how does Yaakov respond? He could have answered that he agrees to swear by the G-D of Avraham. But no! Yaakov swears by the Fear of Yitzchak. Once Lavan used the Holy Name together with the profane, Yaakov refused to participate. Yaakov understood exactly what Lavan was trying to accomplish. This idea is rooted in the Haftarah for *Parshas Bamidbar*. The Haftarah is from *Hoshea* chapter 2, and in *pasuk* 18 says that it will be that you will call me "my Husband and you will no longer call me my Master." The word used for Master is Baal). The *Radak* explains that even though calling Hashem with the word Baal was

acceptable in the past, once it began to be used by idol worshippers, it could no longer be used for the Holy Name.

Ok, so now it is over and Lavan gives up. Nope. In *pasuk* 32:1, it says that after all this Lavan got up in the morning and "...kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them..." The *Chafetz Chaim* asks why Lavan did not also kiss Yaakov. He points out that at this point, Lavan has given up on converting Yaakov but is still trying to make an impression on his daughters and grandchildren, still attempting to persuade them to recognize the validity of his idols and still trying to "kill everything", i.e. the *kedushah* of Klal Yisrael.

Of course there are many other examples of Lavan's evil nature. However, to understand all of them in the Torah, one must "***go and learn.***"

Your Protective Wall ¹

Moshe Rock

We say in the Hagadah: *If Hashem would have split the sea for the Jewish people when they left Egypt, but they would not have passed through on dry land, "Dayeinu," it would have been enough.* The commentators are bothered. What would splitting the sea have done if we could not pass through? The *Sefer L'hodot U'lshabeach* explains that the key word here is "dry land." The author of the Hagadah is saying that it would have been enough if Hashem would have split the sea, and the Jewish people would have passed through on a muddy surface. Hashem is so kind, however, that He even made a nice dry surface so that the Jews could enjoy the experience even more. Noticing the details of Hashem's kindnesses is a great praise to Him.

We have to look deeper into our blessings, and appreciate every aspect of them.

At the end of every Tefillah we recite the *Aleinu* prayer, which begins: *הכל עלינו לשבח לאדון*, *It is incumbent upon us to praise the Master of All.* The *Chida* brings from *Rabbeinu Hai Gaon* that this Tefillah is so special that *אין שבה כמוהו ליוצרינו ועלה על כל השבחות שבעולם*, *There is no greater praise that we can give to our Creator. It is above any praise that could be uttered in this world.* Therefore, he says, it should be said slowly and with intent.

The *Kol Bo* brings from the *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* that *Aleinu* was composed by Yehoshua Ben Nun, who knew how to praise Hashem. Due to its elevated status, it needs to be said while standing up.

¹ Adapted with permission from *Emuna Daily*, a project of Yeshiva Ateres Shimon, Far Rockaway, NY.

Section IV: The Seder

We get to say this wondrous Tefillah three times a day. The *Nefesh Shimshon* explains with a parable why our Rabbis put it at the end of the Tefillah. If a man had permission to go into the king's treasure house, and take whatever he could grab, there would probably be some unscrupulous individuals waiting outside to try and steal something from him. Therefore, he would need a protective covering to keep his treasure safe. That is how it is whenever we pray. We walk out of every Tefillah with treasures of wealth, and the evil forces want to rob us of them. Our Rabbis know that saying *Aleinu*, ending the prayers with a praise to Hashem of that magnitude, will put a protective wall around us, and prevent the damaging forces from taking anything.

Thus, the *Seder HaYom* writes, that saying *Aleinu* is a *segulah* for protection. It protects a person from harm that could have come upon him that day. We do not realize the wealth that we have in the words of our prayers. Knowing how valuable appreciating Hashem is, we should continue the service throughout our day. The more blessings we can find to say thank you for, the greater the service is.

A man who had his first baby girl after being married for one year asked Rav Shach, *zt"l*, if he needed to make a Kiddush to celebrate and thank Hashem. Rav Shach asked him, "If this child had been born to you after eight years of waiting, would you make a Kiddush?" "Of course," the man said, "What a *simchah* that would be!" So, Rav Shach told him, "Hashem was so kind to you. He saved you eight years of waiting. Does that deserve any less of a celebration and thank-you to Him?"

We do not need to be lacking something first to appreciate it. People who are thinking deeply are constantly appreciating all of the kindnesses that Hashem is giving them. The more we realize what we have, the more we can thank and praise Hashem for it.

A Kosher *Bris Milah* ¹

Shimon Weichbrod

There is a very famous question posed by the *Rambam* on the story of Dinah and Shechem, in which the brothers set up the residents of Shechem by first imposing *milah* on them, and then coming in on the third day after the *milah* to wipe them out.

The *Rambam* asks the question: How did the Shevatim have the right to kill out all of Shechem, if only one person is guilty – why should the entire city be punished? Shimon and Levi should only have had the right to kill Shechem (and maybe his father, Chamor), but what was the rest of the city guilty of?

The *Rambam* answers that the residents of the city had the responsibility to set up a court system that would have tried Shechem and punished him accordingly. Therefore, the residents of the city were guilty of one of the *Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach* – of setting up a court system. And, as we know, a ben Noach that violates one of the *Mitzvos Bnei Noach* is subject to capital punishment.

Rav Yehoshua Aharon Tzvi Weinberger, the Av Bais Din of Worgarten, and cited in the sefer *Kemotzei Shallal Rav*, questions the approach of the *Rambam*. Once the people of Shechem had a *bris*, they were no longer *Bnei Noach*, but rather had the status of Yisraelim. If so, once again, we have the problem of why were they subject to death?

¹ The Hagadah teaches us that Bnei Yisrael merited *yetzias Mitzrayim* through the blood of their *bris milah*. This *dvar Torah* digresses to discuss a *bris milah* that was not performed properly.

He answers, as follows: in the *parshah* of *milah*, the Torah states the following (*Bereishis* 17:13):

הַמּוֹל | יְמוּל יְלִיד בֵּיתָהּ וּמִקֵּנַת פֶּסֶפֶד וְהִיְתָה בְּרִיתִי בִּבְשָׂרְכֶם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם:

We derive from there that only a *הַמּוֹל* is eligible to be *יְמוּל*, that is, only someone who is already properly circumcised can perform a *bris*. Therefore, the *brissim* that the residents of Shechem performed were invalid, and they never became Jewish. They were still *Bnei Noach*, and thus responsible for holding Shechem accountable for what he did. If so, Shimon and Levi still had a right to kill them.

He goes on to prove this from the *pasuk* itself, which states (*Bereishis* 34:13-15):

וַיַּעֲנוּ בְנֵי יַעֲקֹב אֶת שָׂקֶם וְאֵת חֲמוֹר אָבִיו בְּמַרְמָה וַיַּדְבִּירוּ אֲשֶׁר טִמְא אֶת דִּינָה אֲחֹתָם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵיהֶם לֹא נוֹכַל לַעֲשׂוֹת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לְתַת אֶת אֲחֹתָנוּ לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לוֹ עֶרְלָה כִּי חֲרָפָה הוּא לָנוּ: אֵךְ בְּזֹאת נֹאוֹת לָכֶם אִם תִּהְיוּ כְּמֵנוּ לְהַמְלִל לָכֶם כָּל זָכָר:

He examines the words of the last *pasuk*. The *Bnei Yaakov* were telling Shechem: if you want to intermarry with us, you would need to be *mahul* like us, by having the *bris* be performed according to Halachah. However, they worded it in a way that made it sound like only the action of *milah* was required.

Furthermore, says Rav Weinberger, it would seem that *Rashi* is trying to highlight this for us. *Rashi* on the word *בְּמַרְמָה* (cunning) defines it as *בהכמה* (wisdom). What, asks Rav Weinberger, is *Rashi* adding with this definition. Is there really a difference between “cunning” and “wisdom”? Both indicate that the brothers had ulterior motives. In fact, it would seem that *מַרְמָה* is more appropriate – they tricked Shechem. Where was the *chachmah*?² However, with the *pshat* provided, this makes a lot of

² In fact, Artscroll’s *Rashi* translation points out that in all of *Neviim* and *Kesuvim*, *be’mirmah* always means with deceit, but that in *Chumash Rashi* and

sense. The brothers were using a specific *chachmah* to trick Shechem into an invalid *bris milah*. The *chachmah* was that the *Bnei Yaakov* gave the correct answer on how the *milah* should be performed, but Shechem and his father did not interpret it correctly.

While this is a very nice *pshat*, there was still something that bothered me with the basic explanation of the *Rambam*. Granted that the *Bnei Noach* are required to set up a court system and try offenders. However, Shechem and Chamor were royalty – they ran the city of Shechem. How could its residents be responsible for what the monarchy did? (I doubt the city of Shechem had an impeachment process written into their constitution).

So, the question then returns, how were the sons of Yaakov correct in punishing the entire city of Shechem for what one person did?³

I think the Torah shows us another aspect of this *chachmah* that the sons of Yaakov exhibited. When Yaakov's sons chose *bris milah* as the only option for marrying into the family, they could have asked only that the family of Shechem perform this action. Instead, they asked that the entire

Onkelos always translate it as *be'chachmah* (see also *Bereishis* 27:35 - וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא (אֲחִיהֶם בְּמִרְמָה וַיִּשָּׁח בְּרַחֲמֵהֶם).

³ I found this question asked by the *Gur Aryeh*. He questions how the city could have done anything to its monarchs, and at most they are an *oneis* and therefore cannot be held responsible. He answers that Shechem and Yaakov were considered to be independent countries, as the *pasuk* states when Chamor and Shechem were talking to their townspeople (*Bereishis* 34:22): אָהֱבָה אֶתֹכֶם לְנָפְשָׁם וְלִשְׁבָּתָם אֶתְּנוּ לָהֶם אֶחָד בְּהֵמוֹל לָנוּ כָּל זָכָר פֶּאֶשֶׁר הֵם נִמְלִיכִים. He promised them that they would “become one people.” This must mean that Yaakov and Shechem were always considered two distinct peoples. If that is the case, says the *Gur Aryeh*, this is tantamount to a declaration of war, by forcing Yaakov, with the abduction of Dinah to come to an agreement. If it is a war, the sons of Yaakov had every right to defend themselves against the entire city of Shechem and are then justified in wiping out the city. The only problem with this answer is that it does not fit in with the *Rambam*'s explanation that we began with – it has nothing to do with whether or not the people of Shechem were responsible for enforcing the law.

city would join in too. Shechem and Chamor, being the rulers of the city, had two options: they could force the entire city to cooperate (on the punishment of death) or they could talk the residents into joining. The real difference is who really wielded the power in Shechem, was it the people or the monarchy.

We get the answer a few *pesukim* later (*Bereishis* 34:20):

וַיָּבֹא חָמוֹר וְשָׁכֶם בְּנוֹ אֶל שַׁעַר עִירָם וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֶל אֲנָשֵׁי עִירָם לֵאמֹר:

And then in *pasuk* 24:

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל חָמוֹר וְאֶל שָׁכֶם בְּנוֹ כֹּל יִצְחָק שַׁעַר עִירוֹ כֹּל יִצְחָק שַׁעַר עִירוֹ וַיִּמְלֹךְ כֹּל זָכָר כֹּל יִצְחָק שַׁעַר עִירוֹ:

It is clear from the *pesukim* that Shechem and Chamor had to talk the residents into complying, and that it could not have happened if the residents did not agree.⁴

This then, was the proof that the sons of Yaakov needed to determine that the entire city of Shechem was culpable for not bringing Shechem to justice. So the second level of *chachmah* that they exhibited was the way they set up the test, so that only the people that were guilty would also be weakened by performing the *bris milah*.

⁴ It also seems that this could be hinted at from the seemingly superfluous words of the *pasuk*, right after Chamor and Shechem come to Yaakov: וְלֹא אָחֵר הֵנָּעַר :לַעֲשׂוֹת הַדָּבָר כִּי חָפֵץ בָּבֶת יַעֲקֹב וְהוּא נִקְבֵּד מִכָּל בֵּית אָבִיו : What difference does it make that Shechem was the most honored of his father's house - unless this has to do with the influence he could have on the city's residents.

Tips to Improve Your Worrying

Label Cooper

Chances are there are probably at least five or ten things at the top of your worry list at any given time, which really have you concerned about your family's future or your own. Consider this:

אין אַנחנוּ מספיקים להודות לך...

7)	6)	5)	4)	3)	2)	1)
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
על אחת מאלף אלף אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות פעמים הטובות שעשית עם אבותינו ועמנו						

In the *Nishmas* prayer recited on Shabbos, the above quantifies the number of *tovos* (favours) that Hashem does for us. How many are there?

- 1) אלף, a thousand.
- 2) אלף times (implied) a thousand... (that's one million so far).
- 3) אלפי times thousands.
- 4) אלפים times thousands (so that's millions of the above million, 12 zeros, so we're up to multiple trillions so far).
- 5) ורבי. Starts with a *vav*, so this is a new count: translation – and tens of thousands.
- 6) רבבות times tens of thousands (so this new count is up to multiples of an 8 zero number), meaning further hundreds of millions.
...but what's the need for adding this new count, which is anyways smaller than the aforementioned multiple trillions?
- 7) פעמים, *number of repeated occurrences* of the above... In other words, hundreds of millions of times, the multiple trillions noted above are “repeated.”

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and Beyond

Now answer this question: Can you make a sizeable list of all the things that you ever worried about that actually turned out so, and confirmed that your particular worry was indeed accurate?

OK, then how about a small list – like ten or twenty?

Take your time. Suggestion - If your list is three items or less, that probably means one of the following, either:

- You keep worrying about the things that don't end up going wrong.
- You aren't worrying about nearly enough things.
- Or you should worry about things NOT included in the above list, and thus are more likely to go wrong.

Waiting to Begin *Chazaras HaShatz* Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

I. Waiting to begin *chazaras hashatz*

In a minyan where the men daven unrushed, it is possible that many will still be davening *Shemoneh Esrei* when the *baal tefillah* is ready to begin *chazaras hashatz*. How many men must be available for answering his berachos for the *baal tefillah* to be permitted to begin?

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules: (*Orach Chaim* 124:4, based on *Teshuvos HaRosh* 4:19):

כשש"צ חוזר התפלה, הקהל יש להם לשתוק ולכוין לברכות שמברך החזן ולענות אמן, ואם אין ט' מכוונים לברכותיו קרוב להיות ברכותיו לבטלה:

When the shaliach tzibur is repeating the tefillah, the congregation must be silent and concentrate on the berachos that the chazzan is reciting and respond Amen. And if nine people are not concentrating on his berachos, his berachos are close to being in vain.

This should make it obvious that if there are not nine men who have finished *Shemoneh Esrei* available to answer the chazzan's berachos, he may not begin *chazaras hashatz*.

However, *Shulchan Aruch* states elsewhere (ibid. 55:6):

ואם התחיל אחד מהעשרה להתפלל לבדו ואינו יכול לענות עמהם או שהוא ישן, אפילו הכי מצטרף עמהם:

If one of the ten began to daven on his own so that he cannot answer with [the others], or he is sleeping, he nevertheless can combine with [the others].

This halachah apparently contradicts the previously-cited one since it does not require nine men to answer the chazzan's berachos; for one of the nine congregants is either davening or sleeping.

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and Beyond

The most well-known answer to this contradiction is presented by the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (55:7), who explains that the two rulings of the *Shulchan Aruch* apply to different cases. In *Siman* §55, the *Shulchan Aruch* is ruling that in order to answer *kaddish* or *borchu* nine men are not needed; but when he rules in *Siman* §124 that it is necessary for nine men to be able to answer the chazzan, he is referring to *chazaras hashatz*. And the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* there (124:6) explains that this is so because the institution of *chazaras hashatz* was made for someone who is unable to recite *Shemoneh Esrei* himself to fulfill his obligation by hearing the chazzan's recitation; and this is effective only when there are nine men following the recitation. Hence, even if everyone in the minyan has davened a silent *Shemoneh Esrei*, it is nevertheless necessary to carry out this institution with nine men listening to the entire recitation of the chazzan.¹ This distinction is made by the *Pri Megadim* (*Mishbetzos Zahav* 47:4), *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (20:2), *Ben Ish Chai* (*Vayechi* §5), and *Kaf HaChaim* (55:48), among others.²

However, *Maharil* (§150), cited by *Magen Avraham* (55:8), has another approach to this contradiction. He claims that even though the *Rosh* holds that we cannot begin *chazaras hashatz* without nine men available to answer, this is not the custom. Accordingly, *Magen Avraham* rules that the ruling of *Shulchan Aruch* in *Siman* §55 applies to *chazaras hashatz*, as well as to answering *kaddish* or *borchu*. This approach is accepted by *Elyah Rabbah* (*Zuta* 55:3), *Siddur Derech HaChaim*, and *Daas Torah* (55:5).

An intermediate approach is suggested by the *Taz* (55:4). In *Siman* §124, the *Shulchan Aruch* is stating the *preferred* practice; i.e. for *chazaras*

¹ See *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. IV §19) for a detailed explanation of how nowadays we have to replicate the original institution through having nine men listening even if everyone is able to recite their own *Shemoneh Esrei*.

² According to R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l (cited by *Ishei Yisrael* Chapter 15 note 11), this is also the view of *Mishnah Berurah* 55:32. But cf. *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. 12 9:7) and *Piskei Teshuvos* (§55 note 94).

hashatz, as well as for *kaddish* and *borchu*, it is preferable to have nine men available to answer. The ruling in *Siman* §55, though refers to where this is difficult; in this case, it is permitted even if there will not be nine men answering.

Based on the above, most Poskim hold that the chazzan may not begin *chazaras hashatz* unless there are nine men available to hear and answer his berachos. But for Maariv, when the chazzan recites *kaddish* after the silent *Shemoneh Esrei*, it is not necessary to have nine men answer.

Now, in the latter case, the *Shulchan Aruch* ruled only that if one of the ten men is not available to answer, it is permitted to recite *kaddish* or *borchu*. But what is the law if more than one member of the minyan is still in *Shemoneh Esrei* or sleeping? May the chazzan recite *kaddish* in this case as well?

The *Mishnah Berurah* (55:32) first cites the view of *Elyah Rabbah* (55:7) and *Derech HaChaim* that as long as most of them, i.e. six men, have finished davening, the chazzan may begin. But he then says that others (*Chayei Adam* 29:1 and *Be'er Heiteiv* 55:9) rule stringently that if more than one is still davening the chazzan may not begin.³ And he concludes that this entire discussion refers to members of the minyan who are still davening. But if more than one is sleeping under no circumstances should the chazzan begin since many Poskim do not accept any leniencies regarding counting a sleeping person as part of the quorum.⁴

It thus emerges that when it comes to beginning *chazaras hashatz*, under normal circumstances the chazzan should definitely wait for nine men to

³ See the reasoning for this view in *Magen Avraham* (55:8). The dissenting view is based on *Teshuvos Maharalbach* (§15), cited by *Magen Avraham*.

⁴ *Aruch HaShulchan* (55:13) explains that someone who is davening is at least involved in Heavenly matters, unlike a sleeping person who is equivalent to a corpse at the time.

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and Beyond

be ready to answer his berachos. However, in an extenuating circumstance – e.g. there are exactly ten men in the minyan and one just began his *Shemoneh Esrei*⁵ – we can rely on the view that the leniency of *Siman* §55 applies to *chazaras hashatz* as well as to answering *borchu* and *kaddish*. However, it would be a stretch to use this leniency if more than one is still davening since there is a dispute if the leniency applies for more than one person even to recite *kaddish* or *borchu*.⁶ [But in case of an extreme circumstance – e.g. one of the men has to absolutely leave for work or carpool and waiting for all ten to finish would not accomplish anything – it is worth considering whether it possible to combine the various leniencies and begin *chazaras hashatz* if there are as few as six men available to answer.⁷]

II. Learning during *chazaras hashatz*

While we are on the topic of *chazaras hashatz*, let's discuss the issue of whether it is permitted to study Torah during that time. Now, if there are only ten people finished *Shemoneh Esrei*, based on what we have learned it is obvious that none of the nine listeners may choose not to listen and

⁵ He shouldn't have. Because he could have been counted as one of the ten men had he waited and begun his *Shemoneh Esrei* with the chazzan (see *Ishei Yisrael* ibid. note 17, quoting R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l).

⁶ *Chayei Adam* (ibid.) states clearly that it applies only in the case of one person still davening. *Tzitz Eliezer* (ibid.) also apparently rules leniently only for one person still davening. And this certainly would not apply if the tenth person is engaged in idle chatter.

⁷ This is not so simple because those Poskim might hold that on that day it is just not possible to have a *chazaras hashatz*, rather than combining multiple leniencies. It also must be determined what to do in a very small community, which could not have a daily minyan if they were forced to wait for ten men to begin *chazaras hashatz*. But the multiple leniencies certainly should not be used as a matter of course on a daily basis in a place that already has a minyan and just wants to add other minyanim for convenience or to increase its membership base.

instead study Torah.⁸ But how about if there are plenty of men listening? Is it permitted then for someone to use this time for Torah study?

We again cite the *Shulchan Aruch* (124:4) where he rules: *When the shaliach tzibur is repeating the tefillah, the congregation must be silent and concentrate on the berachos that the chazzan is reciting and respond Amen.* And he states further (124:7): *One may not engage in idle talk when the shaliach tzibur is repeating the Shemoneh Esrei. And if he did talk, he is a sinner, his transgression is too big to bear, and we should chastise him.*

This halachah clearly refers to idle talk. How about Torah study, particularly when it is done through reading from a *sefer* without any speech at all? The *Magen Avraham* (124:8) cites two opinions about this matter. First, the *Rama MiPano* (*Teshuvos* §102) writes regarding those who learn during *chazaras hashatz* or say *tachanunim*, if they pay attention to the end of each berachah to answer Amen we should not protest. However, the *Magen Avraham* concludes: *But in Sefer Vavei HaAmudim he did contest them,*⁹ and *Magen Avraham* cites a support to this stringent view.

⁸ We obviously cannot apply the reasoning of the *Aruch HaShulchan* cited above (note 4) that since Torah study is also a Heavenly matter, the learner can still count as part of the quorum. For someone who is still davening has no choice but to continue davening; but the Torah learner can and should simply stop his learning.

⁹ *Vavei HaAmudim* was written by R' Sheftel, the son of the *Shl"i HaKadosh*. In the passage cited by the *Magen Avraham*, he says that he commonly chastises people who recite *techinos* during *chazaras hashatz*, stating that their requests will certainly not be granted and whatever they had will be taken from them. He then adds that it is proper to protest and chastise people who learn during *chazaras hashatz* because this learning is not *lishmah*.

R' Chaim Kanievsky writes further (*Orchos Yosher*) that the Torah study of one who learns the *Parshah* during *chazaras hashatz* or *kaddish* will not be successful [תורה כזו לא תצליח], and it is possible that he does not even fulfill his obligation of *shenayim mikrah* [שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום] since it is a mitzvah that came about through a transgression [מצוה הבאה בעבירה].

Section V: Tefillah on Pesach and Beyond

The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (124:6) similarly writes that one should chastise the people who learn or recite *tachanunim* during *chazaras hashatz* even if they pay attention to the end of each berachah and answer Amen properly, because the rest of the congregation will learn from them not to listen to the *shaliach tzibur* and engage in idle chatter. This conclusion of the *Magen Avraham* is accepted as well both by *Mishnah Berurah* (124:17)¹⁰ and *Aruch HaShulchan* (124:9) without citing any difference of opinion, and it is supported at length by *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. IV §19).

Until this point, we have seen only that one must refrain from Torah study during *chazaras hashatz* in order to ensure that there will always be nine men listening to carry out the Rabbinic institution created to help someone who cannot daven himself. But R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *z"l* (*Halichos Shlomo* 9:3) adds that even if there are certainly nine people listening to the entire *chazaras hashatz* there is still an obligation on the entire congregation to listen as well. For the Rabbinic institution was for the congregation to repeat the *Shemoneh Esrei* just as there is an obligation to hear the Torah reading. (He makes this analogy to prove that even if someone missed hearing part of *chazaras hashatz*, e.g. he was in his silent *Shemoneh Esrei* when the chazzan began, he is still obligated to listen to the rest¹¹).

¹⁰ The *Mishnah Berurah* writes further (566:12) that it is not even proper to collect tzedakah during *chazaras hashatz* because it distracts the people from listening.

¹¹ See also *Chazon Ish* (*Orach Chaim* 137:5) who rules the same way. It is also possible that the obligation to stand during *chazaras hashatz* is based on this reasoning; for according to the first reason it might be necessary for only nine listeners to stand. Unless you say that if some sit that too might weaken the seriousness of *chazaras hashatz* for the others. And the same consideration would apply to the well-known practice of the *Rov*, Rav Y. D. Soleveitchik *z"l*, to stand with his feet together during *chazaras hashatz*. Either way, he would certainly hold it forbidden to learn during that time.

We have so far learned that one is prohibited to learn during *chazaras hashatz* merely to uphold an institution that does not seem to be needed anymore. However, in truth listening to *chazaras hashatz* is actually productive even nowadays. For the *Kaf HaChaim* (124:2) explains that for every Rabbinic institution, besides the rational reason given, there is also a deeper, hidden reason that is not necessarily made public.¹² And regarding this institution, the *Arizal* revealed to us that *chazaras hashatz* is more important in having our prayers answered than our silent *Shemoneh Esrei*. The *Kaf HaChaim* further (124:16) cites many other sources proclaiming that one should not mix the accomplishments derived from Torah study when it is time to accomplish through prayer.¹³

So what should one do with his time during *chazaras hashatz* if he's not allowed to learn? Well, the *Mishnah Berurah* offers some advice from the *Shl"ta HaKadosh* (124:26): *Place the Siddur before you and direct your eyes and heart there, without looking outside; you will then be assured of paying attention to each and every word.*

¹² This is why the Gemara states that a *Beis Din* may not abolish the institution of a prior *Beis Din* unless it is greater in size and in wisdom; for even if it is apparent that the rational reason for the institution no longer applies, they have to be certain that there are no other, esoteric reasons that still might apply. We have often spoken out the *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, who uses this principle to explain how we can pray for a good judgment on both days of Rosh Hashanah when nowadays we know which day is the Biblical Rosh Hashanah, which should presumably be when we are judged.

¹³ *Aruch HaShulchan* too writes simply (124:12): *There is a time for Torah, and there is a time for prayer.* For a contemporary analysis of this topic, see R' Shimshon Pinkus's *She'arim BaTefillah*.

It is worth examining that if unlike the previous reason, this effect is not possible unless one hears the entire *chazaras hashatz*, just as one must recite the entire silent *Shemoneh Esrei*. And furthermore, this should prohibit even thinking about a Torah matter, not just learning from a *sefer*.

Bekias Yam Suf or Kerias Yam Suf

Michoel Keidar

In *Parshas Beshalach* we have one of the greatest miracles that occurred to the Jewish nation, the Splitting of the Yam Suf. To express this great miracle the Torah uses the term “*bekia*,” which means separation, as it says in *Shemos* (14:16): וְנִתְּחָה אֶת יַדְּךָ עַל הַיָּם וּבִקְעָהּ.

It is interesting to note that while the Torah uses the term *bekia* to describe the splitting of the Red Sea, it is more commonly known to us as a *keria*, which literally means “tearing.” This is so because the Gemara in several places, referring to this miracle, uses the term *keria*. Two examples are well known:

(1) *Pesachim* (118a): אמר רב שיזבי משמיה דרבי אלעזר בן עזריה קשין מזונותיו: *R' Shizvi said in the name of R' Elazar ben Azaryah: Parnasah is as difficult as splitting the Yam Suf. For it is written (Tehillim 136:25), “Who gives bread to each” and near that pasuk it is written (ibid. 136:13) “To the One Who divided the Yam Suf into parts. [See there for other examples.]*

(2) *Sotah* (2a): אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר ר' יוחנן וקשין לזווגן *Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of R' Yochanan: It is difficult to match them like the splitting of the Yam Suf.*

We therefore wonder why Chazal use an expression that is different from the one used in Torah. But first we need to ask what the difference is between *bekia* and *keria*. It's clear that Chazal wanted to point out the special involvement (*hashgachah pratis*) of Hashem in making our *parnasah* and *shidduchim* possible. It is indeed a miracle that people have a *parnasah* and a *shidduch*. But perhaps there is another dimension here, which is the hope that Hashem is watching over us and provides us with all our needs even though this is a very “difficult” task (obviously

not for Hashem, for us; to help us appreciate it, we call it “difficult”). If that is the case, why do Chazal use the expression of *keria*, which is a different term than the one used by the Torah?

Chidushei HaRim explains the difference between the expression *bekia* used in the Torah and *keria*, which is the one used by Chazal, as follows: *Bekia* refers to something that had always been complete (*shalem*) and was then divided, whereas *keria* refers to something that was separated, put together, and then separated again.¹

R' Shimon Schwab (in *Maayan Beis HaSho'eiva*, *Parshas Ki Seitzei*) brings an interested and important *yesod* (fundamental principle). In many places and, in particular, in *Parshas Mishpatim*, the Written Torah puts a strong emphasis in expressing *midas HaDin* (Hashem's strict judgement). For example, the *pasuk* states the punishment for someone who injured another person (21:24): *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand*. However Hashem employs *midas Harachamim*² On the other hand, the Oral Torah invokes *Midas Harachamim* (Hashem's mercy on His nation). Chazal therefore explain that an *eye for an eye* actually refers to monetary payment, not a cruel physical punishment. This is what we find, continues R' Shimon Schwab, in all cases deserving death penalty that are mentioned in the Torah; for a Sanhedrin that executes a death penalty even only once in seventy years is called “bloody” (*Makkos* 7a). In fact, it is almost impossible for a court to ever execute someone. This is why Hashem is called רַחוּמָה, *the Merciful One* in the Gemara. So it emerges that the Oral Torah works with Hashem's *Midas HaRachmim*, while the Written Torah follows *Midas HaDin*.

¹ There is also a *Halachic* ramification to this idea. For instance, *Rambam* writes (*Hil. Shabbos* 10:11): *A person who separates papers or hides that are stuck together is liable for performing a toladah of the melachah of tearing, koreia, if his intent is not merely destructive*. We see here too the term *keria* is used for papers that were once separate and then glued together.

² See *Bereishis Rabbah* (12:15).

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

Based on the aforementioned *yesod* of R' Shimon Schwab we can suggest that when Chazal make the comparison of having *parnasah* or finding a *shidduch* to the splitting of the Yam Suf, they want to give us hope that Hashem will help us in these pursuits. It is therefore very appropriate to use the expression of *keria*, to demonstrate that all our needs come from Hashem as a *chesed*. In addition, as explained above, *keria* by definition is something that was already done. Since Hashem provided for us over all previous generations, Chazal specifically point out this idea in the Oral Torah, which is the manifestation of *chesed*.

Kerias Yam Suf: Jumping In **Rabbi Paysach Diskind**

In *Parshas Beshalach*, the Jewish people find themselves on the beach of the Red Sea with the entire Egyptian army behind them ready to destroy them. They turn to Hashem in prayer along with Moshe, their leader. Hashem tells Moshe that they prayed enough; “*Tell the people to travel into the Sea.*” The implication was that when they will travel into the Sea they will be saved as in fact happened. The leaders of the people followed by their people literally marched into the sea until they could go no further and then the sea split forming a floor of dry land.

The question is, if Hashem accepted their prayers and was going to save them why was it necessary for them to first travel into the sea and only then the sea would split? Could Hashem not split the sea immediately? What was the point of this challenge?

Before we return to this question I would like to share with you a game that I played with my seven year old daughter. When entering our home there is a small staircase of seven steps going up. I would place my daughter on the third step up. I stood at the bottom with outstretched arms ready to catch her. I then instructed her to jump into my arms. It was a bit unnerving but with enough prompting and cajoling she jumped. After practicing this a number of times I moved her up one step and began the routine again. We continued this until she was able to jump off the top step straight into my arms. This game generated an exhilarating thrill. The reason for this exhilaration was that she was able to do something that she would never have been capable of doing if she did not have complete trust in her father. There is perhaps nothing more exhilarating than going beyond your limits with the knowledge that you will succeed. Furthermore, by throwing all her trust in her father she created a very strong bond between herself and her father. That too can be exhilarating.

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

Let us return to our question. Why did Hashem want that we should start marching into the sea if He was going to split it anyway?

With our Exodus from Egypt, Hashem was creating a people for Himself. It was to be a nation where He and they would have an inseparable relationship. To create such a strong bond it was necessary that this people should be able to place their entire trust in their Director and know that they can count on Him. Hashem therefore designed this impossible situation thereby causing the people to jump into His waiting Arms to be caught by Him. This experience embedded into the deepest recesses of the Jewish soul the trust that we can have in Hashem and the courage to do whatever Hashem wants from us. We have nothing to fear. There is nothing that we cannot accomplish. All we need to do is act with the knowledge that Hashem will make it work. Even if the result is impossible to achieve we will succeed at that as well.

This Cannot Be How It Ends! ¹

Daniel Menchel

As the Exodus reaches its climax, the Jews are cornered. They are on the beach among the reeds, Red Sea lying in front of them, with the cloud of the onrushing Egyptian army in the distance. Trapped, the people despair. Yet before Hashem's talks to Moshe, Moshe knows how to fix the situation (14:13): 'אל תיראו ה' ישיעת ה', *Do not be afraid! Stand and wait, and you'll see God's salvation...*

How exactly did he know?

After they are saved, they sing the Song of the Sea. Curiously, Miriam leads a separate rendition of gratitude, and the Jewish women follow her. Curiously, because why was the Song of the Sea not enough? And curious, because she is identified in a highly unusual way (15:20-21): ותקח מרים הנביאה אחות אהרן את התוף בידה ותצאנ כל הנשים אחריה בתפים ובמחלות. ותענ להם מרים, *Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aharon, took an instrument in her hand, and led the women with instruments and dancing. And she responded to them...*

She needs no introduction; we know exactly who she is. The specific identifications, הנביאה – *the prophetess*, אחות אהרן – *sister of Aharon*, are odd. She was also sister to Moshe, and what of her capacity as a prophetess? ותענ להם means she was responding – but to what?

Sensitive to this, *Rashi* remarks that it was the prophecy she experienced when she was only Aharon's sister; the prophecy of Moshe's birth. In the

¹ The *Shirah* of Miriam is only two *pesukim* long in *Parshas Beshalach*. I always wondered why it was so brief; and what it really stood before, above and beyond the straight *pshat* and *Rashi*. I found this incredible explanation in Geshmak Torah (gtorah.com) and was profoundly affected by it. It is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuot

buildup to his birth, foreseen by Pharaoh, he launched a campaign of infanticide against Jewish boys. The Midrash records how Amram and Yocheved, the Jewish leaders of the time, had separated, so as not to suffer this terrible fate. Miriam had this prophecy, and persuaded them by saying that they were worse than the decree itself, as they were preventing the birth of girls too.

When she fell pregnant, the Egyptian military kept tabs on her – but Moshe was born early. When he was born, the Torah describes his appearance (2:2): וַתֵּרָא אֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא, which the Midrash says is the same כִּי טוֹב as from the creation of light at the beginning of Creation – and the entire house lit up.

But in spite of such a sign (2:2): וְלֹא יָכְלָה עוֹד הִצְפִּינוּ, *she could not hide him any longer*. After three more months, which would have been the full term, the Egyptians were looking for her, to see what she had given birth to. She had to abandon the child, prophesied about by her daughter. She placed the boy into a box, and placed him in the river. The Torah implies she could not bear to watch – and who could? What chances would one give a child in a box in a crocodile infested river, in the Egyptian heat, with the army looking for him no less?

The *pasuk* says (2:4): וַתֵּתֵצֵב אֶחָתוֹ מֵרֶחֶק לִדְעָה מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ, *Miriam stood and waited from afar, to know what would be of him...* The emphasis is on Miriam – Miriam stayed; when Yocheved would not. The thought process is very simple – Miriam had not had a new prophecy, and she was but a child herself. But there is one pure, overarching thought that guides her: “This cannot be how it ends..!”

And she is not wrong. The daughter of the Jews’ oppressors shows up, which would ordinarily be the absolute worst thing that could happen, but she displays compassion for the boy, and takes him in. The ultimate victory is clutched from the jaws of defeat itself.

Years later, Moshe knew what to tell the Jews, because it had happened before; it was the same story! One Jew and one Egyptian, among the reeds, by the water, hope fading; all the Jews and all the Egyptians, among the reeds, by the water, hope fading. It is the same. “This cannot be how it ends..!” He tells them that he has been in this exact situation before; so הִתְנַצְּבוּ וּרְאוּ – Just watch!

Now, so many years after her prophecy, Moshe has saved their people, and it is her celebration, more than theirs, because this is the conclusion of her prophecy.

It emerges why וַתַּעַן לָהֶם מִרְיָם – it was her response, because it was her they were learning from.

They had to learn her faith – “This cannot be how it ends..!”

Just watch.

Shiur HaRav Y. D. Soloveichik zt"l
on Pesach Sheni and *Parshas Behaaloscha*
submitted by Rabbi Yehoshua Cheifetz ¹

Parshas Behaaloscha is one of the most difficult and puzzling *Parshios*. For example, we don't understand the story of Miriam's criticism of Moshe. It was Miriam, the devoted and loyal sister who as a little girl stood alone on the shore of the Nile and watched the floating ark, maintained her faith when all the adults had abandoned hope in Egypt. How could such a sister turn into an accuser of Moshe? Why the strictness and speed with which Hashem punished her? What is the connection between this episode and the tragedy of the Kivros HaTaavah?

Another difficulty is that Moshe went through many crises and stressful moments. The worst of which was the golden calf experience which threatened to terminate the very relationship between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. Yet he never despaired or complained. Quite the opposite, he stood resolute to defend the people and argue their case. Chazal say that *Vayechal Moshe*, as opposed to *Vaeschanan* or other forms of prayer, emphasizes the element of strength and boldness of action and prayer, that Moshe, *kaviyachol*, grabbed the corner of the garment of Hashem and refused to let go until Hashem forgave the people. In the case of the multitudes, the *Asafsuf*, we find Moshe saying things that he never said before. He complains why Hashem placed the entire burden of the people on him.

The most difficult problem of *Behaaloscha* is the apparent lack of continuity of the stories contained in the *Parshah*. The Torah is always

¹ RCA Shiur in honor of Rabbi Klavan 6/74. This summary is copyright 1998 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted. Thank you to Rabbi Cheifetz for making this available to us.

careful to completely narrate and develop a story. However in *Behaaloscha* we do not know how many stories are told and how many are completed. If we summarize the events of the *Parshah* we have the *Parshas HaMenorah*, which according to Chazal, quoted by *Rashi*, is really connected to *Parshas Naso* as a part of the *Chanukas HaMizbei'ach*. So the first real story in the *Parshah* is that of *Kedushas HaLeviim*. Next we have the story of Pesach in the second year and the laws of Pesach Sheni for those that were unclean and could not offer the Pesach in the right time. Where is the transition between *Kedushas Leviim* and Pesach Sheni?

The next story is the description of the cloud guiding the people on their journey. There is no transition between the Pesach story and the story of the guiding cloud. Next the Torah tells us the commandment to fashion trumpets to be used to signal the march and to assemble the people. Next the Torah resumes the story of the marching formation of the tribes. Next the Torah tells us the conversation between Moshe and Yisro, how Moshe humbly extended an invitation to his father in law to join them on their march to the Promised Land.

Next we have the *Parshah* of *Vayehi Binsoa HaAron*, two verses that are surrounded by inverted letter *nun*'s. The inverted letters are intended to show that these verses are out of context. They would have fit beautifully at the end of *Parshas Pikudei* where it describes how the cloud would lead them. Why not put these verses at the end of *Pikudei*? Finally the Torah tells us the tragic story of the *Kivros Hataavah*, those that lamented the restrictions on relationships, stealing etc. They complained simply because they had a desire that they could not fulfill. This story could apply today as well. *Kivros Hataavav* can be translated as the grave that the desires dig for man. The *Parshah* concludes with the story of Miriam.

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

Where is the unity of the *Parshah*? Each story appears incomplete.² The Rav explained the unity of the stories of the *Parshah* and how the inverted events indicate the inversion of Jewish History. Indeed, Chazal view the tragic stories of *Behaaloscha* among the most compelling and tragic.

The *Chinuch* says that Hashem commanded Moshe that the exodus will culminate in two events, indicated by the words תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה, *You shall worship of Hashem on this mountain*. The first was the receipt of the Torah, since following the laws of the Torah is the ultimate constant worshipping Hashem. The second was the construction of the Mishkan. The Mishkan was constructed immediately after Moshe descended with the *luchos* and instructed them how to build the Mishkan. Indeed, Hashem mentions right after the *Asseres HaDibros* the commandment to build a *mizbei'ach adamah*, the second half of the service they were to perform at Sinai.

The episode of the golden calf was a very critical event. Because of the sin of the *eigel*, Moshe had to spend an extra eighty days on the mountain in prayer. This delayed the construction of the Mishkan. The construction of the Mishkan began immediately after Moshe came down with the second *luchos*. The work was completed on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Once the two objectives of *Matan Torah* and *Binyan Mishkan*, the תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים, were completed, there no longer was a reason for camping in Midbar Sinai.

In *Parshas Naso* we read the final acts of dedication of the Mishkan with the sacrifices of the elders of the tribes. The Torah then tells us about *Kedushas Leviim*. In *Parshas Tzav* we were told about *Kedushas Kohanim*. With the selection of the Leviim, all the prerequisites for the Mishkan and its service were completed. They were ready to march on

² The Rav said that when he listened to *Kerias HaTorah* for *Behaaloscha* he felt like a bee jumping from flower to flower accumulating a bit of sweet nectar at each one.

the 13th of Nissan, after the *Nessiim* brought their sacrifices. But the cloud did not move, and the march was postponed till after Pesach. Everyone knew that the stay of the Jews in the Sinai wilderness was coming to a close. The Torah was given and the Mishkan was built. It was time to resume the march.

However the march was delayed till after the Jews brought the Korban Pesach. Those that were *tamei* approached Moshe and Hashem instructed Moshe about Pesach Sheni. The continuity is perfect: *Kedushas HaLeviim* was the last act at Sinai. They were ready to march but it was too close to Pesach, so Hashem ordered them to bring the Korban Pesach. All prerequisites had been met with the receipt of Torah and all aspects of the dedication of the Mishkan were completed with the dedication of the Leviim. They were ready to march into Eretz Yisrael. All four of the *לשונות הגאולה*, *terms of redemption*, mentioned in *Parshas Va'eira*, were completed with the receipt of the Torah and the Jews becoming the chosen people of Hashem. All that was left was the fulfillment of the fifth and final term of redemption – *והבאתי* – the promise to usher the people into the land, and the stage was set for this to be completed in a few days. In a short time they were expecting to enter the Promised Land.

Next the Torah tells us the order they were to march in, who was to lead and who was to bring up the rear. The story of the signal system and the trumpets was very important. Moshe was the leader and he needed to be able to communicate with the people. Hence, the discussion of the trumpets and their uses. The Ark traveled before the people a distance of three days. There was a mood of mobilization and rigid marching order in the air. All conditions were met; the promise made to Abraham many years before was poised to be fulfilled.³

³ The Rav said that we must appreciate the emotional mood created by *Kerias HaTorah* as much as, if not more than, the intellectual aspects of the *Kerias HaTorah*. We must feel the events and the mood of the people.

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuot

Moshe was excited. He was expecting great things. There is a great excitement and expectation as the people prepare to enter the land. This mood is seen in the conversation between Moshe and Yisro. After the offering of the second Pesach and the people began to march, the people felt that this was the final journey. The impression we get of his conversation with Yisro is one of peace of mind and unqualified assurance that they are on their way. No delays, no procrastinations, the great event will happen right now. Moshe says בּוֹסְעִים אֲנַחְנוּ, *we are traveling*, present tense, we are in the process of traveling to the land right now. There are no more doubts, there are no questions as to whether they will succeed on their march. In a few short days they will receive the blessings of Hashem in the Promised Land. Moshe offered an invitation to his father in law to join them in these wonderful events.

Moshe's conversation with Yisro was not limited to his father-in-law. Moshe was extending an invitation to all converts and the entire non-Jewish world: come and join us! Chazal say that the verse "All streams lead to the sea and the sea does not fill up" refers to the fact that there is always room in Judaism to accept as many converts that truly wish to embrace Judaism. As long as the non-Jew is ready to subject himself to the same divine discipline that Bnei Yisrael accepted, they are welcome. This is what we say in our tefillah on Rosh Hashanah: כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל וְשׁוֹכְנֵי אֶרֶץ, *all inhabitants of the Earth*, there is plenty of room to accommodate committed converts in the Torah way of life.

There is something very moving about this *Parshah*: the simplicity with which Moshe, the greatest of men and prophets speaks. He uses the first person: We are traveling, we will do, etc. They were on their way to enter the land and begin the Messianic era. Moshe was certain beyond the shadow of a doubt that he will enter the Promised Land. He and the entire congregation would be classified as the generation that left Egypt and that entered the Promised Land. He was sure that he would see all of Eretz Yisrael. There was no reason to pray as he did in *Parshas Va'eschanan*. There was no doubt about his destiny. The entire conquest

of the land would have taken a few days. There was no need to send spies. Intelligence is needed if a person has doubts. There were no doubts at that time. They were going to enter without difficulty. The Torah tells us that the Ark traveled three days journey before them on the way to their final destination, entry to Eretz Yisrael. As *Rashi* says, they traveled the equivalent of a three-day journey in one day because Hashem was anxious to usher them into Eretz Yisrael. At this point, prior to alienating Hashem, they had no doubts and no need for spies. All Jews believed that this was the consummation of their hopes. The cloud provided them security on all sides from their enemies. Moshe said *vayehi binsoa* and *kuma Hashem* etc. Why was this necessary? No one would have stood up to them. In fact the only wars they fought were with Amalek and, 38 years later, with Sichon and Og. The next confrontation would have been in Eretz Canaan. The two verses would have been in the right place because they would have entered Eretz Yisrael right away.

The inverted *nuns* indicate the inverted destiny. They indicate that something has changed, something is now out of its proper context. Had the people entered the land with Moshe at the head, we never would have been exiled and the Messianic era would have commenced with Moshe as the Mashiach.

Neither Moshe nor the people expected anything to derail their march. What happened? Nothing in particular. The multitude that was among them felt a lust and a desire and the children of Israel wept etc. The Torah tells us that this seizure by desire was evil and aroused the wrath of Hashem, and also Moshe resented it, as it says: *ובעיני משה רע*, *In the eyes of Moshe it was evil*. This brought the march to an end, and the vision of Moshe as Mashiach and entry to Eretz Yisrael began to slip away. Why did Moshe feel discouraged? Why didn't he offer prayers for the people as he did in previous situations?

The sin of the golden calf was defensible because the people had just been freed and they were overcome with the terror of the thought that

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuot

Moshe was gone and they wanted the calf to be the substitute for Moshe. There were mitigating circumstances. We must distinguish between the act of idol worship and the pagan life style. We know that it is possible for people to live like pagans without idol worship. Paganism is a way and style of life.

The pagan way of life is in contradistinction to the Torah way of life. The pagan life style lusts after unbounded and insatiable desire. Unchecked desire is the worst characteristic that man can have. When man reaches for the unreachable, he acts in the pagan way of life, which goes beyond idolatry. The idol worship phase is short lived. Eventually man will recognize that worship of this lifeless object has no purpose. However the desire for a pagan way of life without shackles and controls is much worse, because there is no check or limit to it. The pagan way of life is the antithesis of Judaism which demands the ability to withdraw and limit desire. The Torah describes the Jewish way of life in the *Parshas HaMan* (manna) in *Parshas Beshalach*. The Torah says that each person gathered what he needed. Those that accumulated more received what they needed while those that gathered less were given enough to satisfy their needs.

After this episode Moshe felt intuitively that his hopes to enter the land would never be realized, even though the Meraglim episode had not yet occurred and the edict of a 40-year sojourn had not yet been decreed. When the people began to weep because of their desires, Moshe realized that he would not enter the land. That is why he asked Hashem to kill him if this is what he must put up with. This fits in well with the prophecy of Eldad and Meidad that Moshe would die in the desert and Joshua would distribute the land to the people. With this context, we see how the *Parshah* of *vayehi binsoa* became dislocated as indicated by the inverted *nuns*. Everything changed. The triumphant march became a 38-year meander through the desert that ended with the death of Moshe

without entering the Promised Land.⁴ We see the continuity of the *Parshah*, how it all led to the triumphant entry to Eretz Yisrael. It ended with the disaster of the inverted *nun* and the inverted history that changed their march to Eretz Yisrael to a march away from the land.

Moshe knew that Hashem selected him as the teacher and spiritual leader of the people. Hashem told him that he was not chosen to be a politician or negotiator. The purpose of the exodus is not political freedom, but to accept the Torah. The people need a teacher and Moshe is the best candidate for that job. However Moshe did not expect, until the case of the *Misavim*, that in addition to his role of teacher he would have to accept the role of a nursing mother or father, an אומן. A nursing mother is the most important teacher in the life of the baby. However, where the Rebbe teaches the child, the mother teaches and carries the baby in her bosom. The teacher teaches but the disciple does not become a part of the teacher. The אומן, *the nursing mother*, has one purpose: to protect the baby. According to Judaic thought, the mother belongs to the infant, she is responsible for the child's every need. The teacher, no matter how devoted, has a life of his own.

Moshe realized that he was an אומן; he must devote his entire life to anticipating the needs of the people and to protect them. He is not entitled to enjoy life in an ordinary way like any other human being. He lost his immediate family and became the אומן of the entire nation. That is why Chazal say that he separated himself from his wife. He had to give up any relationship with his own children and wife. In the census taken in the desert, the Torah calls the children of Aharon as the children

⁴ The Rav mentioned that intuition of a goal that slipped away and cannot be retrieved occurred to him as well. He mentioned that throughout the four years of her illness, the Rav always felt optimistic that his wife would somehow recover. The last Yom Kippur prior to the death of his wife, after *Kol Nidrei*, the Rav handed the Sefer Torah that he was holding to a student to return it to the ark. After placing it in the ark, the Sefer Torah slipped and fell inside the ark. At that moment, the Rav realized that his hopes for his wife's recovery would not be realized, and so it was that she passed away that year.

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

of Moshe and Aharon. It does not mention Moshe's own children. Even when they are counted in *Divrei HaYamim*, they are referred to as the children of Menashe. Why not call them the children of Moshe? Because Moshe could not have his own children. If Moshe would have children, he would be responsible to first teach them Torah, as the mitzvah is to teach your own child first before others. But Moshe was the teacher of all Israel, he could not have favorites. Hashem told Moshe that he must remain with Hashem at Har Sinai, even though the rest of the people could return to their tents. Moshe now realized that his acceptance of leadership meant completely giving up his own personal life.

Miriam and Aharon did not recognize this unique role of Moshe. Miriam said that she and Aharon are also prophets, yet they enjoy a normal life with their families. Why should Moshe be different and separate from his wife? They did not recognize the special role of Moshe and how he was indeed different from all other prophets. He is consecrated fully to Hashem. Miriam is rebuked immediately.

The events of the *Parshah* are really one story. It is the story of Jewish leadership and the how difficult a task it is. The great march that could have led us to the messianic era was interrupted by the multitudes that sought their own pleasures and would not accept the limits imposed by Judaism. The same applies to Eretz Yisrael today. There are groups today that look to repeat the experience of the *Misavim*. True Jewish Torah leadership reflects the role of the אומן, *nursing mother*. The covenantal community is a teaching community. The teacher not only instructs but loves and carries the child. It is a children's community with the mother figure in the middle. Moshe did not say that they should excommunicate the *Misavim* and separate from them. He expressed resentment of the magnitude of his task. He thought he was not qualified to carry the burden. All Jewish Torah leaders have such doubts. Yet they do not cast off the mantle of leadership.

Ploni Almoni

Roman Kimelfeld

Ramban writes (*Bereishis* 38:8) that Boaz performed *yibum* when he married Rus. As *Ramban* states, ideally the *yibum* is to be performed by the deceased husband's brother. However, if there is no brother available, then other, more distant relatives of the deceased husband are also able to perform the *yibum*. The marriage of Rus and Boaz is thus an example of *yibum*, performed by a more distant relative. As the *pasuk* in *Rus* states (*Rus* 4:10), the purpose of the *yibum* by Boaz was to restore the legacy of Rus's deceased husband, Machlon. When Rus gave birth to her son, Oved, it was a full restoration of the legacy of Machlon – as if he never died (see *Malbim* on *Rus* 4:17). Thus, Boaz was able to completely fulfil the purpose of *yibum*.

Rashbam writes (*Devarim* 25:9) that Ploni Almoni performed *chalitzah* on Rus. The text in *Rus* seems to support this, as we will now explain. The *pasuk* in *Rus* 4:8 says that Ploni Almoni took off his shoe, apparently indicating an act of *chalitzah*. This *pasuk* uses the words “*Vayishlof Naalo*” to denote Ploni Almoni's act of taking off the shoe (and it also uses the word “*shalaf*” in 4:7). On the other hand, when the Chumash describes the process of *Chalitzah*, it says (*Devarim* 25:9): “*Vechaltza Naalo*” (i.e. “she shall remove his shoe”). Do the words “*Vayishlof*” in *Rus* and “*Vechaltza*” in *Devarim* denote the same thing? I believe that there is an indication that these two words are identical – from *Vayikra* 14:40. In that *pasuk*, when the Torah describes the process of clearing *tzaraas* from an affected house, the *pasuk* says “*Vechiltzu es haavanim*” (“...and they shall remove the stones”). On that *pasuk*, *Targum Onkelos* translates the word “*vechiltzu*” as “*vishalfun*”, which is related to “*vayishlof*” in *Rus*. Furthermore, *Rashi* on this *pasuk* in *Vayikra* says that the word “*chiltzu*”, pertaining to removing the stones, is identical with the word “*chaltza*”, pertaining to the act of *chalitzah*, in both cases denoting the act of removing. Thus, the word “*shalaf*” appears

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuot

to be an Aramaic translation of the word “*chaletz*,” perhaps indicating that Ploni Almoni did perform the act of *chalitzah*, like Rashbam writes.

The question is: why did Ploni Almoni need to perform the *chalitzah*? While we learned from *Ramban* that every relative of the deceased husband may potentially perform the *yibum* (if the deceased husband did not have a brother), do these more distant relatives need to also perform the *chalitzah* (if they cannot perform *yibum*) like Ploni Almoni did?

Before we can answer this question, let us take a look at the sequence of the actions of Boaz (after Rus asked him to marry her) as explained by *Malbim*.

Phase 1: The Mitzvah of *yibum* does not apply to Boaz yet; He *paskens* that one can marry Rus

In *Rus* 4:2, when Boaz asks ten elders to join him, *Malbim* explains that first and foremost Boaz is trying to assemble a *Beis Din* in order to pasken the Halachah that Moabite women are not subject to the prohibition of a Jew marrying a *Moavi*. Boaz is authorized to pasken this Halachah only while he is still not *nogeia bedavar* (i.e. he has no vested interest in the matter). At this point, Boaz is not considered *nogeia bedavar*, because he is not the closest relative to Rus, and he therefore has no mitzvah of *yibum* toward her, according to *Malbim*. For the time being, it is only Ploni Almoni who has the mitzvah of *yibum* toward Rus (since he is the closest relative of her deceased husband), and thus Boaz is still authorized to *pasken* that a Jewish man may marry Rus.

I believe that *Malbim* is adding an important nuance to the *Ramban* quoted earlier, which stated that distant relatives can also perform *yibum*, in the absence of the deceased husband's brother. As *Malbim* clarifies, not all distant relatives have the mitzvah of *yibum* at the same time. Rather, the “closest” distant relative (e.g. Ploni Almoni) has the mitzvah of *yibum*, whereas the more distant relative (e.g. Boaz) has absolutely no

mitzvah of *yibum*; and he is therefore not even considered to be “*nogeia bedavar*.”

Phase 2: Ploni Almoni performs *chalitzah* and then Boaz performs *yibum*

After Boaz (and the entire *Beis Din*) *paskened* that a Jewish man may marry Rus, at this point Boaz is asking Ploni Almoni whether he is willing to perform the *yibum*. Ploni Almoni declines, and performs *chalitzah* (according to *Rashbam* that we quoted earlier; *Malbim* does not say that it was a *chalitzah*). Then, afterwards, Boaz performs *yibum*.

We can now try to understand the function of the *chalitzah* performed by Ploni Almoni. We saw earlier from *Malbim* on *Rus* (4:2) that before Boaz spoke to Ploni Almoni, Boaz had no mitzvah of *yibum* toward Rus. However, we see from *Malbim* several *pesukim* later (4:14) that Boaz later performed *yibum*, and he was able to restore the soul of Machlon, thus fully accomplishing the purpose of *yibum*. What triggered the applicability of the mitzvah of *yibum* for Boaz? Perhaps, it was the *chalitzah* of Ploni Almoni.

Perhaps, the *Rashbam*, who says that Ploni Almoni performed the *chalitzah*, adds yet another nuance to the aforementioned *Ramban*. As we stated earlier, if a person dies and he has no brother, then only the next closest relative has the mitzvah of *yibum*, whereas more distant relatives have no mitzvah of *yibum* (which is why Boaz initially had no mitzvah of *yibum*, as *Malbim* stated). However, perhaps if that closest relative performs *chalitzah*, he transfers the mitzvah of *yibum* to the next closest relative. Thus, by performing *chalitzah*, Ploni Almoni transferred the mitzvah of *yibum* to Boaz.

The Impact of Ploni Almoni

It emerges from the *Malbim* that we quoted above that Ploni Almoni was a truly essential character in the story of *Rus*. First, by being the closest relative of Rus's husband, and thus being the only person to whom the

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

mitzvah of *yibum* initially applied, he enabled Boaz to *pasken* that Rus was permitted to get married to a Jewish man (as we explained earlier). Afterwards, by performing *chalitzah*, he enabled Boaz to perform the mitzvah of *yibum*, thus restoring the soul of Machlon, and thus enabling the Davidic dynasty to emerge from Rus and Boaz. Thus, the story of Rus could not have happened if not for Ploni Almoni. He chose to stay in the background (as the term “Ploni Almoni” perhaps suggests); however his impact was truly good (as his real name “*Tov*” suggests).

National Revelation

Yirmiyahu Lauer

The topic of National Revelation that was first introduced by the *Kuzari* has been discussed by Jewish thinkers and secular thinkers alike in many venues. However, because of the importance of this subject and the impact it has on strengthening our emunah, I would like to go over it in its entirety. I will briefly show how it is truly just about the only irrefutable proof...yes, proof... that the story we will tell on Pesach can be nothing but the truth. It shows that Yetzias Mitzrayim can only be just as it is recorded in the Torah and the fact that Judaism is the only religion ever to make this unique claim, can only mean that this story must be true. There is simply no way around it.

Normally, if there is a skeptic out there who wishes to downplay a supernatural event, there is typically room for rationalization. For someone who wants to doubt religion and the existence of Hashem, a true atheist will always find a way, as farfetched as it might be, to be skeptical and give an explanation. This is the concept of bechirah. Hashem always gives us an opportunity to choose.

When it comes to Yetzias Mitzrayim, however, and the way it transpired, there is truly no way to rationalize it. I searched far and wide to find skeptics who try to disprove the national revelation phenomenon and I found many attempts but nothing that would even resemble an explanation as to how it could not be true.

Two types of stories are part of any national heritage. The first kind is legends. Included in this category is George Washington's admission to chopping down the cherry tree, along with his statement, "I cannot tell a lie." Johnny Appleseed planting apple trees across America with his discarded apple cores. The existence of Big Foot. These are all legends.

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

Then there is history. For example, George Washington was the first president of the United States. William the Conqueror led the Battle of Hastings in 1066 in which Harold, King of England, was killed. The Jews of Spain were expelled from their country in 1492, the year Christopher Columbus set sail.

What is the difference between legend and history?

A legend is an unverified story. By their very nature legends are unverifiable because they have very few eyewitnesses. Perhaps little George did chop down the cherry tree. We can't know if it happened. This does not mean that the legend is necessarily false, only that it is unverifiable. No one thinks legends are facts, therefore they are not accepted as reliable history.

History, however, is comprised of events we know actually happened. It is reliable because we can determine if the claimed event is true or false through a number of ways. One key to verification is the assertion that large numbers of eyewitnesses observed the specific event.

Moshe Rabbeinu says in many places how the Bnei Yisrael were not just told about what Hashem said and did, but they actually heard with their own ears and saw with their own eyes. *רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח, אַת-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפֶן יִסּוּרוּ מִלְּבָבְךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, Only watch yourself, and watch your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life” (Devarim 4:9). הֲשָׁמַע עָם קוֹל אֱלֹהִים מִדְּבַר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעָתָּ אֹתָהּ וַיְחִי, Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? (Devarim 4:33). פָּנִים בְּפָנִים דִּבֶּר ה' עִמָּכֶם בְּהָר, מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ, Hashem spoke with you face to face in the mountain out of the midst of the fire (Devarim 5:4).*

If a large group of people, for example 10,000 or more, unanimously claim to have had a certain experience, they must be telling the truth.

This is because most people tell the truth most of the time. If they do lie, they lie as individuals or as small groups. It is impossible to organize a large group to all tell the same lie and not have at least a significant minority eventually reveal the truth.

Our knowledge of history is largely based on this principle. Without it, how could we know that the astronauts landed on the moon, that the Holocaust happened, that George Washington was a real person and that the Normans invaded England in 1066? If large-scale conspiracies were easily created, perhaps all these historical facts were fabricated by a conspiracy of thousands of people.

This proves that the miracles recounted in *Shemos* must have taken place since the entire Jewish people unanimously accepted them as fact since time immemorial. It would have been impossible at any time in the past to engineer a conspiracy whereby all Jews unanimously would tell their children “My parents taught me that our forefathers were slaves in Mitzrayim and were redeemed with ten miraculous plagues, etc.” when in fact their parents had said no such thing. Therefore the only plausible explanation is that those miracles did indeed happen.

Let's examine some of the popular attempts to refute this and we will see how they all fall short and further prove how this is irrefutable.

One attempt at refuting this is that perhaps in remote antiquity most Jews were illiterate and illiterate people can be enlisted in mass conspiracies. There is no historical or anthropological evidence to support such a claim and the fact that Jews have always been at the forefront of literacy and education makes this very highly unlikely.

Another one is that the events related in *Shemos* basically did occur; however they were natural events, which were later given supernatural significance. The problem with this, however, is that it is difficult to imagine what those natural events could have been which would have

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuot

closely resembled the plagues. And if the actual events were insignificant, but gradually were greatly embellished upon, then we would expect each family and each village to have developed widely separate traditions about what had happened. We would have to resort to a nationwide conspiracy to convert everyone to the one accepted canonical version.

A third possibility is that these events were concocted later in history long after the supposed events took place so they could not be refuted. This too could not have been because if someone attempted to convince a nation that these events occurred earlier in history, the people would have immediately said “How come I haven't heard about this before”? If something so momentous like Yetzias Mitzrayim would have occurred, there is no way such a thing would have been forgotten. It's as if someone would come to me and say that 100 years ago a space ship landed in New York City and lifted Manhattan 100 feet in the air for a few hours. This story would never be believed because if such a thing happened, it would have been passed down through the generations and everyone would know about it.

To date, there are currently about 3000 cults and over 4000 religions in the world. Of all of these, the only one that has a claim of a national revelation is Judaism. Every other religion and belief is based on the claim that one person or a small group had a revelation from God. Why is that? Why not make a religion based on a revelation by everyone? Wouldn't that be a more believable claim?

The answer is that nobody else can make such a claim because it would be easily refuted and it wouldn't get off the ground. Therefore, they all use an unverifiable method so they can't be refuted.

Society today presents us with a huge *nisayon*. Atheism is on the rise throughout the world and the push to doubt what it says in the Torah is widespread. Claims that there is a lack of evidence to support what it

says in the Torah are all too common. There is constant doubt in the air and it is only getting worse.

Yetzias Mitzrayim is without a doubt the single most important event that has ever happened to the Bnei Yisrael as a nation. This is why we say twice a day in *Kerias Shema*, אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, I am Hashem your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. If we are trying to mention the greatness of Hashem, why not mention how He created man or better yet, how He created the world? Why focus on this one event in history? The reason is because this is the one event that constantly proves without a shadow of doubt the existence of Hashem. This is the one event that cannot be disproven.

The *Dubno Maggid* gives a great *mashal*. There was once a young 12 year old girl who was able to play the piano with tremendous talent. One day she put on a performance at a large concert hall. The whole town was there to watch her performance except for one of her neighbors. The next day he came to her father to ask to see her perform because he did not make it the day before and he wanted to see how good she really was. The father said that she would not perform for him because she did her show and proved herself already. There is no need to continue doing this for every person who comes by.

Hashem gave us the one event in history to actually leave no doubt as to what we are supposed to do in this world. This was the one time he did this for all generations to come. There was no need to do this in every generation because this one event could not be refuted and was designed to be believed even in later generations.

This year when we sit at the Seder and recount the events of our history, let's have a new appreciation for this story. When we say חֲסִיב אָדָם לְהִרְאוֹת, let's remember that it wasn't only our forefathers who were redeemed but we

Section VI: Last Days of Pesach Through Shavuos

too have been redeemed. Redeemed to be able to know that the events described in the Torah were totally accurate. Let us have a renewed commitment to believe everything without any doubts. Know without any doubt that the Torah is real, Moshe is real, Yetzias Mitzrayim really happened and that Hashem is without a doubt watching us. It simply can't be any other way and Yetzias Mitzrayim literally proves it.

A Bar Mitzvah

Noam Rock

One day, while Rabbi Akiva was giving his shiur to his students, he looked around...and everyone was falling asleep! Can you imagine that?! I don't know how *anyone* could *ever* fall asleep during shiur?!

But anyhow, the Midrash says that Rabbi Akiva wasn't sure what to do to wake them up. Until finally he said, "Do you know why Esther merited to rule over 127 nations with Achashveirosh? Because Sarah Imeinu lived for 127 years!" All heads were up; all eyes were open. And then Rabbi Akiva continued with his shiur.

The *Chidushei HaRim* asks on this Midrash, how did that wake them up? What did that have to do with anything? He answers that what Rabbi Akiva was trying to express to his talmidim was actually a much deeper lesson. You see, for one whole year of Sarah's life of amazing *avodas Hashem* her great granddaughter Esther merited to rule over one whole country. In each country there are many *cities*, and each city contains many different *neighborhoods*, and each neighborhood is filled with countless *streets*. It follows that for every *moment* of Sarah's life of *avodas Hashem*, her great granddaughter Esther ruled over another street or neighborhood! Every year a country, every month a city, every day a neighborhood, and every moment a street. Each mitzvah that Sarah performed affected the life of her great granddaughter Esther thousands of years later!

Each moment is precious! - Rabbi Akiva was telling his talmidim. *Each moment makes a difference!* Sometimes we see the affects of our actions, but sometimes we don't.

As a Bar Mitzvah, I must understand the value of each and every mitzvah that I perform. For why am I not called a Bar Mitzvos, in the *plural*?! I am now obligated in all the mitzvos! Why am I called a Bar Mitzvah, in

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

the singular? Perhaps it is to teach me, as I reach this amazing milestone of being a Bar Mitzvah, when I'm finally obligated in the 613 mitzvos, to not discount the amazing value and effect of *just one mitzvah*. We could sometimes think: What's one day of tefillin? Is one puny berachah really that important? Does it really make a difference whether or not I say *lashon hara*?

...but as a Bar Mitzvah, I must realize that yes, as Rabbi Akiva told his tired talmidim, each mitzvah—no matter how small—makes a world of a difference.

Tefillin on Chol HaMoed

Yosef Kimelfeld

The Gemara (*Eruvin* 96a) states that Shabbos and Yom Tov are exempt from tefillin because tefillin are an *os* (a special sign), and so are Shabbos and Yom Tov. Here is the text of the Gemara: Rabbi Akiva said: I would have thought that a person should put on tefillin on Shabbos and Yom Tov, but the *pasuk* says [regarding tefillin]: “And it should be for you a special sign (*os*) on your hand” (*Shemos* 13:9). [Therefore, this mitzvah is only] for the days that require a special sign – excluding those days that are themselves a special sign.

In addition to the *pasuk* quoted by the Gemara above, tefillin is also called an *os* in *Kerias Shma*, as follows (*Devarim* 6:8): “*u’kshartom l’os al yadecha*” (...and you shall tie them as a sign on your arm). As these *pesukim* indicate, tefillin is a sign of our connection to Hashem.

As the Gemara that we just quoted states, Shabbos and Yom Tov are also considered a special sign – just like tefillin. According to *Rashi* on this Gemara, the concept that Shabbos and Yom Tov represent a special sign is based on the following *pasuk* (*Shemos* 31:13): ...*Ach es shabsosai tishmoru, ki os hi beini u’veineichem l’doroseichem ledaas ki Ani Hashem mekadishchem*. The *pasuk* is saying “My Shabbosos you shall keep – because it is a sign between Me and you for all your generations – to know that I am Hashem Who makes you Holy.”

Rashi on this *pasuk* in Chumash says that Hashem’s commandment that we should rest (and not work) on His special day of rest – is an *os* (sign) to all nations that we were chosen by Hashem. Thus, the aspect of Shabbos that makes it into an *os* - is the fact that we are refraining from *melachah*. This is also how *Rashbam* and *Ibn Ezra* explain the word *os* in this *pasuk*. (*Ibn Ezra*’s comment is a few *pesukim* later, on *Shemos* 31:17.)

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

Rav Gifter (*Pirkei Torah*, parsha *Ki Sisa*, paragraph 19) explains that the word “*Shabsosai*” in this *pasuk* refers to both Shabbos and Yom Tov. This is so because the *pasuk* tells us to keep “*Shabsosai*” in plural (meaning different kinds of *Shabbosos*). In fact, the Gemara in *Shevuos* 15b learns from this *pasuk* that it is forbidden to build the Beis HaMikdash on Yom Tov (according to *Rashi* there) – because “*Shabsosai*” refers to both Shabbos and Yom Tov. It makes sense that *Shabsosai* should refer to both Shabbos and Yom Tov – because Yom Tov is also referred to as Shabbos (or *Shabboson*) in several places in *parshas Emor* (*Vayikra* 23:15; 23:24; 23:32; 23:39). Accordingly, Rav Gifter states that abstaining from work on Yom Tov represents an *os*, the same way as abstaining from work on Shabbos. Thus, since not working on both Shabbos and Yom Tov is a powerful sign in itself – wearing tefillin is not necessary on these days.

Now, Chol HaMoed is similar to Shabbos and Yom Tov, because some types of work are forbidden on Chol HaMoed. Accordingly, when a person is not doing forbidden *melachah* on Chol HaMoed – he also demonstrates to the whole world that he is connected to Hashem. Therefore, not working on Chol HaMoed becomes a special sign (*os*) of his connection to Hashem. So, perhaps, we should not put on tefillin on Chol HaMoed. (In fact, the first *Tosafos* on *Eruvin* 96a mentions this idea in the name of *BaHaG*.)

However, it could be that Chol HaMoed is an *os* only for a person who is not working on Chol HaMoed. But, if the person has to go to work on Chol HaMoed, then he does not have the “*os*” of abstaining from *melachah* (because to an outsider it looks like the person is having a regular weekday). Therefore, such person would need the *os* of tefillin to demonstrate his connection to Hashem. This is exactly how my Zayde’s Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Meir Malin, *z”l*, taught my Zayde – that a person who does not work on Chol HaMoed should not wear tefillin, but the person who goes to work on Chol HaMoed should wear tefillin. This way, the person who does not work on Chol HaMoed will have the *os* of

Lemaan Tesapeir

abstaining from *melachah*, whereas the person who goes to work on Chol HaMoed will have the *os* of tefillin.

Just to conclude – there are many opinions on this – so everyone should follow his own Mesorah.

***Shehecheyanu* on Tefillin**

Josh Weichbrod

When a person puts on tefillin for the first time, does he make a *Shehecheyanu*? And, if a *Shehecheyanu* is required, should it be made on the day of the Bar Mitzvah, or, as in my case, thirty days ago, the day I put on tefillin for the first time?

We begin to analyze this question by looking at when a *Shehecheyanu* is made. We all know, that a mitzvah that occurs at a set time in the year such as lulav, Chanukah, or Megillah, requires a *Shehecheyanu*. In addition, the Mishnah in *Berachos* states:

בנה בית חדש וקנה כלים חדשים אומר ברוך שהחיינו וקימנו והיגענו לזמן הזה,
Someone who builds a new house or buys new items makes a Shehecheyanu.

The *Shulchan Aruch* clarifies that the Mishnah is referring to someone who acquires something that is special and meaningful to them – they are then required to make this berachah.

So, we have an obligation for the berachah of *Shehecheyanu* in two categories (a) for mitzvos that come at set times, and (b) when acquiring new items. Are either of these sufficient for a berachah of *Shehecheyanu* on Tefillin?

The Gemara in *Menachos* (75b) states that if someone brings a *korban minchah* to Yerushalayim he makes a *Shehecheyanu*. *Rashi* clarifies that the Gemara is talking about a Kohen who is bringing a *korban minchah* for the first time, and the Gemara is teaching us that performing a mitzvah for the first time warrants a *Shehecheyanu*.

Tosafos, on the other hand, disagree. They explain the Gemara as referring to a Kohen who is performing the *avodah* as part of his

Mishmar. As we know, there was a rotation of 24 *Mishamros* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, giving a Kohen the opportunity to perform an *avodah* approximately twice a year. According to *Tosafos*, the reason for the *Shehecheyanu* is not for doing a mitzvah for the first time, rather it is no different than a Yom Tov Mitzvah such as *Lulav* – he is performing a mitzvah at a set time of the year, and therefore he makes the berachah.

This dispute between *Rashi* and *Tosafos* is also seen in the mitzvah of *kisoy ha'dam* – covering the blood of a slaughtered animal. The *Rishonim* argue as to whether a *Shehecheyanu* is required the first time one performs this mitzvah.

The *Rambam* writes in *Hilchos Berachos* (11:9):

כל מצוה שהיא מזמן לזמן כגון שופר וסוכה ולולב...וכן כל מצוה ומצוה שהיא קנין לו כגון תפילין וציצית מזוזה ומעקה...מברך בשעת עשייתה שהחיינו ואם לא ברך בשעת עשייתה מברך בשעת שיצא עליה ידי חובתו בהן.

The *Rambam* holds that tefillin along with *tzitzis*, *mezuzah* and *maakeh* require a *Shehecheyanu*. However, the *Rambam* writes that it is preferably said when they are being made, but if it was not said then, one can also make the berachah when he performs the Mitzvah. What is unclear is whether one who purchases the tefillin, but did not make it himself would still recite the berachah. This *Rambam* is based on a *Tosefta* in *Berachos* (6:15) which states clearly:

העושה תפילין [לעצמו] אומר ברוך שהגיענו

When someone makes Tefillin he recites the blessing of *Shehecheyanu*.

The *Tur* when quoting this *Halachah* mentions *tzitzis* but leaves out any mention of tefillin. The *Shulchan Aruch* explains that the reason the *Tur* mentioned *tzitzis* at all is because it is no different than any other new garment. According to the *Shulchan Aruch* the berachah is not because of the mitzvah, but because of the custom of making a *Shehecheyanu* on

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

new clothing. Since tefillin are not clothing, no *Shehecheyanu* is made. We therefore have a dispute between the *Rambam* and the *Tur* on whether you make a *Shehecheyanu* on tefillin.

Even according to the *Rambam* who holds that a berachah is made, and even if we assume that the *Rambam* would require a *berachah* even when purchased already made tefillin, would a Bar Mitzvah make a berachah on Tefillin if he has been wearing it already for a month or more? There are three interesting solutions to this question.

The *Chasam Sofer* does, in fact, require a *Shehecheyanu* when putting on tefillin for the first time as a Bar Mitzvah. His rationale is based on his definition of the *Shehecheyanu* requirement. The *Chasam Sofer* states that the berachah of *Shehecheyanu* is recited at the first instance of someone being obligated in a mitzvah, whether or not they have ever performed it when not obligated. According to the *Chasam Sofer* a Bar Mitzvah would make a *Shehecheyanu* on both putting on tefillin and *tzitzis* for the first time as an obligation.

It is told that Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach's zt"l children would put tefillin on 30 days before their Bar Mitzvah, but he would explicitly tell them that he was not giving the tefillin to them (to own) until the day of their Bar Mitzvah. That way, the tefillin would be a new acquisition on the day of their Bar Mitzvah, and they could make a *Shehecheyanu*.

The *Pri Toar*, in a novel approach, states that a Bar Mitzvah boy putting on tefillin is different than one performing other mitzvos for the first time. Aside from the tefillin, the Bar Mitzvah is going through a change, becoming a part of *Am Yisrael*, who is obligated in all mitzvos. He is now a full member of the Jewish people and has the ability, through performing mitzvos, to become closer to Hashem. Entering this stage of life brings enough joy to recite a *Shehecheyanu*, and the tefillin may just be the *heker*, a defining mark of this change. According to the *Pri Toar* this would be unique to tefillin, and one would not recite a *Shehecheyanu*

on the first time one performs another mitzvah, such as *mezzuzah* or *kisoy ha'dam*.

One final thought. Until now, we have been discussing whether or not to make a berachah of *Shehecheyanu*. But what if it is required and one does not make it. In general, if one does not make a berachah when it is required, he has violated a *mitzvah DeRabanan*. But when it comes to *Shehecheyanu* on new items, there are many *Poskim* who hold that no mitzvah is violated if one does not make the berachah. This can be seen in the *Mishnah Berurah* (223:7) and is based on the Gemara in *Eruvin* (40b). The assumption is that this berachah is a *reshus*, optional, because the *simchah* of a new item is really dependent on the person

Based on the above, *halacha lemaaseh* most *Poskim* suggest that you do not make a berachah on putting on tefillin for the first time, whether it is on the day of the Bar Mitzvah or when you first put on tefillin before the Bar Mitzvah (since *safeik berachos lehakel*). Some *Poskim* suggest that the boy should have a new fruit or new article of clothing present on the day of his bar mitzvah when putting on Tefillin, and then make the berachah on the new item and have in mind the Tefillin.

***Shehecheyanu* on Tefillin**

Paysie Stein

Generally speaking, the first time that a person performs a mitzvah, he recites the berachah of *Shehecheyanu* (see e.g. *Sefer HaRoke'ach* §371). The question arises, however, why, when a boy puts on tefillin for the first time (as a bar *chiyuva*, and not prior thereto), the normative Ashkenazic practice is that one does not recite *Shehecheyanu*.

In order to understand why, it is helpful to start with the mitzvah of tzitzis. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 22:1) says that if a person buys new clothing and puts tzitzis on it, he makes a *Shehecheyanu* when he wears the clothing, since it is not any worse than getting a new garment – and since a person usually would make a *Shehecheyanu* when he wears a new garment, he makes a *Shehecheyanu* when he wears new tzitzis.

The question arises – why wouldn't one make a *Shehecheyanu* because of the mitzvah of tzitzis itself? The *Magen Avraham* comments that one does not make a *Shehecheyanu* on the mitzvah of tzitzis because it is a daily mitzvah and not one that only occurs from time to time. Therefore, one does make a *Shehecheyanu* on the mitzvos of *kisui hadam*, *bris milah* and *pidyon haben* – because these mitzvos are not common. Now we can understand why a bar mitzvah boy would not say the berachah of *Shehecheyanu* when he puts on tefillin for the first time – because the mitzvah of tefillin is an everyday mitzvah.

The *Tur* holds like the *Shulchan Aruch* – that one makes a *Shehecheyanu* on new tzitzis, but not on new tefillin. The *Bach* explains why the *Tur* makes this distinction between tzitzis and tefillin based on the *Tosafos* in *Succah* (46a). *Tosafos*, after trying to explain why Chazal instituted the berachah of *Shehecheyanu* on certain mitzvos, says the following *sevara*: that Chazal only instituted the berachah of *Shehecheyanu* on a mitzvah that has a special element of joy associated with it.

So, the Bach explains that tzitzis, which is a mitzvah that reminds the wearer of all of the mitzvos of Hashem, has this special element of joy. Tefillin, on the other hand, while it is certainly a special mitzvah, also comes with special rules and halachos about how one must act when wearing tefillin. For instance, the halachos of *guf naki* and *hesech hadaas* are serious and not to be taken lightly. Therefore, when one is performing the mitzvah of tefillin, there is an element of awe and fear, and therefore, according to the *Tur*, one does not make a *Shehecheyanu*.

The *Rambam*, however, in *Hilchos Berachos* (11:9), holds that one makes a *Shehecheyanu* on any of the following three categories of mitzvos:

- 1) mitzvos that are *mizman l'zman*, such as shofar, lulav, Megillah and succah;
- 2) mitzvos that are associated with a *kinyan*, such as tzitzis, tefillin, mezuzah and maakeh; and
- 3) mitzvos *sh'einam tedirah*, such as *milah* and *pidyon haben*.

Therefore, we see that the *Rambam* disputes the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Tur*, and holds that one *does* make a *Shehecheyanu* the first time that one wears tefillin because it is a mitzvah associated with a *kinyan* – the purchase of a new set of tefillin.

And the *Taz* agrees with the *Rambam* that one makes a *Shehecheyanu* on tefillin, but not necessarily because of the reason given by the *Rambam*, but because the *Taz* holds that *any* mitzvah that a person does for the first time in his or her life, one makes a *Shehecheyanu* on that mitzvah. The *Rama* also holds like this with respect to the mitzvah of *kisui hadam*.

The *Kaf HaChaim paskens* like the majority of the Poskim who hold that one does not make a *Shehecheyanu* the first time that one wears tefillin, but suggests that a person wear a new garment on which he would say a *Shehecheyanu*, and have in mind the mitzvah of tefillin when he makes

the berachah of *Shehecheyanu*.

Along this same line of thinking, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was *noheig* with his sons as follows: before his sons became bar mitzvah, he would only let them borrow the tefillin that he had bought for them, and then, on the day of their actual bar mitzvah, he would give them the tefillin as a gift. Then they could make a *Shehecheyanu* because of their having received a very expensive gift and they would also have in mind the mitzvah at the same time (*Halichos Shlomo* 4:14). Rav Moshe Sternbach, however, disagrees with this practice, since whatever joy the bar mitzvah boy gets from the tefillin has dissipated over the last several weeks that he has already been wearing this pair of tefillin. Rav Sternbach seems to hold like the *Tevuos Shor* (§28), who holds that while a boy should recite *Shehecheyanu* when he first puts on tefillin as a bar mitzvah, if he began to wear tefillin before his bar mitzvah, he would not recite the berachah upon reaching bar mitzvah.¹

On a related note, Rav Moshe Feinstein, in the *Igros Moshe*, asks the question of why a person does not make a *Shehecheyanu* when he or she becomes a bar or bas mitzvah; one would think that since the person is becoming a *bar chiyuva* in all of the mitzvos, the person should make a *Shehecheyanu* on such a special occasion. Reb Moshe answers that, in reality, every Jewish child is a *bar chiyuva* from the day that he is born – the Jewish people, as a whole, accepted the Torah at Har Sinai. The only reason that a child does not have to perform the mitzvos is because he has a *petur* – the exemption of *katnus* – but in reality, the *chiyuv* of all of the mitzvos is present from “day one.” Once a boy reaches his thirteenth birthday, the *petur* of *katnus* is removed – leaving only the *chiyuv* of the mitzvos. So, when a *katan* becomes a bar mitzvah, since there are not

¹ It is worth noting that the custom for a boy to begin wearing tefillin a month (or two or three months) before he becomes a *bar chiyuva* is not universal. The *Rama* is of the opinion that a boy should not begin wearing tefillin until he reaches the age of thirteen years and one day (OC 37:3). The practice among many Chassidim is to follow the *Rama* and begin putting on tefillin on the day of the bar mitzvah (*Minhag Yisrael Torah*, vol. 1, p. 126).

new *chiyuvim* falling upon him, but instead a *petur* is being removed from him, he does not make a *Shehecheyanu*.

This, therefore, gives another reason why a bar mitzvah boy does not say *Shehecheyanu* when he puts on tefillin for the first time – he always had the *chiyuv* to wear tefillin from the day that he was born thirteen years ago, but, until his “*bo bayom*,” he also had the *petur* of *katnus*. And one doesn't make a *Shehecheyanu* upon the occasion of a removal of a *petur*.

In conclusion, as is the case in many facets of halachah, there are a variety of opinions regarding the question of whether a bar mitzvah boy should recite *Shehecheyanu* prior to laying tefillin for the first time. Regardless of one's personal practice, however, perhaps this discussion can serve as an impetus for each of us to wax nostalgic and remember the very first time that we put on tefillin for the very first time. If only we were able to bottle those feelings of excitement and inspiration and, every now and then, open that bottle and take a sip before Shacharis. Absent that ability, hopefully we can, on occasion, take a brief moment before laying our tefillin and focus on the tremendous *zechus* we have to be able to perform this mitzvah on a regular basis.

Korach “Took”

Eitan Schulman

In many of the books that I have read, the first line plays an important role in setting the tone for the story that lies ahead. For example, many books begin somewhere along the lines of “it was a dark and stormy night.” This opening hints at a scary or dangerous situation which follows.

If the first sentence of a story can teach us something important about the coming story, what does the first *pasuk* of *parshah* Korach signal to us? The *pasuk* says: ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי ודן ואבירם בני אליאב ואון בן פלת בני ראובן.

What does that mean?! Translated word for word, it says: “And Korach the son of Yitzhar the son of Kehat the son of Levi took, and Datan and Aviram the sons of Eliav, and On the son of Pelet from the household of Reuven.”

This is a strange *pasuk*, because it says that Korach took, but it fails to mention *what* he took! This question is asked by *Rashi*. He writes that Korach took himself aside; he removed himself from Bnei Yisrael.

According to *Rashi*, there is still something unclear. If the *pasuk* had wished to tell us that Korach removed himself, or that he left the community, it could have said so in a more explicit way. For example, it could have said ויצא קורח which means “and Korach left.” Why did the *pasuk* use the confusing verb ויקח without clearly stating what or who he took?

Maybe the *pasuk* is coming to teach us an important life lesson about the way we interact with others. Some people walk around all day looking for different ways to give. Whether at home, in the office, or a community setting, they are always trying to give to others. Let’s call

these people “givers.” Other people have the opposite attitude. They are always asking “what do I get” or “what’s in it for me?” These people are “takers.”

Who is more likely to get into a fight, a giver or a taker? Who is more likely to build lasting relationships with real friends, a giver or a taker? Obviously the giver will do better in these scenarios, and many others as well.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler writes that there is an even deeper significance to giving, as opposed to taking. When a person gives, he is imitating Hashem. Hashem gives all of us life, health and happiness. Hashem doesn't need anything from us in return, yet he gives regardless. Therefore if we give out of love, give for the sake of giving, we are connecting with the holy *middos* of Hashem. If we are obsessed with taking, on the other hand, we are distancing ourselves from this awesome opportunity.

Getting back to Korach, maybe the *pasuk* is coming to tell us that *it doesn't really matter* what he took. The point is that he wanted to take. Taking was Korach's way of life. Because taking was his way of life, as a result he ended up removing himself from Bnei Yisrael, and getting caught-up in a nasty argument, as *Rashi* writes.

Fast forward to the end of the *parshah*. Korach instigates one of the most infamous arguments in Jewish history. As the Mishnah in *Avos* tells us: “Every argument that is not for the sake of Heaven, will not endure...and what is an argument that is not for the sake of Heaven? The argument of Korach and his followers.” In a religion where arguing with each other is like a national sport, Korach becomes the poster-boy for how *not* to argue.

Hashem then summons a special creation that He created during the final few minutes of creation, the earth opens up and consumes Korach.

Section VII: Bar Mitzvah *Divrei Torah*

Maybe the first *pasuk* of the *parshah*, and the story that follows, is coming to educate all of us about the importance of being a giver, and the dangers of being a taker. The first *pasuk* is setting up the scene for Korach's downfall, by teaching us that he was a taker. If we can learn how to be givers in all areas of life, we can avoid the pitfalls of Korach and reach great heights instead.

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

Preface

Last year we reprinted three excellent articles with the intention of gaining the most for our children out of the Chinuch system. This year we highlight three important areas affecting the *chinuch* of our children.

In last year's treatment of this subject we mentioned how our schools are faced with limited funds so that "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." We present an excellent article by Rabbi Mordechai Willig that explains how the entire community is responsible for its *chinuch* system, not just the parents of children as "consumers."¹

The second article discusses many important topics that were brought up at this year's Agudah convention. But to me the most important one is the correct approach to teaching *tzenius*. You might recall the incident cited in last year's *kuntress* where a teacher publicly in class attributed our failure to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash to a girl's lipstick. This year someone at our Shabbos table said that she never understood why a certain educator would tell her when she walked into school to "put her hair up." Enforcing this arbitrary "rule" with neither any explanation nor connection to the girl obviously was not productive, and certainly not in the realm of Torah *chinuch*.

The third article represents further effort to counteract those who harbor gratuitous racist feelings, including unfortunately some of our children's

¹ I present this article without personal bias since I am *bs"d* no longer a "consumer" saddled with tuitions. I would welcome a community-wide initiative that would provide adequate funding for our schools.

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

educators. We do not *chas veshalom* mean to pass judgment upon those of a previous generation who might have been subject to racist anti-Semitism. But neither does that give them the right to extend their grievances to a different generation. Nevertheless, when a parent complained to an administrator that a certain teacher was imparting racist attitudes to the students, the administrator's reply was that this was how the teacher was brought up. As parents, we should be imbuing our children with *kavod habrios*, not baseless hatred. And if we make our feelings known to the various educators, perhaps we will see improvement.²

We hope that these articles will be helpful in reaching our goals of a Torah-true *chinuch* for all of the children of our community.

² I still remember the excellent Project Derech that my children were exposed to, teaching how every human is a *tzelem Elokim*. And this of course does not in any way contradict us being the *Am HaNivchar*.

Jewish Education, Family, and Community ¹

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

"*V'es Yehudah sholach lefanav el Yosef l'horos* - He (Yaakov) sent Yehudah ahead of him to Yosef to prepare" (46:28). *Rashi* cites the *Medrash* (95:3), that interprets *l'horos* as "to teach," i.e. Yehudah was sent to establish a place "*sheyehei moreh bo divrei Torah v'sheyihyu hashevtaim lomdim bo*," where Yaakov would teach Torah and the *shevatim*, i.e. his offspring, would learn.

The highest priority for the success and preservation of the Jewish family and community is having places for Torah teaching and learning. When the first Jewish family emigrated to Egypt, our patriarch Yaakov viewed such a place as a prerequisite for settling in their new country, which had to precede their arrival.

The Torah commands every man to teach his young sons *Tanach*. The *Aruch HaShulchan* (*Yoreh Deah* 245:5-11) explains that this enables the son to learn Gemara on his own after bar mitzvah. R' Yehoshua ben Gamla introduced universal Torah education for boys above age six in every Jewish city (*Bava Basra* 21a).² Although the impetus for this *takanah* was caring for those boys who had no father, it revolutionized Torah education for everyone. From then on fathers would teach their sons basic *pesukim*, such as "*Torah tzivah*" and "*Shema Yisrael*" to implant *emunah* – faith in Hashem and Torah, and the rebbe in *cheder* then would teach them Tanach and Gemara.³

¹ Reprinted with permission from TorahWeb.org. Thank you to Rabbi Moshe Schuchman for obtaining the permission for us to reprint this important article.

² The *Aruch HaShulchan* and Rav Yehoshua ben Gamla predated the introduction of formal Torah education for girls.

³ Editor's note: See our article in last year's *kuntress* how HaRav Yaakov Weinberg z"l explained that this was a *bedieved* situation, and not the optimal method of educating our children.

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

Because a rebbe acts as an agent of the father, the father must pay him. For the orphans and poor the rebbe must be paid from a communal fund (*kupas hakahal*). The halachah dictates that the assessment for the communal fund is based on each person's net worth and applied even to those who do not utilize the affected institutions for their own families (see *Choshen Mishpat* §163, end of §3). When there were organized Jewish communities with the power to enforce halachah and communal policies, all members of the community were compelled by the *gabbaim* to fulfill their obligations.

In modern times, the absence of an organized community assessment has created a user's fee known as tuition. These costs have risen recently far more than average inflation-adjusted income. This discrepancy has created a tuition crisis, especially for larger families in modern communities where the tuition is generally significantly higher than in others.

Unfortunately, many families have decided not to have more children because they cannot afford the tuition (see Yossi Prager, *The Tuition Squeeze: Paying the Price of Jewish Education*, in *Jewish Action* Kislev 5766, at note 13). Ironically, then, the institution most indispensable for the success and preservation of the Jewish family has led to a reduction in family size. In Israel the government taxes individuals based on their wealth to support schools, including religious ones, so that tuition is zero or minimal, and this is a factor that encourages Aliyah (note 13, above).

While all *yeshivos* offer scholarships, many parents fear the tuition committees which oversee these scholarships. They are loathe to divulge their income and to be grilled about expenditures which are not as essential as tuition. Grandparents bear responsibility to teach their grandchildren or pay their tuition as well (*Aruch HaShulchan, Yoreh Deah* 245:9), but this does not always happen. Too often grandparents instead pay for family vacations which are not as essential as their grandchildren's tuition. In such situations, parents are often unable, or

even unwilling, to reorder the priorities of the well-intentioned grandparents.

Recently, a very learned and pedigreed young rabbinic couple asked me about precisely this dilemma. Their two incomes suffice for the tuition for their three children but not for a fourth, and they were hesitant to add to their family and, as a result, to be "on scholarship," not "paying their way." This hesitation is based on the user's fee model. I responded that, in principle, the community is responsible to support its yeshivah. As such, one need not be hesitant or embarrassed to ask for a scholarship; rather the community should be embarrassed that it is not discharging its halachic responsibility! A young couple can and should strengthen the community by having more children. The determining factor in family size should be the mother's physical and emotional health, not the family's wealth.

Reportedly, a major community yeshivah suggested a policy to refuse to grant scholarships unless both parents earn an income. This policy, in effect compelling a mother to work even if she prefers the classic role of full time wife and mother, is another blow to the Jewish family. It prevents a mother who would like to focus completely on her young family from putting all her energy and talent into raising her children, and in certain cases reduces the number of children in the family as well. The dramatic rise in the number of working young women in our generation has revolutionized American society in general and the Orthodox community in particular. Many *kollel* wives are the sole breadwinners, lauded in some circles for their heroic efforts in supporting Torah. They are in fact heroic. However the downside of that approach is overburdened wives, and husbands who wait too long before assuming their halachic responsibility to support their wives and children. Torah study is essential for strengthening and preserving the Jewish family, but it should not be disproportionately emphasized in a way that results in an undesirable change to the essential character and structure of the Jewish family.

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

In more modern Orthodox circles, one can often find a strong push for advanced careers for women and a de-emphasis of their roles as wives and mothers. Yeshivos that impart this attitude and thus, in effect, promote postponing marriage and limiting family size weaken, rather than strengthen, the Jewish family.

Yeshivos, the bulwark of the Jewish family and community since the time of Yaakov Avinu, must continue to emphasize the importance of the Jewish family. Members of the each community are halachically required to finance their local yeshivas based on their wealth, and young couples who wish to have more children should not face the disincentive of a tuition crisis. If we regain the correct distribution of responsibilities mandated by the halachah, our places of Torah teaching and learning will serve the critical role of strengthening and preserving the Jewish family and community, as envisioned by Yaakov Avinu.

My Surprise at the Agudah Convention ¹

Suri W.

After returning home from the Agudah Convention last week, I was left mulling over some of what I had experienced, replaying it again and again in my mind, when something jumped out at me. I must admit that I was a bit surprised by how positive and uplifting the atmosphere was! Here I was, literally surrounded by some of the undisputed Gedolei Hador, listening to incredibly holy people, and a part of me was expecting to hear things like, "You are awful and not frum enough and it's causing people to get cancer!," etc.

But that's not what happened.

Instead, I heard this from Rebbetzin Leah Feldman, wife of the Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisroel, when a woman asked how much she should sacrifice for her husband's learning, as it was leaving her to feel neglected: The Rebbetzin didn't need a second to think, before saying that a woman must tell her husband that she needs his time and attention! And it's okay if his learning has to wait a little! She said something along the lines of, "You matter and your relationship matters! And if you wait around for him to figure this out, you'll be waiting forever! Men never figure anything out!" Many of us burst out laughing of course, but she was not trying to be funny. This wise and holy woman was entirely serious. But this was not what we were expecting.

When Rabbi Yaakov Bender, Rosh Yeshiva of Darchei in Far Rockaway, addressed someone's concern that his son wanted to follow sports, he said that you have to raise your kids to be normal. Of course, this is something that will vary by community, but if they are good kids who go to yeshiva, and have a good family, and they want to follow sports a little

¹ This article was originally posted on Baltimore Jewish Life on 11/30/16, and is reprinted with BJJ's kind permission.

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

– relax! You don't have to encourage it, but it won't send them off the derech either! Now, no one can accuse Rabbi Bender of being on the fringe of Orthodoxy. He is a true talmid chacham and that is what he said.

And this one may surprise a lot of people: When Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi was asked how a woman can encourage her daughter to dress *b'tzanua*, she said, "You must speak about tznius, *b'tzanua*. Be gentle and positive, and tell her she is beautiful and holy. And whatever you do, STOP telling her she is causing others to sin! STOP!! Tell her she is holding up the world and elevating the spiritual plane of the Jewish people with her tzniut and mitzvot! And don't you DARE tell her she is causing people to sin!" She literally screamed this at us! She said when you are constantly talking about your daughter's body or your son's eyes, you are not handling the matter *b'tzanua*, and are missing the point, all the while creating damage.

Suffice to say this was not the approach to tznius I recall being prevalent when I was a kid. But this was coming from the top at the Agudah Convention itself. This is the truth. This is the feeling that is supposed to be transmitted to our girls. One can only imagine how much more connected we would all be to the beauty in this mitzvah if we thought more along these lines.

I remember before I left for the convention, my sister asked me if I was nervous about going somewhere where I didn't know anyone, and would have to endure making endless small talk with the random women I was seated with. I told her I wasn't worried, as I would be sitting with my husband. She was shocked. "They have mixed seating?!" She asked, incredulously. Well, yes. There were many groups of Jews in attendance, and the Chassidim who did, indeed, want separate seating, had their own dining room so they may do so. I also noticed a large Sephardic contingency and enjoyed the zemiroth coming from some of their tables. And guess what? We all got along! Because we had all come for the

same reasons. To turn our minds and neshamos towards personal growth, to listen to our Gedolim and learn how we can help Klal Yisrael at large. I found that especially inspiring.

Of course, that's not to say that all we heard all weekend was feel good fluff. A true Gadol BaTorah doesn't have to pull any punches. Rabbi Elefant spoke very strongly about our generation's overindulgence in the physical. Always chasing the finer things in life and losing focus on what it is that we are meant to be doing in this world. Rabbi Frand talked about the tremendous *mesiras nefesh* that former generations readily made, while we are complacent and feel no need to exert ourselves. He said we must consider the environments in which we choose to work, even if it means making sacrifices in one's career, in order to avoid negative influences. Rabbi Bender implored us all to learn to live with each other with kindness and decency. He made it clear that if you block someone's driveway because you want to make it to Minchah, your tefillah isn't worth much. He and others said you should knock on the doors of your non-Jewish neighbors when you move into a new town, and introduce yourself and find your common ground. Be nice; be a good neighbor. Do what Rav Pam's Rebbetzin did and hand out candy on Halloween.

Many of the speakers bemoaned the fact that we are lacking in our Jewish pride. We look outside instead of in, to find meaning in our lives. We have forgotten the privilege and responsibility of being the *Am HaNivchor*. Well, walking out of the convention, I felt an invigorated sense of pride and hope.

Can you imagine what our communities would look like if we actually listened to these Gedolim and modeled our lives in this way? If we all looked up, and listened to what THEY had to say at the top, instead of glancing side to side, to see what others were doing? Imagine if we really stood for something authentic and real, and had true pride in being Torah Jews. What it would be like if we focused less on how many years a

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

possible suitor states he wishes to learn for, and more on who he is, and how deep his lifelong commitment to Torah learning and ideals truly is? What it would mean if we treated our neighbors, Jews and non-Jews alike, with respect and friendliness, exchanging gardening tips (like I do with mine) and asking how their families are doing? Picture what it would be like if our only true priority was returning our souls to our Maker in an elevated state, regardless of whether or not anyone else knew. Wouldn't that be something special? Well, I think it would be incredible. My fervent hope is for all of us to start moving in this direction together, putting our faith in Hashem, in the true leaders of Klal Yisrael, and in ourselves.

The Moment that Changed Everything as told by Rabbi Yechiel Spero ¹

In 1966 an eleven-year-old black boy moved with his parents and family to a white neighborhood in Washington. Sitting with his two brothers and two sisters on the front step of the house, he waited to see how they would be greeted. They were not. Passers-by turned to look at them but no one gave them a smile or even a glance of recognition. All the frightening stories he had heard about how whites treated blacks seemed to be coming true. Years later, writing about those first days in their new home, he says, “I knew we were not welcome here. I knew we would not be liked here. I knew we would have no friends here. I knew we should not have moved here . . .”

As he was thinking these thoughts, a white woman coming home from work passed by on the other side of the road. She turned to the children and with a broad smile said, “Welcome!” Disappearing into the house, she emerged minutes later with a tray laden with drinks and cream-cheese and jelly sandwiches that she brought over to the children, making them feel at home. That moment, the young man later wrote, changed his life. It gave him a sense of belonging where there was none before. It made him realize, at a time when race relations in the United States were still fraught with misunderstanding and hatred, that a black family could feel at home in a white area and color-blind relationships could develop. Over the years, he learned to admire much about the woman across the street, but it was that first spontaneous act of greeting that became, for him, a definitive memory. It broke down a wall of separation and turned strangers into friends.

¹ This story is presented by Rabbi Yechiel Spero at the Agudath Israel of America website: <http://ourlli.org/video-whoweare-episode-3-the-moment-that-changed-everything/>. There are various written versions of it available; this one is based on a *dvar Torah* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks of London, which is available on many websites.

Section VIII: The Chinuch System Revisited

The young man, Stephen Carter, eventually became a law professor at Yale and wrote a book about what he learned that day. He called it *Civility*. The name of the woman, he tells us, was Sara Kestenbaum, and she died all too young. He adds that it was no coincidence that she was a religious Jew. “In the Jewish tradition,” he notes, such civility is called “*chesed* – the performance of acts of kindness – which is in turn derived from the understanding that human beings are made in the image of God.” Civility, he adds, “itself may be seen as part of *chesed*: it does indeed require kindnesses toward our fellow citizens, including the ones who are strangers, and even when it is hard.” To this day, he adds, “I can close my eyes and feel on my tongue the smooth, slick sweetness of the cream cheese and jelly sandwiches that I gobbled on that summer afternoon when I discovered how a single act of genuine and unassuming civility can change a life forever.”

Section IX: In Memoriam

Preface

It is with great sorry that we include memories of Rav Moshe z”l in this year’s *kuntress*. Although I cannot claim to have learned from him on a regular basis in Yeshivah, I am one of “his talmidim from his thirty to forty shiurim a week, or from his constant travels to Europe, Russia, the U.S.A and South America” mentioned by Rabbi Nissel at the end of his reflections that follow.

I first met Rav Moshe on Asarah BeTeves thirty years ago in Eretz Yisrael, asking for an *eitzah* regarding what would be a proper *limud* for me outside my regular *seder* in Yeshivah. He suggested the *sefarim* of Rav Tzadok HaKohen, giving me the exact order in which to learn them.¹ Out of that first conversation came my *Maftai’ach al Kisvei HaRav Tzadok HaKohen*.

This began a series of meetings with him that stretched from Washington to Baltimore to Chapman Lake to New York, wherever he would be available on his trips to the States. And whenever I was in Eretz Yisrael (e.g. to visit my children in yeshivah, seminary, or Kollel) I would seek him out to hear as many of his *chaburos* as I could and arrange to speak to him. I thus received his guidance through the years of our children’s *chinuch*, opening our Bais HaMidrash, and my own personal learning through publication of my latest *sefer*, the *Derech Etz HaChaim* of the Ramchal, with specific instructions on what further works I should translate into English.

¹ I’m not sure if this order was particular to my needs, so I won’t mention it. But it is worth mentioning that he said to look at *Pri Tzaddik* last because it was not written by him, but rather people who heard his *tish Torah* over Shabbos. I will also add that the following year when he was in Baltimore for a *chasunah* I asked him why R’ Tzadok’s *sefarim* seem so disjointed. He answered that they needed an editor; R’ Tzadok would just add his *chidushim* to loose leafs without thoughts of printing them that way.

Section IX: In Memoriam

My stories from these decades are not about Rav Moshe's *gadlus* in Torah, although I certainly witnessed it through the *shiurim* I heard and the *she'eilos* of mine that he answered. But I remember him best for his obvious caring about me and whatever I was doing. To get a picture of his warmth, one of his *talmidim* recently told me that he remembers that when Rav Moshe made his first visit to Baltimore mentioned above, Rav Moshe told me simply: *היה לי געגועים עליך*, *I missed you*. Fast forward to almost thirty years later when I was talking with him in his office in Eretz Yisrael: at the end he asked me how I was going to return to Baltimore when the city was rioting. [It was during the Freddie Gray riots, and this was the first I heard about it.] I told him I was flying to New York and taking a train to Baltimore. He said to make sure to call my wife in New York to see if it was safe to travel to Baltimore.

Instead of recounting more stories like these, I choose to present you with the words of a true *talmid*, Rabbi Nissel, who learned from Rav Moshe daily through many years. This is followed by further reflections by my esteemed *chavrusa* and partner, Dr. Michael Elman, who had his own very special connection with Rav Moshe and his family.

But to me there is no one to replace the *Gadol* who would greet me with "*Vos mach dir Abba Zvi?*"

Looking into the Sun: Personal Reflections on my Rebbi, HaRav HaGaon Rav Moshe Shapira ז"ל Rabbi Menachem Nissel ¹

I was an excited *yeshiva bochur* as I approached Rav Moshe Shapira for the first time. The year was 1981 and he had just joined the faculty of Yeshivas Mishkan Hatorah on Rechov Sorotzkin, Yerushalayim.

His reputation as a Torah scholar in a different league had preceded him. In Ponevezh as a bar mitzvah bochur he was already known to be the address for reciting the "*yeshivishe reid*" on any *sugya* in "*Nashim and Nezikin*." At age sixteen he had finished Rav Chayim Vital's "*Shaar Hakedusha*" *b'chavrusa* with his Rebbi Rav Dessler. His brother-in-law, Rav Yitzchok Bialistotsky told me how after his father had tested his prospective son-in-law on all of *Shas b'iyun*, Rav Moshe's father told his future *mechutan*, "What you don't know about my son is that he knows *kisvei Maharal* in the same way that he knows *Shas*."

We also knew about his extraordinary *ameilus b'Torah*. Once on Shavuot morning after kiddush one of the *chaburah* offered him a room so that he could rest. Rav Moshe smiled and said, "Every moment of *Zman Matan Toraseinu* is precious" and he went straight back to the *bais medrash*.

His *dikduk b'mitzvos* was legendary. Perhaps because of his years as part of the Brisker Rav's entourage, every small nuance of every mitzvah was performed to the maximum. He once let slip that he never had a bank

¹ This is adapted from Rabbi Nissel's article on the Ner L'Elef website with his permission. Rabbi Nissel has taught for over twenty years in various Yeshivos and seminaries such as Ohr Somayach, Ohr Yerushalayim, Torat Shraga, Michlalah and Bnot Torah/Sharfman's Seminary, and is author of *Rigshei Lev: Women and Tefillah*.

Section IX: In Memoriam

account because of his *ribbis* (interest) concerns. Another time he mentioned that he never drank Coca Cola because he saw an ad describing Coke as “*taam hachayim* – the taste of life.”

To watch him daven was an exalting experience. During the hard times when his daughter Shulamis *a”h* was succumbing to cancer, he would regularly *daven* a forty-five minute *Shemoneh Esrei*. We recall with awe *Mussaf* of Yom Kippur with Rav Moshe as *Shaliach Tzibbur*. His *tefillos* were so intense we literally felt transported back to the *Beis HaMikdash*, with Rav Moshe as our *Kohen Gadol*. Later he conceded that the reason why he skipped the “*Hineni he’ani me’maas*” – the mystical prayer that the chazzan recites before *Mussaf* – was because he could not bring himself to say the uniquely holy name of “*Ekyeh asher Ekyeh*.”

So, as I approached Rav Moshe for the first time, I was excited to finally meet this extraordinary person. His face exuded a *hadras panim* that came living a life of true beauty – mining the depths of the *pnimiyus* of Torah and harmonizing it with the outside world. I asked him a question on the Gemara we were learning. He asked me my name and then answered with the magnanimous patience and clarity of a loving *Zaide*. I left feeling like a million dollars.

The next day I went back to him with a different question. This time he looked at me with his piercing eyes and said, “Did you look up the *Rashba*?” I said no. “*Rabbi Akiva Eiger* sends you to a Gemara in *Yevamos* – did you look it up?” I said no. Then he paused and said, “So why are you wasting my time with your unprepared questions?”

The conversation was over. I was traumatized. I ran to my senior friend, Reb Yerachmiel Fried (presently Rosh Kollel in Dallas) and asked him what had just happened. With a twinkle in his eye he explained, the first time you went to him you were a stranger. Now you became a talmid. For the next thirty seven years, with over twenty years as his “Friday driver,” I was careful to only ask questions that were thoroughly

prepared. From his talmidim, Rav Moshe demanded excellence. He expected us to go deeper. And when we had reached our capacity of depth, we were expected to reanalyze everything and question every assumption and then go deeper still.

At his Purim *tisch* (after being *cheppered* by a drunk *bochur*!) he confided in us how he trained himself to look at a *maamar Chazal*. “I was a young boy playing with my friends in front of the Ponevezh *beis hamedrash*. There was a black out and the *beis hamedrash* was plunged into darkness. Everyone left and we went into the *beis hamedrash* to see if there was any ‘action.’ In the corner sat the silhouette of an aged man who was reciting slowly and deliberately, with the *niggun* of the *baalei mussar*, a simple *maamar Chazal*. When he finished it, he said it again. And again. He said it so many times that we started giggling. But he kept on going. After a while we started to feel awe at what was happening. Eventually there was not a single one of us who was not crying. And that was the moment when I realized the infinite depths of a *maamar Chazal*, without even leaving the simple meaning of the words.”

And who was that aged man? That scion of Kelm, Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.

On Purim night when the dancing was over we packed into a small shiur room and Rav Moshe expounded on Purim for over an hour. He concluded with a *l'chayim* and then chose a song that we sang again and again for maybe twenty minutes. After a while the words seemed to take on a life of their own. We would forever connect to those words in a way that simple recital could never achieve. Which was of course the educational point Rav Moshe was making. Years later he told me that once upon a time one could reach *dveykus* with a wordless *niggun*, but he felt that today we were no longer on a level to do so, we needed the “hook” of words.

Reb Moshe took a personal interest in every *talmid* and built each one of us with the devotion of a diamond polisher. One of the *chaburah* was an artist who went to one of the *Gedolim* and asked him what should he do with his passion for drawing while in yeshivah. The *Gadol* told him to work on himself and find the “*geshmak*” of drawing in a *blatt gemara*. Rav Moshe told him to take off one *seder* and draw. (Interestingly, he went for a third opinion to Rav Wolbe *zt”l* who concurred with Rav Moshe.) The first painting he drew was a picture of Rav Moshe! That painting hangs in the living room of Family Zeffren in St. Louis. (When mentioning The Zeffrens, who can forget the incredibly emotional Skype conversation between Rav Moshe and Reb Gershon Zeffren *z”l*, our esteemed *chaburah* member who passed away five years ago, when a tearful Rav Moshe gave over *yesodos* of *emunah* to his beloved talmid.)

We never could grasp how despite his mastery of *niglah* and *nistar*, Rav Moshe seemed to have general knowledge in everything! My wife and I once drove him from London to Manchester for the wedding of the daughter of *chaburah* member Reb Eliezer Stefansky. As we crossed the River Avon, he remarked, “This is where Shakespeare lived.” As we drove through the Midlands, he and our other passenger, Reb Akiva Tatz, had a spirited discussion on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on an aspect of evolutionary theory. Reb Moshe was once seen trying to decipher a newspaper in Russian. Before we learned *perek* “*Aizehu Neshech*” on the laws of interest, he gave an introductory class on market forces that could have come straight out of the mouth of an economics professor. When I was looking for a yeshivah *ketanah* for my oldest son, he warned me not seek out a “brand name” yeshivah, which he jokingly compared to the Chicago Bulls (yup – it was the Michael Jordan era). Then he looked at me and laughed, “I forgot you are English – I meant to say Manchester United!”

In general he thought his “Anglo” *talmidim* should live in *Chutz L’Aretz*. He felt we were obligated to live in a place where we could serve the King to the best of our talents. So, for example, from the *talmidim* in my

“*bochur* years” apartment, my roommate Reb Mordechai Becher (Senior Lecturer, Gateways) moved to Passaic, Reb Yehoshua Karsh to Chicago (outreach at the JLC Center in Northbrook), Reb Jeff Wohlgelenter to San Diego (Rav of Beth Jacob), Reb Yossie Davis to Flatbush (Senior Editor, ArtScroll), Reb Elazar Stefansky to Manchester (Rov of Vine Street Shul) and Reb Gershon Zeffren z”l to St. Louis.

Rav Moshe’s high expectations from us were outweighed by his love and constant outpouring of *chesed*. I once told him about a bitter *machlokes* in our building between neighbors. He volunteered to come to Har Nof and see if he could make *shalom*. With elegant *chochmah*, he worked out a solution that pleased everyone. When in my house, Sarah the cleaning lady offered him tea which he politely refused. As he left the building, after having walked down two floors he turned to me and said “Menachem, I forgot something.” I thought he had forgotten something like an umbrella and he clearly did not want me following him. He ran back to my apartment and went from room to room until he found the cleaning lady and wished her goodbye. In that moment I saw true greatness.

When I started writing my sefer *Rigshei Lev – Women and Tefillah*, I turned to Rav Moshe for guidelines. He said, “Your goal in writing your book should be to make life easier for women.” When one of the *chaburah* stopped relying on the *eruv* on Shabbos, Rav Moshe admonished him and said, “Why are you being *machmir* on *kavod* Shabbos? It is better to be *machmir* on the *kavod* of your wife.” (Note: this was an individual *psak* – not necessarily for everyone.)

Reb Mordechai Becher was once in a taxi and discovered that his driver lived in Rav Moshe’s building in Bayit Vegan. The driver casually related that he keeps Shabbos because of Rav Moshe. “What happened?” asked Mordechai. “I once gave him a ride and he suddenly asked me if I drive on Shabbos. I looked into his holy eyes and lied to him. But after

Section IX: In Memoriam

that I felt terrible and wanted my lie to have been the truth. So there and then I took on myself keeping Shabbos!”

It was *Shevi'i Shel Pesach* in Rav Moshe's home. Rav Yehoshua Hartman (presently of London) and I had recently returned from an educational trip to Eastern Europe. After Rav Moshe had completed one of his classic scintillating Yom Tov *shiurim* he asked us, so what thoughts did you have during your travels? I made the following personal observation. I said that it was strange how connected I felt to the *Rama* in his shul in Krakow. And how connected I felt to the *Maharal* in his shul in Prague. But when I go to the *Kosel*, with its plethora of Jewish history, I don't feel the same connection.

I assumed Rav Moshe would say that you can get used to anything. You have lost the power of the place simply by living in Yerushalayim. But that is not what he said. In typical fashion he said something short and life changing: When you look directly into the sun, you see nothing.

I have shared with you a tiny sliver of Rav Moshe mainly through the one-dimensional lens of my memories from Mishkan HaTorah. I know nothing of his talmidim from his thirty to forty shiurim a week, or from his constant travels to Europe, Russia, the U.S.A and South America. I know nothing of his vast knowledge and his ability to penetrate depths in all spheres of Torah that was unparalleled in our generation. Or his ability to take the most complex political changes, wars, atrocities and tsunamis and pass them through the lens of Daas Torah in a way that gave us clarity and empowered our emunah. I know nothing of his attraction to the leading linguists of Hebrew University who would come to him for advice in understanding the Hebrew language; or why Benny Lévy, political activist and leading philosopher in France, would switch his allegiance from Jean-Paul Sartre to Rav Moshe; or why Gideon Saar, rising star of the Likud, would want to learn with him *b'chavrusah*. I know nothing of why a man who was offered to be Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron and other of the world's leading yeshivas, would turn them

down to work with *talmidim* who did not fit into the system. Or his extreme affinity, patience and love for special-needs children. I know nothing of the *kiruv* revolution that he led and the countless lives that he impacted through the force of the purity of his Torah and boundless *Ahavas Yisrael*.

But I do know that for thirty-seven years I looked into the sun.

And that the sun looked at me.

My family, my students and I have been spiritually enriched beyond anything we can comprehend. May his rays continue to shine from *Shamayim* as a *meilitz yosher* for us all. And may the orphaned generation he left behind merit the *geulah bimheirah b'yameinu*.

My Reflections on Rav Moshe, ז"ל

Dr. Michael Elman

The loss of Rav Moshe Shapira, *zecher tzadik v'kadosh livrachah* to *Klal Yisrael* cannot be calculated, let alone understood. No words can adequately express my personal pain and deep feeling of loss.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been blessed with the opportunity to learn Torah at the feet of the Master *Mechanech*. I looked forward to those opportunities when I could do so in person, either in Europe, Yerushalayim, or even once in Baltimore. I eagerly awaited the audio recordings or the transcriptions of the weekly *shiurim*, devouring them each week. Rav Moshe touched the core of my *neshamah* and had a profound impact on my life in many ways that go beyond the beautiful and profound *Torah* I was *zocheh* to learn from him.

In addition to all the advice and *hadrachah* I was *zocheh* to receive through the years, I have to comment on the great warmth and concern the Rosh Yeshiva and the Rebbetzin always showed to me and to my family. When I requested that the Rosh Yeshiva and Rebbetzin should daven for the *refuah sheleimah* of my dear wife when we thought she was gravely ill, the first question asked each time thereafter when I met either of you was "How is your wife feeling?" Several years ago Yeshivat Pitschei Olam was having a dinner at Aish Hatorah right before Shavuot. I had just come back to Yerushalayim and asked Doniel Barron why the Rosh Yeshiva's *talmidim* from the Europe trips were not invited. Doniel told me that Rav Moshe did not want to impose on those who already supported him through the Europe trip. I said I wanted to go anyhow and I bought a ticket. When Rav Moshe saw me, he greeted me warmly and insisted I sit next to him on the Dais! I don't know what I did to be worthy of such an honor, but I cherished every moment. Three years ago, we celebrated the *upsheirin* of our Israeli grandson Binyamin Yehuda Meystel. We invited the Rav Moshe, but he could not come, but instead invited us to his house. I will always recall that reception and

how he played with little Binyamin, as it turns out just days before his lung surgery.

The Rebbetzin told me about the time Rav Moshe was paralyzed from Guillain Barre Syndrome. He could not move even his big toe. This paralysis set in shortly after his lung surgery. What bothered him most was the inability to learn at night, as the light in the room would disturb the other patients. The Rebbetzin informed the secular attending physician of the problem. Showing great sensitivity, the doctor wrote an order in the chart instructing the medical staff to allow the Rav Moshe to learn with his son in the dining room at night where they would not disturb the other patients. Where else would one see such an amazing doctor's order but in Yerushalyim! The learning I am sure was the catalyst for the Rosh Yeshiva's amazing recovery from his paralysis.

Five years ago I was approached to assume the lay leadership for the NCSY Atlantic Seaboard region. For two years I politely declined until a soul shaking encounter changed my mind. Every summer I am privileged to join a group of scholars in a European retreat with Rabbi Moshe Shapira, one of the world's foremost experts on *Machshavah*, Jewish thought. Three years ago, when in Amsterdam, I was invited to sit with Rav Moshe for Seudat Shlishit. Rav Moshe does not suffer fools gladly, so I was not going to risk dazzling him with my novel and "ingenious" Torah thoughts. Instead I took the safe route and decided to discuss world events. I innocently asked him in Hebrew – "How do you view things in the world today?" He tersely responded, "The world is going down the tubes." "The whole world or the Jewish world?" I countered. He clarified, "the Jewish world, and nothing in the world is more precious than the Jewish people." Then he hit me squarely in the face with something that shook me to the core and made me change my mind about NCSY. The Talmud tells us that when we all die we are judged with a final exam. It is an open book test. We know the questions and we are writing a page in the book every day. The Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos* states, "Did you deal honestly in business, did you set aside fixed times for Torah study and did you delve into its wisdom and learn

it deeply, did you engage in increasing the world's population, and did you eagerly await the Mashiach?" As he looked me in the eyes with his penetrating gaze, Rav Moshe then added that our generation has been given an additional question, "What did you do to help save the Jewish people?" Saying that you are a busy doctor is no excuse. Saying that the problem is so immense that my efforts are a drop in the bucket is no excuse, for we will not be judged by the results. We each will be judged by our efforts.

We cannot save the Jewish people single handedly. But we each can make a difference. In NCSY it is done little by little, one Jew at a time. Because we all know there is nothing more precious to us than the Jewish people.

I was searching for a means to perpetuate in some small way Rav Moshe's mission as a *Marbitz Torah*, particularly to those not yet fortunate to drink from its waters. In this he followed in the path of the Ramchal who wrote in *Derech Hashem* of the transformative powers of the *Torah Hakdoshah* in people who start out learning Torah on a regular basis as an intellectual exercise. Inspired by Rav Moshe's *hadrachah* in this area, in my capacity as president of the Center for Jewish Education, we have worked over the last two years to establish a new program for Jewish leaders in the community, both religious and secular, to learn *Torah b'chavrusa* each week. This program is scheduled to be launched in the next several weeks. It is my hope that this will grow into a program that will engage the entire community. It is my sincere prayer that all the learning that will come from this program will serve as an *aliyah* to Rav Moshe's Holy *neshamah*.

These are just a few vivid anecdotes that weave a portrait of how Rav Moshe impacted my life in significant ways beyond all the *Talmud Torah*, which by itself would fill volumes. I pray that his dear family will be granted a *nechamah* and the *neshamah* of *mori v'rabi* be granted a continued *Aliyah* in *Gan Eden*. I know he will serve as a fierce advocate in *Shamayim* on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*.

חלק י: מדור לשון הקדש

הגמרא הניחה בקושיתה שלא יתירו חכמים בשום דין של ביטול באיסורים כאלו. וצ"ע.⁸

⁸ וצל"ע עוד בהל' שביתת יו"ט (פ"א הי"ט-כ), דאולי משמע שהאיסור טלטול בנולד הוא תוצאה והמשך ממה שאוסר לאוכלה, וא"כ אפשר שגם העצים שנפלו לתוך התנור אסורים כהמשך מהדין נולד במאכלים. וצ"ע.

עליהן עצים מוכנים ומסיקן", וא"צ ששים. וכיון שאין צורך להתיר אותם ע"י שיעור שינתן החכמים לאבידת האיסור בעוצם מיעוטו, למה אינם מותרין מהדין דאורייתא של ביטול ברוב.

ובפשטות צ"ל, דאף שסיבת התקנה ושורשה היו משום שלא רצו לקבוע שיעורים של היתר במאכלות אסורות כשיש דרך אחרת של היתר, מ"מ לא פלוג רבנן גם על התוצאות של תקנתם, אלא אמרו דאין שום היתר בכל דשיל"מ, ואפילו במקום שהיה שייך ביטול ברוב.

אך היה נראה ליישב עוד בטוב טעם. כפי הנראה, כל הציורים שהביא רבינו לדשיל"מ הם במיני מאכלים שנאסרו (ע"י מקורות וציורים מהדור' פונקל). ועוד יש לשים לב למה קבע את כללי הענין בפרק של התערובות בהל' מאכ"א. ואף שבחלק מהם אין סיבת האיסור מענין של המאכלות האסורות, וכמו מוקצה ונדירים השייכים בכל דבר, אבל כיון שהיום האיסור נמצא על מין של מאכל שטבעו ליתן טעם בהיתר, מסתמא גם בהם שייך תקנתם שאין להתיר מדין ביטול ברוב. ואפשר דכך יש ללמוד מדברי רבינו כאן, שכתב (הל' יב): "דשיל"מ אם נתערב בשאינו מינו ולא נתן טעם - מותר", ומשמע שגם מוקצה ונולד, שאינם אסורים מתורת מאכ"א, אינם מותרים אלא בשיעור שאינם נותנים טעם בהיתר (אלא אם נחלק בין תקנתם במבשא"מ בנו"ט לתקנתם במב"מ שאינו בטל ברוב, ואכמ"ל). ולפ"ז פשוט מאד מה שבאיסורים כאלו לא נתנו חכמים שיעור בדשיל"מ, דלענין תערובתם אין הבדל ביניהם לבין מאכ"א העיקריים.

אבל א"כ יוצא לדינא חידוש גדול. שהדשיל"מ שאינו ממין מאכל, לדוגמא הנודר שלא להנות מבגד מסויים ונתערב הבגד עם הרבה בגדים מותרים - יבטל ברוב. ואף שאפשרות כזה יתכן מאד בדברי רבינו כנ"ל, אבל קשה מאד מסוגית הגמרא (ביצה ד:), ששאלו על העצים שנפלו לתוך התנור שיהיו אסורים משום דשיל"מ, הרי מפורש שאין היתר של ביטול ברוב לדשיל"מ שאין שייך בו ענין של נתינת טעם. אבל עדיין אולי הרחבנו הבנתנו בה"לא פלוג רבנן" שהצענו, דכיון שיש אופנים של דשיל"מ במיני מאכל שנאסרו בנדר ומוקצה וכדומה,

דאורייתא, ואכ"מ). אבל לא נמסר לנו בפסוקים או בקבלה מתי האיסור הנתערב עוברת את הגבול בין "קיים" ל"נאבד", ולכן הדבר נשאר לחכמים לקבוע את השיעור לזה (כמו שמדוקדק היטב בהל' ה', עיי"ש). ולא רצו לקבוע שיש שיעור אחד שוה לכל האיסורים (אולי משום שצריכים לחשוש יותר בהיתר שאינו מפורש ומוגדר בתורה או מסורת), אלא בחרו לתקן שלש שיעורים שונים כפי דרגות חומרת האיסורים.

וא"כ באופן שהאיסור שהתערב בהיתר יש לו דרך של היתר מצד עצמו, לא היה לחכמים סיבה המחייבת אותם ליתן לתערובת כזה שיעור שיותר בו ע"י אבידת האיסור במיעוטו, הואיל ובלא"ה יהיה מותר בהמשך הזמן. ולכן העדיפו לא לקבוע בו שום שיעור של היתר, וממילא נשאר במקומו האיסור מד"ס הנאמרה בכל התערובות מב"מ, וישאר באיסורו עד שלבסוף יותר מאליו.

וכך הוא שיעור דברי רבינו: "לא נתנו בו חכמים שיעור, אלא אפילו אחד בכמה אלפים אינו בטל, שהרי יש לו דרך שיותר בו" – ר"ל מה שלא נתנו כאן שיעור של אבידת האיסור בעוצם מיעוטו כדי להתיר את התערובת אחרי שתקנו שלעולם לא סומכים על ביטול ברוב, היינו משום שבמקום שיש דרך נוסף של היתר התערובת לא היה טעם לקבוע שיעור של היתר, וממילא התערובת נשארת באיסורו אפילו בהרבה אלפים. "אבל הערלה... נתנו בהן שיעור, שאין בהן דרך היתר לכל אדם" – משא"כ בשאר האיסורים החליטו לקבוע בהם שיעורים להיתר, משום שלא רצו להפקיע כל התערובות שבעולם משום אפשרות של היתר. ונמצא שביאורו בהימצאות ההיתר בשאר איסורים בא להגדיר את הטעם של העדר ההיתר בדשיל"מ.

אולם ילח"ע בזה. שרבינו הביא את המוקצה ונולד כדוגמאות של דשיל"מ שאין להם היתר לעולם, וכך פסק במקומם בהל' שביתת יו"ט (פ"א ה"כ). וע"ע בהל' נדרים (פ"ה ה"ב) דגם הנדרים הם דשיל"מ ואינם בטלים. ואיסורים אלו אינם מהמאכלות האסורות שתקנו החכמים שאין להם בטלים ברוב משום שהם נותנים טעם (כמו שהארכתי ע"ז במק"א), ולכאור' היה שייך בהם ביטול ברוב. וכ"כ רבינו להדיא (שם פ"ב ה"א) על העצים שנשרו מן הדקל לתוך התנור ד"מרב

המשיך לבאר ההיתר שנתנו לאיסורים שאין להם היתר אחרת: "אבל הערלה וכלאי הכרם... נתנו חכמים בהן שיעור, שאין בהן דרך היתר לכל אדם". ולכאור' דרכו של הר"ן הרבה מדי סתום בלשונו, שאם כוונתו לחשבון עמוק בגדרי מין במינו, לא נתן לנו שום רמז לזה בדבריו הקצרים, והמילים שכתב כהטעם לההלכה אינם מוסיפים לנו שום הבנה נוסף להתואר של "דבר שיש לו מתירין". ואף שהמילים יכולים לסבול את שיטת רש"י, אבל גם זה סתום, שלא כתב להדיא את החידוש הגדול שיש צד איסור גם אחרי הביטול ברוב, והספיק שנבין את זה ממש"כ שיש דרך אחרת להתיר, מה שאינו קל להבין מסברא כנ"ל.

ובכלל ילה"ע כאן, למה צריך רבינו לחזור באמצע דיני דשיל"מ לבאר הדין של שאר האיסורים שמשערין בהם הואיל ואין להם דרך היתר אחרת, הרי כבר פירש בהרחבה (הל' ד-ו) שאחרי שמדברי סופרים אין היתר של ביטול ברוב, עכשיו תיקנו חכמים שיעורים לקבוע מתי האיסור נאבד מעוצם מיעוט. וזה מובן בפשיטות לכל קורא, שמה שהחמירו בדשיל"מ בלבד הוא כשמו "יש לו מתירין" וכמו שפירש רבינו היטב, ואינו שייך כלל לדבר שאין לו מתירין שנתנו חכמים שיעורים להתיר. ועי' ברלב"ח (נרפס בס' הליקוטים במהדור' פרנקל) שאולי כוונתו להתייחס לשאלה זה.

והנראה בזה, דלדעת רבינו מה שדשיל"מ אסורה לעולם אינו משום שנמנו וגמרו לתקן בו חומרא מסיבה מיוחדת שאינו שייך אלא בו, וכמו שפירשו רש"י והר"ן. אלא להיפך, החכמים החליטו למנוע מלתקן את הקולא של השיעורים שנתנו לשאר האיסורים. ולכן היה נחוץ מאד לרבינו להשוות בין סוגי האיסורים, דרצונו לפרש הטעם שבדשיל"מ לא שייך סיבת ההיתר הנמצאת בשאר האיסורים.

וכך מובן היטב ע"פ שיטת רבינו בפירקין (הל' ד) שמדברי סופרים לא סוכמים על הדין ביטול ברוב במב"מ בשום תערובת בעולם, ואפילו חתיכה של איסור שנתערב בין שני חתיכות של איסור, ר"ל יבש ביבש, אינה בטילה. ונמצא דחל איסור גמור מדרבנן על כל אופני התערובות של מב"מ, והיה ראוי לאסור גם כשנתערבו בהרבה אלפים. אלא שחכמים תיקנו דרך אחרת להתיר התערובות, והוא כשנאבד האיסור בעוצם מיעוטו (ואפשר ששורש ההיתר הוא מסברא

דבר שיש לו מתירין הרב שמואל חיים ניימאן

רמב"ם, הלכות מאכ"א פרק טו

(ט) חמץ בפסח, אף על פי שהוא מאיסורי תורה - אינו בכללות אלו, לפי שאין התערובת אסורה לעולם, שהרי לאחר הפסח תהיה כל התערובת מותרת כמו שביארנו, לפיכך אוסר בכל שהוא בין במינו בין שלא במינו. (י) והוא הדין לתבואה חדשה שנתערבה בישנה מלפני העומר - אוסרת בכל שהוא, שהרי יש לה מתירין, שלאחר העומר יותר הכל: וכן כל דבר שיש לו מתירין, ואפילו היה איסורו מדבריהם כגון איסור מוקצה ונולד ביום טוב - לא נתנו בו חכמים שיעור, אלא אפילו אחד בכמה אלפים אינו בטל שהרי יש דרך שיותר בה, כגון הקדש ומעשר שני וכיוצא בהן. (יא) אבל הערלה וכלאי הכרם וחלב ודם וכיוצא בהן, וכן תרומות - נתנו חכמים בהן שיעור, שאין בהן דרך היתר לכל אדם:

הנה ידועים שני דרכים בדברי רבותינו הראשונים ז"ל בטעם מה שהדבר שיש לו מתירין אינו בטל לעולם. רש"י (ביצה ב: ד"ה אפילו) מפרש: "אחמור רבנן הואיל ויש לו מתירין לאחר זמן לא יאכלנו באיסור על ידי ביטול". וכבר שאלו רבים, איזה צד איסור יש בתערובת אחרי שהתבטל ברוב בדיני התורה, ולא מצינו שום חומרא שלא לאכול את מתערובת שהותר ע"י ביטול. ועי' מש"כ בזה ר' אלחנן (קובץ שמועות ב"מ אות כ ד"ה והנה גוף).

והר"ן (נדרים נב.) מאריך לייסד שכח הביטול הוא ע"י ההתנגדות הנמצא בין הדבר האסור והדבר המותר. ועפ"ז מפרש הטעם שדשיל"מ אינו בטל, דכיון שיש צד של היתר בתוך החלק של האיסור - אין ההיתר מתנגד אליו מספיק כדי לבטלו, והרי זה סוג של מין במינו שגם להחכמים אין לו ביטול. עיי"ש.

אולם כד נדקדק היטב בדברי רבינו בהלכות אלו, נראה בעליל שרוח אחרת היתה עמו. שהגדיר כאן את האיסור מדרבנן של דשיל"מ: "לא נתנו בו חכמים שיעור, אלא אפילו אחד בכמה אלפים אינו בטל, שהרי יש לו דרך שיותר בה". ומיד

למיגזר באופן אחר, וזהו שכ' הראב"ד כיון דלרבא מין ושאינו מינו א' הם כו' ע"ש ודו"ק.

וברמב"ן בלחמות שם אי' פירוש חדש, דלעולם אע"ג דרבא ס"ל בעלמא מין במינו בנו"ט, הכא בחמץ ס"ל דאינו בטל במינו מעיקר הדין, ומשום דחמץ הוי דבר שיש לו מתירין, דחמץ אחר הפסח מותר כר"ש, וכן פסק רבא, ולכן במינו אינו בטל בדבר שיש לו מתירין אפי' באלף לא בטל. מיהו אי"ז אלא במינו אבל שלא במינו אף דשיל"מ באמת בטל. אולם הכא בחמץ גזר רבא שלא במינו אטו מינו.⁷

מיהו שו"מ בכמה ראשונים דנקטו דהוא גזירה לגזירה, הלא המה הרשב"א ע"ז (סוף דף ע"ג ד"ה ומ"מ) שכתב כן מפורש, וכן בתוס' ע"ז (סו. ד"ה מכלל), דכתבו בסה"ד דהא דאסרינן באינו מינו אינו אלא אטו מינו, ע"ש ודו"ק.

לסיכום, רש"י פסק דמב"מ לא בטל ע"פ רבא דפסחים דפסק כן. תוס' ושאר ראשונים נקטו דאף מב"מ בטל בס'. והראיה מפסחים דחו ע"פ גירסא אחרת (תוס') או דפסק כרב ולא מוטעמיה, אלא דגזר בשניהם במשהו משום חומרא דחמץ (ראב"ד - גזירה א', רשב"א - גזירה לגזירה) או דאסר במינו משום דשיל"מ (רמב"ן).

⁷ עיין בר"ן דלא ניתא ליה תי' זה דאף דר"ש ס"ל חמץ אחר הפסח מותר הא קנסא קניס ליי, עיי"ש.

חלק י: מדור לשון הקדש

לגזירה, אולם אם נגרוס רב לטעמי' כנ"ל משמע דליכא למגזר בשלא במינו אלא אטו מינו, וצ"ל דהכא גזרו גזירה לגזירה (ועי' חולין קד. תוד"ה ומנא, דלפעמים גוזרים גזירה לגזירה, ע"ש).

והנה ברי"ף פסחים (ז: מדפי הרי"ף דפ' ווילנא) מיייתי הא דרבא דחמץ בזמנו בין במינו בין שלא במינו אוסר במשהו. והנה לענין שאר איסורים אם אמרינן מין במינו במשהו, ברי"ף ע"ז (לו: פסק כרב ושמואל דבכל איסורים שבתורה מב"מ במשהו. אולם אחר כך חזר בו וכמבואר בחולין (לב.) בסוגיא דריחא, וכן נקטו הראשונים בשיטתו דבשאר איסורים בין במינו בין שלא במינו בנותן טעם.

וצ"ע אי הא דפסק הכא כרבא בחמץ בפסח אינו אלא לפום שיטתיה הראשונה דאסר מין במינו בכל איסורים שבתורה, ומשו"ה פסק כרבא דאיהו פסק כרב דס"ל הכי, או דפסק זה קאי אף לפי חזרתו.

ובבעה"מ שם נראה שנקט דקאי לפני חזרתו, אבל הראב"ד שם בהשגות הקשה עליו דגירסת הרי"ף בגמ' שם הוא כגירסת הבה"ג שהביאו התוס', אמר רבא הלכתא חמץ בזמנו כו' אסור, ול"ג "במשהו כרב" ואפ"ה כתב הרי"ף דמדלא יהיב רבא שיעורא למילתיה (דלא קאמר אלא "אסור" סתם) ש"מ במשהו כרב, ומבואר דנקט הרי"ף דעצם הגמ' משמע דאוסר במשהו, וא"כ אפי' אי בעלמא פסקינן דמב"מ בטל, מ"מ בחמץ בפסח החמירו לאסור אפי' במשהו ואפי' שלא במינו. אבל מ"מ נתקשה הראב"ד בזה וז"ל דתמיהא לי האיך מחמירים בחמץ כולי האי, דבמינו במשהו משא"כ בשאר איסורין, ועוד גזרינן נמי שאינו מינו אטו מינו במשהו, וזהו תימה גדול כו' עכ"ל והיינו כמש"כ דקשיא ליה האיך גזרינן גזירה לגזירה.

ומסיק הראב"ד שם וז"ל גם התימה שתמהנו אין תימה, דכיון דלרבא מין ושאינו מינו אחד הם בנו"ט, אין כאן אלא גזירה א' דלמא אתי למשרי בנו"ט כו' ע"ש והיינו כצד הא' הנ"ל דהכל גזירה א'.

אולם ק"ק לפירוש זה אם גורסין בגמ' שם רב לטעמיה, דמשמע דלעולם ליכא למגזר שלא במינו אלא אטו מינו, אבל נ"ל דמפרש הראב"ד כמו שכתבנו לעיל בתוס', דלא נקט הגמ' דרב לטעמיה אלא מכח קושיא, ולא משום דלא משכח לן

והנה רש"י הביא ראיה מסוגיא דפסחים (כט:ל). דפסק רב חמץ בזמנו (ר"ל בתוך הפסח) בין במינו בין שלא במינו במשהו. ובגמ' מפרש דרב לטעמיה אזיל דס"ל כל מין במינו במשהו, ובפסח גזר שלא במינו אטו מינו. ובמסקנת הסוגיא שם, אמר רבא הלכתא חמץ בזמנו בין במינו בין שלא במינו אסור במשהו כרב. הרי להדיא דרבא ס"ל מב"מ לא בטל, דהא פסק כרב דחמץ אסור במשהו בין במינו בין שלא במינו, ומבואר בסוגיא דהיינו משום דגזר שלא במינו אטו מינו.

אבל תוס' דחו ראיה זו בכמה אנפי. תחילה הביאו מהבה"ג דיש גורסים "אמר רבא הלכתא חמץ בזמנו כו' אסור" ול"ג "במשהו כרב", ולפי גירסא זו איכא למימר דבאמת לא אסר רבא אלא בניתן טעם. ואפי' לגירסא דידן דגרסינן במשהו כרב, י"ל דרבא פסק הלכתא כרב אבל לאו מטעמיה, אלא משום דגזר בחמץ אפי' שלא במינו משום חומר איסור חמץ.

והוסיפו התוס' וז"ל, ועוד דבספרים ישנים ל"ג רב לטעמיה, אלא ה"ג והא רב ושמואל דאמרי תרויהו כל איסורין שבתורה כו' שלא במינו בנותן טעם, ומשני רב גזר בחמץ שלא במינו אטו מינו, עכ"ל, וצ"ע כוונתם בזה, ומצאתי בס' הישר (סי' תע"א) דמבוררת יותר, דקשיא להו האיך נימא דרבא פסק כרב ולא מטעמיה, הא רב גופיה לא אסר אלא משום דגזר שלא במינו אטו מינו, ואם נימא דרבא לא אסר במינו מעיקר הדין, האיך יתכן דאסר שלא במינו אטו מינו.

וע"ז תירצו התוס' דיש ספרים של"ג רב לטעמי', דמשמע דפשיטא לן דליכא למגזר שלא במינו אלא אטו מינו, אלא ה"ג דפריך הגמ' האיך משהו רב דין מינו ושלא במינו, הא רב בעלמא מחלק ביניהם, דדין מינו במשהו ושלא במינו בנו"ט, וע"ז קמשני דאף כאן מעיקר הדין הם חלוקים, רק דגזר רב שלא במינו אטו מינו. אולם לרבא דס"ל בעלמא (לפי ר"ת) דמינו ושאינו מינו שוין הן י"ל דבחמץ בין במינו בין שלא במינו אינו אסור אלא מטעם גזירה, אבל בעלמא ס"ל בשניהם דבטלין בס'. (ולפי מש"כ מתורץ קושיית המהרש"א בתוס' שם ודו"ק).

והנה יל"ע לפי צד זה דלרבא גזרינן בתרויהו, האם תחילה גזר אמינו והדר גזר שלא במינו אטו מינו, או דהיה גזירה א' בשניהם דאוסרים במשהו, גזירה אטו נו"ט דאוסר מדינא. וכפשוטו צ"ל דהכל גזירה אחת דלצד הא' קשה דהוי גזירה

סוגיא דמין במינו הרב יהושע שמואל יעקב הלוי סילברברג

חולין ק"ט. רש"י (ד"ה ותו) פסק בכל איסורים שבתורה דמין במינו לא בטל, מכמה ראיות, דפסק רבי כר' יהודה דס"ל הכי, וכן נקטו רב ושמואל בפרק בתרא דע"ז (עג:) ותניא כוותייהו, ואע"ג דרבי יוחנן ור"ל בע"ז ס"ל איפכא ותניא נמי כוותייהו, הא רבא ואב"י דהוו בתראי ס"ל (ע"ז סו.) כמו רב ושמואל. ובפסחים (ל.) נמי פסק רבא הלכתא כרב דמין במינו במשהו.

והנה בחולין צ"ז. אמר רבא אמור רבנן בטעמא אמור רבנן בקפילא ואמור רבנן בששים, הלכך כו' מין במינו דליכא למיקם אטעמא כו' בששים. ומבואר לכאורה דרבא ס"ל מב"מ בטל, דהא קאמר דמשערין בששים.

וע"ש בתוד"ה אמר רבא שהביאו שיטת רש"י הנ"ל ודחו ראיותיו אחת לאחת. דלא פסקין כרבי ולא כר' יהודה, וגם פסקין כר' יוחנן נגד רב ושמואל, והא דקאמר רש"י דרבא ואב"י נמי ס"ל כן בפרק בתרא דע"ז, ע"כ דמיירי התם בטל ויין נסך דלכו"ע אוסרין במינן במשהו, דהא רבא בחולין פסק להדיא דמין במינו בטל בששים, כנ"ל.

ורבינו אפרים דחה הראיה מחולין, די"ל דהא דקאמר רבא דמין במינו דבטל בס' ר"ל ב' דברים דשון בטעמן, ולא מב"מ ממש דהיינו ב' דברים דשון בשמן (דהכי ס"ל לרבא בע"ז סו. דבתר שמא אזלינן). אבל לא נראה לר"ת לדחות כך דאי מיירי בשון רק בטעם, רבא לא הוה קרי לי' מין במינו.⁶

והנה יש להעיר בדברי ר"ת דקשה אמאי הזכיר רבא כלל מב"מ, הא הכל תלוי רק באם ניכר טעמו או לא, ובמין בשאינו מינו (שאינן שון בשמן) וטעמן שוה נמי בעינן ס' כיון דליכא למיקם אטעמא, ולר' אפרים לא קשיא, דמב"מ ר"ל רק דטעמן שוה. ולא נראה דדין זה גופיה דמב"מ בטל אתא רבא לאשמעין, דסוגיא דהכא לא איירי בהכי, אלא בטעם.

⁶ ועיי' ס' התרומה ס' מ"ח תירוק אחר בשם תשובת רש"י.

בהדרגה תיכף מטומאה ונכנסו לקדושה עד שנעשו מרכבה שלימה בסוד ד' כדגלי המרכבה, והם בסוד ד' גאולות וד' כוסות שתקנו נגדם, וכן ד' מצות פסח מצה ומרור והגדה סיפור יציאת מצרים שהם נגד ד' אותיות הוי"ה כמ"ש רבינו הגדול בפירושו בסוף פרק הרואה, והם סוד ד' דגלים שנעשו במדבר.

והוא מה שכתוב דהוה כהר תבור... שתחילה היה בחוץ לארץ וזכה להיות נקבע בקדושה, וכמו כן ישראל נקבעו באותו יום בסטרא דקדושה כמו הר תבור על שבא ליתן עליו תורה, וכן ישראל בזכות האמונה...

וז"ש והר תבור כמה הוי ד' פרסי וכו', ר"ל כמו כן ישראל נמשכה קדושתם עד שתפסו כל מקום הקדושה כלל ד' אותיות הוי"ה שהם ד' דגלים, והוא זכירת ברית ד' אבות וברית הארץ.

וזהו גם כן הגאות דקדושה איך עם ישראל דלגו ממ"ט שערי טומאה למ"ט שערי קדושה בזמן יציאת מצרים, כמו לידת העיבור. וזכו לארבעה אותיות של שם הוי"ה. וזה גם נרמז בהר תבור שדלג ממדרגת חוץ לארץ, וזכה ליקבע בקדושה על ידי גאותו.

ולפי זה יכולים לומר אף שנפסל הר תבור ממתן תורה מפני גאותו, אחר שתיקן את זה בגבהות דקדושה על ידי ניצוח ברק את סיסרא, שוב זכה להיות מקום לעתיד להשראת השכינה. ודבר זה נרמז במדרש תנחומא (עקב ג):

דבר אחר (ישעיה ב, ב) "נכון יהיה הר בית ה' בראש ההרים" והר תבור יהיה גבוה מאד, משל למה הדבר דומה, לבני פלטרין של מלך שירדו מן העיר והרגו אריות ודובים ונמרים ביער והביאום לעיר ותלו אותן כנגד שער העיר וכל בני העיר היו תמיהין מאותן אריות, והקב"ה כך עשה בסיסרא, בא סיסרא על ישראל בהר תבור, "מן השמים נלחמו הכוכבים ממסלותם" נלחמו עם סיסרא, התחילו הכל תמהים שמעולם לא היה כמעשה הזה שירדו כוכבים מן השמים לעשות מלחמה עם בשר ודם, ואמר הקב"ה בעולם הזה הכוכבים נלחמו בשבילכם אבל לעתיד לבא (זכריה יד, ג) "ויצא ה' ונלחם בגוים וגו' ועמדו רגליו ביום ההוא" גו' וכל אות ענין, ויהיו הכל רואין ומראין אותו באצבע שנאמר (ישעיה כה, ט) "ואמר ביום ההוא הנה אלהינו" וגו'.

והיינו דוקא מהמלחמה של סיסרא יבא הגלוי שלימה של הקב"ה לעתיד לבא.

הארזילא והר תבור

ועכשיו נבאר הענין של הארזילא בר יומיה דהוה כהר תבור, הנזכר בבבא בתרא עג: המובא לעיל באות [ה]. הרשב"ם מבאר שם שהארזילא בר יומא הוא ראם בן יום אחד דאותו היום נולד, ע"ש (ועי' גם תוס' שם).

ומבאר הגר"א חבר (אפיקי ים שם):

אופן ב' יתפרש ענין זה על סוד יציאת מצרים כמו שכתוב (במדבר כג, כב) "א-ל מוציאם ממצרים כתועפות ראם לו"⁵ וכו'. כי ישראל כשהיו במצרים הוא בסוד העיבור וכשיצאו משם היה הלידה... וכן ישראל כשהיו תחילה במצרים היו שקועים בסט"א וביום יציאתם עלו שלא

⁵ איתא בגמרא במעשה של שלמה המלך עם אשמדאי (גיטין סח:), אמר ליה, כתיב "כתועפות ראם לו" ואמרין "כתועפות" אלו מלאכי השרת, "ראם" אלו השדים, מאי רבותיכו מינן. ע"ש עוד.

אמנם לפגם השני עדיין אפשר לומר שאחר נתינת התורה ועבודת כלל ישראל בעקירת עבודה זרה מן העולם יזכה להשראת השכינה בזכות שבא לקבלת התורה.

הר תבור ומלחמת סיסרא

אבל יש לומר שאע"פ שאבדה תבור שכר של השראת השכינה מפני הגאווה, זכה לשכר של מלחמת סיסרא. שכבר בארנו במאמר על נחל קישון שניצוח סיסרא היה על גאותו של פרעה שלא נשלם על ידי קריעת ים סוף. וכיון שראינו שגם לתבור היה גאות יכולים לומר שברק לקח מדת הגאווה של קדושה לנצח את סיסרא.²

וזה ענין המדרש שהבאנו באות [ד] במה שאמרו "אנכי" פעמים על הר תבור. שתיבת אנכי הוא ההתגלות הכי גבוה של הבורא עולם שנתגלה לעם ישראל בשעת מתן תורה. ובהתגלות גאות דקדושה הזו, היה יכול ברק לנצח את גאות סיסרא.

ויש לומר עוד שהרמ"ד וואלי על פי דרכו מבאר ד"הר תבור" שנקרא כן מלשון תבירו או שבירה.³ ואם כן יכולים להבין שמי שבעינו נשבר יכול לאחוז גאות דקדושה, וזה דוקא היתה מעלת הר תבור.⁴

² ויש להעיר שהפעמים אנכי נמצא בתחילת שירת דבורה, ואודותה איתא בגמרא (מגילה יד:), דנפגמה בגאווה. ועי' גם בפסחים (סו:) שבשירה זו גופה התיירה.

³ וגם הגרי"א חבר באפיקי ים (כבא בתרא עג:), עמ' סד) מוצא לשון שבירה בשם תבור. וכן עי' בספר דרכי נועם על מאמרי רבה בר בר חנה שמפרש זה על שם הנסירה (דרך סוד סוף לג:), הר שנשבר ונחלק לשנים, ע"ש.

⁴ ואלו דברי הרמ"ד וואלי (שופטים ד):
לא היה צריך לו אלא להמשיך מצד אי' רזא ד"הר תבור" שנקרא כן מלשון תבירו, שממנה השבירה וההכנעה אל החצונים כידוע.
והיינו שבפנימיות הר תבור הוא מקום אי' ובינה, שממנה היתה שרש השבירה. [וגם השבירה נגרמה ע"י גאות של אנא אמלוך].
אמנם זהו גם כן הענין של אנכי. שכותב הגרי"א חבר (ליקוטי הגר"א קעד):
והוא דרגא דאנכי דיציאת מצרים, והוא בסוד שם אהי"ה, א"ך דאנכי ונשאר נ' י' הם נ' שערי בינה, שער הנו"ן דנוגע ב' דחכמה שנגד עשרת הדברות שהוא שער הנ'.
וכן איתא בחז"ל (תקו"ז חכ"א נ.), "אנכי" דאיהי אימא עלאה, "אנכי" דיציאת מצרים. ע"כ. ועי' דברינו בעד"צ על רות מלואים יז בביאור ענין זה.

חלק י: מדור לשון הקדש

[ד] ובמדרש אחר יש שכר אחר להר תבור (ילקוט שמעוני שופטים רמז מז):

בתבור נפל סיסרא וחיילותיו ונעשה לישראל ישועה בראשו, כיון שנפלו שונאיהם של ישראל נאמר בו (שופטים ה, ג) "אנכי לה' אנכי אשירה". בסיני נאמר (שמות כ, ב) "אנכי", ובתבור נאמר בו "אנכי לה' אנכי אשירה". בסיני נאמר "אנכי", ובתבור נאמר שני פעמים.

וצריכים להבין הענין של "אנכי" ולמה קבל תבור שכר שנאמר בו שני פעמים.

[ה] איתא בגמרא (בבא בתרא עג:):

אמר רבה, לדידי חזי לי אורזילא בר יומיה דהוה כהר תבור, והר תבור כמה הוי ארבע פרסי, ומשאכא דצואריה תלתא פרסי ובי מרבעתא דרישיה פרסא ופלגא, רמא כופתא וסכר ליה לירדנא.

וגם בגמרא זו רואים הגבהות של הר תבור, אבל צריכים להבין הדברים נפלאים של מעשה האורזילא.

הר תבור ומתן תורה

יש להתחיל בהבנה שהטעמים לביאת הר תבור למתן תורה לא סותרות אלו את אלו. שיש שכר לעצם ביאת הר תבור לקבל תורה, וזה לא יגרע אם גם רצה שהתורה ינתן על גבה.

ובטעם למה לא ניתנה התורה על תבור מוצאים שני פגמים, אחד שהיה לו מדת הגאות ולקבל תורה צריכים ענוה, ושנית שעבדו עבודה זרה עליו ואין ראוי שתורה תינתן במקום עבודה זרה. מפני פגם הראשון היה צריך להפסיד שכר ביאתו כי אין ראוי להשרות שכינת ה' על מקום גאווה כמו שאין ראוי ליתן תורה שם. וכן איתא בגמרא (סוטה ה.), א"ר יוסף, לעולם ילמד אדם מדעת קונו שהרי הקב"ה הניח כל הרים וגבעות והשרה שכינתו על הר סיני, ע"כ. והיינו, שהסבה שלא ניתנה תורה על הר תבור היא מפני שבמתן תורה השרה הקב"ה שכינתו ולא רצה להשרות שכינתו במקום גאות.

וזה לכאורה מדה רעה של הר תבור שרצה לעשות דין עם הר סיני להיות מקום לקבלת התורה, ועל כן נקרא על ידי זה בעל מוס. זה לכאורה סבה הסותרת שיטת רבי אלעזר הקפר שלשיטתו בא הר תבור רק לשמוע דברי תורה, ובזכות זה זכה ליקבע בארץ ישראל. אבל לפי שיטת בר קפרא בא ההר בטענה של גאות שלו ראוי להיות המקום לקבלת התורה, וכמובן אין שום שכר להר תבור על טענת גאות שלו. וצריכים להבין השני צדדים של ביאת הר תבור למתן תורה.

[ג] ומדרש אחר מצטרף השני ענינים בביאת הר תבור, דאיתא (בר"ר צט, א):

(תהלים סח, יז) "למה תרצדון הרים גבנונים" ... רבי יוסי הגלילי פתר קרא בהרים, בשעה שבא הקב"ה ליתן תורה בסיני היו ההרים רצים ומדיינים אלו עם אלו זה אומר עלי התורה ניתנת וזה אומר עלי התורה ניתנת, תבור בא מבית אלים וכרמל מאספמיא, הדא הוא דכתיב (ירמיה שם) "חי אני נאם ה' וגו' כי כתבור בהרים" זה אומר אני נקראתי וזה אומר אני נקראתי, אמר הקב"ה "למה תרצדון הרים" וגו' כולכם הרים אלא כולכם גבנונים היך מאי דאמר (ויקרא כא, כ) "או גבן או דק" כולכם נעשה עבודת כוכבים על ראשיכם אבל סיני שלא נעשה עבודת כוכבים עליו (תהלים שם) "ההר חמד אלהים לשבתו", (שמות יט, כ) "וירד ה' על הר סיני", אף על פי כן (תהלים שם) "אף ה' ישכון לנצח בבית עולמים".

גם ר' יוסי הגלילי סובר כבר קפרא שהיה טוען שעליו תינתן התורה. אבל לפי ר' יוסי היה לתבור פגם אחר שמנע אותו מקבלת התורה עליו, והיינו שנעשה עבודה זרה על ראשו. אבל ר' יוסי מוסיף השכר של הפסיקתא שה' ישרה שכינתו עליו, ולכאורה זה קאי אלעתיד לבא. וצריכים להבין לפי שיטת ר' יוסי הגלילי למה זוכה הר תבור להשראת השכינה אם היה נפגם על ידי עבודה זרה.

זה סיני שהשפיל את עצמו לומר שאני נמוך, ועל ידי כך תמך הקב"ה כבודו עליו ונתנה עליו התורה וזכה לכל הכבוד הזה, כמה דתימא (שמות יט, כ) "וירד ה' על הר סיני".

הר תבור וקבלת התורה הרב אבא צבי ניימאן

[א] איתא בגמרא (מגילה כט.) שהר תבור בא למדבר סיני בשעת מתן תורה, אבל מוצאים שם שתי שיטות חולקות בכוונתה, דאיתא שם:

תניא רבי אלעזר הקפר אומר, עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל שיקבעו בארץ ישראל, שנאמר (ירמיה מו, יח), "כי כתבור בהרים וככרמל בים יבא", והלא דברים קל וחומר, ומה תבור וכרמל שלא באו אלא לפי שעה ללמוד תורה נקבעים בארץ ישראל, בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שקורין ומרביצין בהן תורה על אחת כמה וכמה.

והיינו שבא הר תבור ללמוד תורה בשעת נתינתה, ועל ידי זה זכה ליקבע בארץ ישראל. [וענין הר הכרמל נבאר בס"ד במאמר בפני עצמו.] ובמדרש אחר מוצאים עוד שזכר על ביאת הר תבור למתן תורה, דאיתא (פסיקתא דרב כהנא כא, ד):

ר' פנחס בשם ר' ראובן אומר, עתיד הקב"ה להביא סיני ותבור וכרמל ולבנות בית המקדש על גבי ראשיהם, ומה טעמא (ישעיה ב, ב) "והיה באחרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית ה' בראש ההרים".

והיינו שבלבד מה שזכה ליקבע בארץ ישראל, יזכה לעתיד להיות מקום המקדש.

[ב] אבל בגמרא שם יש דעה חולקת על סבת ביאת הר תבור לסיני (כדברי המהרש"א שם), דאיתא שם בהמשך:

דרש בר קפרא מאי דכתיב (תהלים סח, יז), "למה תרצדון הרים גבנונים", יצתה בת קול ואמרה להם למה תרצו דין עם סיני, כולכם בעלי מומים אתם אצל סיני, כתיב הכא "גבנונים" וכתיב התם (ויקרא כא, כ) "או גבן או דק", אמר רב אשי שמע מינה האי מאן דיהיר בעל מום הוא.¹

¹ וע"ע במדרש (במדבר רבה יג, ג):

דבר אחר, (משלי כט, כג) "גאות אדם תשפילנו" זה תבור וכרמל שבאו מסוף העולם מתגאים לומר שאנו גבוהים ועלינו הקב"ה נותן את התורה, "ושפל רוח יתמך כבוד"

החכמה, ואילו החכם ידע מה לעשות עם החכמה. ויסוד זה כבר כ' הרמב"ן בפר' אחרי מות וז"ל "ודע כי חיי האדם במצוות כפי הכנתו להם" וכו' יעוי"ש.

ונראה עוד להביא ראיה ליסוד זה ממ"ש מרן הרב בצלאל הכהן מוילנא זיע"א שפירש את הגמ' במס' פסחים (סח:) רב יוסף ביומא דעצרתא אמר עבדי לי עגלא תלתא אמר אי לאו האי יומא דקא גרים כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא. וצ"ב מפני מה אמרה דווקא רב יוסף ולא אמורא אחר. ועוד הרי אמרו חז"ל בשלהי מס' סוטה דרב יוסף היה עניו וא"כ איך הכא התפאר הוא ביומא דעצרתא?

אלא אמרו בגמ' בנדרים (מא.) שרב יוסף חלה ושכח תלמודו וממילא הרי שהרגיש שהיה כשברי לוחות, וכמו שאמר רב יוסף במס' מנחות (צט.) תני רב יוסף מלמד שהלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחים בארון מכאן לת"ח ששכח תלמודו מחמת אונסו שאין נוהגין בו מנהג בזיון. וממילא תבין לפי"ז מה ששואלים העולם שהרי להלכה קיי"ל כרב יוסי שבת (פו:) דבו' סיון נתנה תורה וכמו שאמרו ביור"ד (קצו, יא) שבעינן לפרוש ו' עונות. והקשה המגן אברהם (סימן תצ"ד) איך אומרים בתפילה בו' סיון זמן מתן תורתנו הרי מתן תורה לא היה באותו היום. ותירץ, דהיינו דקאמר הוסיף משה יום אחד מדעתו, היינו שאותו היום היה ראוי להינתן בו התורה. הרי ההכנה וה"ראוי" הוא סיבה למתן תורה. הילכך רב יוסף שהיה ראוי משום שכל ימי חייו נשם ולמד רק תורה הרי אין לך כלי מחזיק גדול מזה וממילא יומי דעצרתא נבחר דווקא בחודש סיון שבו היו השברי לוחות ואף בו' סיון שבו היה ראוי למתן תורה ודו"ק.

ונסיים באותו משפט של הרמב"ן שהבאנו לעיל "ודע כי חיי האדם במצוות כפי הכנתו להם", ע"כ.

חלק י: מדור לשון הקדש

קפייטל זה נאמר "כי עם בתורת ה' חפצו ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה והיה כעץ שתול על פלגי מים" וגו'.

והנה בראשית הדברים הבאנו מש"כ השל"ה הקדוש שחג השבועות הוא יום הדין לתורה מי יזכה השנה לשפע של תורה וקדושה ומי ח"ו לא. והנה כתוב בספרים הק' שהאדם צריך לעשות עצמו להיות כלי קיבול כדי לזכות לתורה וממילא זוכה הוא שהתורה ניתנת לו במתנה כמו שכ' "ממתנה נחליאל" שהתורה ניתנת לו במתנה והוא ע"י "יגעת ומצאת תאמין" שדבר מוכרח הוא שמפאת היגיעה ודאי יזכה ל"מצאת" שהרי אמרו בגמ' אם יאמר לך אדם יגיעתי ולא מצאתי אל תאמין ומשום שזה מוכרח שע"י היגיעה יזכה הוא למצוא. וכמו שכ' הגר"א זיע"א שזהו מציאה ממש מתנה.

ומפאת שהעבודה ביום הזה הוא ההכנה והיגיעה וההכרה שהאדם עושה עצמו לכלי קיבול לזכות לתורה, הרי שיתיישב לפי"ז מה שחג השבועות נקרא חג השבועות ולא חג מתן תורה ומשום שעיקרו הוא מה שהאדם מכין עצמו ומכיר הוא במתנה הנפלאה שאנו רוצים לזכות בה. וממילא אין עניינו של חג השבועות על עצם נתינת התורה אלא הוא יום הדין לראות היכן האדם עומד, והאם הוא ראוי להיות מקבל תורה ולזה נדרש הכנה של מ"ט יום וביום החמישים כבר היו ראויין לקבל התורה ולכן היו"ט הוא ביום החמישים ולא ביום חמישים ואחד.

ולפי"ז גם נתיישרה קושיית המג"א (בריש סימן תצד) למה לא קבעו את חג השבועות ביום חמישים ואחד שאז היה מתן תורה? ולדברינו שאין היו"ט מצד סיבת נתינת התורה אלא מה שאנו מכינים עצמינו להיות ראויין לה ומש"ה יום החמישים הוא היום שהיו כבר ראויין לקבלת התורה. והכוונה "ראויים" שהאדם עושה עצמו ממש לכלי קיבול ז"א הוא נהפך לחפצא אחר לגמרי הוא נהיה ממש כלי לקבל תורה וכמו דאיתא בזהר הק' שהקב"ה "יהיב חכמה לחכימין" ז"א הקב"ה מביא חכמה למי שהוא כבר חכם. ונ"ל, שכוונת העניין "מי שהוא חכם" הוא מי שעשה עצמו לחפצא של חכם שהכין עצמו בעמל ויגיעה כדי להיות מקבל תורה הוא יזכה לה. וצ"ב, מה הצורך להביא חכמה לחכמים היה עדיף להביא את זה לטפשים? אלא הטיפש יזרוק החכמה מעליו שלא ידע את ערך

ההתחייבות לא חלה א"כ יש לעיין לפי"ז הרי עם ישראל קיבלו התורה והתחייבו בקיומה והרי התורה היא דבר שאין לה קצבה וא"כ איך חלה ההתחייבות? ותירץ שהמוכר עצמו לעבד אינו מקבל על עצמו השתא חיוב מסויים אלא מקנה הוא את גופו לרבו ובזה שפיר חל הקניין וממילא חייב הוא לעשות ציווי רבו ולכן עם ישראל שהקנו גופם ועצמם להקב"ה "כי לי בני ישראל עבדים" ואנשי קודש תהיו לי" ממילא נתחייבו בקיום התורה. [ולהוסיף ע"ז קימעא לפי הנ"ל דכיון שעושה עצמו לעבד שקנוי הוא ממש לרבו וכל מה שקנה העבד קנה רבו ואין לו מגרמיה כלום הרי שע"י זה זוכה הוא לכי לי" בני ישראל עבדים לי" דייקא ודו"ק].

ולהוסיף בו נופך, הנה המילה "לי" יש בו האות ל' שהוא מורה על בינה כפי המבואר בתיקונ' (פפ). והאות י' מורה הוא על חכמה עיין בזה"ק פר' ויקרא. וזהו כוונת הפסוק "ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואביא אתכם אלי", הנה "נשרים" נוטריקון "נשמות שישים ריבוא יוצאים משם" והוא שורש ישראל ואף בו נרמז התורה שהרי "ישראל" נוטריקון "יש שישים ריבוא אותיות לתורה" ובשלהי קרא נאמר "ואביא אתכם אלי" "אלי" דייקא שהוא ג' דרגות עליונות א' שהוא מורה על הכתר ה' אחד ושמו א'. ל' מורה הוא על בינה כהנ"ל וי' מורה הוא על החכמה וכהנ"ל. ובספר התיקונים מובא שיחזקאל הנביא ראה את כל המראות אלוקים היה זה על נהר "כבר" והובא בתיקונים שזהו נוטריקון כ' תר ב' ינה ר'אשית חכמה ודו"ק. הנה חזינן מכולי האי שלהגיע למדרגות הגבוהות בבחינת "לי" בעינן דווקא ע"י לימוד התורה ובחיבור של "ישראל קודשא בריך הוא ואורייתא חד הוא" ודו"ק.

והנה דרך גדילתו של האדם הוא כצמיחת העץ "כי אדם עץ השדה" ובישעיה (סו), כב) כתיב "כימי העץ ימי עמי" היינו כמו שהעץ מתחלק הוא לג' חלקים יש בו השורשים והגזע והענפים כך ישנם ג' תקופות בחיי האדם, וכ"כ העקידה בפר' וישלח ימי הנערות וימי העמידה וימי הזקנה וכבר אסמכהו אקרא בריש תהילים "אשרי האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים" זהו ימי הנערות שהוא עדיין בבחינת הולך מחיל אל חיל צעיר הוא ובעל שאיפות גדולות. "ובדרך חטאים לא עמד" זהו תקופת העמידה. "ובמושב זקנים לא ישב" זהו תקופת הזקנה. ובשלהי

"להנחיל אוהבי יש ואוצרותיהם אמלא" לזכות להאי נחלה הוא השכר השמור לצדיקים לעתיד לבא. וה"ישע" מרומז בו שהרי מילוי אותיות "יש" הוא י וד ש ין והגימטריא של המילוי עולה ע' וזהו "יש-ע" וזהו מה שנאמר "ואוצרותיהם אמלא" היינו מילוי של ע' ודו"ק.

והנה יש לנו להתבונן מהו הדרך לזכות לעליה נפלאה שכזו? ונראה דהנה כתיב בקרא שמות (כד, יח) "ויבא משה בתוך הענן ויעל אל ההר ויהי משה בהר ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה". וכ' ע"ז האבן עזרא שם "ויהי משה בהר" שלא ירד. ועל אלו הארבעים יום נא' דברים (ט, ט) "לחם לא אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי", וזה פלא גדול לא נהיה כמוהו לפניו עיי"ש. הנה נראה שלימדנו משה רבינו רעיא מהימנא דרך לעליה ודביקות בתורה הק' והוא ע"י ארבעים יום של "לחם לא אכלתי ומים לא שתיתי" ונראה שמשם נמשך מה שכ' האבן עזרא "ויהי משה בהר" שלא ירד. זהו הסגולה להישאר במצב של עליה להיות מסור כולו לתורה הק'.

והנה תדע, שעניין "ארבעים" הוא יסוד היסודות וכמו שאמרו בתנחומא בפר' כי תשא שהלוחות משקלם ארבעים סאה. ומקרא "והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים" איך נהיה "סגלה" הוא ע"י והייתם "לי" דייקא שעולה בגימטריה ארבעים וממילא כשתהיו "לי" בזה תזכו להיות עם "סגלה" שהוא סג-לה "סג" כנגד מסכתות הש"ס שהוא תורה שבע"פ ו"לה" כנגד כ"ד ספרים ועוד תרי עשר שבנביאים שהוא תורה שבכתב.

ותדע, שהשגת מדרגת ה"לי" הוא המדרגה היותר גבוהה וכמו שכ' בספר "רזיאל המלאך" (כו.) שאות הגבוהה בא'ב הוא האות ל' והאות הקטנה הוא אות י' וממילא האות ל' מרמז על הקב"ה שהוא גבוה מעל גבוה והאות י' מרמז על עם ישראל כמו שאמרו בדברים (ז, ז) "כי אתם המעט", וממילא תבין מה שאמרו במס' קידושין (ה:) שהקידושין תלויים במילה "לי" שהוא ידים מוכיחות וממילא המקדש ולא אמר "לי" אין קידושיו קידושין שהרי ה"לי" מהותו מיוחדת ומזומנת לי, וזהו שורש השייכות בין ישראל לאביהם שבשמים שאנו מיוחדים ומזומנים תמיד לעמוד ולשרת ולקיים רצון אבינו שבשמים. וזהו מה שנא' בקרא "ואנשי קודש תהיו לי". וכמו שהקשה הבית הלוי בפר' יתרו דהלא לשיטת הרמב"ם בהל' מכירה (פי"א) שס"ל שאם אדם מחייב עצמו בדבר שאינו קצוב

וכבר אמרו במשנה בספר יצירה על המלאכים "צפייתם כמראה הבזק ולתכליתם אין קץ והלכו בהם רצוא ושוב ולפני ה' משתחוים ועל מקומם הם עומדים" וכו'. הנה למדתי מהמשנה הזו שפעמים יש לו לאדם איזה צפיה והשתוקקות להידבק בה' וזה ממש כמראה הבזק ז"א רגעים ספורים ממש, ואומרת המשנה שלתכליתם אין קץ, ז"א אין קץ למה שאדם יכול לקבל ולהשיג בזמנים המעוטים האלו. "והלכו בהם רצוא ושוב" אצל המלאכים זה נאמר שרצים להקב"ה לקבל עוד קדושה ושוב מיד הם חוזרים למקומם, ואם אצל המלאכים כך מה נענה אבתרייהו.

והנה כ' המגלה עמוקות בפר' משפטים, שבכל מעלה שעולה האדם יושבים בית דין של ג' סנהדרין בשמים ודנים האדם אם ראוי הוא לעלות במעלה הסולם. והק' המגלה עמוקות מפני מה צריכים לדון האדם בכל מדרגה שהוא עולה, הרי כבר דנו אותו בראשונה? ותירץ, דחזינן מהא שכדי לעלות במעלות הסולם בעינן לזיכוכ וטהרה יותר ויותר וכמו שאמר שמואל לשאול (כח, טו) "למה הרגזתני לעלות" שסבר שמואל שרצו לדון אותו כדי להעלותו למדרגה גבוהה יותר. ולפי"ז ביאר המגלה עמוקות סמיכות הפרשיות שבשלהי פרשת יתרו נאמר "ולא תעלה במעלות על מזבחי אשר לא תגלה ערותך עליו" ולמדנו מהאי קרא במנחות (ק:) אמר רב גידל אמר רב, זה מזבח בנוי ומיכאל השר הגדול עומד ומקריב עליו קרבן. ויעיין ברש"י ובתוס' מדרשים חלוקים חד אמר נשמותיהן של צדיקים וחד אמר כבשים של אש יעוי"ש. מ"מ חזינן "לא תעלה במעלות על מזבחי" א"א לעלות במזבח ולהיות קרוב להקב"ה "אשר לא תגלה ערותך עליו" ז"א שיגלו כל מעשיו של אדם ושוב דנים ומדקדקים בהם.

ולכן סמיכות הפרשיות ל"ואלה המשפטים", וו' ד"ואלה" הוא כפי שנודע בספרי היסוד שישנם ששה מעלות לכסא וכו'. וממילא כל מעלה ומעלה בעינן זיכוכ וצירוף לזכות להיות דבק בהקב"ה. ומי שהולך בדרך הזה זוכה למה שאמר דוד המלך בתהלים (ג, כג) "ושם דרך אראנו בישע אלוקים" ודרשו בעלי רשומות "ושם" הוא מלשון שומא כההיא דמס' מו"ק (ה) ששמין מעשיו של האדם שכר מצווה ועונש העבירה וכו' וממילא ע"י ששמין זוכים לדרך אראנו "בישע" אלוקים. "ישע" הוא כמו בגדי ישע לכבוד ולתפארת ו"ישע" הוא בבחינת

אלא יעויין בפרקי דר"א (פרק לה) ובילקוט (פר' ויצא), שבמראה הסולם הראה הקב"ה ליעקב אבינו את ד' המלכויות שהיו עולים ויורדים בסולם, ואמר הקב"ה ליעקב שאף הוא יעלה עמהם, והוא לא האמין שהיה מתיירא מן הירידה, אמר לו הקב"ה, אילו האמנת לא היו יורדים בניך לגלות, עכשיו יהיו בניך משעובדים לד' מלכויות, יעויי"ש. נמצא שאף יעקב אבינו היה גורם הגלות ומש"ה בשעת קבלת התורה שהיה חירות מן המלכויות כמו שאמרו במס' עירובין (נד.) שוב הוצרך הקב"ה להראות ליעקב אבינו ע"ה שאותו קילקול שבא בשבילו הגלות נתקנה כעת ולכן כתיב "ויחן שם ישראל" – ישראל סבא, וזהו דאמרינן "גאל ישראל", ודו"ק.

ותדע, שאמרו בילקוט בשלהי תולדות "ויקרא יצחק אל יעקב ויברך אותו", מה בירכו? ברכו ברכת גלויות, ובסוף ברכתו נאמר שם לשון "ויקרא" ומשם פתח יעקב אבינו "ויקרא יעקב אל בניו", כך איתא בתנחומא (פר' ויחי יז) וטעמא דמילתא שפתח יעקב אבינו ב"ויקרא" הוא משום שהוא לשון המראה על חיבור ואחדות כמו שנא' בנביא ישעיה (א, ה) "וקרא זה אל זה ואמר" וגו', ולפי שהגלות הייתה אף מפאת יעקב אבינו ע"ה הוצרך לומר להם "התקבצו" ועל דא נא' "כה תאמר לבית יעקב" ודו"ק.

והנה החודש השלישי (חודש סיון) שהוא כנגד יעקב אבינו ע"ה, בו בחודש ניתנו הלוחות [אע"פ שנשתברו ושוב ניתנו ביוה"כ אמנם רבותינו שייכו קבלת הלוחות ליו"ט דשבועות] מפאת שיעקב אבינו ע"ה הוא סמל התורה כמו שנא' "מגיד דבריו ליעקב" "איש תם יושב אהלים" "תתן אמת ליעקב" "יורו משפטיך ליעקב" וכו' הרי שהתורה משתייכת ממידתו של יעקב אבינו ע"ה.

והיה נראה לענ"ד לבאר, דמה שיעקב אבינו לא האמין שאף הוא יעלה עמהם מפאת שנתיירא מן הירידה, אי"ז אלא לימוד מושכל השכל לדורות הבאים, דהא קיי"ל "אל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך" היינו צעריכים תמיד להתיירא מן הירידה וכמו שאמרו חז"ל "אשרי אדם מפחד תמיד", ההוא בדברי תורה כתיב ודו"ק. היות ועם ישראל תמיד נמצאים במצב של הליכה כמו שאמרו "נתתי לך מהלכים בין העומדים האלה" וממילא נסיון גדול ועבודה רבה היא להיות תמיד במצב של עליה כי אם ח"ו אין עליה אז בהכרח ישנו ירידה רח"ל.

מאמר בעניין עיצומו של חג השבועות ויום מתן תורה והדרך לעליה במעלות התורה ושהכל תלוי במידת ההכנה הרב אורי משה מילרד

איתא בשל"ה הק' זיע"א במס' שבועות (אות ט) שיומא דשבועות הוא יום הדין של תורה ומש"ה נהגו בתפוצות ישראל לאכול מאכלי חלב בחג השבועות וכמו שכ' הכל בו (סימן נ"ב) נהגו לאכול דבש וחלב בחג השבועות מפני התורה שנמשלה לדבש וחלב שנ' "דבש וחלב תחת לשונך" וכ"כ הפרי חדש על הרמ"א שיותר נראה שאוכלים מאכלי חלב משום שהוא יום שניתנה בו תורה והתורה נמשלה בו כדאמרינן בפ"ק דתענית (י.) למה נמשלו דברי תורה לג' משקין הללו מים יין וחלב וכו'.

והנה אמרה התורה "בחודש השלישי לצאת בני ישראל מארץ מצרים ביום הזה באו מדבר סיני" ואיכא למידק, אמאי המתין הקב"ה עד החודש השלישי לצאתם מארץ מצרים? וביאר המגלה עמוקות זיע"א, משום שהציאה ממצרים היתה יציאה של גוי מקרב גוי ומש"ה בעינן להמתנה של ג' חדשים כדין גר המתגייר, שבעינן להבחין בין זרע ישראל שנזרע בקדושה לזרע שנזרע שלא בקדושה. וכ"כ בתנחומא פרשת יתרו (יא) ובילקוט שמעוני (ש) ומכיון שהוצרכו להמתין עד חודש סיון מפני שביום הזה באו מדבר סיני וכמו שאמרו במס' שבת (קמז.) שפסקה מהם זוהמת הנחש. שהרי כל עוד שלא הגיעו לשם עדיין היו בעלי מומין כמו שכ' התנחומא (ש).

והוסיף עלה המגלה עמוקות וכך הובא בתיקונ' ז' שג' חדשים אלו הוו כנגד ג' אבות, חודש ניסן הוי כנגד אברהם וחודש אייר כנגד יצחק וחודש סיון כנגד יעקב, ועל דא נאמר "כה תאמר לבית יעקב" וגו'. וג' דרגות הוא בקבלתה "ומשה עלה אל האלוקים" זהו כנגד יצחק אבינו "ויקרא אליו ה'" הוא כנגד יעקב אבינו "מן ההר" הוא כנגד אברהם אבינו. וע"ז אמרו חז"ל במס' שבת (פח.) בריך רחמנא דיהיב לן אוריין תליתאי וכו'. וביאר עלה רבינו בחיי זיע"א על הקרא "ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר" ישראל — ישראל סבא. וצ"ב מה השייכות המיוחדת שיש לישראל סבא שהוא יעקב אבינו להכא וצ"ע.

מדור

לשון הקודש

Dedications

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

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

Love,

Irvin and Family

לזכות רפואה שלימה

נפתלי הכהן בן רחל נ"י

*** * ***

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

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

by
The Solomons

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

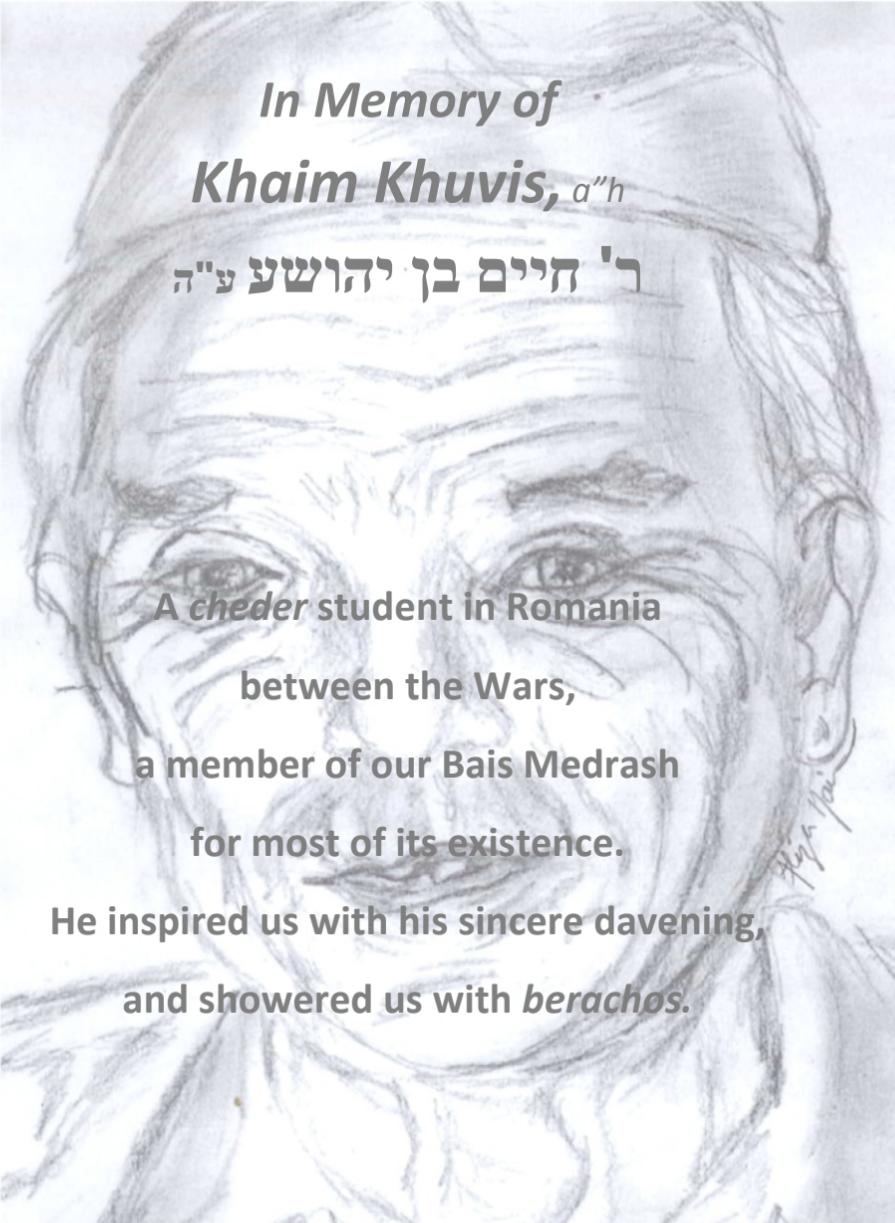
**In honor of the
Rav, the Kiddush Committee,
and the Gabbayim
by
the Kimelfelds**

**In honor and appreciation of
Rabbi and Rebbetzin Naiman
for all they do for the Bais Medrash
and the entire kehillah**

by

**Eli and Janice Friedman
and Family**

**Compliments of the
The Singmans**



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*.

