

# דרכי נועם

A Journal of *Divrei Torah*  
in honor of Pesach 5773

*Compiled by the Members of the*



*Bais Medrash  
of Ranchleigh*



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# דרכיה דרכי נועם וכל נתיבותיה שלום

לעילוי נשמת

דבורה חיה בת נפתלי גדליה ע"ה

ט"ו סיון תש"נ

*Imi Morasi, Doris Rock, a"h, was the epitome of noam, pleasantness, and shalom, peace.*

She was an icon of tzenius, encouraging and enabling many women to cover their hair. Her name Doris Rock is still remembered, loved and respected by many people in the community for her immense sensitivity and kindness towards every person and situation.

*As a shaitel macher, her tzedakah and chesed to women who had monetary issues or sicknesses were limitless. She always provided for them or paid personal visits in a way that they would have no embarrassment or shame.*

Both my mother, *a"h*, and my father, *shetichyeh*, instilled in me a strong love for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, brought me up to be a *shomer Torah u'mitzvos*, and were the foundation for my *emunah* and *bitachon*.

Baruch Hashem, I was given an *eizer kingdo* with the same values of *emunah* and *bitachon* so we can keep each other strong.

Mom, may this *sefer* be an *aliyah* for your *neshamah*.

Love,  
Moshe and Lisa



## Preface: The Second Time

It was a year ago that we were *zocheh* to produce our first *kuntress* as a *tzibur*. The question remained whether such a beautiful project could be repeated. And as you see, the answer is a resounding “yes”!

It is not so easy to repeat a momentous event. The first occurrence has that freshness, that daring to see if it can be done. Once it has been successfully tackled, it is not so easy to develop the enthusiasm to try it again. I’m not sure how many people climb Mt. Everest a second time after they have already accomplished that feat once. But *bs”d* the enthusiasm did not wane and the *divrei Torah* once again came pouring in. And the reason might be because Torah never grows stale; each concept that we learn has a freshness that goads us on to share it with others.

I would like to add another thought to this concept. The Gemara states (see *Kiddushin* 30a et al.) that when a person commits a sin and repeats it, it becomes to him as though it were permissible. This means that a person has certain inhibitions about committing a crime the first time. If he anyway committed that crime, he will still have inhibitions about repeating it. And in a certain way, those inhibitions may now be stronger because he presumably feels terrible about having acted against his better senses the first time. But if he does repeat it, all inhibitions have gone to the wayside and he will *r”l* easily become a repeat offender.

With our *kuntress*, we might have been wary the first time whether we could really do it. And once we did do it the first

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time, we might have been wary if we could repeat it without the initial excitement. But we were able to repeat it and at this point making a *kuntress* has become a way of life for us, and we will *bs"d* hopefully be able to produce many more works of Torah together.

This *kuntress* has the distinction of including articles from some of our Bar Mitzvah *bachurim* sprinkled throughout, along with a special one from one of our prominent *pre*-Bar Mitzvah *bachurim*, Dovid Baruch Keidar. We are also fortunate to have a superbly well-thought-out addendum contributed by R' Reuven Kaplan, which is certainly worth the time to read. The *kuntress* is rounded out with a *maamar* I have written on one of the cities of Eretz Yisrael, Beis Shemesh. Although not directly related to Pesach, anything involving Eretz Yisrael bespeaks the *geulah*, and can thus be included in a journal devoted to *zman cheiruseinu*.

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

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

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conviction that his words are worth writing and sharing with others.

I will close with a thank you to the members of the *maareches* (in alphabetical order) who helped with this production: R' Michael Keidar, R' Moshe Rock, R' Elli Schwarz, and R' Chaim Sugar. Thanks also to the sponsors who made the printing possible; their names are listed on the sponsorship pages. Very special thanks to the Rock family for again sponsoring the name of this year's *kuntress* in memory of Mrs. Doris Rock, a"h, who exemplified *darchei noam*. May the Torah study that comes from it be a *zechus* for her and her entire family. And a final thank you to my *eishess chayil*, the *Rebbetzin*, who allowed me to spend even more time away from my family duties to work on this *kuntress*.

Last year I expressed 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 5773





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## The Enigma of *Taanis Bechorim*

### Rabbi Doniel Horowitz

The *Tur* (§170) cites *Meseches Sofrim*, which says that all *bechorim* are obligated to fast on Erev Pesach in commemoration of the miracle in Mitzrayim that Hashem spared the Jewish first-borns from death during *makkas bechoros*. However, in recent times, very few *bechorim* follow this Halachah. In fact, it has become nearly universal to attend a *siyum* for the expressed purpose of abdicating one's responsibility to fast.

Why is it that we go out of our way to avoid fasting on Erev Pesach, even though this Halachah is cited in many major Rishonim and codified in *Shulchan Aruch*? What is the true nature of Erev Pesach for a *bechor*? Is Erev Pesach a day of celebration or is it a day of solemn reflection and introspection for first-borns?

Also, if *Taanis Bechoros* is incumbent upon those who would have been spared from *makkas bechoros* had they lived during the period of *yetzias* Mitzrayim, we would expect that the halachos would follow exactly who was affected by *makkas bechoros*. Why then does the *Tur pasken* that the head of the household is not obligated to fast in the event that there is no *bechor* in the family? Moreover, why are female first-borns not obligated to fast, according to most Poskim? After all, we know that first-born females and heads of households were killed during the plague when there was no *bechor* in the house.

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R' Yosef Salant, the *Be'er Yosef*, offers a poignant insight into the significance of Erev Pesach to *bechorim*, which sheds some light on the aforementioned questions. He is bothered by the fact that we fast on a day that is meant to commemorate a miracle – the salvation of all Jewish *bechoros*. Every other fast is designated on a day when travesty befell *Klal Yisrael*, yet Ta'anis Bechoros is unique in that we fast on a day that should be a time of happiness.

Erev Pesach during the year of *yetzias Mitzrayim* was indeed a special day for *bechoros* in *Klal Yisrael*. While Hashem was punishing the *bechoros* of Egypt, who led services to *avodah zarah*, he spared the Jewish *bechoros* and designated them to be leaders in *avodas hakodesh*. However, after they served the *eigel hazahav* several months later, the *bechoros* were forced to forfeit their right to perform the *avodah* in the Beis Hamikdash, transferring that *kedushah* to Shevet Levi. Hence, that special status that the *bechoros* secured for themselves during *makkas bechoros* was eventually lost.

While it is always painful for a *bechor* to live with the knowledge that he could have merited such an exalted privilege, this feeling of guilt and longing is particularly potent on Erev Pesach. By far, Erev Pesach is the day when the most *karbonos* are sacrificed in the Beis HaMikdash. The Kohanim and Leviim lead the joyous services with Hallel and *Shira* and are in their full glory, basking in the *kedushah* of the day. In some ways, Erev Pesach is the pinnacle of closeness to Hashem for anyone serving in the Beis HaMikdash.

With that image in mind, try to imagine how painful it must have been for a *bechor* to witness the services of Erev Pesach. How he

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## Section I: Preparations for Pesach

must have lamented how he could have been the one leading the *avodah*, if not for the tragedy of the *eigel*. In the mind of any *bechor*, especially during the times of the Beis HaMikdash, this must have been a travesty, one that would bring him to tears and fasting. It was on this very day that he earned his right to serve Hashem in the Bais HaMikdash, yet he is witnessing the loss of his birthright on this day as well – the day when the tragic loss is most evident.

With this deeper understanding of Erev Pesach, perhaps we can decode the enigma of *Taanis Bechoros* by taking a bifurcated view of the day. On the one hand, the miracle of *makkas bechoros* conjures up sad emotions for a *bechor*, as it reminds him of the great spiritual heights he could have attained given the uniqueness of the day. On that account, a *bechor* is obligated to fast. Additionally, it is for this reason that female first-borns and heads-of-households are not obligated to fast. Even though they were included in *makkas bechoros*, they were never initially chosen to lead the *avodah*.

On the other hand, we cannot forget the fact that Erev Pesach is ultimately a joyous day because Hashem spared all first-borns from the plague. Perhaps, that is why we go out of our way to observe the significance of the day, but ultimately proceed to break the fast by attending a *siyum*.

Moreover, amidst the sadness of losing the *avodah*, there is also the hope that one day the *avodah* will be returned to the *bechoros*. It is hinted to in several Midrashim, and posited explicitly in the *Ohr HaChaim* (*Bamidbar* 3:45), that the *avodah* will return to the *bechoros* when the *Bayis Shelishi* is built לעתיד לבא (although the Kohanim and Leviim will also continue to

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serve). As all of *Klal Yisrael* prepares to celebrate the *Chag* of *Geulah*, *bechorim* have an additional reason to celebrate the *Geulah* and long for the building of the *Bayis Shelishi*, במהרה, בימינו, אמן.



## ***Bris Milah and the Korban Pesach***<sup>1</sup>

### **Avigdor Neuberger**

The *Rambam* writes (הלכות קרבן פסח פרק ה' הלכה ה'): כשם שמילת עצמו מעכבת אותו מלעשות פסח, כך מילת בנוי הקטנים ומילת כל עבדיו בין מהול *may not eat the פסח*, *Just as someone who is not מהול*, *so too, someone who has not fulfilled the mitzvah of מילת of his son who is a קטן, or of his עבד כנעני, may not eat the פסח קרבן פסח.*

We can *kler* a *chakirah*: Why can't someone who has not fulfilled the mitzvah of מילה on his son or עבד eat the פסח קרבן פסח? Is it because of his עבירה in being מבטל the מצוות מילה, or is it because of his status of having an ערל in his home who is disqualified from eating the פסח קרבן פסח?

We can ask the same question as a second *chakirah* about someone who is *himself* an ערל. Is the reason why an ערל is אסור to eat the פסח קרבן פסח because of his עבירה of being מבטל the מצוות מילה? Or, is it because of his status of being an ערל?

*Rashi's* well-known שיטה is that even someone who is an ערל because מתו אחיו מחמת מילה, may not eat תרומה or the פסח קרבן פסח because he has the status of an ערל. And from the words of the *Rambam* in הלכות תרומה, where he writes that an ערל may not eat תרומה and he does not distinguish between a מזיד and an אנוס, we

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<sup>1</sup> The following *dvar Torah* is from my great-grandfather and namesake, Rav Avigdor Cyperstein, *zatzal*, from his sefer, *Imrei Avigdor*. I would like to thank my grandfather, Rav Noam Gordon, shlit'a, for learning this *sugya* with me.

can conclude that the *Rambam* agrees with *Rashi* that an אנוס may not eat תרומה or the קרבן פסח.

We can now resolve our second *chakirah* as to the reason why an ערל may not eat the קרבן פסח. According to *Rashi* and the *Rambam* it cannot be due to his עבירה of being מבטל מצוות מילה because we cannot say that an אנוס has done an עבירה since ביטול המצווה *the Torah does not consider an אנוס as being responsible for doing an עבירה*. So it must be, that according to *Rashi* and the *Rambam*, it is the *status* of being an ערל that makes him אסור in eating the קרבן פסח. And *Rashi* and the *Rambam* hold that even an אנוס has the *status* of an ערל.

We can now return to our first *chakirah*: Our first *chakirah* was about the reason why someone who did not fulfill the mitzvah of *milah* of his son or his עבד may not eat the קרבן פסח. The words of the *Rambam* can help us here. The *Rambam* says the key word כשם שמילת עצמו מעכבות מלעשות פסח כך מילת בניו הקטנים ומילת: כשם *Just as someone who is not* כל עבדיו בין גדולים בין קטנים מעכבת אותו *may not eat the פסח, so too, someone who has not fulfilled מילת זכריו* *may not eat the פסח*.

So we see that the reason for the איסור אכילת הפסח of someone who has not fulfilled מילת זכריו is the same as the איסור of someone who is himself an ערל. Now, since we have seen that the *Rambam* holds that the איסור of someone who is himself an ערל is because of his *status* as an ערל and not because of the ביטול המצווה, and since the *Rambam* says כשם, that just as someone who is not מהול may not eat the קרבן פסח, so too someone who has not fulfilled, מילת זכריו may not eat the קרבן פסח, we can conclude that the reason for the איסור אכילת הפסח of someone who has not fulfilled מילת זכריו is his *status* of being an ערל.

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From this we have learned the חידוש that according to the *Rambam*, the Torah gave someone who has not fulfilled מילת זכריו the status of an ערל. With this יסוד we can answer the קושיא of the הלכות קרבן on the *Rambam* in the next הלכה in שאגת אריה. The *Rambam* is saying that a קטן is not אסור to eat the פסח קרבן even if he owns an עבד who is not מהול. And the *Rambam* says that this דין is learned from the *pasuk*: "וכל עבד איש".

The *Rambam* asks, why does the *Rambam* need a פסוק to learn that a קטן is not אסור to eat the פסח קרבן because of מילת זכריו? Isn't it obvious, that a קטן is not responsible for זכריו since he is פטור מן המצוות?

We can answer the קושיא of the *Rambam* with our יסוד that the פטור מן המצוות to eat the פסח קרבן is not because of the מצווה but rather because of his status as an ערל. A קטן who is פטור מן המצוות may not be considered to be אסור to eat the פסח קרבן because of מצווה. But a קטן can have the *status* of an ערל. Because of his status as an ערל it is possible that he would be אסור to eat the פסח קרבן because of מילת זכריו. That is why the *Rambam* needed the פסוק of "וכל עבד איש" to learn that a קטן is not אסור to eat the פסח קרבן because of מילת זכריו.

## ***Emes***

### **Label Cooper**

One of the most difficult aspects of learning occurs when you are confronted with new concepts that contradict views you've believed until now to be true. This is true in Torah study, but just as true in the lessons and experiences of life. One who seeks truth must be prepared at any time to completely undo previously held views and reshape thinking to assimilate harsh newfound revelations, especially when it is painful to do so.

A Torah example: Yitzchak, according to the Midrash, sees *Gehinnom* open up in front of him when he is struck with the realization that Eisav not only was NOT the recipient of his blessings, but would likely have destroyed the world if he would have been. Yitzchak is the very one chosen by G-d to carry forward Avraham's legacy and build a nation that will bring G-dliness into the world. Yet, his entire personal worldview of how this is to be carried out through his children is completely turned on its ear. Yitzchak shutters in the deepest fear and trepidation at what just happened to him. (He subsequently regains his senses and with his great ability for self-sacrifice literally, is able to admit that indeed the one who received the blessings, Yaakov, shall remain blessed.)<sup>1</sup>

A life changing example for a parent: A parent is at last awakened to the fact that not only is their child going through terrible difficulties (be it school, *shidduchim*, etc.), but the very

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<sup>1</sup> See *Sichos Mussar* of R' Chaim Shmuelevitz (5732 §13) for discussion of this event.

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choices that the parent made with the best intentions for the child's success are actually accentuating the problems. This can happen when a parent comes to the rude awakening that they've planted their child into a mold designed to feed that parent's ideal of what the perfect child's outcome should be, instead of looking at what that unique child really needed to grow and thrive as an individual.

According to the pain is the reward: However, one must fear not. For the word for truth in Hebrew is *emes* [אֱמֶת]. These exact letters, when punctuated differently, will actually spell the word “*amus*” [אָמַס], which means “I will die.” This is a harsh reality of how G-d created us. It is part and parcel of uncovering the deep, beautiful, and hidden treasures that the Torah wants to reveal to us. The way you understand things is so sacred to you and so defines you, that it feels almost impossible to rip apart your understanding of the world to assimilate new-found truths. That is why it is, in a sense, like dying – because you are being asked to let go of the very self-made pillars that define you and your world. And you definitely need these pillars, because much of life's going forth to do difficult things lean upon the pillars which you yourself have forged out of necessity for your own support and guidance.

But however strong and deep your pillars have been cemented, in no way does it mean that you cannot find fault in them should new revelations come your way. In fact this is critical if you want your life to strive towards real truth. The breaking down and rebuilding of these pillars according to your newfound specifications does not weaken the foundation. On the contrary, each time you must do this they become more strongly rooted than before.

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Perhaps Pharaoh was the biggest example of one who could not do this (well, at least not before it was too late). He could not accept what G-d was doing to him and his nation, because his rigidly self-written book of world understanding had no room to see things differently. Imagine, after all those plagues and then the death of all the firstborns, he couldn't drive the Israelites out of Egypt fast enough. Yet, within a couple of days (see beginning of *Parshas Beshalach*) he and the Egyptians ask: "What have we done, to let the Jews out of Egypt!" And he then embarks on the national suicidal mission of chasing after the Jews one more time. My Dear Pharaoh, you've got to be kidding, just what is it about 'YOU WERE WRONG' that you can't seem to understand?

Nevertheless, it isn't just Pharaoh that is prone to this deadly mistake. Each of us is born with a little Pharaoh inside of them. However, if you are willing to die, which really means to undo your worldview when confronted with wisdom bigger than yours (and IT WILL HAPPEN), you will find that you really "LIVE" whenever you allow yourself the freedom to break yourself down in order to re-sculpt a matured version of how G-d's grand scheme works through your eyes.

It may never be easy, and sooner or later we all come across one sort of major realization or another that really, really hurts. But we say in the *tefillah* "*Leolam*, which means ALWAYS... one should be *modeh al ha-emes*." Often, being willing to admit to one's self what is really true can be very difficult. But one has to remember that they are not the only one to ever realize a painful truth, even if it feels self-demeaning to do so. Rather if one is prepared to train one's self to always take on the new reality, real truth will only root and sprout deeper within them every time.

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## Section II: *Galus Mitzrayim*

Even when acknowledging a particular truth seems like it could only be negative (perhaps frustrating or depressing), truth for its own sake is a Torah virtue that leads you closer to G-d. There is also a common inclination to feel very defeated by facing truths, especially if they include your own wrongs or limitations. But don't let this *yetzer hara* get in the way, as one is "not permitted" to view themselves in very negative terms. Viewing oneself negatively is often a big show-stopper, and will most surely get in truth's way. Why shouldn't one view one's self negatively? Because that's also NOT TRUE. You're required to judge others favorably, and they are required to judge you favorably.

And it's not because G-d would like us all to live in a fantasy bubble! Rather, it must be that Jews by nature are favorable people. That is a fundamental truth upon which our whole religion is firmly anchored!!

It is necessary to learn how to be comfortable about finding uncomfortable things. Ultimately, slowly and step by step, you'll find that it really strengthens you every time you absorb your new findings, whatever they may be. As a major side benefit, you will also be training yourself to not need to be defensive when debating matters with husband, wife, friends or family, but rather to remain truthful and objective, which will bring you closer. And you will feel proud of yourself every time you do!

## **Pesach as a *Tikun* for Adam *HaRishon***

### **Louis Leder**

Pesach provides Bnei Yisrael with a method of being *mesakein* the *cheit* of Adam *HaRishon*. Why were the Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim in the first place? Chazal tell us that when Hashem promised Eretz Yisrael to Avram, he asked (*Bereishis* 16:8): בְּמָה בְּיָדְךָ אֵינְךָ יָדוּעַ, with *what will I know that I will inherit it?* The mistake of Avraham in this question can be identified by focusing on the word יָדוּעַ (*know*). Avraham's error indicated that he was not fully *mesakein* the quality of *daas* [דעת] that was blemished by Adam *HaRishon* when he ate from the *eitz hadaas*.

In answering Avraham, Hashem said (*ibid.* 16:13): יָדוּעַ תֵּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לְהֵם, *You shall surely know that your children will be strangers and enslaved in a land not their own.* Now the children of Avraham would have to go down to Mitzrayim to be *mesakein* this whole idea of blemished *daas* (knowledge). After *yitzias* Mitzrayim the Jews were told (*Devarim* 4:35): אִתָּה הָרְאָתָה לְדַעַת כִּי יְדֹן הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבַדּוֹ [לְדַעַת] *that Hashem is Elokim; there is none beside Him.* It was then that they successfully rectified the *cheit* of Adam *HaRishon* regarding *daas*.

After Adam ate from the *eitz hadaas*, he lost the *siman* of *bris milah* with which he was created. Hashem commanded Avraham to circumcise himself and his children to be *mesakein* this imperfection of the body caused by Adam and his *cheit*.

One of the curses of Adam forced him to gain his bread through the sweat of his brow. Through the backbreaking work of

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## Section II: *Galus Mitzrayim*

Mitzrayim, Bnei Yisrael rose to the level of Adam *HaRishon* before the *cheit*.

To indicate this elevated status, Hashem gave *Bnei Yisrael* the *mann* and Shabbos. Their bread would come down as a direct gift from Hashem. Shabbos emphasizes the rest from the normal need to exert oneself in obtaining food and livelihood.

After the *cheit* of Adam *HaRishon*, the *yetzer hara* entered the physical body. In chametz, the dough is left to rot (to ferment, to decay) for a little while. The idea of Pesach is to get away from leavened bread. We want to symbolically distance ourselves from the *cheit* of Adam *HaRishon*. We therefore eat only matzah, which has not decayed.

According to the opinion that the *eitz hadaas* was a grapevine, we can understand that our drinking of *arba kosos* of wine is connected to the consumption of the *eitz hadaas*.

Adam was created on Friday afternoon. If Adam had refrained from eating the *eitz hadaas* until the start of Shabbos, Hashem would have encouraged him to make wine. With the wine he would have been *Mekadesh HaShabbos*. We also make kiddush Friday night to be *mesakein* this.

Of all the possible lands to be enslaved, why Mitzrayim? The descendants of Cham, son of Noach were the inhabitants of Mitzrayim. The first act of Noach after leaving the *teivah* was the planting of a vineyard. His desire was to be *mesakein* the *cheit* of Adam, which came about through drinking of wine. However, Noach was careless and got drunk. As a result of the immorality and disrespect of Cham, Cham and his descendants

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## *Darchei Noam*

(Canaan) were cursed. Just as when Adam consumed the fruit of the *eitz hadaas*, the drinking of wine by Noach also set the stage for the increase of immorality with the strengthening of the *yetzer hara* in *guf haadam*. Mitzrayim, because of the curse of Noach to Cham and Canaan, would always be wicked and immoral. In fact Mitzrayim is termed (*Bereishis* 42:9): עֶרְוַת הָאָרֶץ, *the nakedness of the land*. When Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they had fallen to the 49th level of immorality. This is the concept of our counting 49 days of *Sefirah* from Pesach to *Matan Torah*.

After 49 days, Bnei Yisrael had completely recovered from the descent to the 49th level of *טומאת מצרים*. On the 50th day, they were in the best spiritual health, capable of receiving the Torah.

May we also be *zocheh* to be like the generation of Bnei Yisrael who were *zocheh* to *Geulas Mitzrayim*, purified of their spiritual *tumah* and rewarded with the gift of Torah.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we can add that Bnei Yisrael were told to conquer Eretz Canaan in order to transform Canaan from an immoral land into a land of the highest *kedushah*.

## Giving *Kavod* to Pharaoh <sup>1</sup>

### Michael Cooperman

In the beginning of *Parshas Vayechi* (48:2) when Yaakov Avinu was on his deathbed, he exerted himself and sat up in his bed when Yosef came to visit. *Rashi* states there that under normal circumstance a father is not expected to show respect to his son. However, Yaakov said that even though Yosef is his son he must give him *kavod* because he is a king. *Rashi* goes on to say that Moshe *Rabbeinu* did the same when he was talking to Pharaoh. Moshe said to Pharaoh in *Parshas Bo* (11:8): *These slaves of yours will come down to me*, when it was actually Pharaoh who would come to tell the Jews to leave Egypt. This too demonstrates the respect one must have for a king (see *Mechilta Bo* §13 and *Tanchuma Bo* §7). Now, this is very difficult to understand. It is one thing for Yaakov to give *kavod* to Yosef, the king, even though he was his son. However why did Moshe see the need to give *kavod* to Pharaoh? Although he was a king, he was wicked.<sup>2</sup>

You might want to say the reason is because if Hashem decided to put Pharaoh in a position of power it must be that he deserved it. But this explanation seems lacking. This is the person who is the paradigm for *Rambam's* example of someone who is beyond teshuvah. A total *rasha*. If Hashem decides to give this person

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a shiur by Rabbi Tzvi Goode on *Parshas Vayechi*.

<sup>2</sup> This question is even more difficult because there seems to be a constant theme of Moshe *Rabbeinu* giving *kavod* to Pharaoh. See, for example, *Rashi* to *Shemos* 5:3 and 6:13. See also *Sichos Mussar* of R' Chaim Shmuelevitz (5733, end of §2).

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## *Darchei Noam*

power and he abuses that power so extremely, does it seem right that he is worthy of *kavod*?

There is a well-known Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos* (3:2) which states that a person should pray for the welfare of the government. Why? The answer is that there is something to be said for rule and order. Even when there is a terrible king and government, some type of law and order is being maintained. The Gemara in *Berachos* says that a person should run to see a king, even a gentile king. Why? If you see a gentile king, you can then compare him to a Jewish king. And this is true even if the king is a *rasha*. That could be why Moshe *Rabbeinu* gave *kavod* to Pharaoh. But there is something deeper here, on why we have to give *kavod* to a king like Pharaoh.

Pesach is *zman cheiruseinu*. Our concept of freedom is to be unrestricted in some way. If so, isn't it ironic that the focal point of Pesach is the Seder. On all other holidays, the Yom Tov meals are somewhat less constrained. Although we may be together with family and guests, there are not as many details associated with those *seudos*. The Pesach Seder is very ordered; every detail is accounted for. It seems the opposite of freedom. Freedom is to do whatever you want, right? Why is it that we experience *cheirus* specifically through the Seder? It seems a contradiction. The answer is that in reality people who have *seder* and structure in their lives are the freest people. They have order in their day. On the other hand, someone who has no order and is constantly changing his mind about daily decisions – Should I get up on time? When will I get up today? Should I go to shiur or work today? etc. – has no freedom; he has confusion. We need *seder* and structure in order to be free. Someone who knows rules and fundamentals can create and have the order

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### Section III: *Geulas Mitzrayim*

needed to be free. In any discipline you must know the fundamentals. Whether its art, music, intellectual study, sports, or *lehavdil elef havdalos*, learning Torah; you need to have the basic rules and fundamentals down before you can successfully pursue that endeavor and create. A guitarist must know the chords before he can create and play a song. He doesn't just bang away as he pleases and expect to play beautiful music with the instrument. So that is why the Pesach Seder is so structured. That order generates creation and freedom.

Hashem created structure and rules in the way the world operates. The whole world itself has order. Seasons, solar systems, plants, animal life, etc. In all of these things there is a *seder*. So a king therefore illustrates that there is *seder*, an order in the world. Even if he is a *rasha*, he is helping us recognize the world that Hashem created. Seeing a king helps us realize that there is order in the world. Why should Moshe *Rebbeinu* give *kavod* to Pharaoh, a tyrant who was killing his people? Moshe realized what Pharaoh was and what he represented.

We too, can come to an appreciation of HaKadosh Baruch Hu and his world when we see that *seder* exists; and we can use this realization to enhance our *avodas* Hashem.

## **The Concept of Time**

**Dr. Michael Keidar**

צריכים להבין מה היא המושג של זמן ואיך צריכים להתחסס בו ?

ידוע שאין זמן במקום שהשכינה שורה, שהרי הקב"ה הוא ודאי למעלה מן הזמן. ראינו זה ביציאת מצרים. עיין חדושי הרב שמעון שוואב על התורה (פ' בא) וזה לשונו, "וביטול כח החימוץ נעשה ע"י שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה. שהרי חימוץ העיסה תלוי בזמן הילוך מיל, ובשעה שנגלה הקב"ה בחפזון נתבטלה פעולת הזמן וממילא נתבטל החימוץ".

נעיין במצוות מצה. כתיב (שמות יב, יז) "ושמרתם את המצות", ואיתא בחז"ל (מכילתא שם), אל תקרא כן אלא ושמרתם את המצוות, כדרך שאין מחמיצים את המצה, כך אין מחמיצין את מהצוה, אלא אם באה מצוה לידך אל תחמיצנה, ע"כ. ולמה לומדים ענין של זריזות ממצוה זו דוקא? עיין מהר"ל איך אפשר להיות דומה להקב"ה בעולם הזה. דבר היחידי שיש בעולם הזה הוא מצוה. כשאנו עושים את המצוה בזריזות אנו מבטלים את הזמן ואז מתקרבים כמה שאפשר להקב"ה.

מצד שני אנו רואים שיש חשיבות לזמן עד כדי הרף עין. מי שנולד רק שנייה קודם אהיו הוא הבכור עם כל הקדושה של בכור. ורואים שיש שייכות במצוה זו לזמן. וכן רואים שבששת ימי בראשית שיש חשיבות של זמן [כמו דאיתא במדרשים רבים לגבי מחלוקת של ים סוף וכלל ישראל, מי היה נברא קודם]. ואיך אפשר לישב את שני הדברים האלה.

ידוע שאם יציאת מצרים וקבלת התורה היה שינוי משמעותי בענין של זמן. עיין חדושי הרב יעקב קמנצקי על התורה (פ' יתרו) וזה לשונו, אחר

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קבלת התורה יום מתחיל בערב כמו שהיה לפני חטא אדם הרשון, כמו שהיה בששת ימי בראשית "ויהי ערב ויהי בקר..." אחרי יציאת מצרים קיבלנו מצוות "קדש לי כל בכור"... יציאת מצרים היתה דומה לששת ימי בראשית כמו שפירשתי.

ואולי אפשר לאמר שלאחר חטא אדם הראשון ולפני יציאת מצרים לא היה קשר בין קדושה לזמן. מי שהיה בכור היה אפשר לאבד בכורה [כמו ראובן]. יציאת מצרים וקבלת התורה החזירו את הקשר בין קדושה לזמן כמו שהיה לפני חטא אדם הראשון.

"ויהי ערב ויהי בקר..." אחר יציאת מצרים העולם נמצא במצב כמו שהיה לפני חטא אדם הראשון מצד יחס לזמן. רואים שיש קשר בין דברים רוחניים לזמן כמו מצוות בכור, ביכורים וכו'.

ומה ניתן ללמוד מזה? איך צרכים להתיחס לזמן שזהו דבר העיקרי שיש בעולם הזה. איך להשתמש בו. כדבר קשור לרוחניות, כל רגע יש לה ערך לאין סוף.

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

### **Dovid Baruch Keidar**

1] In פרשיות ויגש ומקץ it always says יוסף, not יוסף המלך or not even צפנת פענח. Why not? An answer could be that the תורה is trying to teach us that even though Yosef was in a place full of טומאה he still kept his Hebrew name – יוסף – and of course his *yiddishkeit*.

2] In פרשת וארא it mentions the names of the first three שבטים: ראובן, שמעון, לוי. *Rashi* asks why are only these three שבטים mentioned? He answers that the Torah wants to teach us that even though יעקב didn't *bentch* these שבטים in פרשת ויחי because שמעון ולי had killed out the city of Shechem and ראובן was פחוז, they are still חשוב. The Torah therefore mentions only their names and the names of their children. I would like to add that the אלה ראשי בית אבתם בני ראובן ובני שמעון בני לוי of גמטריא is the same אלה השבטים אשר יעקב לא בירך בפרשת ויחי (עם הכולל) גמטריא.

3] In פרשת בא when the ארבה was leaving it says they went ימה סוף. So the question is why can't the Torah write אלהים סוף? One answer is that this is the normal way to say it (like we say מצרימה). Another answer could be that the Torah wants to hint that the Yam Suf was to the west, because ימה means west. But this is difficult because if you're standing in Egypt, the Yam Suf is to your east, not to your west. The *pshat* could be that during the מכות the *yidden* were on their way out of Egypt going towards Har Sinai and since this is where they were thinking of going, it as if they were already there. So once you're at Har Sinai, the Yam Suf is to your west.

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4] The גמטריא of the three *makkos* ארבה, חשך, בכור is 764. The 7 hints at the 7 days of ארבה; the 6 hints at the 6 days of חשך; and the 4 subtracted by the three *makkos* is the 1 night of מכת בכורות.

## **Miracles of our Forefathers in our Days**

### **Reuven Kaplan**

*Shvilei Pinchas* in his *maamer* on Miketz/Chanukah (5573) cites the *Kedushas Levi*, who addresses the question of why our blessed Sages instituted that the berachah **לעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים** **ההם בזמן הזה** be recited only on Chanukah and Purim. Why isn't it recited regarding the miracles and wonders associated with Pesach?

He points out that the miracles associated with the exodus from Mitzrayim differ significantly from the miracles of Chanukah and Purim. The miracles of Mitzrayim were supernatural; the laws of nature established during creation were altered and defied. During the ten plagues, water turned into blood, the houses became filled with frogs and lice, the light turned into darkness and all of the firstborn died in a single night. This supernatural aspect was ever so apparent when the sea was transformed into dry land during the phenomenal miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea.

In contrast, the miracles of Purim and Chanukah were obscured within the realm of nature. On Purim, Haman's decree was annulled as a result of Achashveirosh's love for Queen Esther. On Chanukah, the Chashmonaim defeated the Greeks with military weapons. Despite the veil of nature, it was obvious to all – both on Purim and on Chanukah – that HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed these miracles to save Yisrael.

Therefore, concludes the *Kedushas Levi*, our blessed Sages instituted the recitation on Chanukah and Purim of the berachah:

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שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה, *Who performed miracles on behalf of our forefathers, in those days, at this time.* In other words, the miracles performed by HaKadosh Baruch Hu on Yisrael's behalf were concealed – בזמן הזה – within the realm of nature and the constraints of time. This is unlike the miracles associated with the Exodus, which were beyond the realm of nature and beyond the constraints of time.

With humbleness and humility I would like to add the following thought. Chanukah is commonly referred to as the holiday of lights. It is the time when the miracle of oil occurred, when a small jar that was sufficient to burn only for one day, burned instead for eight days. Was this not a supernatural miracle? Furthermore, in the actual words of the prayer that is read during the days of Chanukah, the miracle of oil is not mentioned at all, it's only alluded to:

*In the days of Matisyahu, the son of Yochanan the High Priest, the Chashmonain and his sons, when the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will. But You, in Your abounding mercies, stood by them in the time of their distress. You waged their battles, defended their rights, and avenged the wrong done to them. You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the wanton sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah. You made a great and holy name for Yourself in Your world, and effected a great deliverance and redemption for Your people Israel to this very day. Then Your children entered the shrine of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, kindled lights in*

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## *Darchei Noam*

*Your holy courtyards, and instituted these eight days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise to Your great Name.*

I believe that the *Kedushas Levi* is answering an unwritten question: why is the miracle of oil not mentioned specifically in the על הנסים prayer? He points out to us that the open miracles which are supernatural and defy the laws of nature – no one can dispute them, no one can deny them. However, it is the miracles that are obscured or hidden within the realm of nature that people may dispute, attributing them as wonders of “mother nature” or even to the mightiness of man. The *Kedushas Levi* is teaching us that although everyone will remember the miracle of oil, the miracles of “turning the tables” on Haman’s plan, saving the Jewish people and instead hanging Haman and his ten sons on Purim, and delivering “the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the wanton sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah” on Chanukah – one may forget, or even worse, attribute their success on the power of man and not *HaKodesh Baruch Hu*. It is for this reason that the sages went into great detail describing these hidden miracles when they created this prayer. Therefore, it is these “hidden” miracles that are בזמן הזה – that occur every day of our lives, that we have to be able to recognize, attribute them to their proper Divine source and be thankful for them.

On Purim we read *Megillas Esther*. Throughout the whole book Hashem’s name is not mentioned even once. The miracle of Purim, just like Hashem’s name, is hidden among the mundane and routine events. One can only recognize Hashem’s hand in retrospection. However, while the events were going on many

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were wondering how or if the Jewish people are going to survive Haman's decree of the original holocaust. The Book of Esther's message, just like that of Chanukah, is that we have to recognize the hidden miracles of our everyday lives. We have to look for the א, miracles, סתר, hidden, in our days [א + סתר = אסתר].

As mentioned above, the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* served a different and a unique purpose. *Maharal* explains that the miracles of the ten plagues parallel the ten statements of creation in a reverse order. The *asarah maamaros* are the words of Hashem that created the world; they are the creation of laws of nature. With every utterance Hashem created a veil of nature that would hide Him. Every *makkah* paralleled the *asarah maamaros* in reverse order, and one by one, removed the layers of nature that covered Hashem's presence, until after the tenth and final *makkah* when Hashem's presence as the Creator of the World was felt. As it says in the *Chumash* that Hashem told Moshe prior to the makkos that He will make a mockery of the *Mitzrim* (to be told to future generations) and the whole world will know that "I am Hashem." That Hashem is G-d and the Creator of all, not the sun, not the stars, not Pharaoh. After the ten plagues the Jewish people, *Mitzrim* and the whole world knew that Hashem is G-d.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This idea is elaborated upon in great detail in our contribution to the Addendum.

## The Mouth Talks

### Moshe Rock

There is a well-known *remez* that the name of the holiday, Pesach, can be split into two words: *peh* and *sach*, meaning “the mouth that talks.” It is on Pesach that we have a special mitzvah during the Seder to talk as much as we can about the *nissim* and *niflaos* that occurred in Egypt.

But there is another, more common place, where we find the phrase that the mouth talks. Before we begin *Shemoneh Esrei*, we recite the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 51:17): ה' שִׁפְתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ, *Hashem, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.* We say this at least three times a day, but what does it really mean? If we look at this a little closer, it begs a question. The words ה' שִׁפְתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ literally mean my **mouth** will declare your praise. But is the mouth truly doing anything? Wouldn't it make more sense to say “With my mouth **I** will declare your praise”? Or leave the mouth out altogether and just say “I will declare your praise.” In fact, by Minchah and Mussaf, prior to ה' שִׁפְתַי תִּפְתָּח, we say (*Devarim*32:3): כִּי יִשָּׂא ה' אֶקְרָא, *When I call out the Name of Hashem...* We don't say “my mouth” will call out. So why here do we say my **mouth** will declare your praise?

There are many other times in *Tehillim* and davening where we discuss a part of the body that is doing an action, but it doesn't list the part of the body, like we do here with the mouth. For example, there is a very similar *pasuk* that states (*Tehillim* 142:3): אֶשְׂפֹךְ לְפָנָיו שִׁחִי צָרָתִי לְפָנָיו אֶגִּיד, *I pour out my talk before Him, my distress I declare before Him.* That *pasuk* does not state

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## Section IV: The Seder

“My mouth declares my distress.” It says simply, “I declare my distress.” Another example (ibid. 30: 2): אָרוּמְמָךְ ה' בִּי דְלִיטָנִי, *I will exalt You, Hashem*. Not “my mouth will exalt...”

And the same is true for other actions we perform. The *pesukim* just say what we are doing; they do not mention the part of the body that does it. For example (ibid. 5:8): וְאָנִי בָרָב חֲסִדֶיךָ אֲבוֹא בְיַתְךָ, אֲשַׁתְּחִנָּה אֶל הַיְכָל קִדְשֶׁךָ בִּירְאֲתֶךָ, *I, through Your abundant kindness will enter Your house; I will prostrate myself toward Your Holy Sanctuary in awe of You*. It doesn't say that my feet will enter the house; my back will prostrate itself, etc. Why then does this *pasuk* with which we begin Shemoneh Esrei say that our mouth will declare the praise?

To understand a possible explanation of what else can be meant by “my mouth declaring the praise” let's look at the *tefillah* of *Modim*. *I give thanks...for Your nissim that are with us every day, and for Your niflaos and Your goodness at all times, in the evening, morning, and afternoon*. So we see that *nissim* and *niflaos* happen to us every single day, *at all times*. The Chazal say that *nissim* refer to miracles that are performed for every single *yid* on a daily basis, and *niflaos* refer to the wonders that Hashem has in place, such as the functions of our body.

I will quote a paragraph from *Pathway to Prayer (Modim ד"ה ועל* (נפלאותיך):

*A person should appreciate the eyes with which he is reading this. Without eyesight our lives would be extremely difficult and not very pleasurable. And the eye is one of the most wondrous organs. The eye can move to see all around and adjusts its opening according to the light, to let you see in very dim light*

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*and in very bright light. A stereo focusing system automatically adjusts the eyes to let you see things that are far away and very close-up with maximum image sharpness; and a sophisticated image-enhancer clarifies tiny blurs in our vision caused by motion or darkness. And what is most amazing is that in each eye there are over 137 million light-sensitive receptor cells crammed into less than one square inch of the retina – sending messages to the brain at about 300 m.p.h. – to let you see the whole picture in detail and in color – instantly.*

I need to repeat, 137 million light-sensitive receptor cells crammed into less than one square inch of the retina – sending messages to the brain at about 300 m.p.h. And that is just how the eye works. What about the brain? Our fingers? Our heart?

Do we ever stop to think about the miraculous shell that we walk around in every day of our lives? The intricacy that goes into allowing us to walk, talk, hear, see, think, feel, smell. The list goes on. If humans tried to design even one of those abilities, it would be the most complex design that would still pale to what the body is, and yet we are the living product of an entire system that is so sophisticated, containing multiple interrelated units of pure miraculous design.

*V'al niflaosecha.* The wonders of our body. Our vocal cords, our wind-pipe, our lungs. What are lungs? I go to work five days a week. I process that I am taking my lunch, I process that I am taking my supplies. Do I process that I am taking my lungs? Again, *Pathway to Prayer* (ibid.) explains:

*We all know that the thing that life needs most, and constantly, is oxygen. We are, however, quite unaware of what we do with the*

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*oxygen once we have it. Many people think that one inhales the oxygen into a balloon-like organ, called a lung, and then exhales it. Really, the lungs are not at all like a balloon, but rather like a sponge with over 300 million tiny air sacs, called alveoli, that if flattened out would cover about 600 square feet (about the size of half a tennis-court)! All in the area of your ribcage!... What we breathed in is not the same as what we breath out, rather a miraculous chemical exchange has taken place, all automatically, in the span of a second! And this takes place 16 times a minute - more while you're exercising - over 8 million times a year!!*

*No wonder that the Sages exhort us that for each and every breath one takes, he must praise the Creator. The more one understands the wonder of this most vital function of the body, greater, and more heartfelt, his praise will be.”*

Now, with all of this we can begin to understand what is meant by “My mouth declares Your praises.” Talking is something we do a lot of during any day. Being able to say what we want seems simple and doesn't take a lot of work or thought. But, in order to speak well enough for people to understand us and hear what we have to say takes the control of air from our lungs (for the air supply), our vocal folds (to make vocal sounds), and our tongue, lips and jaw (to shape speech sounds).

So the very fact that we can even talk is a miracle of such magnitude that it is proof of Hashem's incredible abilities. Every word that comes from our mouth is in fact praise to what HE has created. So in fact it is exactly our mouth that is giving the praise. Not just the simple explanation that from my mouth I will say words of praise to Hashem, but that everything that it takes

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for our mouths to be able to produce sound is *in and of itself* the praise. That is what is meant by our mouth will declare your praise. That if Hashem uses His power to open our lips, then the resulting sound from our mouths will be the testimony to the wonders of Hashem.<sup>1</sup>

### Practical application:

Reading about some of these wonders of our body and internalizing it can begin to give us a glimpse of what Hashem has formed. It might be nice to pause at *v'al niflaosecha*, in *Modim*, and just inhale deeply, filling our lungs, as a way of being *makir* what Hashem does for us.

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<sup>1</sup> With this explanation we can perhaps explain the same anomaly in another well-know *pasuk*. We conclude *Ashrei* with (*Tehillim* 145:21): תְּהַלֵּלֵת ה' יִדְבָּר פִּי, *May my mouth declare the praise of Hashem*. There we have it again – the mouth is doing the praising. But the answer can be the same. When we have completed our praise of Hashem from *alef* to *tav* in our *Ashrei*, we can truly say that the very opening of our mouths constituted the praise of Hashem.

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## Gideon and the Pesach Seder <sup>1</sup>

### Chaim Sugar

The sixth *perek* of *Sefer Shoftim* begins with the domination of the Bnei Yisrael by Midyan. When the Bnei Yisrael cry out to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for help, Hashem selects Gideon to save Klal Yisrael. And *pasuk* 12 states that a *malach* appears to Gideon and tells him, “The Lord is with you.” *Pasuk* 13 displays Gideon’s reluctance to believe that Hashem is with the Bnei Yisrael, as Gideon says, “And where are all His wonders that our forefathers told us, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us.”

*Rashi* tells us that this event took place on Pesach, and when Gideon said “that our forefathers told us,” he was referring to the Seder he had with his father the previous night. Gideon heard his father recite the section of Hallel that proclaims “*Betzeis Yisrael MjMitrayim* [When Yisrael went out from Egypt].” However, Gideon tells the *malach* that Hashem has now forsaken us.

This *Rashi* subtly explains a very fascinating concept. Gideon’s father, Yoash, was a strong believer in the idolatry of the *Baal*. He had his own backyard *Baal* altar, and he spent seven years fattening oxen to sacrifice on that alter (see *Rashi* to *pasuk* 25). Yet, despite these beliefs, Yoash still held a Seder with his children and family. Even more fascinating than Yoash’s production of a Seder is the attention paid by Gideon to what his father taught at the Seder, as evident by Gideon’s quoting his

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<sup>1</sup> The following *dvar Torah* was heard from HaRav Yisroel Dovid Schleisinger, shlit”a.

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father's words to the Malech on the following day. Can we imagine such a thing happening? Gideon, chosen by Hashem to save the Bnei Yisrael from Midyan, is quoting to a *malach* the sayings of a major *Baal* worshiper.

The authorship of the Hagadah has been debated by many of our great Sages, some attributing its authorship to Eliyahu HaNavi. But what is undeniable is that majority of the Hagadah is written in Hebrew with *Ha Lachma Anya* at the start of the Hagadah and *Chad Gadya* at the end of the Hagadah composed in Aramaic. Why would the sections that open and close the Hagadah be composed in Aramaic and not in Hebrew?

The same response answers this question and explains why Yoash's statements at the Seder were remembered by Gideon. Imagine you work for a major Fortune 500 company. You work hard for the company and you invite the CEO to your home for dinner one night. For weeks before the night of the dinner, your entire family is involved in its preparation. The table will be set with the finest dishes and cutlery, and the food and drink will be specially prepared for the evening's event. There will even be especially comfortable chairs for all attendants of the dinner.

The evening finally arrives, and the CEO, accompanied by his entourage, reaches your door. Everybody speaks the same language, but you and the CEO are also fluent in a language that is foreign to all the other guests. Now here he is. Here is the man you have worked for for all of these years, this man who can help shape your future. He is seated comfortably in your dining room, eating scrumptious food and drinking fine wine. What a wonderful mood he is in. And you have his complete, undivided attention. You are presented with an opportunity to

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talk to him about your hopes, dreams, and needs. And you might even request his help in accomplishing them. What you say and how you act on this night will be watched closely by your wife and children and will leave a lasting impression on all of them. When your guests first arrive, warm greetings are exchanged among the entire party. But as the guests are seated, you make a small statement in the language that only you and the CEO can understand, creating a special camaraderie between you and the guest of honor. Again, as the evening is ending, just before everybody leaves, you send a special message to the CEO in your shared language.

Now back to our – and Yoash’s – Seder. Each and every Jew has a special guest at his Seder, a guest that the *neshamah* recognizes no matter how unaware the host is of the guest’s presence. The special guest is, not the CEO of a large firm, but HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Who visits us accompanied by his *malachim*. He visits us in our homes and sits at our dining room tables. On some level we know and feel His presence, and our children can sense it, too. As the Gemara tells us (*Shabbos* 12b): *Malachim* do not understand Aramaic. So, when our special guest enters our home and as He leaves, we send a special message in a language that only He, and not His *Malachim*, understands. And throughout the Seder night, our children are watching us and developing lasting memories – as did Gideon – of how their father is relating to this very special guest. Everything we do and say that night, in the presence of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, will make an indelible impression on our children.

## **The Avos: Pesach, Matzah, Maror**

### **Dr. Eli Lazar Singman**

Pesach is the season of renewal for the Jewish people. Indeed, the first Pesach heralded the creation of the Jewish people as an individual nation. It was on Pesach that Avraham learned that he would father our nation. It was on Pesach that Yitzchak was born. Therefore it seems that Pesach is an opportunity to discuss creation and renewal. In the following, we will present renewal as it pertains directly to our Avos – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov/Yisrael.

The Gemara in *Avodah Zarah* (5a) indicates that there are social and physical states in which a living person may be considered as dead. These include extreme poverty, blindness and childlessness (also *tzaraas* but that is not germane to this discussion). It is notable that the Avos were each affected by these states. Avraham Avinu was childless; Yitzchak Avinu went blind and Yaakov Avinu suffered extreme poverty. However, the denouement of their respective lives was quite different. Let's take one at a time.

(1) Avraham was Avram when he fathered Yishmael with his concubine, Hagar (*Bereishis* 16:4). Despite that, he was considered childless. This is indicated when Hashem renamed Avram to Avraham (*Bereishis* 17:3-8) and that changed his mazel, permitting him to conceive with Sarah. In these passages, Hashem made it clear that it was through the son of Avraham and Sarah that the Jewish people will inherit the land of Canaan. Further, the Torah states later that Hashem told Avraham

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“through Yitzchak you will be said to have offspring (ibid. 21:12), and that “Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak” (ibid. 25:5).

(2) Yitzchak went blind but he never recovered from this. *Mei'am Loez* (*Bereisis* Vol. II, p. 486) lists nine reasons why this occurred:

1. The smoke from the incense burned by Eisav's wives injured Yitzchak's eyes.
  2. Yitzchak prayed that people should suffer to atone for sins and his suffering was a loss of eyesight.
  3. He gazed at the face of Eisav who was a *rasha*; this damaged his eyes.
  4. Yitzchak accepted Eisav's bribery of delicacies and bribery blinds.
  5. Hashem needed Yitzchak to be blind so Yaakov could receive his blessing.
  6. Avimelech cursed Avraham, believing he was tricked into thinking Sarah was Avraham's sister; that curse was that Avraham's son should go blind.
  7. Hashem blinded Yitzchak so he would not see Eisav's evil acts and also so that he could not leave the house and walk with Eisav; this avoided people from pointing Yitzchak out as the father of a *rasha*.
  8. The angels wept into Yitzchak's eyes when he was bound upon the altar. This weakened his eyesight.
  9. During the *akeidah*, Yitzchak gazed at the *Shechinah* rather than closing his eyes. Although Hashem told Moshe that “man shall not see Me and live” (*Shemos* 33:20), he did not kill Yitzchak so as not to aggrieve Avraham; instead he made him blind, another form of death.
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(3) Yaakov's mother Rivka told him to flee from Eisav after their plan successfully diverted the blessing Yitzchak planned for Eisav to Yaakov. (*Bereishis* 27:43-45). *Mei'am Loetz* (*Bereishis*. Vol. IIIa, p.6) explains that when Yaakov was leaving Be'er Sheva, he was pursued by Eliphaz, Eisav's son. Eliphaz was instructed by Eisav to kill Yaakov. However, Eliphaz loved Yaakov and was hesitant to kill him. Yaakov suggested that Eliphaz take all his possessions "since when a man is destitute it is as if he were dead." We know that Hashem guided and protected Yaakov while he lived with Lavan and became tremendously wealthy. Notably, when Yaakov went to retrieve some of the possessions that made him wealthy, he met with Eisav's angel and wrestled him all night (*ibid.* 32:24). This encounter led to Yaakov earning a new name, i.e., Yisrael.

A number of questions can be posed from these three situations:

1. Why did the Avos all suffer the equivalent of a *din* of death?
2. Why did Avraham and Yaakov receive a reprieve and full recovery, but not Yitzchak?
3. Was the change in name necessary for the reprieve Avraham and Yaakov received?
4. Is there a link between Pesach and the particular challenges of childlessness for Avraham, blindness for Yitzchak and poverty for Yaakov?

Discussing these questions:

1. Perhaps the first question is phrased prejudicially? Hashem loves the *tefillos* of *tzaddikim*; by creating Avram as a person unable to conceive, He was able to prompt him to pray for



children. In addition, this gave Hashem the opportunity to show how nature is subordinate to him and how the *mazalos* do not govern our nation. We already discussed why Yitzchak went blind and how it was punishment for gazing at the *Shechinah*. As for Yaakov, we must remember that at face value, he was guilty of fooling Yitzchak, his blind father; Yaakov literally put a stumbling block in front of a blind man. Although the Torah was not yet given, perhaps Yaakov was punished with extreme poverty because a tzaddik is judged with a razor's edge.

2. It is interesting to note that Yitzchak never requested to see again. Avraham specifically made it clear that he wanted children (ibid. 15:2-5). Yaakov specifically asked for material support when he vowed saying (ibid. 28:20-21): *If Hashem will be with me, if He will protect me on the path that I am taking, if He gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear...* Perhaps if Yitzchak would have asked for his eyesight to return, Hashem would have healed him. Is it possible that Yitzchak, the paradigm of strength, wanted to accept the terrifying burden of blindness?

3. We know that the name change from Avram to Avraham (and Sarai to Sarah) was part of the process by which Avraham was fundamentally changed and able to conceive with Sarah. However, Yaakov became fabulously wealthy before his name change; in fact he had “everything” (ibid. 33:11). *Mei'am Loez* (*Bereishis* Vol IIIa, p. 139) remarks that there are a few different reasons for Yaakov's new name. First, the name hints that Yaakov struggled with a divine being and overcame it. Second, while the name Yaakov hints at “going behind people's backs,” i.e., trickery, the name Yisrael can spell out “Hashem's honest man,” thereby confirming that Yaakov is indeed honest. Finally,

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a change in name can help annul a decree. It was possible that there was a decree that Eisav might kill Yaakov when they met. However, there would be no decree that Eisav would kill someone named Yisrael, so Yaakov/Yisrael would be safe in Canaan. Clearly, the name change that Yaakov received seems to be vital to his continued success as he moved back to Canaan.

Finally, it should be mentioned that Avram and Yaakov were named by their parents while Yitzchak was named by Hashem. Because of this, no change to Yitzchak's name would be necessary or even appropriate.

4. It should be noted that the *Maharal* of Prague (Hagaddah of the Maharal of Prague, p. 19) likened the Avos to the *pesach korban* (Avraham), the matzah (Yitzchak), and the maror (Yaakov).

a. *Pesach korban*: The plague of the death of the first born was brought about by Hashem himself, rather than an angel. This plague was so severe that, unlike the other plagues, even the Jews needed protection. That protection came in the form of the *pesach korban* and the smearing of the blood of that *korban* on the doorways of the Jewish homes. The *pesach korban* brought the Jews so close to Hashem that he could take them for Himself as his nation, thereby affording them protection. The Aramaic translation of the word *pesach* is "*chayas*" (*Shemos* 12:11, 13,27), which means mercy or caring. It is this character trait that we associate with Avraham; the *pesach korban* reminds us at the Pesach Seder of Hashem's mercy toward us during the plague of the firstborn. I believe it is reasonable to suggest that the *pesach korban* undergoes a fundamental change, specifically an elevation in holiness. It starts as a lamb, a physical entity in this

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world, and ends as a *korban*, an entity that transcends into the world of the spiritual. This parallels the fundamental elevation in holiness that occurred to Avram when he became Avraham.

b. *Matzah*: The matzah at the seder table represents our freedom from Egyptian servitude – i.e., “because you went out of Egypt in great haste” (*Devarim* 16:3), and “remember the day you went out of Egypt, from the house of slavery, because he took you out with a strong hand, do not eat *chametz*” (*Shemos* 13:3). Notably, any huge undertaking that can be accomplished quickly requires great strength. That strength was provided by Hashem’s “strong hand.” So matzah represents strength, the character trait personified by Yitzchak. I believe it is reasonable to suggest that like Yitzchak, the matzah does *not* undergo the fundamental change that leavening brings when we turn flour to bread. On the contrary, we purposely take flour and simply char it a bit and it is finished matzah.

c. *Maror*: The bitter herbs symbolize the bitterness of Egyptian servitude. Bitterness certainly symbolizes Yaakov’s life, who himself described it to Pharaoh as such – “few and bad have been the days of the years of my life” (*Bereishis* 47:9). Those bitter days tested Yaakov as they tested Hashem’s nation in Egypt and continued to test his nation with each *galus*. The truth is that the bitter times are for the good, even though we often have great difficulty understanding that truth. Yaakov, the pillar of truth, is therefore associated with the bitter herbs, the reminder that in truth, all our trials are for our good. As with Yaakov, a fundamental change is associated with the bitter herbs. The bitterness they represent will ultimately be transformed to unparalleled *simchah* with the coming of Mashiach. Although this change has not yet occurred, it is one of

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the basic tenets of our faith. Just as Yaakov sometimes is called Yaakov and other at times is called Yisrael, the bitter times can ease and worsen. Ultimately, when Mashiach comes, the ***permanent*** change will occur and there will be only Yisrael.

As with any discussion of our Torah, we see that connections can exist between what appear to be disparate concepts. The lives and trials of the Avos are intimately tied to us, to Pesach and to each other. Just as we daven in *Shemonei Esrei* that the merit of the Avos should protect us, we continually hope that in their *zechus* we should all see an end to our *galus* soon.

## ***Charoses: Why Does It Taste So Good?***

**David Kaye**

Last year I started thinking about the Seder plate and what each item represents. I came to the *charoses* and I had a question. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 116a; see also *Rama* 473:5) gives two reasons for the *charoses*: (1) It contains apples to represent the apple trees under which the Jewish women in Egypt miraculously gave birth without pain; (2) it is made thick to represent the mortar used to construct the buildings during the Egyptian slavery.

Now according to the second reason, why do we make the *charoses* so sweet? To make the question stronger, the Midrash states that the Egyptian taskmasters would throw Jewish children in the brick molds if the Jews did not fulfill their daily quotas of producing mortar. So to commemorate this terrible tragedy we make a deliciously sweet condiment called *charoses*? We even always make extra because everyone wants to eat more after the maror has been dipped into it.

I asked Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein this question. We learned the following Midrash, cited by *Mei'am Loez*, to understand why the *charoses* tastes so good: As the Mitzrim were approaching Bnei Yisrael at the Yam, Moshe was davening to Hashem. Hashem had already made clear His plans to destroy the Mitzrim. But the *sar* [i.e. spiritual minister] of the Mitzrim said to Hashem. "Wait! You cannot kill all the Egyptians because according to Your own Torah they are not subject to death. Even though they killed the Jewish boys, they did so under the orders of the king and they feared for their lives if they did not obey." Hashem

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turned to Michael and Gavriel for their opinion. They both took off and headed back to Mitzrayim and found a brick in which a Jewish baby was entombed. They brought it back to Heavenly court and turned to the *sar* of Egypt, saying: “You are correct! If the Mitzrim had only been following Pharaoh’s orders they would not be subject to death.” But he then showed Hashem and the *sar* the crushed baby, claiming that this was not part of Pharaoh’s orders. The *sar* had no answer, and Hashem confirmed that the Mitzrim would be drowned at sea.

So although on the surface, the bricks formed during the Egyptian exile seem so awful and repulsive, in retrospect they were one of the greatest things that the Mitzrim did to us. For that sealed their fate – and our final redemption. We can now understand that the *charoses* is sweet to remind us that, yes, it was bitter; but we should look at everything that happens to us as *gam zu letovah*. The worst tragedy became the source of our greatest victory.

## The Egg at the Seder

### Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

Most of us are familiar with the sight of a charred egg on our Seder plate and then another egg floating in salt water at the beginning of the Seder meal, שלחן עורך. In this article, I would like to explore the various and varying reasons for these customs.

#### The egg on the Seder plate

Let us begin with the custom of placing an egg on the Seder plate. The Mishnah in *Pesachim* describing the Seder states (114a):

הביאו לפניו מצה וחרוסת ושני תבשילין — **They brought before him matzah, lettuce, charoses, and two cooked dishes...**  
ובמקדש היו מביאין לפניו גופו של פסח — **And in the Temple era, they would bring before him the body of the *pesach* offering.**

The Gemara (114b) gives various possibilities for the two cooked dishes: Rav Huna said to use rice and beets. Chizkiyah said one could use a fish with egg smeared on it. And Rav Yosef argued that two types of cooked meat are required, one to commemorate the *pesach* offering and one to commemorate the *chagigah*. Ravina concludes there that even a meat bone with its broth constitutes two cooked meat dishes.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (473:4) writes that the custom is to use meat and an egg as the commemoration of the *pesach* and *chagigah* offerings. Now this seems strange because if these two dishes are needed to commemorate the two offerings, we should need to use meat like Rav Yosef said. Why should we use meat

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and an egg? The *Mishnah Berurah* (473:23) answers at first that it would certainly be preferable to use two meat dishes. The *Shulchan Aruch* is only stating that one may also fulfill this custom with an egg, because it is no worse than using broth for the commemoration of the *chagigah* [as Ravina concludes was proper]. According to this, our use of an egg seems to be only a second choice [בדיעבד].

However, *Mishnah Berurah* subsequently offers two reasons (from *Kol Bo* §50) for why it is even preferable to use an egg as one of the two dishes. First, the Aramaic word for an egg is *bei'ah* [ביעא]. And that word means “request”; we thus request that Hashem redeem us from our exile.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, eggs are symbolic of mourning; and we want to demonstrate our sadness for the loss of the Beis HaMikdash, which prevents us from offering the *pesach*.<sup>2</sup>

### **How to prepare the egg**

Since the two cooked dishes are commemorating the *pesach* and *chagigah* offerings, *Rabbeinu Chananel* maintains that the two dishes must be prepared just as these sacrifices were. Hence, the meat commemorating the *pesach* offering should be roasted since that offering had to be roasted, while the meat commemorating the *chagigah* can be cooked since that offering

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<sup>1</sup> *Maharil* gives this reason in his explanation for the custom of eating eggs at the beginning of the meal.

<sup>2</sup> *R' Moshe z"l* (*Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim* Vol. I §156) warns us not to make the mistake that this reasoning replaces the reason of the Gemara to have a commemoration of the *chagigah* offering. Rather, these are reasons why the *chagigah* offering is commemorated specifically with an egg, and not with actual meat.



could be cooked rather than roasted. This is the source of the *Shulchan Aruch's* statement (ibid.) that the custom is for the shankbone<sup>3</sup> meat be roasted (in commemoration of the *pesach*), while the egg is cooked (in commemoration of the *chagigah*). The *Rama*, though, writes that the egg may be roasted, and that was the custom in his city. This is so because even though the *chagigah* does not have to be roasted, it may be roasted; so there is nothing wrong with roasting the egg as well.<sup>4</sup>

But this leads to another issue: What do we do with these two dishes? For there is a well-known Mishnah in *Pesachim* that states (53a):

מקום ששנהגו לאכול צלי בלילי פסחים — In a place where [the people] follow the custom to eat roast on the nights of Pesach, אין אוכלין — we may eat it. מקום ששנהגו שלא לאכול — In a place where [the people] follow the custom not to eat roast on the nights of Pesach, אין אוכלין — we may not eat it because it appears like one is eating the *pesach* offering outside Yerushalayim.

Ashkenazim have accepted the custom not to eat roast on Pesach night (*Tur* §476), but the question arises as to how far this custom goes? Does it apply only to meat, which could be

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<sup>3</sup> *Mishnah Berurah* (473:27, based on *Kol Bo* ibid.) writes that the custom is to use a shankbone [זרוע] to remember Hashem's outstretched arm [זרוע נטויה] in Egypt. But it should have meat on it since it is replacing the meat of the *pesach* offering.

<sup>4</sup> *Tosafos*, though, argue that the halachah is in accordance with the view that the *chagigah* offering *must* be eaten roasted and conclude that both meat dishes should be cooked and not roasted, since that is the simple meaning of the Mishnah's term תבשילין.

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confused with the *pesach* offering? Or does it apply to other foods, as well?

This question is addressed by the *Yerushalmi* there in a conversation between R' Ba and R' Imi. R' Ba asked R' Imi, since the *pesach* offering is brought only from a lamb or a goat, is it permitted for us to eat a roasted calf on Pesach night? R' Imi replied that it is forbidden. R' Ba asked further: Does the custom apply to poultry, which is less likely to be confused with meat of a lamb or goat? R' Imi again answered in the affirmative. The *Yerushalmi* then comments that they thought the custom should apply even to a roasted egg. But R' Yudan the son of R' Chanin concluded that it applies only to meat of an animal or a bird. This conclusion is accepted by *Shulchan Aruch* (476:3) as the halachah for those who follow the custom of not eating roast on Pesach night.<sup>5</sup>

According to this conclusion, it is prohibited to eat the roasted shankbone on the night of the Seder, but it permitted to eat the egg — even if it is roasted (*Mishnah Berurah* 473:32, citing *Taz*).<sup>6</sup> However, *Bach* (loc cit.) reports that the custom of Ashkenaz is not to eat the egg because we do not eat even a roasted egg on the night of the Seder. *Alei Tamar* suggests that this custom originated from people acting stringently since the

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<sup>5</sup> *Tur* cites the *Avi Ezri*, who reports that he saw people who would eat roasted poultry on the Seder night; but according to the *Yerushalmi* that is certainly forbidden. *Alei Tamar* suggests that the custom might have originated from the fact that R' Ba in this *Yerushalmi* thought that the custom might not apply to poultry.

<sup>6</sup> See there for how this affects whether or not these foods may be prepared on Yom Tov if it was not done beforehand.

*Yerushalmi* at first wanted to say that the custom not to eat roast on Seder night applies even to eggs.<sup>7</sup>

### **Eggs during the meal**

The *Rama* (476:2) writes that there is a custom in some places to eat eggs during the Seder meal to commemorate mourning. The *Rama* adds that the reason we would think about mourning on this joyous night is because Tishah B'Av falls out on the same day of the week as the first night of Pesach, and also to feel the sorrow that we cannot bring the *pesach* offering while we are in exile.<sup>8</sup>

However, *Beur HaGra* gives a different reason for eating eggs during the Seder meal. He writes that since the egg commemorates the *chagigah* offering that would be eaten at the night during the time of the Beis HaMikdash, we should also eat it. And *Mishnah Berurah* points out (476:11) that according to this reason it is best to eat the egg that is on the Seder plate, not other eggs. And if you ask why then should we not eat the shankbone to commemorate the *pesach* offering? *Beur HaGra* himself explains that it is because the shankbone is roasted and it is forbidden to eat roasted meat (according to our custom) on Seder night; and to commemorate the *pesach* offering, we will

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<sup>7</sup> *VaYageid Moshe* (27:7) cites another reason not to eat that egg: The Seder plate should remain intact through the conclusion of the Seder. (See there 17:22 for various views about this concept.)

<sup>8</sup> *Chok Yaakov* (cited by *Mishnah Berurah* 476:13) notes that according to the first reason there would be no reason to eat eggs on the second night of Pesach because it is not the same day as *Tishah B'Av*, whereas according to the second reason we are missing the *pesach* offering the second night as well.

eat the *afikomen* at the end of the meal.

*R' Shlomo Brevda z"l* (cited in *Maaseh Rav* §191, 5769 ed.) adds that according to this reason of the *Gra z"l* we can understand why we eat the eggs at the *beginning* of the meal. This is so because the halachah is that the *chagigah* is supposed to be eaten in the beginning of the meal (see *Rambam* 8:7). Since the egg commemorates the *chagigah*, it too should be eaten at the beginning. But according to *Rama's* reason that it is associated with mourning the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, it may be eaten at any time during the meal.<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly enough, we have record of why the *Gra z"l* gave a different reason for the custom of eating eggs than the *Rama*. He says (see *Maaseh Rav* *ibid.*) that G-d forbid we should mention the mourning of Tishah B'Av on Pesach. Therefore, since we cannot be eating the egg out of mourning, it must be to commemorate the *chagigah*.<sup>10</sup>

So how do we defend the *Rama* and the other commentators who do say that we eat the egg to commemorate the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash? The *Beis HaLevi (Parshas Bo)* writes that

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<sup>9</sup> See *VaYagei Moshe* 27:4 for other views regarding whether the egg should be eaten at the beginning of the meal. And see there, 27:2, for yet other reasons for the custom of eating the eggs.

<sup>10</sup> See the *Miluim* there, which cites *Hagadas Zera Gad*, who writes that according to this reasoning, the custom to wear a *kittel* at the Seder cannot be based on the reason of the *Taz* (472:3) that it is to remind us of death so we will not get carried away with the joy of the Yom Tov. For if we cannot think about the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash at the Seder, we should not be thinking about death either. See there for other possible reasons that we wear a *kittel* according to the *Gra*.

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## Section IV: The Seder

Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim before the final *tikun* there was completed. And that is why we still have to undergo other exiles – to complete what was not accomplished in Mitzrayim. This concept is symbolized by Tishah B'Av, the day of our exile. It is therefore understandable that during our Pesach Seder, commemorating the exodus from Mitzrayim, we remind ourselves that because this redemption was accelerated we have the exiles of Tishah B'Av to deal with. And instead of that being a depressing thought, it should give us *chizuk* about all the predictions of the times of Mashiach. As we continue the process of completing what needs to be accomplished in our exile, we can await with confidence the coming of our Mashiach, במהרה, בימינו אמן.

## **Bread of Affliction or Bread of Redemption?**

**Rabbi Moshe Grossman**

The Hagadah at the end of *maggid* brings the following Mishnah from *Pesachim*. Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever has not explained these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation: the Pesach sacrifice, matzah, and maror. Rabban Gamliel then explains the reason for each of these things. In reference to matzah, he tells us that the matzah that we eat at the Seder is to remind us that the redemption of our forefathers in Egypt happened so quickly that the dough they had prepared in Egypt did not have time to rise before Hashem took them out. As proof of this explanation, Rabban Gamliel quotes the *pasuk* in *Shemos* (12:39): *They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into matzahs because they were driven out of Egypt and were not able to tarry and also provisions for the way they did not prepare.*

In *Devarim* (16:3), the Torah tells us: *You shall not eat chametz with it* (i.e. the korban Pesach); *for seven days you shall eat matzah, the bread of affliction, for in haste you went out of the land of Egypt, in order that you remember the day of your going out of Egypt all the days of your life.*

This *pasuk* relates another aspect of matzah, namely that it is the bread of affliction. Based on Rabban Gamliel's statement in the Mishnah, we need not mention this aspect of matzah to fulfill the mitzvah of *maggid*. However, *Rashi* explains that the requirement to eat matzah, the bread of affliction, is to remind us

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## Section V: The Hagadah

of the oppression to which we were subjected in Egypt. He explains the words “for in haste you went out of Egypt” to refer to the fact that the dough did not have time to rise before the Jews left Egypt because the Egyptians forced them out before it could rise. *Rashi* is saying that the “affliction” to which the *pasuk* is referring includes the affliction of being forced out of Egypt by the Egyptians before the dough could rise. If this is the case, how can Rabban Gamliel say that the matzah is to remind us of the haste with which Hashem took us out? The “haste” refers to the forceful expulsion of our forefathers by the Egyptians!

The *Gur Aryeh* on this *Rashi* provides an answer. He explains that Hashem had specifically wanted the Egyptians to force us to leave. Hashem had laid waste to Egypt through the *makkos*. If He had led the Jews out in the sadness, confusion, and terror following *makkas bechoros*, they might think that they had left Egypt on their own volition taking advantage of the situation. Such an attitude would lessen their appreciation that Hashem was the One Who took them out. Instead, Hashem caused Pharaoh himself and all the Egyptians to forcefully drive out the Jewish people with such haste that they did not even have time to let their dough rise. The Jewish people understood clearly that such a bizarre twist of attitude in the Egyptians from absolutely refusing to let them go to driving them out could only be through the hand of Hashem. They received a boost in their *emunah* and in their appreciation of Hashem’s *hashgachah* from this event.

But didn’t the Jewish people see the ten *makkos*? Didn’t they witness all the *nissim* and *niflaos* that Hashem did for them to bring Egypt to its knees and let them go? How could they think for one moment that they were leaving of their own volition?

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I think that the answer is that it is difficult for us to accept that we are powerless in a situation and must totally rely on others. If we do not clearly see Hashem's *hashgachah* in every detail, we can easily mislead ourselves into thinking that we had a part in the outcome.

Recognition of Hashem's *hashgachah* in all our affairs is not something that comes to a person naturally. Although we intellectually believe this very strongly, it cannot penetrate to our emotions unless we work on it ourselves.

Belief in Hashem's *hashgachah* is not only a fundamental principle of our faith, it is also necessary to cultivate the proper *bitachon* in Hashem. The *Chovos HaLevovos* points out in *Shaar HaBitachon* that recalling and appreciating all the wondrous kindness and help that Hashem has shown us throughout our lives helps greatly in developing our *bitachon*. By carefully considering how Hashem has helped us in general and how much He has helped us in specific instances and matters will assist us in developing an emotional connection to our belief in Hashem's *hashgachah* and our *bitachon* in Hashem.



## The Purpose of the *Makkos*

**Moshe Kravetz**

We read in the Hagadah about the ten *makkos*. But why ten? Surely, Hashem could have brought about *Yitzias Mitzrayim* with two or three *makkos* – or even with one major one!

There are several ideas offered on this issue; however here is a thought that I wish to focus on. All the *makkos*, essentially, revolve around nature. Each plague either suspends or changes nature, so that everyday living goes haywire. You try to take a drink or brush your teeth, and your mouth is filled with blood. It gets dark – and stays that way for three days. Fire and ice mysteriously unite and rain down on the people. Animals that don't usually go near humans suddenly invade the homes and streets where you live. Nothing seems to work the same anymore.

Hashem is trying to make a point, to impress the Jewish people (even more than Pharaoh) with His control of the world. Hashem wants to show us that perhaps the greatest miracle is when life carries on as usual, when “normal” living remains normal. Seeing Egyptian life break down reminds us of the wondrous nature of everyday life, which we all too often take for granted.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler explains as follows: A wise person understands that an apple growing on a tree is no less miraculous than *mann* falling from the sky; that a baby being born is no less a miracle than the splitting of the sea.

## *Darchei Noam*

You don't need the sun to stand still in order to know Hashem; Hashem is in every sunrise, in each waterfall, in the wind and in the rain, if only we care to see Him there.

Another point of the *makkos*: Why did the whole freedom process and *makkos* drag on a full year? Why did it take so long? Hashem is all powerful and he could have freed them with the “blink of an eye”; so what is the whole idea of this lengthy process?

Hashem wanted to let Klal Yisrael know that He is still here, and that He was there all along, “that there is none like him in all the land.” This is a process that takes time to digest, especially when dealing with a nation that has been enslaved for such a long period of time. Someone that is born a slave, who has never known freedom for even one day in his life, is going to need time adjusting to the idea. The *makkos* proved to the world at large that Hashem is above nature, and that all beings must answer to Him, and to Him alone. The Egyptians were taught that they are not in control of anything, no matter how much they would have liked to think so. (*Sforno* actually says that the first nine *makkos* were not punishments but signs and wonders to prove “I am Hashem.”)

The Egyptians were able to enslave the Jews only because Hashem allowed it to be so, but the moment the time came for redemption, nothing would stop their departure. *Klal Yisrael* took all of this in, realizing that there is a *hasgachah* in this world. It built up their belief system, and brought them to high spiritual levels. Now, after having lived and seen a full year of *makkos* can they come to the realization that Hashem is in

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## Section V: The Hagadah

control and that there is none like him in all the land. They were finally ready to leave, and to become a nation.

The *Meshech Chochmah* proves this concept from the *pasuk* (*Shemos 7:5*): וַיִּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי ה' בְּנֹטְתִי אֶת יָדִי עַל מִצְרַיִם וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם; *Egypt shall know that I am Hashem, when I stretch out My hand over Egypt; and I shall take the Children of Israel out from among them.* The purpose of the *makkos* and miracles was to display to the world that there is one God – that Hashem is in control – and to create a Kiddush Hashem. In addition, not only did Klal Yisrael's physical bodies get redeemed, but they were redeemed from the ideology of the Mitzrim – that is why the *pasuk* says: וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם; for they were removed from the *kefirah* of Mitzrayim.

There are many times in our lives when things don't go exactly the way we planned or hoped for them to go. There are situations that are not always the most comfortable to be in. We have to know though, that Hashem is with us in whatever the situation is, and that He is holding our hands, guiding us, doing what is best for us. Even though it may be “dark,” there is always the “bright side” somewhere along the way. When we realize that we aren't in control, and we become ready to hand over the wheel to the Master Driver, we can speed away from the bitter *galus* in which we are stuck. We need to find that *emunah* in Hashem “that there is none like Him in all the land.” He is our father and our king, and He wants to bestow upon us the greatest gifts. We just have to let Him!

## ***Safek Muchan* on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Yom Tov<sup>1</sup>**

**Yossi Dixler**

On Yom Tov there is a rule that requires all things – both food and objects – to be usable at the start of Yom Tov in order to then use them on Yom Tov. If something is not usable at the start, it is considered *muktzeh* and cannot even be moved for the entire Yom Tov. For example, an apple on the table when Yom Tov starts is permitted to be eaten, but an apple still attached to a tree when Yom Tov starts is forbidden to be used, even if it falls on its own to the ground. This rule also applies to the second day of Yom Tov.

This rule, which requires things to be *muchan* before Yom Tov, also applies in the case of a *safek*, or doubt. If we are not sure if an apple fell before Yom Tov or after it started, the apple is forbidden *m'safek*. This is true even though *muktzeh* is *d'rabbanan* and normally we say *safek d'rabbanon l'kula*, i.e. we are generally lenient when in doubt about a Rabbinic law.

Does this rule also apply in the case of *safek muchan* on the second day of Yom Tov? In this case the *Shulchan Aruch* rules regarding trapping (*Orach Chaim* 497:4): ספק מוכן מותר ביום טוב: שני משום דהוי ספק ספקא *A doubt of whether something is muchan is permitted on the second day of Yom Tov because it is a safek-safeka [a double-doubt].*

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<sup>1</sup> A Bar Mitzvah Pshetl.

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## Section VI: Mitzvos During Pesach

Two *safekos* are present in this case: the first one being whether the second day is really Yom Tov and the second being that we don't know when the animal was trapped.

This ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* is actually not as simple as it seems. The *Magen Avraham* (§4) questions this based on the *Shulchan Aruch's* own ruling dealing with an egg laid on the second day of Yom Tov. In that case he rules the egg is forbidden even in a situation when we don't know if it was laid, or *nolad*, on the second day of Yom Tov or before Yom Tov. This would seem to also be a case of *safek-safeka*: the first *safek* being whether the second day is really Yom Tov and the second *safek* being when the egg was laid. How can the *Shulchan Aruch* permit *safek-safeka* for the case of trapping, but not for the case of the eggs? Based on this question and others, the *Magen Avraham* rules all cases of *safek muchan* on the second day of Yom Tov are forbidden.

What logic does the *Shulchan Aruch* employ to permit a *safek-safeka* of *muchan* in a case of trapping, but to forbid *safek-safeka* of *nolad* when dealing with laid eggs? We can answer this question through the resolution of another question.

*R' Akiva Eiger* (Vol. IV § 40) was asked by his brother the following question: Does the rule of *muktzeh* apply on the second day of Yom Tov during *bein hashemashos* – the time after sundown before darkness? It would make sense to permit the use of *muktzeh* objects, which are forbidden only *d'rabban*, after sundown of the second day during the time we are unsure if it's still the day of Yom Tov or the night after Yom Tov. This should be a case of *safek-safeka* which is permitted on the

second day of Yom Tov, as the Shulchan Aruch permitted *safek-safeka* in the case of trapping.

To rule on this case, *R' Akiva Eiger* examined the difference between the use of a *succah* and *lulav* during *bein hashemashos*. While we find one is still required to eat in a *succah* during *bein hashemashos* of the eight day, a person is not required to shake a *lulav* during *bein hashemashos* of any day of Succos. As a consequence of this difference, the *succah* remains *muktzeh* through the last day of Yom Tov, but the *lulav* does not. Why is there a difference between the *succah* and *lulav*? Since both cases are a *safek-safeka* in a *mitzvah d'rabban*, we would expect a leniency in both. To strengthen the question, why is *muktzeh* ever forbidden on the second day of Yom Tov? It should be a *safek d'rabban* for which we are normally lenient.

The answer lies in the time difference between these two mitzvos. The mitzvah of *lulav* is intermittent: it's only once a day and only during the day time. In contrast, the mitzvah of *succah* is all day and all night. Because *succah* is a constant mitzvah, the rules are enforced to include even the case of a *bein hashemashos*, while for *lulav* we are lenient because the mitzvah is intermittent. In general, the rules for constant mitzvos apply all the time, even in a case of doubt such as *bein hashemashos*; so the day of Yom Tov is not divided into parts, some of which are permitted and some of which are forbidden.

Based on this logic, *R' Akiva Eiger* classifies *muktzeh* as a constant mitzvah and forbids it on the second day of Yom Tov, including during *bein hashemashos*.

## Section VI: Mitzvos During Pesach

With this principle we can explain the *Shulchan Aruch*. The case of *safek muchan* in the case of trapping is permitted on the second day of Yom Tov because trapping happens occasionally; it is not constant and regular. On the other hand, egg laying is a regular occurrence. In fact, according to Wikipedia some commercial breeds of chicken will lay over 300 eggs per year, or about one per day. A chicken coop with 24 chickens will reliably produce eggs just about every hour of the day, enough to be considered a constant occurrence. For this reason the *Shulchan Aruch* is stricter in the case of egg laying on the second day of Yom Tov, even though it's also a *safek-safeka*, although he generally permits as *safek-safeka* on the second day of Yom Tov in other cases.

## **Burning Chametz on Yom Tov: The *Rashba's* View**

### **Rabbi Yitzchak Yochanan Friedman**

The *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* (446:1) rules: המוציא חמץ בבית... ואם הוא יום טוב מחפה עליו את הכלי עד הלילה ואז יבערה *If one finds chametz in [his] house... if it is on Yom Tov, he should cover it with a vessel until night and then burn it. Rama's* gloss on that statement is: לפי שלא יוכל לטלטל ביום טוב גם לשרפו במקומו אסור *[This is so] because he is not able to move it on Yom Tov; it is also forbidden to burn it in its place.* Since the *Shulchan Aruch* does not make an exception for a case when the owner did not nullify the chametz on Pesach eve, we can infer that he is of the opinion that even in such a circumstance one is prohibited to burn chametz on the Yom Tov of Pesach.<sup>1</sup> *Shaar Hatziyun* records that the *minhag* is like the ruling we have inferred from the words of the *Shulchan Aruch*, especially since this is the ruling of the *Rambam*.<sup>2</sup> The rationale for this ruling is

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<sup>1</sup> This is the understanding of the *Magen Avraham* and many other Acharonim, as cited by the *Shaar Hatziyun*, 446:9.

<sup>2</sup> This is the understanding of the *Kesef Mishnah, Hil. Chametz U'Matzah*, 3:8. However, *Imrei Binah*, in the first essay on *Hilchos Yom Tov* (quoted in the footnotes to the MHK edition of *Rashba, Beitzah* 12a §546) claims that *Rambam* prohibits only the burning of *kodashim* on Yom Tov. However, the extinction of chametz is a much more pressing issue and is permitted on Yom Tov, according to the *Rambam*. See *Moadim U'zmanim* (3:193) who proposes that *Rambam* holds like *Tosafos* that the prohibition of burning the chametz is due to *muktzah*.

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## Section VI: Mitzvos During Pesach

already found in the *Ritva*.<sup>3</sup> He posits that any mitzvah, whose performance is not mandated for Yom Tov day, may not override the prohibition against performing *melachah* on a Yom Tov. The Gemara concludes<sup>4</sup> that the burning of the chametz should be done on the eve of Passover; hence, it is not a mitzvah that is mandated to be done specifically on the holiday.<sup>5</sup>

Rabbi Moshe Brown, in his sefer *Teivas Moshe*,<sup>6</sup> shows that there is a seemingly contradictory ruling, found in a later *siman* of the *Shulchan Aruch*. For *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 526:1, states the following regarding taking care of a deceased person on Yom Tov: שלצרכי המת התירו להלבישו ולהחם לו מים ולטהרו ולהוציאו ולשומו בקבר, *For the needs of a deceased they permitted to dress him, to warm water for him, to purify him, to take him out, and to place him in the grave.* We see that caring for the deceased overrides various prohibitions involved with those activities, and this ruling applies even if the deceased died on the eve of the holiday. This stands in contrast to the *Shulchan Aruch's* earlier ruling that a

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<sup>3</sup> *Pesachim*, 4b ד"ה תנן התם.

<sup>4</sup> *Pesachim* 5a.

<sup>5</sup> See footnotes to MHK edition of the *Rashba*, Beitzah 12a §546 where the author raises the question that the chametz need not be specifically incinerated and other methods of removal suffice to fulfill the mitzvah of תשביתו.

<sup>6</sup> In the essay in the back of the sefer entitled: שריפת חמץ ביום טוב ומתוך שהותרה לצורך.

## *Darchei Noam*

mitzvah, not specific to the Yom Tov day, does not have the power to override the prohibition of doing *melachah* on Yom Tov.

Rabbi Brown answers beautifully that the mitzvah to burn the chametz was not initiated on Yom Tov. It is yesterday's mitzvah of שריפת חמץ that was neglected and hence its performance is incumbent today. Therefore, it cannot be considered a primary need of the Yom Tov and cannot be permitted. On the other hand, today's obligation to be involved in the care of the deceased is fluid in nature. Each day has its own list of tasks that must be accomplished, if proper care is to be rendered to the deceased. Today's tasks are not necessarily similar to those of yesterday. Therefore, today's tasks most certainly are considered a primary Yom Tov need and can override the prohibition of *melachah* on Yom Tov.

The distinction that Rabbi Brown presents successfully reconciles the two seemingly contradictory rulings of the *Shulchan Aruch*. However, in researching the topic, I found an added contradiction that goes in the opposite direction.

The *Rashba*, in his Responsa (1:71), disagrees with the aforementioned *Ritva* and says that chametz that was not nullified before Pesach may be burned on Yom Tov<sup>7</sup>. However, concerning the care of the dead on Yom Tov,

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<sup>7</sup> This opinion is brought in the *Mishnah Berurah* 446:6.

## Section VI: Mitzvos During Pesach

he rules (1:22) that one is prohibited to violate Yom Tov in pursuit of that goal<sup>8</sup> — ? —

To muddy the waters even further, the *Ritva* writes in his novellae to *Pesachim* 6a (ד"ה כופין) that his teacher, the *Rashba*, prohibited the burning of *chametz* on Yom Tov, even if it had not been previously nullified! This stands in contradiction to the *Rashba's* ruling in his Responsa.

Additionally, the *Rashba* in his halachic work, *Avodas Hakodesh* (3:10), insists that the *melachah* that is done on Yom Tov be צורך היום.<sup>9</sup> He adds (ibid.) that the kindling of candles in the synagogue is considered צורך היום since without them the congregation will not gather for the holiday prayers. He equates this with the Mishnah's example of a Torah scroll, whose public reading requirement permit its transportation through the public domain. It appears that the *Rashba* would not permit the lighting of candles for private prayers. Why is that activity not worthy of צורך היום consideration if it promotes the prayers of the Yom Tov day? Does the Mishnah not permit the carrying of a lulav or shofar for an individual mitzvah performance?

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<sup>8</sup> The *Tur* brings from the *Rashba's* Rebbi, the Ramban, to also prohibit the burial of the deceased on Yom Tov. He reasons that the carrying and subsequent burial of the dead is "similar to the handling of stones"!

<sup>9</sup> The *Mishnah Berurah* (514:10) adds that lighting candles in the synagogue is permitted even by day since it is an honor for the Divine Presence. He marshals the verse, כבדו את ה' באורים, כבודו את ה' באורים.

In his novellae to *Beitzah*<sup>10</sup> *Rashba* writes that one should not use a נר של אבטלה (a candle that has no utilitarian need and serves just to bring honor to the location or owner of the light<sup>11</sup>) on Yom Tov since Rav Yochanan expressed reservations in the matter. However, *Tosafos* (ad loc. ד"ה על גבי גזלים) says that Rav Avunah who expresses a permissive view in the *Yerushalmi* would hold that since the *melachah* of *havarah* can be used for preparing food, no צורך is required even if one is not preparing food (i.e. נר של אבטלה). This is the famous principle of Beis Hillel, known as *mitoch*. If that is the case, we might see a precedent for burning the chametz on Pesach, in the view expressed by Rav Avunah in the *Yerushalmi*.<sup>12</sup> However, the *Rashba* ruled stringently like Rav Yochanan in the case of נר של אבטלה. Why did the *Rashba* feel that burning non-nullified chametz is permitted even though it is not today's mitzvah and hence not a צורך היום? Is the burning of the chametz more lenient than נר של אבטלה? Both cases should not be considered צורך היום?

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<sup>10</sup> ד"ה גדי מקולס ב 22b.

<sup>11</sup> *Rashba*, Responsa 3:277. The *Meiri*, in his novellae to *Beitzah* (12a), explains it to mean a candle that is lit without any purpose other than the individual doesn't want to be in the dark. See the *Beur Halachah's* exposition on this opinion (514:5 נר של בטלה)

<sup>12</sup> See *Ridvaz* on this piece of *Yerushalmi* (ד"ה רב יודן).

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And last but not least, the *Rashba* himself,<sup>13</sup> in response to a question of preparing wicks from one day of Yom Tov to the next, quotes the *Yerushalmi* of נר של אבטלה. He concludes that “all have come to the conclusion that candles being used, even not at the table, are permitted.” This seems to follow the lenient position of Rav Avunah. However, as cited above, the *Rashba*, in his novellae sides with the stringent view of Rav Yochanan.

To review, the questions that need to be addressed are the following:

Why is burning chametz considered צורך היום, while care of the diseased is not in the view of the *Rashba*?

Why does the *Rashba* permit the burning on Yom Tov of chametz that was not nullified, while the *Ritva* quotes him as saying that it is forbidden?

What is the *Rashba*'s basis for distinguishing (in his work, *Avodas Hakodesh*) between lighting candles for public versus private prayer?

How can the *Rashba* (in his novellae to *Beitzah*) take a stringent position on נר של אבטלה and take a lenient position (in Responsa 1:71) vis-a-vis the burning of chametz that has not been nullified?

The *Rashba*'s view in his Responsa (3:277) is lenient on the issue of נר של אבטלה in contradistinction to the stringent position taken in his novellae to *Beitzah*.

If this was a classic piece of Brisker Torah, I would probably be making a distinction between a *gavra* and a *cheftzah*. However, my distinction will be between “*gavra*” and “*gavra*.” I feel that we should distinguish

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<sup>13</sup> Responsa 3:277

between the *Rashba* as a *poseik* and the *Rashba* as a Rosh Yeshiva. The *Rashba* might have taught his *talmidim* the ideal but when it came to responding *halachah lemaaseh*, he might have taken a different position. This is not hypocritical, since *halachah lemaaseh* is not only built on study, but on precedent. The distinction between the actual *halachah lemaaseh* and the *halachah* as it emerges from the Beis HaMidrash is actually found in the *Yerushalmi* concerning the *נר של אבטלה*.

“Rav Nachum, the brother of Rav Illa asked this question (*נר של אבטלה*) to Rav Yochanan and he ruled, “Do not prohibit and do not permit” (*Yerushalmi, Beitzah 5:2, 21b*)]. The *Pnei Moshe* says that Rav Yochanan meant that one should not go over to one who is lighting a *נר של אבטלה* and tell him that the activity is forbidden, nor should he rule that it is permitted ipso facto. Now, we can understand how the *Ritva* quotes his Rebbi, the *Rashba*, as saying that burning the chametz that was not nullified is forbidden on Yom Tov, but the *Rashba* ruled in his Responsa (1:71) that it is permitted (question #2). In the Responsa he cites the *Ritva*’s argument for stringency, but dismisses it by saying the following: *וליתא דהוא הדין בשרפה דמותר*: His emphatic statement that burning the chametz is permitted proceeds his bringing a proof from a *Yerushalmi* to buttress his position that burning the chametz is permitted when not nullified prior to Yom Tov. Perhaps his assuredness comes from precedent, as we will see.

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We have seen from the *Yerushalmi* that if people are lighting a נר של אבטלה one should not tell them it is forbidden. Perhaps, that is the source for the *Rashba's* contradictory rulings (question #5). In his novellae, the *Rashba* takes the academic position that it should be prohibited. However, in his Responsa, he records the “*halachah u’lemaaseh*” that all have concluded that a נר של אבטלה is permitted.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, one should not be fazed by the lenient ruling concerning נר של אבטלה (question #4). He was just following the *halachah lemaaseh* tradition. However, in *Avodas Hakodesh*, regarding kindling candles, his academic conclusion is that we should not permit unnecessary kindling for an individual; only in the Beis Hakenesses.

The *Mishnah Berurah*, in his *Beur Halachah* commentary (§518, ד"ה ספר תורה) discusses מצוה צורך that is not צורך היום. He writes: ודע דכל הני פוסקים דהבאנו להחמיר בזה הם אותן שסוברים דלא הותר משום מתוך כי אם צורך קצת וזה לא מקרי לדידהו צורך. In other words, even if due to circumstance, the “mitzvah” must be done today, if it is not incumbent that it be done today (it could have been

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<sup>14</sup> See *Magen Avos*, authored by the *Meiri* (pgs.71-80) who presents the view of the students of the *Ramban* (who were visiting Provence) as prohibiting the burial of the deceased on the first day of Yom Tov. The *Meiri* fights back and quotes the *Rosh* and the *Rambam* as being permissive in this matter. He also falls back on the custom in Provence to be lenient. Perhaps, the *Rashba* heard of or was involved in this disputation and ruled to be lenient as was the custom. This would be contrary to his ruling and that of his Rebbi, the *Ramban*, to be stringent.

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done yesterday or be accomplished tomorrow) it is not a צורך היום.<sup>15</sup>

To answer the first question, it could be argued that the *Rashba* disagrees with this formulation. Perhaps, he is of the opinion that the only mitzvos that are permitted to be done when Yom Tov would be violated are those that are incumbent on the person themselves. The chametz must be burned by the owner or his/her agent. The care of the dead emanates from the need that the deceased not suffer the humiliation of degeneration. This mitzvah is not incumbent on any particular Jew. Even a non-Jew, who is not halachically an agent to fulfill a mitzvah obligation, can tend to the *niftar*. Therefore, the Jew cannot violate Yom Tov for that purpose.<sup>16</sup>

Another answer might be a practical one. In the case of the deceased, there is no transgression committed if you wait for a non-Jew to arrive and provide care. However, in the case of the chametz, every minute that the non-Jew does not arrive, the owner of the chametz remains in violation.

I leave you with question number three unanswered. Perhaps, by Pesach the appearance of Eliyahu will be a reality and *Tishbi yitaretz kushyos v'abayos!* Chag Someach!

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<sup>15</sup> See similar idea in Rav Elchonon Wasserman's *Kovetz Ha'aros*, page 36, §109.

<sup>16</sup> There you go; a *gavra-cheftza* distinction.

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## **Burning Chametz on Pesach:**

### **The *Rambam's* View**

#### **Elli Schwarz**

The *Rambam* (הל' חמץ ומצה פ"ג ה"ה) writes that if one finds chametz on the Yom Tov of Pesach he should leave it where it is and cover it (and not burn or otherwise move or destroy it). The *Kesef Mishnah* asks: We have a principle that מתוך שהותרה לצורך, הותרה הותרה נמי שלא לצורך, which means that since [a *melachah*] is permitted [on Yom Tov] for a [food-related] need, it is also permitted for a non-[food related] need. Example applications of this principle allow cooking water to wash one's face, hands, and feet, or lighting a candle (from a pre-existing flame) to light up a room. The *Kesef Mishnah* thus asks, according to this principle, why doesn't the *Rambam* allow one to burn the chametz found on Pesach – the הבערה, burning, should be permitted even for this non-food related action? (Since the chametz can't be eaten on Pesach, its burning is not considered food-related.)

The *Kesef Mishnah* gives several answers. 1) Since the chametz was presumably nullified (*batul*) already, there is no need to burn it on Pesach because the chametz doesn't belong to the one who found it. But the *Magid Mishnah* writes that this halachah of the *Rambam* is true even if the owner wasn't *mevatel* the chametz. However, the *Kesef Mishnah* says that even so, the action needs to be לצורך היום, necessary for the Yom Tov, and the performance of a mitzvah (in this case, burning the chametz) doesn't necessarily make something considered לצורך היום. He proves this from the halachah that שרפת קדשים (burning leftover *karbanos*), which is also Biblical mitzvah, is not permitted on

Yom Tov, so we see that performance of a mitzvah doesn't make something considered לצורך היום. Therefore, the burning of chametz on Pesach wouldn't be permitted due to this reason.

2) Even if the owner wasn't *mevatel* the chametz, the *Kesef Mishnah* writes that we only apply the above principle of *mitoch* when there is a *הגואה הגוף*, physical benefit, provided to someone. In the case of burning this chametz found on Pesach, there's no *הגואה הגוף*, physical benefit, for one to burn the chametz. Even though it may be a mitzvah to destroy the chametz, performance of a mitzvah isn't considered a physical benefit (מצות לאו להנות). Therefore, we can't apply the above principle of *mitoch* to permit burning this chametz.

3) *Tosafos* write in *Kesubos* that even if the chametz isn't *batul*, one still can't burn the chametz on Yom Tov because it's *muktzeh*. According to *Tosafos*, Chazal didn't allow the active violation of the *muktzeh* prohibition in order to avoid another prohibition (שב ואל תעשה), even if the prohibition trying to be avoided is a Biblical one, such as owning chametz on Pesach. Additionally, there's no need to specifically *burn* the chametz (if we don't hold like R' Yehudah who requires burning); to avoid the prohibition, it would be enough to just destroy the chametz another way. Therefore, since *Chazal* didn't allow one to violate the prohibition of *muktzah*, one must cover the chametz to avoid eating it, and wait until Chol HaMoed to destroy it properly.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that nowadays, when most people sell their chametz to a גוי through their Rav, any chametz found on Pesach doesn't belong to the one who found it, and therefore there possibly would be no reason to burn the chametz. In fact, since the chametz doesn't belong to him, burning it may be considered stealing from the גוי who actually owns the chametz.

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According to the first two answers, the rule of *mitoch* doesn't apply in the case of burning chometz. According to the third answer, it does apply, but burning the chometz is prohibited for another reason. The second answer of the *Kesef Mishnah* above, that הנאת הגוף is required in order to apply the rule of *mitoch*, is difficult to understand. The Gemara in ביצה יב. says that carrying a child on Yom Tov is permitted (even in a place where there is no *eruv*). This seems to imply that even in a case where there is no הנאת הגוף, such as carrying a child, the carrying is still permitted. In fact, the *Rambam* himself writes in פ"א הל' יום טוב, פ"א ד"ד that the melachos of carrying and kindling are completely permitted on Yom Tov. There is no mention of the fact that a הנאת הגוף is required!

The *Chasam Sofer* explains the Gemara on 12a, by writing that even though doing a mitzvah is not enough to allow performance of a *melachah* using the principle of *mitoch*, if the mitzvah is combined with a הנאת הגוף, the combination of the two is enough to allow using the principle of *mitoch* to perform the *melachah*. He proves this from the Gemara in *Kesubos* 7a. The Gemara there is discussing if ביאה is permitted to be performed for the first time on Shabbos or Yom Tov. According to the *Chasam Sofer's* explanation of the Gemara, since the first time there is a mitzvah, and there is הנאת הגוף, the combination of the two reasons allows the application of the principle of *mitoch*.

Possibly, this could be what the *Kesef Mishnah* above is saying. When he says there's no הנאת הגוף, and הנאת הגוף is needed, what he means is that since burning the chametz is only done for a mitzvah, הנאת הגוף is required. This doesn't mean that הנאת הגוף is

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always required, since we have many cases that indicate otherwise. Rather, any time a person receives some positive benefit from the *melachah* of kindling, it is permitted even though that benefit is not a bodily pleasure. However, if the benefit is only fulfillment of a mitvah, it is permitted only if it is accompanied by some הנאות הגוף.

## ***Chazaras HaShatz and Birkas Kohanim***

### **Roman Kimelfeld**

*Chazaras HaShatz* and *Birkas Kohanim* do not just impact the people in Shul, but they also cover the individuals outside of the shul. Regarding *Birkas Kohanim*, the Gemara (*Sotah* 38b) states: Adda said in the name of Rav Simlai: In a Shul that consists entirely of Kohanim, all of them go up to the platform [to perform *Birkas Kohanim*]. [The Gemara asks] Who are they blessing? Rav Zeira said: Their brethren in the fields.

The People in the Fields [עַם שְׁבִשְׂדוֹת] are those city residents who are unable to attend services because they are involved in work outside of the city. These People in the Fields are covered by the blessing of Kohanim even though they do not hear the Kohanim.

As I will explain below, *Chazaras HaShatz* works similarly to *Birkas Kohanim*. First, I will discuss how *Chazaras HaShatz* works, and then I will discuss its similarity to *Birkas Kohanim*.

### ***Chazaras HaShatz – fulfilling one’s obligation by listening to the Shaliach Tzibur***

As we all know, *Chazaras HaShatz* is intended to cover an individual who is unable to daven. Henceforth, I will refer to such individuals as *eino baki* (i.e. non-expert). Such an individual is supposed to listen to *Chazaras HaShatz* from the beginning to end, without saying “*Baruch Hu u’baruch Shemo*,” and without answering *Modim D’Rabanan*. If the *eino baki* answers “*Baruch Hu u’Baruch Shemo*” during *Chazaras HaShatz*, he does not fulfill his obligation to daven, because it

would constitute an interruption (*Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim* 2:98).

Nowadays, many shuls have guests who are not yet able to daven on their own. It would seem that these *Yidden* could fulfill their obligation to daven by listening to *Chazaras HaShatz* (i.e. through *shomeia k'oneh*). However, most likely they will not fulfill their obligation in this manner because they will inevitably answer “*Baruch Hu u'baruch Shemo,*” like the rest of the congregation.

Does this mean that every guest who is not yet able to daven should be instructed not to answer “*Baruch Hu u'baruch Shemo,*” and not to answer *Modim D'Rabanan*? It would certainly be awkward to instruct our guests in this manner, but should such instruction nevertheless be given to them?

### **The conditions of the *Mishnah Berurah***

According to the *Mishnah Berurah* (124:2), it is not possible to fulfill one's obligation to daven by listening to *Chazaras HaShatz* unless the individual fulfills both of the following conditions: (1) the individual must be unable to daven (i.e. he is *eino baki*), and (2) he must understand Hebrew.

Nowadays, virtually nobody fulfills both of the conditions above (this is stated in *Elef L'Mateh* in his commentary on *Mateh Efraim* 591:1). Typically, if the individual understands Hebrew, it means that he can daven from a siddur. *Mishnah Berurah* seems to suggest that an individual who is unable to daven and who does not understand Hebrew should repeat Shemoneh Esrei word-by-word after someone else. Thus, according to *Mishnah Berurah*, an *eino baki* will not fulfill his obligation to daven by

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listening to *Chazaras HaShatz* even if he refrains from answering *Baruch Hu u'baruch Shemo*" and *Modim D'Rabanan*.

### **The view of the *Chazon Ish***

The *Chazon Ish* writes (*Orach Chaim, siman 19*) that *Chazaras HaShatz* covers the People in the Fields who are *eino baki* without hearing the *shaliach tzibur*, the same way they receive the blessing from the Kohanim without hearing the Kohanim. He proves this from the following Gemara in *Rosh Hashanah* (35a): R' Yaakov bar Iddi said in the name of R' Shimon Chasida: Rabban Gamliel did not exempt from davening [anyone], except the people in the fields.

The *Chazon Ish* explains that according to Rabban Gamliel, the *shaliach tzibur* exempts from the obligation to recite Shemoneh Esrei all People in the Fields regardless of whether or not they are able to pray. The Chachamim there agree with Rabban Gamliel only regarding those People in the Fields who are *eino baki*. Thus, according to all opinions in the Gemara, the People in the Fields who are *eino baki* fulfill their mitzvah of *tefillah* through *Chazaras HaShatz*, even though they do not hear it.

We mentioned earlier that an *eino baki* who does not understand Hebrew will not fulfill the mitzvah of davening by listening to the *shaliach tzibur* (according to the *Mishnah Berurah*). However, the *Chazon Ish* adds (ibid. §3) that this person (i.e. *eino baki* who does not understand Hebrew) has exactly the same status as the People in the Fields (if they are *eino baki*), so he will fulfill the mitzvah of davening through the recitation of the *shaliach tzibur* regardless of whether he is in shul or not. This individual is a complete *oness*; he has no other way of fulfilling the mitzvah of *tefillah*; hence the *shaliach tzibur* would cover

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him. Thus, according to the *Chazon Ish* it emerges that an *eino baki* who does not understand Hebrew can fulfill the mitzvah of davening through *Chazaras HaShatz*, even if he is outside of the shul and does not hear the *shaliach tzibur*. Accordingly, it is not necessary for an *eino baki* who does not understand Hebrew to repeat Shemoneh Esrei word-by-word after someone else (like *Mishnah Berurah* implied). Rather, he can fulfill the mitzvah of the davening the same way as the People in the Fields. [See *Aruch HaShulchan* (end of 124:2) for similar reasoning.]

Consequently, we could say that if an *eino baki* who does not understand Hebrew is in the shul, he can answer *Baruch Hu u'baruch Shemo* like everyone else, and he can answer *Modim D'Rabanan*, because he will fulfill the mitzvah of davening in any case.

### **The Bond with the Congregation**

We discussed above that the People in the Fields who are *eino baki* fulfill their obligation to pray through the recitation of *Chazaras HaShatz* by the *shaliach tzibur*, even though they do not hear the *shaliach tzibur*. This appears to be a very radical concept. The basis is a Mishnah in *Berachos* (30a): R' Yehudah said in the name [of R' Eliezer ben Azaryah]: In every place where there is a *chever ir* (assembly of the town), an individual is exempt from the Mussaf Prayer. The Gemara there comments that according to R' Yehudah, an individual in the city where there is a congregation is exempt from davening Mussaf. This is so because he fulfills the mitzvah of davening through the *shaliach tzibur* of the congregation (as *Rashi* explains). If, on the other hand, there is no congregation in his city, he must pray on his own.



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The *Chazon Ish* points out (there §9) that while the halachah does not precisely follow R' Yehudah because according to halachah each *baki* must daven on his own (unlike what R' Yehudah said), nevertheless R' Yehudah is teaching us the following important concept that is entirely true according to all opinions: This concept is that an individual has a strong bond with his congregation; and that the individual benefits from the communal prayer, even if he is unable to attend the shul. Because of this bond with the congregation, the *eino baki* who does not understand Hebrew will still fulfill the mitzvah of davening through the *shaliach tzibur* of his congregation.

The *Chazon Ish* furthermore states that every *tzibur* is obligated to ensure that there is a minyan in their congregation. Thus, besides an individual obligation to pray, an individual also shares a communal obligation to ensure that there is a minyan in shul. According to the *Chazon Ish*, when the *shaliach tzibur* recites *Chazaras HaShatz*, the entire congregation fulfills their communal obligation.

Perhaps, this communal obligation described by the *Chazon Ish* is exactly what the *Rama* outlines in *Orach Chaim* (55:22, based on *Rivash*) where he says that a community must ensure that there is always a minyan in shul, so that the daily *tamid* will not stop. Based on this *Rama*, Rav Moshe Feinstein says that every member of shul must ensure that there is always a minyan in his own shul, even if there are other minyanin in town (*Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim* 3:16).

It appears from the *Chazon Ish*, *Rama* (citing *Rivash*), and *Igros Moshe* that all members benefit when their shul has a minyan, like the entire Klal Israel benefited from a daily *tamid*. Thus,

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when the *shaliach tzibur* recites *Chazaras HaShatz*, he benefits not only those who are unable to daven, but he benefits all members of the shul.

### **The Uniqueness and Power of Chazaras HaShatz**

The mitzvah of davening is unique in the sense that it can be fulfilled in certain cases entirely through *shaliach tzibur*, without the individual even hearing the *shaliach tzibur* (as we have explained). *Ria”z* explains that the reason why the individual’s obligation to daven can be fulfilled through the *shaliach tzibur* is because *tefillah* is modeled after communal *karbonos*. Just like the communal *karbonos* performed by Kohanim benefited the entire Klal Yisrael, so too the communal *tefillah* (i.e. *Chazaras HaShatz*) benefits the multitude of people.

Perhaps, this explains why the *Arizal* writes that *Chazaras HaShatz* is more elevated than the silent Shemoneh Esrei.<sup>1</sup> When someone davens the silent Shemoneh Esrei, he fulfills only his personal obligation. On the other hand, during *Chazaras HaShatz* the entire congregation resembles the Kohanim, who bring the daily *tamidin* on behalf of the entire Klal Yisrael. The *shaliach tzibur*, empowered and assisted by the congregation, discharges the obligation of others to pray, even if they are outside of the shul (if they are unable to pray on their own). Thus, the impact of *Chazaras HaShatz* is well beyond the walls of the shul.

We see that *Chazaras HaShatz* is the most powerful part of davening in the sense that it directly benefits even those people

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<sup>1</sup> See Kaf HaChaim 124:2. For further discussion about the importance of *Chazaras HaShatz*, see *She’arim BaTefillah* p. 14.

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who are not present. Perhaps, this is the reason why *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 124:7) says that an individual who talks during *Chazaras HaShatz* commits an *aveirah* that is too great to bear. *Chazaras HaShatz* has the power to connect *Yidden* to Hashem, even those *Yidden* who are not so familiar with religious observance, and who might not even be in shul. Those people who talk during *Chazaras HaShatz* could completely negate its power; and turn it into a *berachah levatalah* (see *Orach Chaim* 124:4).

On the other hand, those who conduct themselves properly during *Chazaras HaShatz* increase the effectiveness of their communal tefillah. Their communal tefillah, conducted in the serious and sincere manner, will help connect *Yidden* to Hashem, both the *Yidden* inside and outside of the shul.

## **The Splitting of the Red Sea: In One Side and Out The Other?**

**Jeff Silverberg**

Perhaps the most thrilling story taught to every young Jewish child is that of the splitting of the Red Sea. Pursued by the strongest army in the history of mankind, the newly freed Jewish nation showed its faith in Hashem by plunging into the water. The raging tide became two massive walls (or so I was taught) as the Jews hurried through on the miraculously dry seabed. Emerging on the other side (or so I was taught), they looked back to see the walls of water ferociously collapse on their Egyptian pursuers, destroying once and for all their former taskmasters. At last the Jews were truly free to meet their destiny of *Matan Torah* (the Revelation of Hashem and the Giving of the Torah) at Mount Sinai. They had crossed the Red Sea.

Or had they?

Rabbi Ben Zion Firer, in his sefer *Panim Masbirot LaTorah*, quotes a *Mechilta* (*Perek* 14:15) that cites a *pasuk* in *Hallel* (*Tehillim* 114:3): הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסֹב לְאַחֲרָיו, *The Sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned backwards*. Noticing a similarity in the wording of the story of Yosef HaTzaddik and his resistance to the wife of Potiphar, the Midrash teaches: Shimon of Katron said: In the merit of the bones of Yosef, I [Hashem] split the [Red] Sea, as it says (*Bereishis* 39:12): וַיַּעַזְבֵם בְּיָמָיו וַיִּנָּס וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת חַמְטוֹ בְּיָמָיו וַיִּנָּס וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת חַמְטוֹ בְּיָמָיו, *He left his coat in her hand and fled*; and it says: הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס, *The Sea saw and fled*.

Very nice. But there was a second splitting of the Sea forty years later when Hashem held up the waters of the Jordan River to allow the Jews to cross into the Promised Land. We know that the casket containing the bones of Yosef was still with the Jewish people at that time (*Yehoshua* 24:32). One might easily come to the conclusion that Yosef's merit had assisted the Jewish people once again.

However, R' Yehudah the son of R' Simon in the name of R' Yochanan refutes that theory. He tells us (*Bereishis Rabbah* 76:5): In *Neviim* and *Kesuvim* we find that Yisrael did not cross the Jordan except through the merit of Yaakov. He also uses a similarity in wording to make his point. Yaakov *Avinu* says (*Bereshis* 32:10): אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן הָעָבַרְתִּי עַבְרָתִי, *Because with my staff I crossed this Jordan [River]*. And we are told in *Yehoshua* (4:22): וְהוֹדַעְתֶּם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר בַּיַּבֶּשֶׁה עָבַר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה, *You shall make known to your descendants saying: On dry land Yisrael crossed this Jordan*. The two *pesukim* both use the word עבר (crossed) and the reference to “Yisrael” in the *Navi* is treated as an inference to Yaakov. Returning to our chapter in *Hallel*, R' Yehudah cites his second proof (*Tehillim* 114:5,7): מָה לָךְ הָיִם כִּי תָנוּס הַיַּרְדֵּן תָּסֹב לְאַחֹר... מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, *What did the Sea observe that it fled, the Jordan that it turned backwards...from before the G-d of Yaakov.*” The fact that the *Psalm* references the splitting of the Jordan and the G-d of Yaakov – with no reference to Abraham and Isaac – is a hint, according to R' Yehudah, that the Jordan split through the merit of Yaakov *Avinu*.

Why was this so, Rabbi Firer asks. What association is there between the splitting of the Red Sea and Yosef, while the splitting of the Jordan is associated with Yaakov? Why could not

the bones of Yosef HaTzadik have sufficed for both? His answer sheds light on my original question.

Rabbi Firer contends that the answer lies in the disparate *goals* of the two miracles. The reason for the splitting of the Red Sea was quite different from that of the splitting of the Jordan River. At the Sea, the Jews were being pursued by the Egyptian chariots. They entered the water *not* to get closer to the Land of Israel, but to be saved from destruction. The *Ibn Ezra* writes (*Shemos* 14:17): We know that the Red Sea is not between Egypt and the Land of Israel and it is not necessary to enter the Sea to get to Eretz Yisrael. [They did so] because of Hashem's command so that the Egyptians would pursue them and Hashem would drown them. *The Jews entered the Sea in the Wilderness of Eitam and they exited the Sea in the Wilderness of Eitam*. The *Rambam* in his explanation to *Avos* (5:44) explains that the Sea split not in half, but into twelve separate semi-circles, one for each tribe, and that each *shevet* exited its semi-circle on the same side of the Sea as it entered. He says explicitly that the Jews did not travel from one side to the other. *Tosafos* (*Arachin* 16a; see also *Rashash* there) bring a proof to this opinion from the journeys of the Jewish people described in *Bamidbar*.

Not so the crossing of the Jordan. The Jordan River flows along the entire eastern border of Eretz Yisrael. The splitting of the Jordan was necessary to enable the Jewish people to get to the Promised Land.

This disparity, Rabbi Firer suggests, is the reason that Chazal insist that the Jewish people specifically needed the merit of Yosef to be saved in the Red Sea, but could not use his merit at the Jordan. Yosef was the viceroy of Egypt at the time of a

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horrible famine. His mission was to save lives amidst terrible deprivation. He succeeded magnificently. Therefore, at the time the lives of the entire Jewish nation were in danger at the Red Sea, it was in the merit of Yosef, the successful saver of lives, that Hashem miraculously split the waters.

However, in all of his years of viceroy, Yosef did not make an attempt to return to his homeland. Instead, he brought his father and brothers to join him in Egypt. While this was undoubtedly Hashem's plan, the fact remains that Yosef's distinction is one who saved lives, not one who demonstrated his love of the Land of Israel [although he undoubtedly had it].

In stark contrast are the actions of Yaakov *Avinu*. He prayed that Hashem return him to the land when he runs from Esav (*Bereishis* 28:21). He endangered his life and that of his family by fleeing to Eretz Yisrael and risking Lavan's wrath (*ibid.* 30:20). Even upon hearing the news that Yosef was still alive and wanted him to go down to Egypt, Yaakov hesitated until Hashem gave him specific instructions to do so (*ibid.* 46:2-3). Yaakov showed his desire to live in Eretz Yisrael at every opportunity. Therefore it could only be in the merit of Yaakov that Hashem split the Jordan to allow his descendants to achieve that goal by crossing the Jordan into his, and our, beloved homeland.

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Rabbi Yitzchok Mirsky, in his *Hagadah Hedyonei Halachah*, makes a related and interesting observation on the text of our davening. In both *Shacharis* and *Maariv*, just before *Shemoneh Esrei*, the splitting of the Red Sea is mentioned. The passing of the Jews through the Sea and the drowning of the Egyptians are

mentioned in both *tefillos*. However, in Shacharis we say: נִזְדִּים וְיִרְדִּים הָעֶבְרִית, טַבְעָתָ וְיִרְדִּים הָעֶבְרִית, *The wicked You drowned and the beloved ones You passed through*, mentioning the drowning of the Egyptians before the passing through of *Am Yisrael*. We reverse the order in Maariv: הַמַּעְבִּיר בְּנֵיו בֵּין גְּזְרֵי יָם סוּף אֶת רוֹדְפֵיהֶם וְאֶת שׂוֹנְאֵיהֶם בְּתַהוֹמוֹת טַבַּע הַמַּעְבִּיר בְּנֵיו בֵּין גְּזְרֵי יָם סוּף אֶת רוֹדְפֵיהֶם וְאֶת שׂוֹנְאֵיהֶם בְּתַהוֹמוֹת טַבַּע, *He passed his children between the divisions of the Red Sea, their pursuers and the ones that hated them He drowned in the depths*. What did the *Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah* wish to teach us by structuring our prayers in this manner? Why are the texts of the *tefillos* not consistent?

As mentioned already, the *Rambam* and others are of the opinion that the *shevatim* traversed the Red Sea in separate, concentric semi-circles, not together through two walls of water, and left the Sea on the same side that they had entered. Accordingly, a portion of the Egyptians must have pursued each *shevet* in that tribe's semi-circle. Of necessity, the distance each tribe walked in the Sea was different. Those in the paths closest to the shore had a smaller semi-circle and a shorter distance to walk than those in the outer circles and returned to the shore more quickly than those in the outside paths. As each *shevet* completed its path and stepped onto the shore, the watery walls of that division tumbled down and drowned the Egyptians who were in pursuit of that *shevet*. After the first *shevet* exited, the Egyptians in their path were drowned, while all the other tribes and the Egyptians in pursuit of each of them were still in the Sea. When the second *shevet* exited and their pursuers were then drowned, ten tribes and the Egyptians pursuing each of them still remained in the Sea, and so on.

Accordingly, a series of twelve *yeshuos* of the Jews and twelve drownings of the Egyptians took place, one after the other. The

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## Section VII: *Kerias Yam Suf*

drowning of the first group of Egyptians occurred simultaneously with the salvation of the second group of Jews, the second drowning at the same time the third group of Jews were being saved, and so on, until the Egyptians in the outer semi-circle were destroyed, ending the miracle. Therefore, Jews were being saved and Egyptians were being drowned in the Sea simultaneously, time after time. Rabbi Mirsky suggests that Chazal used both orders, salvation before destruction and destruction before salvation in our *tefillos* to emphasize this detail of *Kerias Yam Suf*. Jews were being saved as the Egyptians behind the prior group drowned. One aspect therefore cannot be placed before the other.

## **Lag B'Omer: Mid-Air Refueling: Continuing to the Target <sup>1</sup>**

**Daniel Menchel**

At the end of *Parshas Vayitzei*, we find that Yaakov had amassed a huge fortune working for Lavan. His family had grown to four wives and eleven children. He had wealth and honor. It would appear he had it all. The *pasuk* says that Hashem told Yaakov to go to the land of his fathers. Yaakov left Lavan, and Lavan pursued him. Ultimately, there was the famous confrontation and a peace agreement. The peace treaty was ratified by a monument of stones that Yaakov calls *Gal'eid* [גלעד] (31:47). The *Kedushas Levi* states that *Gal'eid* is a *remez* to *Lag B'Omer* because the letters of *Gal* [ג"ל] are the same as those of *Lag* [ל"ג].

To begin his explanation, the *Kedushas Levi* says that Chazal tell us that Hashem appeared to *Klal Yisrael* as a young warrior at *Krias Yam Suf*, but that at Har Sinai He appeared as a wise elder. He uses the following *mashal* to explain this perplexing statement. Parents initiate their *yiddishe kinder* to go to school by explaining to them that school is a place to have fun, have candy and be with other kids. The parents extol school and learning in such a way as to create a *taivah*, a desire for school in the children. Then, when the children are used to going to school, the *Kidushas Levi* continues, one can teach them Torah;

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<sup>1</sup> Thank you to my son, Yehuda, learning in the Providence Yeshiva Kollel, for his time, energy and analysis. May he and his family continue to grow and may all the things they desire to acquire be given to them.

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## Section VIII: Sefirah and Shavuos

one can switch tracks from initiation to actual implementation of education.

Similarly, the *Kedushas Levi* says, Hashem displayed fabulous miracles at the Yam Suf; He appeared as a glorious warrior to the former slave nation. This vision initiated *Klal Yisrael's* desire to have a relationship with Him, much in the same way a parent entices a child to go to school. Subsequently, the vision of Hashem as a wise elder giving over the Torah is the parallel of the children being educated once he enjoys going to school. The display of miracles at Yam Suf was the appetizer; the revelation at Har Sinai was the eternal main course, so to speak.

The desire, the thirst for a relationship with Hashem began to swell from *Krias Yam Suf* until Lag B'Omer, like a child's initiation to school. On Lag B'Omer, a critical reorientation occurred to us. On Lag B'Omer we became focused, goal oriented to prepare ourselves to be fit for *Kabbalas HaTorah*. We were ignited with a passion to become the beings that would be worthy to accept that which Hashem was offering on Har Sinai. We had graduated to a new plateau.

The *Kedushas Levi* explains that this concept is encapsulated in the words *Gal'eid* in the situation that Yaakov faced at the end of *Parshas Vayeitzei*. We have already explained above that Gal is related to Lag. But we can now add that this pivotal moment of transmutation directed our holy focus on acquiring a glorious *Eid*, the crown each Jew received at Har Sinai (see *Parshas Ki Sisa* 33:6) when they said *naaseh ve'nishma*. Through this conscience declaration, we became the *am hanivchar*.

## *Darchei Noam*

Based on all of the above, we can explain the situation Yaakov found himself in at the end of the *Parshas VaYeitzei*. As we said, Yaakov, after leaving Lavan, had everything. He was at that moment, transitioning himself and *Klal Yisrael* from the foundation phase to the building phase, from the appetizers to the banquet meal. He symbolized his recognition of the pivotal phase change with the construction of the Gal'eid monument where he was poised, at the edge of Eretz Yisrael. This is where he was to begin to educate and train the *Shivtei Ka*, the predecessors of *Klal Yisrael*. Perhaps we can say that the Gal'eid structure tells us that all his success and achievement until then were not the main point in his life. The stones say, “don't think what we have now is the main point of the journey.” For what lay ahead was the creation of *Klal Yisrael*.

Lag B'Omer symbolizes our personal switch from being persuaded to love the Torah to desiring the direct, personal connection to that Torah. From Lag B'Omer on, we no longer need to be talked into it; we now *want* to use our abilities, talent and strength to reach the lofty goal of receiving the Torah and the special relationship to Hashem.

## A Journey of Spiritual Preparation <sup>1</sup>

### Daniel Menchel

Pesach and Succos are parallel in many ways. Both festivals begin with a full moon; Pesach on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, which is the first month of the Jewish holiday cycle, and Succos on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei, which is the first month of the lunar cycle of the Jewish year. Each Yom Tov lasts for seven days and the Torah *HaKedoshah* calls the first days of the holidays, *mikra kodesh* – a sacred occasion. Each *mikra kodesh* is followed by Chol Hamoed, which is then followed by another *mikra kodesh*.

Between these two *Yamim Tovim* we celebrate Shavuos, which is *zman matan Torah*. The seven-week counting period of the Omer leads up to Shavuos. We count up to Shavuos for 49 days, starting on the second day of Pesach when sheaves of the new barley crop were brought to the Beis HaMikdash as the *korban omer*; and the counting ends on Shavuos when the two loaves of bread, the *lechem hapanim*, that were made from the new wheat crop were brought as a meal offering to Hashem.

The *Zohar HaKadosh* states that the reason we count the 49 days is to remind us how close we came to assimilation in Mitzrayim. We fell to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of impurity; if we had fallen one more

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<sup>1</sup> The following is from the sefer *Ner Uziel*. The author was R' Uziel Milevsky who was taken to the *Olam HaEmes* in the prime of his life. His wisdom and penetrating analysis affected hundreds of talmidim. I strongly urge you to purchase his fantastic *peirush* on the Haggadah, *The Ohr Somei'ach Haggadah*. It will transform your Pesach Seder. [DM]

## *Darchei Noam*

level there would have been no return. If we had not been rushed out (which we commemorate with our “rushed” baking of the matzos), we would have been lost forever.

Leaving *shibud* Pharaoh was the first stage of Hashem’s plan for the Jewish people. The redemption would not be complete until *matan Torah* and Bnei Yisrael’s acceptance of עול מלכות שמים, the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom. Indeed, Hashem could have given the Torah right after *Yitzias Mitzrayim* if we would have been spiritually prepared. However, before being able to receive the Torah, Bnei Yisrael had to rid themselves of impurity which was their legacy from Egypt and concomitantly ascend to the forty nine levels of holiness. Once they climbed up the 49 levels of holiness then could they be ready for the 50<sup>th</sup> level on Shavuos, the 50<sup>th</sup> day.

Thus, Pesach and the days that follow are preparation for Shavuos. Essentially, it is one long holiday: Pesach being the first *mikra kodesh*, the 49 day period of Chol HaMoed, and the holiday concluding with another *mikra kodesh*, Shavuos.

The *Zohar’s* teaching helps us to understand why on each day of the Omer, in each day’s counting, we recall the *omer* offering brought on the second day of Pesach. We say, “Today is the first day of the Omer, Today is the second day of the Omer,” etc. until we have seven times seven days, recalling on each day the offering of the first new barley crop: “*HaYom yom ... baomer...*”

The number seven, and all multiples of seven, represent a cycle that exists within nature and that is defined through nature – the rhythm of the physical world. The number eight represents

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## Section VIII: Sefirah and Shavuos

beyond nature. *Bris milah*, exclusive for Jews, symbolizes the unique identity of a Jew. Jewish survival is not a natural phenomenon within the cycle of life in this world. Were our existence governed only by the natural order of things, we would have disappeared long ago.

Likewise, the forty-nine days of Omer, seven times seven, signifies a complete cycle in the process of the spiritual preparation we undergo between Pesach and Shavuos. We count each of the forty-nine days separately, indicating that our climb out of the depths of physicality, our escape from the 49 levels of Egyptian impurity, can be accomplished only rung by rung.

The culmination of this process, and the counting of the weeks, is the 50th day – Shavuos. Like eight, it represents breaking the cycle, going beyond the rhythm of the purely physical. When the Jews who left Mitzrayim broke past the seven cycles of seven, they were ready to receive the Torah at Har Sinai. When we repeat their spiritual journey of preparation through the Omer count of seven cycles of seven, we too are ready to receive the Torah on Shavuos.

The manifestation of this spiritual journey is seen in different types of grain offerings brought on Pesach and Shavuos. Before we have cleansed ourselves and before we became free – from the mire of physicality, of Egyptian impurity, of animal tendencies – the offering is one of animal-feed, barley in its simplest form, as fresh kernels roasted in a pan (*Vayikra* 2:14). In stark contrast, on Shavuos, when we have reached our spiritual climax, we bring wheat, choice grain, which has been kneaded and left to rise, and then baked into breads – a “human” offering prepared for Hashem (*Vayikra* 23:17).

## Lessons from *Megillas Rus* <sup>1</sup>

### Yitzchok Raczkowski

Although there are many lessons that can be learned from *Megillas Rus*, I would like to focus on one particular section. In his *sefer Harvest of Kindness*, Rabbi Yehuda Y. Steinberg teaches an interesting lesson. The *pasuk* in *Megillas Rus* states (1:14): וַתִּשְׁנֶה קוֹלָהּ וַתִּבְרְכֵינָה עוֹד וַתִּשָׁק עֶרְפָּהּ לְחֻמוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ: *And they raised their voice and wept again; Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Rus clung to her.*

A person's life is compared to a down escalator. If you are not going up and you are staying in place, then you are going down. One must work hard and fight his way up the escalator to be the best possible *eved Hashem* he can be.

When Naomi was trying to convince Orpah and Rus to go back to Moav, she said (1:13): כִּי מְרַ לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם: *it grieves me much for your sakes.* Naomi was in a state of personal turmoil and yet she still felt bad for their sake. This teaches us that even when a person is in a difficult situation, he must still do kindness and care for one another.

The Gemara also mentions that Galyas, the arch-enemy of Bnei Yisrael, descended from Orpah, while Rus was the ancestor of David HaMelech, the leader of Bnei Yisrael. Additionally, the Megillah continues and only mentions Rus. So, what happened

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<sup>1</sup> *Hashgachah* has it that my Bar Mitzvah falls out around Shavuot time and we all know that *Megillas Rus* is read on Shavuot. I therefore devoted the following *dvar Torah* to my Bar Mitzvah this past year.

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to Orpah? Why does the Megillah continue and not mention Orpah? The Midrash explains that when Orpah went back to Moav, she rapidly fell in her spirituality. How could she have fallen so rapidly? Rabbi Chaim Kaufman, z"tl, explains that when one has the opportunity to grow and does not use it to the fullest of their capability, the *yetzer hara* takes advantage of the situation, and brings the person to a lower *madreigah*. Orpah, instead of utilizing her chance to go with her mother-in-law to Eretz Yisrael and grow, went back to Moav, and “sank.”

## **To Gan Eden and Back – A Nation's Journey Beyond Time**

### **Reuven Kaplan**

The prohibition of chametz is very severe during the time of Pesach. One may not eat, possess, or even derive any benefit from chametz. However, these prohibitions apply only to the time of the festival (and a few hours before). As we emphasize during the *mah nishtanah*, we eat leavened bread all year long, and abstain from it on Pesach, when we eat only matzah. Although *Chazal* have provided us with various explanations as to why chametz is forbidden, I would like to add a thought to this topic. What is the deeper meaning and message of matzah, and what is its connection to our history as a whole? <sup>1</sup>

#### ***Lechem as the Fruit of Eitz Hadaas Tov VeRa***

The essential difference between *lechem* and matzah is time; any combination of water and flour that sits undisturbed for more than 18 minutes is chametz. On the deeper level, it stems back to Adam *HaRishon's* sin. The Gemara (*Berachos* 40a) teaches us that R' Meir was of the opinion that the forbidden fruit of the *eitz hadaas* was wheat. Therefore, according to R' Meir, Adam *HaRishon's* sin was eating bread from the *eitz hadaas*. Furthermore, the *Yerushalmi* (*Berachos* 6a) teaches us that prior to the sin, already refined and finished bread grew from the ground. As expressed by the wording of the *berachah* "*hamotzi*

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<sup>1</sup> In this essay I will refer to leavened bread, chametz, as *lechem*, even though in *Tanach* *lechem* can also refer to matzah, and it is also illustrated through the same *berachah* that we make on matzah as any other regular bread – *hamotzi lechem min haaretz*.

*lechem min haaretz*,” Hashem originally brought forth bread directly from the ground. In addition, after Adam’s sin it was *lechem* that was singled out by Hashem as the food that Man would now have to toil for through the sweat of his brow.

In *Derech Hashem*, *Ramchal* teaches us that originally Man was created in perfect balance between good and evil, with good being the perfection of his spiritual, and evil the deficiencies of his physical side. The world around him was also created with a balance of good and evil forces. Man was to utilize his free will to have his spiritual element prevail over his physical, fix the deficiencies, reach perfection, which would then allow him to achieve *deveikus* with Hashem in Olam HaBa, the ultimate goal of creation. *Ramchal* further explains that originally the *yetzer hara* was an external force and not part of Man, as resembled by the serpent. However, after the sin, the *yetzer hara* was internalized and became part of Man; and furthermore, the internal balance of perfection and deficiencies was shifted towards the deficiencies, making it more difficult for Man to achieve total perfection. Since the world was created for the purpose of helping Man achieve his perfection, once Man was changed, the world changed as well. Therefore, all this was caused by Adam eating bread at a time when it was prohibited to him by Hashem. As *Chazal* teach us, if Adam would have waited until *Shabbos*, he would have been allowed to eat from the *eitz hadaas*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For the Torah states that *Hashem* wanted Adam to partake of all the trees of the *Gan Eden*. Eating from the *eitz hadaas* was a temporary prohibition, possibly due to Adam not being ready or the fruit of the *eitz hadaas* not being “ripe,” or both.

## *Darchei Noam*

As *Ramchal* points out, the purpose of creation was for Man to have *deveikus* with Hashem and have Hashem bestow His goodness upon Man. To achieve this Adam had to reach perfection, which at his stage of creation could have been a relatively easy process. Allowing his spiritual side to prevail over the physical would have allowed Adam to reach that perfection. However, disobeying Hashem's command of not partaking from the *eitz hadaas* caused the opposite.<sup>3</sup>

When we, as Avraham's descendants, were being redeemed from Mitzrayim, the Torah tells us that Hashem did not allow our dough to rise. Instead of it becoming *lechem*, we had matzah. Already being on the lowest spiritual level, the 49<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah*, Hashem did not want us to partake of the fruit of the Adam *HaRishon's* sin, since *galus* Mitzrayim was part of the *tikun* for this sin, as illustrated by our ancestors' descent there due to lack of bread and famine. After 49 days of spiritual uplifting the Jewish people were able to reach the level of Adam *HaRishon* prior to the sin. This signifies that the Jewish people were successful in the *tikun* for the damage of Adam *HaRishon's* sin.<sup>4</sup> On Shavuos, we stood at Har Sinai as one nation, with one

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<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Shmuel Iann (during his 5773 *Succos shiur* at Bais Medrash of Ranchleigh) explained this with a simple analogy: Adam had one job to do, to turn on the light. Not only did he not turn on the light, he broke the light bulb. So Man's task now is to collect the pieces of the light bulb, put them together and then turn on the light. Hashem chose Avraham to complete this task.

<sup>4</sup>It has to be clarified here, and as you will see later on in this essay, the statement of "the *tikun* of Adam *HaRishon's* sin" refers to man's spiritual *tikun*, and not physical. As *Ramchal* explains in *Derech Hashem*, this sin caused significant damage to man's physical body and the world, that it now requires 6000 years to achieve complete

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heart, and we received the Torah. The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 30b) teaches us that Hashem gave us the Torah as an antidote for the *yetzer hara*. Once we accepted it, we were able to shift the internal balance of perfection and deficiency back to its original form at creation of Adam at Gan Eden, to its equilibrium prior to the sin. Therefore, it is at this time that we are able to bring the two loaves of bread (*chametz*) as part of the *bikkurim*. *Chazal* teach us that at that time we reached the spiritual level capable of ushering in the Mashiach. However, as with Adam *HaRishon*, this “pre-sin” period was short lived. The Jewish people sinned with the golden calf and subsequently through the *meraglim*. As a result of this, we failed to reach perfection and the messianic age was pushed off to a future time.

### **Replacing Moshe with the Golden Calf, and choosing temporary over eternal**

History repeats itself. Adam’s sin of eating *lechem* postponed Olam HaBa for 6000 years, and the Jewish people’s sins in the *midbar* postponed the coming of the Mashiach. At the core, the sins of the eating from *eitz hadaas* and creating the golden calf, the *egel hazahav*, were the same: pushing off the eternal spiritual pleasure of Olam HaBa for temporary pleasure of “here and now.” Adam failed to wait until *Shabbos* at which time he would have been permitted to eat from the *eitz hadaas*; instead he violated the only negative commandment that Hashem gave him. Adam *HaRishon* chose “here and now” over “eternal.” In case of the golden calf, *Chazal* teach us that Moshe’s “delay” at Har Sinai and the people’s miscalculation of his return caused them

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purification, including the necessary processes of the body going through death and *techias hameisim* and the re-creation of the world.

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to build a golden calf to replace Moshe. Many commentators explain that the golden calf served as a conduit between the people and Hashem. The people saw Moshe as a conduit between them and G-d and therefore when he did not return, the people felt the need to have someone or something in his stead to be the intermediary between them and Hashem.

The Torah describes the incident of the golden calf as follows (*Shemos* 32:6): וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הָעָם לֵאכֹל לִישְׁתּוֹ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and then got up to play/make merry*. On *Rashi* comments as follows יש במשמע הזה גלוי עריות כמו לְצַחֵק? *Rashi* comments as follows, שנאמר לְצַחֵק בִּי (*Bereishis* 39:17): “to mock (לְצַחֵק) me.” These acts of adultery by the people produced such sounds, that Yehoshua referred to them as “sounds of war” (*Shemos* 32:17): וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת קוֹל הָעָם. *Yehoshua heard the voice of the people in their shouting, he said to Moshe: "There is a voice of war in the camp!"*<sup>5</sup> The root of the word *Mitzrayim* is צר which means “narrow.” This means that the *Mitzrim* had a narrow view of the world. They were blinded by physicality and idol warship, deifying physical objects and nature. All that mattered for them was “here and now,” the temporary physical pleasure. It was this צר of the *eruv rav* of the *Mitzrim* that infected the Jewish people and led them astray in the *midbar*, leading first to the sin of *eigel hazahav* and then, as *averiah*

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting here that Sarah *Imeinu* was able to protect us from the לְצַחֵק of Yishmael, son of an Egyptian maid, Yoseph *HaTzaddik* was able to withstand the לְצַחֵק of Potifar’s wife (*Bereishis* 39:14-16), the *Klal Yisrael* in the *midbar*, however, were not able to resist the לְצַחֵק of the Egyptian *eruv rav*.

*goreres aveirah*, the sin of the *meraglim*. Nevertheless, Moshe was the leader of the Jewish people, the original *Rebbe* and teacher of Torah. He was the one to whom people would go to ask questions about halachah, *hashkafah*. Moshe taught them Torah and mitzvos which earn the person Olam HaBa. How could *Chazal* say that the golden calf was made to replace Moshe?! What was the *hava amina* in the golden calf and their behavior of לְצַדִּיק that was to replace or resemble Moshe?! How could the Jewish people have gotten this so wrong?!

For this, we need to start thinking outside the box. In the physical world, if one wants to have two objects as close to each other as possible, one would put those objects next to each other. What if one wanted to have the same objects apart the furthest possible? One would put them next to each other as close as possible. How so? If A is placed to the left of B as close as possible, then by drawing a line connecting the two starting from B and going leftward, we get the shortest distance between them, however, if the line is drawn from B rightward, that distance becomes the longest possible.<sup>6</sup> Since the physical world parallels the spiritual, we can see an analogous example of this in the *Chumash*. The word *kadosh*, קדש, means “holy”; however, we see that a harlot in the Torah is referred to as *kadeshah*, קדשה (see *Bereishis* 38:21). We see that two opposite things can be referred to in similar, almost identical terms. Therefore, two people can be looking at the same situation, yet with each having a unique perspective they may have opposite interpretations. It is this concept, of looking at something yet seeing its opposite is what caused the Jewish people to err and replace Moshe with the

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<sup>6</sup> For illustrative purposes:  $A \leftarrow B \rightarrow \infty$ .

golden calf, his antithesis. What happened at the end is that the Jewish people chose קַנְיָוּת, the pleasure of the physical world, of “here and now,” instead of the eternal pleasure of Olam HaBa.

**Matzah is needed to complete the *teshuvah* process for Adam’s sin**

I have already mentioned above that the reason that *lechem* is not eaten on Pesach is because it was the fruit of Adam *HaRishon*’s sin. In the similar fashion as gold is not used during the Yom Kippur service due to its implication in the golden calf, Hashem had us eat matzah instead, based on the concept of *ein kategor na’aseh sanegor* - an accuser should not serve as a defender. However, if *lechem* is avoided due to its being the culprit in the sin, then why not prohibit all sorts of bread including matzah from being consumed?! Why do we need matzah? We see in many places in *Tanach*, that objects that were used in a transgression do not necessarily become forbidden forever. For example gold is only not utilized during the Yom Kippur service (by Kohen Gadol not using his golden belt and not worn as jewelry by regular people) but it is used in the Beis HaMikdash as the material for *keilim* and the inner box of the *aron*; also wool and linen, which are culprits in the first murder in this world, are only not allowed to be used together as *shaatnez*, however are allowed to be used separately. These objects do not become prohibited; instead they are allowed to be used properly. The allowance of their proper usage is especially important for completion of the *teshuvah* process. *Ramchal* teaches us in *Derech Hashem* that since our souls stem from Adam *HaRishon*, we too are responsible to do *teshuvah* for the sin. According to *Rambam’s Hilchos Teshuvah* (2:1), “When is one’s *teshuvah* complete? If he has an opportunity to repeat a transgression, but instead he resists – not because of fear [of being discovered] or

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lack of strength – but because of his *teshuvah*, then this person’s *teshuvah* is complete.” By abstaining from consumption of (and furthermore even possession and receipt of any benefit from) chametz on Pesach, we are completing our part of the *teshuvah* process for Adam *HaRishon*’s sin, which was eating *lechem* from the *eitz hadaas* during the time when it was not allowed. In other words, *matzah* on Pesach is used in a similar fashion as the *parah adumah* is used for the *tikun* of *eigel hazahav*, the golden calf.

### **Concept of Creation and *Maaseh* of Creation**

This brings us to yet another question: If matzah is eaten as a *tikun* for the sin that happened on day of Adam’s creation, which we know is the first of Tishrei, Rosh Hashanah, why not eat matzah also on Rosh Hashanah? Instead of using bread, the actual culprit in the sin, and dipping it into honey, shouldn’t we use matzah instead?! There are many places in *Chazal* where the connection between Pesach and Rosh Hashanah is illustrated. The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b) refers to Nissan as Rosh Hashanah for arranging the months and leap years. This Gemara (ibid. 10b-11a) also records a dispute between R’ Eliezer and R’ Yehoshua as to when the world was created. R’ Eliezer is of the opinion that it was created in Tishrei (began on 25<sup>th</sup> of Elul and completed on first of Tishrei, six days later). R’ Yehoshua differs by saying that the world was created in *Nissan*. *Rabbeinu Tam* comments on this Gemara by saying that “these and these are the words of the living G-d, and one may say that the thought to create was formed in Tishrei, while the actual creation did not take place until Nissan” (*Tosafos, Rosh Hashanah* 27a). This idea of the conceptual creation of the world in Tishrei and actual physical *maaseh* in Nissan is further developed by other commentators. The *Torah Temimah* (*Bereishis*, Chapter 1) writes

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## *Darchei Noam*

that *birchas hachamah*, a prayer for the sun when it returns to its original position at creation, we recite in Nissan; yet we still refer to Tishrei as *techilas maasecha*, the beginning of Your (Hashem) work, since the thought of the creation occurred in Tishrei, and from the Divine perspective, there are no differentiations between thought and action; thus to Hashem, the world is considered created the moment the idea of its creation is conceptualized. *Aruch LaNer*, elaborating on *Rashi* on *parshas Bereishis*, says that Hashem thought in Tishrei to create the world employing the term "*Elokim*," strict justice; however, in Nissan the actual creation utilized "*Elokim*" and "*YKVK*", the attribute of Mercy. For this reason the first of Tishrei was designated as Rosh Hashanah, *yom hadin*.

Based on this new information, we can now answer our question of why we do not eat matzah on Rosh Hashanah, the day of the actual sin. As we see from what we just mentioned above, Adam might have been created in Nissan, and the sin of eating *lechem* from *eitz hadaas* might have also occurred in Nissan. Therefore, eating matzah in Nissan, as we do now, is most appropriate.

### **The mitzvah of matzah allowed us to take control of time**

I would like to bring in yet another thought, representing the deeper meaning behind the idea of matzah. As already mentioned briefly above, the difference between matzah and chametz is time. Rav Chaim Friedlander said that chametz represents a false perception of natural processes occurring by themselves without any outside intervention of man or G-d, *chas veshalom*. If flour and water are left to stand for more than 18 minutes before the dough is baked, yeast microorganisms from the air intrude into the dough, causing fermentation and the rising of the dough. To an average onlooker, it is nature at its

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best. To a *frum Yid*, it is a work of Hashem's concealed Hand. By not allowing the dough to become chametz, we take control of nature, we take control of time. Our hasty departure from Egypt was not only necessary to prevent our spiritual degradation to a point of no return, but also have the Jewish people take control of time and nature.

The *Maharal in Gevuros Hashem* explains that redemption had to occur in *Nissan*, as it is the first month, and first is the paradigm for all that follows it, since second, third, etc. months are always identified in relation to the first month. This idea is further illustrated by the first mitzvah given to us after *yitziat* Mitzrayim, the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh. This mitzvah symbolizes our control of time. Generally, when we perform a mitzvah, an ordinary object that is used to perform that mitzvah becomes elevated with a special sanctity. The object of the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh is “time.” Therefore, this mitzvah gives us control over time as we permeate it with *kedushah*. While other nations, referred to as *ovdei kochovim*, servants of the stars, are subservient to time, we, the Jewish nation, are subservient only to Hashem, who is above time, making us an eternal nation. This idea stems from the fact that originally Hashem took Avraham *Avinu* outside the realm and influence of time, “He took him out of this world and raised him above the stars” (see *Rashi to Bereishis* 15:5). It was at this time that Hashem promised Avraham that he will have a son, and that his descendants will follow his spiritual footsteps. By accepting the Torah at Har Sinai we completed this covenant, becoming an eternal nation. This holds true for both the the physical world, *Olam HaZeh*, as well as the future world of *Olam HaBa*.

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This idea fits beautifully with the other explanations of *chazal* on chametz. We see that chametz represents *avodah zarah* (*Zohar HaKadosh* 2:182), and the *yetzer hara* (*Ramchal*, based on *Berachos* 17a). Based on what I have mentioned above, it is one and the same. If one looks at chametz as a natural process, occurring all by itself, he falls into the trap of the *yetzer hara*, which tries very hard to mislead us from the *emes*. We read in the *Chumash* that the *Mitzrim* did not want to eat bread with the Jewish people, because they felt it repugnant to do so (*Bereishis* 43:32). The *Mitzrim* ate chametz and did not want to eat at the same table as Yoseph and his family, who ate matzah. The *Mitzrim* saw their full bread as a product of an outside natural force or god, which was lacking in the Jewish flat matzah. Therefore, during Pesach eating chametz and giving the process of fermentation any credence is a form of *avodah zarah*.

*Maharal* explains that the ten plagues parallel the ten statements of creation in a reverse order. The *asarah maamaros* are the words of Hashem that created the world; they are the creation of laws of nature. With every utterance Hashem created a veil of nature that would hide Him. It says in *Tanach* (*Yeshayahu* 19:22): "*V'Nagaf Hashem es Mitzraim nagof v'rafah,*" "...and Hashem struck *Egypt* with a blow and a cure" - "...a blow for *Mitzrayim* and a cure for *Yisrael*." says the *Zohar*. Every *makkah* was to punish the *Mitzrim* while at the same time to enlighten the *Bnei Yisrael* with Hashem's *Shechinah*. Every *makkah* paralleled the *asarah maamaros* in reverse order, and one by one, removed the layers of nature that covered Hashem's presence, until after the tenth and final *makkah* when Hashem's presence as the Creator of the World was felt. As it says in the *Chumash*, Hashem told Moshe prior to the *makkos* that He will make a mockery of the *Mitzrim* (to be told to future generations)

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and the whole world will know that “I am Hashem.” That Hashem is G-d and the Creator of all, not the sun, not the stars, not Pharaoh. After the ten plagues the Jewish people, *Mitzrim* and the whole world knew that Hashem is G-d and He controls nature. The next step, matzah, leaving in haste and the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh are one and the same, it served specifically for the Jewish people, to raise them “above the stars,” above nature and time.

***Tikun for the sin of meraglim still needed to bring Mashiach***

Let us return to the thought of our *tikun* of Adam *HaRishon*'s sin and take it a little bit further. We know from the *Ramchal* that every *neshamah* is sent down to this world to fulfill its unique role in *gilui hayichud*, the revelation of Hashem's Oneness. This had been the mission set before Adam *HaRishon*. When he failed to bring this about on his own, his collective *neshamah* and its mission was divided amongst all of the souls throughout all the generations until Mashiach. As I mentioned above, not only did Adam *HaRishon* fail to bring in Olam HaBa, where Hashem's Oneness would have been revealed, but with the sin of the *eitz hadaas*, he made that mission even harder. This mission was bestowed upon Avraham and his descendants. After spiritual elevation from the 49<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah* and acceptance of the Torah at Har Sinai, Klal Yisrael were able to reach the level of Adam *HaRishon* prior to his sin and completed the *tikun* for the sin. However, as we have already stated, we failed to compete the mission and to bring in the Mashiach, the current prerequisite for Olam HaBa.

The calamities that have befallen our nation since then are due to our nation's sins in the *midbar* – the golden calf and the *meraglim* – which led to the breaking of the *luchos*, delay of

entering Eretz Yisrael and more importantly, the coming of Mashiach. Every day that Mashiach does not come is due to the fact that we have not done proper *tikun* for our sins at the *midbar*. It is therefore important to understand which one of the sins is the culprit, the golden calf, the spies, or both, and to understand the sins themselves to be able to do proper *teshuvah*.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, shlit"za, Rosh HaYeshiva Yeshivat Har Etzion, in his *Shabbes Sichah* on *parshas Shelach*, said the following (summarized by one of his talmidim, Dovid Silverberg, 5755):

*"...Only twice until this point did G-d threaten to annihilate His nation and create a new "chosen people" - after the sin of the golden calf, and after the sin of the spies. In both instances, Moshe intervenes on the nation's behalf and succeeds in mitigating the punishment. Why did these transgressions provoke such fierce anger that G-d wished to eradicate Am Yisrael?*

*If national destruction was the proposed response to these misdeeds, then apparently these sins violated the very purpose and destiny of Am Yisrael. When heralding the exodus from Egypt, G-d is very explicit as to His plan for the newly emancipated nation: "I will take you as My nation and I will be your G-d... And I will bring you unto the Land..." (Shemos 6:7-8). Bnei Yisrael left Egypt with a binding commitment to become a nation worshipping G-d in Eretz Yisrael. They broke this twofold promise in two stages. With the sin of the golden calf, they rejected the service of G-d in favor of the worship of a physical image. Later, when the spies returned from their excursion into Eretz Yisrael, Bnei Yisrael refused to live up to the second component of their covenant, to dwell in Eretz Yisrael.*

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*Thus, through these two sins, Bnei Yisrael negated the central purposes of their redemption from Egypt...The sin of the golden calf and the sin of the spies had a lingering impact on Bnei Yisrael. These events brought about a permanent change in the character of the Jewish nation, since they had rejected the two central components of their destiny. From then on, every punishment of Bnei Yisrael would also contain part of the retribution [for their sins].”*

We have already talked about the sin of the golden calf, how it was to serve as a replacement for Moshe *Rabbeinu*, and what it was that led the people astray. However, I would like to suggest that it was not this sin that prevented the coming of Mashiach. As we say during our *selichos*, “*salachti ke’dvarecha*,” Hashem forgave us on Yom Kippur for the sin of the golden calf. Furthermore, Hashem gave us *parah adumah* as a *tikun* for the golden calf. We do not see, however, that Hashem had forgiven us for the sins of the *meraglim*. I would like to suggest that it is this sin of *meraglim* that is the underlying cause for all of our tragedies and misfortunes throughout history. Tishah B’Av has become the saddest day for the Jewish people, with many tragedies occurring on this day. Understanding the details of this sin is necessary for its proper *tikun* and our *teshuvah*, so that in the future we can prevent further calamities against our people and finally bring in the days of Mashiach.

The *meraglim* were the leaders of their respective tribes, so how could they have sinned this way?! Given this fact and that we have to judge fellow *yidden* favorably, we have to say that what they did, they thought they were doing the right thing and *lesheim Shamayim*. So what were they thinking and how did they err?

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I would like to suggest the following idea. There is a famous *sugya* in *Bava Metzia* (59b) where Rabbi Eliezer argues that a certain clay oven is *tahor*, while the Sages maintain that it is *tamei*. Rabbi Eliezer then said: "If the halachah is like I say, the carob tree should move a hundred cubits." The tree moved but the Rabbis said, "you cannot prove your point from a tree." Then Rabbi Eliezer said: "Let the river run upstream to show that I am right." The river reversed its course but the Rabbis remained unimpressed. Then Rabbi Eliezer said, "Let the walls of the *beis medrash* show that I am right." The walls began to collapse. At this point Rabbi Yehoshua rose and said: "Walls of the study hall, if rabbis argue with each other about the halachah what business is it of yours?" The walls stopped collapsing to honor Rabbi Yehoshua, but did not straighten in honor of Rabbi Eliezer. Finally Rabbi Eliezer said: "If I am right let Heaven confirm it." A heavenly voice issued saying, "Why do you contend with Rabbi Eliezer when the halachah is always like him?" Rabbi Yehoshua rose again and said, "*LO BASHAMAYIM HE!* – [The *Torah*] is no longer in heaven!"

While this *sugya* deserves a *drashah* of its own, the reason I cite it here is to illustrate the rational of the *meraglim*. To do that, first we have to understand what Rabbi Eliezer was trying to achieve by so persistently going against the Sages. The items that Rabbi Eliezer used for his proof will give us a clue into his reasoning and possibly, where he made a mistake. He used carob tree, river, and the walls of the *beis medrash*. Rabbi Eliezer was saying that he can survive on just plain fruit of the carob tree and water. The fruit of the carob tree has some sweetness to it, and even though modern science has shown it to have antioxidant activity, it does not provide much nutritional support. The walls of the *beis medrash* served as witnesses that Rabbi Eliezer was

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the first one in and the last one out, spending most of his time learning Torah (water further supporting this, as *water* is commonly represented as analogous to Torah). The point that Rabbi Eliezer was trying to make is that he does not need fancy food or any other physical sustenance but carob fruit and water, as Torah and spiritual “food” is all that he needs to survive. By implying that all that he needs is spiritual, he was rejecting the physical world. However, that is where Rabbi Eliezer made a mistake. If Hashem wanted us to be pure spiritual beings He would have made us into angels. He made us part physical and part spiritual. Hashem put us into this physical world and made this world for us to enjoy and to utilize for our *avodas* Hashem. We are to be *mekadesh* the physical world and not to avoid it.

Rejection of the physical world was also the mistake of the *meraglim*. For the past months since the Jewish people had left Mitzrayim, all their needs had been taken care of: water from a well (or other sources), *mann* from heaven (occasional quail) – no need to do anything other than study Torah, as all of their physical needs are taken care off. What the *meraglim* saw in Eretz Canaan scared them. They saw a land of giants, a land that needed to be cultivated, with work put into it, to grow produce. They brought back giant grape vines to show how much time, work and energy is going to have to be put in to produce such fruit. They would have to be involved in the physical world, toiling day in and day out, cultivating, planting, harvesting... All this will take away from their time learning Torah.

Don't get me wrong, learning Torah is very important. It is the most important act that we do. However, Hashem has created human beings to continue His creation of this world, as it says in *Bereishis*: “*asher bara Elokim laasos.*” Hashem then chose *Bnei*

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*Yisrael* from among the nations to represent Him in this world, to be “a light unto the nations.” It is through our study of the Torah that we perfect ourselves and through utilization of this Torah knowledge as we perform the mitzvos in this world that we are able to be “a light unto the nations,” as we perform *Kiddush Hashem* and exemplify proper, moral and ethical human behavior. It says in *Pirkei Avos*: “*Torah Im Derech Eretz*,” we need to do both, study of *Torah* and involvement of *derech eretz*, which is explained by many commentators to refer to our involvement in the physical world.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This idea has been brilliantly elaborated on by Rabbi Pinchas Friedman (in *Shvilei Pinchas* on *parshas Lech Lecha*, 5772). Analyzing the statement in Gemara *Sukkah* (28a) referring to *talmudic* debates as “*havayos d’Abaye v’Rava*,” Rabbi Friedman says:

*[It says in Berachos 48a:] Rabbah asked them, “To Whom do we direct our Berachos?” They replied, “To the Merciful One.” Next he asked, “And where does the Merciful One dwell?” Rava responded by pointing toward the ceiling. Abaye went outside and pointed toward the heavens. Rabbah said to them, “Both of you will grow up to be great Torah scholars.”*

*Let us try and understand the great wisdom inherent in the responses of the young Abaye and Rava – which impressed Rabbah so much that he immediately perceived and attested to their future greatness in Torah scholarship. In truth, they are not really disagreeing with one another. Rather, each of them is revealing a different facet regarding the service of Hashem – both are illustrations of Divine truth. My explanation is based on a principle found in the ingenious teachings of our master the Chasam Sofer addressing the pasuk describing Chanoch (Bereishis 5, 24): “And Chanoch walked with G-d; then he was no more, for G-d had taken him.” The Chasam Sofer comments that Chanoch, while still alive in this world, separated himself from all other human beings so as not to be corrupted by them. He remained isolated with HKB”H in sanctity and purity. As his reward, he ascended to heaven while still alive and was transformed into the “malach” Matat. In contrast, we do not find that Avraham Avinu ascended alive to the heavens to become a “malach.” For, he*

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### **Our *Kavanah* during Pesach Seder**

The *Rama* (*Orach Chaim* 476:2) mentions a custom of dipping an egg into salt water at the Pesach Seder as a sign of mourning for the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* on Tishah B'Av. This custom is based on the phenomenon that the first night of Pesach

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*chose a different path. Rather than remaining isolated all day long communicating with HKB"H, he chose to fraternize with others outside of his home in order to bring them closer to Hashem. As the Chasam Sofer explains, Avrohom Avinu realized that this was not the purpose for which man was created; he was not created for the purpose of ascending to heaven alive and transforming into an angel. HKB"H has myriads of angelic creatures above in the heavens. Hence, he created man to serve Hashem in the capacity of a human being. He is meant to associate with other human beings and to introduce them to Hashem and His Torah. Accordingly, we find that both Rava's and Abaye's viewpoints represent divine truth. Clearly, at the outset, one must act in accordance with Rava's point of view – immersing oneself in the study of Torah day and night. For, if a person does not engage in Torah study himself, he will not be qualified to guide and influence others. As we have learned (Bava Metzia 107b): "first correct yourself and then correct others." Nevertheless, after one has performed his due diligence – having toiled in the "beis-midrash" – he must step outside in accordance with the viewpoint of Abaye. He must draw others near, to learn Torah and to serve Hashem.*

*It appears that before HKB"H chose Avraham's path, two distinct viewpoints and paths existed in the world regarding the service of Hashem. Firstly, there was the view of Chanoch. He believed that a person should insulate himself from other human beings and remain isolated with Hashem alone and His Torah. Secondly, there was the doctrine adopted by Avraham. He opined that the glory of Heaven was enhanced by leaving the confines of one's house and spreading the name of Hashem and His Torah throughout the world."*

This fits beautifully into my explanation on the sin of the *meraglim*, they chose the path of *Chanoch* and not that of *Avraham Avinu*.

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always falls on the same day of the week as the night of the following Tishah B'Av.

At the Seder, as we drink the four cups of wine, eat the matzah and celebrate our freedom, we have to have *kavanah* that we are doing our part for the *tikun* of Adam *HaRishon's* sin. Furthermore, since each individual has a commandment to see him or herself actually leaving Mitzrayim, each one is personally experiencing Hashem's twofold commitment of "I will take you as My nation and I will be your G-d... And I will bring you unto the Land..." (*Shemos* 6:7-8). Our sins in the *midbar* infringed on our obligation to this commitment. Through our *teshuvah* process we were successful in reestablishing the first part of this commitment, becoming Hashem's chosen people and an eternal nation. However, the sin of the *meraglim*, still haunts us to this day. We have not yet done complete *teshuvah* for this sin and therefore, the second part of this commitment, our eternal residence in *Eretz HaKodesh*, has not been established.

As explained above, the key to the *teshuvah* process for the sin of the *meraglim* is to continue our *avodas* Hashem in the way of Avraham *Avinu*. That is, "spreading the Name of Hashem and His Torah throughout the world." This is accomplished through our diligent study of Torah combined with zealous and scrupulous performance of mitzvos and Kiddush Hashem. Only through utilizing both of the "ב's" of "לבבך", the spiritual and the physical, can we truly follow the footsteps of Avraham *Avinu* and become the "light onto the nations."

At this crucial time in our history it is crucial that we, the Torah observant Jews, be a light onto our own nation, Klal Yisrael. So that all the sons, the wise, the wicked, the simple, the one who

does not know how to ask, and the one who is not even present at the Seder, will all come back to the path of Avraham Avinu, the path of Torah and mitzvos, with *derech erez*, and we will once again be able to reach a level of *עם אחד ולב אחד*, be *zocheh* to bring in *Melech HaMashiach*, so that the next Tishah B'Av night will be a Yom Tov of rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash,

במהרה בימינו ... אמן.

## Beis Shemesh

### Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman

א] הנביא מלמד לנו איך הוכו הפלשתים באחזתם את הארון הקדש בשביה ואיך הוצרכו להניחו בשדה פלשתים שבעה חדשים עד שקראו לכהניהם לשאול איך להחזיר הארון למקומו. והכהנים יעצו אותם איך לנסות אם הנגעים באמת באו מהארון הקדש (שמואל-א ו, ז-ט):

(ז) וְעָתָה קָחוּ וַעֲשׂוּ עֲגֹלָה חֲדָשָׁה אַחַת וּשְׁתֵּי פָרוֹת עֲלוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָלָה עֲלֵיהֶם עַל וְאֶסְרֶתֶם אֶת הַפָּרוֹת בְּעֲגֹלָה וְהִשִּׁיבֹתֶם בְּנֵיהֶם מֵאֲחֵרֵיהֶם הַבְּיָתָה:

(ח) וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֶת אַרְוֹן ה' וּנְתַתֶּם אֹתוֹ אֶל הָעֲגֹלָה וְאֵת כְּלֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁבַּתְתֶּם לוֹ אֲשֶׁם תְּשִׁימוּ בְּאָרְגוֹ מִצִּדּוֹ וְשַׁלַּחְתֶּם אֹתוֹ וְהֵלֵךְ:  
(ט) וּרְאִיתֶם אִם דֶּרֶךְ גְּבוּלוֹ יַעֲלֶה בֵּית שְׁמֶשׁ הוּא עֲשֵׂה לָנוּ אֵת הַרְעָה הַגְּדוּלָה הַזֹּאת וְאִם לֹא יִדְבַעְנוּ כִּי לֹא יָדוּ נִגְעָה כִּנּוּ מִקְרָה הוּא הִיָּה לָנוּ:

ופשוט שהטעם שבחרו לשלוח הארון דרך בית שמש הוא משום שעיר זה היתה קרובה לארץ הפלשתים. אבל צריכים להבין למה היתה ההשגחה שנסיון זה יהיה דוקא בעיר בית שמש ולא שום מקום אחר בארץ. וכן צריכים להבין ענין הנסיון עם הפרות תלכו אחר בניהם או לבית שמש.

ב] הנביא ממשיך בתואר הנס שנעשה בדרך חזרתו (שם יב):

וַיִּשְׁרְנָה הַפָּרוֹת בְּדֶרֶךְ עַל דֶּרֶךְ בֵּית שְׁמֶשׁ בְּמִסְלָה אַחַת הֵלְכוּ הֵלֵךְ וְנָגְעוּ וְלֹא סָרוּ יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל וְסָרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים הֵלְכִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם עַד גְּבוּל בֵּית שְׁמֶשׁ:

וענין נס זה מבואר בגמרא (עבודה זרה כד):

מאי ״נִישְׁרָנָה״, אמר ר' יוחנן משום ר' מאיר שאמרו שירה, ורב  
זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב שישרו פניהם כנגד ארון ואמרו שירה,  
ומה שירה אמרו, אמר ר' יוחנן משום ר' מאיר ״אז ישיר משה  
ובני ישראל״, ור' יוחנן דידיה אמר ״ואמרתם ביום ההוא הודו  
לה' קראו בשמו״... ר' אלעזר אמר ״ה' מלך ירגזו עמים״. ר'  
שמואל בר נחמני אמר ״ה' מלך גאות לבש״.

וצריכים להבין ענין הנס הגדול הזה, ובפרט למה מדגיש הקרא שהיה  
״על דרך בית שמש״ דוקא. ויש להעיר שמיד אחר כך (שם כה.) הגמרא  
עוסקת בנס יהושע איך העמיד השמש כשנלחם עם חמשת המלכים  
הצרים על הגבעונים. ואף שרש״י מבאר המשך הגמרא משום דפליגי  
לעיל ר' אלעזר ור' שמואל בר נחמני, זה לכאורה דוחק משום שהיה גם  
אמוראים אחרים דפליגי בענין הפרות ואין להם דעה בענין העמדת  
השמש של יהושע. ובודאי יכולים לראות קשר בין נס הפרות ההולכות  
דרך בית שמש, ונס העמדת השמש של יהושע, וצריכים לבאר אותו.

[ג] ובשוב הארון לבית שמש בנסים גלויים, כתוב (שם יג-יד):

(יג) וּבֵית שֶׁמֶשׁ קִצְרִים קִצְרִי חֲטִים בְּעַמְק וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת עֵינֵיהֶם וַיֵּרְאוּ  
אֶת הָאָרוֹן וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ לְרֵאוֹת:  
(יד) וַהֲעִגְלָה בָּאָה אֶל שָׂדֵה יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֵּית הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַתַּעֲמֵד שָׁם וְשָׁם  
אָבָן גְּדוֹלָה וַיִּבְקְעוּ אֶת עֲצֵי הָעִגְלָה וְאֶת הַפְּרוֹת הָעֵלִי עֲלֶהּ לֵה':

והגם שנראה שאנשי בית שמש נהגו כשורה בשמחתם על החזרת הארון  
הקדש, ממשיך הפרשה (שם יט):

וַיֵּן בְּאֲנָשֵׁי בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ כִּי רָאוּ בְּאָרוֹן ה' וַיֵּן בְּעַם שְׂבָעִים אִישׁ  
חֲמִשִּׁים אֶלְף אִישׁ וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ הָעָם כִּי הִכָּה ה' בְּעַם מִכָּה גְּדוֹלָה:

והגמרא מבארת את חטא אנשי בית שמש (סוטה לה.):

משום דראו וַיֵּךְ, רבי אבהו ורבי אלעזר, חד אמר קוצרין ומשתחווין היו, וחד אמר מילי נמי אמור, מאן אמריך דאימריית ומאן אתא עלך דאיפייסת.

ורש"י מבאר את דעה הראשונה וז"ל, לא בטלו ממלאכתן לכבודו, ע"כ. וצריכים להבין הענין שלא הבינו אנשי בית שמש שצריכים לתת כבוד לארון הקדש. ולדעה השניה מבאר רש"י וז"ל, מי הכעיסך כשכעסת ולא הצלת את עצמך מן השבייה ועתה מי מפייסך כשנתפייסת לבא מאלך, ע"כ. ואלו דברים שלא ראויים לאמרם אפילו הפחות בישראל, ואיך הרהיבו לדבר כך אודות הארון הקודש. וכן צריכים להדגיש שהארון בא דוקא לשדה של איש הנקרא יהושע. וכבר ראינו שיהושע בן נון העמיד את השמש, ואיך שייך זה לעובדא זו של חטא אנשי בית שמש בשדה יהושע בית השמשי. והרמ"ד וואלי כותב וז"ל, אולי שיהושע הזה היה גלגול יהושע בן נון שהוא ממש בחינת ארון האלקים כי פני יהושע פני לבנה, ע"כ.<sup>8</sup> וצריכים להבין ענין זה.

דן ועיר בית שמש נזכרה גם בספר מלכים כאשר נלחמו מלך ישראל ומלך יהודה. כתיב (מלכים-ב יד, יא-יג):

(יא) וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲמֻצָּיָהוּ וַיַּעַל יְהוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּרָאוּ פָּנִים  
הוא וְאֲמֻצָּיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בְּבֵית שָׁמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לַיהוּדָה:  
(יב) וַיִּנְגַף יְהוּדָה לְפָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְסוּ אִישׁ לְאֹהֲלָיו:  
(יג) וְאֵת אֲמֻצָּיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בֶּן יְהוֹאָשׁ בֶּן אֶחָזְיָהוּ תָּפַשׁ יְהוֹאָשׁ  
מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּבֵית שָׁמֶשׁ וַיִּבְאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּפְרֹץ בְּחֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם

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1. והתוס' רי"ד כותב כאן, יש לומר הוא בית שמש הוא תמנת חרס, שהשמש נקרא חרס שנאמר (שופטים יד, יח), "בטרם יבוא החרסה", ע"כ. ותמנת חרס הוא מקום קבורת יהושע בן נון (עי' יהושע כד, ל).



**בְּשֵׁעַר אֶפְרַיִם עַד שְׁעַר הַפְּנֵה אַרְבַּע מְאוֹת אַמָּה :**

וצריכים להבין למה נלחמו דוקא בבית שמש, ומה הענין שאחר נצחון מלך ישראל פרץ את חומות ירושלים.

**שמש ולבנה**

וכיון ששם המקום הוא בית שמש והשדה היה של יהושע השם של המנהיג שהיה פני הלבנה, צריכים לבאר ענין השמש והלבנה.

ונתחיל בדברי הר' יוסף ענגיל באוצרות יוסף שלו, מאמר הלבנה (אות 1):

ארץ ישראל הוא בחינת לבנה, וזה רמוז בדבריהם ז"ל בסוטה (לד:), אמר ר' חייא בר אבא, מרגלים לא נתכוונו אלא לבושתה של ארץ ישראל, כתיב הכא (דברים א, כב) "ויחפרו לנו את הארץ" וכתיב התם (ישעיה כד, כג) "וחפרה הלבנה וגו', וזה אחד מן הטעמים על אשר לא הכניס משה את ישראל לארץ רק יהושע, וזה כי אמרו בכבא בתרא (עה.), פני משה כפני חמה פני יהושע כפני לבנה, ועל כן רק יהושע דייקא היה בחינת ארץ ישראל מה שאין כן משה היה למעלה ממדרגה זאת, ועל כן רק יהושע הכניסם לשם ולא משה.

ויש לבאר שהפסוק בספר ישעיה ממשיך "ובושה החמה", ואם כן למה הקיש משה רבינו בספר דברים את חטא המרגלים לבושת הלבנה ולא לבושת החמה. אלא ודאי משום שארץ ישראל דומה ללבנה ולא לחמה, ועל כן משה שפניו חמה הוכיח ישראל על קבלת דברי המרגלים שביישו את ארץ ישראל שדומה ללבנה. והענין שארץ ישראל דומה ללבנה הוא שהלבנה הוא סימן לשכינה כמו דאיתא בגמרא (סנהדרין

מב.) כל המברך על החדש בזמנו כאילו מקבל פני שכינה, ע"כ.<sup>9</sup> וגם כלל ישראל נמשל ללבנה כמו שאומרים בברכת הלבנה, "וללבנה אמר שתתחדש עטרת תפארת לעמוסי בטן שהם עתידים להתחדש כמותה, ולפאר ליוצרים על שם כבוד מלכותו." כי עבודתינו היא להמליך הקב"ה על כל הארץ. ועכשיו מלכות שמים היא נסתר כמו הלבנה שאינו מלא, וגם קדושת כנסת ישראל נפגמה כמו פגימת הלבנה. ומקום עבודתינו הוא ארץ ישראל שיש בה מעלות ומרדות (עירובין כב:) הדומה גם ללבנה. ומדרגת יהושע היתה פני לבנה כי הוא היה ראוי להנהיג את ישראל באופן זה. אבל משה רבינו היה דומה לפני חמה, שאורו קבוע בלי שינוי. ועל כן היתה מדרגתו מדרגת מדבר בנסים גלויים תמידים.<sup>10</sup>

ואיתא בכתבים שגם הארון הקדש מבחינת הלבנה.<sup>11</sup> והיינו שהארון הקדש הוא הכלי שמגלה אורו של תורת משה. וזאת ניכר על ידי הכרובים שפונים פנים אל פנים כשעושים רצונו של מקום, ואחוריים כנגד אחוריים כשבטלו עבודת ד'. ואם כן מובן שהארון הוצרך להיות בשדה של איש הנקרא יהושע, ובפרט לפי דברי הרמ"ד וואלי הנ"ל שהיה גלגול יהושע בן נון, שהיה פני לבנה. אבל מקום יהושע הזה היה בית שמש, שהיה צורך ליחד את עבודת ארון הקדש עם מדרגת שמש.<sup>12</sup>

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2. ובפשטות אין ענין כזה בברכת החמה משום שהחמה אינו דומה לשכינה. אבל עיי' ספר ברכת החמה, פרק ד' הערה יא.

3. ולענין שמש ולבנה עיי' מש"כ בעד"צ על רות, מילואים כ.

4. עיי' ע"ח שער מיעוט הירח (פ"ג קד.), מלכות נקראת ארון, ע"כ. וע"ע ספר הליקוט' פ' תרומה ס" כה.

5. עיי' דברי רמ"ד וואלי וז"ל, עליתו של ארון האלקים שהיתה עד הת"ת בסוד "בית שמש" היה צריך להתנשא עוד ולעלות עד הבינה "מי" דיקא. וז"ס "ואל מי יעלה מעלינו", ע"כ.

החזרת הארון לבית שמש

ובזמן זה היה אור של הארון הקדש מתחזק עד שגם הפרות הנושאות אותו אמרו שירה, כדאיתא בחז"ל (זוה"ק ח"א קכג.):

הני ארונא הוה על גבייהו וכיון דארונא אשתקיל עלייהו ושוייה לעילא אנון שרירו שירתא דהא כיון דאתנטיל מנייהו ארונא הוה געאן כארז שאר פרות דעלמא ולא אמרו שירתא.

והיינו שכל כח שירה שלהם היה מחמת הארון.<sup>13</sup> ובספר ארץ חמדה מבאר עוד:

ניתן להסמיך החכמה שניתן לפרים הוא מכח נשיאת הארון וכמו שמצינו במדרש רבה (שמות מח, ב) כל מי שנתעסק במלאכת המשכן נתן בו הקב"ה חכמה ובינה ודעת שנאמר "ויעשו כל חכם לב" ולא בבני אדם אלא אפילו בבהמה ובחיה שנאמר "חכמה ותבונה בהמה", "בהמה" כתיב, שנתנה חכמה באדם ובהמה.

וזה הטעם שרצו הפלשתים לנסות ההשגחה אם יחזרו הפרות הארון לבית שמש דוקא. כי אם הוא אמת שאור הארון הוא חזק עד שמוכן להתגלות, מקום הגילוי יהיה בבית שמש. ואם הפרות לא הולכים שם עם הארון, זה מוכיח שכל הנגעים היו במקרה.

טעות אנשי בית לחם

וברוך זה יכולים להבין טעות אנשי בית שמש. דאיתא בחז"ל (במדבר רבה ה, ט):

ובזה היה להם תקנה שלא ימותו אם אינם מסתכלין בארון, הדא

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6. וכותב הבעל הטורים עוד (בראשית לג, יג), אותם פרות ששלחו אותם פלשתים היו מעין הפרות של יעקב ודוד, ע"כ.

הוא דכתיב "ולא יבאו לראות כבלע וגו' " זה הארון... תדע מאנשי בית שמש כי ראו בארון ה' "ויך בעם" וגו'... ר' לוי אמר נכפפה היריעה שעל הארון וראו בו.

והיינו שיש חיוב לכסות את הארון כמו שיש כסוי ללבנה. וכמו שמי שמסתכל בשמש יוזק, כן המסתכל מארון הקדש. אבל אנשי בית שמש, שהיו מדרגת שמש, סברו שהם כן יכולים לראות הארון בלי כסוי כשהיה נוסע להם באור גדול.<sup>14</sup> וכן המהרש"א מבאר דברי הגמרא שקוצרין ומשתחווין היו, וז"ל, היינו דאמר שראו הארון בדרך קוצרים ומשתחווים ולא נפלו על פניהם שלא לראותו דרך חרדה ויראה אבל עמדו זקופים וראו ושמחו כמפורש בסוף המקרא, ע"כ.

ובדרך עבודה יש לבאר שזה היה באמת המדה של מקום בית שמש בארץ ישראל, והיינו מקום שיכולים להתקשר עם השפע בלי כסוי והסתר. ובגמרא איתא (שבת קנו.), האי מאן דבחמה יהא גבר זיוותן, יהי אכיל מדיליה ושתי מדיליה ורזוהי גליין, ע"כ. והיינו שיש לו שייכות עם השפע בגלוי. ומפני שמצאנו בקרא איך היו עוסקים בשמחה בקצירת תבואתיהם, כמו השמש שכתוב בה (תהלים יט, ו), והוא כחתן יצא מחפתו ישיש כגבור לרוץ ארח.

אבל דרך עבודה הרגיל בעולם הזה הוא בדרך הלבנה, ואיתא בגמרא (שם), האי מאן דבלבנה יהי גבר סביל מרעין בנאי וסתיר סתיר ובנאי אכיל דלא דיליה ושתי דלא דיליה ורזוהי כסיין, ע"כ. והיינו שקבלת

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7. וכן איתא בילקוט שמעוני (שם, בשם' תנא דבי אליהו יא) :

כיון שראו היה להם ליטול את בגדיהם ולהניח על פניהם וליפול לפניו שעה או שנים או שלשה עד שיתכסה הארון של מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה והם לא עשו כן אלא כשראו היו שוחקים זקופים ומרקדים ומדברים דברים יתרים שנאמר ובית שמש קוצרים.

ומפרש המהרש"א, והיינו דאמר שראו הארון בדרך קוצרים ומשתחווים ולא נפלו על פניהם שלא לראותו דרך חרדה ויראה אבל עמדו זקופים וראו ושמחו כמפורש בסוף המקרא.

השפע שלו בא בעקיפין ובהסתר, כי עכשיו אור ה' גנוז ולא גלוי.

ואנשי בית שמש חשבו שכיון שהארון חוזר דוקא למקומם ובגילוי עד שגם הבהמות היו אומרים שירה, שיכולים להמשיך בעבודתם כרגיל. אבל באמת הארון היה עדיין בבחינת הלבנה הצריכה כיסוי אלא שהיה במדרגת עלייה. ועל כן באה העגלה דוקא לשדה יהושע בית השמשי. ויש לומר שאם הארון מסמל עבודה הרגילה של ירידות ועליות, כשמצטרף עם בית שמש המסמל תמידיות, צריכים להיות תמיד עוסקים בדרכי עלייה. ואנשי בית שמש טעו והתמידו רק במדרגתם הרגילה.

ובספר ישמח משה מבואר עוד (מצורע יז):

הנה נאמר (שמואל-א ו, יט) "ויך באנשי בית שמש מכה רבה". והוא משולל הבנה דלמה זה, הלא שמחו שמחה של מצוה שבא הארון. אך נראה על פי מה שהקדמתי בכמה דרושים... ומקורו מהגמרא (תגיגה ה:): דבבתי בראי "הוד והדר לפניו" (תהלים צו, ו), ובבתי גוואי "המשל ופחד עמו" (איוב כה, ב), עמו דייקא. והנה העבודות בשמחה הוא דבר יקר מאד, שנאמר (תהלים ק, ב) "עבדו את ה' בשמחה", ונאמר (דברים כח, מז) "תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה", והיא מחזקת האהבה כעין שנאמר (שיר השירים ז, ז) "מה יפית ומה נעמת" וגו'. אבל כל זה בבתי בראי, אבל בבתי גוואי המשל ופחד, והארון בבחינת בתי גוואי כמו שביארתי בדרושים הנ"ל, לכך ויך באנשי בית שמש כנ"ל. ויש לומר דנקראו אנשי בית שמש, על שם המאורע שעשו מעשה השמש שעובדת רק בשיר ובשמחה, אבל אין שם מקומה אצל הארון, והבן.

והיינו גם כן כדברינו שעבודת שמש היא בגלוי בבתי בראי, ושם בריחוק מקום יכולים לשמות. אבל עבודת לבנה אור בהסתר, ועל כן שייכת קורבה גדולה ואז צריכים יותר יראה. ויש להסביר זה על פי

הגמרא (ברכות לד:) מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדין, ע"כ. והיינו שמי שיש לו ירידות ועליות יכול להתקרב יותר להקב"ה ממי שהוא צדיק גמור תמיד.<sup>15</sup>

### מלחמת יואש מלך ישראל ואמציה בן יואש מלך יהודה

ובדרך זה יכולים להבין איך הכה מלך ישראל את מלך יהודה דוקא בבית שמש. כי דוד המלך הקים עולה של תשובה (עבודה זרה ה.). ועוד, כותב האוצרות יוסף (א) שדוד הוא סימן לקידוש החודש כמו דאיתא בגמרא (ראש השנה כה.), אמר ליה רבי לרבי חייא זיל לעין טב וקדשיה לירחא ושלח לי סימנא דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים, ע"כ. ואם כן כשבא מלך יהודה לבית שמש יש לו חסרון [אף על פי שבית שמש היא בחלקה של יהודה]. ועל כן מלך ישראל בא אחר כך לירושלים מקום המקדש הדומה ללבנה.

אבל יש להוסיף שהשרש של אותו מעשה התחיל באביתר הכהן הגדול. דאיתא בגמרא (סנהדרין צה.):

מנא ליה דכלה זרעה דדוד דכתיב (מ"ב יא, א) "ועתליה אם אחזיה ראתה כי מת בנה ותקם ותאבד את כל זרע הממלכה," והא אשתייר ליה יואש התם נמי אשתייר אביתר דכתיב (ש"א כב, כ) "וימלט בן אחד לאחימלך בן אחיטוב ושמו אביתר," ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב אלמלא נשתייר אביתר לאחימלך בן אחיטוב לא נשתייר מזרעו של דוד שריד ופליט.

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8. ועי' הרמ"ד וואלי:

ואולי שהיו הגלגול של אצילי ישראל שנסתכלו פעם אחרת בשכינה ואז לא נענשו כדי שלא לערבב את שמחת התורה כענין שנאמר "ואל אצילי בני ישראל לא שלח ידו ויחזו את האלקים ויאכלו וישתו". ועכשיו ההסתכלות החדש הזכיר את הישן ונתגלגל עליהם את הכל.

והיינו שזכות חיים של יואש אבי אמציה היתה הצלת אביתר הכהן כחורבן נוב עיר הכהנים.

ובעד"צ על רות (מלואים כ) ביארנו שאביתר הכהן היה מדרגת עבודה מעוני, בחינת הלבנה במיעוטה. ועבודה זו שייכת לדוד המלך שהיה גם כן בחינת דל (כמרומו בשמו דל"ת וא"ו דל"ת).<sup>16</sup> אבל כאשר מלך שלמה בכל העושר שלו, בבחינת הלבנה במלואו, שוב לא היה מקום לכהן עני כאביתר לשמש בכהונה גדולה. ואם כן מסתבר לומר שיואש המלך שניצל בזכותו היה גם כן במדרגת לבנה.

וביארנו עוד (שם סימן סז) איך שהטמינו את יואש בחדר המטות (מלכים-ב יא, ב), דהיינו בקדשי הקדשים אצל הארון הקדש. שגם יואש היה מדרגת הלבנה כמו ארון הקדש. אבל איתא במדרש (תנחומא וארא ט; וע"ע שמו"ר ח, ב) שנתגאה לעשות עצמו אלהות, והיינו שחשב שהוא במדרגת שמש המשפיע כמו הקב"ה. וסופו שעשוהו גרוע ממדרגתו האמיתית עד שנבעלה כאשה, ודו"ק.

ואודות בנו אמציה כתיב (מלכים-ב יד, ג), "ככל אשר עשה יואש אביו עשה". ואם כן גם אמציה היה מדרגת הלבנה.<sup>17</sup> אבל כשנתגאה אחר הכהת אדום בגי מלח, רצה להלחם גם עם מלכות ישראל. וחשב שיכול לנצח את מלכות ישראל בבית שמש דוקא, שהוא מקום השמש בגבורתו, כנ"ל. אבל נלכד בטעותו וגם את חומות ירושלים, מקום

9. ובאור החמה על זזה"ק (ח"א סג): מביא בשם הרא"ג וז"ל:

שכל הימים שדוד היה נרדף מפני שאול והיה עני ומדולדל שכן שלח לנבל לאמר שיתן לו איזה דבר היה הולך עמו אביתר והיה סובל כל אותם הסיגופים והעוני וכמשה"ה (ש"א כב, כג) "אשר יבקש את נפשי יבקש את נפשי".

10. ואפשר שזה גם זה שייך לנסיון הפרות שלא הלכו אחר בניהם אלא נשאו את הארון לבית שמש. וגם אודות אמציה כתוב (ע"ש יד, ה-ו) שהכה רק העבדים שהכו את המלך אביו, אבל לא בניהם.

הלבנה, נפרץ על ידי מלך ישראל.<sup>18</sup>

ואם כן זכינו ללמוד ששרש המקום בית שמש הוא עבודה של גילוי ושמחה חיצוני. ובעבודה כזה מתמידים במדרגות שקונים בבחינת צדיק גמור שאינו חוטא. אבל עבודה כזו יכולה להביא גם לגאווה וגם לחסרון בכבוד שמים בזמן שההשגחה צריכה להיות בהסתר וביראה.

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11. ויש להעיר שפרשת המלחמה מתחיל (שם יד, ח) "אז שלח אמציה" וכו'. וגם בפרשת העמדת השמש של יהושע כתיב (יהושע י, יב), "אז ידבר יהושע לה' ", ואיתא בחז"ל איך שלשון "אז" שייך לשירה, שיהושע אמר שירה תחת השמש לפי שאמר לשמש דום (עי' רש"י שם).  
ויש גם כן קשר בין רציחת נוב עיר הכהנים שאחר כך נעקר המשכן לגבעון, מקום העמדת השמש. ונבאר ענין זה בס"ד בפרק על מקומות הללו.



# ***Sponsors***



לעילוי נשמת

## יעקב אליהו בן דוד ע"ה ניימאן

י ליד באלטימאר מעורב עם הבריה

ע וד בנערותו שימש גדולים בתורה

ק יים מצות בשדה מלחמה

ב אשת נעוריו שמח נ"א שנה

א ח נאמן עד דשבק חיים

ל אחר שנעשה ע"ז בשנים

י סורים סבל בסבר פנים

ה ניח אחריו בנים ובני בנים

ו כולם עוסקים בתורה וחסדים

נפטר בשם טוב ח' שבט תשס"ה לפ"ק

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

In honor of our dear mother,

**Deborah Naiman (Klein)**

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

Love,

Irvin and Eleanor,

Yehudah Mayer, Atara, and family

Avrami, Jen, and family,

and **Fayge**

In appreciation of the

**Rav and the Rebbetzin**

by

**The Solomons**

In memory of

***Shlomo Yitzchak***  
***ben Pesach Reuven a"h***

by

**The Singmans**

In honor of

**the Rav, Gabbayim,  
and Kiddush Committee**

for their tireless efforts

in BMR

by

**The Sugars**

In honor of the  
**Rav and the *Maareches***

by  
**Mr. Eli Friedman and family**

---

לעלוי נשמת  
**אליעזר בן שלמה ע"ה**

**Louis Cooper**

by his son,  
**Label Cooper**