

# אוהל אברהם

*A Journal of*

דברי תורה

*in Honor of*

חג הפסח  
וחג השבועות

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**Congregation Beth Abraham**

Bergenfield, NJ

*Dedicated*

*in memory of*

*a wonderful husband and father*

Benjamin M. Strauss A'H

בנימין מאיר בן נפתלי ע"ה

*Claire Strauss and family*

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*Dedicated by*

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## Editors' Note

We are happy to present the *Ohel Avrohom* Volume 4 in honor of the upcoming *chagim* of Pesach and Shavuot. The *Ohel Avrohom* is a Torah journal of Congregation Beth Abraham written by members of our community. The erudition, thoughtfulness, and creativity of the articles submitted reflect the love and devotion to Torah that our community strives to achieve, guided by our *Rabbanim*, Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger and Rabbi Tanchum Cohen.

Thank you to all of those who contributed *divrei Torah* to the journal. To all of the sponsors of the *Ohel Avrohom* thank you for your generosity and commitment to communal Torah learning. Thank you as well to Dr. Barry Finkelstein, Zevi Fischer, and Aaron Sheffey for setting aside time to assist with the editing process.

Prior to engaging in the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah, we recite a uniquely formulated *bracha*. We ask - והערב נא ה' אלוקיני את דברי תורתך בפינו... - "Hashem, please sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths..." We ask G-d to enable us to enjoy and take pleasure from the words of Torah. The root ע.ר.ב can also mean responsibility to others, connoting a sense of community as in the phrase עֲרֵבִים זה לזה - "All of the Jewish people are responsible for one another." May the Torah generated by this journal be pleasing and meaningful, thereby enhancing our *simchat Yom Tov*, and may it serve to connect us to each other as a unified צבור.

Avie Schreiber

Seth Lebowitz

## A Message from the Rabbi

*Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Neuburger*

“How beautiful are your tents!” This *Pasuk* takes on precious meaning as we welcome the *Ohel Avrohom* volume 4 to all our tents and all our tables. This volume includes an increasing number of participants broadening our tent in the most positive manner, as it speaks to a growing appreciation of creative Torah study in our *kehilla*. For this we must be overwhelmingly grateful to Hashem *Yisborach*.

I thank all of you who took the time to contribute, and am extremely grateful to Rabbi Avie Schreiber and Seth Lebowitz for this yeoman’s task, as I am to their families for allowing Avie and Seth the time for this project. You have given us the venue through which we can formulate ideas and flesh them out as we ready them for the public. Your efforts allow us to share ideas that have inspired our davening, enlightened our seder tables, encouraged discussion at our yom tov tables or given us a “*geshmack*” moment of learning.

Most notably, the *Ohel Avrohom* adds a dimension to the Biblical mandate to make our holidays into “*mikra’ai kodesh*,” as explained by the Ramban. He interprets it to refer to the holy ventures that bring people together such as learning and davening together as a community.

We all know and appreciate how hard it is to find the time for communal projects, how daunting volunteering for communal work can be and how all consuming projects become before they are ready for the community. May Hashem bless them and their families with all the *berachos* that communal work can bring.

We are especially thankful to all of our sponsors who are singled out on the introductory pages. We thank them for their generosity and graciousness that made this project possible. In the merit of the Torah study and *Simchas yom tov* generated by this booklet, may Hashem fulfill all of your prayers *letovah l’yomim tovim va’aruchim*.

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## Begging the Question

*Moreinu HaRav* Yaakov Neuburger

We have often contrasted the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, the core of the seder night, with the year round mitzvah of *zechiras yetzias Mitzrayim*. Indeed, the Haggadah itself begs this discussion when it references the debate between Ben Azai and his colleagues regarding the nightly recital of the *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

We have, in the past, listed the many distinguishing features of Pesach eve, amongst them the length and detail of the Haggadah, the required order - to begin with disparaging events, and the question and answer format introduced by the *ma nishtana*.

The importance of raising questions on the seder night cannot be underestimated. We all know that we must recite the *ma nishtana* even if a child is not present. *Chazal* chose to preface the explanation of every mitzvah, this evening, with a quick question (*matzah al shum ma*). They instituted *karpas* to encourage questions and Rav Moshe Soloveitchik suggested that we can creatively introduce behaviors to raise our children's curiosity. According to the *Rosh*, our fulfillment of the mitzvah of teaching our children on the seder night rests on our success in encouraging their questions. Accordingly, we have satisfied our biblical obligation only if we have responded to their inquisitiveness.

Why is there so much emphasis on questions? Undoubtedly, raising the interest of our audience is vital to successfully transmitting our message. That is why every class begins with a "hook" and every speaker goes for the opening line. However, the requirement to recite the questions in the absence of an audience seems to "beg the question" as does training our children to memorize and recite the *ma nishtana*, well in advance of the seder.

One of the many insights that my father (*hk"m*) would share with us seder night, interpreted the emphasis on questions as a celebration of freedom. He would point out how a slave does not have the right to question. His is to do and not to ask. Whereas, a father takes pride in his child's inquisitiveness, the slave master sees it as impertinence. Considering alternatives, which generally advances every process and tool, can rattle the insecure and the apprehensive. Unfortunately, one does not have to travel too far in time and place to find curiosity and questions severely dismissed with a "frask" from an unnerved and misunderstanding adult.

Furthermore, it well serves the rulers of the slave society to stifle inquiry and thus suffocate the fertile grounds which could nurture any thoughts of independence. If you cannot question, you are doomed to accept. If you cannot question, you certainly cannot dream.

That is why on this night we celebrate our miraculous delivery with questions - encouraging questions, reading questions and even memorizing questions!

\*\*\*

Perhaps we quickly censure the “*rasha*” on this evening because instead of inquiring, he ridicules, and instead of trying to understand, he cynically dismisses. On the night when we celebrate the empowerment of questions, their irreverent misuse finds no place at our table.

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It seems to me that the seder includes several different types of questions: The *ma nishtana* records four observations and the “*tam*,” the third child, struggles to organize coherently the proceedings in which he is participating. The “*chacham*” - the wise son - cannot get enough information and equipped with all of his categories - “*edos*,” “*chukim*” and “*mishpatim*” he is ready and waiting for more direction. Rabban Gamliel instructs us to slow down and consider the meaning of what we are practicing - “*matzah zu al shum ma*”- “why do we have this matzah?”

Our redemption developed through these types of defined moments as well. Moshe observed the burning bush and the curiosity that it sparked within him, distinguished him. Hashem, apparently taken by Moshe’s curiosity (*Shemos* 3:4 – “And Hashem saw that he turned to see”), calls upon Moshe, and thus initiates the prophet and prophecy of our redemption. Similarly, we open our seder with the keen but hesitant observations of the *ma nishtana*.

Already distressed by the reckless and rude behaviors of a physically aggressive Jew, Moshe exclaims “*achen noda ha’davar*” (*Shemos* 2:14) which Rashi interprets as “Now I get it. Now I understand why they are being enslaved.” It would seem that not dissimilar to the question of the “*tam*,” Moshe, in his heart, was trying to make sense, “to wrap his mind around” the suffering of his brethren. Perhaps the Torah shares this with us so that we would see it as an important part of the grounding of Moshe’s career.

Surprisingly, Moshe engages Hashem during his very first prophecy, inquiring about Hashem’s various attributes (*Shemos* 3:13). The Haggadah, as well, presents the *chacham* to us as someone with unpredictable responses and an almost impulsive appetite for the information that he seeks.

Finally, according to Ramban (*Shemos* 5:22), the redemption does not proceed until Moshe asks why his people are suffering further and why his very efforts of redemption have brought greater pain and strife. Ramban explains that only one who is moved by the suffering of his people, hurting for the meaninglessness of their misery and troubled enough to question Hashem Himself, can represent Hashem and guide and teach His children. We too, acting under Rabban Gamliel's direction, cannot continue with our celebration until we have asked why matzah, why maror?

## Do Actions Really Speak Louder than Words? The Phantom of Pesach Preparations

*HaRav Tanchum Cohen*

The associations we have with Pesach preparation – and with battling *chametz* in particular – tend to be active ones. Vigorously cleaning and actively ridding our homes of *chametz* leap to mind first, and *bedikas chametz* likely comes in at second place. Yet it is *bittul chametz*, a distant third both in our associations and in activity level, which the *Gemara* seems to regard as the most central from an halachic standpoint. Over the course of this article we will grapple with this puzzle, investigating the “*kol chamira*” which seems to be mere words.

### I

Although *bittul* seldom appears in *mishna* and *baraisos*<sup>1</sup>, the *Gemara* clearly considers it to be highly potent: *mi-deoraysa, be-vittul be-alma sagi*, the *Gemara* (4b) tells us, *bittul* alone is sufficient at the *de-oraysa* level. How does a mere declaration substitute for an actual search-and-destroy protocol and render such protocol unnecessary *mi-deoraysa*? This shocking phenomenon is interpreted by classical *rishonim* in two different ways:

Tosfos<sup>2</sup> believes that *bittul* is simply an act of *hafkara*. I obviously do not violate *bal yeira'e u-val yimatzei*, the prohibition against owning *chametz* during the Pesach season, if that *chametz* has already left my possession and been rendered ownerless before the onset of Pesach.

Rashi<sup>3</sup>, Rambam<sup>4</sup>, and others contend that *bittul* is unrelated to the universal concept of *hefker*. After all, asks Rabbeinu David<sup>5</sup>, why would *chazal* invent a new term – ‘*bittul*’ – rather than employ the usual ‘*hefker*’. Moreover, the *baraisa* quoted on *Pesachim* (7a) suggests including *bittul* in one’s arsenal when *erev Pesach* falls on a *Shabbas* despite the fact that *kinyanim* are forbidden on *Shabbas*<sup>6</sup> and that this prohibition probably includes *hefker be-shabbas* as well. Finally, as Tosfos themselves admit, *hefker* may require

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1. עיל פני יהושע (ב. תוד"ה אור) עפ"י הר"ן (א. באמצע ד"ה אלא).

2. ד: ד"ה מדאורייתא.

3. ד. ד"ה חובת הדר.

4. הל' חמץ ומצה (פרק ב' הל' ב' ופרק ג' הל' ז).

5. ה: ד"ה הבודק.

6. משנה ביצה (לוי:) ובגמ' עלה (ריש לז.), ועיי"ש ברש"י (ד"ה משום).

certain conditions, such as an audience of three individuals, which *bittul* does not.

What, then, is *bittul*? These *rishonim* define it instead as an earnest declaration that my *chametz* is but *ke-afra*, no more meaningful than soil. Our practice is to recite both formulae of *bittul*: *libateil ke-afra de-ar`a* fulfills Rashi and Rambam's understanding, while *li-havei hefker* accomplishes that of Tosfos.

## II

Now that we have unearthed the mechanism of *bittul*, we confront the inverse problem. Since *bittul* is potent and sufficient *min ha-torah*, *bedika* and *bi`ur* now seem not only onerous but entirely unnecessary. What purpose is served by all the cleaning, searching, and burning if one can and will perform a simple *bittul* which can solve the *chametz* problem singlehandedly? Why does the opening *mishna* of *Masseches Pesachim* mandate universal *bedika* (and subsequent *bi`ur*): “*Or le-arba`a asar bodekin es he-chametz le-or ha-ner*”<sup>7</sup>

This second question will also yield to the *machalokes ha-rishonim* detailed above. Let us consider several solutions that flow from that *machalokes*.

1. In addition to the *issur* of *bal yeira`e*, proper *chametz* disposal can also fulfill a positive mitzva, *tashbisu se`or mi-bateichem*. According to Tosfos, *bittul* is only an end-run around the *lav* of *bal yeira`e*; one obviously does not perform the *mitzvas aseh* of *tashbisu* through *hefker*. *Bedika* and *bi`ur* are thus preferable, as only through them can one fulfill *mitzvas tashbisu*.<sup>8</sup>
2. Rabbeinu David argues that this holds true (namely, that *bittul* is solely a strategy to avoid violating the *issur bal yeira`e*, not a valid form of *mitzvas tashbisu*; as such, *bedika-bi`ur* are vital as the sole opportunity to fulfill this *mitzva*) even according to Rashi and Rambam's definition of *bittul* as a *ke-afra* statement. He explains as follows:

The concept that a *ke-afra* statement has any validity or meaning whatsoever actually seems both surprising and singular to *chametz*; certainly, verbally deeming bacon or *basar be-chalav* as soil permits me neither to eat the bacon nor to benefit from the *basar be-chalav*!!

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7. אבל מ"מ תיקשי דהו"ל לחז"ל לחייבנו בביטול ולא בבדיקה ובביעור ע"י הערה 1 למעלה, אך עיי"ש בהמשך דברי הר"ן.

8. וזה מלבד מש"כ תוס' בריש מכילתין (ב. ד"ה אור), דחז"ל תקנו בדיקה מחמת חשש דילמא אתי למיכליה.

The key to understanding lies in a comment of Rabbi Elazar (*Pesachim* 6b). Like all *issurei hana'a*, *chametz* automatically leaves the financial domain of its erstwhile owner at midday on *erev Pesach* at the onset of its *issur hana'a*: “*eino birshuso shel adam*”. Yet the Torah formulates a prohibition against owning *chametz* during *Pesach*, a seeming impossibility! This indicates, says Rabbi Elazar, that the Torah grants quasi-possession of the *chametz be-Pesach* to its prior owners to enable the possibility of violating *bal yeira'e*: “*asa'o ha-kasuv ke-illu hu birshuso*”.

Rabbeinu David<sup>9</sup> suggests that the Torah will not grant such “honorary ownership” at midday on *erev Pesach* if the owner has already registered his sense of disconnect from the *chametz*. Thus, ironically, Rabbeinu David’s *bittul* accomplishes the same goal as Tosfos’ *hafkara*, albeit through a different modality. By reciting *bittul* in advance of *zeman issur chametz*, I ensure that when the *issur hana'a* sets in, the *chametz* will naturally cease to belong to me (as is the case with all objects which are *assurim be-hana'a*), as I have already disabled the usual phenomenon of *asa'o ha-kasuv ke-illu hu birshuso*.

Rabbeinu David himself notes that he is therefore in agreement with Tosfos on the following point: *Bittul* is purely an avoidance mechanism. By performing *bittul*, I ensure that the *chametz* is not mine during *Pesach*. However, it does not contribute towards the positive *mitzva* of *tashbisu*. Only *bi'ur* does that, and therein lies the value of physical search and destruction.

However, Rashi<sup>10</sup> and Rambam themselves both write that *bittul*, namely the declaration of *chametz* as soil, constitutes the *mitzva* of *tashbisu*. Rashi adds that Onkelos translates the very word ‘*tashbisu*’ into Aramaic as ‘*tevattelun*’! This all leaves us wondering what purpose remains for *bedika* and *bi'ur* according to Rashi?<sup>11</sup>

3. Perhaps Rashi believes that *bittul* is only effective on certain sorts of *chametz*. Several *rishonim*<sup>12</sup> suggest that *bittul* only applies to unknown *chametz*. What you find, you must destroy; *bittul* only addresses the rest.

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9. שם, עפ"י דברי רבו הרמב"ן (ד:).

10. ד: ד"ה בביטול.

11. וע"ע בהע' 8, אך רש"י התם לכאורה פליג אתוס'.

12. על ר"ן (א. סוף ד"ה אלא), רא"ש (פרק א' ריש סי' י'), ועוד.

While this does respond to the above problem (the purpose of *bi'ur*), the *Kesef Mishne*<sup>13</sup> (responding to a *girsas* that has Rambam stating this limited view of *bittul*) develops a roster of *kushyos* against this opinion. Chiefly, he lists several sources in *Masseches Pesachim* that recommend *bi'ur* as a remedy for *chametz* which I know of but cannot directly destroy, such as *chametz* which is either physically inaccessible<sup>14</sup> or geographically distant<sup>15</sup>.

An appealing alternative appears in Rabbeinu Manoach's commentary<sup>16</sup>. He suggests that *bittul* can only act upon *chametz* which does not easily allow for direct physical destruction. This approach is consistent with the sources later marshaled by Rav Yoseph Caro in his *Kesef Mishne*, laying to rest the problems he raises. Moreover, this approach is logically compelling. My verbal *bittul* can only be meaningful only with *chametz* for which I cannot "do better"; otherwise, my choice to let my *chametz* be belies my verbal devaluing of that *chametz* and demonstrates the hollowness of that *bittul*.

\* \* \*

In summary, we recite a dual formula in our *bittul*, fulfilling both opinions on the mechanism and meaning of *bittul*: *hefker*, or a declaration of disinterest. *Bi'ur* is still necessary as well, either in order to fulfill the positive *mitzva* of *tashbisu* or to address the accessible *chametz* which does not yield to mere verbal *bittul*.

In this period which celebrates our ability to be increasingly proactive in our spiritual strivings and reinforces our reach and scope in following the strength of our convictions,<sup>17</sup> may *Hashem* power us to align both our speech and our activities with His interests and to access all our talents *lichvod bore'einu*.

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13. להל' חמץ ומצה (פרק ב' הל' ב')

14. ברייתא (ח).

15. משנה (מט.) וברייתא (ריש ז).

16. על הרמב"ם הל' חמץ ומצה (שם הל' א').

17. מכתב מאליהו (ריש כרך ב', ענייני פסח, "שורש נצחיות ישראל" – עמ' 21-22).

## Cleaning for Pesach: Tremendous Mitzvah or Totally Superfluous?

Rabbi Elchanan Grunwald

One of the most demanding questions in the months before Pesach is, “Do we really need to get rid of all those crumbs?” Does *לא יראה* and *לא ימצא* mean that not even the tiniest speck of *chametz* can be found? Or does it only apply to what is larger, and all that additional scrubbing and scouring is spring cleaning, which, while laudable, should not be confused with the mitzvah of preparing for Pesach.

At first glance this would seem to depend on the הלכה of חצי שעור. The first משנה of ביצה states clearly that the שעור of *chametz* is כזית. The gemara explains that this is referring to בעור (getting rid of) *chametz*. Now we know from עד דף יומא that חצי שעור מן התורה, that a fraction of the designated amount of something forbidden is also prohibited, just not with the same severity and consequences. So it should follow that *chametz* smaller than a *kzayis* is also forbidden and must be swept away. Indeed there are some opinions who limit this rule of חצי שעור to אסורי אכילה (forbidden consumption). Nonetheless, it may still apply to *בל יראה* being that the prohibition of owning *chametz* is about food. (There is an interesting question as to why the Torah prohibited owning *chametz* on Pesach. Is it because *chametz* creates such a conflict with Pesach that even owning it is something inherently wrong? Or is it that the Torah is trying to prevent people from violating the primary *Issur* of eating *chametz*?)

There are two famous *acharonim* who maintain that the *halacha* of חצי שעור does not apply to *בל יראה* owning *chametz*. The חכם צבי writes that the prohibition against חצי שעור only applies when by violating the *Issur* with a minute amount, the violator is showing that he wants to transgress, such as when someone eats half a *kzayis* of a forbidden food, showing that he enjoys eating the food. But *Bal Yay'ra'eh*, which one violates passively, simply by leaving the *chametz* around, does not show any interest in the *Issur* and one is not in violation. The שאגת אריה, סימן פא, suggests that there is no *Issur* of חצי שעור by *בל יראה* because one is only in violation of חצי שעור when he could transgress in full. For example, if one ate a half-olive size of *traif*, one could eat another half-olive size the next minute and would have transgressed in full. But by owning *chametz*, if one owns only a half-olive sized piece this minute, he could not be in violation for this minute. Even if he went and bought another piece of *chametz*, that would be a violation during the next minute, not this minute.

We should be able to prove the answer to this question from the gemara on 6b. The gemara quotes the *halacha* that even though one has done *bedika*, has searched for and destroyed one's *chametz*, one must still perform *bitul*. The gemara struggles to understand why. The first suggestion given is: since probably one hasn't gotten rid of all one's crumbs, *bitul* is to cover the unfound crumbs. The gemara rejects this, as crumbs are not a problem as they are automatically nullified due to their unimportance. A first glance at the gemara supports the position that *בל יראה* does not apply to *חצי שיעור*. However, a more careful look would support the opposite approach. The gemara does not say that crumbs are not a problem because of *חצי שיעור*, rather it suggests that they are automatically *hefker*. This implies that *חצי שיעור* is prohibited by *בל יראה*. Also, the defining size of crumbs may not be a *kzayis*. (However, see *חדושי רבינו דוד* who maintains that the gemara gave one of two possibilities and could also have said *חצי שיעור*.)

To summarize, there is a debate if one is required to get rid of a piece of *chametz* smaller than a *kzayis* because of *חצי שיעור*. However, there is a strong argument made by the *ז"ט* in *תמב"ו* that even if the *halacha* of *חצי שיעור* does not apply and there is no obligation *min haTorah* to get rid of it, there may still be an obligation *miderabanan* to get rid of it. According to the first Tosafos the reason chazal required *bedika* and *biur* is to prevent having *chametz* around and eating it accidentally. Since all agree that eating even a tiny piece of *chametz* is forbidden, then this requirement would apply to *חצי שיעור* as well. However, we can prove from the gemara on 6b that at least with regard to very tiny crumbs, there is no obligation to get rid of them because they are *hefker*.

There is a sugya in the third chapter on *דף מה* that appears to address this question. The gemara is speaking about a kneading bowl that has small pieces of dough stuck to it. There is an opinion that if the pieces are not edible and are not complementing the walls of the bowl, there is no obligation to get rid of pieces smaller than a *kzayis*. (This may be *min haTorah* because of *חצי שיעור*, or it may be *miderabanan* like the Taz.) See the *מגן אברהם* on the corresponding *halacha* (442:6), who brings a *Machlokes rishonim* whether this obligation to get rid of a piece smaller than a *kzayis* is only if there are several such pieces which jointly make a *kzayis* or if one is obligated to get rid of even one. This is precisely our question. See also *חק יעקב* ad loc.

The bottom line is that we are obligated to get rid of even pieces smaller than a *kzayis*, perhaps *min haTorah* and perhaps *miderabanan*. However, very small pieces (I believe smaller than the size of a cheerio) are not required to be removed because they are automatically *hefker*. If the *chametz* is dirty,

then as long as it is smaller than a *kzayis* one is not required to remove it. (See מגן אברהם above). However, this is only where the *chametz* will not come in contact with food. But where it might come in contact with food (kitchen counters, refrigerators, etc.), every crumb must be cleaned out (or covered up) so it does not enter the Pesach food.

The רא"ש (in the sugya mentioned above) concludes by saying: *Klal Yisroel* are holy people and they get rid of every bit of *chametz* even when not required. Perhaps the reason for this is that *chametz* is also symbolic of the *yetzer hara* or of arrogance, and just as we scrub and clean our homes, we should scrub and clean our *neshamos*. Nonetheless, I felt compelled to explain what is required by *halacha* and what is “extra credit” so we can all have a kosher and enjoyable Pesach.

## ***Tashbisu and the Issur Chametz***

Yossi Kra

The Torah obligates us to eradicate (*tashbisu*) *chametz* from our midst on *erev* Pesach (*Shemos 12:15*). Why?

### **Opinions of the *Rishonim***

The first *Mishna* in *Pesachim* introduces the *mitzvah* of *bedika*, searching for *chametz* on the night of *erev* Pesach. The *Mishna* focuses on the technical requirements without an explanation of the purpose.

***Rashi*** - *Rashi* explains the purpose of *bedika* is to avoid transgressing *bal yiraeh* and *bal yimatzei*, the *deoraysa* prohibitions of possessing *chametz* on Pesach.

***Tosafos*** - *Tosafos* maintains the *mitzvah* of *bedika* is only *derabannan*, and its purpose is to avoid the temptation to eat *chametz* on Pesach. We fulfill all *deoraysa* obligations through *bitul*, disclaiming possession of any *chametz* in one's possession. However, the Rabbis were concerned someone would find an attractive piece of *chametz* and eat it anyway. Therefore, they introduced an added requirement to also search and destroy *chametz* before Pesach. *Tosafos* elicits a proof from the *Gemara* (6b) that states that *bitul* is sufficient on a *deoraysa* level.

***Ran*** - The *Ran* contends that on a *deoraysa* level either *bitul* or *bedika* is sufficient. The *Ran* suggests that *Rashi* subscribes to this view. Therefore, *Rashi*'s position that *bedika* avoids the *deoraysa* prohibitions doesn't conflict with the *Gemara* quoted by *Tosafos* that *bitul* is sufficient, as there are two acceptable alternatives. The *Ran* then explains that there is a *derabannan* requirement to use both options.

In summary, on a *deoraysa* level, *Tosafos* maintains that *bitul* is required. However, *Rashi* as explained by the *Ran* maintains that one can fulfill his obligation with either *bitul* or *bedika*.

### **A Deeper Understanding of *Tashbisu***

The *Ran*'s explanation of *Rashi* requires additional elaboration. According to the *Ran*, why does *Rashi* reference the *deoraysa* prohibitions of *bal yiraeh* and *bal yimatzei*? *Rashi* should have explained the purpose of *bedika* is to fulfill the more immediate positive commandment of *tashbisu*!

It is difficult to suggest that *tashbisu*, *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei* are synonymous. If so, the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* has no significance and implications beyond adding a *mitzvas asei*, positive commandment, to the prohibitions of *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei*. However, the parameters of *tashbisu*, such as a specific day to complete a prescribed activity, suggest an added dimension. I would like to suggest two approaches:

***Tashbisu as a Preparation*** - The obligation of *tashbisu* could be a Biblical obligation to prepare for avoiding a severe prohibition. One invariably must remove from his possession any *chametz* prior to *Pesach* in anticipation of *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei*. The Torah introduces an additional commandment to eradicate *chametz* before *Pesach* as reinforcement.<sup>1</sup> Fundamentally, the objective remains simply to not possess *chametz* on *Pesach*.

Similarly, the *Rosh* (1:10) asks why there is no *berachah* of *shehechyanu* on the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu*. The *Rosh* explains that the sole purpose of *tashbisu* is to prepare for *Pesach*, and therefore is included in the *shehechyanu* on Yom Tov.

Accordingly, the *taam hamitzvah* of *tashbisu* is to prepare for *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei*, and *Rashi* is referring to the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, it seems that *Rashi* should have referenced the direct *mitzvah* being fulfilled, rather than alluding to the deeper reason for the *mitzvah*.

***Tashbisu as an Independent Mitzvah*** - *Rashi* may subscribe to a more profound understanding of *tashbisu*. We generally assume that *bedika* and then *biur* (destroying the *chametz* we find) are two interrelated actions that together accomplish one goal. After all, it would be counterproductive to search for *chametz* if that which we found was then preserved. Conversely, what is the point of destroying some *chametz* if other pieces may be lying around the house?

Perhaps, *tashbisu* has independent significance beyond mere disposal of what we find during the *bedika*. A dispute in the *Mishna* whether *tashbisu* can be fulfilled through any means of destruction or specifically through burning (21a)<sup>2</sup> best supports this notion. If a particular method is mandated, it seems that the process has

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1. There are other *Mitzvos* which may belong in this category, such as *Tosefes Shabbos*. A more complete analysis of the topics of *Gezeirah Min HaTorah* and *Hechsher Mitzvah Min HaTorah* are outside the scope of this article.
  2. The *Ran* brings several proofs that this dispute is on a *Deoraysa* level.

significance, and we are not only focused on the result. There must then be a purpose to the action of the destruction of *chametz*, beyond preparation for Pesach. The Torah requires a demonstration that *chametz* is unwelcome in our homes, through either a cognitive disassociation (*bitul*) or a physical display (*biur*).

If *tashbisu* has independent significance, we accomplish two goals with *biur*. Through the *bedika*, we rid the house of *chametz* in advance of Pesach to avoid *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei*. The following *biur* completes the practical *bedika* process and at the same time demonstrates a fundamental separation from *chametz*. With this understanding, it is conceivable that one could possibly fulfill *tashbisu* through *biur* without having previously completed a proper *bedika*.<sup>3</sup> Though we have fulfilled *tashbisu*, the lack of a proper *bedika* will result in violation of *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei*. Rashi is very precise when explaining that the purpose of *bedika* is (only) to avoid *bal yirae* and *bal yimatzei*. Rashi would not use the same language if the *Mishnah* were describing the *biur*.

### **Implications for the Prohibition of *chametz***

Taking the second approach a step further, we can ask - what is so bad about *chametz* on Pesach that the Torah would command an active destruction? This may depend on our understanding of *chametz* and *Matza* on Pesach.

The Torah records the dough did not have time to rise when we left *Mitzrayim* (*Shemos* 12:39). If the only significance of *Matza* is a memorial to this event, it is difficult to understand why *chametz* should be destroyed in an active demonstration. Presumably, achieving an environment free of *chametz* through any means would be sufficient to highlight the exclusive presence of *Matza*, as noted in the *Mah Nishtana*.

However, we start our *Seder* on Pesach night declaring another dimension of *Matza*. *Ha Lachma Anya* describes *Matza* as the food our forefathers ate while they were slaves, unrelated to the events of leaving *Mitzrayim*. By contrast, *chametz* represents a life a freedom and luxury.

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3. The aforementioned *Rosh* similarly has an initial suggestion that *Biur* alone fulfills the *Deoraysa* of *Tashbisu* even if without a previous *Bedika*. The *Rosh* then rejects that approach based on the placement of the *Berachah* before the *Bedika* and posits a novel interpretation that *Tashbisu* only applies on a *Deoraysa* level when *Chameitz* is burned after the *Zman HaIssur*. Interestingly, the *Magen Avraham* (O.C. 432:2) records an opinion of the *MaHarik* that in fact the *Berachah* should be recited before the *Biur*. However, there are a number of variables that influence when the *Berachah* is recited which are outside the scope of this article.

Further, *chametz* and *Matza* have applications independent of Pesach and unrelated to *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Almost all *Korbanos Mincha* must be made of *Matza* and can't include *chametz*. The *Sefer HaChinuch* (117) speculates that *Matza* symbolizes urgency and alacrity while *chametz* can only be prepared with a waiting period and symbolizes a form of laziness.

With this perspective of *chametz*, we can understand the requirement of *biur*. A basic explanation would be that we are disassociating ourselves from a life of luxury as we prepare to relive slavery personally as part of the Seder. Alternatively, perhaps homiletically, as we enter *Z'man Chayrusaynu*, the Holiday of Freedom, we declare that true freedom is not a life of luxury but rather a life of vigilant *Shemiras Hamitzvos*.

## The Power of Renewal

Jonathan Kaplan

As we sit down to another Pesach Seder we must ask ourselves - why are we doing this again? What is so important about retelling the story of the exodus from Egypt?

The truth is that remembering the exodus is not limited to the night of the Seder, but rather, all of our holidays and Shabbatot act as reminders of the exodus. Additionally, every day and every night we remind ourselves of *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* as it says in the third paragraph of Shema - "I am HaShem your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your G-d. I am HaShem your G-d."

What is clear is that *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* is fundamental to our faith as Jews. What is it about this event that necessitates us to refer back to it constantly? The simple answer is that we became a nation through the exodus experience. In other words, it defines who we are as a people. Therefore, we are compelled to take a closer look at this event so that we can better understand who we are as a people and the nature of our special relationship with Hashem.

Rashi at the beginning of his commentary on Chumash quoting Rabi Yitzchak, formulates a very interesting statement:

א) בראשית - אמר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל [את] התורה אלא (שמות יב ב) מהחודש הזה לכם, שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו [בה] ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בבראשית, משום (תהלים קיא ו) כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים, שאם יאמרו אומות העולם לישראל לסטים אתם, שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, הם אומרים להם כל הארץ של הקב"ה היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו.

The Torah should have begun from the first mitzvah commanded to us as a people - the mitzvah of *Kiddush Hachodesh* - using a lunar calendar. Why did the Torah start from the creation story? Rashi tells us that Hashem wanted to convey to us the power of His ways. Additionally, he wanted to insure that there would be no doubts over our rights to the land of Israel.

The fact that Hashem started the Torah, a book primarily of directives, with *Sefer Bereishis*, a book of stories, bothers Rashi. What is the practical application of recording the story of creation? The Maharal, in his commentary *Gur Aryeh*, explains that since the majority of *Mitzvot* are dependent on the land of Israel, then Hashem has to establish the Jewish people's right to the land. We still need to explain, however, Rashi's statement "כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו" – The power of His acts he told to his own

people.” What imperative message do we, the Jewish people, need to learn from the story of creation?

Rav Moshe Shapiro explains that Rashi is teaching us a much deeper lesson. What is the significance of the first mitzvah commanded by Hashem to the Jewish people - *Kidush HaChodesh*? Usually, that which comes first sets the stage for that which follows. What is unique about the mitzvah of *Kidush HaChodesh* that causes it to come first? And further, the Torah introduces this mitzvah in the context of *Geulat Mitzrayim*. What is the connection between *Kidush HaChodesh* and the redemption from Egypt?

The *Baal Haggadah* states –

וְיוֹצֵאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם - לֹא עַל יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שָׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ, אֲלָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְעִבְרָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, וְהִפְיֵתִי כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאֲדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים. אֲנִי ה'.

"**And Hashem took us out of Egypt,**" not through an angel, not through a seraph and not through a messenger. The Holy One, blessed be He, did it with His glory by Himself!

Normally, Hashem runs the world via messengers but in the case of the exodus from Egypt He acted Himself. What does - *בְּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ* – “In His glory and by Himself” mean? To what does each of these terms refer? From the text in *Shemot* we see two names used for G-d. One is *Elokim* and the other is *YKVK* (the transcendental aspect of Hashem). The name *Elokim* is the name that expresses *Kavod Hashem* - *בְּכְבוֹדוֹ* (Hashem’s Glory). The name *YKVK*, on the other hand, is an expression of Hashem in his essence, *בְּעֶצְמוֹ*

The Torah uses these two names - *Elokim* and *YKVK* - in the creation of the world, indicating G-d’s direct involvement. In the story of creation, we see the name *Elokim* used 32 times. The Zohar explains that this is the numerical value of *כְּבוֹד*. In Chapter 2, the name *YKVK* is introduced. We see that these two names are the model used for creation. Hashem’s direct involvement in the redemption teaches us that this too is an act of creation similar to the creation of the world.

*Chazal* stress the idea that in the creation of the world, Hashem created *Yesh MeAyin, ex nihilo*, something from nothing. Rav Shapiro explains that at the time of the redemption from Egypt, Hashem inserted within the existing creation the power of *Yesh MeAyin*, as well. The story of the redemption is a story of creation and rebirth. People, already alive, experienced a birth similar to an act of creation. In other words, the redemption from Egypt

introduced the power of renewal, not just change, but rather the power to become completely new, similar to *ex nihilo*.

It is for this reason that Hashem introduced *Kidush HaChodesh* as the first mitzvah. As opposed to the sun, which is constant, the moon, as we experience it, is in continuous fluctuation. Every month it reaches a point of complete nonexistence. It is from this state of nothingness that it emerges as a new creation. This mitzvah captures and exemplifies the power of the redemption from Egypt. This is what Rashi is telling us when he says - כח מעשי הגיד לעמו. Hashem started the Torah with the story of creation to teach us the model for creation, which Hashem utilized at the time of the redemption from Egypt. (It is for this reason that we celebrate Pesach in the spring as the physical world reflects this power of rebirth as well.)

When we return to the seder table on the holiday of Pesach and we re-experience Hashem's direct involvement, we must understand the gift that we were given. We have been empowered and mandated to continuously return and reconnect to this wonderful event so that we can ascend to our highest potential.

## The Transformation of a Nation

Rabbi David Flamholz

We are accustomed during this time of year to reflect fondly on the foundations of our faith and the great moments in our history that have created the unique relationship between כלל ישראל and הקב"ה. Surely, during the holidays of שבועות and פסח, as we celebrate the formation of our great bond with הקב"ה, the great revelation at הר סיני and the splitting of the ים סוף are foremost on our minds. It was at these times that a mutual commitment was formed, expressed by והייתם לי סגולה (שמות י"ה:) on the one hand and נעשה ונשמע (שמות כ"ד:) on the other.

It is surprising then, that the הגדה does not emphasize (and hardly references) these two great moments in our history as a nation. One would have expected more emphasis on either קריעת ים סוף or מעמד הר סיני or both in the הגדה. Yet, one must search carefully to find any reference in the הגדה to either one of them.

Perhaps we can answer this question based on a fascinating חידוש of the משך פרשת בא in חכמה.

The sudden and seemingly arbitrary switch from the word "אל" to the word "לא" in the following two פסוקים troubles the משך חכמה.

ט אַל־תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ נֶאֱבָשׁל מִבָּשָׂל בְּמַיִם כִּי אִם־צֹלִי־אֵשׁ רֵאשׁוּ עַל־כִּרְעִיו וְעַל־קֶרְבּוֹ:  
י וְלֹא־תֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בִּקֹּר וְהִנֵּתֶר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בִּקֹּר בְּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרְפוּ: (שמות יב:ט-י)

In פסוק ט, when the תורה is discussing the prohibition of eating the קרבן פסח, in any other form other than roasted, the תורה chooses to use the command form of "אל". In the next פסוק, however, when discussing the prohibition of leaving over part of the קרבן פסח until the next morning, the תורה switches to the more common command form of "לא". What is the reason for this switch?

The משך חכמה suggests that although the word "אל" is - like "לא" - a word that is used to introduce a prohibition, it is a more passive form and carries with it the connotation of a request. In a sense, the תורה is requesting us not to do something rather than commanding us not to do something.

The משך חכמה elicits many proofs to support this interpretation. One is that throughout תנ"ך, with regard to commands given by הקב"ה to בני ישראל (with the exception of the command above), the word "לא" is used rather

than the word "אל" (as is seen in almost all of the negative prohibitions in the תורה). However, our own supplications to הקב"ה typically begin with the word "אל". For example - אֶל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי; אֶל־תִּשְׁכַּח עַנְיִים (תהילים ייב) - אל" (תהילים כביב).

What then is the reason for switching from "אל" to "לא" in the two פסוקים above? According to the משך חכמה, it is because the prohibition concerning the קרבן פסח in ט prior to midnight - prior to and while מכת בכורות took place. In contrast, the prohibition of נותר in י applied to the morning after מכת בכורות took place. According to the משך חכמה, in that one night, a tremendous transformation took place *vis-à-vis* the relationship between הקב"ה and בני ישראל. In the course of that night, ה' demonstrated his השגחה פרטית over בני ישראל as He killed the Egyptian firstborn, while He carefully spared the firstborn children of בני ישראל. Over the course of that single night, the relationship between הקב"ה and בני ישראל transitioned from one of השגחה כללית (general divine providence) to that of השגחה פרטית (specific divine providence).

Therefore, explains the משך חכמה, prior to this transformation, הקב"ה could only request בני ישראל to follow His command to eat the קרבן פסח in the roasted form rather than raw or cooked. However, once הקב"ה demonstrated His השגחה פרטית and dominion over the nation through מכות בכורות, *mitzvot* are now formulated as commands and not as requests.

Thus, according to the משך חכמה, the true bond between הקב"ה and בני ישראל was not initially created at סיני הר מעמד or even at ים סוף. Rather, it was formed over the course of the night of the 15th, when הקב"ה killed all the firstborn Egyptians while sparing the firstborn Jews. It was during that night, that בני ישראל became a nation worthy of commands rather than just requests. For this reason, in our recitation of סיפור יציאת מצרים at the ליל סדר, the הגדה emphasizes the miracles of the night of the 15th - rather than those at סיני הר מעמד and ים סוף.

## Make Haste, But do not Hurry

Yossi Markovitz

The chronology of the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt has always puzzled me. We are taught that *Makat Bechorot*, the final and culminating plague bestowed upon the Egyptians took place at *Chatzot Ha'Laila*, at midnight. Presumably, 12:01 AM would have been a great time for the Jews to haul it out of their oppressive host country.

In fact, Pharaoh begged the Jews to leave immediately, during the night, while the firstborn were still dying. However, Moshe told him that they refused to leave in the dead of night, like thieves, or like escaped slaves. *Bnai Yisrael* would leave the next morning, on the fifteenth day of Nisan, and everyone would know they were being released.

Here's where it gets tricky. The stated reason for eating *Matzah* is that "in our rush to leave we did not give our dough time to rise", often quoted as, "*Ki B'Chipazon Yatzatem Mi'mitzrayim.*" Even the *Rambam's Haggadah* which he records at the end of *Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah* begins with the words, "*B'vehilu Yatzatem Mi'mitzrayim.*"

Wait a minute! Why were *Bnai Yisrael* in such a rush if they had already told Pharaoh that they were leaving at their own pace? It seems that *Chipazon* might not have been an external requirement but an internal discipline.

Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm elegantly develops this idea in a speech he delivered in 1958 at Congregation Kadima in Springfield, Massachusetts. He cites a disagreement between R. Akiva and R. Elazar ben Azaria in *Berachot* (9A) about the proper time to complete eating the *Korban Pesach*, based on the Torah requirement to eat it *B'Chipazon* (there's that word again!) R. Akiva posits that it means until dawn, whereas R. Elazar ben Azaria opines that we are to rush through the meal and finish by *Chazot*. The *Gemara* explains that R. Akiva is basing himself on *Chipazon D'Yisrael*, while R. Elazar ben Azaria is calculating based upon *Chipazon D'Mitzrayim*.

On a simple level, *Chipazon D' Mitzrayim* means the time that Pharaoh wanted us out of his country and *Chipazon D'Yisrael* refers to Moshe's alternate schedule. Therefore, we can answer our original dilemma by understanding that the lack of time for the dough to rise was not due to the Egyptians expelling us from their land. Rather, the *Matzah* is a product of

our deliberate rush to leave the impurity of Egypt and resume our service of *Hashem*.

However, Rabbi Lamm brings out a much deeper and more relevant approach. He writes:

I use two different words to describe the right and wrong kind of rushing: HURRY and HASTE. Our unhappy, mad rush through life is a HURRY, an anxious scramble to hide the void and emptiness of life and disguise it lest we come face to face with its utter barrenness. This is not what the Torah recommends on Passover. On the contrary, when it comes to HURRY, Judaism tells us to take it easy and to digest our meal through *Heseiva*, thru reclining in an aristocratic fashion. When the Torah commands *Chipazon*, it means HASTE, or “deliberate speed.” It means not to waste time and fritter away your years in nonsense but to proceed directly to the core of your life, to uncovering its inner meaning. The man who rushes to play cards is in a HURRY. The man who rushes to *shul* is in HASTE.

This profound idea is even more relevant today than it was over a half-century ago. Our lives are exponentially faster paced than the previous generation. We all multi-task on an unprecedented level, aided by the speed and access of technology. Of course, mobile computing devices are important for earning a living, but have we taken our alacrity too far? Have we replaced the HASTE to enrich our lives with the HURRY to amass more pleasure?

It is noteworthy that two of the *Mitzvot* given to *Bnai Yisrael* on the eve of the exodus were *Korban Pesach* and *V'Higadta L'Bincha*, the Pascal Lamb and the commandment to teach our children about the story of Pesach for generations. When life becomes overwhelming, the first passengers to get bumped are often our own children. Too often, they compete with our Blackberries or iPhones for our attention. We send them a message that HURRYING for minutiae is a value for us, preceding a HASTE to spend quality time nurturing and raising them. For this reason, the Torah commands us to SLOW DOWN while eating the *matzah* with our families. Take some precious time and set it aside for uninterrupted attention to our children. *V'Higadta L'Bincha* is a focal point of *Chipazon D'Yisrael*, teaching our children that the exodus from Egypt instilled within every Jew an eagerness to serve the eternal Master.

Rabbi Lamm concludes by quoting R. Yonatan Ben Uziel's explanation of *Chipazon*:

When we rush because of love of G-d and Torah, when we rush for the sake of high ideals and noble aspirations, then G-d is with us, then the *Shechina* guides our steps and gives us speed, then the Master of the World shares our HASTE with us.

## Why do we eat Matzah on Pesach? It's not as Simple as You Thought

Yitsy Weinreb

Each year we sit at the Seder table and ask the famous question, "why do we eat matzah?" The answer the *Haggadah* gives is that the Jewish people's dough did not have time to rise before the Egyptians rushed them out of Egypt. Thus, the matzah is symbolic of the speed with which we were taken out of Egypt. Much less attention is paid to what happened to the dough after the Jewish people left Egypt. The Torah tells us that the Jews traveled from Rameses to Succoth and baked the dough in Succoth into matzos. However, we know from Rashi (*Shemos* 12:37) that the distance from Rameses to Succoth was 120 mil (roughly 62 miles). We also know that flour and water mixed together becomes chametz after a period of 18 minutes. If so, why didn't the dough that the Jewish people carried out of Egypt rise and become chametz during their journey from Rameses to Succoth?

Further, it appears that the dough not rising was just one particular consequence of the Jewish people being rushed out by the Egyptians. In all likelihood, in their haste, there were many other chores that the Jewish people were in the middle of doing or wanted to do but could not complete. If so, how does the *Baal Haggadah* know that the dough not having time to rise was such a significant event as to be the reason why we eat matzah today?

Many answers are given to our first question as to why the dough did not rise on the journey after the Jews left Egypt. They include: that the dough was baked along the way by a very hot sun (*Targum Yonatan ben Uziel*), that it was continuously kneaded by the Jews during their journey (*Ohr Hachayim*), and that Hashem miraculously took the Jews from Rameses to Succoth in a moment's time before the dough had a chance to rise (*Ramban* and *Rashi*). The answer we will focus on comes from the *Malbim* who holds that Hashem miraculously took away the natural power of the dough to rise.

The *Malbim's* interpretation that a miracle occurred answers our first question as to why the dough did not rise on the journey. It also answers our second question as to how the *Baal Haggadah* knew that our dough not having time to rise in Egypt was a significant event (which we commemorate by eating matzah today), as opposed to just a consequence of the Egyptians rushing us out. According to the *Malbim's* view we can say that by Hashem miraculously removing the dough's power to rise on the journey, He showed us that He specifically wanted the dough to be baked into matzah all along. And thus, matzah becomes the defining symbol of our exodus.

The Malbim's view fits very well into our narrative. But is there any support in the words of the Torah and *Haggadah* for such an interpretation? Let's examine this by asking a few questions.

1. There are two places in *Parshas Bo* where the Torah talks about the dough not rising. In *Shemos* 12: 33-34, the Torah recounts that:

"Egypt imposed itself strongly upon the Jewish people to hasten to send them out of the land, for they said, 'We are all dying!' The people picked up their dough before it could become leavened ..."

A few *Psukim* later, in *Shemos* 12: 37-39, the Torah states:

"The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth . . . They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened, for they were driven from Egypt for they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves."

These two portions of the Torah relate to two different time periods. The first recounts the events that took place while the Jewish people were still in Egypt. The second relates what took place in Succoth.

When the *Baal Haggadah* asks why we eat Matzah, he answers, "Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened before Hashem revealed himself to them and redeemed them." In support of this answer, the *Baal Haggadah* quotes the *Pasuk* in *Shemos* 12:39, that the Jewish people "baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened, for they were driven from Egypt for they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves."

Notice that the *Baal Haggadah* did not quote the Torah portion of *Shemos* 12:33-34 which talks about the events in Egypt (that they were hurried out before the dough could become leavened), but rather quoted *Shemos* 12:39 which talks about the events which occurred in Succoth (that they baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes for they were driven from Egypt). Is there any significance to this?

2. After telling us in *Shemos* 12:39 that the Jewish people baked their dough into matzah in Succoth, why does the Torah state once again in that *Pasuk* that the Jewish people had been driven from Egypt before their dough could be leavened? This was already told to us a few *psukim* earlier in *Shemos* 12:33-34! It says there that Egypt imposed itself strongly upon the Jewish people to send them out and the Jewish people picked up the dough before it could become leavened! Why the repetition?

3. Why didn't the Jewish people pack provisions for themselves before they went out of Egypt? Further, why is it important for the Torah to tell us this?

By applying the Malbim's interpretation, that Hashem miraculously prevented the dough from rising during the journey to Succoth, we can answer all of our questions. Our first difficulty was why in response to the question of why we eat matzah, does the *Haggadah* quote a *Pasuk* which talks about the events in Succoth, as opposed to the events in Egypt. According to the Malbim it makes perfect sense why this was done, since the events which took place after we left Egypt lend support to the reason why we eat matzah. Had we just been hurried out of Egypt before our dough had time to rise, we might have attributed our baking the dough afterward into matzah simply as a coincidental consequence of the Egyptians rushing us out. Once we saw in Succoth that miraculously, the dough still had not risen, we realized that it was Hashem's will all along that the dough be baked only into matzah. Thus, when the *Haggadah* states that the reason we eat matzah is because the dough of our fathers didn't have time to rise in Egypt, it quotes the events in Succoth to support the fact that what happened in Egypt was not some random occurrence.

This also answers our second question. We asked, after telling us that in Succoth the Jewish people baked the dough into Matzah, why does the Torah state once again that we were driven from Egypt before the dough could rise. The answer is that once the Jewish people saw in Succoth that miraculously, the dough had not risen on their journey, they realized that the earlier event of being hurried out of Egypt was not a coincidence. Rather, it was part of an orchestrated plan by Hashem to ensure that the Jewish people would only be able to bake their dough into matzah. Therefore, when telling us that the Jewish people baked the dough which had still not risen in Succoth into matzah, the Torah repeats the fact that the dough did not have time to rise in Egypt.

Finally, the fact that the Jewish people did not pack provisions for themselves supports the premise that they fully expected their dough to rise during their journey which they would then bake into bread.<sup>1</sup> The fact that they were left without provisions when they arrived at Succoth hints to us that something happened to inhibit the dough from rising on the journey.

The fact that the Jewish people did not pack provisions for themselves was also part of Hashem's master plan to ensure that they would have to use the dough they took out of Egypt and bake it into matzos.

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1. This is according to those who hold that the Jewish people were permitted to have chometz in their possession at that time, such as the Ran and The Malbim.

Why did Hashem manipulate all these events to ensure that the Jewish people be forced into baking matzos? Rav Shimon Schwab gives a beautiful explanation in his sefer מעין בית השואבה. Rav Schwab explains that when the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt, they were fed matzah, which is slave's bread (*Lechem Oni*). Upon learning that they were going to leave Egypt, they wanted to bake bread as a sign of their freedom. However, Hashem wanted to impart the message to them that although they would no longer be slaves to Pharaoh, they would be slaves to Him. As a result, Hashem had the Egyptians rush the Jewish people out of Egypt and then through a miracle He did not allow the dough to rise on the journey to Succoth, so that we should eat matzah, the bread of slaves.

This answer also helps us understand a difficult statement in the *Haggadah*. When the *Haggadah* asks why we eat matzah, it answers that it is because the dough of our fathers did not have time to rise before Hashem "appeared to them and redeemed them." Which episode is the *Haggadah* referring to when it says Hashem "appeared to them"? Rav Schwab states that it is referring to the miracle of the dough not rising during the Jewish people's journey to Succoth. It was through this miracle that Hashem "appeared" to them and made it known to them that He wanted them to bake the dough into matzah all along. Upon this realization, the Jewish people were fully "redeemed", since the matzah they ate was symbolic of their becoming servants of Hashem.

חג כשר ושמח!

## The True Miracle – *Kriyas Yam Suf* and Beyond

Allen Pfeiffer

A child asked his father on the night of the seder after listening to the wondrous retelling of *kriyas yam suf*, “Hashem created the sea; so why is it a *chidush* that He can split the sea?” The father provided his child with a *mashal*. There was once a great sculptor, the best in the world. One day, the sculptor carved a marble horse and placed it in the city center so that people could witness the exquisite workmanship. Hundreds of people passed by and surprisingly did not pay any attention to the masterful work of art. The sculptor’s heart was broken and he became depressed because nobody appreciated his incredible efforts and talents.

His family comforted him by suggesting that perhaps his sculpture was so lifelike that people did not even notice that it was made of marble. Perhaps they thought it was actually a live horse, and therefore did not pay attention. The sculptor thought to himself, “What should I do? Should I make an imperfect sculpture? Will that benefit my career?” His family advised him instead to cut the sculpture in half and then everyone who passes will notice something they have never seen – a horse split in two but standing upright. People will then recognize that this is no ordinary horse, but rather, it is the unparalleled talented work of a great sculptor.

This *mashal* describes the compromise that God made when splitting the sea. If the Jewish people had pure hearts and truly desired to always seek out God, it would not have been necessary for God to split His creation. By splitting the sea, He intended to instill love and fear of God in their hearts. It should have been enough for us to merely look at the vastness of the sea and see the glory of God contained within it. God, however, needed to split the sea in order to focus our attention back to the beginning – to the fact that God is the one who created the sea. We stopped paying attention to God’s creations. We were accustomed to just walking by and seeing the sea but not appreciating its wonders. God’s subsequent splitting of the sea helped us acknowledge not just the splitting of the sea, but the sea itself and all of God’s other creations. Ultimately, this leads one to recognize God’s continuous role in this world, and His great kindness in every action at every minute and in every breath. This is the importance and the theme of the splitting of the sea. This constant awareness of God is the cornerstone of our faith in Him and all that He does for us.

The Ramban at the end of *Parshas Bo* demonstrates this point beautifully and relates this idea to all miracles. The fundamental reason God performs miracles is not to change the natural course of events. Rather, God enlightens us and makes us aware of His hand and role in the world even

when there is no blatant and obvious stamp of God. Events usually perceived as natural phenomena are actually *nisim nistorim* - hidden miracles. The Ramban refers to this as the foundation of the entire Torah. He writes that one has no place in the Torah until he believes that everything is a miracle and that the concept of *tevah* or the natural order of the world does not really exist. This is the message of *kriyas yam suf*.

The word *nes* and the word *peleh* (wonders) are seemingly synonymous. We say “*al ha'nisim v'al ha'niflaos*.” But the technical meaning of the word *nes* is also, *degel*, a flag. In *shmoneh esrei* we say, “*v'sah nes lekabetz galuyoseinu*.” In this context, *nes* means a flag. However, these are not really two different meanings. Rather, the purpose of every miracle is to serve as a flag to awaken us to see the true everyday miracles. A flag is for waving and proudly displaying one's patriotism and national origins. In the same way, miracles serve as a flag to symbolize the glory of all of Hashem's creations. We believe, as the Ramban says, “that everything is a *nes*, and there is no simple natural order of the world.” (The recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan further highlight this conviction.)

This understanding helps us answer a question *achronim* raise on the *p'sak* of the *Rema* (*orach chaim* 582:1 - see *Yeshuos Yaakov*.) The *Rema* says that if one forgets to say *yaaleh v'yavo* in *birchas hamazon*, he should say הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו ניסים ונפלאות כשם שעשה לאבותינו. Yet, the gemara in *brachos* 54:1 states that if a man's wife is pregnant and he davens to Hashem “*yehi ratzon* that my wife will have a boy,” it is considered a “*tfillas shav*” - an improper and nonsensical *tefilah*. The gemara explains that we do not daven for a *nes*. How does the “*harachamon*” recommended by the *Rema* make sense in light of this gemara?

Rav Asher Weiss in an introductory section of *Minchas Asher on Meseches Psachim* explains that certainly one can daven for a *nes* that will serve for *klal yisrael* as a *degel*, a flag, a sign of the mastery and constant rule that Hashem has on this world. That is akin to the *nisim* that Hashem performed for our forefathers. That is the *harachamon* recommended by the *Rema*. Those *nisim* are *mekadesh shem shamayim*. They help us achieve our *tachlis* - to accentuate Hashem's mastery over this world. However, a “*nes*” that will not bring this glory to Hashem, is not to be davened for. It is a “*tfillas shav*.” It is not a *nes* that serves as a *degel*. A female fetus that is miraculously changed into a male fetus would not be recognized by the world as a *nes*. It will not spread the acknowledgement that Hashem is the master of the natural world and that all daily occurrences are actually *nisim nistarim*. In fact, even the father himself would not know if the baby was a boy or girl from the point of conception (See also *Shabbos* 53b re *Machlokes rav yosef* and *abayei*).

The Rabbeinu Yonah explains on the posuk in Mishlei 3:6 “*bechol derachecha de’ehu*,” that in every detail of life, with every breath taken, remember it is from Hashem. We should not turn to Hashem only in times of need because that is a reflection of inconsistent *emunah*. The Rabbeinu Yonah expresses a similar concept in explaining a *Gemara* in *brachos*. The *Gemara* states that whoever juxtaposes *geula* to *tefilah* is assured *olam habah*. How can a seemingly small detail in *hilchos tefila* assure one of such an enormous reward? He answers that when one mentions *yetzias mitzraim* and then immediately asks Hashem for his every need in *shemoneh esrei*, he is demonstrating his complete trust in Hashem. At the moment of *krias yam suf*, the *pasuk* states about our predecessors “*v’yaamenu b’hashem*,” they believed in Hashem’s role in this world. We are asking Hashem in *shemoneh esrei* to answer our daily needs in the same miraculous way that *krias yam suf* occurred. The *gemara* teaches us that *olam habah* is assured to one who understands this link.

The Rambam in *hilchos Krias Shma* 1:3 quotes the *halachah* of Ben Azai in *Brachos* 12b that it is a mitzvah to mention *yetzias mitzrayim* every day, morning and night. However, the Rambam does not list this in his *Sefer Hamitzvos* as one of the 613 *mitzvos*. *Acharonim* (see *Ohr Sameach*) struggle to interpret this opinion of the Rambam. Rav Asher Weiss explains that mentioning *yetzias mitzrayim* is not an independent mitzvah but rather part of the mitzvah of *krias shma*. The mitzvah of reciting *krias shma* is to accept the yoke of *mitzvos*. This is the same basic precept inherent in remembering *yetzias mitzrayim*.

Everything that happens is from Hashem. Even what seems to be a negative occurrence is for the best - *Kol ma di’avid Rachmana l’tav avid* (see Ramban *Devarim* 14:1). There was once a man who approached the Maggid of Mezritch to ask how he could appropriately and actually fulfill the edict of *Chazal* in *Brachos* 54a requiring “*chayiv adam l’vorech al harah k’shem shemevarech al hatov*.” The Maggid told him to go to the beis medrash and ask for Rav Zusha from Anipoli, who would help him answer his question. The man was told where Rav Zusha lived and he went to his house. The man noticed that Rav Zusha was extremely poor and was dressed in ripped clothing. The walls of his house were blackened and sickness and affliction seemed to fill his home. The man explained to Rav Zusha why the Maggid sent him. The man then asked Rav Zusha how to thank Hashem for the bad in the same way that we thank Hashem for the good. Rav Zusha replied, “you must have heard the Maggid incorrectly, because in truth I don’t know how to bless or thank Hashem for the bad. In my life, I’ve never experienced any bad circumstances. I have been blessed with only good fortune from Hashem from the day I was born until today.”

If we all understood and really believed that everything in this world is a *nes* (*nistar*), and it all comes from Hashem, we would consequently also understand that whatever occurs is for the good.

We should all be as fortunate as Rav Zushah and reach his level of *emunah* to perceive the “bad” as “good.” *Kol ma di'avid Rachmana l'tav avid*. These are the true underlying lessons of *kriyas yam suf*.

## Nurturing Nature and the Splitting of the Sea

Avi Goldenberg

Iz"n R' Moshe B"R Yitzchak Aizik Neuman zt"l

The beginning of *Maseches Sotah* (2a) offers, in the name of Rabba bar bar Chana in the name of R' Yochanan, one of the more well known metaphors in contemporary Jewish life: that the completion of a *shidduch*<sup>1</sup> is as difficult for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* as was His splitting the *Yam Suf* for the *B'nei Yisrael* as they left *Mitzrayim*. In an analogous passage, the *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (118a) offers, in the name of R' Shizbi quoting R' Elazar ben Azarya, that sustaining a livelihood ("*mezonosav shel adam*") is as difficult to accomplish for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* as splitting the sea was. These comparisons have offered many generations grist for countless *aufruf* and *sheva brachos drashos* for they contain two clearly troubling points: the *Gemaras* (1) assume there can be any difficulty for the omnipotent G-d and (2) offer what appear to be odd parallels of mundane life (marriage, work) to *keriyas Yam Suf*, one of the most formative events in Jewish history. To resolve these points, I would like to offer a suggestion made by R' Shimon Schwab z"l in the name of R' Michael Forschlager z"l which is recorded in R' Schwab's sefer *Maayan Bais HaShoeva*.<sup>2</sup>

The sea generally is viewed in *maamarei chaza"l*, and in our own real life experience, as a place which, by its very nature, enables man to see Divine and spiritual active intervention within the world. The sea puts man directly at nature's mercy, where he finds it both powerful and unpredictable; not subject to the forces of technical sophistication and scientific wizardry that has enabled man to tame dry land and harness its forces with the same sense of control. Rather, the sea leaves man bewildered and enfeebled, and reaching for a greater force – a *Ribono Shel Olam* - that truly controls the world's destiny. This sense of powerlessness in the face of the sea which leaves man to sense a greater power is omnipresent in the Torah and in life. For example, within the first 10 *psukim* of *Sefer Yonah*, we find sailors – throughout literature known as the coarsest of professions – instinctively beseeching their gods immediately upon the tempest brewing.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, throughout the sailors' ordeal with Yonah, the sailors intuitively accepted Divine involvement as the reason for, and ultimately, the solution to their troubles. Even at present, in our own lives far removed from the vicissitudes

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1. The *Gemara* elaborates that this refers to a second marriage.
  2. I encourage you all to read the *vort* in the original, where R' Schwab expands on points explained only briefly herein.
  3. *Dovid HaMelech* in *Tehillim* (49:2) and the *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* (82a) each similarly recognize sailors for their beholding the *yad HaShem* more closely than their fellow landlubbers.

of weather and water, who has not watched with rapt attention fearsome walls of water thirty feet high unpredictably rising out of the Japanese depths and not immediately sensed that the *Ribono Shel Olam* was moving those waters? The sea, by its very nature, is a place where one need not stretch his spirit to see *yad HaShem* and instead, *kvod Shamayim* is there for all to see.

It is for this reason that the sea originally resisted Moshe *Rabbeinu's* instruction to split. As the *Mechilta* records, the sea refused to split even after Moshe demanded it to split, after he showed the sea his staff, and after he informed the sea that he was carrying out the *Ratzon Hashem*. When did the sea finally split?

ולא קבל עליו עד שנגלה הקדוש ברוך הוא עליו בכבודו וכיון שנגלה  
הקדוש ברוך הוא בכבודו ובגבורתו התחיל הים בורח שנאמר הים ראה וינס

The sea maintained its insistence until *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* Himself, in all of His glory and strength, directly demanded it!

What was the reason for the sea's insistence on not splitting? R' Schwab explains that the sea understood that its nature, as dictated by *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* at its creation, was to be a mode by which man could see *Yad Hashem*. By splitting and changing its nature from what it was created to do, the sea believed it was destroying a fundamental aspect of its nature and diminishing the ability to see *Yad Hashem* in the world. The sea was apparently appeased when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* directly demanded the split as an opportunity to demonstrate an even greater *Kiddush Hashem* by enabling an even greater opportunity to see *Yad Hashem* by the whole world through the *keriyah*. But the *keriyah* stood for something fundamental: that when a situation exists wherein *Yad Hashem* is able to be seen and a *Kiddush Hashem* can be created, while "difficult" to change such a situation, there are times when such a change is warranted to enable the possibility of an even greater *Kiddush Hashem*.

This then is the parallel to the difficulty of earning a livelihood. The natural state of existence which enables the possibility of a superior *Kiddush Hashem* is poverty. This is because if man, while poverty-stricken, powerless and unable to control his own fate, firmly believes that his situation was formulated by *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, believes that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* is the Ultimate Provider and insists on *davening* to Him for his salvation, he has created an enormous *Kiddush Hashem*. Therefore, one might believe that if the poor man's prayers are answered, it will be a form of *Chillul Hashem ch"v* since the great heights of complete dependence and acknowledgment he once attained no longer exist. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the "difficulty" of diminishing the *Kiddush Hashem* occurring in poverty, to possibly allow a greater one to exist - one where a man no longer poor can now serve *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* in a multitude of

ways beyond the one described above, by opening his home, his heart and his wallet – a livelihood must be supplied, even though it disturbs the natural order.

A similar phenomenon occurs when man is seeking but has not yet found his mate. If during that time, the single man looks to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* as the “Ultimate Connector” and continually *davens* to Him to help find his *zivug*, he will have exposed *Kvod Shamayim* in an almost comparable fashion. However, while “difficult” to interrupt such a *Kiddush Hashem*, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* assists such a person in finding his mate in the expectation that creating a family will enable a myriad of possibilities for further *Kiddush Hashem*.

Let us *daven* together that in all matters of *parnasa*, of *shidduchim* and in all areas of our lives, we can make the “difficult” easy and collectively increase *Kvod Hashem* and *Kiddush Hashem*.

## Historical Aspects of the Haggadah

Uri Jacobs

This article will delve into two historical aspects of the *Haggadah*:

- 1) The development of the current *Haggadah*, and
- 2) Some insights into the origins and tunes of specific songs/sections of the *Haggadah*

### I

Although the core sections of the *Haggadah* were assembled during the times of the Talmud (100-500 C.E.), its content continued to be fluid. It was only in the period of the *Geonim* in the great Babylonian cities of Sura and Pumbedita in the 9th and 10th centuries C.E., that the beginning form of the *Haggadah* as we know it today was established.

The *Haggadah* is first mentioned in manuscripts starting in the 9th century. The earliest completed *Haggadah* appears in 10th century in the *siddur* of Rav Saadiah Gaon of Sura. An earlier and almost completed *Haggadah* appears in the 9th century in the *siddur* of Rav Amram Gaon of Sura. The earliest written forms of the *Haggadah* text are from Israel in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century. They were preserved only as fragments and were mostly found in the Cairo *Genizah*.

The "Seder Rav Amram" contains a relatively brief, after-dinner liturgy, which was expanded considerably following the Crusades in Europe. The Rambam, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, records the text of the *Haggadah* in his *Mishneh Torah* which is essentially the same as the *Haggadah* we use today, with the exception of a number of songs that were later added by Polish and German Jews in medieval times.

The best known Hebrew *Haggadah* manuscript is the Sarajevo *Haggadah*, originally produced around the year 1350 as a wedding gift to a young couple in Barcelona. The first printed *Haggadahs* originated in Guadalajara, Spain circa 1482 and then in Italy in 1505.

### II

As noted above, the development and expansion of the current *Haggadah* occurred over many centuries. As will be explained below, most of the inclusions were originally written for other contexts and were subsequently incorporated into the *Haggadah*. A similar pattern occurred with the development of the formal *siddur* we have today, where many sections were added over the centuries.

### Kadesh Urchatz...

The introduction to the *Seder*, the singing of the 15 “steps”, is a mnemonic device that is usually sung by all to announce what is about to occur over the next several hours. The earliest use of this mnemonic was recorded by the French poet Yosef ben Shmuel Tov-Elem in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Other opinions hold that *Rashi* or one of the *Baalei Tosafos* composed it. No matter the originator, it has been accepted by Jews since the time of the *Rishonim*.

The use of this mnemonic was instituted before the printing press and served several purposes:

1. Organizing the *Seder* - this was especially important since the *Haggadah* was based purely upon oral tradition.
2. It assisted in educating the children (and adults) of each step.
3. The singing puts the children into a joyous mood in an effort to get them to ask questions.

### Ha Lachma Anya

This mostly Aramaic paragraph in the *Haggadah* that invites the poor to attend the *Seder* was instituted after the first *Churban* during *Galut Bavel*. It is written in Aramaic, the common language in *Bavel*, in order for the poor to understand the invitation that was being extended to them.

The words *L'Shana Ha'Baah*, which are said both here and towards the end of the *Seder*, are said only one other time during the year – on Yom Kippur at the end of *Ne'ilah*. The connection between the two is *geulah* (Redemption): *Geulah* via *Tzedaka* and *Geulah* via *Teshuva*. According to the *Gemara* in *Baba Basra*, “*Gedolah Tzedaka Shemekareves Es Hageulah*” – “Great is charity that brings the redemption.” Likewise, the *Rambam* says that the only way to achieve *geulah* is through *teshuva*. This explains the connection between the *Geulah* of Pesach and the *Geulah* of Yom Kippur. Lastly, one of the older tunes for *Ha Lachma Anya* that has been used for centuries actually has a similar motif to the *laining* on Rosh Hashanah.

### Adir Hu

This song, written by an anonymous poet in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century in Germany, was a song written about the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*. It was originally sung at various celebrations and festivals before being introduced into the *Haggadah* in the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The current tune for *Adir Hu* originated in the mid 1800's. An adaptation of this tune was used in various other areas of the *Pesach davening* throughout the ages, including *Maariv*, *Bircas Kohanim*, and *Hallel* both in *Ana Hashem* and in *Hodu Lashem*.

The last verse “May He build His Temple very soon” has its origins in the *Gemara Shevuos*, which states the third *Beis Hamikdash* will not be built by man but rather will descend from *Shamayim* at the proper time.

### *Echad Mi Yodayah*

The popular “Who knows one” riddle song has been in the *Haggadah* since the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was probably included to keep the children awake. Although we do not know who authored it, it was originally sung as a *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* table-song.

So why up until 13? Various reasons have been given including:

- 1) the *gematria* of *Echad* is 13, signifying the Oneness of Hashem, and
- 2) it relates to the 13 principles of faith.

### *Chad Gadya*

Written in Aramaic with 10 stanzas, the oldest printed version of this poem comes from Prague in 1590, though it was probably sung earlier and handed down orally from generation to generation.

There are many allegorical interpretations for *Chad Gadya*. The most common one is:

- the goat symbolizes the persecuted and oppressed Jewish people,
- the father is Hashem, and
- the two *zuzim* are either *Moshe* and *Aharon* or the *Shnei Luchos*.

There are several reasons why this poem was included in the *Haggadah*:

- 1) To keep the children awake
- 2) Singing a poem that has hidden meanings can lead to many interpretations and will extend the discussion of *Yezias Mitzrayim* later into the night.
- 3) The inclusion of this deep and somewhat disturbing summary of Jewish History will prevent excessive joy and pride that one might have and will in turn lead one to greater *Yiras Shamayim*.
- 4) As the last part of the *Haggadah*, it leaves us with the sense that at the end of the day, *Hashem's* justice will ultimately prevail.

May we be *zoche* to see this very shortly.

#### א. סיפור יציאת מצרים

כ' בספר החינוך (פרשת בא, מצוה כא) שמצות סיפור יצי"מ נוהגת בזכרים ובנקבות.

והקשה המנ"ח "דבר זה חידוש גדול אצלי, למה תהיה נוהגת מצוה זו בנשים כיון דהוי מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא ונשים פטורות ... ולא מצאתי בשום פנים טעם למה יתחייבו נשים". והנה כ' הרמב"ם (פ"ב מהל' עכו"ם ה"ג) "וכל מצות עשה שהיא מזמן לזמן ואינה תדירה נשים פטורות חוץ מקידוש היום ואכילת מצה בלילי הפסח ואכילת הפסח ושחיטתו והקהל ושמחה שהנשים חייבות" ולא כתב מצות סיפור יצי"מ.

והנה כ' הרמ"א (סי' תעג ס"ו) "ויאמר [ההגדה] בלשון שמבינים הנשים והקטנים או יפרש להם הענין וכן עשה ר"י מלונדרי כל ההגדה בל' לעז כדי שיבינו הנשים והקטנים". ובברכי יוסף כ' שאין לומר שלדעת הרמ"א יש חיוב לנשים בסיפור יצי"מ, שהקפידא היא לזכרים לומר ההגדה בלשון שמבינים הנשים. ואדרבה, עיקר המצוה היא לספר למי שאינו חייב בעצמו. [כ' הרמב"ם (פ"ז מהל' חו"מ ה"ג) "אין לו בן אשתו שואלתו, אין לו אשה שואלתו זא"ז מה נשתנה הלילה הזה. ואפילו היו כולן חכמים". ומקורו בגמ' (פסחים קטז). שאשתו שואלתו קודם לשאר ב"א. ובפשטות י"ל שאשתו קודם לת"ח שעיקר מצות והגדת היא לספר למי שאינו מצווה בעצמו].

ויש שכתבו דמחייבי נשים במצות סיפור יצי"מ מדרבנן. בתוס' (סוכה לח: ד"ה מי) כ' "משמע בפ' ערבי פסחים (קח.) דמחייבי [נשים] בד' כוסות ומסתמא לא תיקנו ד' כוסות אלא כדי לומר עליהם הלל ואגדה". ועפ"ז כ' החי"א והמנ"ח (שם) שחייבות נשים בסיפור יצי"מ מדרבנן. ומצינו שנשים חייבות במצוות עשה שהזמן גרמא להן בשאף הן היו באותו הנס, במקרא מגילה (מגילה ד.ד.), בארבע כוסות (פסחים קח:) ובנרות חנוכה (שבת כג.). וכתבו בתוס' (מגילה שם ד"ה שאף) דמשום האי טעמא לא מחייבא אלא מדרבנן". והקשו בתוס' (פסחים קח: ד"ה היו) למה נשים אינן חייבות במצות סוכה משום האי טעמא דאף הן היו באותו הנס, והרי חייבין בד' כוסות, ותרצו (שם) "התם [סוכה] בעשה דאו' אבל בארבע כוסות דרבנן תיקנו גם לנשים כיון שהיו באותו הנס". היוצא, שלא שייך הסברא ד"אף הן" במצוות דאו'. [פ"י מהר"ל דשאני מצוות דרבנן ממצוות דאו' שבמצוות דרבנן הנס גרם למצוה, אבל במצוות דאו' המצווה גרמה לנס, שהקב"ה הסתכל באורייתא וברא עלמא].

והנה מצינו בספרי ראשונים ואחרונים כשיטת החינוך שיש לנשים חיוב במצות סיפור יצי"מ מן התורה וחדשו דרשות שאינם בגמ'. בס' סדר הערוך (עמ' שנו) הביא מש"כ בס' קהלת יעקב (י' חלקים; חלק י' סי' נה) שנשים חייבות מזה

שחייבות באכילת מצה שנקראת לחם עוני שעונים עליו דברים הרבה, [והביא ראייה מהגמ' (קטז): "סומא פטור מלומר הגדה ... איני והאמר מרימר שאילתינהו לרבנן דבי רב יוסף מאן דאמר אגדתא בי רב יוסף אמר ר' יוסף. מ"ד אגדתא בי רב ששת אמרו רב ששת. קסבר מצה בזמה"ז דרבנן". מצה מאן דכר שמיה? אלא ע"כ שמצה וסיפור יצי"מ קשורים זב"ז]. וע"ע בס' סדר הערוך (שם) שהביא כמה תרוצים למקור לחיוב נשים במצוה זו. וגם המנחת חינוך (שם) כ' "ואפשר לומר לפי מה שהביא הר"מ כאן פסוק זה דזכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים, כמו שנאמר זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, א"כ אפשר דהוי גזירה שוה מקידוש של שבת, כמו דשם דנשים חייבות ה"ה כאן, אבל באמת בש"ס דילן אינו מוזכר וכולם הרגישו שיש חיוב לנשים, אלא שדחקו למצוא המקור של הדין."

וגם שיטת הרמב"ם צ"ע, שכ' במשנה תורה (שם) המצוות עשה שהז"ג שנשים חייבות בהן ולא הזכיר סיפויצי"מ. ובסה"מ (סוף מנין העשין) משמע שנשים חייבות, ששם רשם הרמב"ם ס' מצוות עשה הנוהגות בזמה"ז ובהם יש מ"ו מצוות שהנשים חייבות בהן (שהזמן גרמא) וי"ד שאין הנשים חייבות בהן ולא חישוב מצות סיפור יצי"מ. [על בהערות לס' מנ"ח בהוצאת מכון ירו' שהעיר קושיא זו].

## **ב. פרסומי ניסא**

והנה יש מצוות שהם משום פרסומי ניסא, דהיינו ד' כוסות (פסחים יב.), ונרות חנוכה (שבת כג.) ומקרא מגילה (ברכות יד., על בפר"ח סי' תרפז). ויש בהם דינים מיוחדים שלמדים זה מזה.

תנן בריש פסחים "אפ"י עני שבישראל ... לא יפחתו לו מד' כוסות ואפ"י מן התמחוי." וכו' בגמ' (שם קיב.). "פשיטא לא נצרכה אלא לדעת ר"ע דאמר עשה שבתך חול ואל תצטרך לבריות הכא משום פרסומי ניסא". הרי שבמצוות שהם משום פ"נ צריכים אפ"י לבריות. ואף שבכל מצוות עשה המבזבז אל יבזבו יותר מחומש, לא כן במצוות אלו. ובהל' חנוכה כ' הרמב"ם (פ"ד ה"יב) "אפ"י אין לו מה יאכל אלא מן הצדקה שואל או מוכר כסותו ולוקח שמן ונרות ומדליק". וכו' המגיד משנה "נראה שלמדו מזה שנתבאר פ"ז מהל' חמץ ומצה שאפ"י עני שבישראל לא יפחות מד' כוסות והטעם משום פרסומי ניסא".

ומצינו שבג' מצוות אלו נשים חייבות בהן שאף שהן מצוות עשה שהזמ"ג, הלא אף הן היו באותו הנס, בארבע כוסות (פסחים קח:), בנרות חנוכה (שבת כג.), ובמקרא מגילה (מגילה ד.), וכן הוא בתוס' (מגילה שם, ד"ה שאף) "בפורים ע"י אסתר בחנוכה ע"י יהודית בפסח שבזכות צדקניות שבאותו הדור נגאלו". ואף שנשים חייבות, חיובן חלוק משל אנשים. כ' הרא"ש (מס' מגילה פ"א ה"ד) בשם בה"ג שאנשים חייבים במקרא ונשים חייבות בשמיעה (ולכן, לדעתו, אינן מוציאות אנשים י"ח). והגרי"ד זצ"ל באר שבד' כוסות יש ב' דינים דהיינו פרסומי ניסא וסידור ברכה על הכוס, ונשים חייבות בפרסומי ניסא ולא בסידור ברכה על הכוס (ואכמ"ל).

ומצינו שיש גם בקרבן פסח ענין של פרסומי ניסא דתנן (פסחים קטז:): "ר"ג היה אומר כל שלא אמר ג' דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא י"ח ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור, פסח על שום שפסח המקום על בתי אבותינו במצרים שנאמר, "ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' אשר פסח וגו'". ובתוס' (שם ד"ה ואמרתם) כתבו "פ"ל באמירה שצריך לומר פסח זה שאנו אוכלים". וכן הוא פשוט במקרא שכ' "והיה כי יאמרו עליכם בניכם מה העבודה הזאת לכם" והתשובה היא "ואמרתם זבח פסח". [וכ' בס' החינוך (במצ' שחיתת הפסח ומצ' אכילת ק"פ) "משרשי מצוה זו כדי שיזכרו היהודים לעולם הניסים הגדולים שעשה להם השם יתברך ביציאת מצרים"].

וכ' (שמות יב:ד) בקרבן פסח "במכסת נפשות", ופ"ל הנצי"ב (העמק דבר) "החוב מוטל אפ"ל על עני המחזר על הפתחים כמו ד' כוסות בזמה"ז".

וברור שלמד הנצי"ב שמצות קרבן פסח היא מצוה של פרסומי ניסא, שאם לא, לא מובן הדמיון לד' כוסות, ומצוה מיוחדת היא שהיא מן התורה ויש בה משום פרסומי ניסא. ונשים חייבות במצוה זו (ע"ל רמב"ם פ"א מהל' ק"פ ה"א ובפ"ב מהל' עכו"ם ה"ג) כמו בשאר מצוות של פרסומי ניסא. ושמעתי מפי הגר"מ ווילג שליט"א שעפ"ז י"ל שהחוב של נשים לספר ביציאת מצרים הוא מזה שחייבות במצות קרבן פסח שעל הק"פ צריכים לפרסם הנס. אמנם חובן אינו בגדר של" סיפור יציאת מצרים" וחלוק מהחוב של אנשים, וכמו שמצינו חלוק במצות נשים במקרא מגילה ובמצות ד' כוסות (ע"ל מה שכתבנו למעלה). ולפ"ז מובן זה שהרמב"ם לא הזכיר חוב לנשים במצות סיפור יציאת מצרים (בהל' ע"ז) שאין חובן אלא משום חובן במצות ק"פ. וגם מובן למה לא הזכיר פטור לנשים במצוה זו (בס' המצוות) כיון שלמעשה הן חייבות. וי"ל שמצות ק"פ היא המקור לחוב של נשים בכל מצוות של פרסומי ניסא שכל דתקון רבנן כעין דא' תקון.

חלק א'

"אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא: 'למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך'. ימי חיך – הימים. כל ימי חיך – הלילות."<sup>1</sup>

This presents the source of the מצוה of יציאת מצרים every day and night of the year. בן זומא derives from the words "ימי חיך" and from the seemingly extra word, "כל", that, in addition to the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים exclusive to the night of ט"ו ניסן, one is commanded to remember יציאת מצרים every day and night of the year. The מנחת חינוך<sup>2</sup> explains that the difference between the two חיובים is that while every day of the year one is required to remember יציאת מצרים, on the night of ט"ו ניסן he is additionally commanded to relate the story to his children. However, what is the purpose of the isolation of יציאת מצרים? Why isn't the daily מצוה to relate the events of יציאת מצרים to his children every night of the year in addition to recall them for himself?

In order to substantiate this question it is necessary to understand the only other event regarding which the תורה commands one to relate its events to his children. בני ישראל משה commands:

"רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חיך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך. יום אשר עמדת בחורב וגו'."<sup>3</sup>

Regarding מעמד הר סיני where בני ישראל were shown an image of the כבוד of ה' upon הר סיני and they heard the voice of ה' speak to them face to face, משה commanded בני ישראל to remember this event and to inform their children of it.

Regarding only הר סיני does the תורה present a מצוה<sup>4</sup> to tell over events to one's children. Presumably this is because it was through these two events that בני ישראל were taken as the עם סגולה of

1. ברכות, י"ב:.

2. מצוה כ"א.

3. י-דברים, ד:ט'.

4. מצות לא explains that מעמד הר סיני is included in the מצוה לא (שם). מעמד הר סיני תעשה to not forget.

'ה and because they are the foundations of their entire purpose and belief. However, these מצות are not equal in terms of the time for their fulfillment. The מצוה to relate the events of הר סיני applies every day of the year. However, although one is required to remember מצרים every day, he is only commanded to tell over its events to his children on one specific night of the year. What is the uniqueness of the מצוה performed on the night of ט"ו ניסן limiting its חיוב to that night?

## מצה ומרור

The פסוק says:

"והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים"<sup>5</sup>

Many of the מוני המצות<sup>6</sup> explain this פסוק to be the source of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. The מכילתא additionally understands it to be teaching the appropriate time of the מצוה with the following דרשה:

"יכול מראש חדש, תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום, תלמוד לומר 'בעבור זה' לא אמרתי אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך על שולחניך"

The מכילתא explains that to reject the possibility that the חיוב of סיפור יציאת מצרים begins on ראש חדש ניסן, the פסוק specifies "ביום ההוא" – on that day, namely, ט"ו ניסן. To then counter the possibility that the חיוב would begin during the day, the פסוק specifies "בעבור זה" – because of this, referring to the מצה and מרור that must be on one's table when reciting סיפור יציאת מצרים. Therefore, the חיוב of סיפור יציאת מצרים applies at the same time as the חיוב of מצה and מרור do which is on the night of ט"ו ניסן. However, the מכילתא adds two more words which create controversy amongst the פוסקים. It concludes by saying "לא אמרתי אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך על שולחניך". The מצה ומרור must be on one's table before him in order to allow for the recitation of סיפור יציאת מצרים. The רמב"ם<sup>7</sup> quotes the מכילתא but omits these last two words. Why does he not include the end of the quote?

It appears that this is the basis for a big מחלוקת amongst the פוסקים. Based on the לשון of the מכילתא, the בית הלוי<sup>8</sup>, the תורה תמימה<sup>9</sup>, and the שולחן

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5. שמות, י"ג:ח'.

6. רמב"ם, ספר החינוך.

7. הל' חמץ ומצה, ז'א'.

8. בהגדתו.

9. שמות, י"ג:ח'.

ערוך הרב<sup>10</sup> maintain that it is not sufficient for one to own מצה and מרור and have them in a box on the side, rather, מצה and מרור must be present on the table in order to recite סיפור יציאת מצרים. Others, such as the פרי מגדים<sup>11</sup>, the תרומת הדשן<sup>12</sup>, and the ספר החינוך<sup>13</sup> contend that the requirement of מצה and מרור regarding סיפור יציאת מצרים is merely that the מצוה only applies at the time that one is חייב to eat מצה and מרור.

According to everyone however, the main idea of the מכילתא is that a strong bond exists between the מצות of סיפור יציאת מצרים and מצה ומרור. Regardless of whether the מצה and מרור must actually be present during the סיפור or if the חיוב is during the time of the חיובים to eat מצה and מרור (and they are only actually brought out at the time that they are eaten), everyone agrees that סיפור יציאת מצרים cannot exist on its own without מצה ומרור. For this reason the מגן אברהם makes the following statement:

"ונראה לי דמי שלא אמר הגדה בליל פסח אין לו תשלומין דהא כתיב 'בעבור זה – לא אמרתיו אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך', וכתוב 'בערב תאכלו מצות – מאן ואילך רשות'."<sup>14</sup>

If one did not recite the הגדה on the night of ט"ו ניסן he is unable to fulfill it on a later date because after that night אכילת מצה is no longer a חיוב and the חיוב of סיפור יציאת מצרים only applies when there is a חיוב of מצה ומרור. Similarly, ר' סעדיה גאון and רמב"ן<sup>15</sup> explains that both the מצוה of מצה ומרור are מעכבין the fulfillment of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים and that if one does not have מצה and מרור he is פטור from סיפור יציאת מצרים.

What is the חשיבות of the מצה and מרור and why are they bonded so tightly to סיפור יציאת מצרים, causing the different חיובים to go hand in hand?

The חפץ חיים<sup>16</sup> explains that the purposes of both the מצה and מרור are to serve as visual aids in telling over סיפור יציאת מצרים. He emphasizes that a message cannot be instilled in a child's mind unless he sees it being put to action. Rav Chaim Shmulevitz<sup>17</sup> understands the מצה ומרור as the חפץ חיים

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10. ס' תע"ג, סע' כ'.

11. משבצות זהב, ס' תפ"ה.

12. ס' קל"ז.

13. מצוה כ"א.

14. ס' תפ"ה.

15. בהגהות לספר המצות לר' סעדיה גאון, עשה ל"ג.

16. Haggadah of the Roshei Yeshiva, volume 3, page 96

17. Volume 3, page 120

does and explains further that the מכילתא (quoted above) is emphasizing the importance of teaching with the מצה ומרור saying that one night of סיפור מצרים with the מצה ומרור is more efficient than two weeks of סיפור מצרים without the מצה ומרור.<sup>18</sup>

As was established above, however, סיפור יציאת מצרים is not the only מצוה which commands one to tell over certain events to his children. One is required to relate the ניסים of סיני מעמד הר סיני as well. Why is there no מצוה to use visual aids while telling over those events in order to instill the message in the children just as is done regarding סיפור יציאת מצרים?

### **בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים**

After completing סיפור יציאת מצרים the הגדה states that in every generation one is commanded to view himself as if he was redeemed from מצרים. In explanation of this statement the רמב"ם writes:

"בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים שנאמר 'ואותנו הוציא משם וגו'. ועל דבר זה צוה הקב"ה בתורה 'וזכרת כי עבד היית' כלומר, כאילו אתה בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדת. לפיכך כשסועד אדם בלילה הזה צריך לאכול ולשתות והוא מיסב דרך חירות וכל אחד ואחד בין אנשים בין נשים חייב לשתות בלילה הזה ארבעה כוסות מייין."<sup>19</sup>

In every generation one is obligated to portray himself on the night of ט"ו ניסן as if he is currently being redeemed from מצרים. Therefore, in addition to the basic מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים and the סעודה of יום טוב one must eat in a reclined position and must drink four cups of wine. Interestingly, the רמב"ם quotes the חיוב to appear as if one is currently leaving מצרים as the basis for the other primary חיובים of the night. It appears that the רמב"ם is describing the atmosphere created on the night of ט"ו ניסן. The מצות of סיפור יציאת מצרים come together to transform סיפור יציאת מצרים into a visual experience in which one creates the environment of "currently being redeemed from מצרים." The חיד"א<sup>20</sup> writes similarly, that it is insufficient for one to view himself in his mind as if he is currently leaving מצרים, rather, he must passionately and enthusiastically portray himself to all the members of his household as if he is being redeemed from slavery to freedom. On the night of ט"ו ניסן, the story of יציאת מצרים is not simply told

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18. Even according to the שיטה that מצה ומרור do not have to be present during סיפור יציאת מצרים, bringing them out to eat them later fulfills this purpose as well.

19. הל' חמץ ומצה, ז' - ז'.

20. בתי הנפש.

over, rather, on the same night that בני ישראל were redeemed from מצרים 3323 years ago and were taken as ה' s nation, an atmosphere is re-created each and every year in order to instill its importance and relevance in the minds of the children. All year long one is obligated to recall these נסים for himself and enhance his אמונה through them; however, only on the actual night of redemption one is commanded to create an atmosphere which will grip the minds of his children.

This same method is, in fact, used in relating the נסים of הר סיני to one's children as well. The children have before them the תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה themselves which were given from ה' to משה on הר סיני. No other visual objects or actions are necessary. Every day when one engages in תורה he creates an atmosphere of תורה and קדושה and it is in such an environment that one must relate the נסים of הר סיני to his children, instilling unwavering אמונה and reverence of ה' in them.

The חיוב of מתן תורה contains two aspects just as does the חיוב of remembering יציאת מצרים. Regarding יציאת מצרים there is the daily חיוב of סיפור יציאת מצרים as well as the annual חיוב of זכירת יציאת מצרים. Similarly, the מצוה of תלמוד תורה contains the מצוה of actually learning תורה as well as relating נסים to one's children. However, unlike יציאת מצרים, the חיוב of סיפור תורה is daily. Why doesn't this מצוה only apply on ו' סיון, the day which the תורה was given?

The יקר notices that even in its commandment to observe שבועות, the תורה never refers to ו' סיון as the date of מתן תורה. Perhaps his explanation can explain the daily חיוב of relating the events of הר סיני as well. He writes:

"על מתן תורה לא רצה ה' להגביל יום ידוע לפי שצריך האדם שיהיה דומה לו בכל יום ויום מכל ימות השנה כאילו באותו יום קבלה מהר סיני, כי באמת אמרו רז"ל שהתורה נמשלה לדד זה, שכל זמן שהתינוק ממשמש בה הוא מוצא בה טעם חדש, כך התורה כל ההוגה בה מוצא בכל יום טעם חדש. על כן, דין הוא שיהיה דומה עליו בכל יום כאילו היום קבלה מהר סיני, ואם כן כל יום הוא מתן תורה אצל ההוגים בה. על כן אין ראוי להגביל יום ידוע לנתינתה."<sup>21</sup>

The תורה chose not to specify the date that the תורה was given because every day one should view the תורה as if he received it on that day. Each time one engages in תורה he discovers a new explanation or understands a new approach and therefore it is as if one received the תורה on that day.

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ויקרא, כ"ג:ט"ז. 21.

It is possible to extend this idea to the מצוה of telling over the נסים of מעמד as well. Every day one accepts the תורה anew and therefore every day is a commemoration of מתן תורה. One must re-experience the נסים that occurred at הר סיני. Unlike יציאת מצרים which occurred on one night, מתן תורה continuously occurs, daily.

## חלק ב'

### **מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח**

The משנה states:<sup>22</sup> "מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" is structured to begin with degradation and end with praise. This instruction is explained in the גמרא:

"מאי בגנות? רב אמר, מתחילה עובדי עבודת גלולים היו אבותינו ושמואל אמר, עבדים היינו."<sup>23</sup>

רב and שמואל debate the definition of beginning with degradation. רב says that this requirement is to discuss the idolatrous ancestors of בני ישראל and to progressively show how בני ישראל came to recognition of ה'. שמואל holds that one need not extend past the strict topic of יציאת מצרים and beginning with degradation means to describe the slavery of בני ישראל in מצרים. The ס' רמב"ם describes the חיוב of "מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" in the following way:

"וצריך להתחיל בגנות ולסיים בשבח. כיצד? מתחיל ומספר שבתחילה היו אבותינו, בימי תרח ולפניו, כופרים, וטועין אחר ההבל, ורודפין אחר עבודת אלילים. ומסיים בדת האמת שקרבנו המקום לו והבדילנו מהאומות וקרבתנו ליחודו. וכן מתחיל ומודיע שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שגמלנו, ומסיים בנסים ובנפלאות שנעשו לנו, ובחירותנו."<sup>24</sup>

One is required to begin by discussing how תרח, the father of אברהם, and those before him were idol worshippers and denied the existence of ה', and conclude with how בני ישראל were later chosen to be the nation of ה'. Furthermore, one is to begin with the description of the slavery of בני ישראל and conclude with the great miracles that ה' performed in their redemption and how He chose them as His nation. Rav Soloveitchik<sup>25</sup> notices that the ס' רמב"ם quotes both the opinions of רב and שמואל. He therefore suggests that

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22. פסחים, קט"ז.

23. שם.

24. הל' חמץ ומצה, ז'ד'.

25. "Festival of Freedom"

the Rav<sup>26</sup> does not understand the two אמוראים to be arguing. Rather, both are integral components of סיפור יציאת מצרים. One is required to relate how בני ישראל underwent the transformation from being idol worshippers to being chosen as the עם סגולה of ה' and receiving the תורה. The slavery and redemption from מצרים were key components in the development of this process. However, if this is the structure of סיפור יציאת מצרים it appears that a vital component is left out of the story related on ט"ו ניסן. While עבדות מצרים and יציאת מצרים are discussed at length, the הגדה does not mention מתן תורה. If the purpose of סיפור יציאת מצרים is to portray the national development of בני ישראל it would appear that יציאת מצרים cannot stand on its own but must be linked to מתן תורה. Why do we not extend סיפור יציאת מצרים to מתן תורה?

### ספירת העומר ושבועות

In order to properly understand the purpose of פסח and, specifically, the night of ט"ו ניסן it is necessary to understand the context in which פסח is observed. On ט"ו ניסן, the night following the night of סיפור יציאת מצרים, the ספירת העומר מצוה begins. Day one of the subsequent forty-eight days leading up until חג השבועות is counted. The Rav<sup>27</sup> understands the essence of ספירת העומר in the following way:

"צוה בחג המצות שבעה ימים בקדושה לפניהם ולאחריהם כי כולם קדושים ובתוכם ה', ומנה ממנו תשעה וארבעים יום שבעה שבועות כימי עולם, וקדש יום שמיני כשמיני של חג. והימים הספורים בינתיים כחולו של מועד בין הראשון והשמיני בחג והוא יום מתן תורה שהראם בו את אשו הגדולה ודבריו שמעו מתוך האש. ולכן יקראו רבותינו ז"ל בכל מקום חג השבועות 'עצרת', כי הוא כיום שמיני של חג שקראו הכתוב כן."<sup>27</sup>

The days of ספירת העומר are like days of חולו של מועד between פסח and שבועות. The time period from פסח through שבועות is one time of קדושה and is like one long חג. The משך חכמה<sup>28</sup> explains as well that the fifty one days

26. In Rav Sherkin's collection of שיעורים of the Rav on the מועדים titled "הררי קדם" he explains that the מחלוקת between רב and שמואל is what the main focus of one's thanksgiving to ה' should be. According to רב one is to thank ה' for the overall purpose of יציאת מצרים which was the election of בני ישראל as the עם סגולה of ה'. According to שמואל one is to focus on the actual redemption from מצרים. However, רב and שמואל are in agreement that both aspects should be included in סיפור יציאת מצרים.

27. ויקרא, כ"ג:ל"ו.

28. שם:ט"ו.

from פסח through שבועות are one unit and he elaborates that this is a defining time period for כלל ישראל in which they separate themselves from all other nations, proclaim their loyalty to ה', and prepare to accept the תורה.

The night of ט"ו ניסן is not an isolated night. סיפור יציאת מצרים serves a greater purpose beyond it. It begins a time period of קדושה in which בני ישראל come closer to ה' and His תורה. Therefore, on the first night of פסח, בני ישראל is experienced in which the description of how בני ישראל changed from idol worship to recognition of ה' (and ultimately being elected as the עם סגולה) occurs. The slavery and redemption from מצרים which were vital components in this process are discussed at length and הודאה is given to ה' for the great נסים He performed. Following this, just as בני ישראל did not receive the תורה immediately after their redemption from מצרים, יציאת מצרים is not immediately linked to מתן תורה. The סיפור ends after יציאת מצרים and the period of ספירת העומר begins which is a time of introspection and striving for closeness to ה' in preparation for מתן תורה. Finally, on ו' סיון this period of קדושה concludes with the observance of the day that בני ישראל accepted the תורה, marking the completion of the mission that began on פסח.

Rabbi Rothwachs (Rav of Congregation Beth Aaron) once described this mission as the transition from animals to men. On ט"ז ניסן, the second day of פסח, the קרבן עומר, consisting of barley, is brought. Barley is animal food. On שבועות the קרבן שתי הלחם, consisting of two loaves of bread, is brought. Bread is human food. Rabbi Rothwachs explained that between פסח and שבועות an internal change occurs as one works to improve himself and draw closer to ה', changing him from an animal to a man. סיפור יציאת מצרים is not an isolated night. Rather, it is the beginning of an exalted time period. Why then does ספירת העומר not begin on ט"ו ניסן? If this night is the beginning of this time period, setting its tone, wouldn't it stand to reason that it should be counted as day one?

Rav Soloveitchik<sup>29</sup> writes that פסח is a holiday of great awe. The nation of בני ישראל was born through wondrous miracles and divine revelation. ה' redeemed בני ישראל Himself as the הגדה states, "אני ולא מלאך". The Rav explains that such times have been repeated throughout the history of כלל ישראל. There have been times in which the presence of ה' has been easily recognizable. Every event clearly had the hand of ה' behind it. At such times life is a great joy. There are no problems, dreams are fulfilled, and one feels that life is purposeful. These times are represented by פסח. However, such

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הררי קדם שם. 29.

times do not last forever. The נסים גלויים disappear. The שירת הים is a mere memory and עמלק attacks. One finds himself lost of purpose and direction and life is full of contradiction. How is one supposed to respond to such change? The Rav says that in such times a Jew must live with dignity. He must commit to hard work to sustain himself but at the same time he needs to be ready to sacrifice and give up for the sake of the community. Although he is surrounded by enemies and doubt and he can barely sustain his own household, he must still be prepared to submit himself to the community and the תורה. This is symbolized by the קרבן עומר. When times change and one is living in times of difficulty he still must separate the first sheaf of barley from the new harvest and bring it to the כהן.

Contrary to פסח, the period of ספירת העומר symbolizes the difficult everyday life. Therefore, although the greatness of ה' and the redemption of בני ישראל are discussed in an exalted atmosphere on the night of ט"ז ניסן, these same ideas and lessons must be remembered and applied in one's strenuous everyday life.

Rav Soloveitchik notes that ספירת העומר is not unique in the sense that many other instances of counting occur in הלכה. Six days are counted leading up to שבת, six years are counted leading up to שמיטה, forty nine years are counted leading up to יובל, certain טמאים such as זב and נדה are required to count days, and an אבל counts שבעה and שלושים. What is the role that counting plays in Jewish life? The Rav explained that when one counts he looks both backwards and forwards. When he states that today is the thirty third day of the עומר he is recognizing that thirty two days have passed but that many more are yet to come. The תורה requires each person to look backwards and forwards at the same time. Life is full of both review and thought and anticipation and searching. One must contemplate and understand Jewish history and must understand the stories of the תורה and develop an understanding of ה'. However, such stories and events are not meant to remain in the past, rather, one must apply them to daily life and utilize them to understand the world around him. The Rav states that one who understands the stories of the תורה understands the world around him.

This is the goal of ספירת העומר. One is to understand history, namely, יציאת מצרים, the travels in the מדבר, and ultimately מתן תורה, but at the same time he must use these events to look forwards in his daily life. The Rav concludes with the following statement:

“The Jew who approaches Mount Sinai to receive the Torah is rooted in the ancient past and at the same time committed to a future pre-experienced as a reality. One's mind is precise and exact, pedantic as to the component parts,

and also beholds an exalted vision of the whole. All this is symbolized by counting the עומר.”

On שבועות the conclusion of the mission is reached having both analyzed the past and having looked forward in preparation to accept the תורה, moving forwards.

On the first night of פסח, with the atmosphere we are creating with סיפור יציאת מצרים, we begin a fifty one - day - long mission in which we recognize our roots and journey to becoming the nation of 'ה. We understand the foundations of our existence and look ahead to their application in our daily life.

## The Four Sons

Tzipora Ross

When examining the *pesukim* in which the four sons ask their questions, we may be left with several questions ourselves. First, what is the general context in which the Torah records the asking of these questions? Second, do the answers in the Torah correspond with the answers in the Haggadah, and if not, why? Third, how do the questions connote the character traits that the Haggadah ascribes to the sons?

The source for the four sons comes from the *Yerushalmi*, *Pesachim* 10:4. Strangely, the Gemara alters the חכם's question from the *pasuk* (Devarim 6:20) "מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלקינו אתכם" אשר צוה" to "מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלקינו אתכם". Our Haggadah quotes the *pasuk* verbatim, which often leads the more astute to comment that, like the רשע, the חכם seems to remove himself from the group by using the term "אתכם" - you. The פני משה, commenting on the *Yerushalmi*, explains that the חכם purposely alters the *pasuk* so as not to remove himself from the group.

What is the context of the חכם's question? In other words, why does the *Yerushalmi* attribute the character trait of wisdom to the son who asks such a question? First, it is important to realize that the חכם's question alone is the only one not in שמות, but rather in דברים. It takes place after the command of שמע, told not to the slave generation that had experienced the Exodus, but to their children, who lived their entire existence surrounded by divine clouds. It is this son, presumably the third generation, who wants to know the essentials behind *halakha*. The Torah answers "עבדים היינו"; in other words, he must remember his history because, as Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch writes, only if a Jew realizes where he came from, can he properly serve ה"ה הקב"ה.

Although the בעל הגדה includes the *pasuk* of "עבדים היינו" in the evening's liturgy, the answer he gives to the חכם is in fact from the Mishna: אין "אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן" (*Pesachim* 10:8). Perhaps the nature of the חכם's question indicates that we need to answer him on a deeper level, for one cannot really know the עדות, חקים, ומשפטים without delving into תורה שבעל פה. Why do we choose to answer him with the *halakha* of this Mishna specifically? Perhaps because it is the last Mishna in *Pesachim* that deals directly with the seder. Alternatively, the Gemara (119b) comments that the word מפטירין means that one should not move from one group to another when eating the פסח קרבן. Staying with one's original group,



apparently unrelated mitzva of פטור חמור to ask "מה זאת". The תם is neither a חכם nor a רשע, and so we answer him simply: "בחוזה יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים מבית עבדים". Here we have the same answer in the Torah and the Haggadah. The answer is both concise and historical; we keep these mitzvot because of the landmark historical event of our Exodus. Had Hashem not spared the בכורים of *Bnai Yisrael*, had He not taken us out of Egypt, none of these *mitzvot* would exist because we as a nation would not exist.

Finally, we come to the שאינו יודע לשאול. He is being taught within the context of the Pesach seder itself (*Shmot* 13:8), "והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר, בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים". Perhaps he is too young to ask, but the tangible experiences of the seder can enlighten him about the Exodus. Or perhaps he is an adult son who is completely apathetic about Torah and mitzvot. Therefore, we find the context of his unasked question in the introduction to the mitzva of tefillin. Tefillin is a daily mitzva that emphasizes our actions (תפילין של יד) and our thoughts (תפילין של ראש) as being devoted to Hashem. The father needs to explain to his son that it is not only at the annual seder that we remember and discuss our history, but every single day, when wearing tefillin. As Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains, ליל הסדר is not an ancient story, but a current one. Its relevance applies to our generation because we are so sure of the tradition that we are transmitting to our children. If we conduct the seder properly, then this son will realize it is his own father's head that the מלאך המות passed over, his own father's hand that had been shackled in chains, and his own father who was liberated from Egypt. Hence, the בעל הגדה uses the same *pasuk* for the רשע and the שאינו יודע לשאול - not to compare them, but for completely different emphases. This child needs to feel connected to his past, not excluded from it. When the father says "עשה ה' לי" he is stretching out his hand to the שאינו יודע לשאול to include him in the *mesora*.

While the Torah and the Haggadah respond differently to the sons' questions, underlying themes connect the responses. Both emphasize the need to connect to one's family and to one's history. The Seder is the best example of these two areas coming together. We use the תורה שבעל פה to illustrate the תורה שבכתב, as well as adding in long-standing customs, while placing an overall emphasis on transmission to future generations.

## Go Out and Learn

Dov Adler

Throughout the Haggadah we find many references to the Avos and to the role they played in the rise of Klal Yisrael. The paragraph of *V'hi She'amda* is sandwiched in between the description of the *bris bain habesarim* and *Tzai U'Imad*, which describes Lavan's role in trying to uproot everything Ya'akov stood for. As it states, "צא ולמד, מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות לעקב, ולבן בקש לעקר את הכל" - "Go out and learn what Lavan wanted to do to our father Ya'akov, for Pharoah issued a decree only against the male children, but Lavan wanted to uproot everything."

Two questions arise about this sequence. First, what is the meaning of "צא" - "Go **Out** and learn." Where are we "going"? We do most of our learning in the context of our homes, our shuls and our community. What does the *ba'al Haggadah* refer to when instructing us to go out and learn? Second, what is the connection to the previous paragraph of *V'hi She'amda* which states that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* saves us from our enemies in every generation?

The following interpretation was suggested by my father in a *drasha* he delivered in K"K Rinat Yisrael, in תשמ"ט. We find the word "צא" used by the Torah in a very different context. In *Parshas Noach (Braishis 8:16)* *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* tells Noach "צא מן התבה". The rain had stopped, the water had receded and G-d was now instructing Noach to leave the תבה. The obvious question on that pasuk is why did Hashem have to instruct and command Noach to leave the תבה? After being in the תבה for the last year, once he realized it was time to leave, it would seem logical that he would want to leave! He would want to take his family out of their cramped quarters and see what of the world remained. Why would Noach wait for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* to command him to leave the תבה? Rather, after the מבול, Noach thought that perhaps it would be better for him to remain in the תבה and not to embark on starting the world anew. Perhaps it was not worth it to invest all of his energy into creating a new world only for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* to get angry once again and to bring the destruction all over again. It seemed impossible to live up to the standards that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* expected and therefore it was not worth it. It would be impossible to ward off all of the enemies of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* who want to distance the world from Torah and Mitzvos. Why make the sacrifice if it all will be for naught? Hence, Hashem had to command Noach - "Leave the תבה." You have the mandate to start fresh, to start a new world and to do your best at making sure that the next generation will be one that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is proud of.

Similarly, this applies generations later to Klal Yisrael as well. In *V'hi She'amda* we say "שְׂלֵא אֶחָד בְּלִבְךָ, עֲמֹד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ" – “for not only one enemy has risen against us to destroy us.” We have many enemies - external enemies that we see on a daily basis and enemies that we deal with internally, within our conscience and our beliefs. Many individuals and many generations will have the same thought process as Noach. “It’s not worth it to fight the day to day battles. It’s difficult to face the pressure of being a Jew in public. It’s not worth it to face the challenges that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* puts before us. We can be Jews in private, in our own *תבה*, but publicly it is not worth it to fight that battle. It’s not something we can overcome.” Other generations will take it one step further and say that it is not worth it to fight that battle at all and they may totally give up being an *Eved Hashem*. Therefore, the *Ba'al Haggadah* uses the terminology of *אֶחָד בְּלִבְךָ*. Just as G-d was commanding Noach to go into the world, to do his best at warding off those who may oppose his way of life and his belief in G-d, so too, Hashem is commanding us to go out and learn. Step into the public domain to see what Lavan tried to do. Step into the public domain to learn how we can counter our enemies, both physical and spiritual, in order to help perpetuate the name of Hashem. Therefore on the heels of *V'hi she'amda*, we recite *אֶחָד בְּלִבְךָ* -to counterbalance the natural instinct of the human being to retreat and to instruct us that we cannot worry about what others will do to us. We can only be responsible for what we can do for ourselves.

Ya'akov Avinu also could have fallen prey to the same thought process. He had a brother who was chasing him and who wanted to kill him. He was away from his family for 20 years and lived in a house of *ovdai ovoda zarah*. Yet, he was able to overcome and resist any temptation he faced. As *Chazal darshen* – "עם לבן גרתי ותריג מצוות שמרתי" - “I lived with Lavan, who was an *ovaid ovoda zarah*, yet I was able to keep my *emunah* and my commitment to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and His mitzvos.”

Many commentators find it difficult to identify the source of the theme of *אֶחָד בְּלִבְךָ*. Where did Lavan attempt to eradicate everything? The Vilna Gaon explains that indeed there is no explicit source for this statement. However, that is precisely the point. There are times when our enemies fully announce their intent to eradicate the Jewish people. At other times they contemplate the idea without precisely stating their intentions. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is still aware of their intentions and destroys them as well. The proof of this is Lavan. Even though his intention to destroy us is not documented, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* still saves us from his hands.

During the *seder* night we tell the world that we are not afraid. We open up the door after *bentching*, before reciting *Shfoch Chamascha*, not to let

Eliyahu in, as many have learned in *yeshiva ketana*, but rather to show the world the belief we have in the *Lail Shimurim*. We demonstrate the belief we have that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* indeed will protect us against any enemy. It is our collective hope and prayer that this Pesach will once again serve as a reminder for us not to be afraid of our enemies. May it remind us to **Go out** and show the world our unwavering belief in our G-d. May this Pesach serve as a source of inner strength in our continuing daily service of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

**The Plague of Darkness Explained:**  
**The *Machlokes* between the GR”A and Einstein**  
**on the Nature of Light and Darkness**

Dr. Yosi Fishkin

The plague of darkness was the most mysterious of the ten plagues in Egypt. Every other plague involved some permutation of something we have physically seen in this world, albeit in an extraordinary manifestation. But the darkness in Egypt differed from the darkness we usually experience in many ways.

The Torah states (Shemos 10:23) *V'yamesh choshech* – “and the darkness will be palpable.” Not only was this darkness impervious to light, but also to movement; the Egyptians were restricted in their mobility during this time period. However, as the *pasuk* states, for the Jews there was light. They experienced the freedom of sight and movement.

This darkness was clearly different from the usual darkness we customarily experience in the absence of light. Since this plague of darkness was a one-time event that we have not experienced since, it is impossible for us to fully understand the nature of the experience. But perhaps we can combine traditional sources with modern science to try to gain a better understanding of the nature of this plague of darkness.

In order to appreciate the nature of this miraculous darkness, we need to understand more fully the nature of light. Is darkness simply the absence of light, or is darkness a separate entity in the natural world? As we shall see, there are two basic approaches to this question.

The opinion of the GR”A<sup>1</sup> (1720-1797) is that darkness is an entity to itself, and not simply the absence of light. He cites the *pasuk* (Yeshayah 45:7) *Yotzer Or U'voreh Choshech*– “He formed light, and created darkness.” To understand the difference between usage of the word “*Yotzer*” and the word “*Boreh*” in this *pasuk*, it is necessary to understand that there are four distinct worlds<sup>2</sup>:

1. The *Olam Ha'asayah* – our physical world. “*Asiyah*” refers to putting the finishing touches on something which has already been created.

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1. At the end of his peirush to Sefer Yetzirah, as well as in Aderes Eliyahu.  
2. According to Chachmei Hakabbalah; the wording here is as elucidated by Rav Schwab in *Rav Schwab on Prayer*.

2. The *Olam HaYetzirah* – the world where Hashem “forms” things that will eventually exist in the *Olam Ha’asiyah*.
3. The *Olam Haberiyah* – the world of creation, where Hashem creates something where nothing previously existed.
4. The *Olam Ha’atzilus* – a higher level, the world before creation.

By saying *Yotzer Or U’voreh Choshech*, the *pasuk* refers to the process of *Yetzirah* for light, but *Beriyah* for darkness. *Beriyah* implies a creation without defined characteristics or limits, while *Yetzirah* implies a creation with specifications. Hashem “formed” light by giving it defined boundaries that describe its attributes. Light can only project a specific distance, it must have a source, and it has other physical limitations, as well. Darkness, on the other hand, was made through *Beriyah* without *Yetzirah*; it was created, but limits were not put on it. Darkness can extend out to infinity, and doesn’t require a “source;” darkness simply “appears” whenever a light source is removed.

The one limitation Hashem put on darkness is that it cannot intermingle with light; wherever light exists, darkness cannot penetrate. This unique limitation is what is meant by the *pasuk Vayavdel bein ha’Or uvein ha’Choshech* (Bereishis 1:4) – Hashem “divided between the light and between the darkness.” This is similar to the air that fills the world – it naturally extends everywhere in the world, but in the physical location where a person or any other object stands, air is displaced from that spot.

Keeping in mind these concepts, we can now understand, to a limited extent, what took place during the plague of darkness. Hashem temporarily “flipped the switch,” as it were, removing the usual limitations on darkness and giving it additional powers. Although usually darkness could not exist in the presence of light, suddenly, when Moshe stretched out his hands toward the *shamayim*, the rules changed. Darkness was able to penetrate even in areas where usually light existed, and was no longer pushed away by light. The normal restrictions on darkness were removed to such an extent that it was even able to limit the Egyptians’ physical movement. However, for the Jewish people, *hayah or b’moshvosum* – they had light, and the light for them behaved as it usually does, pushing away darkness.

We see, therefore, that according to the GR”A, both light and darkness have their own unique existences, each with rules set forth by the *Ribono shel Olam*. However, let’s now explore what modern science teaches us about the

nature of light, and its ramifications for understanding the spiritual nature of light and darkness<sup>3</sup>.

In 1905, Albert Einstein published his Theory of Relativity. He demonstrated that matter, space, and time are all interconnected, with each having an influence on the other. These conclusions happen to be consistent with the views of early Jewish philosophical writers.

One of the fascinating aspects of Einstein's theories is the concept of the relativity of time. Time slows down in proportion to speed; the faster an object travels, the slower the effect of time on that object. To give a classic explanatory example: If an astronaut and an observer on the ground both synchronize their watches, and then the astronaut spends time in a spacecraft traveling at very high speeds, an interesting result ensues. When the astronaut and the observer on the ground later compare their watches, more time will have passed for the observer on the ground than for the astronaut. The ground-based watch may display 9:00 am, while the astronaut's watch may only indicate 8:55 am. Time actually passes more slowly on the spaceship, relative to the observer on the ground. This is not just a theoretical idea, but has been proven through many modern experiments.

The faster an object moves, the slower it travels in time. The fastest speed in the universe is the speed of light, which is just over 186,000 miles per second. At that speed, time actually stops altogether, which is admittedly a difficult concept for the human brain to grasp. Light travels, by definition, at the speed of light. Therefore, since light is traveling at the speed of light, light itself is not bound by the structure of time as we know it. All of us are familiar with light and we interact with light on a constant basis throughout the day. But it is an amazing concept to contemplate that light exists outside the rules of time.

This is a fascinating concept, but what is its spiritual significance? The *Ribono shel Olam* created the world as a world bound by the rules of time. The world, and everything in it, has a definite past, present, and future. We, as human beings created to function in this world, cannot even contemplate what it would mean to be "outside" or "before" time. How do we even explain what the nature of time really is? Time is defined by the Maharal (1520-1609) in his sefer *Ohr Chadash* as a phenomenon of constantly changing existence. Our bodies are constantly changing, the world around us is constantly changing, our thoughts are constantly changing, and all these

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3. Much of the following analysis is based on Rabbi Yisrael Lorberbaum's *The Dimension Beyond*, the English translation of his sefer *HaMeimad HaNosaf*, which is highly recommended reading for those interested in this subject.

provide the experience of time. We don't experience time passing while we're asleep, unconscious, or otherwise deprived of our senses. Hashem gave us the gift of living in a time-bound world, since this provides us with changing moments in time that we can use to serve Him in many different ways throughout our lives. The gift of time also allows us to develop and continuously improve ourselves. This is the concept of time in our physical world.

The spiritual world, as opposed to the physical world, exists outside time and is not bound by it. In the spiritual world, things are constant and unchanging. Hashem is unchanging, and He exists in past, present, and future with no change and no contradiction. *Malachim* are unchanging, unmoving, as indicated by the example of them having one "foot" since they do not "walk." Spiritual concepts and dimensions are constants that exist outside of time.

Now, if we can define the physical world as being that which is subject to the laws of time, and the spiritual world as that which is outside time – what category does light belong to, physical or spiritual? Light obviously has a physical manifestation in our world, and we interact with light on a constant basis in our world. On the other hand, since light is not bound by time, as explained above, it has a spiritual nature to it as well. Light has both a physical and spiritual nature.

The *pasuk* (Mishlei 6:23) states *Ki ner mitzvah v'Sorah or*, "A mitzvah is a candle and Torah is light." The Maharal explains that Torah is compared to light because the Torah is not dependent on the physical world, it is entirely spiritual. Therefore, it is compared to light, since light is also a spiritual phenomenon. Neither the Torah nor light is bound by the rules of time. Mitzvos, however, are very much bound by the physical world. Mitzvos depend on the human being who is performing the mitzvah, as well as the time the mitzvah is taking place. Mitzvos are therefore compared to a candle, which depends on its specific physical location in time and space to provide light. A candle is a specific physical location that provides a source for light, which can have a spiritual nature. Similarly, a mitzvah is a specific time-and-space-bound manifestation of a spiritual idea in the Torah.

Light has both a physical and spiritual nature. What is the reason for this dual nature of light? What's so special about light that it deserves to be free of the bounds of time? Science can describe the fact that light is not subject to time, but it cannot explain the underlying reason for this fact. To determine the reason, we need to look at the creation of light, as described by the Torah.

On the first day of creation, Hashem said (Bereishis 1:3) “Let there be light.” The very first recorded “statement” of Hashem in the Torah was the creation of light. But it’s not until the fourth day of creation that the sun, moon and stars, the sources of light, were created. If the source did not yet exist, what was the nature of the light that existed on the first day? The Gemara (Chagiga 12a) explains that it was a unique type of *spiritual* light that would have permitted man to see from one end of the world to the other. Hashem saw that it was unfitting for mortals to use, so after the creation of this purely spiritual aspect of light, He then hid this spiritual light away for the future. Instead, on the fourth day, physical light was created. This physical light still retained some of its spiritual aspects, it is still referred to as “light” just like the purely spiritual light created on the first day, but it was a spiritual light wrapped in a physical form more fitting for use by human beings.

It is no coincidence that light was created so early in the creation process, immediately after the “beginning of time”; it came into existence very close to the “before-time” state. It is therefore less surprising that time has such a tenuous hold on light.

This is the unique aspect of light: it is a physical creation that has its roots in its original spiritual nature.

Now, according to this way of thinking about light, how do we define darkness? Unlike the GR”A, who postulated that darkness is an entity to itself, according to Einstein and others who describe the modern scientific way of analyzing light, darkness is the absence of light. This actually fits with the basic *p’shat* of the *pesukim*. The second *pasuk* of the Torah mentions the fact that there was darkness, but unlike the creation of light in the next *pasuk*, it doesn’t mention the fact that darkness was explicitly created. The word *choshech* immediately follows the term *sohu va’vohu*, further leading to the implication that darkness was related to the state of “emptiness,” a lack of creation. It is clear from the *p’shat* that darkness was the state before the creation of light, but not a creation all to itself. Einstein’s science appears to be in agreement with the *p’shat* of the *pasuk*.

If light is a physical manifestation of an innately spiritual nature, then darkness is the total absence of that spiritual nature. Darkness, as the opposite of light, is representative of an “anti-spirituality.”

Let us now apply this to the plague of darkness in Egypt. If we conceive of darkness as being anti-light and at the same time anti-spiritual, a number of interesting consequences can arise from this line of reasoning.

Egypt was a country deep in *Tumah*, and as a result of the Egyptian influence, the Jewish people had sunk to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of *Tumah*. Egypt was as close as possible to being a national manifestation of anti-spirituality. It was a very fitting punishment, therefore, to inflict Egypt with darkness, which is itself the antithesis of spirituality.

The *pasuk* states that while the Egyptians were experiencing darkness, the Jews were experiencing light. The innate nature and destiny of the two nations manifested themselves in their physical experiences. Egypt, the anti-spiritual nation, experienced darkness, at the precise moment that the Jews, the primary spiritual nation, experienced light.

The Midrash states that it was during this plague of darkness that those Jews who were unworthy of redemption perished. The contrast of the light versus darkness divided between the more spiritual versus the less spiritual among the people, with mortal consequences. The spiritual aspect of light “protected” those who were more spiritual, while those who were lacking spirituality were lost in the darkness.

Although the Jews had reached a terribly deep level of *Tumah*, the Torah still attests to the fact that they had light. Even with darkness/anti-spirituality around them, the Jews were about to begin their journey upwards through the levels of greater Kedusha. Even the very beginning steps of this process, where they were just barely escaping the clutches of *Tumah* and starting their long journey upwards, is described by the Torah as light/spirituality.

If we accept the fact that light is a combined manifestation of both physical and spiritual forces, perhaps we can conjecture that this can also explain the restrictive nature the darkness placed on the Egyptians’ movements. The Egyptians were forced to experience total and absolute darkness. All of the effects of light were removed from them, representing a removal of combined physical and spiritual forces. With the absence of physical forces, they were deprived of their physical ability to move through space. With the removal of spiritual forces, their psychological motivation to move was removed as well. The combined spiritual and physical consequences of the absolute darkness prevented them from any movement for the duration of the plague.

We have attempted to understand the plague of darkness in Egypt from the perspective of two approaches. We have considered the approach of the GR”A, who felt that darkness was a created entity of its own with its own unique attributes. We have contrasted that with our second approach, stating that darkness is the absence of light, representative of a lack of spirituality.

When Einstein eventually received his Nobel Prize in 1921, it wasn't for the principles of relativity discussed above. It was for his description of the quantum mechanics of light: Light can behave as a particle, and as a wave, at the exact same time. Although these are two apparently contradictory concepts, both are true simultaneously<sup>4</sup>. This radical concept took the secular scientific world by storm, but it was no *chiddush* in the beis medrash. This principle is clearly found in the Gemara in the statement "*Elu v'elu divrei Elokim chayim*" (Eruvin 13b). Two sides of a *Machlokes*, which may seem to be opposites, can both be correct.

Although they seem to be opposite approaches to the plague of darkness, the principles of quantum mechanics, and *Elu V'Elu*, demonstrate that there may be no essential contradiction at all between the approach of the GR"A and the consequences of Einstein's relativity.

May this Yom Tov season be one of light and increased spirituality for us all.

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4. A revolutionary concept, which although difficult to comprehend, has been experimentally proven. The physicist Niels Bohr said, "Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it."

## ***Pesach, Matzah, Maror - Leap of Faith***

Rabbi Asher Teigman

The Haggadah quotes Rabban Gamliel's statement that anyone who does not speak of three things does not fulfill his obligation of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* at the Seder: Pesach, Matzah and Maror. Obviously, these mitzvos are central to the night of Pesach, especially in the times of the *Bais Hamikdash*, but what is their deeper message that makes their mere mention so pivotal to Pesach night, and can we take this message away with us into our everyday lives?

I'd like to share the following understanding based on the Ohr Gedalyahu.

The *Korban Pesach* commemorates the fact that Hashem "*pasach*" over the Jewish homes during *Makkas Bechoros*. The Ohr Gedalyahu explains that the fact that Hashem "skipped over" the Jewish homes represents that Bnai Yisrael experienced a level of *gilui Shechina* they did not deserve. They were not yet at the spiritual level normally necessary to merit such *nissim*. Hashem, in His infinite mercy, allowed Bnai Yisrael to "skip" to the level of *tahara* required to experience such *gilui Shechina*. Thus, the entire *geulah* of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was a leap of spiritual growth.

Generally speaking, spiritual growth is obtained through gradual introspection and self improvement. However, there are times that we experience a sudden inspiring moment and if we do not try to capitalize on that moment right away, the inspiration wears off and we have lost an opportunity to come closer to Hashem. In those moments of inspiration, we must immediately take action and introspect only later. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is one of the events that Bnai Yisrael needed to capitalize on immediately, and they did so. That is represented by the Matzah. Bnai Yisrael did not wait for the dough to rise, and they did not take their time to contemplate the situation. Rather, they saw the need to capitalize immediately on the awesomeness of what they experienced.

Bnai Yisrael's ability to seize the moment would not have been possible had they not felt that they were in *galus*. Had they gotten used to their routine and felt content with their lives, they would not have had the will power to follow Hashem blindly into the desert. The Maror represents the fact that Bnai Yisrael recognized their *galus* and were therefore able to pick themselves up and leap to new heights.

That being the case, why does the Matzah precede the Maror at the Seder? The reason is that the Maror also represents the realization that we must praise Hashem even for the bitterness we experience. The *galus* is preparation for *geulah*, and ultimately is for our own good. However, this

realization can only be obtained in retrospect. Only after we have experienced *geulah* can we look back and see that Hashem was with us the entire time, guiding our every day lives. This is why even though the bitterness preceded the *geulah*, at the Seder the Matzah comes before the Marror, because only after we experience *geulah* can we recognize that the bitterness was also to our own benefit and worthy of praise to Hashem.

Every year, Pesach provides us with a new opportunity to improve our relationship with Hashem. We must seize the moment and not waste the opportunity. *Sefiras HaOmer* provides us with the opportunity to contemplate our growth, but only after the spiritual high of Pesach. May we take these messages to heart and ultimately experience the *Geulah Sheleimah*.

## **Charoses – To Shake or Not to Shake**

Rabbi Elchanan Dulitz

The *mishnah* in *Pesachim* states: At the *seder* we bring *matza*, *maror* and *charoses* to the table even though it is not a mitzvah. R. Eliezer argues and claims that *charoses* is a mitzvah. The *gemara* will analyze both sides of this dispute. Is *charoses* a mitzvah or not? If *charoses* is a mitzvah, why do we not make a *bracha* when we eat it, and if it is not a mitzvah, then why is it not *mafsik* when we eat it with the *matzah* and *maror*. In addition, we will attempt to address the issue of why we shake off the *charoses* and whether it resolves all problems.

The *gemara* asks if *charoses* is not a mitzvah, then why bring it to the *seder* table in the first place? The answer given is because of “*kapa*.” The *gemara* explains that the smell of the *charoses* gets rid of *kapa*. What exactly is meant by “*kapa*” is itself subject to a debate.

Rashi says that *kapa* is a sharp taste with the possibility of poison contained in the *maror*. Dipping *maror* into *charoses* eliminates the *kapa*. Tosfos argues and says that *kapa* is a worm. This worm dies when it smells the *charoses*. The obvious problem with the approach of Tosfos is that even if the worm in the *maror* is dead, one should not be permitted to eat the *maror* as a full worm never becomes *batel*? Tosfos assumes that the person checked for worms and concluded that the *maror* was clean. If that is the case, why does one need the *charoses* at all, --if one checks and confirms that the *maror* is free of worms, there should be no need for *charoses* according to Tosfos, and if one is not able to determine that there are no worms in the *maror*, then *charoses* does not help? Tosfos concludes that it must be that we rely on *rov*, namely most *maror* does not contain these worms. For the *issur* of eating non kosher we can rely on a *rov* to allow it, but when it comes to danger we have a much lower tolerance and we cannot rely on a majority and must use the *charoses* as the antidote.

The *gemara* asks what the basis is for R. Eliezer to assume *charoses* is a mitzvah. R. Levi says *charoses* serves as a remembrance of the *tapuach* (usually translated as an apple tree), while R. Yochanan says *charoses* serves as a remembrance of the mortar in Egypt.

The *gemarah* in *Shabbos* quotes Shir HaShirim, which compares the Jews to an apple tree. Rashbam explains the comparison by quoting the *gemara* in *Sota* which states that the women in Egypt gave birth under the apple tree. On Pesach the *charoses* reminds us of these great women. He then quotes a second reason, just like the *tapuach* has the fruit grow in before the leaves so

too the Jews accepted Hashem's commandments before he told them what the commandments were at Har Sinai. Tosfos, assuming that an apple tree does not grow in this manner, says that *tapuach* refers to an *esrog* where the leaves grow in after the fruit. Tosfos cites a proof from *Targum Unklos*, who translates the word as the "fragrance of an *Esrog*." Tosfos also quotes the *Yerushalmi*, which holds that *charoses* is a remembrance of the blood in Egypt. In order to comply with both positions, Tosfos suggests that we should start making the *charoses* very thick and immediately before we use it, add wine to thin it out so it will have a similar look and texture to blood. *Rambam* has an alternate recipe. He states that we must crush figs or dates and nuts and then add vinegar to the mixture. However, when he quotes the mitzvah he states that the obligation is to put it on the table as opposed to eating it and therefore there is no *bracha* when we eat it.

The Shulchan Aruch concludes like Tosfos and assumes that we should start by making a thick mixture of apples, figs, nuts and pomegranates and then right before we eat it we should add wine or vinegar and liquefy it. We should dip the *maror* in but not lose the bitter taste because that would defeat the purpose of the *maror*. The Mishnah Brurah adds that this addition should be done right before the *charoses* is eaten. If *erev Pesach* is Shabbos then there is a potential problem of *lisha* so in order to avoid such a problem, one should do it before Shabbos (the issue of whether adding wine to a mixture is *lisha* is a major topic for a different time). Rama adds that there is a custom not to eat fruit on the fourteenth of *Nissan* but we do not hold by the custom.

The Shulchan Aruch HaRav holds that we should not dip the *maror* all the way in to the *charoses* because today there are no bugs in *maror*, and since we still use *charoses* we must therefore assume that our dipping is a mitzvah. However, we do not make a *bracha* because *charoses* is *tafel* to the *maror*. He holds that we should dip the *maror* in and then knock some of it off to make sure that there is not too much being eaten, which may require a separate *bracha*.

The *Tzitz Eliezer* also concludes that we should knock some of the *charoses* off in order to do the mitzvah properly. He adds that it not a problem of *borer* for two reasons: (i) because one is separating the *charoses* from the *maror* for a mitzvah, and (ii) *breira* requires the actor to want the two foods totally separated, whereas here the person only wants some of the food separated, which is permissible.

As we sit down and prepare for the *seder* we must use the proper recipe for *charoses*, and when we dip we should be careful not to have too much, which may negatively impact the other *mitzvos* of the evening.

*Good yom tov.*

**שביעי של פסח -  
Is it a רגל בפני עצמו?**

Rabbi Brian Gopin

The last days of Pesach are always a strange time: on the one hand, we celebrate the day as any normal yom tov with the prohibition of *melacha* and the obligation to eat and drink. On the other hand, we do not recite the *beracha* of *she'hecheyanu* (see Shulchan Aruch OC 490:7), which is the declaration of a new yom tov, nor do we recite a full Hallel. How are we to understand this holiday?

It would appear from the Torah reading for the seventh day of Pesach, which is taken from Parshas Beshalach and which describes the miracle of *keriyas yam suf*, that we are celebrating the actual miracle that Hashem performed for us on that day (see Rashi on Shmos 14:5) and that is why we are commanded to keep the seventh day of Pesach as a yom tov. But the commandment to keep the seventh day of Pesach as a yom tov was given to us in Parshas Bo when Bnei Yisrael were still in Mitzrayim (Shmos 12:16) and the miracle of *keriyas yam suf* had not yet taken place. It then would appear from the Torah itself that the last days of Pesach are celebrated as part of the holiday of Pesach and are not related to the miracle at all.<sup>1</sup> The Meshech Chochma is troubled by this point and explains that unlike the nations of the world, Jews do not formally celebrate the destruction of their enemies – it is for this reason, explains the Meshech Chochma, that we describe the holiday of Pesach as the days we left Mitzrayim and not as the days when Hashem judged the Egyptians.<sup>2</sup> In fact the Medrash says that when the Angels wanted to praise Hashem for destroying the Egyptians, Hashem responded *שירה ומעשי ידי טובעים בים ואתם אומרים שירה* “My creatures are drowning and you want to sing praise?” (see Megilla 10b), yet another proof that celebrating the downfall of our enemies is frowned upon. Therefore, concludes the Meshech Chochma, Hashem commanded Bnei Yisrael to celebrate the seventh day of Pesach when they were still in Mitzrayim so it would not appear that we are celebrating the destruction of our enemies.

In light of the above explanation, how are we to understand this holiday? Is the seventh day of Pesach a new yom tov where we are celebrating the

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1. See Ibn Ezra on Shmos 12:16 who says that the seventh day was commanded to remember the miracle which would occur in the future.

2. See Meshech Chochma who explains why the holiday of Chanukah was instituted because of the miracle of the candles and also why Purim was “בימים אשר נחו מאויביהם” and not on the day when Haman was killed.

miracle of the *yam suf* – in other words, does the miracle of the *yam suf* obligate us to celebrate a new yom tov - or is the seventh day just a conclusion to the seven day period we know as Pesach and it is just a coincidence that the miracle occurred on that day? This very basic question has some practical halachic applications as described below.

### **The Torah Reading on the Seventh Day**

As mentioned above, the Torah reading which was chosen for the seventh day of Pesach is the story of the splitting of the sea in Parshas Beshalach. What would be the *halacha* should the congregation forget to read this portion and read the parsha of כל הבכור (the reading chosen for the eighth day of Pesach) in its stead? Would we require the congregation to go back and read the portion of *keriyas yam suf* or would we say that since they mentioned the yom tov in the Torah reading that would suffice to fulfill their obligation? The Pri Megadim (Eishel Avraham 490:3) questions the Pri Chadash who seems to imply that if the congregation read the incorrect portion on the seventh day they would not be obligated to read the parsha of *keriyas yam suf* on the eighth day to make up for the incorrect omission of that parsha. Also, the Shaarei Ephraim (8:26) is of the opinion that if one were to read the incorrect portion on the seventh day, he would be required to read the parsha of *keriyas yam suf* on the eighth day, but in the Sha'arei Rachamim (8:8) he rules that if the congregation were to read the incorrect portion on both the seventh and eighth days they would **not** be obligated to go back and read the parsha of *keriyas yam suf*. It seems that the disagreement between the Pri Chadash and the Sha'arei Ephraim on the one hand and the Pri Megadim on the other is based on our fundamental question regarding the nature of the seventh day of Pesach: if the obligation of the yom tov is derived from the miracle that occurred on that day then we can understand why we would be obligated to read that Torah portion (and why we would require the congregation to go back and read that story should they make a mistake) but if the reason why we celebrate the seventh day is that it is the concluding days of Pesach which obligate us to declare it yom tov, perhaps the congregation can fulfill their Torah reading obligation by just mentioning the yom tov itself and not referencing the miracle.

### **The Recitation of Hallel on the Seventh Day**

The gemara in Arachin 10a questions why there is an obligation to recite the full Hallel all the days of Sukkos while on Pesach we only say a full Hallel on the first day (our custom is to recite a “half” Hallel on *chol hamoed* and the last days of Pesach – see Tosfos there). The gemara explains that since Sukkos has a different *korban mussaf* every day we consider each day as a separate yom tov which would require the recitation of a full Hallel. However, on Pesach, the *korbanos musaf* are the same every day of the holiday so there is no inherent *kedusha* which is added on the second day over and above the first and as a result, there is no new obligation to recite

the full Hallel. When explaining the reason for not saying a full Hallel on Pesach, the Taz seemingly ignores the reason given by the gemara and explains based on the Medrash cited above: the Medrash says that the *malachim* wanted to praise Hashem at the time of *keriyas yam suf* but Hashem stopped them, saying that it is not appropriate to recite שירה when the creatures of Hashem are drowning in the sea. Here too, explains the Taz, it is not appropriate for us to recite a full Hallel on the last day of Pesach since that was a time when the Egyptians were killed. Furthermore, continues the Taz, since we do not recite the full Hallel on the last days of Pesach we do not recite the full Hallel on *chol hamoed* either, so as not to treat *chol hamoed* with greater importance than yom tov.

Why did the Taz ignore the reason given by the gemara for reciting a half Hallel on the last days of Pesach and use the reason mentioned by the Medrash? The שאילת יעבץ סי' כ explains the Taz's omission of the reason of the gemara as follows: on the seventh day of yom tov there are really two separate reasons for reciting Hallel, (1) the fact that this day is a yom tov and like any other yom tov, we are required to say Hallel, and (2) the fact that the miracle of *keriyas yam suf* was performed for us on that day, which requires us to say a full Hallel like any other miracle performed for us. The gemara's reasoning for not saying Hallel on the seventh day only addressed the reason why the yom tov of the seventh day of Pesach does not require a recitation of Hallel, but the gemara did not address the second obligation of Hallel, namely, the miracle aspect of the day. Therefore, the Taz explained that for the miracle of *keriyas yam suf* we cannot recite a full Hallel either due to the fact that מעשי ידי טובעים בים. Perhaps this discussion is based on the very nature of the seventh day of Pesach. If the miracle of *keriyas yam suf* obligates us to celebrate the yom tov of the seventh day then we would need to recite a full Hallel because of the miracle and then we would need the reasoning of the Taz to tell us that there is no obligation of Hallel (because the Egyptians were killed on that day). However, if the yom tov is not related to the miracle at all and we are really celebrating the concluding days of Pesach then the only reason why we would not recite a full Hallel is that the day has no additional *kedusha* (as the gemara states).

### **Reciting זמן חירותנו on the Seventh Day of Pesach**

The Chok Yaakov in *Hilchos Pesach* 492:9 brings the opinion of the Maharil that on the seventh day of Pesach one should recite within the Kiddush and Tefilla "זמן שמחתנו" because of the joy and happiness we have over the fall of the Egyptians on that day and not "זמן חירותנו" which is recited on the first days of Pesach. It seems that the Maharil believed that the last days of Pesach were inherently different from the first days and that there is an added level of שמחה on the last day which changes the very nature of the day when compared to the first days of Pesach. In contrast to this opinion,

Maseches Sofrim states, "בשביעי של פסח אומר ביום שביעי העצרת הזה"<sup>3</sup>. It seems that the Maseches Sofrim understood that the seventh day of Pesach is considered to be the concluding day of the whole Pesach experience and that is why this day is labeled as עצרת, unlike the Maharil who understood that the nature of this day is based on the miracle of *keriyas yam suf*, thus declaring this day as one of joy and happiness.

Although the Maharil and the Maseches Sofrim seem to argue about the nature of the concluding days of Pesach, they both agree that there is a need to change the actual title of the yom tov and that it would not be appropriate to label these days as "זמן חירותנו". We, however, do not follow either opinion and we continue reciting "זמן חירותנו" in the Kiddush and Tefilla. What is the basis for this disagreement<sup>4</sup>? Is there any reason why these concluding days should not be considered "זמן חירותנו"? Perhaps this discussion is related to the very fundamental question about the miracle of *keriyas yam suf* and its relationship to the whole *yetzias mitzrayim* experience. Are we to consider the whole seven day journey from Egypt to the *yam suf* as part of *yetzias mitzrayim* or do we only refer to the actual leaving of Egypt as the central focus of *yetzias mitzrayim* and see the splitting of the sea as a separate miracle that Hashem performed for us. This fundamental question is highlighted in two very important issues raised by the *poskim*:

1. In the Haggadah we recite a series of paragraphs that reference the *makkos* that were given to the Egyptians at *yam suf*. The Rambam in his Haggadah leaves out this whole section (as well as דיינו) – after explaining the various *pesukim* mentioned in the Haggadah the Rambam moves right to the paragraph of רבן גמליאל. Perhaps the Rambam believed that the commandment of סיפור יציאת מצרים only requires us to convey the actual leaving of Egypt and that the miracles that were performed at the *yam suf* are not a part of what we term יציאת מצרים.
2. The מגן אברהם ס"ז ס"ק א says that if in the morning a person definitely recited the first paragraph of קריאת שמע but is not sure whether he said the third paragraph, he would not be obligated to repeat the whole קריאת שמע because of the obligation to remember יציאת מצרים. Since

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3. See קקלט יב ס"ק קל"ט who discusses this opinion.

4. It should be noted that based on the opinion of the תורה תמימה mentioned in footnote 3 we who do not change the text of our davening are actually following the opinion of the Maseches Sofrim.

he already recited the paragraph of אז ישיר he has already fulfilled his obligation of זכירת יציאת מצרים and there is no reason to go back.

מגן עקיבא איגר ר' argues with the opinion of the אברהם and maintains that the obligation of זכירת יציאת מצרים only relates to the actual day that Bnei Yisrael left Egypt and not to the subsequent days, and therefore, one would have to repeat קריאת שמע in such a case.

Here too, we can apply the same concept to the text of the Tefilla and Kiddush on the last days of Pesach. We who do not change the text and continue to recite "זמן חירותינו" are expressing the belief that the miracle of *keriyas yam suf* is an extension of the miracles of the first days of Pesach and is still part of what we call יציאת מצרים. However, the Maharil who insisted on changing the text to ensure that the last days of Pesach were not labeled as "זמן חירותינו", believed that יציאת מצרים only included the physical departure from Egypt and not the miracles that occurred subsequently and for that, we would be required to declare these last days as "זמן שמחתנו".

## Why I Wear a Bow Tie on Yom Tov (and so should you): Selected Thoughts on *Simchas Yom Tov*

Yechezkel Rotblat

Many of you have noticed that I wear a bow tie on *Yom Tov* and have asked me why (approvingly or otherwise). The answer is to observe the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov*, as the *posuk* in *D'vorim* 16 states:

ושמחת בחגיך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך והלוי והגר והיתום  
והאלמנה אשר בשעריך

“And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates.”

The *Shulchan Aruch* in א ט, סעיף א states:

ובגדי יום טוב יהיו יותר טובים משל שבת וצריך לכבדו ולענגו כמו בשבת . . .

“One should honor (*Kavod*<sup>1</sup>) and delight (*Oneg*<sup>2</sup>) on *Yom Tov* just as one does for *Shabbos*; however, one’s clothing for *Yom Tov* should be nicer than one’s clothing for *Shabbos*.”

The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* writes in ה ט, סעיף א

וגם בגדי יום טוב יהיו יקרים יותר משל שבת

“Also one’s *Yom Tov* clothing should be more expensive (or special) than those for *Shabbos*.”

According to the *Magen Avraham*, the reason for wearing special clothing on *Yom Tov* is because of the additional *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov*. This reason is also cited by the *Mishna Berurah*.

### The Source for *Yom Tov* Clothing

Based on my limited research, the concept of wearing nicer clothing on *Yom Tov* than on *Shabbos* first appears in the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Kiddushin, Daf 16a*).

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1. *Kavod* generally refers to acts performed before *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* begins. Examples would include washing, putting on clean clothes, not eating a large meal on *Erev Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*, cleaning the house, setting the table, etc.
  2. *Oneg* generally takes place on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* itself and involves partaking in formal *seudos* (meals).

העושה קטלא לביתו אין מביאין לאמצע וחולקין בראייה להשתמש בחול אבל בראייה להשתמש ברגל מביאין לאמצע וחולקין רבי מנא אמר כלי רגל חולקין כלי שבת צריכא

The *gemorah* discusses the case of a brother that used property of a joint estate to fashion a necklace for his daughter. The *gemorah* states if it is fit to be worn only on weekdays, then when the final accounting is performed, it is not taken into account. However, if it is fit to be worn on *Yom Tov*, then when the accounting is performed, the value is taken into account. Rav Manna adds that in general, *Yom Tov* clothing is accounted for when splitting up an estate, while weekday clothing is not. The *gemorah* then asks what should be done for clothes that are fit for *Shabbos* (but not for *Yom Tov*).

The *poskim* understand from this *gemorah* that there is a difference between *Shabbos* clothing and *Yom Tov* clothing and that *Yom Tov* clothing should be finer than *Shabbos* clothing.

#### What Kind of Clothing Fulfills the *Mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov*

The *Be'er Heitiv* states that if a person has limited funds he should at least get new shoes for *Yom Tov*. There are 2 interesting points that are implied in this statement: (1) that one should wear something new on *Yom Tov* and (2) new shoes are considered less significant than other garments. (The appendix in the back of the *Ta'amei Haminhagim* cites this *Be'er Heitiv* to explain why even though we don't wear new clothes during the three weeks, we only refrain from wearing new shoes from *Rosh Chodesh Av*. The author attributes this to the fact that we don't recite a *שהחיינו* on new shoes).

The foregoing would lead one to conclude that the special clothing one wears for *Yom Tov* should be of the caliber that would warrant a blessing of *שהחיינו*, perhaps something much more significant than a bow tie. Nevertheless, I would like to present two sources that support wearing something special for *Yom Tov*, even if it's only an accessory such as a bow tie.

#### Support # 1:

On the subject of *Simchas Yom Tov*, the *Rishonim* are divided as to whether the *mitzvah* is *d'oraisa* nowadays.

*Tosafos*<sup>3</sup> is of the view that the correct way to perform this *mitzvah* is to partake in the offerings brought in the *Beis Hamikdash*, and therefore nowadays we can only fulfill this *mitzvah* on a rabbinic level.

*Rambam* is of the opinion that *Simchas Yom Tov* is *d'oraisa* nowadays, even if one can no longer fulfill this *mitzvah* through the consumption of *korbonos*. As the *Rambam* writes:

הלכות יום טוב, פרק ו הלכות י"ז-י"ח

[יז] שבעת ימי הפסח ושמונת ימי החג עם שאר ימים טובים, כלם אסורים בהספד ותענית. וחוב אדם להיות בהן שמח טוב לב, הוא ובניו ואשתו ובני ביתו וכל הנלוים עליו, שנאמר "ושמחת, בחגד..." (דברים טז, יד). אף על פי שהשמחה האמורה כאן, היא קרבן שלמים כמו שאנו מבארים בהלכות חגיגה, יש בכלל אותה שמחה, לשמח הוא ובניו ובני ביתו כל אחד ואחד בראוי לו.

[יח] כיצד: הקטנים, נותן להם קליות ואגוזים ומגדנות; והנשים, קונה להן בגדים ותכשיט כפי ממונו; והאנשים, אוכלין בשר ושתיין יין, שאין שמחה אלא בבשר, ואין שמחה אלא ביין.

In summary, the *Rambam* states that even though the *simcha* addressed in the Torah is referring to the *simcha* of partaking in the *korban shalomim*, nevertheless *simcha* also includes the *mitzvah* to rejoice with one's family "each in a way befitting him or her." The *Rambam* then continues and recites a number of examples such as clothing and accessories (jewelry) for women, treats for children and meat and wine for men.

Some *poskim* understand the *Rambam* literally and recommend that one consume wine each day of *Yom Tov*, including *Chol HaMoed*<sup>4</sup>. Some *Rishonim*, such as the *Sefer Yereim*,<sup>5</sup> believe that wine is not the exclusive way to perform the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov*; rather each person should celebrate in the manner that brings joy to his heart.

Likewise, the *ש"ת*<sup>6</sup> in an essay on this subject concludes that *Simchas Yom Tov* nowadays is a Torah level obligation, which should be observed by each individual based on what brings him *simcha*:

3. Moed Katan 14(b) עשה ד"ה

4. Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, as per *Sefer Chol HaMoed* by Rabbi Dovid Zucker and Rabbi Moshe Francis, both recommend consuming wine on each day of *Chol HaMoed*.

5. סימן 126 and 127

6. סימן ס"ה

ולא דמי לשאר מצוות ששוין בכל אדם העשיר לא  
ירבה והדל לא ימעט, אבל שמחה זו כל אדם ואדם  
מחויב לשמוח כפי יכולתו ולפי רוב עושרו. וכן אנשים  
בראוי להן ונשים בראוי להן.

This is not comparable to other *mitzvos* that are performed equally by all, where the rich may not add and the poor may not diminish, rather this rejoicing needs to be performed by each person based on his own means, men with what is befitting them and women with what is befitting them.

Therefore, we see that nowadays, in the absence of the *Beis Hamikdash*, there is no specific way to celebrate the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov* and one could very well fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov* by wearing special clothing or accessories on *Yom Tov*.

#### Support # 2:

Regarding *Oneg Shabbos* - the *mitzvah* to partake in special *Shabbos* meals - the *Rambam* writes in הלכות שבת, פרק ל, הלכה ח

מי שהיה ענוג ועשיר, ויהרי כל ימיו בשבת-- צריך לשנות מאכל שבת ממאכל החול. ואם אי אפשר לשנות, משנה זמן האכילה: אם היה רגיל להקדים, מאחר; ואם היה רגיל לאחר, מקדים.

If on one is wealthy and pampered and all his days are like *Shabbos*, he is required to change his menu for *Shabbos* and if he can't do that, then he should at least eat at different times. If he usually eats early, he should eat later. If he usually eats later, he should eat earlier.

I would propose similar reasoning to the requirement to wear special clothing on *Yom Tov*. Just like one who has delicacies all week long is required to come up with some variation for *Shabbos*, similarly one who is accustomed to wearing fine garments every *Shabbos* should also come up with some kind of variation for *Yom Tov*. Nowadays, *B"H* our economic situation does not present us with the need to trade up from a tattered or wrinkled suit to a finely pressed suit in honor of *Yom Tov*. However, we should still make an effort to distinguish our *Yom Tov* clothing from *Shabbos* clothing, hence, a bow tie ... an opportunity for a real היכר יום טוב!

### Incidental Halachik Bonus for Wearing a Bow Tie

A bow tie (i.e., a “real” one that needs to be tied), in *halachik* terms is an עניבה על גבי קשר – a bow on top of a single knot (the same as the bow one would use to tie shoelaces). Although the full discussion of the various opinions regarding knots that are prohibited on *Shabbos* is beyond the scope of this essay, it will suffice for our discussion to note that there are *poskim* that prohibit tying an עניבה על גבי קשר if one knows that it will remain in place for more than 24 hours. The *Sefer Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasa* in Chapter 15:58, states that “One may tie a necktie on *Shabbos* if it is not made as a knot and stands to be opened within 24 hours.” Therefore, if one is going to tie a necktie on *Shabbos*, one must be careful to undo the knot when the tie is removed (or at least after *Shabbos*). A bow tie, however, although it is an עניבה על גבי קשר will always be undone within 24 hours because there is no way to just loosen it and slide it off. A bow tie has to be completely undone in order to remove it and therefore, it can be tied on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* without any concern about when the knot will be undone.

### Final Thoughts

The *Arzei Halevanon II Hagaddah*, shares an interesting thought from Rav Gedalia Shcorr, regarding the phrase מועדים לשמחה. Rav Schorr explained that the phrase refers not only to the celebration of *Yom Tov*, but also applies to the performance of all *mitzvos*, and the idea is that we apply the *simcha* with which we celebrate *Yom Tov* to the performance of all other *mitzvos*.

As many say in the לשם יחוד that appears in many *Machzorim* and *Haggados*,

ותהא חשובה מצוה זו כאלו קיימתיה בכל פרטותיה ושרשיה ותרי"ג מצות התלויים בה . . . .

Please consider my performance of this *mitzvah* as if I performed it with all of its details and with the 613 *mitzvos* that are “dependent” (or “included”) in it.

Rav Schorr explains that each *mitzvah* has an element or a trait that we can apply to the performance of all other *mitzvos*. For example, the *posuk* says “ושמרתם את המצות” - “you should watch the *Matzos*.” However, the *gemorah* also reads this as ושמרתם את המצוות to teach us that “you should watch the *mitzvos*” and therefore מצוה הבא לידך אל תחמיצנה - if you have a chance to perform a *mitzvah* do not let it leaven (i.e., do not delay).

Likewise, the phrase מועדים לשמחה teaches us that not only has Hashem given us “holidays on which to rejoice” but also “holidays that show us how to rejoice” in the performance of all of the *mitzvos*.

Wishing you all a חג שמח.

**נשמה יתירה בשבת ויום טוב**  
**Passing or Everlasting?**

Rabbi Avie Schreiber

**I. נשמה יתירה - Only on Shabbos?**

On Shabbos a transformation occurs. A sense of tranquility imbues our homes. An aura of majesty and elegance envelops our dining rooms. Our family time becomes more focused and more meaningful. Not just externally, but internally, we ourselves feel changed as well. A refreshed spirit animates us and we interact differently with our environment and with those around us.

The name for the cause of this change that occurs within us is the נשמה יתירה - the additional soul. ריש לקיש, in the Gemara in *Masechet* Beitzah (17a), teaches us:

נשמה יתירה נותן הקדוש ברוך הוא באדם ערב שבת,  
ולמוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה הימנו,  
שנאמר (שמות לא) "שבת וינפש",  
כיון ששבת ווי אבדה נפש.

G-d grants a person an additional soul on the eve of Shabbos. At the end of Shabbos, it is taken from him as it says in the Pasuk, "He ceased working and rested" - after he ceases, woe! the soul is lost.

Inevitably though, as the day of Shabbos wanes and comes to a close and as the new week begins, we sense a loss of this spirit. Most *Rishonim* and *Poskim* explain that the fragrance of the בשמים (spices) we breathe in as part of havdalah is in order to alleviate this feeling of loss and to revive our weakened selves. And so our נשמה יתירה departs for the time being, to return to us in less than a week, at the onset of the next Shabbos.

But what about on Yom Tov? Does G-d grant us a נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov as well - or is this phenomenon limited to Shabbos? A fascinating discussion in the *Rishonim* about this question revolves around what seems to be conflicting halachot in *Masechet* Pesachim.

On the one hand, the halacha is that during havdalah at the close of Yom Tov, בשמים is absent. The underlying assumption of this halacha seems to be that we do not possess a נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov. The rationale for the lack of בשמים therefore is that since there is no significant sense of loss as

Yom Tov ends there is no need to revive our spirits.

On the other hand, the Gemara in פסחים דף קב: concludes that when יום טוב falls out on מוצאי שבת (Saturday night), kiddush for the incoming Yom Tov and havdalah for the outgoing Shabbos merge into a set of multiple brachot. They are recited in the following order: first בורא פרי הגפן, then קדוש (to begin Yom Tov), then בורא מאורי האש, then הבדלה (to end shabbos), and then שהחיינו (for the new day of Yom Tov). The Gemara refers to this combination of Brachot as יין, קידוש, נר, הבדלה, זמן - יקנה"ו. Many of the *Rishonim* note the absence of בשמים in this set of Brachot. For some reason, when we perform the Mitzvah of havdalah to delineate the transition from Shabbos to Yom Tov, בשמים is not required. The underlying assumption of this halacha seems to be that indeed, we do possess a נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov. The logic for the missing בשמים is as follows: since Yom Tov begins immediately as Shabbos ends, and on Yom Tov we also experience the additional soul, there is no loss of the נשמה יתירה as Shabbos ends, and hence no weakened spirit to revive.

To summarize - the first halacha above implies that there is no נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov, and the second halacha implies that there is. Which of these two sources is the decisive one?

The רשב"ם in *Masechet* Pesachim (102b) considers the second source to be definitive. He explicitly addresses the issue of why we don't use בשמים when Yom Tov begins on מוצאי שבת. He explains, גם ביום טוב יש לנו. Because on Yom Tov as well we possess a נשמה יתירה just as we do on Shabbos. According to the רשב"ם, as explained above, there is no need for בשמים in havdalah in this particular instance because the נשמה יתירה doesn't leave on מוצאי שבת when יום טוב immediately follows. This is because on יום טוב too, we possess a נשמה יתירה.

Why then, according to the רשב"ם, is there no בשמים as part of havdalah of Yom Tov? If there is a נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov, doesn't it depart when the day ends? Don't we need בשמים to assuage our feeling of loss? About this question, the רשב"ם is silent. We will return to this question later.

The בעלי תוספות (ibid.), as well as the vast majority of the *Rishonim*, take a different approach. They view the first halacha above, i.e. the lack of בשמים on מוצאי יום טוב, as the defining source for our discussion. The בעלי תוספות argue, that the absence of בשמים on יום טוב clearly proves that in fact there is no נשמה יתירה present on יום טוב. But why then is בשמים missing when Yom Tov falls out on מוצאי שבת - doesn't the נשמה יתירה depart when Shabbos comes to an end? The בעלי תוספות respond to

this question and explain that when **יום טוב** is on **מוצאי שבת** there is no need for **בשמים** because something else takes the place of the **בשמים** and serves the same function: **דשמחת יום טוב ואכילה ושתיה מועיל כמו בשמים**. - The joy of the Festival and the eating and drinking accomplish the same result as **בשמים**.

In sum, the **רשב"ם** and the **בעלי תוספות** dispute whether or not on **יום טוב** we are endowed with a **נשמה יתירה**. According to the **רשב"ם** we are, and according to the **בעלי תוספות** we are not.

For the Rashbam a very powerful question needs to be addressed as Tosfot points out and as we pointed out above. If there is a **נשמה יתירה** on Yom Tov, why do we not use **בשמים** as part of havdalah on **מוצאי יום טוב** to relieve the loss of the **נשמה יתירה**.

In order to answer this question, it would be helpful to better understand the reasons behind the **מחלוקת** between Rashbam and Tosfot. Why should there be or not be a **נשמה יתירה** on Yom Tov? In order to explain this argument, we need to first define and describe the **נשמה יתירה** in clear terms.

## II. Different Views of the **נשמה יתירה**

As we survey some of the more common descriptions of the **נשמה יתירה**, I believe we will see that there are some clear differences among the Rishonim in defining its nature.

### 1) Rashba's First Opinion:

The Rashba offers two different explanations of the **נשמה יתירה**. In his first explanation, he says:

...נראה לי כי נשמה יתירה שאמרו הוא מפני שהימים נפעלים כפי ענין התחלת בריאתם... ולפיכך כשנגמרה מלאכת הבריאה עמד העולם על **בריאותו ושלימותו** בשבת. כששבת חוזרין ימות השבת חלילה להיות נפעלים כתחילתן ויום הראשון חלוש מכולם שממנו ההתחלה...<sup>1</sup>

The Rashba explains that the days of the week continuously operate based on the prototype of creation. For example, we somehow experience every *Yom Rishon* based on what happened on the first day of creation, and every *Yom Sheini* based on what happened on the second day of creation etc. Since the original Shabbos represented the culmination of creation and exemplified a sense of completion, every Shabbos in turn, cycles us back to that accomplishment. Every Shabbos is imbued with the same sense of fullness and completeness. Thus the Rashba defines the **נשמה יתירה** as a **שלמות** - feeling of wholeness.

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שו"ת הרשב"ם חלק ז סימן שמט. 1.

## 2) Rashba's Second Opinion:

ויש מפרשים נשמה יתירה דהיינו המנוחה והעונג שהנפש מוצאה כאילו היא נשמה יתירה וכשעובר ממנו נכנס בימי הטורח והעיניו כאילו אבדה ממנו נשמה יתירה שהוא נחלש.<sup>2</sup>

According to this view, the Rashba identifies the נשמה יתירה with the rest, relaxation, and enjoyment we experience on Shabbos. It is interesting to note that whereas according to the first explanation of the Rashba, the נשמה יתירה seems to be a metaphysical phenomenon, according to his second explanation, the נשמה יתירה is more of a psychological feeling - on Shabbos we feel **as if** (note the word כאילו in the Rashba) we are suffused with an additional soul. When Shabbos ends it feels **as if** this additional soul is leaving.

[Rashi, I believe, takes a similar, albeit, slightly different, approach as the Rashba.

In *Masechet* Beitzah, he defines the נשמה יתירה as: "רוחב לב למנוחה ולשמחה: "an expanded heart (capacity) for rest and happiness and to be open to expansion (or salvation). Also, one can eat and drink and not become disgusted by it." It is interesting to note that according to Rashi the נשמה יתירה adds a dimension to us on many different levels. *Menucha* seems to relate to our mental and psychological health, *Simcha* to our emotional state, פתוח לרוחה relates to our intellectual capacity and an open minded perspective enabling us to contemplate fresh ideas. (The word רוחה used by Rashi conjures up the phrase מצרה לרוחה which means literally - "from a narrow place to an open place." Perhaps this means that often we get "boxed in" to a certain way of thinking and on Shabbos, we have the ability to think "outside the box".) And finally, the phrase, ואין נפשו קצה עליו relates to our physical selves, in particular to our appetites.]

## 3) Ibn Ezra:

### אבן עזרא בראשית פרק ב

ויברך אלקים - פירוש ברכה תוספות טובה, וביום הזה תתחדש בגופות דמות כח בתולדות, ובנשמות כח ההכרה והשכל.

The Ibn Ezra, in his explanation of the phrase **ויברך אלקים**, explains that on Shabbos we are granted an abundance of goodness. This goodness is associated with both physiological creativity and intellectual clarity. According to the Ibn Ezra, the נשמה יתירה is the manifestation of the blessing that G-d bestowed upon Shabbos.

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2. שם.

#### 4) Sfas Emes:

##### שפת אמת בראשית פרשת ויגש

ולכן כשבא יום השבת ובני ישראל פונין מכל דבר ויודעין ומעידין כי השבת הוא תכלית הבריאה. והוא רק כלי לקבל קדושה. אז יורד ברכה וקדושה מעולם העליון וזהו בחינת זכור ושמור. ואז זוכין לנשמה יתירה... וכמו כן בשבת קודש שנקרא מתנה טובה יש לכל איש ישראל נשמה יתירה והרגשה ממלבוש הפנימי.

The Sfas Emes explains that as we accept and observe Shabbos, and as we recognize Shabbos as a day of great potential for holiness, the נשמה יתירה descends upon us. The נשמה יתירה, according to the Sfas Emes, is the connection to our inner soul - to our inner holiness that we are able to feel on Shabbos (See the Sfas Emes for elaboration).

### III. The Source for the Different Definitions of the נשמה יתירה

What is the basis for these differing views and definitions of the נשמה יתירה? I would like to suggest that the argument is based on the following question: what aspect of Shabbos in particular triggers the presence of the נשמה יתירה? We know that Shabbos is a complex day with many components and layers, for example - it is a day of rest, it is a day of holiness, it is a day of testimony that Hashem created the world etc. Which of these elements of Shabbos produces the נשמה יתירה? To focus the question more clearly, we can frame it based on the first paragraph of Kiddush Friday night (the beginning of the second *perek* of *Bereishit*). In this paragraph we say:

א וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: ב וַיְכַלּוּ אֱלֹקִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: ג וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מְכָל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בְּרָא אֱלֹקִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

Four stages and aspects of Shabbos are mentioned:

1. וַיְכַלּוּ... וַיְכַלּוּ - and the heavens and the earth were completed. And G-d completed...
2. וַיִּשְׁבֹּת - And He ceased working and rested
3. וַיְבָרֶךְ - And He blessed
4. וַיְקַדֵּשׁ - And He sanctified

The progression of the formation of Shabbos is: the completion of the world leads to G-d resting on the seventh day which leads to G-d blessing the day which in turn leads to G-d sanctifying Shabbos. And so to reframe the question we asked above - which of the four facets of Shabbos listed in the *Pesukim* above sparks the onset of the נשמה יתירה? Is it the sense of completion felt on Shabbos, is it the שבתה - the cessation from work, is it the ברכה - the blessing of Shabbos, or is it the קדושה - the holiness of

## Shabbos?

Perhaps the four opinions listed above (two in the Rashba, the Ibn Ezra, and the Sfas Emes) argue about this very question. The first opinion of the Rashba identifies the *נשמה יתירה* as a feeling of completeness and wholeness that descends upon us on Shabbos. The Rashba further explains that on every Shabbos we tap into the experience of the original Shabbos. The Rashba clearly links the *נשמה יתירה* to the *ויכולו* aspect of Shabbos. The second opinion of the Rashba explained the *נשמה יתירה* as a feeling of rest and relaxation emanating from our abstention from work. According to this opinion, the *נשמה יתירה* is linked to the *שביתה* - the resting - of Shabbos which derives from the word *וישבות*. The Ibn Ezra clearly states that the *נשמה יתירה* is an abundance of good resulting from the *ברכה* of Shabbos and is thus connected to the word *ויברך*. The Sfas Emes explains that the *נשמה יתירה* is the ability to tap into our inner resources of holiness. He explicitly relates the *נשמה יתירה* to the *קדושה* of Shabbos, and thus to the word *ויקדש*.

### IV. Explanation of the *machlokes* between Rashbam and Tosfos

Now we can try to understand what lies behind the disagreement over the presence of a *נשמה יתירה* on Yom Tov, with the Rashbam holding it is present and Tosfos holding it is not. According to the first three views above - the two of the Rashba and the Ibn Ezra - the presence of the *נשמה יתירה* is initiated by either the quality of completeness we feel on Shabbos (*ויכולו*), or by the cessation of work (*וישבות*) or by the blessing bestowed on Shabbos (*ויברך*). These three elements are wholly unique to Shabbos and do not seem to be present at all on Yom Tov. Yom Tov does not represent any theme of completing work, it is not a day of *שביתה*<sup>3</sup>, and there is no specific *ברכה* associated with it<sup>4</sup>. According to these three views, it follows that we are not endowed with a *נשמה יתירה* on Yom Tov.

However, according to the Sfas Emes who says that the *קדושה* of Shabbos activates the *נשמה יתירה*, perhaps the *קדושה* of Yom Tov activates a *נשמה יתירה* as well. Perhaps, the Rashbam bases his opinion (that there is a *נשמה יתירה* on Yom Tov) on this idea. The Rashbam's view of the *נשמה יתירה* on Shabbos is fundamentally different from that of Tosfos. While according to Tosfos, the *נשמה יתירה* is not really related to the *קדושה* of Shabbos per se, according to the Rashbam the two are inextricably linked. And therefore, just

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3. The Rashba states this explicitly. שו"ת הרשב"א חלק ז סימן שמט.  
...ולפי פירוש זה בשבת הוא שניתוסף בו נשמה מפני שהוא יום מנוחה ואפילו ממלאכת  
אוכל נפש מה שאין כן ביום טוב.

4. Further though is required about this point in light of the phrase from  
*Tefilat Yom Tov* - והשיאנו ה' אלוֹקינו את ברכת מועדיך ... ואמרת לברכנו -

as the נשמה יתירה is present on Shabbos as a result of its קדושה, the נשמה יתירה is also present on Yom Tov.

## V. Why no Besamim at the end of Yom Tov?

Now we can return to the very powerful objection raised against the Rashbam - if indeed there is a נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov, why do we not use בשמים at the end of the day? We can suggest two answers to this question.

1) Even though there is קדושה on Yom Tov, it is a lower level קדושה than Shabbos. This is expressed clearly in the *nusach* of the havdalah when Yom Tov begins on מוצאי שבת. In the Bracha of havdalah we say המבדיל בין קודש לקודש - He who separates between holy and holy - meaning - between the higher level of קדושת שבת and the lower level of קדושת יום טוב. Just as the קדושה of Yom Tov is lower, consequently its corresponding נשמה יתירה is of a lower kind. The שו"ת דברי יצב writes: "היה אפשר לומר דביום טוב - איכא נמי נשמה יתירה, אבל במדריגה יותר נמוכה." "It is possible that there exists a נשמה יתירה on Yom Tov, but on a lower level."

According to this understanding we can explain why according to the Rashbam there is no בשמים at the close of Yom Tov. The only time we need בשמים is when transitioning from a high level נשמה יתירה to no נשמה יתירה at all. In such a case, we strongly feel the loss of the "added soul" and therefore we need בשמים to revive our spirits. When Yom Tov begins right after Shabbos, there is no need for בשמים because on Yom Tov we also possess a נשמה יתירה, albeit on a lower level. When Yom Tov ends, we do not need בשמים either because we are merely losing a low level נשמה יתירה - the feeling of loss in this case is not acute enough to require the use of בשמים.

2) The Sfas Emes based on the Ramban offers a different and absolutely stunning answer. The Ramban in ספר האמונה ובטחון פרק כא, astoundingly writes:

ומה שאמר "תן חלק", רמז לנשמה יתירה שיש לאדם בשבת וביום טוב, ואינה מסתלקת בחולו של מועד, ולא במוצאי יום טוב לחול אף על פי שאין חולו של מועד, שלכן אין מברכין על הבשמים במוצאי יום טוב.

According to the Ramban, the נשמה יתירה we possess on Yom Tov never leaves! Even when Yom Tov ends and the days of חול resume, somehow our נשמה יתירה remains intact. Consequently, there is no requirement of בשמים at the end of Yom Tov.

But of course, the Ramban's statement raises questions even as it answers

one. How could it be that the נשמה יתירה of Yom Tov is permanent? What does it even mean that it is permanent? Why does the נשמה יתירה of Shabbos not share this property?

## VI. נשמה יתירה של יום טוב - In What Way is it Different?

Based on the Sfas Emes and others, we can suggest the following: The difference between the קדושה of Shabbos and the קדושה of Yom Tov is not merely quantitative. It is qualitative. The holiness of Yom Tov is not just lower than Shabbos; it is fundamentally different. The Sfas Emes<sup>5</sup> explains:

וזה ההפרש בין השבת למועדות כי השבת הוא מתנה בבית גניזו. והוא יומא דנשמתין ולא דגופא כדאיתא בזוה"ק והוא קודש. ומועדות הם מקראי קודש אשר תקראו שהוא קרוב יותר לנפשות בני ישראל. ויכולין לקבל הארת הקדושה גם בגוף. לכן מלאכת אוכל נפש מותר ביו"ט כי אין הגוף מעכב הקדושה הבאה במועדות. [ובזה נראה לבאר קושית התוס' בענין הנשמה יתירה אי יש ביו"ט א"כ במוצאי יו"ט נברך על הבשמים ואי אינה ביו"ט א"כ בין שבת ליו"ט נברך על הבשמים. וכפי הנ"ל נראה כי וודאי יש נשמה יתירה אבל על ידי שההארה מתפשט בגוף נשאר לעולם רשימה כמ"ש אסרו חג בעבותים כו' לכן אין צריך לבשמים במוצאי יום טוב רק במוצאי שבת וי אבדה נפש שאין הגוף יכול לקבל הארה עליונה כזו של השבת כנ"ל]

The *Kedushas Levi*<sup>6</sup> in a similar way writes:

ומה שאין מברכין במוצאי יום טוב עצמו על הבשמים, משום שהבחינה שיש לאדם ביום טוב שהוא על ידי התעוררות התחתון, יכול אדם לקשר עצמו בו, ולכך אין צריך לברך על הבשמים במוצאי יום טוב, אבל שבת הוא התעוררות העליון, וכיון שיצא שבת מסתלק התעוררות העליון, ואי אפשר לאדם לקשר עצמו בו.

According to both the Sfas Emes and the *Kedushas Levi*, the קדושה of Yom Tov is such that we are able to connect to it, internalize it, and to a large degree take it with us beyond the Yom Tov limits. The קדושה of Shabbos, on the other hand is so transcendent that we only truly feel its effect on the day of Shabbos itself.

The Sfas Emes describes the difference between the two קדושות by saying that Shabbos is a day of pure spirituality, whereas Yom Tov is a day of physical celebration infused with spirituality. The Sfas Emes links this to the concept that on Yom Tov, we are permitted to perform מלאכת אוכל נפש - food related *Melachot*, but not on Shabbos.

The *Kedushas Levi* explains in a slightly different way, that the קדושה of

5. שפת אמת בראשית פרשת ויגש.

6. קדושת לוי ויקרא לפסח.

Shabbos emanates purely from above - from הקב"ה, whereas the קדושה of Yom Tov predominately emanates from below - from כלל ישראל. We therefore, in a sense, gain "ownership" of the קדושת יום טוב as embodied by the steadfast יתירה נשמה that remains with us even after the end of the day. This idea links to the notion, as stated in the Gemara (pesachim 117b), that the קדושה of Shabbos is קביעא וקיימא - is permanent and preexisting, while the קדושה of Yom Tov הוא דקבעי ליה - the Jewish people establish it - by determining the day of Rosh Chodesh, and thereby the correct days of Yom Tov. This is expressed in the *nussach ha'tefila* - on Shabbos we conclude the *bracha* of *kedushas hayom*, with the words מקדש השבת whereas on Yom Tov we say מקדש ישראל והזמנים - the Jewish people are a prerequisite and an active partner in creating the *kedusha* of Yom Tov.

Building on the ideas of the Sfas Emes and the Kedushas HaLevi, I would like to suggest another way to describe the difference between the נשמה יתירה of Shabbos and that of Yom Tov.

Allow me to explain with a משל - an analogy. There are complimentary methods that can be used to motivate and facilitate oneself (or others) to improve and to accomplish a challenging goal. One method is to visualize the end result, the accomplished task. Feeling and seeing what it would be like to achieve the desired result helps a person view it as a reality. The second method is not just to visualize the **end** result, but to clearly identify and see the **next** step one needs to take, and of course to actually begin working at achieving the goal.

The day of Shabbos is parallel to the first method. Shabbos is an encounter with perfection - with the ideal. As we say in various places in the liturgy - Shabbos is מעין עולם הבא - a taste of the world to come - of the ideal world. On Shabbos, we grow spiritually as a result of simply coming into contact, even for short while, with the highest level of קדושה. It follows that the נשמה יתירה of Shabbos is of a similar nature. Our נשמה יתירה on Shabbos, is a more perfected and ideal version of ourselves. We catch a glimpse of what we can be, of our potential, and this experience propels us to improve and progress. Since the נשמה יתירה on Shabbos is of an ideal kind, it cannot possibly remain with us after the conclusion of Shabbos. It is a wholly unique experience that we cannot even remotely duplicate on any other day of the week.

The day of Yom Tov is parallel to the second method. Yom Tov introduces us to various key elements of עבודת ה' that we need to work on and incorporate into our personality and character. Consequently, the נשמה יתירה of Yom Tov allows us realistically to feel and accomplish "the next step" in

improving ourselves and our relationship with "הקב"ה and כלל ישראל.<sup>7</sup> Since the נשמה יתירה of Yom Tov is rooted in the reality of where we are now, as opposed to the ideal potential of what we can become, it has "staying power." And so, long after Yom Tov itself becomes a memory (distant or recent), the spiritual accomplishment of Yom Tov remains. The נשמה יתירה of Yom Tov is not a passing phenomenon; rather, it is everlasting.

חג שמח!

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7. The Nesivos Shalom in ל עמודי פורים quotes the following משל to explain the difference between Shabbos and Yom Tov:

בן מלך שנגזר עליו להרחיקו מאביו המלך ולהיות בין אנשים גסים, וחשש המלך שלא יתקלקל ויהיה כמותם, לכך קבע זמן פעם אחת בשבוע לקבלו בהיכלו, וכמה פעמים בשנה מבקר המלך אצל בנו באשר הוא שם. בחינת שבת היא שהמלך מרימו ליהודי ומכניסו בהיכלו, ובחינת יום טוב היא שהמלך מבקר אותו באשר הוא.

(Rav Soloveitchik z'l is often quoted as offering the exact opposite analogy.)

## ***Korban Omer and Birkas Hamazon: The Shared Message***

Rabbi Benzion Scheinfeld

The well-known popular mitzvah of *Sefiras Ha'Omer* gets its name from the lesser known and less understood mitzvah of *Hava'as Korban Omer*. The *Korban Omer* is a *Korban Tzibbur*. It is an obligation of *Klal Yisrael* to bring a measurement (*Omer* is the Hebrew term connoting a specific measurement - weight or volume) of Barley as an offering on the second day of Pesach. The *Korban Omer* is not only an obligation, but also serves as a *Matir*. It allows *Bnei Yisrael* to eat from the new crop of wheat that had taken root after the last *Korban Omer* was brought. It is forbidden to eat "New" grain (known as *Chadash*) that has grown in *Eretz Yisrael* (and מעיקר הדין even grain grown in *Chutz La'aretz*) until it undergoes this *Matir* of the *Korban Omer*. Once *Bnei Yisrael* brings the *Korban Omer*, the grain henceforth becomes known as "*Yashan*". Nowadays, since there is no *Beis Hamikdash*, the 16th of *Nissan* serves as a *Matir* of the new wheat even though the *Korban* cannot be brought. As Rav Yochanan ben Zakai points out in the Mishna in *Succa*, BE"H when the *Beis Hamikdash* is rebuilt the situation will return to the original status whereby the *Korban* is the *Matir* and we will have to wait until the actual *Korban* is brought to start eating the new wheat.

[It is debatable whether or not the mitzvah of *Sefiras Ha'Omer* has a thematic connection to the *Korban Omer* or if the convergence of the two is coincidental. Perhaps the name – *Sefiras Ha'Omer*– is just used as a convenient way to identify the 16th of *Nissan* – the day after *Yetzias Mitzraim* – as the starting point for the mitzvah to count. Perhaps there is no intrinsic connection between *Sefiras HaOmer* and *Hava'as Korban Omer*. This relates to the reason behind the Mitzva of *Sefiras Omer* and is beyond the scope of this D'var Torah - see Sefer Hachinuch regarding the mitzvah of *Sefiras HaOmer*].

I would like to discuss the message of the *Korban Omer* and the reason it must serve as a *Matir* for the new grain. Through this, we will show the deep connection between the *Korban Omer* and *Birkas Hamazon*.

The first time the mitzvah of *Korban Omer* is mentioned is in *Parshas Emor* in the *Parshas Hamoadim*:

ט וַיְדַבֵּר ה', אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. י דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם, כִּי-תֵבְאוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נוֹתֵן לָכֶם, וְקָצַרְתֶּם אֶת-קְצִירָהּ--וְהִבַּאתֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר רֵאשִׁית קְצִירְכֶם, אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן. יא וְהִנִּיף אֶת-הָעֹמֶר לִפְנֵי ה', לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם; מִמִּחֲרַת הַשָּׁבֹת, יִנִּיפוּ, הַכֹּהֵן. יב וְעִשִּׂיתֶם, בַּיּוֹם הַנִּיפְכֶם אֶת-הָעֹמֶר, כֶּבֶשׂ תִּמְמִים בֶּן-שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה, לַה'. יג וּמִנְחָתוֹ שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִים סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן, אִשָּׁה לַה'--רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ; וְנִסְכָּה יין, רְבִיעִית

ההיו. יד וְלַחֵם וְקֹלֵי וְכֶרְמֶל לֹא תֹאכְלוּ, עַד-עֵצִים הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה--עַד הַבִּיאְכֶם, אֶת-קֶרְבֶּן  
 אֱלֹקֵיכֶם: חֲקֹת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם, בְּכֹל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם.  
 טו וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם, מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת, מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאְכֶם, אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה: שִׁבְעַת שָׁבֻתוֹת,  
 תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה. טז עַד מַמְחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִית, תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם; וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם  
 מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה, לַה'. יז מִמוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם תָּבִיאוּ לֶחֶם תְּנוּפָה, שֵׁנִי עֶשְׂרִינִים--סֵלֶת  
 תִּהְיֶינָה, חֲמֵץ תֹּאפֶינָה: בְּכֹרִים, לַה'

By using the words “*Mimacharas hashabas*” the Torah gives an enigmatic date for the exact day that the Mitzva of *Korban Omer* applies (enigmatic enough for the *Tzedukim* to have misinterpreted it). It is only through *Torah Shebe'al Peh* that we know that the term is actually referring to 16th of Nissan. The Torah does not give any reason why this day is the chosen day for the Mitzva. This leaves us to wonder why this day specifically, in the middle of Pesach, was the day chosen for *Korban Omer*?

I believe we can find the answer by looking at the *Pesukim* in *Sefer Yehoshua Perek 5* describing the first few days that *Bnei Yisrael* spent in *Eretz Yisrael*:

*Yehoshua Perek 5*

ט וַיֹּאמֶר ה', אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, הַיּוֹם גִּלּוּתִי אֶת-חֲרַפַּת מִצְרַיִם, מֵעַלְיָכֶם; וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם  
 הַהוּא, גִּלְגָּל, עַד, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. י וַיַּחֲנוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּגִלְגָּל; וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַפֶּסַח בְּאַרְבַּעַת  
 עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֲדָשׁ, בְּעֶרְב--בְּעֶרְבוֹת יְרִיחוֹ. יא וַיֹּאכְלוּ מֵעֵבֶר הָאָרֶץ, מִמַּחֲרַת  
 הַפֶּסַח--מִצּוֹת וְקֹלֵי: בְּעֵצִים, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. יב וַיִּשְׁבֹּת הַמֶּן מִמַּחֲרַת, בְּאַכְלֵם מֵעֵבֶר  
 הָאָרֶץ, וְלֹא-הָיָה עוֹד לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מֶן; וַיֹּאכְלוּ, מִתְּבוּאֹת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, בְּשָׁנָה, הַהִיא.

The *Pesukim* quoted above reference 3 related events:

- 1) The Jews observed Pesach on the 14th (and presumably the 15th).
- 2) The Jews ate from the produce of the land the day after Pesach (presumably the 16th).

The gift of Manna stopped on the same day that they started eating from the produce of the land.

It turns out that the 16th of Nissan is not just any day. In fact, it is the day that *Bnei Yisrael* started getting their food from the land and consequently ended their dependency upon the Manna. We may suggest therefore that when the Torah in Parshat Emor designates the 16th of Nissan to be the date for the *Korban Omer* it is based on a future event – on the cessation of the Manna. The Torah wants us to commemorate this day forever as the day of transition from our supernatural dependency upon Hashem for food and sustenance (most clearly represented by the Manna) to a completely new type of connection to Hashem. This new type of connection is through the

natural processes of agriculture (and rain) that are perhaps the defining features of *Eretz Yisrael*. Recognizing the dangers and pitfalls inherent in such a transition, the Torah instituted the Mitzva and *Matir* of *Korban Omer*. We must bring a *Korban Omer* before we partake of the produce of the natural world to insure that we recognize our clear dependency upon Hashem, despite the illusion that may lead one to believe that nature runs the world. In fact, the Torah prohibited all of the grains (*Chadash*) until we bring this *Korban*, thereby acknowledging our dependency on Hashem. Thus, the *Korban Omer* is the *Korban* that signifies the transition from Manna to nature and all that it entails. Of course, we must therefore bring it on the 16th, the day when historically this transition took place.

This connection between the Manna and *Korban Omer* also explains a rather strange quirk inherent in the *Korban Omer* that seems obvious but is often overlooked - namely its name. Although *Korbanos* are often named based on a number of different factors (the process - "*Olah*", the motivation - "*Todah*" and perhaps other etymologies), the *Korban Omer* is unique in that its name reflects neither process nor motivation but rather the measurement of barley used in the *Korban*. Why would this seemingly arbitrary and thematically insignificant detail about the *Korban* (the amount) take center stage so brightly that it actually becomes the name of the *Korban*? For no other *Korban* do we find the measurement playing such a prominent role!

We can find the answer if we take notice of the following detail about the Manna in *Sefer Shemos*:

*Shemot Perek 16:*

טו וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו מִן-הוּא--כִּי לֹא יָדָעוּ, מִה-הוּא; וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, אֲלֵהֶם, הוּא הַלֶּחֶם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן ה' לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָהּ. טז זֶה הַדָּבָר, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה', לְקַטֹּו מִמֶּנּוּ, אִישׁ לְפִי אֶבְלוֹ: עֹמֶר לַגִּלְגָּלֶת, מִסֹּפֶר נִפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם--אִישׁ לְאִשֶׁר בְּאֶהְלוֹ, תִקְחוּ. יז וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; וַיִּלְקְטוּ, הַפֶּמְרָבָה וְהַמַּמְעִיט. יח וַיִּמְדוּ בַעֲמֹר--וְלֹא הִעֲדִיף הַפֶּמְרָבָה, וְהַמַּמְעִיט לֹא הִחְסִיר: אִישׁ לְפִי-אֶבְלוֹ, לְקַטֹּו.

As we see from the *Pesukim*, the amount of Manna that each person received per day was exactly an *Omer*. This amount was embedded in the hearts and minds of *Bnei Yisrael* as the amount of food allotted to them supernaturally by Hashem each day for forty years. And of course it was this measurement that was to be used for the *Korban Omer*, the *Korban* that signifies our obligation to stay connected to Hashem as we transition from supernatural to natural dependency upon Him. It is for this reason that the seemingly insignificant factor of the measurement of the *korban* takes center stage and in fact becomes part of the name of the *korban* itself - *Korban Omer*.

Now that we have established that the *Korban Omer* preserves our dependent connection to Hashem (that we learned from the Manna) even in our natural world, let us analyze the content and even more so the context of the mitzvah of *Birkas Hamazon*.

The context of *Birkas Hamazon* is a complicated topic that needs much explanation. First, the content:

At first glance, one would expect *Birkas Hamazon* to be a blessing thanking Hashem for food. In fact, only one blessing is actually **thanking** Hashem (*Nodeh Lecha*). Two blessings are praising Hashem (*Hazan, Hatov Umetiv*) and the other is actually a request (notice the similarities to *Shemona Esrei*). But even harder to explain are the array of themes that make their way into the blessing about food. The first blessing is about food but then comes a blessing for the land, for Jerusalem and finally a blessing commemorating the martyrs of Betar and the fact that their bodies did not decompose and were eventually buried! Why are all of these themes included in this blessing about food?

These questions need much explanation (see Rav Hirsch and Rav Kook for divergent explanations).

However, at least a starting point for the underlying theme of *Birkas Hamazon* can be gleaned from its context in the Torah when it is commanded.

*Devarim Perek 8:*

**א** כֹּל-הַמִּצְוָה, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם--תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת: לִמְעַן תַּחֲיוּן וְרִבִיתֶם, וּבָאתֶם וִירְשִׁתֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע ה', לְאַבְתָּיִכֶם. **ב** וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּרֹךְ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִיכָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ זֶה אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה--בַּמִּדְבָּר: לִמְעַן עִנִּיתָ לְנִסְתָּךְ, לְדַעַת אֶת-אֲשֶׁר בִּלְבָבְךָ הִתְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתָיו--אִם-לֹא. **ג** וַיַּעֲזֹב, וַיִּרְעַבְךָ, וַיֹּאכְלֶךָ אֶת-הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתָּ, וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ: לִמְעַן הוֹדִיעָךְ, כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לָבְדוּ יַחֲיֶה הָאָדָם--כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי-ה', יַחֲיֶה הָאָדָם. **ד** שָׁמְלִתָּךְ לֹא בָלִיתָ, מִעֲלִידָה, וְרִגְלֶךָ, לֹא בְצַקָּה--זֶה, אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה. **ה** וַיִּדְעָתָּ, עַם-לְבָבְךָ: כִּי, כַּאֲשֶׁר יִיָּסֵר אִישׁ אֶת-בְּנוֹ, ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, מִיִּסְרוֹךְ. **ו** וְשָׁמַרְתָּ, אֶת-מִצְוֹת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָיו, וּלְיִרְאָהוּ אֹתוֹ. **ז** כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, מִבְּיַמֶּיךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה: אֶרֶץ, נַחֲלֵי מַיִם--עֵינַת וְתַהֲמַת, יֵצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהַר. **ח** אֶרֶץ חֹטֵה וְשֹׁעֲרָה, וְגִפְנוֹ וְתַאֲנִיחַ וְרִמּוֹן; אֶרֶץ-זֵית וְדִבְשׁ. **ט** אֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְּמִסְפָּנֹת תֹּאכַל-בָּהּ לֶחֶם--לֹא-תַחֲסֹר כָּל, בָּהּ; אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבִינָהּ בְּרִזָּל, וּמִהַרְרִיחַ תַּחֲצַב נַחֲשֵׁת. **י** וַאֲכַלְתָּ, וְשִׂבַּעְתָּ--וּבִרְכַת אֶת-ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, עַל-הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָךְ. **יא** הִשְׁמַר לָךְ, פֶּן-תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת-ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, לְבַלְתִּי שָׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם. **יב** פֶּן-תֹּאכַל, וְשִׂבַּעְתָּ; וּבִתִּים טֹבִים תִּבְנֶה, וְיִשְׁבַּתָּ. **יג** וּבִקְרָךְ וּצְאֻנָּה יִרְבֶּיךָ, וְכִסְף וְזָהָב יִרְבֶּה-לָּךְ; וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ, יִרְבֶּה. **יד** וְרַם, לְבָבְךָ; וְשִׁכַחְתָּ אֶת-ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, הַמוֹצִיאֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים. **טו** הַמוֹלִיכָה בַּמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא, נָחַשׁ שָׂרָף

וְעָקְרָב, וְצִמְאוֹן, אֲשֶׁר אֵין-מַיִם; הַמוֹצִיא לָךְ מַיִם, מִצּוֹר הַחֲלָמִישׁ. טז הַמֵּאֲכֵלֶךְךָ מִן  
 בְּמִדְבָּר, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ: לְמַעַן עֲנִתְךָ, וּלְמַעַן נִסִּיתְךָ--לְהִיטִיבָךְ, בְּאַחֲרֵי־יָדְךָ. יז  
 וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ: פָּחִי וְעַצְמִי יָדָן, עֲשֵׂה לִי אֶת-הַחֵיִל הַזֶּה. יח וְזָכַרְתָּ, אֶת-ה'  
 אֱלֹקֶיךָ--כִּי הוּא הִנְתֵּן לָךְ פֶּתַח, לַעֲשׂוֹת חֵיִל: לְמַעַן הַקִּים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע  
 לְאַבְרָהָם, בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה

The *Tzivui* for *Birkas Hamazon* is found in *Sefer Devarim Perek 8*. The context of *Sefer Devarim* from the beginning until this *Perek* (and actually all the way through to *Perek 12*) is not about Hashem commanding ritual *Mitzvot* to *Bnei Yisrael*; rather, it is primarily a *mussar schmuz* that Moshe *Rabbeinu* is giving to *Bnei Yisrael* about the dangers of life in the “real world”. In the middle of this *schmuz*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* mentions the *Mitzva* of *Birkas Hamazon*. The context (as is apparent from the underlined *pesukim* in the above paragraph) is that *Birkas Hamazon* is not simply a gesture to thank Hashem for giving us the food we have. Rather, the Torah established *Birkas Hamazon* to counter the dangerous challenge that *Bnei Yisrael* would face upon losing their supernatural dependency on Hashem. The entire paragraph in the Torah that commands *Birkas Hamazon* is really a paragraph begging *Bnei Yisrael* not to forget the lessons of the Manna. It warns them of the dangers of *Kochi V’otzem Yadi* caused by the illusion of the natural world. As part of this *Musar schmuz* Moshe *Rabbeinu* commands *Birkas Hamazon*. By commanding *Bnei Yisrael* to *bentch* after they eat, Moshe is hoping that *Bnei Yisrael* will forever remember the lessons of the desert experience and the dependency upon Hashem that (along with the other miracles in the desert) the Manna instilled. (This may be a starting point to explain the other themes included in *Birkas Hamazon* although a full explanation of those themes is beyond the scope of this D’var Torah). *Birkas Hamazon* enables us to connect to the world of the Manna even though our food comes from the ground.

So as it turns out, *Korban Omer* and *Birkas Hamazon* are the two bookends of the eating process and both are trying to help us hold on to the reality of our dependency upon Hashem despite the illusions of nature. *Korban Omer* is the *Matir* that allows us to eat the food in the first place and we must offer it before we start to eat. *Birkas Hamazon* is the reminder that begs us to hold on to that perspective even though we are now completely satisfied.

May we all find ways to connect to Hashem despite the hidden quality that is inherent in our experience of the natural world.

## The Final Count UP Thoughts on *Sefiras Haomer*

David Greenberg

The forty nine days that we count from Pesach to Shavuot are given to us to work on our *middos*. It is a time of introspection, a time when we ask the *Ribono Shel Olam* to help us improve our ways. The *sefira* period is a time that we must use to prepare ourselves for *kabalos haTorah* on Shavuot. We are told that we are to count the 49 days from the second night of Pesach through Shavuot. The torah tells us “*u’sfartem lachem mi’mochoras ha’shabbos..... tisperu chamishim yom.*” One of the more famous questions that is asked is why do we count **up** to Shavuot? We know that when we are anticipating something we count down to that event. When we were children we counted down to the last day of school. We count down the days until vacation or a special wedding. We count “down” to our desired goals. Rabbi Akiva Tatz in his sefer “Living Inspired” questions; *it is the natural activity of one who anticipates a longed-for event to “count down” towards that event. Therefore, we should count from 50 days down till the last day of Shavuot, each day one less, rather than an increasing count of days?* Another question to add to this difficulty is; we count towards the chag of Shavuot, but we call the time period “*Sefiras Haomer*” – literally the counting of the *omer*. The *omer* is the *korban* that we bring on Pesach. Why then is the mitzvah named for the starting point (Pesach) as opposed to the finish line (Shavuot)? And finally, why is the counting named after the small, single barley (*omer*) and not the superior *shteis halechem* (2 breads) that we bring on Shavuot?

On Pesach, Benei Yisroel were on the 49<sup>th</sup> level of *tumah*. They had reached such a low spiritual level, that if HKB”H had not taken them out of Mitzrayim on the fifteenth day of Nissan, they would have remained there forever. When HKB”H did take them out, He elevated them to the highest level of *kedusha*. He took them from physical slavery to spiritual redemption overnight. Benei Yisroel ascended to unimaginable heights of holiness; heights they could not have received on their own merits. It was only through HKB”H’s love and sympathy for Am Yisroel that they received the miracle of redemption. However, once they entered the desert, and the miracles of Yitziyas Mitzrayim were behind them, they now had to make every effort to try to regain that feeling of holiness that HKB”H had gifted to them. It was time for Benei Yisroel to maintain the level that HKB”H had raised them to. This is the mission and undertaking of the fifty days between Pesach and Shavuot. It is a task of each and every one of us to try to increase our *kedusha* each day during the routine of the mundane practical life without the assistance of *nisim* and *neflos*.

On the day after Yitziyas Mitzrayim HKB”H told Benei Yisroel that they need to count 50 days – fifty levels that they will need to ascend on their own. HKB”H had elevated them just the day before; so that they would know exactly what kedusha feels like. Now it was their responsibility to achieve it through their own efforts. It was their obligation to obtain the exalted level they experienced during Yitziyas Mitzrayim. Each day we count upwards towards Matan Torah on Shavuos so that we can take on new mitzvos and become closer to HKB”H, as this is what Benei Yisroel were told to do. We count up as if we are climbing a ladder to try and achieve the kedusha that HKB”H wants for us.

This perhaps now explains why we use the poor, small, single *omer* of barley. HKB”H told Benei Yisroel to bring as the first *korban* a small *omer* of barley. He wanted Benei Yisroel to bring a *korban* that came from their own will. HKB”H didn’t want that first *korban* to have any inspiration from above. He didn’t want them to feel that they needed to overdo it and bring an animal or something loftier. It was to be just a regular small *korban* brought with the true sense of giving. According to R’ Eliyahu KiTov, HKB”H said *“do not bring ME more than this, for you are not ready for a major sacrifice and if you bring one, it will not be desired. Rather, if that which you bring is offered on your own volition, in a spirit of true giving, it will be sufficient for ME to bestow upon you an abundance of good from the heavens above and from the earth below.”* *Begin your ascent and count as you ascend. But when counting do not raise your eyes to the ultimate goal, for you are not yet aware of it. Always look back to the omer, your very first offering. Count from there and you will see how far you have ascended. Your hearts will be uplifted as you ascend on God's path and you will, at the end of fifty days, reach a level that you had never expected.*

*“Then you will bring Me a new offering - new because you never believed or knew that man could ascend so high a level.” (Book of our Heritage pg 688)*

Now after the 50-day arduous process of climbing back to the level of *kedusha* they obtained at Yitziyas Mitzrayim, Benei Yisroel were ready to receive the Torah. It is for this reason that we count from Pesach towards Shavuos, as it is a process that we all need to go through to be able to accept the Torah. We build from day one to day fifty, counting each day and each week as a reminder that we need to climb the ladder to achieve the level of *kedusha* our ancestors reached. Through the counting of the *omer*, the simple barley, we create a pathway to Shavuos always looking back as a reminder that we are building towards the superior bread we will bring on Shavuos. May we all be *zocheh* to increase our level of *kedusha* throughout the 50 days of *sefira* and be *mekabel* the Torah *b’bracha* and *simcha* on Shavuos.

## Last Night, Talkin' 'Bout Last Night<sup>1</sup>

Seth Lebowitz

We've all seen the situation before: the end of ma'ariv during the springtime, and the shaliach tzibur has just recited kaddish shalem. He then recites the birkat hamitzva for sefirat ha-omer. But instead of continuing directly to the sefira itself, he pauses for a brief moment, a slight frown appearing on his face –he has forgotten what night of the omer it is. One of the congregants present (we'll call him Harold), wanting to be helpful, calls out, "Seventeen!" Three quarters of the congregation then turns in unison to Harold with a look that is equal parts horror, mirth and astonishment on their faces. The slap of Harold's palm on his forehead reverberates throughout the shul as he winces. Harold has fallen prey to one of the ultimate public synagogue "Gotchas!" The shaliach tzibur continues "*Hayom shiva asar yom, shehem...*" followed by the brachot of the rest of the tzibur, except for poor Harold, who counts without a beracha.

The Mechaber states in siman 489, s'if 4: "*Mi she shoel oto chavero bain hashemashot kama y'mei hasefira bezeh hala'ila yomar lo etmol haya kach v'kach, she'im yomar lo hayom kach v'kach aino yachol lachzor v'limnot bevracha...*" If one is asked during bain hashmashot (or at night<sup>2</sup>) what night of the omer is tonight, he should respond "last night was [night X-1]" for if he responds "tonight is night X," he can no longer count with a beracha, since he has already fulfilled the mitzvah for that night. This is a well-known and widely followed halacha. Experience seems to show that there are individuals who may not even bother to count each night, but who if asked will always respond "Last night was..."

The Mishna Berura narrows the scope of application of this halacha to such an extent that Harold only very rarely may not count with a beracha, despite the common practice to respond with the previous night's count. Armed with this knowledge, Harold can hold his head high, proud of the mitzvah he performed by helping out a sweating shaliach tzibur, and knowing that he is free of the "Gotcha!"<sup>3</sup>

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1. Any questions about practical applications of these halachot naturally should be directed to Rabbi Neuburger.
  2. Mishna Berura *s'if katan* 19.
  3. Whether the opinions of the Mishna Berura discussed here create a kind of reverse Gotcha! that Harold may then use on the rest of the congregation is an interesting question, but is beyond the scope of this essay. Please consult your local sociologist.

Conceptually, the Mishna Berura asks why the halacha should be so in the first place, when Harold clearly did not have kavana to perform the mitzvah of sefirat ha'omer (he was helping out the *shatz*, or in a more general sense he was answering his friend's question) and generally speaking, *mitzvot tzrichot kavana*.<sup>4</sup> The Mishna Berura concludes that although in general mitzvot require kavana, in this case we are extra strict and are choshesh for the opinion that mitzvot do not require kavana because a potential *beracha l'vatula* is at stake.<sup>5</sup>

Recall that Harold only called out "Seventeen!" and not "tonight is seventeen." The Mishna Berura reads the Mechaber's words very carefully and states that if someone did not say "hayom," i.e. if he did not say "tonight is" or "today is," then he need not worry about having fulfilled the mitzvah of sefira and can count later with a beracha.<sup>6</sup> This is because "*ikar mitzvat hasefira hu sheyomar hayom kach v'kach*."<sup>7</sup>

In our example, even if Harold had blurted out "tonight is seventeen!" the Mishna Berura states that Harold would not have been yotzei and may still count with a beracha.<sup>8</sup> This is because the normal way that everyone counts is to count both days and weeks, and we are entitled to assume that anyone who counts only the days was not intending to perform the mitzvah. Thus even though we assume for the purposes of this particular halacha that "*mitzvot ain tzrichot kavana*," Harold was not yotzei because his leaving out the weeks showed his negative kavana –his specific kavana not to perform the mitzvah.<sup>9</sup>

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4. *s'if katan* 22.

5. See Sha'ar Hatziun 26 for the opinions of other acharonim on why the Mechaber nevertheless considers answering a question about the night of sefira a problem for a later beracha.

6. *s'if katan* 20

7. I assume that this means that if he doesn't say "hayom," then his statement is not an act of counting, but rather just stating a number. However, others may have a different interpretation. I once asked a friend who had been to a bris that morning "How many children does your brother-in-law have now?" and the friend refused to answer me on the grounds that it was forbidden to count Jews. I suggested that he merely state the number without saying "He has X children" and that shouldn't be considered counting by analogy to this Mishna Berura. He still refused to tell me how many children, perhaps on the grounds that he interprets the Mishna Berura differently.

8. *s'if katan* 22.

9. Sha'ar hatziun 28 has a discussion of views of several poskim who believe that leaving out the weeks holds one back from being mikayem the mitzvah only when it is strictly necessary to mention weeks –that is, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>,

The Biur Halacha<sup>10</sup> considers another possible way out for Harold. A person who is careful to count sefira only after tzeit hakochavim but is asked what night it is during bein hashemashot (which is the way the halacha is originally phrased by the Mechaber) may be said to have clear negative kavana when he answers the question, since it isn't yet the time that he normally counts, in fulfillment of the statement by the Mechaber "*V'hamedakdekim ainam sofrim ad tzeit hakochavim.*" However, this theory is left as "*lema'aseh tzarich iyun,*" i.e., it is considered inconclusive, so by itself it does not appear to help Harold's cause.

The Mishna Berura suggests a more straightforward way than any of those mentioned so far for Harold to be able to count sefira with a beracha. One would assume that Harold has either read this article or the Mishna Berura on Siman 489 S'if 4 (or maybe even both), so he knows that negative kavana will work to ensure that he is not yotzei sefira when he informs someone else what night it is. So all he has to do is say "tonight is the seventeenth night, which is two weeks and three days of the omer," all the while having in mind that he does not intend to perform the mitzvah now, but only to help out his friend who forgot, and he may perform the mitzvah later with a beracha.<sup>11</sup>

Another interesting aspect of this rule, mentioned by the Mechaber and seconded by the Biur Halacha<sup>12</sup>, is that before the beginning of bein hashemashot (which in our community we assume starts immediately at sunset) "*Ain b'kach klum*" if someone counted at this time. So if Harold were attending an early ma'ariv minyan and the person making the announcements said, "don't forget to count sefira later, last night was...ah...ah..." Harold can feel free to jump in and say "Tonight will be seventeen!" without fear of falling prey to this dreaded Gotcha!

So we see that at least according to the Mishna Berura, someone who answers his friend who asks him during the zman of sefira what night it is will only be precluded from counting later with a beracha if (1) it was during the first six days of sefira before the counting of weeks begins, (2) he formulated his answer using "hayom" (or the equivalent in another language), and (3) he did not have kavana not to be yotzei with his answer. We may find the implications of the Mishna Berura's opinions surprising or even unsettling, but just think of how pleased Harold must be.

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21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup>, and 49<sup>th</sup> nights, but the Mishna Berura concludes that leaving out the week works all the time starting on the 7<sup>th</sup> night.

10. *D"H* "She'im...."

11. *s'if katan* 22.

12. *Sof D"H* "Aino yachol..." ("*...Nireh li pashut afilu haya achar plag hamincha ukvar hitpallel hameishiv maariv, afilu hachi ain l'hachmir bik'gon zeh v'yachol lachzor achar kach v'limnot bivricha*")

## Shavuos -Where was Moshe?

Josh Gelernter

We are familiar with the gemara in Shabbos, daf 88, that contains the *Machlokes* between Rab Yosi and the Rabannan regarding the time of Matan Torah. Everyone agrees that Matan Torah happened on Shabbos. The disagreement is regarding what day of the month of Sivan Matan Torah occurred on, either the 6th because Rosh Chodesh was Monday or the 7th because Rosh Chodesh was Sunday. Both *shitos* analyze the various *pesukim* that lead up to Matan Torah and explain which events (*perisha*, *hagbala* etc . . .) happened on which days through the *diburim* of HKB”H to Moshe.

The gemara does not discuss, however, where Moshe was when HKB”H spoke to klal yisroel. I always assumed Moshe was up on the mountain, but this poses a difficulty. We know that part of the way through the dibros, the people spoke to Moshe, saying ‘we cannot handle hearing the words of Hashem, rather you speak to us.’ It is difficult to envision the people conveying this message to Moshe while he is on top of the mountain, especially considering that there was an area surrounding the mountain where the people were prohibited from going. Perhaps it was a chain call, the people told the zekainim who were in their own *mechitza* and who relayed the message to Aharon and then Aharon relayed it to Moshe, but it is hard to envision this as being the scenario at Matan Torah. Let us analyze the *pesukim*, picking up on the day of Matan Torah in Shemos 19:16 where the *pasuk* says “*vayhi bayom hashlishi.*”

### שמות פרק יט

טז וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בְהִיטּוֹת הַבְּקָר, וַיְהִי קוֹלֹת וּבְרָקִים וַעֲנַן כְּבֹד עַל-הָהָר, וְקוֹל שֹׁפָר, חֲזָק מְאֹד; וַיִּחַרְדּוּ כָּל-הָעָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּמַחֲנֵה. יז וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָעָם לְקִרְיַת הָאֱלֹהִים, מִן-הַמַּחֲנֵה; וַיִּתְצַבּוּ, בְּתַחֲתֵית הָהָר. יח וְהָרַסִינִי, עֲשׂוֹן גְּלוּ, מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יִרְדּוּ עָלָי ה', בְּאֵשׁ; וַיַּעַל עֲשָׂנוּ כְּעֵשׂוֹן הַכְּבָשׂוֹן, וַיִּחַרְדּוּ כָּל-הָהָר מְאֹד. יט וַיְהִי קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר, הוֹלֵךְ וְחֲזָק מְאֹד; מֹשֶׁה יִדְבֵר, וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְּקוֹל. כ וַיִּרְדּוּ ה' עַל-הָרַסִינִי, אֶל-רֹאשׁ הָהָר; וַיִּקְרָא ה' לְמֹשֶׁה אֶל-רֹאשׁ הָהָר, וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה. כא וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, רִד הָעֵד בְּעַם: פָּן-יִהְרָסוּ אֶל-ה' לְרֵאוֹת, וְנִפְל מִמֶּנּוּ רַב. כב וְגַם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַנִּגְשִׁים אֶל-ה', יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ: פָּן-יִפְרָץ בְּהֵם, ה'. כג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, אֶל-ה', לֹא-יִכַל הָעָם, לַעֲלֹת אֶל-הָרַסִינִי: כִּי-אַתָּה הַעֲדִיתָ בְּנִי, לֵאמֹר, הִגִּבְלִי אֶת-הָהָר, וְקִדְּשִׁתּוּ. כד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי ה' לְדָוִד, וַעֲלִית אֵתָהּ וְאַהֲרֹן עִמָּךְ; וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם, אֶל-יְהִרְסוּ לַעֲלֹת אֶל-ה'--פָּן-יִפְרָץ-בָּם. כה וַיִּרְדּוּ מֹשֶׁה, אֶל-הָעָם; וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲלֵהֶם

We see clearly from the end of *pasuk* 20 that Moshe goes up to the mountain prior to the giving of the *Aseres Hadibros*. We see further in *pesukim* 21 and

24 that HKB”H commands Moshe to go down. Also in *pasuk* 24, Hashem tells Moshe to come back up with Aharon. In *pasuk* 25 we find Moshe in fact going down to the people as HKB”H commanded, and we don’t find anything else happening before the *Aseres Hadibros* . . .

### שמות פרק כ

א וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים, אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאִמֹּר. {ס}

The Torah then recounts the *Aseres Hadibros* and at the conclusion states the following:

יז וְכָל-הָעַם רֹאִים אֶת-הַקּוֹלוֹת וְאֶת-הַלְפִידִם, וְאֶת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר, וְאֶת-הַהָר, עָשָׂן; וַיֵּרָא הָעַם וַיִּנְעוּ, וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ מֵרָחֵק. טו וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, דַּבֵּר-אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ, וְנִשְׁמָעָה; וְאַל-יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים, פֶּן-נָמוּת. טז וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעַם, אֶל-תִּירְאוּ, כִּי לִבְעֹבוֹר נְסוּת אֲתֹכֶם, בָּא הָאֱלֹהִים; וּבְעֹבוֹר, תִּהְיֶה יְרֵאתוֹ עַל-פְּנֵיכֶם--לְבַלְתִּי תִחָטְאוּ. יז וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעַם, מֵרָחֵק; וּמֹשֶׁה נָגַשׂ אֶל-הָעַרְפֶּל, אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם הָאֱלֹהִים.

As mentioned above, it is hard to envision that Moshe was on top of Har Sinai when the people made this statement directly to him. And although the *pasuk* is written after the *Aseres Hadibros* are complete, it makes sense that this conversation occurred in the middle of the *Dibros*. Furthermore, at the end of *pasuk* 17, Moshe approaches the *arafel*, indicating that until that point he was not “where HKB”H was” during the *Aseres Hadibros*.

We also know that *Ma'amad Har Sinai* is broken up between Parshas Yisro and Parshas Mishpatim. The *pesukim* below are from Mishpatim and the time frame for these *pesukim* is the subject of some debate between the *meforshim*. Exactly when did each instance of the *pesukim* describing Moshe “going up” occur?

### שמות פרק כד

א וְאֶל-מֹשֶׁה אָמַר עֲלֶה אֶל-ה', אֶתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וְאָבִיהוּא, וְשִׁבְעִים, מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם, מֵרָחֵק. ב וְנָגַשׂ מֹשֶׁה לְבַדּוֹ אֶל-ה', וְהֵם לֹא יָגִשׁוּ; וְהָעַם, לֹא יַעֲלוּ עִמּוֹ. ג וַיָּבֵא מֹשֶׁה, וַיְסַפֵּר לְעַם אֶת כָּל-דְּבָרֵי ה', וְאֶת, כָּל-הַמְשָׁפָטִים; וַיַּעַן כָּל-הָעַם קוֹל אֶחָד, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר ה', נַעֲשֶׂה. ד וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה, אֶת כָּל-דְּבָרֵי ה', וַיִּשְׁכֹּם בְּבֹקֶר, וַיָּבֵן מִזְבֵּחַ תַּחַת הָהָר; וַשְׁתִּים עֶשְׂרֵה מִצְבָּה, לְשִׁנִּים עֶשֶׂר שְׁבֻטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. ה וַיִּשְׁלַח, אֶת-נְעָרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיַּעֲלוּ, עֹלֹת; וַיִּזְבְּחוּ זִבְחִים שְׁלָמִים, לַה'-פָּרִים. ו וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה חֲצִי הַדָּם, וַיִּשֶׂם בְּאֵזְנֵי הַדָּם, וַיִּזְרַק עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. ז וַיִּקַּח סֹפֶר הַבְּרִית, וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעַם; וַיֹּאמְרוּ, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע. ח וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַדָּם, וַיִּזְרַק עַל-הָעַם; וַיֹּאמֶר, הִנֵּה דַם-הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת ה' עִמָּכֶם, עַל כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים, הָאֵלֶּה. ט וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה, וְאַהֲרֹן--נָדָב, וְאָבִיהוּא, וְשִׁבְעִים, מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. י וַיֵּרָאוּ, אֶת אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו, כִּמְעַשֶׂה לְבַת הַסַּפִּיר, וַיִּכְעָצֵם הַשָּׁמַיִם, לְטָהַר. יא וְאֶל-אַצִּילֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹא שָׁלַח יְדוֹ; וַיִּחָזוּ, אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים, וַיִּאֲכָלוּ, וַיִּשְׁתּוּ.

Presumably, the *aliyah* referred to in Pasuk 9 is the fulfillment of the commandment in *pasuk 1*.

יב ויאמר ה' אל-מֹשֶׁה, עֲלֵה אֵלַי הַהָרָה--וְהִיִּיחָה-שָׁמַיִם; וְאֶתְנָה לְךָ אֶת-לְחֹת הָאָבֹן, וְהִתְנַחֵה וְהִמְצִיחָה, אֲשֶׁר כְּתִבְתִּי, לְהוֹרֹתָם. יג וַיִּקַּם מֹשֶׁה, וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ מִשְׁרָתוֹ; וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה, אֶל-הַר הָאֱלֹהִים. יד וְאֶל-הַזִּקְנִים אָמַר שְׁבוּ-לִנּוּ בָּזָה, עַד אֲשֶׁר-נָשׁוּב אֲלֵיכֶם; וְהִנֵּה אֶהְרֹן וְחֹר וְעַמְּכֶם, מִי-בַעַל דְּבָרִים יִגֹּשׁ אֲלֵהֶם. טו וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה, אֶל-הָהָר; וַיִּכַּס הָעֲנָן, אֶת-הָהָר. טז וַיִּשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹד-ה' עַל-הַר סִינַי, וַיִּכַּסְהוּ הָעֲנָן שְׁשֶׁת יָמִים; וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מִתּוֹךְ הָעֲנָן. יז וּמְרָאָה כְּבוֹד ה', כָּאֵשׁ אֲכֹלֶת בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָר, לְעֵינָי, בְּנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. יח וַיָּבֵא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֲנָן, וַיַּעַל אֶל-הָהָר; וַיְהִי מֹשֶׁה, בְּהָר, אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם, וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה

Here, the command to go up in *pasuk 12* seems to be fulfilled in *pasuk 13*, leaving us with the question of what is the *aliyah* in *pasuk 15*.

### **Meforshim on the Pesukim**

The Sforno is probably the most explicit in explaining where Moshe was. In his commentary to 19:24 the Sforno says that the command of לָךְ-רֹד, וְעִלִּיתָ is for a future time, i.e. HKB”H wants Moshe and Aharon to come back up after the *Aseres Hadibros* and parshas mishpatim.

The Ibn Ezra has a different interpretation. He explains that Aharon and Moshe went up before the *Aseres Hadibros*. However, he explains based on וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, דַּבֵּר-אֵתָה עִמָּנוּ that Moshe and Aharon only went up partway, in order to facilitate the people talking to Moshe. Apparently, Moshe and Aharon went a little past the *gevul*, but were still within shouting distance of the people. Interestingly, the Ibn Ezra says that, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, occurred **after** all 10 *dibros* were spoken by HKB”H. The reason HKB”H told Moshe to go down in 19:24 is to warn the people again about the *gevul*. Because Moshe was past the *gevul*, they needed to be extremely careful about possibly crossing the *gevul* when calling for him. *Pasuk 19:25* says Moshe went down, and the Ibn Ezra assumes that even though it does not say he went back up, HKB”H started the *Aseres Hadibros* immediately when Moshe returned. The Ibn Ezra explains in 20:16 that the leaders of the people spoke to Moshe after the *Dibros*, requesting that Moshe speak rather than God. They were under the impression that HKB”H was going to transmit the entire Torah at Ma’amad Har Sinai, and Moshe allayed their fears, saying that the encounter was over. Interestingly, the *pasuk* in Parshas Va’eschanan seems to indicate, consistent with the view of Ibn Ezra, that the leaders of the people spoke to Moshe at that point (Devarim 5:20-24).

The Netziv on *pasuk* 19:24 explains that klal yisroel were under the impression that HKB”H was going to communicate the entirety of the *chamisha chumshei Torah* at Har Sinai and only the oral *kabbalos* would be transmitted privately to Moshe Rabbeinu.

### ***Midrashim on the Psukim***

The Torah Shleima cites a *midrash* that sheds light on our problem.<sup>1</sup> The first piece quoted by the Torah Shleima on Perek 20 is from Shmos Rabba 28:3. Moshe was up on Har Sinai and HKB”H said to Himself (*k’vyachol*), I am about to speak to Klal Yisroel and reveal to them the Heavens, and Moshe is up on the mountain. Perhaps the people will mistakenly think that it is Moshe who is speaking. So HKB”H needed a plan to get Moshe down. Therefore, He instructed Moshe to go down and warn the people (19:21). Moshe responded that they have already been warned (19:23). HKB”H instructed Moshe to go down anyway (19:24) and warn the people and then come back up. Moshe went down (19:25) and we do not find that he came back up. The Midrash states: “*Ad she’Moshe yoraid, niglah HKB”H*” as proven by the beginning of *perek* 20, meaning that HKB”H in effect “pulled a fast one” on Moshe and started the *Aseres Hadibros* before Moshe returned.

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1. Thanks to Rav Elchanan Grunwald for pointing this source out to me.

## Shavuos: The Holiday of *Mesiras Nefesh*

Tzvi Aryeh Benoff

The sefer Taamim Uminhagim<sup>1</sup> presents different reasons why we read Megillas Rus on Shavuos. The Binyan Ariel explains that Shmuel Hanavi wrote Megillas Rus to trace the lineage of Dovid Hamelech. Therefore, we read the Megilla on his birthday, Shavuos<sup>2</sup>, to honor him. This answer, however, is very peculiar; we do not usually commemorate the birthday of a Biblical figure by reading the relevant portions of Tanach. Why then, do we single out the birth of Dovid by reading Megillas Rus?

The simple connection between Rus and Shavuos is that Rus is the archetypical proselyte who accepted the Torah. Similarly, the Avudraham explains, B'nei Yisroel also 'converted'<sup>3</sup> to Judaism prior to their acceptance of the Torah on Shavuos. The Mogen Avraham elaborates that we read the Megilla on Shavuos to demonstrate that "the Torah is only 'given' through hardships and poverty..."<sup>4</sup> Thus, Megillas Rus delineates the prerequisites that prepare the Jew to receive the Torah.

The Tiferes Shimshon<sup>5</sup>, Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l, explains that there was a fundamental difference between the *Avodas Hashem* of Yosef and that of Yehuda, which was manifested throughout their respective dynasties, *Malchus Yisroel* and *Malchus Yehuda*.

Yosef was known as "Yosef Hatzaddik," a "tzaddik yesod olam," a tzaddik who supports the world. He operated via *middas hadin*, strict 'measure for measure' judgment. He served Hashem perfectly (by refusing to marry Potiphar's wife) and was rewarded with riches and dominion over the entire civilized world. If, however, Yosef would have sinned even once, he would have lost everything. Thus, Yosef had a binary relationship with Hashem: tremendous reward for perfect fealty and loss of everything for a single error.

Such was the fate of Shaul Hamelech. (Rav Pincus notes that Yosef symbolized the rest of B'nei Yisroel, including all Jewish kings that were not descendents of Dovid Hamelech. Thus, Shaul is considered part of *Malchus Yisroel*, with respect to the nature of his *avodas Hashem*.) The medrash

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1. סימנים תקפד, תקפה, תריט, ותרך.
  2. תוס' פרק א' של חגיגה בשם הרושלמי.
  3. פרק החולץ "במילה, וטבילה והראת הדם".
  4. סימן תץ"ס ק"ח.
  5. מאמרים על פרשת וישב.

states<sup>6</sup> that Shaul was a greater tzaddik than Dovid, yet “Shaul sinned once and lost everything, while Dovid sinned twice and retained his kingship,” a kingship that perpetuated a dynasty promised to exist forever. Why was Shaul judged so much more harshly than his counterpart Dovid? Like Yosef, Shaul merited kingship because he was perfect, a tzaddik. However, he immediately lost it when he succumbed to public pressure and offered *karbanos* in Mitzpeh to defeat the P’lishtim, despite divine orders to wait for Shmuel’s arrival.<sup>7</sup> (This punishment was executed after Shaul again defied Shmuel’s command to kill every member of Amalek, sparing King Agag and the cattle.<sup>8</sup>)

Similarly, Yeravam ben Navat was promised by Achiya Hashiloni<sup>9</sup> that he would merit to rule over B’nei Yisroel and produce a “*bayis ne’eman*,” an eternal dynasty<sup>10</sup>, *as long as he remained loyal to Hashem*. In fact, the gemara<sup>11</sup> recounts a dialogue between Yeravam and Hashem during which Hashem begs Yeravam to repent, promising that Yeravam “and ben Yishai (Dovid Hamelech)” would walk beside Him in Gan Eden. Only after Yeravam asked who would walk first did Hashem say that Dovid would. Before the question, however, Hashem implied, by mentioning Yeravam first, that Yeravam would walk in the front. Thus, Yeravam, at one point, was greater than (or could have become greater than) Dovid himself! Like Shaul, Yeravam lost everything after he sinned, even relinquishing his portion of Olam Haboh, the World to Come.

Yehuda’s *avoda* was *Mesiras Nefesh*, self-sacrifice. Although he made ‘mistakes,’ he always remained loyal to Hashem regardless of the consequences. This devotion was epitomized when Yehuda chose to publicly admit his deed with Tamar in front of Yitzchak, Reuvain, Shimon, Levi, and Yisachar instead of adjourning the court and telling them privately to repeal the death sentence. Similarly, Dovid Hamelech ‘erred’ by marrying Bas Sheva, but did not lose his kingship because he too went above and beyond what is expected of people. In a situation similar to Shaul’s test at Mitzpeh, Dovid was told by the *Urim V’tumim* to not attack the Pelishtim until the trees bent in the wind. Dovid refused to accede to the demands of his troops to attack. Instead, the Yalkut Shemoni expounds<sup>12</sup>, he replied that “it would be better to die as *tzaddikim* than live as *reshaim*.” Thus, the

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6. פסיקתא רבתי הוספה א, פיסקא א.

7. שמואל א פרק יג.

8. שם פרק טו.

9. מלכים א פרק יא.

10. מצודת ציון שם, לח.

11. סנהדרין קב.

12. ילקוט שמעוני שמואל ב רמז קמב.

extraordinary strength and self-sacrifice to cling to G-d, not perfection, was responsible for the continuity of the Davidic Dynasty.<sup>13</sup>

This concept of *Mesiras Nefesh* can be extended to Rus. Although her original connection to B'nei Yisroel via Machlon might not have been proper, she nevertheless gave up her power, money and lavish lifestyle as a princess to follow a poor widow back to a land where she would probably not find anyone willing to marry her and would have to collect *matnos aniyim* to survive. Finally, she followed Naomi's orders to approach Boaz in the middle of the night even though she might have appeared as a *perutzah*, a promiscuous woman, to the one person in the country that respected her. It was her *Mesiras Nefesh* to Hashem that provided her with the fortitude to convert to Judaism and perform such deeds. Thus, she merited to be the matriarch of a line of kings that would live and survive by this *avoda*.

One of the reasons suggested why the Torah doesn't mention Shavuot as the day we received the Torah was because B'nei Yisroel made the *aigel hazahav*, the golden calf, and lost the *luchos* that were given on Shavuot. Rather, the true *kabbalas haTorah* occurred on Yom Kippur, the day we received the second set of *luchos*. If this is true, why then do we celebrate Shavuot at all? The answer is that Shavuot was the day on which the Torah became an inseparable and integral component of our lives and existence. We read Megillas Rus, the story of a woman who was the paradigm of *Mesiras Nefesh* and the forbear of Dovid Hamelech, the king who was willing to give up his life to remain loyal to G-d, to symbolize that although we may err, the Jewish nation will always remain a *mamleches kohanim*, a nation of priests, to Hashem because of our *Mesiras Nefesh* to uphold the Torah. As we stood by Har Sinai, we proclaimed "*na'aseh v'nishma*," "we will do and we will hear," promising to do His will regardless of the trials and tribulations that might befall us. Throughout the ages, we have lived up to this vow; even some of the most wicked Jews have sacrificed their lives rather than renounce their Father in heaven. In the merit of our extraordinary devotion to Hashem, may we merit to see the day when the kingdom of Dovid will be restored to its former glory, the era of *Moshiach* and the third *Beis Hamikdash*. Amen

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13. Another episode when the *mesiras nefesh* of Yehuda was demonstrated occurred by the Yam Suf when Nachson ben Aminadav, the nasi of Shevet Yehuda obeyed Hashem's command and marched into the raging sea, completely submerging himself and nearly dying.

## ***Bikkurim: The Intersection of Zeraim and Kodshim***

Rabbi Aryeh Stechler

As Religious Zionists, our perspective on the political State of Israel is derived from our religious texts and traditions. Too often, however, our policies and ideas are rooted solely in Aggadic material. We ought to spend more time mining for meaning the Halakhic source material on Israel and Jerusalem, such as the laws of *Zeraim* and *Kodshim*, and to employ them in the development of our religious philosophy for the Halakhic State of Israel. Shavous is the *Chag HaBikkurim*, a holiday devoted to the communal and personal fulfillment of the mitzvah of *Bikkurim* - the commandment to bring one's first fruit to the Mikdash. On Shavous, the communal *korban* called the *Shetai HaLechem*, the only biblical mitzvah of the day, was a *Korban* categorized by the Gemara (Menachos 84a) as *Bikkurim* for the Mikdash. Additionally, Halakhic sources mandate that personal *Bikkurim* may be brought commencing on Shavuos, not before (Rambam *Bikkurim* 2:6). This holiday, biblically focused solely on Halakhos pertaining to Israel, offers us a unique opportunity to rededicate ourselves to our study of Israel from a Halakhic perspective.

### ***Bikkurim as Zeraim***

Analysis of the mitzvah of *Bikkurim* represents a unique challenge because it is very difficult to place among the categories of Jewish law. At first glance, *Bikkurim* should be classified as a law pertaining to Israel, similar to *Terumah*, *Maaser*, *Sheviis* and *Kilayim*. This group is often referred to as "*Mitzvos HaTeluyos BaAretz*" – commandments dependent on the land. Along these lines, Maseches *Bikkurim* appears in the first order of the Mishna called *Zeraim*, which is also where the Rambam codifies these laws, alongside the other *Mitzvos* of the Land. In fact, the Mishnah (*Bikkurim* 2:1) relates that most of the laws of the sanctity of *Bikkurim* are replicates of the laws of *Terumah*. The Yerushalmi (*ibid*) derives this from the fact that the Torah "speaks of two *Terumahs* – *Terumah Gedolah* and *Bikkurim*." Furthermore, regarding the laws of *Tumah*, Halakha has three categories, *Kodesh* (Temple related material), *Terumah* and regular items, and Rambam notes that *Bikkurim* is treated as *Terumah*, not on the high level of *Kodesh* and certainly not regular food.

However, many Rishonim believe that *Bikkurim* is not a regular mitzvah *Hateluyah BaAretz*. Later commentaries noticed that when Rashi (Kidushin 34a) lists examples of these laws, he leaves out *Bikkurim*, because he believes they are a mitzvah that fall on the person to perform. If one does not want to eat the food that grows in his field, he may not be obligated to tithe, but he must bring the first fruits to Jerusalem (Rashi Gitin 46a). Furthermore, the Rishonim are bothered as to why the Gemara (Tosfos to Bava Basra 81a) quotes a separate exemption derived from the Torah that

excludes *Bikkurim* from outside of Israel. By definition, a mitzvah that is dependent on the land of Israel is not relevant to foods grown outside of Israel! Rashba, one of the Baalei Tosfos (there), argues that *Bikkurim* is not a mitzvah that is dependent on the land, and therefore one might have thought can be brought from fruits grown abroad.

### ***Bikkurim* as the Climax of *Zeraim***

To reconcile this apparent contradiction – how *Bikkurim* can be an integral unit within *Zeraim* and yet not rank on the list of Laws Dependent on Israel - we turn to the Mishna in the first chapter of Keilim (1:6). The Mishna lists the ten levels of holy space that exist in the world, and describes the unique *halakhos* that pertain to each level of *Kedusha*. The first level of *Kedusha* is the land of Israel, which is holier than the rest of the world. The Mishna delineates three mitzvos that highlight Israel's unique holiness over the rest of the world. The first barley for the *Omer* sacrifice brought on Pesach to allow the new crop to be eaten outside the Mikdash, the first wheat for the *Shetai HaLechem* to allow the new crop to be used in the Mikdash and the first fruits – the *Bikkurim* - of the individual all come only from the land of Israel and not from abroad. Strikingly, the Mishna that highlights the *Kedusha* of Israel over the rest of the world leaves out all ten of the Mitzvos that Rashi (above) lists as *Mitzvos HaTeluyos BaAretz!* Because of this glaring omission, the Vilna Gaon emends the text to include only the Korbanos of *Omer* and *Shetai HaLechem*, because it was inconceivable to the Gaon that *Bikkurim* outranks *Terumah*, *Maaser* and so on. If we are not willing to accept the emendation of the Gaon, why is it that *Bikkurim*, which is not one of the *Mitzvos HaTeluyos BaAretz* is listed as the law that represents the special level of *Kedusha* of Eretz Yisroel?

From close analysis of the remaining 9 levels of *Kedusha* it is clear that the laws quoted as different from level to level do not represent a comprehensive list of differences. Rather, they are specific laws that highlight and celebrate the particular *Kedusha* of that place. Factually, *Terumah* pertains specifically to Israel and not to the rest of the world and is thus a mitzvah that depends on the land. However, *Bikkurim* is much more than factually tied to Israel. The entire purpose of the mitzvah of *Bikkurim* is to take a moment each year to celebrate that one lives and owns land in Israel, the holiest country in the world. Thus, *Bikkurim* is employed in the Mishnah Keilim to symbolize Israel's superior *kedusha* to other lands.

Beyond the mitzvah to bring the *Bikkurim* to the Mikdash, the Torah prescribes a mitzvah to recite the Parsha of *Bikkurim* upon reaching the inner chambers of the Mikdash. The recitation includes him saying, "I declare today to HaShem...that I have come to the Land Hashem swore to our forefathers to give us." The recitation includes a brief history of our national birth in the sweatshops of Mitzrayim and how we yearned for Israel. "And He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and

honey. [Therefore,] I now bring my first fruits from the land He gave me...” The mitzvah of *Bikkurim* is a symbol of the realization of our national dream to live in the Land of Israel and an offering of gratitude to HaShem for a personal connection to our historical homeland. While the borders of the Land of Israel for the laws of *Mitzvos HaTeluyos BaAretz* can include vast areas tangentially connected to Israel, the borders of *Bikkurim* are limited to areas that are flowing of milk and honey, the land that we had dreamed of. For example, *Ever HaYarden* is not considered Israel for the laws of the *Bikkurim*, even though according to many it is considered Israel for the other laws dependent on Israel (Maharik 122).

Additionally, to be obligated in *Terumah* and *Maaser* one must own produce grown in Israel. However, the obligation to bring *Bikkurim* is limited to those significantly connected to the land of Israel – only those who own a parcel of land (Mishnah *Bikkurim* 1:2). Some authorities argue that produce which is completed in Israel, despite growing outside of Israel can be obligated in *Terumah* and *Maaser* (even biblically - Kesef Mishnah Terumos 1:22). However, since *Bikkurim* is a celebration of our realization of the dream of living in Israel, it may be argued that *Bikkurim* has a special exemption for all produce not grown in Israel, even when completed in Israel. Similarly, the scope of produce differs from *Terumah* and *Maaser* and *Bikkurim*. *Bikkurim* is biblically mandated for the seven types of produce for which the Land of Israel was praised and celebrates the uniqueness of Israel (Rambam *Bikkurim* 2:2). *Bikkurim* is not just a law whose application is dependent on the land of Israel. Rather, it is much more. *Bikkurim* is the mitzvah in the Torah that celebrates our realization of the dream of living in Israel and is therefore the prototypical mitzvah related to Israel. Chronologically, *Bikkurim* is the first and fundamentally the primary mitzvah performed on produce (before *Terumah* is taken), and simultaneously the last *Masechta* listed in *Zeraim* – the climax of the entire Seder.

#### ***Bikkurim as Kodshim***

However, viewing *Bikkurim* solely through the prism of *Zeraim* would be to disregard the process of *Hakravas Bikkurim* (offering) and the point of inception of the *Kedushas Bikkurim*, which fit squarely into the world of *Kodshim*. The Mishnah (*Bikkurim* 2:4) says that the *Bikkurim* process must be linked to the offering of a Korban, must be accompanied by the *Leviim* singing *shir* (at the time of *Nesachim* like all other *Shiras HaKorbanos* – Archin 11a) and requires *Tenufah* - waving. Furthermore, Ramban (Bamidbar 5:9) requires *Hagasha* – that the *Bikkurim* actually touch the altar before they may be eaten. He derives this from the Torah classification of *Bikkurim* as “*Asher Yakrivu*” (whose *shoresh* is K,R,V) – a term that is only used in the world of *Kodshim* and only for offerings that involve contact with the *Mizbeach*.

Ramban argues that the Torah's categorization of *Bikkurim* as a *korban* is also the source for the Rabbis' opinion (Mishnah *Bikkurim* 3:12) that the *Bikkurim* were eaten by the *Anshei Mishmar* – the Kohanim on duty that week in the Mikdash. Rabbi Yehuda disagrees, arguing that in truth *Bikkurim* should be treated like *Terumah*, which may be given to any Kohein one chooses. The Yerushalmi (Terumos 1:1 and *Bikkurim* 1:2) quotes this debate to solve two other queries regarding *Bikkurim*. Children can offer *Korbanos* once they understand the concept of giving to HaShem, while some *Tannaim* limit their involvement in *Terumah*. Therefore, a child may bring *Bikkurim* according to the Rabbis, but not Rabbi Yehuda. Similarly, according to the Yerushalmi stolen items may not be used for *Korbanot*, but may be used for other mitzvos. If *Bikkurim* were stolen, they may be brought according to Rabbi Yehuda who views *Bikkurim* as a *Zeraim* law, but not according to the other *Tanaim* who consider the offering of *Bikkurim* to be a *Kodshim* process.

Although the Rambam quoted earlier categorized the *Kedusha* of *Bikkurim* as *Terumah*, regarding *Tumah*, Rambam (*Bikkurim* 2:19) says that when *Bikkurim* becomes *Tamei* it should be treated as a *Korban* and not *Terumah*. *Tamei Terumah* may be burned for benefit for the Kohein, but *Korbanos* when *Tamei* may not be burned. The same is true of *Bikkurim*.

Most importantly, the inception of *Kedushas HaBikkurim* differs significantly from *Terumah*. When one designates a selection of produce as *Terumah* it is immediately invested with *Kedusha*. A non-Kohein immediately faces severe consequences and penalties for eating *Terumah*. The severity and penalties for a non-Kohein eating *Bikkurim* are identical to *Terumah*, but differ as *Bikkurim* does not initially attain this *Kedusha*. Only once the fruits undergo the beginning of the *Hakravah* – offering – process do they receive their *Kedusha*, for Rashi, it begins upon entering the Mikdash (Makkos 19a). If produce was grown in Tel Aviv and designated there as *Bikkurim*, it will not receive its full *Kedusha* until the produce is transported to the Mikdash in Jerusalem.

#### ***Bikkurim* as the Intersection of *Zeraim* and *Kodshim***

*Bikkurim* are quite paradoxical. The *Kedusha* of *Bikkurim* is identical to *Terumah* and the world of *Zeraim*, but this *Kedusha* is instilled only as the *Bikkurim* commence their *Korban*-like process! Why would the *Bikkurim* – a mitzvah that celebrates the unique *Kedusha* and beauty of the Land of Israel - only reach its climax in Yerushalayim as part of the *Avodah*? It seems clear that the Torah wishes to impress upon us a critical clue to our understanding of Eretz Yisroel. While living in and farming the land is a realization of our national dream for Israel, without incorporating this dream into the service of HaShem in the Mikdash, our dream does not reach its full expression. Israel is not Israel without Yerushalayim, her spiritual center and core. We

cannot celebrate Israel without bringing the fruits of our labor to HaShem and celebrating in a religious framework.

Ironically, *Bikkurim* also highlights the opposite point as well. Yerushalayim, the religious core of Israel is not an independent entity divorced from the rest of the nation. When the Jews from all around the country would come to Jerusalem, they would stop just short of the outskirts of the city and send emissaries to alert the people of Jerusalem they had made it. A corresponding crowd of Jerusalemites would exit the city to greet them. Hand in hand, the people of Israel with the locals would dance the remainder of the way to the Mikdash (Rambam *Bikkurim* 4:16). The Hakravah of the *Bikkurim* was the process through which the relationship between Yerushalmis and the Jews from the other corners of the land was cemented.

The song that the Levites sang during the *Hakravah* of the *Bikkurim* was “*Mizmor Shir Chanukas HaMizbeach*.” (there 4:17) It is not clear what the relevance of this chapter of Tehilim is to *Bikkurim*. This paragraph was also sung at the dedication ceremony when more space was added to the Mikdash (Shavuos 15b). The minhag is to recite this paragraph on Chanukah, another dedication of the Mikdash (Bear Hateiv 132:7). It could be that the singing of a song of Chanukas HaMizbeach during the *Bikkurim* process teaches us that the mitzvah of *Bikkurim* adds holiness to the Mikdash or should be seen in light of a dedication process. When Israelites made the Mikdash their place for celebrating the success of (what many would call today) the Zionist dream, they were signaling that Jerusalem and the Mikdash were the spiritual capital of Israel. This mitzvah process cemented the holiness of the Mikdash. (See Rash Sirlio on Yerushalmi 3:4 who connects the song of *Bikkurim* to the song of *Chanukas HaMizbeach*, although for other reasons than I suggest here.)

*Bikkurim* – the realization of *Zeraim* and Zionism – must be rooted in the *Kedusha* of *Kodshim* and the Mikdash. Simultaneously, the scenes of *Anshei Yerushalayim* dancing hand in hand with those bringing *Bikkurim* and the *Leviim* singing of *Mizmor Shir Chanukas HaMizbeach* both highlight that the flipside is true as well. The *Kedusha* of the Mikdash is not an independent or standalone *Kedusha*. Only when Yerushalayim has a strong connection to the rest of the land and serves as her capital is the Mikdash achieving its full *Kedusha*. Without dancing hand in hand with the rest of Israel, Yerushalayim becomes isolationist and much less meaningful.

Let us hope that this Shavuos our learning will inspire us to both infuse our Zionism with the *Kedusha* of religion and turn our religion and community outward to the entirety of Israel. From the Halakhic perspective of Israel which we derived from *Bikkurim* it is clear that the celebration of Israel must be performed in a religious framework and that our religious framework and our Mikdash requires the partnership of the entirety of the Israeli community.

# **Murex Trunculus - The Rediscovery of *Techeiles* or just another Fashion Fad<sup>1</sup>**

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Shulman

## I. Third Parsha of Shma

In the last paragraph of שמע we read (from שלח):

ועשו להם ציצת על כנפי בגדיהם לדרתם ונתנו על-ציצת הכנף פתיל תכלת... אני ה'  
אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים...

Rashi quotes a גמרא in ב"מ:

למה נאמר יציאת מצרים? אני הוא שהבחנתי במצרים בין טפה של בכור לשאינה של בכור אני הוא עתיד להבחין ולהפרע מן התולה קלא אילן בבגדו ואומר תכלת הוא.

Why is the exodus from *Mitzrayim* mentioned in the parsha of Tzitzis? Because it is I who distinguished in *Mitzrayim* between the drop which was firstborn and that which was not firstborn. It is I who will distinguish and punish those who attach indigo-dyed strings on their garments and claim that it is *Techeiles*.

## II. History & Background

### A. Lost after הגמרא (perhaps 600's CE)

גמרא מנחות מג. - מר ממשכי אייתי תכלתא בשני רב אחאי בדקוה כו'  
"Mar from Mashki brought *Techeiles* in the time of Rav Achai, and they tested it [and it was *Techeiles*]." Rav Achai was one of the latest Amoraim. In fact, he was one of the *Rabbanan Savurai* and he passed away in 510 CE (lived one generation after Ravina & Rav Ashi).

מדרש תנחומא פר' שלח - ועכשיו אין לנו תכלת תכלת נגנו.

The Midrash Tanchuma (compiled 750 CE) says that we no longer have *Techeiles* since *Techeiles* was hidden.

So it's assumed that *Techeiles* and the *chilazon* that produces it was lost some time in the 600's (perhaps 639 Arab conquest) about 1300 to 1400 years ago.

### B. 1857 - Murex discovery

French zoologist Henri de Lacaze discovers three dye producing snails in the Mediterranean - *Murex brandaris*, *Murex trunculus* and *Thais haemastoma*, as the source for the purple dye used by royalty (royal purple) in ancient times.

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1. This article is written in an outline format.

C. 1888 Radziner Rebbi identifies cuttlefish as *chilazon*

Rav Gershon Henoch Leiner, Radziner Rebbi, felt discovery of *Techeiles* was precursor to coming of mashiach. He identified the cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis* - similar to a squid) as *chilazon*.

D. 1913 Rav Herzog Disproves Radziner *Techeiles*

Rav Herzog (later first Chief Rabbi of Israel) in his doctoral dissertation proves that cuttlefish does not create blue dye, but rather the chemical additives themselves produce a blue dye and the cuttlefish can be replaced with any organic entity. Thus cuttlefish is not an essential component of blue dye!

E. 1913 Rav Herzog Identifies *Murex trunculus* as a likely candidate as *chilazon*, but it's purple

Rav Herzog identifies the *Murex trunculus* as a likely candidate for the *chilazon*, but the dye produced is purple rather than blue.

מנחות דף מג: - תניא, היה ר' מאיר אומר: מה נשתנה תכלת מכל מיני צבעונין? מפני שהתכלת דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע ורקיע לכסא הכבוד.

It is unlikely that *Techeiles* is purple since *Techeiles* is compared to the sea (contrary to Prof. Irving Ziderman).

F. Rav Herzog suggests that *Janthina* snail may be *chilazon* but secretion turns brown

Rav Herzog identifies *Janthina* snail as likely candidate for *chilazon*, but there doesn't seem to be a way to produce blue dye from it. *Janthina* does secrete blue liquid, but it turns brown after a few minutes. (See claim of Dr. Kaplan in [www.realtekhelet.com](http://www.realtekhelet.com) that in 2002 he was able to produce blue dye from it, though he does not present any details or scientific verification on his website.)

G. 1980 - Professor Elsner discovers that exposure to sunlight causes *Murex trunculus* reduced dye to produce blue dye (dibromoindigo turns to indigo)

Professor Otto Elsner and Prof. Ehud Spanier discover that when *trunculus* dye is in reduced to dehydrated state, exposure to ultra-violet light of sun will (unbind the bromide atoms from the indigo molecule) and transform the blue-purple dibromoindigo to pure blue indigo.

#### H. 1993 - Amutat Ptil Tekhelet founded to produce *tekhelet* strings

Based on work of Rabbi Eliyahu Tavger in 1980s and 1990s, Ari Greenspan, Baruch Sterman and Joel Guberman form Amutat P'til Tekhelet and begin producing and selling blue *Techeiles* from *Murex trunculus*.

#### III. Proofs for *Murex Trunculus* Being *Chilazon*

A. Archeological evidence shows tremendous amounts of *Murex* shells in coast of Northern Israel and Lebanon, in area identified in Maseches Shabbos as place *chilazon* fisherman were situated.

שבת דף כו. - ומדלת הארץ השאיר נבזראדן רב טבחים לכרמים וליוגבים (ירמיה'  
16 52). כורמים - תני ר' יוסף אלו מלקטי אפרסמון מעין גדי ועד רמתא. יוגבים -  
אלו צידי חלזון מסולמות של צור ועד חיפה

Nevuzadran chief executioner left the poorest of land to the *kormim* and the *yogvim*. The *kormim* are the gatherers of balsam from Ein Gedi to Ramasa. *Yogvim* are the ones who catch *chilazon* [on the Mediterranean] from the height of Tyre until Haifa.

Archeological digs show much evidence of the dyeing industry in Northern coast of Israel and southern Lebanon. Phoenicia was the center of the dye industry in the ancient world.

Archeological digs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century show enormous numbers of broken *Murex* shells (*Murex trunculus*, *Murex brandaris* and *Thais haemastoma*) in Sidon (Lebanon) and Tyre (Lebanon; south of Sidon), and the shells are cut open by the hypobranchial gland where the dye was extracted.

The gemara in Shabbos identifies the area in northern Israel and southern Lebanon from Sulamos Tzur until Chaifa as the place where *Techeiles* dye was obtained where *chilazon* was fished. It is very possible that since *Murex* is produced in Northern Israel / Lebanon coast and *chilazon* is produced in Northern Israel/Lebanon that *Murex* is *chilazon*.

This proof does not support *Janthina* or cuttlefish.

Dr. Zvi Koren found in Masada a fabric with purple dye, which tested as being from *Murex trunculus*, according to paper given Feb. 28, 2011. See NY Times Feb. 28, 2011. [Perhaps that dye was prepared without sunlight.]

B. In Shir Hashirim Raba and in Maseches Shabbos, Chilazon is identified as having a shell.

שיר השירים רבה (11:4) - שמלתך לא בלתה מעליך כו' ולא היו גדלים? אמר ליה צא ולמד מן החלזון שכל זמן שהוא גדל נרתיקו גדל עמו  
Go and learn about the Jews in the desert from the *chilazon* that all the time it grows, its shell grows with it.

שבת דף עה. - הצד חלזון והפוצעו כו' ר' יהודה אומר חייב שתיים.  
One who traps *chilazon* and “breaks it open” on shabbos violates hunting, or according to Rabi Yehuda two transgressions - for hunting (צידה) and threshing (דישה).

So we see that *chilazon* is not a cuttlefish, but rather a snail with a shell that must be broken open, like the Murex snail (or possibly the Janthina snail).

C. Zevulun is promised Sefunei Timunei Chol - Murex Snail Burrows in Sand

גמרא מגילה ו. - אמר זבולון כו' לאחיי נתת להם שדות וכרמים ולי נתת הרים וגבעות לאחיי נתת להם ארצות ולי נתת ימים ונהרות. אמר לו כולן צריכין לך על ידי חלזון שנאמר (דברים לג) [עמים הר יקראו כו' כי שפע ימים יינקו] ושפוני טמוני חול.

Zevulun was given *chilazon* as stated in *Vizos Habracha*: “By the riches of the sea they will be nourished and by treasures concealed in sand.”

We see that the *chilazon* is buried in the sand. Murex burrows into sand and sediment on the sea floor.

This is not true of the cuttlefish or the Janthina snail (Janthina lives by floating on water and will drown underwater, so it can't live burrowed in the sand according to Twerski).

D. Etymology - In Farsi Chilazon is a Snail; Raavia quotes the Yerushalmi that Chilazon is Propherin which is a Greek word for Murex.

As pointed out by the Twerski article, in Farsi (Persian language) and Assyrian “*chilazon*” means a snail. This supports snail (Murex or Janthina) theories, but not cuttlefish.

Also, the Raavia quotes a Yerushalmi  
ראבי"ה ברכות דף ט. סי' כה - וגרסינן בירושלמי בין תכלת לכרתי בין פרופירין לבין פריפירין

This identifies *Techeiles* with the Greek word for Murex. (Not *Janthina* or cuttlefish.)

E. Gemara Shabbos says *chilazon* must be alive to produce good dye - consistent with mucus of Murex that deteriorates very quickly after death

גמ' שבת דף עה. ולחייב נמי משום נטילת נשמה? כו' מתעסק הוא אצל נטילת נשמה. והא מודה ר' שמעון בפסיק רישא ולא ימות! שאני הכא דכמה דאית ביה נשמה טפי ניחא ליה כי היכי דליציל ציבעיה. (רש"י שדם החי טוב מדם המת.)

Let him also be also punishable for violating “killing” on shabbos! (this refers to someone who squeezes out the dye of the *chilazon* on shabbos). The Gemara answers that one is preoccupied with removing the dye and is not *mechaven* to kill. But Rebi Shimon agrees one is *chayav* when it is an inevitable consequence (such as this case)! It's *Lo Nicha Lei* - one doesn't want that consequence (and considered as “not *mechaven*” according to Aruch or *Melacha Sheein Tzricha Ligufa* according to Tosafos). The Gemara explains that he actually doesn't want it to die, because the longer the *chilazon* stays the clearer the dye will be (as Rashi says that the dye of the live *chilazon* is better than the dye of the dead *chilazon*).

This is consistent with Murex because in order for the color changing process to develop with the mucus of Murex, a specific enzyme purporase must be present which quickly deteriorates soon after death, and then the mucus won't develop into the dye (Twerski).

This is not true of *Janthina* or cuttlefish.

F. If not Murex, generally should have warned against it like קלא אילן

Another support that Murex is *chilazon*, is that if it is another unidentified source, e.g. another snail, why would the Gemara not specifically warn to exclude Murex like it warned to exclude the indigo plant dye.

#### IV. Problems With Murex Theory and Solutions

##### A. *Chilazon Braisa*

מנחות דף מד. ת"ר: חלזון זהו - גופו דומה לים, וברייתו דומה לדג, ועולה אחד לשבעים שנה, ובדמו צובעין תכלת, לפיכך דמיו יקרים.

The *chilazon* - its body is similar to the sea, its form is like a fish and it comes up every 70 years, and its blood is used for *Techeiles*, therefore it is very expensive.

B. Problem 1 with Braisa - גופו דומה לים

Solution - Sea fouling gives it appearance like the seabed

Several problems are raised based on this *Braisa*. First, as Rav Herzog asks, the body of the Murex snail does not appear to be blue. It's more white or grey.

The answer given by Baruch Sterman and others is that the Murex snail in its natural habitat is covered with sea fouling, giving it a blue hue, and making it look like the seabed. So *גופו דומה לים* means it looks like the seabed when diving for it, so it is very hard to find. (Rav Herzog's Murex was probably cleaned.)

Rav Yehuda Rock says this may be a reason why it is expensive.

C. Problem 2 with Braisa - ברייתו דומה לדג

Solution - Its creation is like fish in that it spawns eggs like fish

Dr. Mendel Singer asks that how is it *ברייתו דומה לדג* which Rashi explains to mean *תבנית דיקנו* - its form (and Rabeinu Gershom says *בריאת צורתו*). How is its form like a fish?

It may just mean it is a snail which has certain characteristics like a fish, even though a snail is not a fish in the common usage of the word. (In the English language though, snail is defined as a type of fish.)

It may also mean, as Baruch Sterman suggests, that *ברייתו* means its creation. Its creation is like fish because the Murex spawns, depositing its eggs like a fish.

D. Biggest problem with Braisa - עולה אחד לשבעים שנה

Possible solution - Comes up on the beach very infrequently

The biggest problem posed from the *Chilazon Braisa* cited above is its final statement

*ועולה אחד לשבעים שנה, ובדמו צובעין תכלת, לפיכך דמיו יקרים*

Murex does not have a cycle! This issue was also raised by Rav Herzog.

Rav Herzog says "Science knows nothing of such a septuagenarian 'appearance' of any of the denizens of the sea."

The Rambam doesn't quote this criterion.

Possible solutions - Maybe the Murex becomes less available or accessible due to overfishing.

The Chida describes the עולה אחד לשבעים שנה to mean it miraculously comes onto the beach once every 70 years.

Solution given by Baruch Sterman and others - Maybe what it means is that it rarely comes ashore and becomes readily available in abundance only very rarely. Other times you have to dive for it. Once every 70 years is a term which means "very rarely."

E. Problem with chemical tests in gemara if Murex dye is chemically identical to Kala Ilan (indigo)  
Perhaps test detects impurities in plant-derived indigo - Not satisfactory answer

One of the biggest problems with the Murex theory is that the Gemara in *Menachos* gives a chemical test to tell the difference between *Kala Ilan*, (which the Aruch and others assume is plant-produced Indigo), and real *Techeiles*.

מנחות דף מב-מג. - ת"ר תכלת אין לה בדיקה ואין נקחית אלא מן המומחה כו' ותכלת אין לה בדיקה? והא רב יצחק בריה דרב יהודה בדיק ליה מייתי מגביא גילא ומיא דשבילתא ומימי רגלים בן ארבעים יום ותרי לה בגווייהו מאורתא ועד לצפרא איפרד חזותיה פסולה לא איפרד חזותיה כשרה. ור' אדא קמיה דרבא משמיה דרב עזירא אמר מייתי חמירא ארכסא דשערי ואפיא לה בגווייה אישתנאי למעליותא כשרה לגריותא פסולה כו'. מאי אין לה בדיקה נמי דקאמר אטעימה. כו' היכא דבדקנא בדרב יצחק בריה דרב יהודה לא איפרד חזותא כשרה איפרד חזותיה בדקינן לה בדרב אדא בחמירא ארכסא אשתני למעליותא כשרה לגריותא פסולה.

*Menachos* 43. - There are two tests. You put in liquid alum, juice of fenugreek, and 40 day old urine and soak the blue wool in it overnight. If it doesn't fade it is kosher. If it fades then you use a second test of hard barley and yeast. If the color changes for the better than it is *Techeiles*, but if it changes for the worse it is *Kala Ilan*.

The question is that according to the Amutat P'til Tekhelet, the Murex trunculus dye in its reduced state is exposed to the sun's ultraviolet rays which unbinds the bromide atoms from the indigo molecule, leaving the remaining chemical dye, indigo, which is chemically identical to plant-derived indigo (*Kala Ilan*).

So chemically, indigo dye from Murex is the same as indigo dye from plant. If the indigo is chemically identical, how would a chemical test cause one dye to fade and one to not fade? This is asked by Dr. Singer and others.

Notes on Gemara - Some scientists discard the Gemara's tests, noting that the *Amoraim* were not chemists. That is not a very satisfactory answer.

Baruch Sterman notes that he did subject the Murex dye to the Gemara's tests and it did not fade. Thus, that should satisfy the Gemara. Again, it's not entirely satisfactory, since we are left without an understanding why *kala ilan* would fade.

Answer - There are several other answers given. First, it is possible that the chemical tests might be used to detect impurities that might be found in the plant-derived indigo but not in snail-derived indigo.

(Twerski quotes Sterman that the snail may have been reduced chemically using lead and tin pots with sulfuric reducing agents found in the glands of snails. Plant-derived indigo has no proteins or sulfur compounds. Until recently, indigo was reduced by fermentation, using bran, madder and sugars to cultivate the bacteria necessary to reduce the dye. These differences may have had something to do either with the way the dye adhered to the wool, or perhaps to some extraneous chemicals found in the dyed wool - maybe in the snail *Techeiles*, or just as possibly in the plant indigo.)

Interestingly, the Amutat P'til Tekhelet uses the above question to actually buttress the claim that Murex trunculus is the *chilazon*. They point to the Gemara in Bava Metzia, quoted in Rashi above.

בבא מציעא סא: - אמר רבא: למה לי דכתב רחמנא יציאת מצרים ברבית, יציאת מצרים גבי ציצית, יציאת מצרים במשקלות? אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אני הוא שהבחנתי במצרים בין טפה של בכור לטפה שאינה של בכור - אני הוא שעתיד ליפרע ממי שתולה מעותיו בנכרי ומלוה אותם לישראל ברבית, וממי שטומן משקלותיו במלח, וממי שתולה קלא אילן בבגדו ואומר תכלת הוא.

I, Hashem who could tell the difference between a first born and non-first born in Egypt will take retribution from someone who puts *Kala Ilan* in his garment and says it is *Techeiles*.

The Amutat P'til Tekhelet says that the fact that it is compared to Hashem's ability to tell the difference between a first-born would support the view that *Techeiles* is indigo from Murex, which is chemically identical to plant-derived indigo and therefore only Hashem can tell the difference.

(This still doesn't answer the Gemara in Menachos though, and at best would have to be a *Machlokes*.)

F. How the same chemical could be valid if snail-derived and invalid if plant-derived

Another issue with the Murex theory is how can the same identical chemical be valid *Techeiles* if made from a Murex snail and not be valid if made from the indigo plant? These produce the identical chemical molecule!

The answer is that we find the Torah is concerned with not just the result but also the process, e.g., with Shechitah, etc.

V. Is Mesorah Needed to Determine Techeiles? Should You Wear Murex Dyed Tzitziz if Just a קפס?

A. Do you need a Mesorah? Differing Views of Beis Halevi's Objection

1. Negative Mesorah. The Radziner quotes an objection made by the Beis Halevi to the cuttlefish theory. The cuttlefish was in existence and common throughout the ages. Yet the Rishonim and *acharonim* did not wear it as *Techeiles*. This should be considered as a *mesorah* that the cuttlefish is NOT the *chilazon*.

Rav Elyashiv in ב קובץ תשובות ס' ב wonders if this argument of a negative *mesorah* might apply to the Murex as well.

It appears that this argument should not apply to Murex because the Murex snail and the complex method of obtaining a blue dye from it was not readily available. So there is no negative *mesorah* that it is not the Murex.

2. Rav Soloveitchik's version of Beis Halevi's objection - need positive mesorah

Rav Y.D. Soloveitchik ז"ל in מורי ליכר אבא מורי pg. 228 quotes the Beis Halevi as having a more basic objection to the Radziner *Techeiles* which would likely apply to the Murex *Techeiles* as well. Rabbi Soloveitchik quotes the Beis Halevi that we cannot rely on scientific evidence for something like *Techeiles*, where we rely on a tradition handed down generation to generation. You would need a *mesorah* to reinstitute *Techeiles*.

This version of the Brisker objection would presumably apply not just to the Radziner *Techeiles* but also to Murex.

The problem with this version is that there doesn't seem to be a source for why you should need a *mesorah*.

No one says that Rashi or Rabeinu Tam *tefilin* would need a *mesorah*.

Also, why can't you rely on scientific evidence, which is like an אומדנא דמוכח which as Rabbi Twerski points out is stronger than רוב?

B. What if just a ספק if Murex is Techeiles? Should you wear the Murex tzitzis?

If you don't accept the proofs for Murex trunculus as compelling beyond a doubt - and say it's not an אומדנא דמוכח would you still say that since it is likely at least a ספק if it is *Techeiles*, one should wear the Murex dyed *tzitzis* as a ספק דאורייתא לחומרא?

I would think you probably should. However, there are three possible reasons why not to use the Murex dyed *tzitzis* if it's just a ספק.

1. ספק argument would likely apply for just a ספק

It could be that even if you don't accept the Rav's version of a requirement to have a positive *mesorah* for *Techeiles*, nevertheless, maybe you do need a *mesorah* in order to be obligated to put on a new type of *tzitzis* every time a new scientist makes a discovery.

2. Need color of *begeg* - ממין הכנף according to one view of rishonim

Rav Elyashiv in ב' raises another concern why you shouldn't use the Murex dyed *tzitzis* if you don't know if it is *Techeiles*. He quotes the following Shulchan Aruch:

שולחן ערוך סי' ט' סעי' ה' - ויש אומרים שצריך לעשות הצצית מצבע הטלית והמדקדקין נוהגין כן.  
רמבם פב מהל' צצית הח - טלית שהוא כולו אדומה או ירוקה או משאר צבעונין עושה חוטי לבן שלה כעין צבעה אם ירוקה ירוקין אם אדומה אדומין.  
רמא סי' ט' סעי' ה' - והאשכנזים אין נוהגין לעשות הצציות אלא לבנים אף בבגדים צבועים ואין לשנות (תרומת הדשן סי' מו)

According to the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch you need the non-*Techeiles tzitzis* to be the same color as the *talis*. Red *begeg* - red *tzitzis*, white *begeg* - white *tzitzis* etc.

This is based on a מנחות דף מא': in גמרא מנחות דף מא' - טלית אין פוטר בה אלא מינה וע"ש ברש"י ותוס'

*Tzitzis* for a *talis* is only acceptable if the thread of the *tzitzis* is the same kind as the *talis*. Two reasons are given for this. Rashi and the Raavad say

that you need the same color in order for it to be ממין הכנף, which is a דאורייתא. But Tosafos says that it's because of זה קלי ואנוהו.

According to the Shulchan Aruch's view that you need the same color, if we follow the opinion of *rishonim* that it's a דאורייתא requirement, there may be a problem. You can't say that the blue thread is no worse than לבן because you need ממין הכנף. So, if one is using a white *begeg* he would need a white thread.

In any event, the Rama does not *pasken* like Rashi and the Shulchan Aruch because he says you always use white thread even on a colored *begeg*, which is certainly only a דרבנן because of זה קלי ואנוהו or in order not to get mixed up with *Techeiles*. According to this view, one would certainly be able to use the Murex dyed *Techeiles* because it would be no worse than white.

(.ולא יהא אלא לבן - מנחות דף מ. in גמרא)

### C. Concern of Rav Aviner of מוחזי כיוהרא

Rav Shlomo Chaim Hakohen Aviner, Rosh Yeshiva of Ateret Kohanim, among other doubts he raises about the Murex being the *Techeiles*, also raises the issue of מוחזי כיוהרא regarding wearing the purported *Techeiles*.

If the person's rebbeim don't wear the *Techeiles* and he goes *be'rabim* with the *Techeiles* that may be יוהרא.

This is mentioned for example with respect to Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*. See שו"ע סי' לד סעי' ג where the משנה ברורה quotes a באר היטב that it may be יוהרא for a person to wear Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin* in public and certainly in front of his rebbeim who don't do so.

This is also mentioned in שו"ע סי' יא סעי' ט where the משנה ברורה quotes the Beis Yosef that to wear the two holes on a *talit* that the Ari z"l wore is מוחזי כיוהרא since the halacha is that it's not needed. The ב"ח says that one who wants to, should wear the two holes on the טלית קטן since it is not יוהרא if done privately, but one should not wear the two holes on the טלית גדול.

So Rav Aviner, who for other reasons is not convinced that the Murex is *Techeiles*, says that to wear the *Techeiles* on the טלית גדול in a situation where one's rebbeim are not *machmir* may be יוהרא. But he adds that on a טלית קטן there would be no concern of יוהרא as stated above based on the ב"ח.

We pray that משיח should come soon so that we can wear the *Techeiles* without any doubts.

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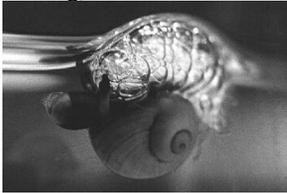
## PICTURES

See clearer color pictures at [www.parsha.net/bamidbar/techeiles\\_pics.pdf](http://www.parsha.net/bamidbar/techeiles_pics.pdf)

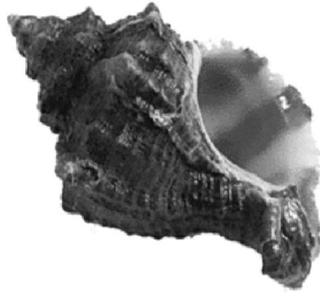
1. Common cuttlefish - *Sepia-offinialis* (source of Radziner techeiles):



2. *Janthina* snail (possible source for techeiles according to Rav Herzog):



3. *Murex trunculus* shells (likely source according to Amutat P'til Tekhelet):



4. Hypobranchial gland in *Thais haemastoma*:



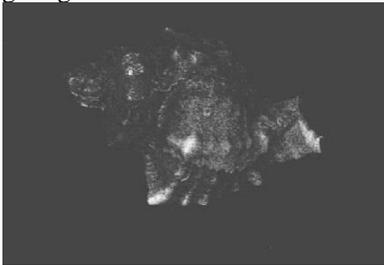
5. Murex trunculus spawning eggs:



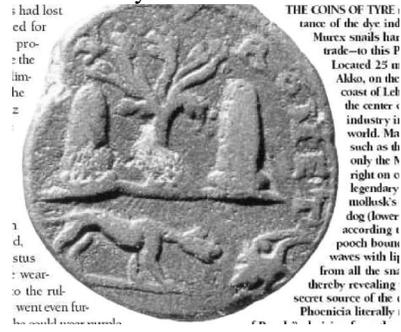
6. Murex trunculus seabed:



7. Murex with marine fouling giving blue hue:



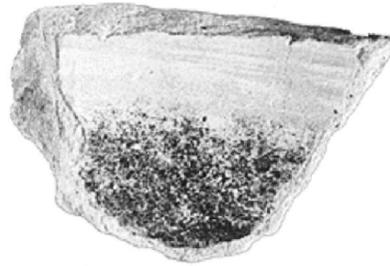
8. Coin of tyre -



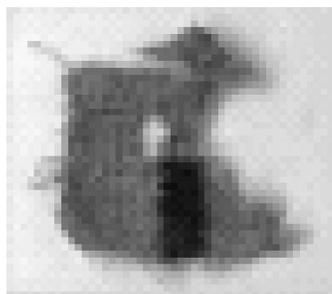
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9. Shard from Tel Shikmona w/ purple murex dye:



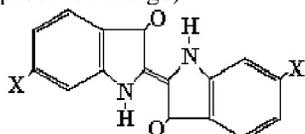
10. Murex Trunculus dye found in Masada by Prof. Zvi Koren - first known physical sample of tekhelet – Darker shade than one made by Ptil Tekhelet Foundation [b/c of different process of exposing to light?] but also from the Murex Trunculus snail – See NY Times Feb. 28, 2011 pg. A7:



11. Indigoid plant - for kala ilan (fake techeiles):



12. Indigo & dibromoindigo molecule (indigo molecule same for murex produced blue dye and plant produced indigo):



X=Br, dibromoindigo  
X=H, indigo

13. P'til Tekhelet factory in Kfar Adumim:



14. Methods of tying - 1) Radziner; 2) one understanding of the Rambam; 3) Vilna Gaon; 4) Chinuch; 5) Rav Natronai Gaon; 6) Rav Amram Gaon; 7) Rambam

(Note that number of blue strings is separate machlokes Rambam 1 string out of 8, Raavad 2 strings out of 8, Tosafos 4 strings out of 8 (all after folding))



(Pictures taken from publicly available Internet sources)

