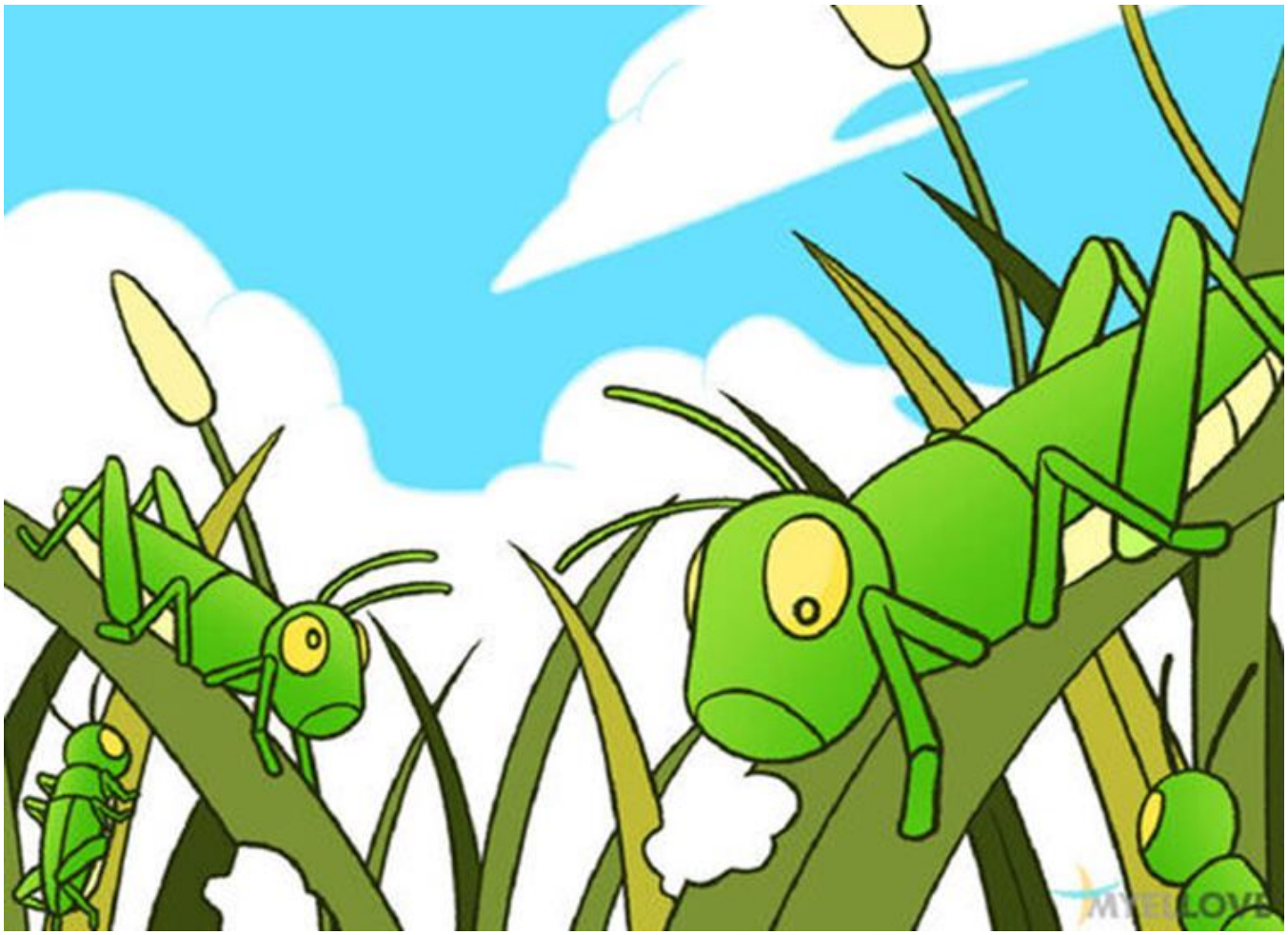
TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



בא

לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

ואשתו מרת חנה ב"ר דוד ע"ה

ר'שרגא פייביש ב"ר מרדכי צבי ערליך ע"ה

ר'יעקב ב"ר שלום הלוי פרידמאן ע"ה

ר'חיים דוד ב"ר אלכסנדר הכהן ריטשמאן ע"ה

ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

בא

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



Hamaayan is prepared by laymen and published weekly for the edification and enjoyment of the reader who is lacking the time or ability to study the weekly parashah on his own. Hamaayan's goal is to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary — classical, recent and "obscure" — as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought.

תַּשְׁבִּיתוּ שְׂאֹר מִבָּתֵּיכֶם - *"You shall eliminate leaven from your homes"* (12:15)

Rabbi Yehuda, one of the Sages of the Mishnah, maintains that Chametz must be destroyed by fire and not by any other means. He derives this from the law of "Notar" / leftovers of sacrificial offerings, which also must be destroyed by fire.

R' Zvi Elimelech Shapira z"l (the "**Bnei Yissaschar**"; died 1841) is quoted as saying that whenever the Talmud derives one law from another law, there must be some intrinsic connection between them. What is the connection between Chametz and Notar?

R' Yaakov Yechizkiyah Gruenwald z"l (Hungarian rabbi; died 1941) explains: Why would someone leave leftovers from a sacrificial offering rather than eat it all within the allotted time?

Often, it would be because he lacked Bitachon / trust in G-d and was afraid he would not have food for tomorrow. - Chametz alludes to a

similar lack of Bitachon. What's the difference between Chametz and matzah?

Matzah does not expand; the way it's made is the way it remains. Chametz doesn't share this trait. Chametz rises as if it's afraid there won't be enough for tomorrow. Thus, Chametz also alludes to a lack of Bitachon. (Va'yagged Yaakov)

בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שִׁתִי אֹתֹתַי אֵלֶּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ

"***Hashem said to Moshe, 'Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn*** ...'" (10:1)





R' Mordechai Leifer z"l (1824-1894; Nadvorna Rebbe) asks: How is, "for I have made his heart stubborn," a reason for Moshe to go to Pharaoh? To the contrary, that would seem to be a reason not to go to Pharaoh! - He explains: Pharaoh considered himself to be a god (see Rashi to 7:15), and Hashem wished to show him that, not only was he not a god, he was but a pawn in Hashem's hands. –

Therefore, He said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh," and tell him that "I, G-d, have made his heart stubborn." Tell him that he had no say in the matter and was merely My pawn. (**Divrei Mordechai**)

וְהָיָה כִּי־יִשְׁאָלְךָ בִנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה־זֹּאת -*"When your son will ask you in the future, 'What is this?'" (13:14)*

R' Moshe Feinstein z"l (1895-1986) writes: The question of the "simple son" ("What is this") appears in the Torah before the question of the "wise son," because before a person can ask the reasons for the mitzvot, he must know them thoroughly. – This will give provide him with a solid foundation for his faith. (**Darash Moshe**)

וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ פַּרְעֹה לֵךְ מֵעָלַי הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ אַל־תֹּסֶף רְאוֹת פָּנַי כִּי בְּיוֹם רְאֹתְךָ פָנַי תָּמוּת
"*Pharaoh said to him, 'Go from me! Beware — do not see my face any more, for on the day you see my face you shall die*!'" (10:28)

R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852) writes: Hashem caused Pharaoh to say this shortly before the Exodus so that no one would think that Pharaoh allowed Bnei Yisrael to leave out of respect for Moshe.

Similarly, Hashem commanded Bnei Yisrael to publicly slaughter lambs–which the Egyptians venerated–so that the Egyptians would despise Bnei Yisrael. All of this, so that there would be no question that the Exodus occurred solely due to Hashem's might. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim**)

**וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה' רַק צֹאנְכֶם וּבְקַרְכֶם יֻצָּג גַּם־טַפְּכֶם יֵלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם -*"Pharaoh summoned Moshe and said, `Go, serve Hashem, only your flock and cattle shall remain behind; even your children may go with you'."* (10:24)

In this verse, which follows the plague of darkness, Pharaoh does not say, "Go, serve Hashem **your** G-d." Why?

R' Moshe Botarel z"l (Spain; late 14th-early 15th centuries) explains in the name of **R' Sa'adiah Gaon**: Ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun. According to their belief, Hashem was "also" a

god, but he was the god of Bnei Yisrael only and not the most powerful deity. That is why, on earlier occasions, Pharaoh, when speaking to Moshe, referred to Hashem as "**your** G-d."

The plague of darkness shattered that false belief. Clearly, Hashem's powers are superior to any perceived powers of the sun. Thus, Pharaoh now acknowledges Hashem and no longer thinks of him as the G-d of Bnei Yisrael only. (**Peirush L'Sefer Yetzirah**)



וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה כֹּה אָמַר ה' כַּחֲצֹת הַלַּיְלָה אֲנִי יוֹצֵא בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרָיִם "***Moshe said, 'So said Hashem – At about midnight I shall go out in the midst of Egypt'***." (11:4)

וַיְהִי בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה וַה' הִכָּה כָל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם "***It was at midnight that Hashem smote every firstborn*** . . ." (12:29)

Rashi writes: Moshe said "about midnight," which implies near to it, either just before or just after it, and he did not say "at midnight" because he feared lest Pharaoh's astrologers might make a mistake as regards the time when the slaughter of the firstborn actually took place, thinking that it was a little earlier or later than midnight, and they would then say, in consequence of this error, "Moshe is a liar."

R' Moshe Sofer z"l (the Chatam Sofer; died 1840) offers the following explanation for why the astrologers were likely to mistake the time.

Our Sages teach that all prophecy emanates from Eretz Yisrael. Thus, when G-d told Moshe, "at midnight," He meant midnight in Eretz Yisrael. However, midnight arrives in Eretz Yisrael a few minutes before it arrives in Egypt. Thus, it was likely that the astrologers would note the wrong time. (**Torat Moshe**)



וַיֹּאפוּ אֶת־הַבָּצֵק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עֻגֹת מַצּוֹת כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ כִּי־גֹרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהְמֵהַּ וְגַם־צֵדָה לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם "***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 and they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves*** . . ." (12:39)



R' Yitzchak Al-Achdab z"l (Spain and Sicily; late 14th-early 15th centuries) writes: Many commentaries write that, at this time, Bnei Yisrael were not yet commanded not to eat chametz for seven days. Therefore, after eating the korban Pesach with matzah, they began to bake bread. However, they were suddenly expelled from Egypt and their bread had no time to rise. In commemoration of this, we eat matzah for seven days.

However, he continues, this is difficult to accept, for if they wanted leavened bread and they were forced to eat matzah, why is that worth commemorating? Furthermore, although it is true that they were not yet commanded not to own chametz for seven days, they certainly were not permitted to bake chametz on the first day of Pesach!

Rather, he writes, after Bnei Yisrael finished eating their korban Pesach and matzah, they began baking matzah for the next day. Suddenly, however, G-d revealed Himself in Egypt and, in the ensuring uproar, which was followed by preparing to leave, Bnei Yisrael were unable to bake the dough which they had prepared. That dough should have risen during the night that followed and become chametz, but a miracle happened and it remained unleavened. It is to commemorate that miracle that we eat matzah for seven days. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach Pesach Dorot**)

לֹא כֵן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים וְעִבְדוּ אֶת־ה׳ כִּי אֹתָהּ אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים וַיְגָרֶשׁ אֹתָם מֵאֵת פְּנֵי פַּרְעֹה - *"'Not so! Let the men go. Serve Hashem, for that is what you seek!' And he drove them out from Pharaoh's presence." (10:11)*

R' Aharon Hakohen z"l (1580-1656; Dubrovnik, Croatia) explains Pharaoh's statement as follows: All along, Moshe had been telling Pharaoh that Bnei Yisrael wanted to go out to the desert to serve Hashem. Tired of the plagues, Pharaoh asked Moshe (in verse 8) who would go. Moshe answered (verse 9), "With our youngsters and with our elders we shall go; with our sons and with our daughters . . ." To this Pharaoh responded (incorrectly): No! I don't believe that Hashem desires the service of those who are too young to know Him. Serve Hashem, for that is what you seek, but true service of Hashem can only be by adults. Clearly, your interest is not in serving Hashem; rather, you are plotting an escape!"

This explains why Pharaoh drove Moshe and Aharon out of his presence without waiting for their answer. (**Zekan Aharon**)

וּמוֹשַׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרָיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה - *"The [period of] habitation of Bnei Yisrael during which they dwelled in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." (12:40)*



Rashi (6:18) notes that this should not be taken literally. How then should it be understood?

R' Aryeh Leib Zunz z"l (Poland; 1765-1833) explains: The Torah describes the Egyptians' oppression of Bnei Yisrael using the Hebrew word "Innuy." This is the same term the Torah uses to describe our self-

affliction on Yom Kippur. Indeed, all five of the afflictions we impose on ourselves on that day were imposed on Bnei Yisrael by the Egyptians:

(1) Eating (they had to eat Matzah, which is difficult to digest);

(2) Bathing and…

(3) Applying ointments to the skin (both of these activities are mentioned in Yechezkel 16:9, which speaks of the slavery in Egypt);

(4) Wearing shoes (they had to trample straw with their bare feet to make bricks); and

(5) Marital relations (as mentioned in the Pesach Haggadah).

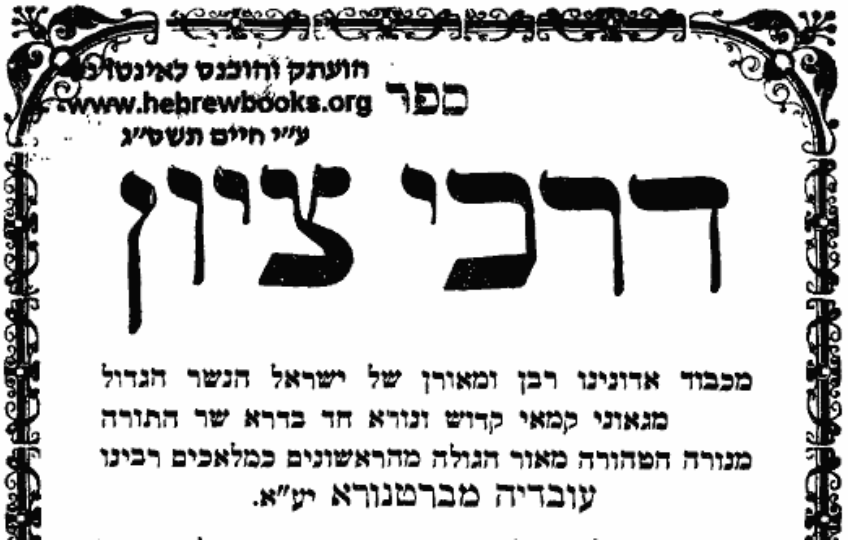
Our Sages teach that the actual enslavement of Bnei Yisrael in Egypt lasted only 86 years (of the 210 years that Bnei Yisrael were in that land). In His kindness, Hashem counted the five forms of oppression as, so-to-speak, five 86-year sentences running concurrently, for a total of 430 years of enslavement. (**Kometz Ha'minchah**)

A Traveler's Journal

This week, we continue excerpting from a letter that the noted Mishnah commentator, ***R' Ovadiah Yarei z"l of Bartenura****, Italy (approx. 1455-1515), wrote to his father and brother about his journey to Eretz Yisrael. This passage continues R' Ovadiah's description of the Jewish community and Bet Ha'knesset in Palermo, Sicily.*

There are many differences between their customs and ours. They read the entire Kri'at Shema out loud, and so they do in all of Egypt and Eretz Yisrael. On Yom Ha'kippurim, the Chazzan does not stop in the middle of the prayers to recite Selichot; rather, after he finishes his prayers, he begins Selichot. They prostrate themselves in every prayer on Yom Ha'kippurim. On Tisha B'Av, they recite

"Va'ya'avor" [i.e, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy] more times than we do on Yom Ha'kippurim. . .



I was in Palermo from the 22nd of Tammuz [5]247 [1487 C.E.] until Shabbat Bereishit [5]248. When I arrived there, the community leaders asked me to give a Derashah late on Shabbat afternoon, and so I did beginning on Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Av [5]247. Hashem caused me to find favor in their eyes, and I was forced to deliver a Derashah every single Shabbat. This caused me trouble, because I came to Palermo with the intention of going to Syracuse at the far end of Sicily, because I heard that boats from Venice would stop there on their way to Beirut, near Yerushalayim. . . I missed that opportunity, and I remained here delivering Derashot . . . every single Shabbat for three hours. I spoke against informing [on other Jews to the government] and about family purity, and so on. The elders told me that many people repented from sin. As long as I was there, the informing stopped. . .

For the rest of my life, I cannot hope to live among people who will love me, honor me, and elevate me as the Jews in Palermo did, for they treated me as the gentiles treat their saints. The common people said that Hashem sent me, and many people asked for a piece of my cloak as a memento. . .

They tried to keep me there for an entire year, but I would not listen, because my desire was to get to Eretz Yisrael. (**Darchei Tziyon**)

פֶּסַח הִוא לַה׳ - ***"It is a Pesach-offering to Hashem."*** *(12:11)*

If Bnei Yisrael needed some merit with which to be redeemed from Egypt, why did Hashem give them this particular mitzvah and not a commandment that somehow encompasses all of the 613 commandments?



R' Meir Yechiel Halevi Halstock z"l (1852-1928;) answers that the mitzvah of Korban Pesach **does** allude to all of the 613 commandments. Specifically, the "full gematria" of the word "Pesach" ("peh samech chet") is 613, the number of commandments. ("Full gematria" means the gematria of a word when each of the letters of the word is spelled out the way that letter is pronounced. Thus, the "full gematria" of "peh samech chet" – **פה-סמך-חת** = 85+120+408 = 613.)

This may explain as well why Hashem gave Bnei Yisrael the mitzvah of Matzah while they were still in Egypt. The "full" gematria of the word **מצות** "Matzos" ("mem tzadi vav tav") also is 613. (80+104+13+416 = 613.)

R' Halstock observes further: Hashem had told Avraham that his descendants would be in a foreign land for 400 years, yet Bnei Yisrael were in Egypt for only 210 years. They were redeemed 190 years early in the merit of the mitzvah of Matzah. The "full" gematria of the word "Matzah" ("mem tzadi heh") equals 190. ("Mem tzadi heh" = 80+104+6 = 190.) (**Meir Enei Chachamim**)

וְהָיָה֩ הַיּ֨וֹם הַזֶּ֜ה לָכֶ֣ם לְזִכָּר֗וֹן וְחַגֹּתֶ֤ם אֹתוֹ֙ חַ֣ג לַיהוָ֔ה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶ֖ם חֻקַּ֣ת עוֹלָ֑ם תְּחָגֻּֽהוּ - *"This day shall become a remembrance for you and you shall celebrate it as a festival for Hashem, for your generations, as an eternal decree shall you celebrate it." (12:14)*



Rashi z"l writes: I might think that "generations" means "for two generations," the smallest plural number; therefore, the Torah says "an eternal decree."

R' Ovadiah of Bartenura z"l (15th century; Italy and Eretz Yisrael; author of the Mishnah commentary known by his name) asks: Let the Torah not say "generations" and it will not be necessary to say "an eternal decree"!

He answers: The Torah is teaching that for all time, eternally, Pesach should be celebrated as joyously as it was celebrated for the parents and children (the first two generations) who experienced it. (***Amar Naka***)

וּבְנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל עָשׂוּ֙ כִּדְבַ֣ר מֹשֶׁ֔ה וַיִּשְׁאֲל֥וּ מִמִּצְרַ֖יִם כְּלֵי־כֶ֣סֶף וּכְלֵי֣ זָהָ֑ב וּשְׂמָלֹֽת - *"Bnei Yisrael carried out the word of Moshe, and they asked to borrow from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels, and garments." (12:35)*

R' Menachem Mendel of Rimanov z"l (1745-1815; early Chassidic Rebbe) writes: As a father takes pride in, and tells acquaintances about, every little thing his child does, so the Torah praises Hashem's beloved children for even the small matter of asking the Egyptians to lend them objects of value.

But why is this praiseworthy at all?

R' Menachem Mendel explains: In Bnei Yisrael's joy to be leaving Egypt, one would have expected them to do everything possible to make a clean break with the Egyptians. Certainly they could anticipate that "borrowing" items of value from the Egyptians would make the latter chase them. Moreover, Moshe never told Bnei Yisrael that Hashem commanded them to obtain items of value from the Egyptians, as he was only instructed by Hashem to "Please speak to them . . ." (Shmot 11:2), as if he was only giving them good advice. Nevertheless, Bnei Yisrael listened to Moshe in this matter, as our verse describes, and for that they are praised. (***Menachem Tziyon***)

וְהָיָה֩ לְךָ֨ לְאֹ֜ות עַל־יָדְךָ֗ וּלְזִכָּרֹון֙ בֵּ֣ין עֵינֶ֔יךָ - *"And it shall be for you a sign on your arm and a reminder between your eyes . . ." (13:9)*

The Gemara (Menachot 43b) teaches: **תפילין בראשיהן ותפילין בזרועותיהן וציצית בבגדיהן ומזוזה לפתחיהן**- ***If one has Tefilin on his head, Tefilin on his arm, Tzitzit on his clothes, and a Mezuzah on his door, it may be presumed that he will not sin.***

R' Chaim Avraham Dov Ber Levine z"l (1860-1938; Chassidic Rebbe in New York, known as "the Malach") writes: Our everyday experience seems to contradict this teaching, for many people have all of these, and yet they sin!

However, R' Levin writes, a careful reading of the Gemara's precise wording answers the question. The Gemara does not say, "If one wears Tefilin and Tzitzit etc." The Gemara says, "If one has Tefilin b'rosho"–literally, "Tefilin **in** his head," not just "Tefilin **on** his head."

If one puts on Tefilin, but then takes his mind off of them or if one puts on Tzitzit, but hides them inside his clothes, even when he is at home, he is not called one who "has" Tefilin or Tzitzit. Such Tefilin are not "in" his head, but only "on" his head, and they do not provide any protection against sinning. (***Otzar Igrot Kodesh***)

דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב - *"Please speak in the ears of the people; Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her fellow silver vessels and gold vessels."* (11:2)



The gemara (Berachot 9a) teaches: Why did Hashem say "Please"? He wanted Moshe to request of Bnei Yisrael to be sure to ask the Egyptians for gifts, lest Avraham Avinu say, "You did not keep Your promise that they would leave with great wealth." (See Bereishit 15:14)

R' Chaim Berlin z"l (died 1905) explains this as follows: Hashem told Avraham that Bnei Yisrael would leave Egypt with great wealth, but surely He did not mean material wealth. Why would a tzaddik such as Avraham care whether his descendants had material wealth? Rather, Hashem meant the "riches" of good character.

Had Bnei Yisrael been so inclined, they could have helped themselves to the Egyptians' belongings during the plague of darkness. Therefore, Hashem said, "Please be sure that they **ask** for gifts, rather than taking on their own" [even though they were entitled to be paid for their hundreds of years of servitude]. Why? Because one who must ask will (hopefully) ask modestly and accept even a small gift.

That is the type of good character trait that Hashem promised Avraham his descendants would have. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Imrei Chaim)

"An Astonishing Midrash"

וַה' נָתַן אֶת־חֵן הָעָם בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם וַיַּשְׁאִלוּם וַיְנַצְּלוּ אֶת־מִצְרָיִם - ***"Hashem gave the people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians and they loaned to them – so they emptied Egypt."*** *(12:36) – "favour" refers to nothing other than ruach ha'kodesh/Divine inspiration.*

At the time of the Exodus, Moshe commanded Bnei Yisrael to ask their Egyptian neighbors for gifts. As for Bnei Yisrael themselves, they would have been happy just to escape with their lives; they had no desire for gold and silver at that moment.

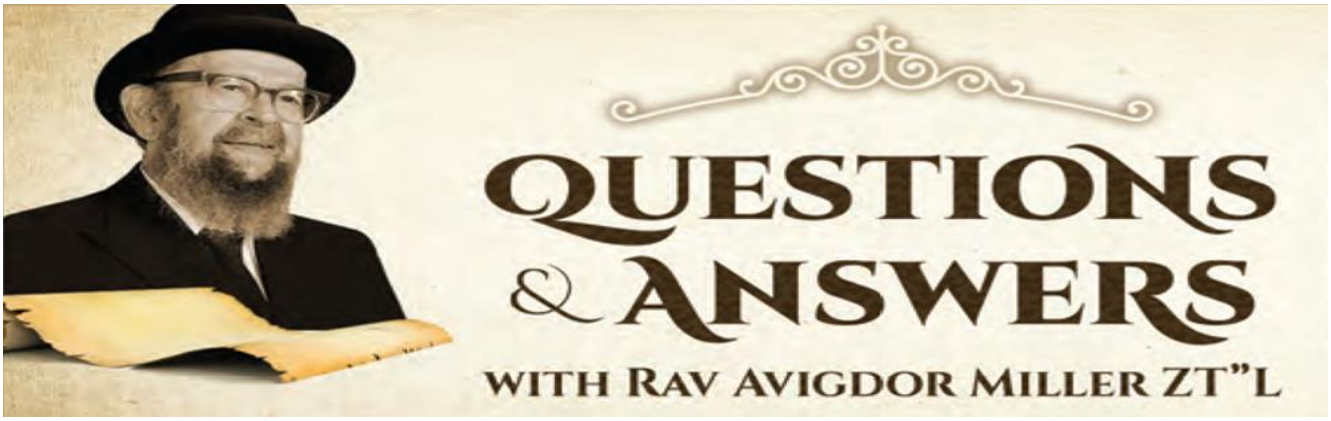
The ability to not desire riches is akin to achieving ruach ha'kodesh! This is what the midrash means: The Egyptians saw Bnei Yisrael's ruach ha'kodesh and therefore they loaned to them. (**Binat Nevonim**)

The Gaon of Vilna zt"l (M'Shulchan Govoha) would say: **וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמַּשְׁחִית לָבֹא אֶל־בָּתֵּיכֶם לִנְגֹּף** 12:23-

In the Haggadah, it says that Hashem passed through the Land of Egypt and killed the firsborn Egyptians **,וְעָבַרְתִּי בְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה וְהִכֵּיתִי כָל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה** , whereas here in the parsha, it seems that the 'Mashchis' - the Malach Hamaves, was the one doing it, as it says, 'He didn't let the mashchis into your homes'?

Since there where some Jews who were meant to die at that time, Hashem wanted to increase the miracle even more and those who were meant to die, the mashchis was not allowed to enter into their homes."

"No matter how busy you are, your mind is always free to think of hashem. True success is keeping your thoughts on hashem as much as possible." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller





What is one supposed to think when he cries out to Hashem and Hashem doesn't answer?

We are supposed to think that Hakodosh Baruch Hu wants you to cry out even more. Let's say a man is on his deathbed. He's an old man, he's 119 years old. Look, he can't expect to live much more. But he cries out anyway on his deathbed, he wants to live. And finally he passes away. Did he waste his time? No! He achieved maybe in his last minutes more than he did all of his life. Because he's thinking about Hashem.

Here's an old man who's crying out on his deathbed. He says "Hashem heal me". "Oh that's so silly!" you say. The bystanders think its ridiculous. He wants to be healed! How long do you want to hang around here? 119 years is not enough? And the answer is, it's not enough. He wants to live a thousand years. Why shouldn't he? He had a grandfather who lived a thousand years. Mesushelach lived almost a thousand years, so why shouldn't he?

So he's crying out; he's allowed to cry out. And don't say that he didn't accomplish what he wanted. He did accomplish! The crying out is so that he should cry out to Hashem and become more aware of Him. That's the biggest achievement there is. So nobody should ever be frustrated in crying out, because you are achieving. You are gaining more awareness of Hashem.



How do we benefit from this cold weather?

The benefits of cold weather are tremendous. Cold weather causes the earth to stop producing. If the earth would continue to produce all year round, it would use up all of its resources – all of its nutrients and energy. And that's why deserts are found in hot climates. You won't find any deserts in cold climates. Because in temperate climates the earth always has a chance to recuperate its powers.

In the hot climates however, sometimes the sun shines continuously with such heat, and the earth continues to produce and produce until it becomes arid and finally loses all its energy.

So the cold weather is mamash a yeshuah, a lifesaver. The cold weather is the reason that next year there will be crops again. The crops are a result of the cold weather that gave the earth a chance to recuperate.

So next summer, when you're about to bite into a delicious peach, remember to thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu for the cold winter that prepared the earth to give you this peach. And when you walk in the cold today, remember to thank Hashem for all the delicious fruit that the cold weather is preparing for you.

You know, the earth uses up all of its energy to produce for us. But when the cold comes, all the leaves fall onto the ground. And the leaves are fertilizer. After a while they melt away into the ground. And now comes the cold weather and there's no more growing. Everything stops growing. The earth stops producing. What does the earth do? It recycles. It recycles all the energy that it had lost and the earth becomes fertile once again. And now in the springtime it is ready to produce again.

So the cold is actually a lifesaver for us. Without cold there would be deserts all over America. But the dry deserts are found only in the areas with hot climates like the Sahara or the Arabian deserts because the sun is shining there all year round.



If I see a *frum* Jew who's not so good, should I love him for being a Jew or hate him for the bad things that he's doing?

If you see a *frum* Jew who is doing something wicked, let's say. Let's say a *frum* Jew is standing in line in front of the movies. Of course he's not a *frum* Jew. But suppose you see a Jew with a *yarmulke* standing in line in front of the movies. So you say, "Ah, a *yarmulke*! Ah! That's wonderful!" A *yarmulke* means "*oter Yisroel b'sifarah*, You crown Yisroel with glory"; and that *tifarah*, that glory, means you believe in Hashem.

Anybody who wears a *yarmulke*, he's demonstrating, "I believe in Hashem." Even a small little *yarmulke*; so he's a *modeh b'miktzas*, but he's still one of ours. That already is very great. But it's a pity that he's taking that crown and he's taking it into a stable full of manure, full of *tzoah*.

So you have two attitudes: here, he's a *meshugene* or a *shoteh*; he's wasting his money. Suppose a man stands in line for a chance to dip his head in a trough full of manure. Only four dollars today! A special! You get a headful of manure! So he's a *meshugene*. It's a pity on him.

At the same time you should think he's wearing a *yarmulke* too. So it's a problem; you have to have both attitudes.



How can we explain that Rabi Chanina's son died young because he chopped down a fruit tree before his time (Bava Kamma 91b)?

Because a fruit tree is supposed to remain and to teach and to give benefits to the world. Of course, to give also luscious fruits to the world. And when he didn't understand that lesson – not merely because he deprived the world of that individual tree – but he didn't understand sufficiently the greatness of this lesson. He should have approached the tree with reverence.

And that's how we should approach an apple or a nut. With reverence! We're seeing testimonies of the Creator. And because he was lacking to some extent in that attitude, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu took him out of the world. It was a demonstration how important it is to utilize this life to revere and to benefit from the creations of Hashem.



וְהָיָה֩ לְךָ֨ לְאֹ֜ות עַל־יָדֶ֗ךָ וּלְזִכָּרֹון֙ בֵּ֣ין עֵינֶ֔יךָ – '*And it shall be for you a sign, your arm and a reminder between your eyes*.' (13:9)

The mitzvah of Tefillin – two boxes which each contain four short parshiyos from the Torah inscribed on parchment and worn on the arm and the forehead – is one of the most important mitzvos of the Torah. One of the boxes is worn on the arm, opposite the heart, which is the seat of one's emotions; the other is placed above the

forehead, resting opposite the cerebrum. Thus, our attention is directed to the head, the heart and to the hand, thereby implying that our actions must be dedicated to Hashem in such a manner that we conjoin our emotions/passion together with our intellect and power of reason.



Placed on the arm opposite the heart and on the head, the Tefillin signify the submission of one's mind, heart and actions to Hashem, as well as the reign of the intellect over emotion. We must experience a balance between the two, applying the heart and mind to our everyday endeavor.

Tefillin comprise the badge of the Jew. Indeed, the Talmud is referring to one who is no longer observant, calling him a **קרקפתא דלא מנח תפילין**, "***one who does not put on Tefillin***." It is the single act of service to the Almighty that defines our relationship with Him. One who does not put on Tefillin has rejected this relationship.

Tefillin are symbolically identified with bar-mitzvah, despite the fact that, when a boy reaches Jewish adulthood (thirteen years old), he becomes obligated in executing all 613 mitzvos.

Why is Tefillin singled out?

Mishnas Yeshoshua (quoted by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita) explains that the mere fact that Tefillin shel yad, the Tefillin worn on the arm, are put on prior to placing the Tefillin shel rosh, the Tefillin of the head, on the forehead, is – in and of itself – a powerful lesson in avodas Hashem, service to the Almighty. We imply that we, as Jews, are prepared "to do," even before our mind/intellect, seat of reason, is able to grasp the rationale for the mitzvah. We accept

the yoke of service to Hashem, as we declared at Har Sinai, Naaseh v'nishma; "We will do and we will listen."

As a young boy enters adulthood, he must ingrain in his mind that, as Jews, we serve, we act, even when circumstances appear questionable, even when we do not truly understand the mitzvah. Lack of rationale (which is on our part) is no reason for faltering in performing a mitzvah.

Tefillin is about love – between Hashem and Klal Yisrael. When one loves, any form of separation is overwhelming. Every moment spent together is exceedingly precious. Every bit of communication, every memento, anything that reminds one of His love, is treasured. Thus, a simple ring that is given to concretize the bond of love has special meaning. Every time one looks at the ring, the love is remembered.

Hashem's love for His children is the greatest love that exists. To believe in Hashem is to share this love. Hashem's creating the world purely for altruistic reasons was an act of love. His love is boundless, infinite, beyond anything that we can possibly fathom. It is in force even when we do not deserve it, because a loving Father never gives up on his child.

Nonetheless, it is our duty to strengthen that bond of love. Faith and love are extremely tenuous concepts. We speak of them and think about them, but, unless we do something definitive/tangible to concretize these emotions, our attention wanes, and they become nebulous and insignificant, the victims of complacency.

Tefillin serves to help us remember the love. It is our ring, the concretization of our relationship. The Torah talks of three forms of love: בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ, "with all your heart; with all your soul; and with all your might."

The Tefillin worn on the left arm, opposite the heart, submits/dedicates our heart, the seat of life, to the love of Hashem. The Tefillin worn next to the brain, the seat of one's intellect and

soul, represents our dedication to loving Hashem with all our soul. The Tefillin worn on the arm, the symbol of strength, binds all of our powers to the love of G-d. Now we understand that one who rejects Tefillin repudiates Hashem's love – and faith without love is lacking in conviction.



Walking into a shul in the morning and looking around at the worshippers putting on their Tefillin gives one the impression that it is a simple, everyday ritual act- which it is. We all put on Tefillin out of habit. Some run into shul, put on (the Tallis followed by) Tefillin and move on to the daily davening. Some might arrive earlier to recite Tehillim, to learn, but, when it comes to the Tefillin, it is usually the same: put them on as a preparation for davening.

As we all know, however, the action is only as good as the accompanying attitude. Obviously, one should keep in mind that he is performing a special mitzvah that underscores the reciprocal love we share with Hashem.

I came across the following thought from the **Tzaddik of Yerushalayim, Horav Aryeh Levine, zl**, which is quite inspiring. As Rav *Ha'assirim*, chaplain to those incarcerated by the British, Rav Aryeh had the sad experience of spending the last days and moments with the Kedoshim who had been found guilty by the British court and sentenced to die.

When Rav Aryeh spoke to the pre-bar-mitzvah boys in the mamlachti dati school in Hertziliya, he described to the boys the last few hours

of the lives of two martyrs. The Rav came with two pairs of Tefillin for the two men to put on for the last time. They took them into their hands and could not stop kissing the boxes. They put them on and, with tears flowing down their faces, they recited Shema Yisrael. When they removed the Tefillin, they held them lovingly, unable to let go of them.

Finally, the guard signaled that their time was up. They had to take their last walk. Rav Aryeh asked the boys, "Is it only when we are parting from the Tefillin for the last time in our life that we should be so emotional? What about one who has his entire life ahead of him – should he not cherish every moment spent with his Tefillin?"

We act instinctively because we are creatures of habit. If we would remember that the Tefillin are Hashem's sign of abiding love for us, we might manifest greater care and feeling when we don our Tefillin.

One last story. Reb Yosef lived in one of Yerushalayim's large apartment complexes. A friendly fellow, he made it a point to get to know everyone who lived there – not because he was particularly nosy; he just liked to help people.

One elderly man rarely went out. He suffered from a large bump on his back. He sat home alone, learning. The neighbors treated him royally, looking out for him and offering assistance whenever possible. They knew neither his life story, nor the reason for the unsightly bump on his back.

One day, this man felt sick, and he was taken to the hospital. The situation quickly advanced to a serious state. Having developed a relationship with Reb Yosef, he called for him. Obviously, Reb Yosef dropped whatever he was doing and proceeded to the hospital where the man was hooked up to a number of lines and tubes. The situation did not look hopeful.

The man looked up at Reb Yosef and said, "I have to ask you for a favor. I really have no one else. I have one son who lives somewhere

in the diaspora. Unfortunately, he left the fold years ago, and we have nothing to do with one another. If somehow you are able to contact him, I have an envelope of money with me for you to use to purchase a pair of Tefillin for him. Although he is not frum, observant, now, I am certain once I "transition" to the Olam Ha'Emes, World of Truth, I will be able to intercede on his behalf that he be imbued with a desire to return to Hashem'.

The man continued talking, realizing that this was probably his last chance to relate the story of his life for posterity. Perhaps his son would one day find it meaningful: "I was six years old when my mother died. My father was unable to care for me, so the neighbors lent a hand. Thus, I went from home to home, caregiver to caregiver; no mother, no father to speak of – I was alone in the world. I wanted so much to learn.

I met a kind man who was a candle maker. I made a deal with him: I would sell his candles all over the city, while he would hire a Torah tutor for me whom he would pay with my wages.

"One day", he continued, with tears beginning to well-up in his eyes, "I came to a home occupied by a group of men who had long ago left the Jewish religion. They made fun of my religious garb, my payos, long jacket and black hat. They were bent on causing me to sin. - The pressure was mounting - I ran to the window and jumped – not realizing that we were on the third floor! I was badly injured and, after months in the hospital, I was released with a stark reminder of the accident. That terrible bump has been with me ever since.

Somehow, later in life, I met a wonderful woman who, despite my disfigurement, married me. We had a son. When he was a teenager, my wife died, leaving me to raise him alone. I did the best I could, but, apparently, it was not enough.

"I have one more favor to ask of you. Please bring me a map of the cemetery which shows the available parcels of land for burial. I would like to select my final resting place."

The next day, Reb Yosef returned with the map of the cemetery. The man nixed most of the places. He obviously had demanding criteria concerning next to whom he wanted to lay.

He explained, "From the time that I jumped from the window, I was careful never to look at anything, anyone, or anywhere that was spiritually harmful to my eyes. I avoided sin by my willingness to relinquish my life. I would like to lie next to someone whom I am certain guarded his eyes his entire life."

In the end, he selected a corner of the cemetery where old shaimos, Torah volumes that were unusable, and infants that had tragically died, were buried.

The man died the next morning. His burial took place that very same day. The work of locating his son began in earnest.

The story continues in America. Thousands of cars were moving back and forth on the highway. One car (the driver) lost control and sustained serious injuries. He was taken to the emergency room and, after a day, moved to a hospital bed to recuperate.

Two days later, a man entered his hospital room, and said, "Good morning. I am visiting from the Holy Land. I heard that there is a young man with ties to Eretz Yisrael convalescing in the hospital. I decided to come visit you."

They began to speak. The patient told the visitor about his father who "lived" in Eretz Yisrael. The man listened: "Actually, I knew your father. Very special man. Indeed, he was a holy soul!"

The son had no idea that his father had died. One more of life's challenges for him to deal with.

The son told his visitor, "I do not know what has come over me. It has been more than twenty years since I last put on Tefillin. I reneged on my religious observance. Suddenly, the last few months 'something' has been compelling me to return to my People, to once

again become observant." (This was probably due to his father's Heavenly intercession.)

The visitor from Eretz Yisrael returned home and immediately contacted Reb Yosef, relating to him the story of the elderly man's son.

Reb Yosef went out that day and purchased a fine, kosher pair of Tefillin and sent it to the man's son, who was in the process of becoming a baal teshuvah, returning to his religious observance.

We derive from here, says the **Nadvorna Rebbe, Shlita** (who heard the story from Reb Yosef), that when one acts with mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice, the influence of this action will endure and be the source of positive inspiration for generations to come.



וַיֵּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַשָּׁמָיִם וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ־אֲפֵלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - '***Moshe stretched forth his hand towards the heavens, and there was a thick darkness throughout the Land of Egypt***.' (10:22)

Chazal (Midrash Rabbah/Shemos 14:2) ask from whence came this choshech, darkness. Rabbi Yehudah says it came from on High. It was a Heavenly/otherworldly darkness, as it says in Tehillim 18:12, **יָשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סִתְרוֹ סְבִיבוֹתָיו סֻכָּתוֹ** - "***He made darkness His concealment, around Him His shelter***." (This means even when Hashem intervenes in a swift and stunning manner in human affairs, He remains concealed [**Ibn Ezra**], or alternatively, man quickly forgets Hashem's role in all that happens to him [**Horav S.R. Hirsch**].

The question is obvious: If the darkness that plagued Egypt was from Heaven – where in Heaven was it to be found? Is there darkness in Shomayim, Heaven?

The Navi says: **וּנְהוֹרָא עִמֵּהּ שְׁרֵא**, "***And light dwells with Him***" (Daniel 2:22). Furthermore, we are taught (based upon a pasuk in Yeshayah 19:22) that the darkness which descended over Egypt affected only Egyptians, while simultaneously it was light for the Jews. It was the very same darkness that served a dual purpose: darkness and oblivion for the Egyptians; light and clarity for the Jews.

How is this to be understood?

Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, cites the **Sifsei Kohen** who explains that the darkness that blinded the Egyptians was, indeed, Heavenly light which darkened the eyes of the Egyptians. Due to their evil, they were unable to see.

This is similar to gazing at the sun on an unusually sunny, bright day. One is blinded, unable to see. The wicked Egyptians were so overwhelmed by the otherworldly light that they were left devoid of vision, the reality around them obscured.

The Jews, on the other hand, were worthy of seeing. Due to their distinction, they were not overwhelmed and blinded by the Heavenly light. Their vision was able to penetrate its rays, to see the brilliance that surrounded them with amazing clarity.

Thus, the very same light that shined for the Jews darkened the lives of the Egyptians. The Jew could walk into an Egyptian home and see what was concealed from the Egyptian's eyes, that the darkness was actually light. **נֵר־לְרַגְלִי דְּבָרֶךָ וְאוֹר לִנְתִיבָתִי**, "***Your word is a candle for my feet and a light for my path***" (Tehilim 119:105). The Torah illuminates man's way, enabling him to proceed to his destination in life with vigor and surefootedness.

This pasuk is a reference to the light that emanates from (one who studies) Torah and mitzvah observance. Therefore, darkness

descended on Egypt, a darkness that was comprised of the Heavenly light which Hashem sent down, a light that darkened the eyes of the Egyptians, but was a source of powerful illumination for the Jews.

Rav Pincus concludes with a powerful observation. We live in a time in which the world around us clamours for the denigration and disenfranchisement of the Jews. There are those who would do us harm for no other reason than our being born into the Jewish faith – a faith which we observe religiously. The term anti-Semitism is thrown around all of the time to the point that many of our coreligionists bend over backwards to do anything and everything to appease those around us, to assimilate in any way that garners favor in the eyes of the gentile.

The solution is right in front of our eyes: **כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אוֹר**; the light of the Torah will prevail. It provides us with the necessary light, while it concurrently darkens the vision of those who would do us harm. The choshech of Mitzrayim obfuscates their nefarious vision, impairing their efforts to cause us harm.

וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ־אֲפֵלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים – '***And there was a thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for a three-day period***.' (10:22)

Egypt was plunged into three days of overwhelming darkness, a blackness so heavy that the Egyptians were unable to move. If the purpose of the darkness was to impede the Egyptians' ability to see, Hashem could have struck them with blindness. It happened in Sodom, when the townspeople were about to attack the Angels who had come to save Lot. Hashem could simply have blinded the Egyptians without creating such a heavy darkness.

The Chasam Sofer, zl, explains that it is well-known that when a person loses the power of one of his senses, the other senses become more acute. This is due to the fact that the neurons that

flow to the now impeded sense will flow instead to the other senses. Thus, if one's sight becomes impaired, his other senses will be more perceptive. - On the other hand, if someone sits in a darkened room with his eyes open, his eyesight working at full strength, he continues to see, to employ the power of all of his senses – he is just unable to penetrate the darkness that envelops him.



In such an instance, explains the Chasm Sofer, the individual who is unable to see due to the darkness does not benefit from his other senses to the same extent as one who suffers from blindness.

Hashem was not about to benefit the Egyptians – even by default. We might suggest that Hashem did not want simply to impair their sight; He wanted to impede their movement.

A blind man has the ability to move; thus, he can sit with a friend, talk, commiserate, thereby maintaining a sense of kinship. When a person is enveloped by a heavy darkness in which his ability to move is impeded, however, he is all alone. He might be sitting a few feet from someone but is unable to benefit from the nearness.

Hashem wanted each Egyptian to feel the loneliness, the inability to reach out to his fellow for comfort, encouragement and hope. The plague of darkness was about helplessness, so that the Egyptians would have some idea of the suffering and pain that they had impacted upon their Jewish slaves.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, quotes Horav Shaul Brody, zl, primary student of the venerable **Maharam Shick, zl**, who related a frightening story about his Rebbe: In his later years, the Maharam Schick's eyesight waned, and he became blind. The sage

lamented his blindness because he was not able to learn from sefarim, Torah volumes. Nonetheless, he did take solace in the fact that, in his youth, he constantly reviewed his studies to the point that they became committed to memory. He extolled the great benefit of constant chazarah, review, since, if one would ever reach such a dire predicament in which he could not see or sefarim from which to learn were inaccessible, he would still be able to learn Torah.

Rav Zilberstein has an addendum to the story which indicates the incredible diligence and hasmadah that the Maharam Schick applied to his learning.

Once, during the latter stages of his life, his shamash, aide, found his Rebbe crying. He asked, "Rebbe, what is it? Can I do anything to help?"

The Maharam Schick replied, "Had I known that I would end up like this (unable to read), I would have learned much more."

"But Rebbe," the shamash asked, "if the Rebbe would have known this, would he have studied 25 hours a day?" (The Rebbe was such an extraordinary masmid that he never wasted even a moment.)

The Maharam Schick was pleased with his shamash's response. It was evident that his shamash's response had put him at ease.

The Maharam Schick continued, "From the time that I had some seichal, a modicum of intelligence, I never wasted a moment. Nonetheless, if I would have known what would happen with me later in life, I would have minimized the breadth of my learning and spent much more time reviewing what I had previously learned."

"Never forget that the Creator Who created nature, can change nature at will, and do what you could never expect." ~ Babi Sali

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים – '***This month shall be for you the beginning of the months***.' (12:2)



Time is our most precious Divine gift. Time is life. When we give someone our time, we are giving him a part of our life. The time we give up is a part of our life, which we can no longer retrieve. Thus, it is best that we take great care in how we spend that time.

The quantity and quality of time we spend with our children manifests how much we value our relationship with them. If our relationship is all about talk, but does not involve our input of time, it is a sad commentary on that relationship.

As Yidden, we must view time not, merely from an objective perspective, but rather, a subjective perspective, as well. We fill time with meaning; otherwise, it goes by and is wasted.

We have the opportunity to elevate time when we use it appropriately. We can sanctify time by using it for **דברים שבקדושה**, holy observances. Therefore, the first mitzvah with which we were commanded as we prepared to leave Egypt was the mitzvah of Kiddush HaChodesh, Sanctifying the New Moon. This is the process in which we declare a certain day to be Rosh Chodesh.

At the beginning of the month, the calendar year was determined by the bais din. The decision rendered by the bais din determined when the various Yamim Tovim, Festivals, occur. This is unlike Shabbos, which occurs every seven days, regardless of the calendar date. Shabbos is determined by Hashem; the Festivals, by man.

Sforno observes the distinct connection between Yetzias Mitzrayim, the Egyptian exodus, with the ensuing freedom from slavery, and the mitzvah of Kiddush HaChodesh, sanctifying time vis-à-vis the new moon.

Slaves have no clear perception of time since it does not belong to them. They work for a master. Thus, their time is his. Only a free man who has control over his time can spend his time properly. He may, therefore, sanctify it. The concepts of freedom and sanctity of time go hand in hand, for they define the quality of one's life.

Of all of the "things" that Hashem created, only Shabbos represents the sanctity of time that was blessed by Hashem. Shabbos thereby became an experience in time permeated by Heavenly sanctity.

The following discussion between two Chassidic Masters underscores this idea: **The Kotzker Rebbe and the Vorker Rebbe** were debating the holiness of certain mitzvos. The Vorker maintained that the mitzvah of Succah has greater sanctity than the Four Species. - We are busy preparing for their use, purchasing the finest, most pleasant, perfect and beautiful species; once they are used, however, the holiness departs from them. But when a Jew sits within the confines of the Succah, he is ensconced in kedushah, holiness; he is surrounded by the mitzvah. Thus, Succah should be considered the greatest mitzvah.

The Kotzker countered with the mitzvah of Shabbos. A Jew can leave the Succah, and the holiness no longer encompasses him. A Jew, however, cannot walk out of Shabbos. The sanctity of time is the ultimate sanctity since it embraces him wherever he goes.

Life is measured in time; therefore, time is life. A life whose "time" is holy is a holy life. A life whose "time" has been wasted is essentially without meaning and is of limited value. - Hashem grants life; who are we to waste it?

בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם "***It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt***." (13:8)

The Tzadik, Horav Mendel, zl, m'Vorka teaches, "*When does one know that he is close to Hashem? When you see that, you are close to people! Go out to the street and see if you feel close to every person you see. If you care about them all, then you are close to Hashem. If, however, when you walk the streets, you cast a jaundiced eye on every person, or you have something negative to say about every other fellow, then you are not secure in your relationship with Hashem*."

Caring about our fellow Jew is (or should be) an inherently Jewish character trait.

A distraught father came to **Horav Yitzchak m'Vorka** and cried, "Rebbe, I cannot take it any longer. My son is gravely ill. For all I know, by now he could be on his death bed. Please Rebbe, pray that he recuperates and lives."

The Vorkar (as he was reverently called) closed his eyes and began to sway back and forth. A few minutes went by; the Rebbe opened up his eyes, looked at the father and said, "I regret that I was unsuccessful in my entreaty. I tried, but the Heavenly gates are sealed. My prayers were unable to penetrate the Heavens. Quickly, return home. You are needed there."

The father bowed his head and began to weep profusely, but what more could he do? He had prayed; he had gone to the holy Vorkar Rebbe, who had also prayed. Heaven had more or less given its response. He returned to his coach and left for home.

A half hour went by, and he heard the sound of a wagon quickly approaching. He turned around to see the holy Vorkar coming up behind him. He stopped his coach, allowing the Rebbe to catch up. The Rebbe alighted from his wagon and said, "Wait here; I have something to say to you."

The Rebbe motioned the man to sit down with him on the side of the road. The Rebbe looked at the man and said, "When you left, I was engulfed with sadness. It broke my heart that I was unable to help you, to in some way ease your plight. I then realized that while I could not affect a cure for your son's illness, I could at least cry together with you! This is why I came."

The Rebbe proceeded to weep incessantly. The scene was heart rending: the holy Rebbe sitting on the ground next to the distraught father, sitting together crying mournfully. Ironically, the father realized that the Rebbe was crying with greater intensity than even he was crying. This motivated the father to cry even harder.

A short while went by, and the Rebbe motioned to the father to stop crying. "Go home. Your son has been cured. The illness has turned around. Your son will live."

"What happened?" asked the father. "The Heavens opened up to our tears."



וּלְמַ֣עַן תְּסַפֵּר֮ בְּאָזְנֵי֒ בִּנְךָ֣ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ֗ אֵ֚ת אֲשֶׁ֣ר הִתְעַלַּ֔לְתִּי בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם – '***And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt***.' (10:2)

We celebrate the exodus from Egypt annually on Pesach when we recall the many miracles which Hashem wrought for us. Veritably, the Exodus was a seminal event, second in importance only to the Giving of the Torah. What happened at that time to our forebears carries weight for us to this very day. After all, had they not been liberated from the Egyptian bondage, where would we be today?

Indeed, it makes sense for children to celebrate their parents' wedding anniversary. Had their parents not wed, the children would never have been born. Therefore, the parents' wedding celebration is not only an event for the parents to mark; it also touches on the lives of their children.

While it is important that the wedding itself be celebrated and remembered, should the menu that was served that night be equally as important? Should it be a primary part of remembrance of the occasion? Is it important whether they served chicken or fish, steak or sushi that night? - The important thing is that the parents were married that night – not the menu!

Likewise with events surrounding the Exodus; we are grateful that we left Egypt, but why are we so strongly commanded to tell over the story at such great length, relating everything that took place – every plague, every detail? Is that not similar to ruminating over the menu at one's parents' wedding, when all that is really important is celebrating the actual event?

Horav Simcha Wasserman, zl, explains that this teaches us an important lesson concerning yetzias Mitzrayim: It is not a series of events that took place thousands of years ago which has some remote relationship to us. No! These events happened to us and their effect on us continues to this very day.

In his commentary to the Torah, **Ramban** writes that one of the reasons the Torah discusses so many of the events which occurred during the Egyptian exodus (in minute detail) is that they teach us the fundamentals of emunah, faith in Hashem. We witnessed Hashgachah, Divine Providence. The world does not run like a machine. Hashem interacts with Creation/nature. He is in control of every aspect of the world's functioning. He controls everything in the world, in our lives – everything. He takes an interest in what takes place. He is concerned.

When Moshe Rabbeinu predicted that an event would occur – it happened exactly as he said it would. Nothing "just happened." Hashem made it happen!

Ramban says that every event that happened is an essential lesson in emunah. Every event is demonstrated in such dramatic terms, so that it sinks into our minds, and we constantly remember it.



The miracles of Egypt are analogous to the wedding! The miracles and wonders that accompanied us then continue to chaperone us to this very day. The names of the miracles might change, but their Source is the same. "**בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם**"; ***in every generation, a person is obligated to view himself as if he (personally) went out of Egypt*** (Hagaddah Shel Pesach). We, too, experienced the process of Redemption. We, too, should be grateful for it. We must learn from every event that took place then – because it happened to us. It was our wedding too!

In order to learn the lessons, we must focus on each one. They are much more than just the menu. They are the wedding. Our emunah in Hashem is incredible. Emunah is our light. A Jew who does not have it is in the dark. With it, we are able to see, to keep on going in the midst of the greatest and most palpable darkness.

The fact that Jews who survived the Holocaust were able to rebuild their lives is a tribute to their emunah. Those who lost it, sadly had their light extinguished. With emunah, they were able to see the future amidst the overwhelming darkness of the present. Thus, they were able to "dust themselves off", pick themselves up, rebuild, and raise new families to believe in Hashem. They knew there was a reason for the tragedy. Hashem was with them throughout, and He had a reason.

One day the light that we have now will shine brighter as it illuminates the answers to all of our questions. Emunah keeps us

going. It is the engine that drives our lives. It is the reason that so many of our own people envy us. We can see. Sadly, they refuse to put on the lenses of emunah. So they go through life existing, without meaning, envious that we have it and they do not. All they have to do is light the match. It is there within them as well. Sadly, they would rather stay in the dark and denigrate those who have taken the initiative, those who refuse to walk blindly. This is the only way a Jew can live.

Horav Yissacher Frand relates ("Listen To Your Messages") hearing the remonstration of an observant pharmacist in Brooklyn who asked, "What should I do? I see the worst forms of sickness. I dispense drugs for the worst types of diseases – not just strep throat and ear infections. It is so difficult. Why is this happening? Why should people suffer so much?

I recently filled a prescription for a young father suffering from end-stage terminal cancer who said, 'I am teaching my five-year-old son to recite Kaddish yasom!' I went to shul this morning, and I cried throughout the entire davening."

I read this story, and I realized that, amidst his terrible physical and emotional pain, the father could think of nothing else other than imbuing his young son with love and respect for Hashem, teaching him how to say Kaddish, how to exalt and sanctify the Almighty. That defines emunah. That father was not living in darkness. He saw the light, and he was transferring it to his son!

This is how people live in the Holy Land amidst terror attacks. Their deep-rooted emunah illuminates their lives, as they continue to learn and review the lessons of yetzias Mitzrayim.

People wonder why Hashem has not wrought miracles of the caliber that were manifest in Egypt. A well-known incident which occurred with **Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl**, sheds light on this query. An assimilated Jew approached Rav Yisrael and told him that his daughter, who was an accomplished dancer, had asked him, "We are

always relating miracles which occurred thousands of years ago. Why do we not see miracles today?" [Veritably our lives are filled with miracles. They are covert and require one to open his eyes in order to see them. Someone who keeps his eyes shut or has myopic or distorted vision – due to his desire to see only those things that support his perverted sense of morality and culture – sees either only what he wants to see or sees nothing at all.]

Rav Yisrael did not immediately respond, but he waited until the man began bragging about his daughter's extraordinary dancing ability.

Rav Yisrael said, "I have difficulty believing that your daughter is such a consummate dancer. For all I know, she does not even know how to dance."

The father said, "Rebbe, I am telling you the truth. My daughter is a magnificent dancer." - Rav Yisrael countered, "If she is that good, let her come and dance for me."

The father said to his daughter, "I would like you to put on a show for the Rabbi, so that he will believe me that you dance."

The girl replied indignantly, "I should dance because some Rabbi does not believe I know how to dance? Let him look at my diploma from the most prestigious school of dance. I am certainly not going to dance just for him!"

Rav Yisrael was waiting for this likely response. Arrogance often accompanies a lack of observance. The assimilated (frequently) look askance at their observant brothers and sisters because, otherwise, they are the ones who are out of place.

We can ask the sceptics: "What do you want? Hashem should come dancing into Vilna, making overt miracles, because one nonbeliever does not believe that He can perform miracles?" Hashem owes us nothing. We owe Him everything!

וְהָיְתָה צְעָקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר כָּמֹהוּ לֹא נִהְיָתָה וְכָמֹהוּ לֹא תֹסִף
'***There shall be a great outcry in the entire land of Egypt, such as there never has been.***' (11:6)



That there will be a loud crying is understandable. Every Egyptian home sustained the loss of its firstborn. It is a normal response to sudden death. Why was it necessary to inform the Egyptians beforehand that there would be a great outcry? What else?

Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl, explains that the Torah is teaching us an important lesson. The great outcry which would accompany the deaths of the Egyptian firstborn, an outcry which would seize and overwhelm the entire country, was not the result of a natural reaction to sudden tragedy. This outcry was part of the middah k'neged middah, measure for measure, punishment which the Egyptians deserved for how they treated the Jews.

When the Egyptians snatched the Jewish babies from the arms of their mothers, this cruel action certainly catalyzed a bitter outcry throughout the Jewish community. Therefore, the Egyptians deserved a punishment which would be appropriate in light of the distress they caused the Jews.

The deaths of their firstborn was insufficient to compensate for the pain and grief experienced by the Jews when their children were thrown into the water. Hashem promised to judge the nation that afflicted His people. They would be paid back in full; nothing would be held back. Thus, they deserved to cry out with the same grief stricken screams that they caused the Jews to emit.

Hashem is very exacting in His punishment: no more; no less.

וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ – '***And it shall be a sign upon your arm, and an ornament between your eyes***.' (13:16)



The four Scriptural passages contained in the Tefillin are basic to Judaism. They address the concepts of the Oneness of G-d, reward and punishment, and the obligation of a Jew to observe all of the mitzvos of the Torah. Also contained therein is a reminder of the Exodus which catalyzed our freedom from tyranny, leading up to our acceptance of the Torah and eventual initiation as Hashem's People. Thus, wearing Tefillin daily is an affirmation of our belief in all of the above.

A Jew who does not put on Tefillin is referred to as a **פושעי ישראל בגופו**, '*Jewish sinner with his body*', which serves as the vehicle for this transgression. One who wears Tefillin not only fulfills a most important mitzvah, but he also wraps himself in an insurance policy, which is demonstrated by the following episode:

Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl, symbolized ameilus baTorah, toil in Torah, at its zenith. His brilliant encyclopedic knowledge was without peer. His mastery over Torah granted him the unique power which allowed him to have a penetrating insight into situations which would elude others.

Commensurate to his great strengths was his outstanding humility. He made every effort not to call attention to himself, by constantly playing down his involvement in a specific endeavor.

During the shivah, seven-day mourning period, following his passing, the following story came to light. A Kollel fellow from Elad (city in Eretz Yisrael near Tel Aviv) went for an outing with his family. They all climbed into the family van and set out on their journey. Sadly,

shortly after they left, they were involved in a collision with another vehicle. Everyone in his family suffered injuries – none life-threatening, but painful. Their oldest son, a b'chor, firstborn, who was at the time nine and a half years old, did sustain serious injuries. For the first few hours, he hovered between life and death.

The doctors performed brain surgery on the child, which was partially successful. They saved his life, but they saw little hope that he would ever regain his full brain function. They felt that, to a certain extent, he had suffered irreversible brain damage. He would be mentally deficient for the rest of his life.

The father, who was miraculously the only one not to have sustained injury in the crash, was beside himself. He could not accept the surgeon's diagnosis, and he went all over Eretz Yisrael to various tzaddikim, righteous Jews, to petition their blessing for his son.

One of the father's close friends was a Tefillin-maker and scribe. As a result of his vocation, he had opportunity to speak often with Rav Elyashiv. He offered to go to the gadol hador, preeminent Torah leader of the generation, to ask for his blessing.

The man quickly took the boy, who at the time was in bed staring out in space, to Rav Eliyashiv. The Rav listened to the story and responded, "Go home and bring a pair of Tefillin and place them on the boy's head."

The only available pair of Tefillin he had at home were in preparation – plain, undyed boxes that did not in any way resemble the real thing. Rav Elyashiv felt that Tefillin would engender positive results.

The man quickly picked up the Tefillin and brought them to the home of the young boy. Following the instructions of Rav Elyashiv, he put the Tefillin on the boy. The surgeon walked into the room to see, to his shock, a boy in a coma wearing Tefillin. He thought the scribe insane, but respectfully did not raise a ruckus. He turned around and quietly left the room, thinking that this time the rabbi was insane.

One week later, the boy was standing on his feet. Two weeks after he had been administered the "Tefillin medication," the boy left the hospital on his own volition. That same day, he attended shul, standing next to his father, davening. It was as if nothing had ever happened. - The surgeon now agreed that nothing short of a miracle could have affected such results.

Only a handful of people were aware of this story. That was Rav Elyashiv. He did not seek or want any publicity. It remained circulated only within the immediate family.

The boy's father had occasion to be in Bnei Brak, so he visited **Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Zt'l**. After relating the story to him, Rav Chaim listened and then commented, "The Midrash states: (Hashem says) 'I did not create a head (for no) other (reason) than to put Tefillin on it.'" - Rav Chaim added, "If there are Tefillin, then there is a reason for a head!"

When the story was related during the shivah, a member of the family commented, "That was the fourth time that a person was saved through the vehicle of Tefillin."



וְהָיְתָה צְעָקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר כָּמֹהוּ לֹא נִהְיָתָה וְכָמֹהוּ לֹא תֹסֵף. וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ – '***There shall be a great outcry in the entire land of Egypt, such as there has never been and such as there shall never be again. But against Bnei Yisrael, no dog shall whet his tongue***.' (11:6,7)

There was a remarkable contrast of sound that fateful night in Egypt. The Egyptian firstborn were dying amid a cacophony of weeping throughout the land. In contrast, not a sound was heard in the Jewish ghetto of Goshen.

While under most circumstances one can hear sounds even during the dead of night, on the night the firstborn died, it was silent in the area of the Jews: no dog barked; the crickets were silent; no

noise whatsoever; total silence. This was all part of Hashem's plan. It was His demonstration, a lesson to remember for all time: a fundamental difference exists between Jew and gentile. **לְמַעַן תֵּדְעוּן אֲשֶׁר יַפְלֶה ה' בֵּין מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל**; "***So that you shall know that Hashem will distinguish between Egypt and Yisrael***" (Ibid 11:7).

We must hammer the lesson that we learned that night into our psyche, so that we never forget and never lose sight of the fact that there is absolutely no connection, on any level, between Jew and gentile. The contrast between the unrestrained, tumultuous noise that reigned in Egypt that night, and the extreme silence that prevailed in the area of the Jews, rendered this distinction translucent.

Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, delineates the three mitzvos, which, in order to be properly executed, require a person to contemplate the intended message of the mitzvah. In other words, Hashem gave us these three mitzvos for a specific reason: that we cogitate and apply their message. They are: the mitzvah of Tzitzis; the mitzvah of Tefillin; and the mitzvah of Succah.

Each of these mitzvos is followed by a phrase that reveals its purpose, beginning with the word **לְמַעַן**, "***so that***."

The Rosh Yeshivah extends this idea of a mitzvah, through a message that must be internalized, to the utter silence that prevailed and surrounded the Jewish People on the night of yetzias Mitzrayim, the Exodus. The Torah also qualifies the silence, which is personified by **לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ**, "***No dog shall whet its tongue***," with **לְמַעַן תֵּדְעוּן**, "So that you may know that Hashem shall distinguish between Egypt and Yisrael."

We must acknowledge and remember that the distinction between Jew and gentile which occurred that night was not intended to be for that night alone. It is here permanently. It was intended to demonstrate for all time that Klal Yisrael, the Jewish nation, is a people apart from all other nations. We are a nation that must

distinguish itself in our exclusiveness. We are different, and the only way we will continue to remain so is if we take pride in our heritage by transmitting it to our children.

The Jew who forgets this lesson opens himself up to accepting the base level of conduct that characterizes contemporary society. While it is primarily endemic to the gentile world, it is creeping in to our world via those who have sold their Jewish birthright for a bowl of red lentils.

The Torah admonishes us to shun the practices of the Canaanite nations who inhabited the Holy Land before we returned there. The Torah warns us not to go in their ways.

Regrettably, when we do not take pride in "our" ways, in the glorious Jewish culture with religion as its centrepiece, we are left with very little with which to maintain our fidelity to Judaism. The only way to elevate oneself above the pitfalls of the baseness which surrounds him, is to constantly remind himself of the lofty nature of the Jew.

Thus, Rav Belsky notes, the lessons of the Exodus are as significant for us today as they were when the redemption took place. Never – never – should a Jew think that he has anything whatsoever in common with the gentile. This does not countenance elitism; rather, it encourages the Jew to take pride in his heritage.

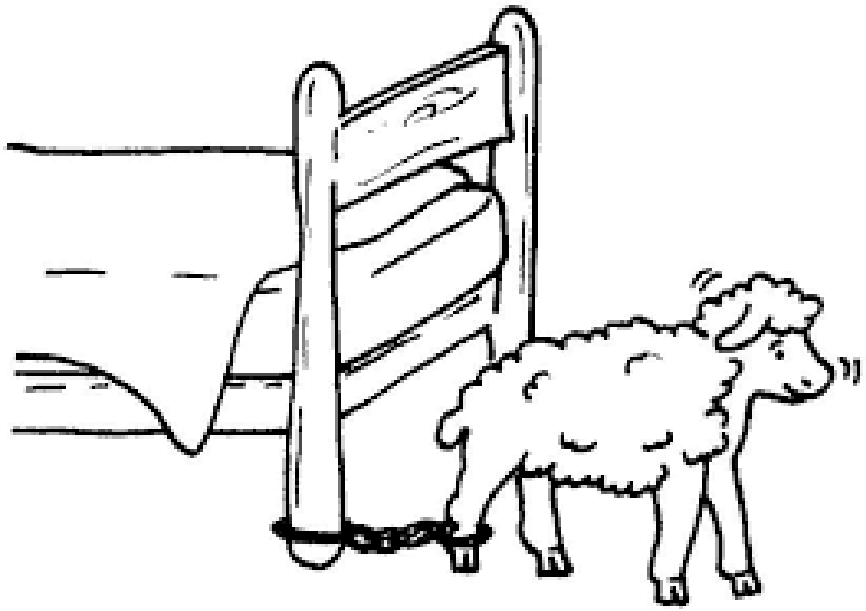


וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת עַד אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה – '***It shall be yours for examination until the fourteenth of the month***.' (12:6)

The lamb used for the Korban Pesach was taken on the tenth day of the month and not used until the fourteenth. During those four days, the animal was checked for blemishes that would render it unfit for use as a sacrifice. This requirement applied only concerning the first Korban Pesach, which was offered in Egypt.

Chazal explain that, after the many years of the Egyptian exile, the Jewish People had descended to a very low level of spirituality. They

had plummeted to the nadir of depravity, and they had no z'chusim, merits, to warrant their redemption from Egypt.



Hashem gave them two mitzvos: Korban Pesach and Bris Milah, circumcision. Both of these rituals involve blood. Since the circumcision had to take place on the tenth day of Nissan, in order to allow for the three-day healing process to be completed before the Korban Pesach was actually slaughtered, it was incumbent that they take the lamb also on the tenth day of the month. Thus, they were involved with mitzvos, in whose merit they were redeemed.

The Midrash teaches that all of the people did not immediately acquiesce to the circumcision command. They said, "We would rather remain slaves in Egypt than have our bodies physically maimed."

Hashem had Moshe Rabbeinu prepare the Korban Pesach. He then had the winds of Gan Eden attach themselves to the Korban Pesach and allow the aroma to waft through the camp. The people were mesmerized by the aroma. They asked Moshe, "Please, may we partake of your Korban Pesach?"

Moshe replied, "You can partake of the Korban Pesach only if you are circumcised." They immediately agreed, performing the mitzvah. Hashem then kissed each one.

The Midrash is absolutely mind-boggling. Two mitzvos – that is it! The Jewish People carried out two mitzvos – shelo lishmah – not for the sake of the mitzvah, but rather, for ulterior motives. Yet, it was these two mitzvos that warranted their redemption.

How are we to understand this anomaly? There has to be something more than two mitzvos to sanction their redemption after such a long period of bondage. Apparently, this was it. Why?

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, relates that he once visited **Horav Chaim Kreisworth, zl**, when the Rav was Chief Rabbi of Antwerp, Belgium. Antwerp is known as one of the preeminent diamond centers of the world. It makes sense that many members of the Jewish community are employed or involved in this industry in some way.

Rav Kreisworth said to Rav Galinsky, "Let me share with you a din Torah dispute that came before me for adjudication yesterday. A broker had closed a deal on a sale of diamonds and demanded his brokerage fee of 6%. The owner of the diamonds claimed that he had only promised him 5%. The dispute centered around 1%."

Rav Galinsky laughed. After all, how small-minded and petty can a person be, to argue over one percent?

Rav Kreisworth noted Rav Galinsky's attitude and immediately said, "One percent may not be very much, but when the sale is for fifteen million dollars, it suddenly becomes quite a huge sum of money."

We now understand, explains Rav Galinsky, how two mitzvos can have the required merit power to ensure the Jews' redemption from Egypt. When one takes into mind the incredible reward that the performance of a mitzvah generates, it is awesome and beyond our imagination to perceive. Thus, even a mitzvah that is carried out not for the sake of the mitzvah, is still of inestimable value – very much like the percentage of a large principle. - If we take the two mitzvos and multiply their reward by 600,000, we have a substantial total.

"There is plan and purpose in everything in our lives. Our job is to realize the plan, and to stand up and step into our purpose." ~ Rabbi Duvy Bensoussan.

וַיָּקָם פַּרְעֹה לַיְלָה - "***Pharaoh rose up at midnight***." (12:30)



After Moshe notified Pharaoh of the impending death of the firstborn Egyptians, the Torah states that "Pharaoh rose up at midnight." From where did he rise?

Rashi responds, **מִמִּטָּתוֹ** - "***From his bed***."

Anyone who had been following the narrative knows that Pharaoh's time was up. Everything that Moshe had said would occur had been realized. Nine devastating plagues had come and gone. What more did Pharaoh need to make him face the reality that Egypt was doomed? He was being told about the tenth and most devastating plague – makas bechoros, death of the firstborn. What did he do the night before he was likely to die? He went to sleep as if nothing had happened or was going to happen!

What possessed a human being to have such insolence. Pharaoh's incurable arrogance was absolutely mind-boggling!

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, explains that it is necessary to maintain a balance between the forces of good and evil. Otherwise, the concept of **בחירה חופשית**, free-will, has no meaning.

Consider an individual of exceptional kedushah, holiness, whose unstinting devotion to Hashem is his benchmark. When told he is to sacrifice his beloved son, for whom he has waited nearly a lifetime, he is prepared to do so without question. There must be an antithesis to him among the forces of tumah, impurity. If, on the night before he is to leave to slaughter his son, Avraham Avinu went to bed, then there must be a representative of the forces of evil, who, when told he and the other firstborn of his kingdom will die, would likewise go

to sleep, ignoring Hashem's warning. If Avraham goes to sleep, then Pharaoh must also have been evil enough – or foolish enough – to go to bed.

Avraham Avinu's power of kedushah was so great that he transcended human nature and emotion in order to fulfill the word of the Almighty. As a counterpart to Avraham, there had to be a Pharaoh, whose evil and defiance of Hashem would likewise transcend human nature.

Avraham went to sleep secure and trusting in Hashem's command. Pharaoh went to sleep demonstrating his obstinacy and hostility to Hashem's command.

Horav Chaim Kanievsky, zl, supplements this thought with another case in which one's trust in Hashem overcame his natural tendency towards fear and anxiety.

Yonah Ha'navi was on a ship, being thrown around the sea in the midst of a dangerous storm. The waves were shaking the ship and its passengers. Everybody was screaming, frightened for their lives. Yet, Yonah descended to the ship's hold and went to sleep.

Is this a typical response to a life-threatening situation?

Klal Yisrael was not created today or yesterday. We have been around for a while and have endured the most formidable challenges to which human beings have been subjected. We are still here because Hashem protects us and wants us to be here.

As He has protected us from our external enemies, He will also protect us from our enemies from within. Yonah goes to sleep trusting in Hashem, knowing that this storm is Hashem's work. Whatever will be – will be.

Horav Yitzchok Zilberstein, Shlita, attributes the rise in tension among Jews specifically to the above thesis. There has never been such a surge of Torah growth. Thousands upon thousands of young men and women are returning to Torah Judaism. The Yeshivos and

Kollelim are filled with bnei Torah studying **בקדושה ובטהרה**, with holiness and purity. Yet, in contrast, we find a world filled with moral decay unparalleled in history. There is a virulent animosity towards the observant Jew, regrettably, from some of our own brethren. That, however, is only a sign that the forces of kedushah are on the rise.

To abate this elevation in holiness, there has to be a balanced rise in the forces of tumah, impurity. It is tragic that this has to be emanating from among our own People. We have to hope that one day they will come to their senses and realize that there is only one way for a Jew to live. - The situation seeks equilibrium.

The Midrash relates that when the angel struck Sancheriv the king of Ashur's camp, during his battle against Chizkiyahu Ha'melech, all of his soldiers died. He was left alone with his two sons.

When the wicked general saw this, he bowed down to his idol and said, "I am prepared to slaughter my remaining two sons to you, if you will help me." - Before he had the opportunity to carry out his ill-fated plan, his two sons, who had overheard his prayer, killed him.

The question is glaring – Sancheriv saw his own folly. He clearly saw that he was no match for Hashem. He had the strongest army, the most powerful weapons, and they were all transformed into nothing. Yet, he was prepared to slaughter his two children to an idol which had proven itself time and time again to be a worthless piece of stone. - How irrational and senseless can one be?

The answer is as mentioned. If Klal Yisrael possesses individuals whose level of kedushah, coupled with their overwhelming devotion to Hashem, is incredible –there has to be a balance. Sancheriv represented the balance.

In contrast, we offer the following story that demonstrates the kedushah of our People: In Russia, during the reign of the N.K.V.D., Russian secret police, who were notorious for their ruthlessness, it

was forbidden to perform a bris milah, circumcise Jewish boys, or to shecht, ritually slaughter animals. Heaven-help he who was caught in such "defiance" of the state.

Rav Aizik Roth, zl, was a mohel, ritual circumciser, who shared an apartment with another chasid who happened to be a shochet, ritual slaughterer. One night there was a loud knock on their apartment door. They knew that such a knock could only be a sign of trouble, since they were both "employed" in vocations that were strictly prohibited by the government.

Rav Aizik told the shochet to gather his knives and leave through the back door. He would deal with the police. He opened the door to be greeted by a major in the Secret Police. "Where is the mohel?" he asked somewhat forcefully.

Rav Galinsky, who happened to be in the apartment, looked at the officer and innocently asked, "Do you think, Major, that we would circumcise our children knowing that it goes against the government? No, we would never do this."

The Major was relentless; he would not budge: "Where is the mohel?" He walked through the apartment and saw that no one was there but himself and the two rabbanim. He turned to them and said in Yiddish, "I am also Jewish. My wife has given birth to a little boy, and I need a mohel to circumcise him."

Imagine what was occurring. There is no doubt that if it had been discovered that this Major was circumcising his son, there would not be a gallows high enough for him. The Russian Secret Police would make him their paradigm of one who commits treason. His death would be slow and torturous. Yet, his overwhelming devotion to fulfill a mitzvah for which Jews have died throughout the ages superceded all his fears. - There must be a balance.

In contrast to the malevolent evil of a Sancheriv there has to be an individual whose devotion to Judaism transcends even their basic

desire to live. We should note that this major was not observant. He knew, however, that Bris Milah is a defining mitzvah in Judaism. He was prepared to die for this mitzvah.

Regrettably, today some of our co-religionists who have alienated themselves from the faith, refuse to live with this mitzvah.

וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ – *'But against all Bnei Yisrael, no dog shall whet ("sharpen") its tongue*.' (11:7)



Simply, this means that Egypt will be engulfed with death and grief. The Jews, however, will enjoy complete respite and tranquility; not even a dog will bark (utter a sharp cry – **לְשׁוֹן שְׁנִנוּן** - Rashi) at them.

What is the significance of the dogs barking, or not barking? Does it really make a difference?

Everything that is recorded in the Torah has a message. What then is the message of the dog's restraint from barking?

The Bais HaLevi, zl, explains with the following anecdote: A terrible dispute erupted in the city of Brisk. Two groups took sides against one another, and the fires of controversy were being fanned throughout the community.

As Rav of the city, the Bais HaLevi sought a way to extinguish the flames of hatred and put an end to the machlokes, dispute. The Rav called in the most influential lay leaders of the community and enjoined them to speak with both sides to end the strife that was rapidly splintering the community.

Regrettably, their response was one that has become quite common: The leaders refused to get involved, lest it be inferred that they were taking sides. They felt that by remaining neutral and aboveboard with everyone, they would maintain their standing in the community.

Rav Yosheh Ber viewed their response as obsequious, shirking their responsibility as communal leaders.

He told them, "Your neutral attitude has a precedent among the dogs who lived in Egypt during the Exodus. In the Talmud Bava Kamma 60b, Chazal teach that when the Malach Ha'mavess, Angel of Death, comes to a city, the dogs begin to cry – they whine mournfully in response to the impending death that visits the city. In contrast, when the dogs sense the presence of Eliyahu HaNavi they laugh, their barking is a playful sound.

In Egypt, on the night of the Redemption, both Eliyahu HaNavi, who heralded the Exodus, and the Angel of Death, who slayed the Egyptian firstborn, came to town.

What is a dog to do? Should he recognize Eliyahu and bark playfully, or give precedence to the Angel of Death and bark mournfully?

The dogs decided to keep their collective mouths shut. They remained neutral – not wishing to take a stand by getting involved."

The lay leadership took the hint and immediately addressed the issues, which were soon resolved.

Hashem is more exacting with the sin of lashon hara than with any other sin. As Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai taught in the Zohar: "Hashem is prepared to forgive anything except lashon hara." ~ Chofetz Chaim

וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה צְלִי־אֵשׁ וּמַצּוֹת עַל־מְרֹרִים יֹאכְלֻהוּ - '***They shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted over the fire, and matzos; with herbs they shall eat it.***' (12:8)



It seems almost paradoxical that one should eat the matzoh, which symbolizes our freedom, together with the marror, bitter herbs, which represent our affliction.

That is not the only anomaly of the Seder night. The night of the first Seder occurs on the same day of the week as Tisha B'Av of that same year. When we celebrate our redemption from Egypt, we remember Tisha B'Av, the day of the year commemorating the churban, the destruction of our Batei Mikdash.

Why is it necessary to integrate misery with joy? Are we not taught that everything has its own time and place?

Horav Mordechai Gifter zl, suggests two reasons for this. First, at the moment of heightened spiritual joy, when we experience the freedom from bondage and the accompanying kedushah, it is incumbent upon us to also reflect upon the bitterness of exile. Thus, we will appreciate our present condition to a greater extent.

We note a second--more profound--aspect to this reflection. We must realize that until the final moment of the geulah, freedom, we were still tottering at the brink of destruction. The yetzer hora, evil inclination, who challenges us every step of the way, works "timelessly" to bring about our destruction. The source of churban is there waiting to grab hold of us, preventing our liberation, hindering our triumph. That same night that resulted in "matzoh," freedom and joy, could just have easily been transformed into "marror," bitterness and destruction. One must always realize that the derech aliyah, road to spiritual ascendancy, is fraught with the

blandishments of the yetzer hora every step of the way. We cannot falter, even for a moment, or the fangs of the yetzer hora will pull us down to ruin and oblivion.

Indeed, the entire Seder is a paradox! The white kittel is the garment that is worn by nobility. It is also used as shrouds for the dead. The marror commemorates the bitterness and affliction, while the matzoh is the symbol of freedom. We do not minimize our happiness by remembering the destruction, because our tears for the Bais Hamikdash are not relevant to the Seder. We remember the Bais Hamikdash in a positive, constructive mode.

Our entire festival cycle recalls the service in the Bais Hamikdash in all of its splendor. We do not recall destruction. We remember the functioning off the Bais Hamikdash.

The lesson is simple: The Jew does not constantly focus upon the loss and devastation. To do so would be counterproductive to Judaism, in addition to emotionally draining for the individual. The proper approach towards venerating the past is to mourn with dignity at the appropriate times and to honor in a positive, resolute manner at other times.

Seder night is a night of education. It is a night in which we raise our awareness with joy, freedom, and hope, as well as--in contrast--servitude, persecution, and depression. The Jewish calendar is filled with times which commemorate both. How do we relate to this moment? How do we express ourselves during these times?

On the Seder night, we wrap together the matzoh of freedom and the marror of affliction to teach us that they go hand in hand for the Jew. We cannot mourn a destruction unless we are aware of what we have lost. We are obligated to remember our loss in a positive, active manner. This way we will merit to bring it all back -- bimheirah b'yameinu -- one day soon!

וַיָּקָם פַּרְעֹה לַיְלָה הוּא וְכָל־עֲבָדָיו וְכָל־מִצְרַיִם "***And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians***." (12:30)



One who reads the above pasuk cursorily may miss its profound message. How was Pharaoh and all of Egypt capable of going to bed, let alone falling asleep, when they were fully cognizant of what might transpire if Moshe's warning were to be realized? Had not the first nine plagues taken their toll on the Egyptian people?

Even if there has been room to doubt the potential for this plague's fulfillment, sleep would still have been impossible. This was an integral part of Hashem's divine plan. Had Pharaoh stayed awake, anxiously waiting to see if this latest warning would be potentialized, it would certainly diminish its impact. Hence, Hashem caused Pharaoh to go to sleep, only to awaken to the cries of terror and anguish throughout Egypt.

This is but one example of the many miracles which occurred and the numerous lessons which we can derive from them.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבְזִקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ "***And Moshe replied, we will go with our young and old alike***." (10:9)

Why does Moshe mention the young before the old? Should not the elders go before the young?

The Kesav Sofer responds that the young had to be rescued as soon as possible. Since they lacked a proper spiritual upbringing, they were more susceptible than their elders to the Egyptian environment. Only after the youth had left, did the older generation,

who still maintained some roots in Judaism, and were more likely to survive spiritually in Egypt, leave.

The Koznitzer Magid Zt"l applies a homiletical exposition to this posuk. As we go in our youth, we will ultimately go in our old age. If during our youth we strive to spiritually ascend to reach the proper level of what Hashem expects of us, then as we get older there will be ultimate blessing in our old age.

This may be compared to wine, whose vintage is good, gets better as it ages, while wine which has an inferior vintage turns sour with age.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Tu B'shevat



We are compared to a tree as it states **כי האדם עץ השדה**, man is a tree of the field.

In middle of winter, the trees look empty and dead. We all know that it is now when new life starts to pump through the trees as they begin to rejuvenate. The same applies to us. My Avodas Hashem may have been going through a difficult "winter" lately but this period has potential for rejuvenation.

ראש השנה לאילנות which is Tu B'shevat, brings renewal to the tree. This also refers to the **עץ חיים** - tree of life, Torah.

The Avnei Nazer explains that man's fruit are his Chidushei Torah, his original Torah ideas and teachings. Just as on Tu B'shevat the sap rises up inside the tree, enabling a new crop of fruit, so too, there is a renewal in the Chidushei Torah, in the fruit of each jew.

In fact, the Avnei Nazer was able to tell a difference in his Torah before and after Tu B'shevat. He felt that his Chidushei Torah were enhanced due to Tu B'shevat. They were on a higher level than they were during the remainder of the year.

The Eretz Tzvi adds that since "tree" is a reference to a person, as in **כי האדם עץ השדה**, the main Rosh Hashana (the main renewal) on Tu B'shevat is in fact for Chidushei Torah and not for the fruit of the actual trees. - It is specifically in **שבט** that we hope to merit **שמרם ברכם טהרם**, guard them, bless them, purify them. (**אנא בכח**)

Rashi (Vayikra 26:4) comments on **ועץ השדה יתן פריו** , the tree of the field will give its fruit, that it refers to the **אילני סרק** , trees that do not bear fruit which in the future will produce fruit. This is also a hint to humans who are compared to a tree, that those Jews who are **אילני סרק** will bear fruit, Chidushei Torah, in the future. - R' Moshe Wolfson points out that **וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פִּרְיוֹ** has a numerical value of 1,236, the same equivalent as **חמשה עשר בשבט** . Astounding!

The Divrei Chaim would make an extravagant seuda on Tu B'shevat. He explained that from Rosh Chodesh Shevat until Shavuos there is a Yom Tov at least every 15 days. They are: Rosh Chodesh Shevat, Tu B'shevat, Rosh Chodesh Adar, Purim, Rosh Chodesh Nissan, Pesach, Rosh Chodesh Iyar, Pesach Sheini, Rosh Chodesh Sivan and Shavuos.

Is it any wonder that the letters of **שבט** form the phrase **שנתבשר בשורות טובות**, be informed of good news?!

The month of **שבט** should be one of **שלום - ברכה - טובה** peace, goodness and blessing.

The Weekly Vort

● **The Ruach Chaim** (Pirkei Avos 6:6) writes that if a person took time from indulging in material pleasures and instead delved into Torah study, it would be counted as if he experienced *yissurim*. Then, besides earning the rewards given for learning Torah, he would also cleanse himself from his sins.

Rabbeinu Yonah writes (in Yesod HaTeshuvah) that when a person holds back when his *yetzer hara* is urging him to indulge in something forbidden, that, as well, counts as *yissurim* and will cleanse him from his sins. (Living Emunah 7)



Chad Gadya

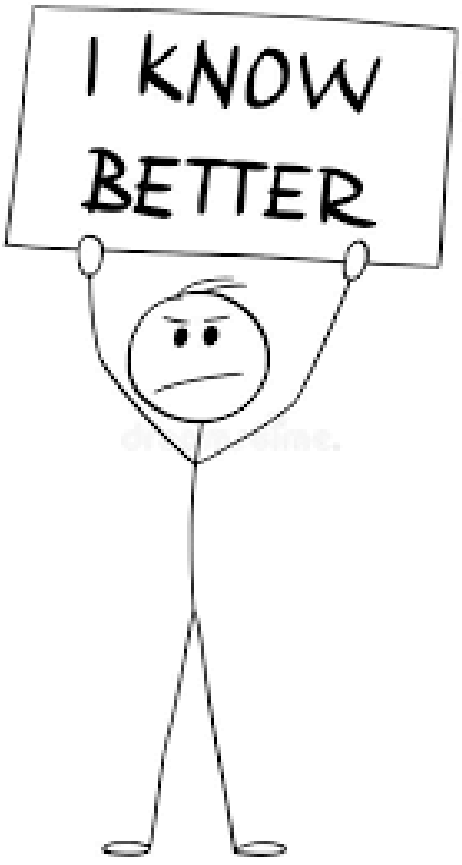
The highest time of Yom Kippur is the end when we recite Neilah. We can assume that the end of the seder is also the peak of the seder. What do we do then? We sing Chad Gadya! Why?

The answer is that the message of Chad Gadya is that everything happens by hashgachah pratis; nothing happens by chance. Chad Gadya discusses a dog that was hit by a stick. It seems unfair. Why should the dog be hit? But the dog deserved it because it bit the cat. Then, the stick is consumed by fire. It seems unfair; why should the stick be burned? But the stick deserved it because it hit the dog.

Similarly, we must know that everything that occurs in life is planned and not by chance. This lesson is the peak and the message of the seder.

Do We Really Know Better?

וַיִּקְרָא֩ לְמֹשֶׁ֨ה וּלְאַהֲרֹ֜ן לַ֗יְלָה וַיֹּ֙אמֶר֙ קוּמ֣וּ צְא֔וּ מִתּ֖וֹךְ עַמִּ֑י גַּם־אַתֶּ֥ם גַּם־בְּנֵ֖י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וּלְכ֗וּ עִבְד֛וּ אֶת־ה֥'
כְּדַבֶּרְכֶֽם - *"[Pharaoh] called for Moshe and Aharon that night and said, "Get up and go from among my people, both you and B'nei Yisrael. Go worship Hashem as you have said [requested]."* **(Shmos 12:31)**



The 9th plague that Hashem punished the Egyptians with, was the plague of *choshech*, darkness. **Rashi** (Shmos 10:23) says that during the first 3 days it was so dark that the Egyptians were unable to see each other. Over the next 3 days, the darkness was substantive. It was so palpably dark that the Egyptians could not move. They were frozen in place. If an Egyptian happened to be sitting when this second period of darkness began, he was unable to rise. If he had been standing, he would have been unable to sit.

The **Chasam Sofer** says that the Jewish People had a golden opportunity during this plague. They could have risen and killed the Egyptians! Then they could have escaped from Egypt without a fight. Why didn't they? The **Chasam Sofer** quotes **Targum Yonasan ben Uziel** (Bereishis 50:25) who explains that Yosef had made the Jewish People swear that they would not attempt to leave Egypt before the time that Hashem had

designated. When would that time be? Yosef had told them that two people would come to take them out. The two would say the code words, "**פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם**", "Hashem will surely remember you".

Luckily, the Jews listened to the promise and waited for Moshe and Aharon who used these code words. A tragedy had occurred 30 years earlier. The **Midrash** (Shmos Rabbah 20:11; Midrash Lekach Tov, Midrash Sechel Tov 13:17) tells us that the tribe of Ephraim miscalculated the date which they thought was the designated date for freedom. Their calculations were off by 30 years. They escaped from Egypt but did not wait for the two redeemers who would say the "code words". It was a tragic mistake. After leaving Egypt early, 300,000 Jews from the tribe of Ephraim were killed by the Plishtim.

The **Chasam Sofer**'s explanation helps explain another Midrash (Shmos Rabbah 14:1). The Midrash says when Hashem decreed that the Egyptians deserved the plague of darkness, all the angels concurred. Even the guardian angel of Egypt agreed. **The Satmar Rebbe** (quoted in Talelei Oros by Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rubin) wondered why this plague was unique in that it received the approval of the guardian angel of Egypt.

The answer is that the guardian angel of Egypt realized the inherent danger to the Jewish People. While the Egyptians were immobilized, the Jews had the opportunity to escape. They could have finally become free! However, it was not yet the moment that Hashem had decreed for them to go free. Had they left then, it would have been too soon. They would have met the same fate as the Jews from the tribe of Ephraim and would have been killed. That is what the guardian angel of Egypt had hoped would happen. However, since the Jews had total faith in Hashem and did not leave a moment too soon, their lives were spared!

There was a similar occurrence by *makas bechoros*, the plaue of the killing of the firstborn. The **Torah** says (12:31), "[Pharaoh] called for

Moshe and Aharon that night and said, "*Get up and go from among my people, both you and the B'nei Yisrael. Go worship Hashem as you have said [requested].*" After midnight, the Egyptians were pressing the Jews to leave Egypt. The Jews had been waiting for this opportunity for so many years! Yet the Jews did not leave until the morning.

Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky zt"l (Emes L'Yaakov) says that the Jews knew from past experiences that Pharoah had changed his mind about freeing them on many occasions. Perhaps he would change his mind, now, as well. Why didn't the Jews take the opportunity and leave? **Rav Yaakov** zt"l answers that the Jews were given a directive from Hashem not to leave their homes until morning. Despite being faced with the opportunity for immediate freedom, they listened to the command of Hashem and waited for the designated moment.

There are times in our lives when we have temptations and rationalizations. As a result, we may feel that "we know better" and do not have to scrupulously follow the laws of the Torah.

That is a big mistake which can lead to negative repercussions. - We only gain when we follow Hashem's directives.

Parshah Pearls (adapted from the Ba'al ha'Turim)

● Outsmarting Pharoah

When Paroh asked Moshe "***מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים (who are the ones that are going)?"*** Moshe replied ***"בְּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבְזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ (with our youth and with our elderly we will go)"*** 10:8/9.

The numerical value of "**מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים**", points out the Ba'al ha'Turim, is equivalent to that of 'Kalev u'bin Nun'. 'Why are you so keen to go, Paroh was asking Moshe, when you are all going to die in the desert, and the only ones who will arrive at their destination are Yehoshua and Kalev'?

'Not so', answered Moshe, 'because the decree will only cover those who are between twenty and sixty; the youth and the elderly, as well as Yehoshua and Kalev, will all enter Eretz Yisrael'.

It seems that Paroh wasn't concerned with the tribe of Levi, which was not subject to the slavery. Perhaps he wouldn't have minded if they alone would have left Egypt and gone to Eretz Yisrael.

● **And They (the Locusts) Rested**

וַיָּנַח בְּכֹל גְּבוּל מִצְרָיִם - *"And they encamped within all the borders of Egypt"* (10:14).

The word **וַיָּנַח** is also written in Yisro (20:11) **וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי** (and He rested on the seventh day). To teach us, that the locusts rested on the Shabbos, giving Paroah a day of respite.

Alternatively, it hints at Chazal, who have said that the obligation of blowing the Shofar and fasting when there is a plague of locusts, is confined to weekdays, but does not apply to Shabbos.

● **The Trees and the Youth**

וְלֹא־נוֹתַר כָּל־יֶרֶק בָּעֵץ - *"and nothing will remain on the trees"* 10:15.

The same word appears in Eichah, says the Ba'al ha'Turim, **וּנְעָרִים בָּעֵץ כָּשָׁלוּ** - "***and the youth tripped over the trees***" 5:13.

To explain the connection between the two, he reminds us that it is for Paroah's refusal to send out the children, that no green was left on the trees.

● **This B'chor and that B'chor**

וּמֵת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - *"And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt* ... (11:5).

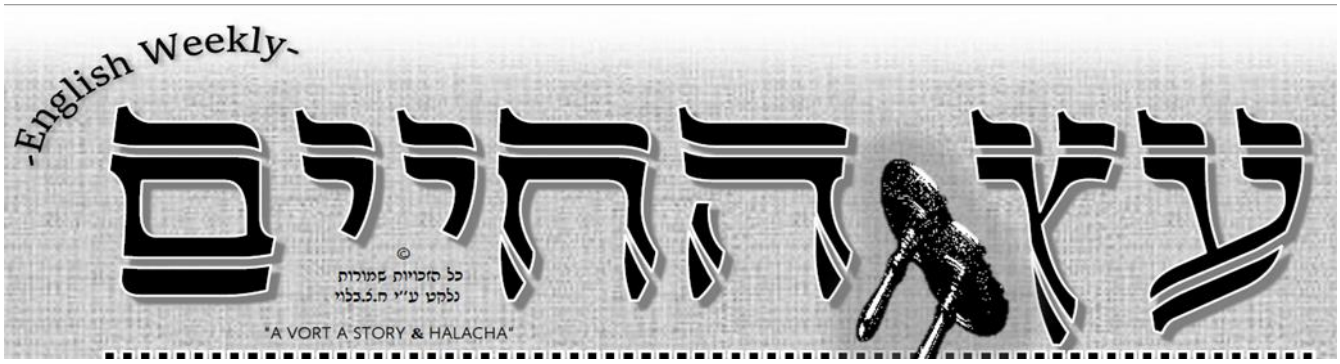
Besides the firstborn of the animals, 'Makas Bechoros' incorporated three different kinds of 'firstborn' - the paternal firstborn, the maternal firstborn and the oldest in the house, even if he or she was not actually a firstborn.

And that, explains the Ba'al ha'Turim, is why the word "b'chor" appears three times in this Pasuk (apart from "ve'chol b'chor be'heimah", which is written independently at the end of the Pasuk).

● **They went Out on Pesach** 10:28.

וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ פַּרְעֹה לֵךְ מֵעָלָי "And Paroh said to him, Go away from me"

The numerical value of "**לֵךְ מֵעָלָי**" is equal to that of 'ba'Pesach', says the Ba'al ha'Turim, and that is precisely when they left Egypt.



● **Rav Yaakov Edelstein** told over a **מעשה** about **Rav Boruch Ber:** Rav Boruch Ber once went over to a bochur who was eating and told him, "Eat my son, eat!" Rav Boruch Ber explained to the bochur as follows: "Every Yeshiva bochur is a shtick kedushah. As long as the food was out of your mouth, the food was **נחשב** to be **חולין גמורין** . However, once it was eaten by a heiligeh Yeshiva bochur, the food pashut transformed into a **חלק** of the Yid and it becomes from **חולין** to kdusha v'taharah mamash - **כי עם קדוש אתה** !"

Rav Boruch Ber concluded, "That is why I got excited when I saw you eating and I told you, "Eat my son, eat."

● **What was the argument between Pharaoh and Moshe?**

Moshe says to Pharaoh, "We are taking the children." If all the children are going out, it is obvious that the wives are coming along too. Pharaoh said to himself, "If it's true that they just want to go out to bring **קרבנות** to **ה'**, why are the wives and children coming

along?" So Pharaoh told Moshe, "I'll allow only the men to go out, since they are the only ones needed to bring the **קרבן** ."

The question is, why was Pharaoh's calculation wrong?

The answer is that a goy cannot understand the idea of **לכם**! A goy cannot understand that gashmius and ruchnius can come together. Therefore, a goy feels that if you are going to serve Hashem "ruchni" there's no **מקום** to bring the gantzeh mishpachah. However, we are Yidden know that it's not true. Even the most gashmius acts are done with kedusha and taharah and they are a **חלק** of our ruchnius.

The gantze mishpacha coming for the **חג לה'** is part of ruchnius. Pharaoh, who was a goy, was not given the **כלים** to comprehend such a concept!

● שלום בית

There was a story that **Harav Moshe Aron Stern זצ"ל** said over first hand of how **הרב שך זצ"ל** restored a couple's **שלום בית** with great wisdom. This was the story:

There was a young man who approached Harav Moshe Aron Stern with the following dilemma. He had recently gotten married and since then his marriage and his home have been like a raging fire. - What happened?

The young man explained that "Every night after I came home I learn **משנה ברורה** , and my wife complains, "What's wrong with you that you don't learn **בעיון**?" "However", the newly married yungerman continued, "After learning **בעיון** seriously, all day in Yeshiva, at night I want to learn and become knowledgeable in Halacha as well". Yet, his wife constantly complained to him, to the point that the marriage was falling apart.

After listening to this man's story, Harav Moshe Aron thought that he would have one talk with this young man's wife and surely matters would be sorted out immediately thereafter.

Harav Moshe Aron related "I went to their house and gently explained to her how wonderful it was for her husband to learn **הלכה**. However, the woman stood firmly strong in her opinion and told Harav Moshe Aron, "Rebbe, this is not what I had in mind!"

Harav Moshe Aron realized that this was not going to be the correct way to restore their **שלום בית**. Harav Moshe Aron met **הרב שך זצ"ל** shortly after and told **הרב שך** about the issue that was taking place in the young man's home. - **הרב שך** told Harav Moshe Aron to send the woman to meet him.

Harav Moshe Aron went to bring her to **הרב שך**.

When they came into **הרב שך** 's home there was a lot of people there and Rav Shach announced that there will be no more **קבלת קהל** for that day. After the woman had a seat **הרב שך** told his **גבאי** to bring a piece of cake from the kitchen, and to give it to the woman to eat.

She ate the cake, and then **הרב שך** asked that they bring another type of cake for her. After she finished the second piece, **הרב שך** asked her what the difference between the two pieces of cake was. She replied that one had more cocoa than the other, one more sugar etc. After she said her opinion, **הרב שך** said, "I see that you have a very keen understanding in the baking world. - I want to advise you to use your strengths. Go home and use them in the best way possible, and don't busy yourself with the learning of your husband."

She became terribly chastened, but she immediately realized how true the words of the great **הרב שך** were and how mistaken she had been. **הרב שך** 's words penetrated her heart and their home experienced a complete improvement and it became a home with the ultimate **שלום בית**.

Despair is the worst of ailments. No worries are justified except: "Why am I so worried?" ~ R' Yisrael Salanter zt"l.

BITACHON POWER!

Harav Yitzchok Zilberstein Shlit"a Related the following story: There was a certain person that did something terrible to a **תלמיד חכם**. A few days later this person sent a letter to the **תלמיד חכם** asking him forgiveness for the terrible agony he caused him. This **תלמיד חכם**, who was still terribly distressed by what the man did, had a very difficult time trying to overcome the pain and forgive this person - to the point that he wanted to just tear the letter.

His wife, however, came into the picture and asked him please not to tear it and gave him an **עצה**. She told him to take the letter and place it between the pages of his **סידור**, and when he is standing in middle of **שמונה עשרה**, in front of **הקב"ה**, and he says **סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו, מחל לנו מלכנו כי פשעניו** he should stop for a moment, take out the note, and say in his heart -" **רבונו של עולם**, you see how hard it is for me to forgive this person for what he did to me. However, despite all this I am being **מתגבר** on my feelings **ואני מוחל לו בלב שלם**. Please **רבונו של עולם**, forgive me too on all my sins…"



● Midnight Seder

In his later years, the great *tzaddik*, **R' Pinchas Menachem Malach**, *zt"l*, didn't have the strength to learn the many late hours that he had been accustomed to learn when he was younger. Yet, every night before going to sleep, he would take out *seforim* from his *seforim* shank and place them on his table.

His son asked him, "Totty, why are you taking out all these *seforim*? Do you think that you'll learn from all of them? Did you regain your strength?"

R' Malach responded, "I'm taking out the *seforim* that I would have learned had I had the strength to learn! Now, I don't have the strength, but taking out these *seforim* is an expression of the desire I have to learn!"

He explained further, "Although I can't actually learn now, nevertheless Hashem considers it as if I had learned from them, since if I had the strength, I would be learning from them."

By expressing his love for learning, Hashem will reward him as if he had actually learned.

The term "wishful thinking" radiates a negative connotation. This is understood by many as: "nice try, try again" or "you did not succeed, maybe next time you will." But when it comes to *avodas Hashem*, this is not how it is calculated. Hashem considers each thought and every attempt we make to grow. Our thoughts are not overlooked. Hashem cherishes each attempt and effort that we make, and we too should value them.

● One Person's Will

A fellow approached the **Chofetz Chaim** with the request to purchase all of his *sefarim*—the *Mishnah Berurah*, *Ahavas Chessed*, and twenty more—but not the *Sefer Chofetz Chaim*. "I don't want that one," the man explained, "because it talks about guarding your mouth, and for me it's too hard to control my mouth, so I want to pass on that *sefer*."

When the Chofetz Chaim heard this, he calmly responded with the following account: "When I was preparing to write that *sefer*, I asked the great *tzaddik*, **R' Yisroel Salanter**, whether it was better not to write it, since Chazal say that everyone transgresses the prohibition of *avak lashon hara*, and therefore perhaps it's better

that they not know about it. Chazal say it's better to be a *shogeg*, mistaken sinner, than a *maizid*, rebel. By not informing them of the severity of the sin, I'll prevent them from liberally transgressing it.

"The great R' Yisroel responded: 'It's worth you writing the entire *sefer Chofetz Chaim* if even one person will speak *lashon hara* with a *krechtz*. The value of that one *krechtz* is so much that it's worth writing the entire *sefer* just for him to do it—but with a sigh.'"

This relays an incredible lesson. Hashem values every motivation, will, and sigh. The entire *sefer*, which the Chofetz Chaim himself spent many months if not years writing, was worth every minute even for "one sigh!"

Baruch Hashem, we know how this *sefer* turned over the world with the encouragement, motivation, and inspiration of its many words, and of all the programs built around its study and dissemination. But, the writing itself had behind it the intent that even if "one person" would benefit from it, the whole project was worth it.

● Wishful Hero!

In a suburb of Yerushalayim, there was a convalescent home situated on a non-religious farming village. Its *kashrus mashgiach* related that one time, they were in need of a tenth man for the minyan, so he went outside to find someone. He saw one of the local, irreligious farmers and asked him to participate. After discussing with him the concept of davening, the local agreed to partake. But, while they'd been talking, a tenth man had arrived, and so the irreligious man didn't join the minyan in the end.

Ten years passed. The *mashgiach* had already stopped working in the home several years prior. One night, the farmer appeared to the *mashgiach* in a dream with a face radiating with light. He told him that he'd passed away one month ago.

"You have no idea of the reward I received in the Next World for 'wanting' to partake in the minyan, even though I didn't follow

through when the tenth man had arrived. In that merit, I was granted to come to you in a dream and request that you go to my one and only son and convince him to say *Kaddish* for me." (*The Joy of Emunah*, p. 44)

● The Miller Building

Walking past the Mirrer Yeshiva in Flatbush, **R' Avigdor Miller**, zt"l, once remarked: "This is the Miller Mirrer building." The followers were surprised, because they hadn't known that R' Miller had contributed to its funding.

He continued by explaining: "If Hashem would give me five million dollars, I would give a large part of it to the Mirrer Yeshiva. Hashem, therefore, considers it as if I sponsored this building."



An Israeli woman was on a long drive home and was listening to a radio broadcast from Rav Shalom Arush. The רב was discussing the importance of thanking ה' even for our difficulties and challenges, for ultimately they are all for our best.

When she arrived at her home near the Gaza border, she discussed with her family over dinner what she had heard. Her daughters exclaimed that if that was the case, they should be thanking ה' each time the missile siren went off, which is what they proceeded to start doing!

Soon after, there was a temporary ceasefire, and the family took the opportunity to go to a local park for the first time in weeks. As they were picnicking in the park, one of the children noticed that their little sister had gone missing! The father heard his wife whispering, "Thank you ה' that our daughter is missing", and told her that he thought she was taking things too far.

The family spread out and started frantically searching for the little girl, when suddenly the missile siren rang out! A few seconds later they heard a huge explosion. A missile had landed… in the exact spot where they had been enjoying their lunch just a few moments earlier!

They discovered their terrified daughter hiding behind their parked car, but their greatest discovery was how thanking ה', even for our trials and troubles, brings about the greatest **ישועות**.

Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro - Fifty Thousand Dollars for Shas

Allow me to share with you a story that you might already be familiar with. Why then would I mention it at all? Because there is a second part that is far less known, and it brings to light some remarkable lessons.

One young man was extraordinary beyond words. In every conceivable area, he excelled, whether it be his extensive and in-depth Torah erudition, his sterling character or his overall successful approach to life. He had gone for an entrance exam to **Rav Yochanan Wosner** in Montreal, Canada, and was tested on two full sections of the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim and Yoreh Deah). Rav Wosner attested that he had never seen such an accomplished young man in so many areas.

Sometime later, Rav Wosner met the father of the young man and asked if his son had always been that way, marked by both superb brilliance and character. The father was clear in his response. "He wasn't. But let me tell you what happened years ago…

"When I myself was a bachur in yeshiva, I was once asked to do *hag'baah* (lift the Torah) on a regular weekday after the reading of the Torah had concluded. To the shock of everyone present, I did a reverse *hag'baah* whereby I turned the Torah around so that the parchment faced outward, away from me—as is done only on Simchas

Torah—instead of it facing inward, toward me. As soon as I did this, everyone began to murmur and talk about what they had just witnessed. Shortly afterward, I was called in to speak to the Rosh Yeshiva. It was there that he asked me directly why I did what I did. I explained as follows.

"The boy who had gotten an aliyah just before me had a terrible stutter. It was painful and terrible to listen to, and without question, it left him feeling utterly ashamed and embarrassed. The final beracha, said after the reading had concluded, felt as if it took forever.

"As soon as he finished the concluding beracha, I could tell that the people around were whispering about him. He had certainly humiliated himself and everyone felt bad for him. And then I came up to do *hag'baah*. During those few seconds before I raised the Torah, I started thinking what I could do to divert and distract the attention from all the *bachurim* to focus solely on me instead of the boy who had just terribly stuttered. And so, I decided to do something strange—namely, a reverse *hag'baah*. It actually worked in getting everyone around to start talking about me and forget about the other boy.

"It was on that day," concluded the father to Rav Wosner, "that all of the windows in Heaven opened and blessings came pouring forth to my son. It must have been because I thought about the other boy that Hashem showered such blessing upon my family."

This is the part that you might be familiar with.

But recently, I received a call from Rav Shmuel Dovid Hakohen Friedman who shared with me that he himself had spoken to Rav Wosner. Rav Wosner told him that the father, at that very same time they stood together at the wedding, in fact told him a second story. "It's possible that the second story is even more remarkable than the first," Rav Friedman told me on our call. At the mention of

this, I grew that much more than interested in knowing what exactly the father had told Rav Wosner.

"My son," began the father, "is now a yungerman living in a particular city near the Tristate area and learning in a Chassidishe Kollel. A few years ago, as can happen in the middle of davening or learning, a *meshulach* from Israel collecting funds for the wedding expenses of two of his children approached the yungerman. Collectively, he needed to raise fifty thousand dollars for the two weddings and related expenses. The yungerman, in speaking with the *meshulach* and getting to know him, recognized that he was a fine gentlemen, but at the same time, knew that he'd have a hard time collecting the entire sum he needed.

Realizing this, my son thought of a friend he had gone to yeshiva with who had become quite successful. And so, he picked himself up, traveled hours away to the city his friend lived and asked if he would be able to cover the expenses of the two weddings so that this father could adequately provide for his family and quickly return to Israel.

My son's friend was quite moved that my son would expend so much care and effort on behalf of another stranger. "Normally I give one or two hundred dollars to those who come collecting, and for you who really went out of your way, I certainly want to give more. But the full fifty thousand, I'm sorry, but I don't think I'll be able to give it all."

On the spot, my son turned to his friend and said, "I'll make a deal with you. If you write out a check for the full fifty thousand, in one year from now, I will have learned Shas Bavli."

As my son knew, to accomplish this requires learning roughly seven and a half blatt (folios) every day. "And that Shas," my son told his friend, "will have been learned for you, and all the merits will accrue directly to you and your family. It will be your Siyum HaShas and

your Torah learning. I'll give you those zechusim (merits) if you write out the check for fifty thousand."

Right there and then, the friend wrote out a contract, noting that he would pay fifty thousand dollars to the meshulach so he can return home, and that my son has committed to learn all of Shas Bavli in one year, with the merits accruing to the friend.

One year later, my son made the Siyum HaShas and I was invited. When I arrived, I noticed my son's friend sitting at the head table and inquired why. That is when he disclosed to me what had taken place."

Let's think about this for a moment. This man's commitment wasn't something taken upon himself for a day or a week. It was a serious commitment that would last hours a day, every single day, for an entire year. To learn seven and a half blatt every day with diligence and understanding is no simple decision or feat. And why did he do it? It wasn't for his mother or first cousin. He did it for a man from Israel he had never met until just the day before.

Maybe he actually viewed the meshulach from Israel as his brother. Maybe he really believed that this stranger from Israel was not a stranger at all. And with this attitude, he was willing to undergo a colossal and stratospheric commitment to learn all of Shas in one year. - And that is the second part of the story.

This is what it means to not live for yourself. Because truthfully, when you view the entirety of the Jewish people as your brother for whom you are responsible, you'll do anything.

"The Humble person finds Serenity; One who seeks honor and recognition cultivates a life of inevitable frustration." ~ R' Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l.

Reb Dovid - R' Yisrael Besser [Artscroll Mesorah]



The chessed started even before they opened the door to others. For many years, **Rav Dovid Feinstein** and his wife lived in a two-bedroom apartment, with the Feinstein daughter's sleeping on the couches each night. At one point, a three-bedroom apartment became available on a different floor in the same building; it seemed to be the perfect opportunity.

Reb Dovid shared his dilemma regarding the idea with the Rebbetzin. Mrs. Kassner was an elderly widow with whom they were very close. When the Rebbetzin had been a young mother with several children, Mrs. Kassner had been there to give her a hand, and now the Feinsteins tried to honor and assist her in her old age.

"If we move to a different floor," Reb Dovid said, "then we will have forfeited the zechus of being there for Mrs. Kassner. We cannot give it up just for space and convenience."

The Rebbetzin immediately agreed, and they remained in that apartment until their neighbor passed away.

***

At a chasunah at which he was to be mesader kiddushin, Reb Dovid looked over the kesubah and saw that the chassan's name had been filled in without mention of the fact that he was a Kohen. Reb Dovid took a new kesubah and filled it in again, this time adding the term "HaKohen" after the chassan's name.

Later on, a talmid wondered about this. "Is the inclusion of the fact that the chassan is a Kohen me'akev in the kesubah? Was it necessary to write a new one?" he asked the Rosh Yeshivah.

"No," Reb Dovid said, "it is not me'akev, the kesubah is kosher without it. But I considered what would happen if the one reading the kesubah under the chuppah realized that it did not mention that the chassan was a Kohen. Perhaps he would have thought that it was me'akev, and made a commotion about it, leading to embarrassment for everyone. So I thought it better to add it in now, and avoid that situation."



The Siddur Speaks

The Chofetz Chaim would often give a Mashal:

A poor man approaches a wealthy miser and cries his heart out to him, and he insists that he is unable to get money from anyone else. He has exhausted all other options, and he has nowhere else to turn. He pleads, "Please help me. There is no one else!"

The Chofetz Chaim said that even the most miserly and stingy individual will open up his wallet to help this person and give him something. Surely, if one turns to Hashem like this, his Father in Shamayim, the Creator of the universe, and says, "No one else can help me but You, Hashem!" - Surely, Hashem will listen to these Tefilos!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz, zt"l, said, "All we can do is change ourselves, and that will make the world just a little bit better!"



Air Of Purity - Aleinu L'Shabeiach by Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein

My aunt told a story that happened in her town, Goborova, during the Holocaust. One Friday afternoon, the Nazis set fire to the town from all sides, and gathered all of the Jews — men, women, and children — into the shul, which was made of wood. They declared that they were going to torch the shul, and that any Jew found outside the shul would be killed on the spot. The children, who were hungry and tired, cried continuously. Among the Jews in the shul was R' Yoel the baker, a truly G-d-fearing person.

R' Yoel had managed to bake some challos for Shabbos that morning, but the challos were still in his bakery. At risk to his own life, he decided to sneak out of the shul to get the challos and bring them back to the shul so that the people could fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh.

Several minutes later, he returned to the shul with the challos and invited the people to partake of a Shabbos seudah. Momentarily dismissing their unfortunate circumstances, the Jews washed their hands and ate the fresh challah.

Then, inexplicably, a Nazi commander arrived and informed the soldiers that their regiment had been given a new assignment on the

battlefield, and that they were to leave the town immediately. The evil Nazis guarding the shul requested that they be allowed to set the shul on fire before departing, but the commander insisted that they follow him without delay.

The Jews of the town were convinced that this miraculous turn of events, which happened just as they were fulfilling the mitzvah of seudas Shabbos, was due to the mesirus nefesh of R' Yoel the baker.

His mesirus nefesh purified the environs to the extent that it banished the Angel of Death, causing the Nazis to abandon their murderous plan.

wh Y I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

וּלְמַ֣עַן תְּסַפֵּ֗ר בְּאָזְנֵי֙ בִּנְךָ֣ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ֔ אֵ֥ת אֲשֶׁ֛ר הִתְעַלַּ֥לְתִּי בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם וְאֶת־אֹתֹתַ֣י אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֣מְתִּי בָ֑ם וִֽידַעְתֶּ֖ם כִּֽי־אֲנִ֥י ה׳" ***So that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt and My signs that I placed among them--that you may know that I am Hashem.***" (10:2)

The Pasuk is explaining to us a very important lesson. If a person wishes his words to be accepted, he must first believe in them himself. Only when a person truly believes in what he is saying, do other people - especially his children - follow him. so that you can tell your children and grandchildren but only if first you yourself know that I am Hashem. (**R' Yehoshua of Belz**)

Your words are fire! They can bring warmth and comfort Or spread and destroy Everything!

The Old German's Confession

An old German man was feeling guilty about something he had done, so he decided to go to Confession. He said, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I feel terrible because during World War II, I hid a Jew in my attic."

The priest said, "But that's not a sin! I wouldn't feel bad about that if I were you."

"But I made him agree to pay me 50 Marks for every week he stayed."

The priest said, "Well, I admit that it wasn't the noblest thing to do, charging the man to save his life, but you did save his life, after all, and that is a good thing. Don't worry about it too much; G-d forgives."

The man said, "Oh thank you, Father, that eases my mind. - I have only one more question to ask you: Do I have to tell him the war is over!?"

The Legendary Story of the Maharam Schick



The Maharam [Rabbi Moshe] Schick (1807-1877) as a child and young boy was known not to be very bright. Even when he came to learn in the Yeshiva of Chassam Sofer it was said that whatever he learned one day, he forgot by the next day.

But the Maharam Schik was an extraordinary Masmid and very diligent, he chazered and chazered over and over until Hashem opened his mind and heart and he became

one of the leading Gedolim of his generation. So much so, that he remembered his learning by heart.

When testing his students, he would open a Gemarah, put his finger on the right place but wouldn't even look inside. Once in his old age when his eyesight was bad, one of his students wanted to check out his Rebbi and when he wasn't looking, he managed to flip over the page. The Maharam Schik hadn't noticed, and he continued looking at his students, with his finger pointing to the right place on the wrong page.

The Maharam Schik used to say, "one doesn't become a Talmid Chacham from learning. Becoming a Talmid Chacham is only from Chazarah over and over again.



Once the **Kesav Sofer** (Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyomin Sofer, 1815-1871) and the Maharam Schik were in the same town for health reasons. The Kesav Sofer was busy studying a topic and needed a Tur with the commentary of the Beis Yosef. He asked his attendant to go to the Maharam Schik and ask if he could borrow the Tur.

The Maharam Schik replied that he can't lend him the Sefer, but if he asks his Rebbi, the Kesav Sofer which Siman (chapter) he needs, he is happy to write it down for him. The student returned back shortly after with the correct Siman and the Maharam Schik wrote him the whole thing.

A few days later, the Kesav Sofer came to visit the Maharam Schik and asked him to see the Tur inside. It was then that the Kesav Sofer found out that the Maharam Schik hadn't copied it from a

volume because he didn't have the Sefer with him, he had written it completely from memory.

Reb Asher Lemmel Schwarz was a student of the Maharam Schik and used to write his Rebbi's Chiddushei Torah. Once on a journey with his Rebbi, Reb Asher Lemmel was busy writing his Rebbi's Divrei Torah. As they were traveling the wagon got stuck and turned over. No one was hurt besides Reb Asher Lemmel who injured his hand and had severe pains. So much so, that he couldn't continue writing his Rebbi's Chiddushim.

Out of such intense pain the young Asher Lemmel made a comment and said, "maybe the Rebbi's words need to be checked out." (He made this comment out of pain and bitterness that only he was injured on his hand that was busy writing the words of his Rebbi's Torah)

The Maharam Schik looked at him bewildered and said, "When you come up to Heaven, I will come and take you to my Yeshiva in Heaven and you will see and be proven that I learned Torah Lishmah – Torah only for Hashem's sake without any exterior motives."

Many years later Reb Asher Lemmel told this story to his son in law and asked that the story should be repeated at his Levaya as he hopes that his Rebbi will fulfil his words and come to take him into his Yeshiva.

In his final illness the Maharam Schick's body was bloated from head to toe and he suffered intense pain. He turned to his students and said, "I am begging Hashem to be able to stay alive, even if I will remain bedridden like now and unable to do anything, I am willing to lie like this and be able to say once a day just the first Passuk of Shema Yisrael till Echad!"

[Reprinted from the Parshas Shemos 5784 email of Inspired by a Story]

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev.באר היטב פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק

חלון לחג הפסח - A window to the Yom Tov of Pesach.

Reb Avrohom Elimelech of Karlin ZT"L HY"D said in the name of his great grandfather **The Bais Aharon ZY"A**, that on Parshas Bo a window opens to the Yom Tov of Pesach. Therefore, one should watch the Seforim and not put them on a table which has Chometz on it.

Similarly, **The Kedushas Levi ZY"A** says, that when a person takes a Sefer off the table and brushes it off from any crumbs, he is fulfilling – **למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך** – '***one must remember the day of leaving Mitzrayim (Egypt) all the days of his life***.'

After Ma'ariv, on the night of Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Bo, **Reb Moshe Leib Sasover ZY"A**, and his Kehilla all burst in unity in the recitation of Hallel with great joy and enthusiasm.

Just as is done on the nights of Pesach (in many communities). It was not done as a Minhag, and not done every year. Only such it was, when they reached the height of feeling the Yetzias Mitzrayim (redemption from Egypt), they said Hallel to praise Hashem.

It is known and accepted in the name of our **Rebbe the Holy Chozeh of Lublin ZY"A**, that he said as a symbol of the following Parshios. Parshas Bo is the first days of Pesach. Parshas Beshalach is the last days of Pesach. Parshas Yisro is Matan Torah – Shavuos. Mishpotim is Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – days of judgement. Terumah is a symbol of Succos, as is the canopy of the Mishkon, so to the Sukkah is a temporary dwelling. Tetzaveh is Chanukah, Shemen Zayis Zoch (pure olive oil). Ki Sisoh is Purim, as Chazal say in Megilloh 13:," I preempted my Shkolim to the Shkolim of Homon." - **Sefer Chaim ViSholom.**

One might wonder, "what is the significance of this Remez?" The answer is: Firstly, "Kri'oh Me'orer ess hazman" (the reading awakens the time – significance). Secondly, when one plants, there is plowing and seeding. So too are there Parshios for the coming Yomim Tovim. Thirdly, it is a Hachonoh (preparation) for the upcoming Yomim Tovim.

May we be Zoche (merit) to prepare and celebrate the Yomim Tovim with a speedy Redemption from Golus, Omein.

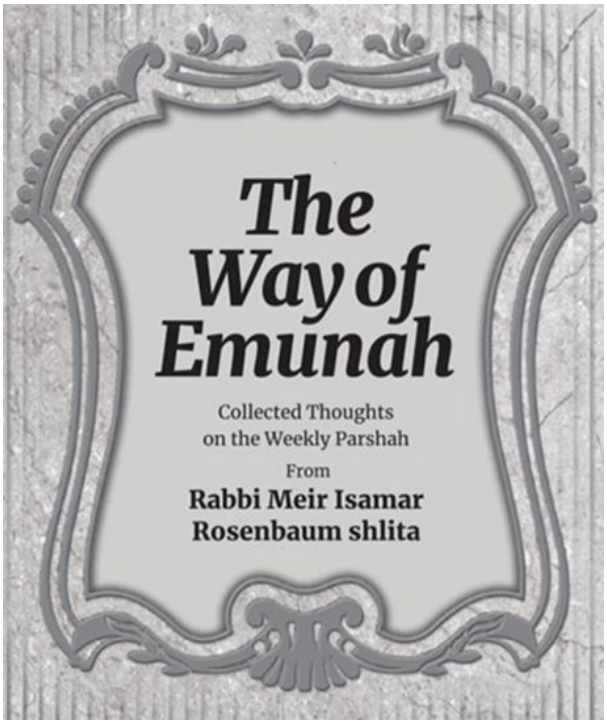
הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב – '***Today you are leaving, in the month of springtime***.' (Shemos 13:4)

It says in the **Zohar HaKodosh**, that in the Zechus of Klall Yisroel eating Matzoh on Pesach, they are spared from judgement on Rosh Hashonoh.

This is hinted in this Possuk "**הַיּוֹם** - Today". Hayom is referring to Rosh Hashonoh (Zohar HaKodosh Bo 32:2). As to say Today – Rosh Hashonoh, we prevail in the Zechus of the Matzoh that we have eaten during Chodesh Ho'Aviv, in Nisson, on Pesach. – [**Sefer Divrei Yichezkel – Shinev**.]

The Heilige Chozeh of Lublin ZY"A, quoted the Gemoroh (Kedushin 41) "Mitzvoh Bo Yoser MiBishlucho", it is a greater Mitzvoh to come to one's Rebbe for Parshas Bo than Parshas Beshalach.

Rabbi Nochum of Shtefinesht ZY"A once said to the Chasidim gathered around him: "If we could hang all our troubles and sorrows on pegs, and we were allowed to choose those we liked best, each of us would take back his own, for other people's would seem even more difficult to bear." – [**Sipurei Chasidim**.]



● The Plague of Being Unable to See One's Friend

וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ־אֲפֵלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. לֹא־רָאֹו אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו - '*And there was utter darkness in all of the land of Egypt…and a man could not see his brother*.' (10:22-23)

Sefer Emes L'Yaakov (by **Rav Yaakov Emanuel Koppel zt"l**, son-in-law of the **Divrei Yisroel of Modzhitz zy"a**) states that we see from this pasuk that one must always look to see what his friend needs and attempt to help him. We see that the plague of darkness was that "a man could not see his brother." Not being able to see one's brethren's needs is a makkah.

וְגַם־מִקְנֵנוּ יֵלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ לֹא תִשָּׁאֵר פַּרְסָה כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ נִקַּח לַעֲבֹד אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ - '*And our cattle will also go with us. Not one hoof will remain because we will take it with us to serve Hashem*.' (10:26)

● The Tzedakah One Gives Speaks on His Behalf

The word פַּרְסָה (hoof) can also be translated as "perusah" (a piece of bread). It is said in the name of **Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a** that this pasuk can be understood to be saying that when a person dies, he does not leave behind even one piece of bread that he gave to a poor person. Rather, every piece goes up to Shomayim and speaks on the person's behalf before the Heavenly Court."

"Tefilah is living with Hashem, feeling His presence throughout the day in every situation that comes our way." ~ Living Emunah.

● Today, Chesed is The Main Thing

Sefer Ohr Elimelech (Gemilus Chasadim, Ois 37) quotes **Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk zy"a** as saying that until the era of the Arizal, the world stood on the pillar of Torah. The other two pillars – those of avodah and gemilus chasadim – were merely secondary, as Torah was the main thing.

From that time until now, however, the pillar of gemilus chasadim was the main one. He concludes: "This means that a person is permitted to give precedence to chesed over the other pillars."

● In the Merit of Tzedakah, His Life Was Saved

On the topic of tzedakah, the following story is related about **Rav Yitzchok of Kalish zy"a** (son of **Rav Aron Leib of Premishlan zy"a**, brother of **Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a**), who was known to have an open house for all wanderers and poor people:

One day (Sefer Oros Mordechai says that it was on an erev Shabbos), a non-Jew came to Rav Yitzchok's home and asked for a piece of bread. The Rebbitzen had just baked fresh 84ravell and was reluctant to cut open a whole loaf just to give one piece to this gentile. However, Rav Yitzchok told her, "If you cut the bread, Jewish blood will not be spilled."

The Rebbitzen did as he said, and she gave the non-Jew enough bread to sate his hunger. Shortly thereafter, Rav Yitzchok 84ravelled to Hungary. His journey took him through the Carpathian Mountains, where gangs of highwaymen who would rob travelers, and occasionally kill them, were common on the roads.

Rav Yitzchok was captured by thieves, who took all the money he had with him. They then brought him to their leader to ask what they should do with him. Should they kill him to ensure he doesn't inform on them to the authorities, or should they let him go?

The leader of the highwaymen immediately recognized Rav Yitzchok as the man who had been kind to him and had told his wife to give him bread. He said, "This Jew saved my life when I was starving. Let him go and give him back his money."

Rav Yitzchok walked out in peace. When he got home, he told his Rebbitzen, "Didn't I tell you that if you cut the bread, blood would not be spilled. In the merit of that bread, my life was spared." (**Ohr Hameir Premishlan**)

דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב

'***Please speak in the ears of the nations and a man should borrow from his friend… vessels of gold and vessels of silver***.' (11:2)

● The Treasure of Bitachon

The Gemara states (Brachos 9A): "The word נָא always connotes a request. Hashem told Moshe: I request of you to go and tell Yisroel to please borrow from the Egyptians gold and silver vessels so that they shouldn't say that I promised Avrohom that his offspring would be enslaved, and I fulfilled that, but I then said that they would leave with a great treasure, and I did not fulfill that."

The Meforshim struggle to understand this. Did Hashem only need to give them this treasure so that the nations wouldn't say that He didn't fulfill His promise? Didn't He have to fulfill His promise in any case?

The Lisker Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Ach Pri Tevuah) answers that when Klal Yisroel left Mitzrayim, they had complete emunah in Hashem and Moshe. They trusted fully in Hashem and followed Him into the barren desert with unquestioning faith that He would lead them to a good place, and Hashem testified that He will always remember their unwavering bitachon in Him (Yirmiyahu 2:2).

In truth, there is no one wealthier than one who possesses emunah and bitachon. **The Chovos Halevavos** writes that one who has

bitachon is ten times wealthier than an alchemist who knows how to transform dust into gold. The reason for this is that this alchemist will always be worried that the government may discover that he is turning dust into gold. He is also afraid that he might get sick and be unable to enjoy his wealth. Even if he has all the money in the world, he can't be certain that he will have any benefit from it. - One who has bitachon, however, always is confident that Hashem will take care of all his needs.

Since Klal Yisroel had bitachon when they left Egypt, they were all very wealthy. Hashem recognized this and knew that He had fulfilled His promise to grant them riches. Even if they didn't have monetary wealth, the bitachon they had was worth a lot more.

However, the nations of the world did not know about this and were unaware that the promise could be fulfilled in this way. Therefore, Hashem told Moshe that He should tell the people to take literal treasures from the Egyptians so that the non-Jews shouldn't think that He hadn't fulfilled his guarantee.

The reason Hashem told them to borrow the gold and silver was so that they shouldn't acquire it suddenly and absolutely. Since they only borrowed it, they had to be worried that the Egyptians may chase them to get it back, and they had to strengthen their bitachon even more that Hashem would save them.

Only after the downfall of the Egyptians did they realize they would be keeping the treasures and that it had been theirs since they had taken it.

● The Booty Was a Loan

Rav Moshe of Lelov zy"a explains that the reason Hashem told Moshe that the people should borrow the gold and silver vessels, rather than taking them outright, was so that they should be "in

debt" to the Egyptians and, thereby, they would be afraid to ever return to Egypt because of their debt.

The Ropshitzer Rebbe zy"a famously said that if you bump into a rich man who enjoys talking on and on, but you have no patience to listen to him, the best idea is to ask him for a donation. From then on, he will cross the street whenever he notices you coming his way.

So too, if you want to avoid an annoying poor man, the best thing to do is to lend him money. From then on, he will always make sure to stay away from you so that he doesn't have to pay you back.

Rav Mordechai Yaffe of Lechovitch zt"l הרב מרדכי בן נח יפה זצ"ל Shevat 13, 5570 Known As: Ohr Yeshorim, Mira D'chi

● **A Poor Man is Exempt from Gehenim**:

The Mishmeres Shalom of Koidenov zy"a (quoted in Sefer Shem Aharon, page 11) related the following story: After the passing of a relative of Rav Mordechai, the nifter was brought before the Heavenly Court for his final judgment.

He told them, "My entire life, I never did anything without first getting the approval of the Lechovitcher Rebbe. I want him to be my judge."

His request was granted, and Rav Mordechai was made the judge. He ruled, "He does not deserve to go to Gehenim because Chazal say (Yevamos 102B) that a poor man is exempt from Gehenim and he was poor. I rule that he should be given a place in Gan Eden."

● **The Greatness of the Teacher is Evident in His Students**:

Rav Mordechai had another talmid named Rav Yeshaya Tamim who once came to the Rov of his city in the middle of the night. The Rov was very frightened to see him because a war was raging at the time between Russia and Poland and the city was right near the battlefield, making it very dangerous to walk outside. Additionally,

Rav Yeshaya's hat fell off on the way, and he covered his head with his coat. He entered the room dressed like that, which gave the Rov a fright.

The Rav asked, "What happened to you?" Rav Yeshaya replied, "Nothing happened to me. I just walked over because I had a question on a Rashi and I wanted to ask you to explain it to me."

The Rov said in amazement, "At a time like this and in the middle of the night, you came to ask me a question on a Rashi?"

Rav Yeshaya answered, "Just because the Russians and Pollacks are fighting, I shouldn't understand a Rashi?"

● **I Believe**:

The Kobriner Rebbe zy"a related that Rav Mordechai would go over the words of Ami Ma'amin with the local innkeepers. The Kobriner Rebbe said that he witnessed this one time and saw Rav Mordechai repeat the words "Ani Ma'amin" three times.

The third time that Rav Mordechai said the words, he had to leave the room because the fire of his emunah was so strong.

● **He Could Not Enjoy Gan Eden If Jews are in Gehenim**:

Rav Mordechai once said, "After 120 years, if I am sent to Gan Eden, I won't be able to enjoy it as long as even one Jew is in Gehenim. How can it be a 'Gan Eden' for me if I know that there is a Jew in Gehenim?"

● **Praying With Joy**:

He once said, "If a Jew is in trouble, he can daven to Hashem to save him in the name of Mordechai ben Aidel (his name) as long as he davens with joy and not with sadness."

● **Torah Pursued Him**:

Sefer Sipurei Maran Haramach relates that a misnaged was once learning Gemara when he had a question on a Tosafos. He toiled over

this Tosafos for several days but could not come up with an answer to his question. He then asked Rav Mordechai if he could help him understand Tosafos and was given an answer immediately.

He said, "I don't understand why I had to work for days to try to find a p'shat and still couldn't do it, but you were able to think of one right away."

The Rebbe replied, "I am busy with my shiurim and my tefillos. The Torah begs me to learn, so, if I have time, I learn. Therefore, the Torah comes to me. On the other hand, the Torah does not want you to learn it. Therefore, it runs away from you."

● **With The Power of Emunah, One Can Perform Wonders**:

The Ramach of Slonim further relates that Rav Mordechai was once asked how he is able to provide yeshuos for people who come to him.

He answered, "I don't do miracles. What I do is I instil the person with emunah until he becomes so saturated with emunah that he becomes a miracle worker and he can bring about his own salvation."

The Ramach writes that Rav Mordechai would say that anyone who passes through the door of his house will not die without doing teshuva.

The Ramach added, "His door is still open for all generations."

● **He Would Not Reveal The Secret**:

The Ramach also relates that Rav Mordechai said in regards to the importance of giving tzedakah to the poor of Eretz Yisroel, "I don't want to reveal the secret of giving money to Eretz Yisroel because if Yidden would know the secret of how great it is to donate funds to Eretz Yisroel, wealthy people would send all their money there and it would be very bad for the poor people in chutz la'aretz."

● **There is Some Truth to The Words of The Misnagdim**:

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen (Chelek 2, page 231) writes: It is well-known that Rav Mordechai suffered greatly from the persecutions

of the misnagdim. He once asked those around him, "What are the misnagdim saying about me?"

They answered that they were saying three things about him – that he was a "mechashef" (engaged in sorcery), that he was an ignoramus, and that he ate like a glutton.

Rav Mordechai responded, "There is some truth to their words. Although I am not a mechashef, I am a mechashev (one who thinks), in fulfillment of the Mishnah (Avos 20:1) that says that one should think about the loss he sustains in fulfilment of a mitzvah in relation to the reward he will receive.

"It is also somewhat true that I am an am ha'aretz, as Chazal say that an am ha'aretz is afraid of Shabbos and I am, in fact, afraid of the holiness of Shabbos.

"However, it is not true that I eat a lot because I do not have such a big appetite. If only I was able to eat, I would be able to save the 'small hats' of Germany." (The Jews of Germany had begun wearing small hats, with a big breach in traditional Jewish garb.)

● **He Could Only Sleep After Giving Away All He Owned to Charity** :

The Ramach of Slonim zy"a relates the following statement in the name of Rav Mordechai: "When I get ready to go to sleep, if I know that there is still some money in the house, it pokes me in the side. But if there is nothing in house, I can sleep well, knowing that in the morning I will need to once again rely on Hashem." - May the memory of the tzadik be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.

A Jew is never lost on his journey. Wherever he finds himself, Hashem has a reason for placing him there." ~ R' Morderchai Pogremansky.

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI MAAMIN Foundation

What Tu B'Shevat fruit does not grow from a flower?



Figs are one of the most ancient and beloved fruits in the world, having been enjoyed by people for thousands of years. They are native to Eretz Yisrael and the Middle East, but they are now grown in many other parts of the world, too.

Figs are known for their high nutritional value, as they are rich in fibre, vitamins, and minerals.

Figs are unique in that they do not flower like most fruits. Instead, they have a unique structure called a syconium, which is a hollow receptacle with a small opening at the top. The flowers are located inside the syconium, and the fruit develops from the flowers. Fig trees can live up to 200 years.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman:

There are three beliefs a person must know regarding Tefillah:

1. ***Hashem can do anything.***
2. ***Hashem wants to help me.***
3. ***Even my Tefillah can make a difference.***

Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

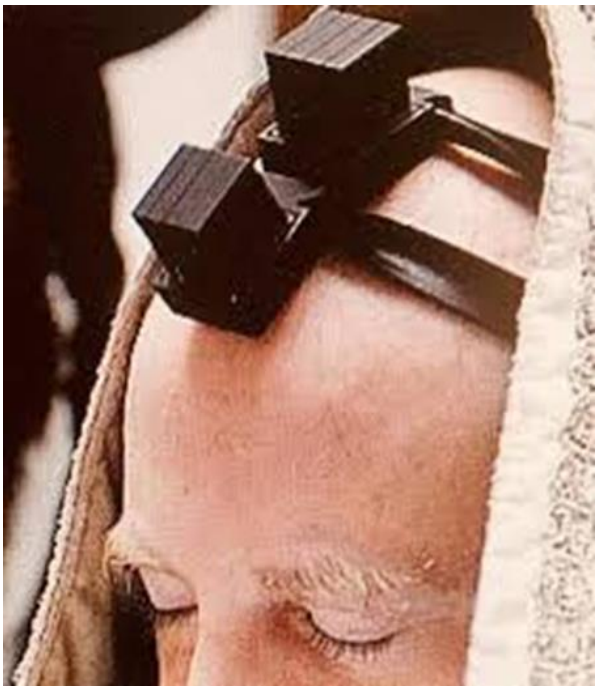
In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב

Hashem instructed Moshe to beg the Jewish people to go "borrow" silver and gold from their neighbors, so that Avraham Avinu won't complain that Hashem didn't fulfill His promise to make us wealthy upon our exit from slavery. (11:2)

The Jews themselves needed convincing because after all they had endured under the cruel conditions of slavery, they lost all desire for anything physical or material; they were just happy to be alive, and so they needed some convincing.

When they ended up constructing the eigel ha'zahav from these precious metals, Moshe argued in our defence, that it was only because we were forced to take gold at a point that we weren't really ready for it, we didn't know how to put it to proper use and failed in our decision to contribute to the eigel ha'zahav campaign.



Tefilin of Rabeinu Tam

At the end of parshas Bo we read about two of the four parshiyos found inside our tefillin. The other two parshiyos - shema and v'haya im shamo'a are in parshas Va'eschanan and parshas eikev.

The order of their placement in the tefillin is a matter of dispute among the Rishonim. Rabeinu Tam questions Rashi's understanding of the Gemara.

Although he agrees that the parshiyos must be written in the order they appear in the Torah, he disagrees with their placement. - The Tur and Rosh write that since this is a major machlokes between the Rishonim, one should be machmir and wear two pairs of tefillin. - Those of Rashi and Rabeinu Tam. They recommend wearing both pairs of tefillin at the same time as is the custom of many sefardim who wear somewhat smaller tefillin. The Beis Yosef however writes that one who finds it difficult to wear both simultaneously should put on Rabeinu Tam tefillin after davening.

It is well known that **Rav Chaim Volozhin**, once asked his Rebbe, the **Vilna Gaon** why he doesn't wear Rabeinu Tam tefillin. The Gra replied that if he wanted to fulfill every opinion, he would have to wear sixty-four pairs of tefillin!

The cheshbon is as follows: There are four opinions regarding the order of the parshiyos. In addition, there is a machlokes Rishonim whether or not to place the parshiyos vertically or horizontally. This makes a eight possible combinations. Also there is a machlokes between the Rosh and Rambam and how to write a parsha stuma -the spacing between the parshiyos - this makes 16 possibilities.

There is another machlokes regarding which side of the klaf to write on, making 32 possible combinations. etc.. It should be noted however, that many of the contemporary gedolei haposkim have said that this reasoning only applied to the Gra who wore tefillin all day long. Switching to a different pair of tefillin would therefore take away from the mitzva one is fulfilling since the basic halacha follows Rashi. - We however, who generally only wear tefillin during davening, should not use this as a justification not to fulfill the opinion of Rabeinu Tam and there are indeed several non-Chasidishe, Ashkenazi gedolim who do don tefillin d'Rabeinu Tam regularly. - Indeed, the minhag of most Ashkenazim who are not Chasidish is to wear only those tefillin that are according to the order of Rashi.

Tefillin "In" The Head

וְהָיָה֩ לְךָ֨ לְאֹ֜ות עַל־יָדֶ֗ךָ וּלְזִכָּרֹון֙ בֵּ֣ין עֵינֶ֔יךָ (13:9)

Rav Zusha of Anipoli once walked through a marketplace with his tallit and tefillin on. As the Gentiles saw him, they fled in fear, closing their doors. Rav Zusha attributed this reaction to his wearing tefillin.

His students then posed a valid question: They too wore tefillin in public, encountering gentiles, yet saw no similar response.

Rav Zusha's answer was insightful. He cited the Gemara's distinction between tefillin "on" the head and tefillin "in" the head. It's insufficient for tefillin to be an outer symbol; they must be internalized. This signifies that the intellectual and spiritual essence of the tefillin permeates our thoughts and actions.

When we put on tefillin daily, it's not a mundane routine. Rather, it's an act of empowerment, a recharging of our spiritual energy. The texts within the tefillin should become a living part of us, guiding our perspectives and actions. While some might view tefillin as a burden, they are, in fact, a wellspring of vitality, shaping our day positively.

Tefillin "inside" the head (**תפילין שבראש**) signifies this internalized connection. When the nations witness a Jew who genuinely embodies the tefillin's essence, they will respect and hold him in high regard. This respect emanates not from fear of harm, but from a profound reverence for our deep-rooted values.

In this way, the Jewish people can truly become a source of illumination and inspiration for the world.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita adds that a person should put on tefillin -not just because it is a mitzva, and he is commanded to do it, but because he desires to. It says in Shema - **וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדֶךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ** – 'And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for *totafos* between your eyes.'

לְטֹטָפֹת means as an 'adornment'. A person should don tefillin because it is pleasant, like wearing jewellery. But the main thing is that their kedusha should be infused by the wearer - **הנח תפילין בְּיד והנח תפילין בְּראש** [Menachos 37b]



The journey of 89-year-old tefillin and their owner Menachem Zev O"H By Leslie Srolovits

The tefillin are 89 years old, but no one looking at them could know their history, where they had been, or what their owner had had endured while he was a prisoner during World War II.

Menachem Zev Ben Chaim was born in Nyirbator, a tiny town outside Budapest, June 12, 1915. He was the oldest of 11 children born to a chassidish family. All 11 of them went to cheder before attending secular school. As a child, Menachem was very thin — but he was strong.

Menachem's parents were followers of the **Kalivah rebbe** and one of his brothers became the rebbe's hoeiz bocher — his house boy — charged with attending to his every need, arranging appointments, getting meals, and accompanying him wherever he went. Menachem received his tefillin from his parents; they were written by a Kalivah scribe. The Kalivah dynasty exists today in Jerusalem with tens of thousands of followers. I had the distinct honor and privilege to have a private meeting with the grand rabbi several years ago; we spoke in Yiddish and Hungarian.

Once, Menachem's parents were wealthy; they owned real estate and hired Gypsies to help around the house. When he was a teenager, though, the family fell on hard times. Their wealth evaporated. Menachem showed tremendous respect toward his parents and siblings. As a young man he understood that finances were tight at home, so he found a job in a bakery making matzah. Although he worked 10- to 12-hour days, he made time to put on tefillin and thank

G-d for all his blessings. Menachem earned enough money to buy hand baked matzah for the entire family for Passover. That cost his entire salary, but he had no regrets.

Menachem was inducted into military service in 1941, not as a soldier but rather as an assistant assigned to a high-ranking officer, who was in charge of a large division. The Hungarian government mandated all young men to serve in some capacity. During the earlier years there had been no overt signs of hatred toward Jews, but that changed very rapidly.

As life grew worse for the Jews throughout Europe in1943, and as Hitler gained more power and started rounding up Jews in Poland and elsewhere, the treatment of non-commissioned Jewish soldiers started to deteriorate. The commander, who liked Menachem, allowed him to keep his tefillin, inside their little zippered blue bag, which he kept in his deep-pocketed coat.

As World War II spread throughout Europe and the Hungarian Jews were rounded up by force and taken to camps, Menachem became a prisoner of war, held by the Hungarian and German armies somewhere on the Russian border. He had a very powerful voice, so the commander demanded that he sing Hungarian songs to several hundred soldiers whenever they were at the main army base, far from the front line.

In return for singing songs, Menachem received extra food and was permitted to keep his tefillin. Throughout the bitter cold days and nights, he spent near the Russian border, Menachem often would touch and hold the tefillin, and that gave him comfort.

As the war in Europe got worse, Menachem, who was with a small group of Jewish prisoners, had to dig ditches by the front line while bullets whizzed by them. Hungarian soldiers thought that Jews were dispensable. If a few of them were killed digging trenches, that wasn't a big deal. Menachem told me that it was so cold in Russia that many of his fellow prisoners froze to death. It was

normal and common for the prisoners to swap clothing and shoes with the dead prisoners, if their clothing or shoes had been better. Sadly, since the ground was so rock solid, always covered with thick ice and snow, none of the Jewish prisoners were buried properly.

One bone-chilling night, a friend of Menachem's died peacefully in the front lines, frozen to death. Menachem exchanged his old ragged coat with his friend's. The new coat was black and long enough to cover more of Menachem's legs, which were always cold. The new coat also had bigger pockets, and he put his tefillin in one of them.

Menachem was very concerned he might not make it through the war. He was becoming thinner and thinner as the weeks and months passed. Jewish prisoners all around him were dying from frostbite or bullets from the Russian soldiers. They constantly were being pushed to different locations, with very little rest.

He didn't know how long he could endure it.

One night, the entire group of soldiers and Jewish prisoners stopped in a remote Russian farm — a field, a house, and a barn. The soldiers slept in the warm house, while the Jews were sent to the unheated barn. There were pigs and horses all around them. That was the night when Menachem held onto his tefillin tightly and asked Hashem (G-d) to please watch over him as he tried to escape. Menachem had enough. He was going to take a chance and risk his life. If he succeeded, he would finally be free.

When one of the guards was distracted and looked away, Menachem ran across a snow-covered field. The soldier screamed "Stop! Stop!" but he kept on running. He was wearing his long black coat. Several gunshots rang out, and one bullet his Menachem's right leg. (After all, he was after all an easy target, wearing a black coat and running across a snow-covered field.) Menachem ran a few yards after he was hit, and then he collapsed into the snow.

What happened next is without a doubt one ness — one miracle — after another. As Menachem lay on the ground, in excruciating pain, the soldiers surrounded him and mocked him. One soldier wanted to shoot him on the spot, while another resisted the temptation. "We need them for the front lines," that second soldier said. "Too many of these Jews have been dying. Let's send him back to the hospital and get him patched up, so he can come back here and continue to dig trenches."





The soldiers picked Menachem up and dropped him in a small indentation in the ground, used to collect water. They did that just to torture him. They did it several times before they put him on a truck headed back to a field hospital, which was 10 miles from the front lines. Menachem was in pain. But he clutched his pocket, where his tefillin were. When he got to the hospital, a group of soldiers took him inside. They took off his coat and set it aside, and then they dropped him into a stainless-steel drum full of ice cold water. They kept laughing and making jokes.

Then a doctor — who was a commissioned officer — walked into the operating room, told the soldiers to put Menachem on the table, and

immediately ordered everyone out of the room. What happens next is nothing but the hand of G-d, another miracle.

Menachem was all stretched out on the table, sopping wet, under blinding lights. He was thinking, "I've been shot. I've been tortured twice this evening. What else can Hashem want from me?" As he stared into the doctor's eyes, the doctor leaned over Menachem and whispered in his ear. "I am a Jew. I never had a bris. I will take care of you."

Menachem was in total shock. He was speechless. The doctor removed the bullet, stitched Menachem up, and said, "You are super thin. I'm going to order that they put you in the kitchen to work, and you must eat everything you can lay your hands on so that you can fatten yourself up." This was music to Menachem's ears. There was very little food on the front lines.

Shortly after Menachem started to work in the kitchen, the doctor told him that in a week or two he would be transferred to another field hospital. "Once I am gone, you must take a knife or utensil and open your wound so it starts bleeding heavily again," the doctor told Menachem. "This will save you from going back to the front lines, where I am told the battles are becoming more intense."

Menachem did what the doctor told him to do. The new doctor in charge said, "You are not ready to go back to the front."

Several weeks later, word spread within the hospital that the Russians had killed all the soldiers and prisoners on the front lines. Everyone in the hospital and on the base was convinced that was just a question of time before they would be surrounded. The war was almost over, they believed.

Years later, Menachem told me, "I bet you never heard of anyone's life being saved by a bullet." His was.

Some time later, all the prisoners at the remote base in Russia where Menachem was held were told to leave. "You are free to go," they

were told. The soldiers holding them were totally surrounded. Menachem stuffed some food in one pocket of his black coat. The tefillin were safe in his other pocket.

As he and his companions scrambled to leave, Menachem and two other prisoners remembered that there were mountains and forests at some distance from the camp. They thought it would be a safe place to hide.

As the three men walked, they heard bombs landing, and fierce fighting in the distance. They walked for a few hours. As they got deeper and deeper into the forest, one of them noticed an opening in the mountain. It was a cave, partially hidden by trees. They climbed in and stayed there for several days, slowly eating the small amount of food they had brought with them.

The three men often would peer out of the cave when they heard tanks and machine gun fire the distance. Menachem remembers clutching his tefillin, raising his head toward the sky, and whispering, "When will this all end? Oh dear G-d, when will I feel safe? When will I finally be liberated? When will I be able to go home?"

The very next day the three friends saw a bunch of German soldiers in the distance, exchanging clothing with the prisoners. Next, Menachem saw that everyone's hands were up in the air, and Russian soldiers surrounded all of them, soldiers and prisoners alike. The Russians separated the people dressed in uniforms from those dressed as prisoners.

The Russians start marching the soldiers into the forest — but those soldiers really were prisoners. Menachem spoke some Russian that he had picked up from his years in captivity. He realized there was a language barrier separating the Hungarians, the Germans, and the Russians.

At great risk to his personal safety, Menachem put his hands up in the air, crawled out of the cave, and walked toward the Russian

soldiers. In broken Russian, he explained that the Germans switched clothing with the prisoners. Although it took some time to get his point across, he was successful.

The Russians demanded that the Germans and the prisoners exchange clothing again. Once again, the soldiers put on their uniforms and the prisoners their ragged clothes. Then they marched the German soldiers deep into the forest and killed all of them.

Menachem got some more food from the Russians, who told him that he and the other prisoners were free to go. Although Menachem felt free, he knew that there still were pockets of resistance. Word that the war was over did not filter to everyone.

Menachem walked from the Russian frontier back home to Hungary. He begged for food, knocking on doors and saying in Russian, "I am a refugee. Please help me with some scraps of food, or even a raw potato." He slept in the streets, or in open fields. But still he held onto the hope that with of G-d's help he would make it back to Nyirbator.

Three and a half months after he started his journey, Menachem arrived in his hometown, only to find that gentiles were living in the house where he, his parents, and his 10 siblings had lived. Not knowing what to do, he wandered around town, looking for his parents and siblings.

He came across two friends, and they hugged and kissed each other, with joy and tears. Menachem and his friends spent some time talking about what they had endured, and how they were able to survive and make it back home.

One of Menachem's friends was very upset that all the Jewish homes were occupied by gentiles, who had taken possession of them after the Germans rounded up the Jews and deported them. After careful thought, the three childhood friends come up with a plan. Since Hungary is still in a state of chaos, they thought, let's raid the old

police station, see what we can find, and then go house to house and evict the gentiles. Because it was a small town, they already knew a lot of people and where they use to live, Menachem said.

Menachem and his friends broke into the padlocked police station, where they found badges, handcuffs, and — to their amazement — guns. They tried out all the keys to the jail cells, spruced up their appearances, had a nice meal, and made the police station their temporary home. Menachem was happy and thankful to have survived, but he was not in his own home yet, and he had no idea where the rest of his family was.

The next morning, the three self-appointed detectives went door to door and politely asked the squatters to vacate the premises. If they declined to leave, the three friends opened their coats to show their weapons. If the squatters insisted on staying in the house they had taken over illegally, they were forcefully handcuffed and whisked away to jail.

Word spread around town that a group of detectives were going door to door. Some squatters felt threatened and left before the knock on their door came. Menachem and his friends went only to the homes where at least one family member of the original occupants had survived the war. Their belief was that people were entitled to live in their own homes, in the houses in which they had grown up.

The three friends got their homes back, but their parents and siblings had not returned home from the war. Menachem prayed that his parents and siblings would return home every day, using his tefillin. The prayer was comforting.

During the day, Menachem and his buddies continued to evict and arrest people in town, but at night he had time to think. He wondered what he would do next, to put some normalcy back in his life. Menachem closed the shades every morning before he prayed with his tefillin, the same tefillin that accompanied him and gave him comfort and hope throughout the war.

One day, one of Menachem's brothers returned from the war, then another came back, and then another. The town and its houses were filling up. After several weeks, four brothers were back home. The other seven siblings and their parents never were seen again.

Back at the police station, one day, while Menachem was cleaning his gun, it went off accidently. It nearly killed one of his best friends. Menachem said that this was a message from G-d that he had to pick a real profession.

Menachem was a heavy chain smoker; he smoked unfiltered cigarettes. He coughed a lot – so much, in fact, that the local doctor asked him if he wanted to smell the ground from above or from below. The doctor recommended that he find a job out in the fresh air. He also recommended that Menachem stop smoking immediately.

A friend suggested that Menachem become an apprentice glassier, which would give him skills as well as the opportunity to work outdoors. Menachem did become an apprentice, and he found that he enjoyed being outside and meeting people. During that time, a young woman broke a glass door in her house. That young woman, Leah Gruenberger, had survived Auschwitz, and so had her sisters and her father. Her family and Menachem's and known each other before the war.

Leah called the local glassier to fix the door, so Menachem showed up at her house on a Friday afternoon, while she was cooking the Shabbos meals. Menachem fixed the door, and told her how wonderful the kitchen smelled. Leah knew that four boys in Menachem's family had survived, and that they were living on their own in an empty house, without parents, so she invited all the brothers over for a Shabbos meal.

The next week Leah inadvertently slammed the two glass doors together again, again breaking one of the glass panels. Menachem came to the rescue again, with a big smile. Of course, Leah was very embarrassed. Leah invited all the brothers over for a second

Shabbos meal. Menachem and Leah dated briefly, and then they got married in the living room of her father's home. (No one had big weddings then. Everyone was poor.)

Menachem was 32 years old when they married, and Leah was 21.

Menachem and Leah had two boys, and life went on as normally as possible. The entire family escaped from Hungary in October 1956. First they went to Vienna, where they got the papers that allowed them to enter the United States in February 1957.

You're probably wondering how I came across such an interesting person as Menachem. Well, his story has been a part of my entire life, because Menachem Zev Ben Chaim O"H was none other than my dear beloved father, who I miss and think of every day.

He was a man of courage and compassion toward others, regardless of who you were. My father never made a lot of money, but he was always happy with what G-d had provided him and his family. He never envied those who had more, and he always taught us to look at people who have less than we have. If we do, he said, you never will be dissatisfied with what you have.

If you ever met my father and spoke with him just for five minutes about anything, you would walk away feeling that you just met a very special person. He made everyone feel important. He was the most genuine and honest person I have ever met.

My dad passed away 13 years ago, at the age of 89, but not a day goes by without my thinking of him and his stories, about his life and what he had to endure as a prisoner of war. I often wonder how a human being can go through so much yet be able to continue with life and raise a family and always have a smile on his face.

My mom, who I love dearly, is now 91 years old, and she is a pillar of strength and encouragement for our entire family. This is my father's story, not my mother's, but she has her own horror story. In Auschwitz, she made ammunition for Krups (yes, the same

company that sells small appliances in Macy's). She and her two sisters had consecutive numbers tattooed on their arms in Auschwitz; they were there for one and a half years before they were liberated by the American army.

The tefillin remind me daily of who my father was, what he stood for, and how I can strive to be more like him.

The journey of the tefillin does not end here. It is my intention to replace the straps on both tefillin, replace the outer shell (called batim) and then, G-d willing, offer them to my grandson Jonah for his bar mitzvah. The tefillin, with all its history, will be passed to the great grandson of Menachem Zev Ben Chaim Srolovits O"H.



מגדל אור

R' Elchanan Wasserman HY"D spent much time in America in the early 1930's, and was asked about the Great Depression. He explained that all difficulties that come to the world are on account of Klal Yisrael, intended to teach us something.



"The problem is not a lack of money," he explained. "There is money in the hands of the rich, but they are distrustful of other people. Without the smooth flow of money, the economy stalls.

This is mida k'neged mida, measure for measure. The Yetzer Hara for idolatry is gone, but it was replaced with one of kefira/heresy. When we don't believe and trust in Hashem, He says, "I will extend your lack of trust in Me so that people don't trust each other either." Then you will find out the hard way that just as the world cannot exist without Emunah in Hashem, it similarly cannot exist without Emunah between people."

"Our job in life is not to win – It's to never give up the fight." ~ Rabbi Shlomo Farhi.

Rebbe Dovid Biderman of Lelov, the founder of the Lelov dynasty, was born in 5506 (1745) to a family that opposed Chassidut. Nonetheless, he was drawn to Chassidut from his youth. Rebbe Dovid was a disciple of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhansk and afterward, of the Seer of Lublin. He was known for his great love of the Jewish people, for not imparting words of Torah in public and for bringing Jews close to Hashem.



Rebbe Dovid passed away on the 7th day of Shevat 5574 (1814) and was brought to rest in Lelov, Poland.

The righteous Rabbi David of Lelow, known as an exceptional lover of the Jewish People, used to stop in every village he passed, enter, and ask if there was a Jew there. And if he was answered in the affirmative, he would enter the Jewish home to check on the Jew's well-being, to be moved with him as with a long-lost brother, and to enlighten his heart with faith and trust in G-d, Torah and chassidism.

The Jew – who at first did not understand how he was visited by the good angel – would listen with an open mouth and attentive ears to Rabbi David's warm words, which infused him with a dew of encouragement, and would take it upon himself to draw closer to his Father in Heaven. Then the Rabbi wished him many blessings, and continued to the region he intended on going to.

Well, what small town didn't have a wandering Jewish boy living in it? Indeed, Rabbi David's travels took a long time, but in doing so he gained many Jewish souls. He revealed precious diamond stones, which would not be dissolved in gold; pure souls whose brilliance have reached the throne of honor. This is how Rabbi David brought back

countless Jewish children to Judaism and closer to their Heavenly Father.



A water carrier in Lublin

Once, on the way to his grandson's wedding, Rabbi David went to Lublin, and stopped in the city of Wadyslaw. As was his custom, he entered one of the villages around the city, to look for Jews, and a terrible picture was revealed to his eyes: the paritz (Polish estate owner whom Jews had to pay taxes to in exchange for protection), whose Jew had not paid him the rent for a long time, tied the Jew and his wife to the end of a carriage and drove the horses through the muddy streets of the village. If G-d forbid they fell, they would remain lying down forever… The paritz in those days did with his subordinates as his barbaric mind dictated, who dared to challenge him, to express an opinion to him?

When Rabbi David the righteous man saw the horrible spectacle, he waved his hand at the paritz to stop. The paritz, out of curiosity, ordered the coachman to stop the horses.

Rabbi David expressed his desire to pay the debt on the condition that the paritz freed the poor couple. One hundred and fifty rubles, that was the amount of the debt. "I don't have this amount here and now, but I am the rabbi of the town of Lelow. I will write you a promissory note and soon I will repay you the full amount."



The paritz was not stupid. He knew that dragging the Jews under his carriage would not bring money, so he agreed to the condition and immediately released the couple to their home.

Rabbi David did not stay with them too long. After showering them with blessings and words of encouragement, he continued on his way to Wadyslaw, where the Chozeh from Lublin rabbi was already waiting for him, outside the carriage that would take them to Lublin, for the wedding.

All the while that Rabbi David was conducting the negotiations with the paritz, the Chozeh stood with one foot on the carriage step and the other on the ground, absorbed in his holy thoughts. The relatives were already waiting for the Chozeh of Lublin to get on the carriage to continue the journey to the wedding, but no one dared to disturb the rabbi who was deep in thought until his student Rabbi David arrived. The Chozeh of Lublin greeted him with open joy and assured him that he would see to it that the debt to the paritz was paid.

The paritz had a wool business. He used to sell his sheep's wool to the same trader every year at a fixed price. A few days after the

incident with Rabbi David of Lelow, the paritz succeeded in trading, and sold the wool at a profit – 150 rubles more than every other year!

The paritz understood that Rabbi David was immersed in the matter. As much as the paritzes hated the Jews, and as much as they rejoiced at every opportunity that came before them to persecute the Jews, they knew very well that, unlike their priests, the righteous Jews are G-dly people who have a say in Heaven.

When the paritz came to this conclusion, he thought to himself: maybe the rabbi could really do miracles, maybe he could also heal my mute son, who has not spoken a word for several years, since his birth?

He thought and he did. The paritz called his workers to fill his carriage with all good things and together with his son he went to the wonder man in the town of Lelow.

In Lelow, he asked the local Jews where the Rebbe lived, but in response he was met with suspicious looks. They did not know what brought the paritz to their beloved rabbi and did not rush to give him information. The Fritz understood their suspicion, which considering the circumstances of the time was quite justified, and showed them his cart full of the best: fattened chickens and geese, fruits and vegetables, walnuts and almonds, "all for the righteous man."

At the sight of this fine merchandise, the Jews softened and instructed the paritz where the home of Rabbi David of Lelow was. The paritz saw the small, poor house, sparsely furnished, which had neither glory nor splendor, and he was confused:

How strange are the Jewish multitudes! So many are the dawns before them, and in such poverty they live.

The paritz went inside, took out the promissory note, tore it to pieces in front of everyone, and told about what he had earned from

the leather business. "The debt is paid!" he declared, "but I have one request of you, holy Rabbi. My only son, here he is before you. He is big and developed, as your eyes can see, but he does not open his mouth. A word has not come out of his mouth since he was born. A word, after all, He has it in Heaven, thus I came to see. Please pray for my only heir, G-d will surely hear his prayer.

Rabbi David turned his face to the wall and prayed in Yiddish, saying:

"Master of the Universe! So many dogs bark in the Your world. Another dog should bark!"

And there, as Rabbi David finished his prayer, the boy began to speak as one of the people. The paritz didn't know what to do with himself for joy. He went outside, unloaded the large shipment he had brought as an offering to the Rebbe, and since then he did not stop telling his paritz friends about the greatness and holiness of the salvation worker, the righteous Rabbi of Lelow.



The grave of Rabbi David of Lelow z"l

Even after the passing of Rabbi David of Lelow, gentiles would come and place their requests at the grave of the salvation worker, who in his life wandered endlessly in the towns and villages of Poland, in search of Jewish souls thirsty for encouragement, strength, and blessing.

Pray For Them All - Rabbi Shlomo Landau



Ori Danino has been held in brutal Hamas captivity for 122 days. His amazing mother and sister have been travelling throughout the USA instead of to receive chizuk, - to give chizuk.

Recently, somebody took his little sister, a 10-year-old girl, to a restaurant for a meal, and in an effort to make her feel better, they brought out a cake with candles.

She said, "But it's not my birthday."

"Yes, but blow out the candles anyway, and make a wish." – They assumed that she would say, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, please return my brother home." But the girl thought for a minute and said, "I know that I could ask for my brother to come home, but then that just helps my brother – what about everybody else?"

She says, "You know what, this is what I'm going to ask for… Hakadosh Baruch Hu, please bring Moshiach, because when You do, all of our issues and problems will be resolved."

This is profound! A young girl, in the darkest of places, and she doesn't just think about her brother, but she also thinks about everybody else.

What a great message! Let's daven for the redemption of the captives, but also daven for the Geulah Shleimo for all of Am Yisrael.

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו – *'For I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants.' (10:1)*

When Pharaoh would soften, his servants and ministers would harden themselves; when they would soften, Pharaoh would harden; when both would soften, G-d would harden their hearts. (**Midrash HaGadol**)

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבִבְנוֹתֵינוּ - *'We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and our daughters.' (10:9)*

Pharaoh was willing to let the menfolk go, as long as the children remain behind; for as long as the younger generation remains "in Egypt," there would be no future for the people of Israel.

The "Pharaohs" of our day have the same attitude. If the older folk wish to cling to Jewish tradition, that is perfectly acceptable; but the youth should be raised in "the spirit of the times" . . . (**Maayanah Shel Torah**)

לֹא־רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו וְלֹא־קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחְתָּיו שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים – *'A man did not see his fellow, nor did anyone get up from his place for three days.' (10:23)*

There is no greater darkness than one in which "a man did not see his fellow"—in which a person becomes oblivious to the needs of his fellow man. When that happens, a person becomes stymied in his personal development as well—"nor did anyone get up from his place." (**Chiddushei HaRim**)



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● **What did Pharaoh's servants advise him?**

וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי פַרְעֹה אֵלָיו עַד־מָתַי יִהְיֶה זֶּה לָנוּ לְמוֹקֵשׁ שַׁלַּח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים וְיַעַבְדוּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיהֶם הֲטֶרֶם תֵּדַע כִּי אָבְדָה מִצְרָיִם (10,7) "***And Pharaoh's servants said to him: how long will this one be a stumbling block for us? Send out the people and they will worship Hashem, their G-d. Do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?***"

The words "and they will worship Hashem, their G-d", are seemingly superfluous, since it should have been sufficient to just write "Send out the people, do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?". - I wrote earlier that it was not proper that Pharaoh should send them out because of fear of punishment, but for the honour of Hashem. And on the contrary, he would benefit if he sent them in order to worship Hashem, because then it would also be considered a merit for him.

This is what his servants were saying to him: "Send out the people, and they will worship Hashem, their G-d" - your main intention in sending them should be to honour Hashem, to bring Him satisfaction by doing His will. "Do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?" - send them before you will know that Egypt is lost, and then you will be sending them to honour Hashem. But if you send them after you already know that Egypt is lost, then you will be sending them because of fear of punishment, and it is not proper to do so.

This is what Pharaoh says to Moshe later on, "let the men go now and worship Hashem, for that is what you request". I am not sending you out because of fear of punishment of the plague, but rather to honour Hashem. Therefore, if I also send the children like you ask, since they would not be going to worship Hashem, it would not be clear that I am sending you to honour Hashem, to worship Him.

Therefore, "let the men go now and worship Hashem", but no one else, and then it will be clear that I am sending you only for His honour. "For that is what you request" - you yourself said to me explicitly in the name of Hashem, "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me", meaning to honour Me, as I explained earlier.



◣ People of Prominence - Sefas Emes

שַׁלַּח֙ אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁ֔ים וְיַעַבְד֖וּ אֶת־ה֣' אֱלֹקיהֶ֑ם - "***Send out the men so that they may serve G-d.***" (10:7)

Pharaoh's men meant to send out only the most prominent among the Israelites. Pharaoh's response was **מִ֥י וָמִ֖י הַהֹלְכִֽים** -"Which ones shall I send?" for they are all prominent.

◣ Impenetrable Darkness - Sforno

וְיִהְי֥ חֹ֖שֶׁךְ עַל־אֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם וְיָמֵ֖שׁ חֹֽשֶׁךְ "***and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt. The darkness will be palpable.***'" (10:21)

Ordinary "darkness" is no phenomenon in itself, it merely signifies the absence of light. When there is no light, it is dark. Darkness of this sort has no existence in its own right and can be readily dispelled by the kindling of a light. But the darkness that came over the land of Egypt was a phenomenon in its own right, so real that it could be felt (va'yameish) and could not be dispelled by light.

◣ The Worst Darkness - Chiddushei Harim

לֹא־רָאֹו אִיש אֶת־אָחִיו וְלֹא־קָמו אִיש מִתַּחְתָּיו - "***They [the Egyptians] did not see one another, nor did any of them rise from his place***." (10:23)

The worst darkness is the blindness in which one person will not "see another," refusing to notice another person's misery and help. One who will not "see another" will become incapable of "rising from his place"; that is, incapable of growth and development.

◣ Blinding Pursuits - Avnei Ezel

לֹא־רָאֹו אִיש אֶת־אָחִיו וְלֹא־קָמו אִיש מִתַּחְתָּיו - "***They [the Egyptians] did not see one another, nor did any of them rise from his place***." (10:23)

This may also have been the thought of the Sages of the Midrash when they stated that the darkness that enveloped the land of Egypt was as thick as a golden dinar. - The pursuit of the golden dinar causes people to be selfish so that they become unwilling and unable to "see" others and their needs.

◣ Favorable Kindness - Ostrovitzer Rebbe

דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִיש מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב
"***Speak now in the ears of the people and let every man ask of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, vessels of silver and vessels of gold***." (11:2)

When Jews perform deeds of kindness and help each other, especially in times of need, then even their enemies will notice the favor that Hashem has granted them.

◣ Respected By All - Haderash Vehalyun

גַּם הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה גָּדוֹל מְאֹד בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּעֵינֵי עַבְדֵי־פַרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי הָעָם "***Moreover, the man Moshe was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants and in the eyes of the people***." (11:3)

It is rare that someone is accepted and respected in equal measure by both the aristocracy and the masses. In most cases, someone popular with the masses will be despised by higher society, and someone who enjoys the upper classes' respect will be disliked by common people, for each class of society has its own standards and requirements.

What was so unusual about Moshe's personality was that he was respected not only by "Pharaoh's servants" - Egypt's nobility - but also by the Egyptian masses.

◣ Brightness Despite Darkness - Sefas Emes

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחָדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה - "***This month will be for you the beginning of the months***." (12:2)

The nations of the world build their calendar around the sun, while the Jewish people base theirs on the moon. This symbolizes the difference between the heathens and the Jews. The heathens can survive only as long as the light shines upon them. As soon as darkness descends upon them, they perish and disappear from the scene of history. - But like the moon, which can shine even through the darkest night, the Jewish people can survive and spread light even in darkness.

Hashem's love is like the ocean; it is vast and deep, and no one can fathom its depths. ~ Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1167)

◣ United Humility - Reb Yechezkel of Kuzmir

וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֲגֻדַּת אֵזוֹב וּטְבַלְתֶּם בַּדָּם אֲשֶׁר־בַּסַּף וְהִגַּעְתֶּם אֶל־הַמַּשְׁקוֹף וְאֶל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזֹת מִן־הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר בַּסָּף - "***And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts***. (12:22)

This is to teach you that even if you are as lowly as the hyssop, which grows low on the ground, as long as you are bound together into one united group, ready to "dip it in blood" - give of your lifeblood for Judaism, you will be able to "strike (lit., reach) the lintel"; you will be able to attain high places.

◣ Observing Our Words - Koznitzer Rebbe

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לְחָק־לְךָ וּלְבָנֶיךָ עַד־עוֹלָם - "***You shall observe this matter as a decree for yourself and for your children forever***." (12:24)

The word used for "matter" in this verse is "davar," which can also mean "word." This teaches us that one should heed his word and guard his tongue. This should be "a decree for yourself and for your children forever."

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Travelling by air, these days, has become a nightmare. Many are reluctant to fly, and for those that do, they are subjected to long queues, delays and cancellation of flights, and risking losing some or all of one's luggage. Most travellers have a tale to tell, as did my friends' daughter, but this one has a positive twist, too.

Mrs Esther Landau* had travelled from Manchester to Tel Aviv on an EasyJet flight for a family chasanah that took place on *Lag B'omer*. Her outward journey experience included long queues at the

check in desk and then security, followed by a delayed departure. But, Boruch Hashem, she arrived and found her suitcase on the carousel at baggage reclaim.

For her return journey, she arrived at Ben Gurion Airport early, only to find the queue stretching out of the front door. Eventually, it was her turn for the security check, but by this time there wasn't much time left before boarding. Since she already had a boarding pass, she proceeded straight to passport control – with her suitcase. [To do otherwise, could have meant missing her flight]. However, once she was on the airside post passport control, and presented her suitcase at the security upstairs, she was stopped from taking her case into the cabin, and was told it would be put in the hold.

She proceeded to her gate to await departure etc.

On arrival at Manchester Airport, she waited by the baggage reclaim carousel for a considerable amount of time, but her suitcase didn't appear. Mrs Landau went to the lost and found counter, but despite their best efforts, they could not trace her suitcase. Eventually, she gave up and went out through customs to meet her husband who had come to pick her up.

When she got home, she contacted her relatives in Israel, who phoned Ben Gurion airport on her behalf, but to no avail. Her brother-in-law even went to the airport to try and locate her suitcase, only to be told that since it didn't have the usual barcode tag, there is no way of tracing it. Her case had disappeared.

Several weeks later, Mrs Landau related the above experience to her father, and that she had still not retrieved her luggage. He promptly enquired whether she had given a donation to Reb Meir Baal Haness. She said, she had given something to another tzedokoh. Her father told her, Reb Meir Baal Haness is an age old *segulah*, and one should give there. [Giving to Reb Meir Baal Haness pre-dates aviation travel].

The very next day, the brother-in-law in Israel, received a phone call from a stranger. He enquired whether they had lost a suitcase in the airport and asked for *simonim*. It turns out that this stranger's father had travelled the day before, also direct to Manchester on EasyJet, but when he arrived in Manchester, his luggage was missing. The son went to Ben Gurion airport, and after a lot of pleading and arguing, was allowed into the warehouse where lost luggage was stored. It was a massive warehouse, full of luggage of all types and descriptions. This son, decided that whilst he was searching for his father's case, he would also look out for other suitcases that had identity tags and could be returned to its rightful owners.

After spending several hours, literally, and eventually, finding his father's case, he also found 46 other suitcases that had some sort of identification. He then contacted each and every owner of these 46 suitcases. Mrs Landau's case had a tag with an Israeli phone number, which was her brother-in-law's number. Just before leaving for the airport, Mrs Landau had inserted a paper into the case with that phone number on.

Also, kudos to the family who added this suitcase to their own extensive lot of suitcases, to get it back to the owner in UK.

Good Shabbos

"We are instructed to be like Aharon Hakohen and "love mankind and bring them close to Torah." But shouldn't it be the other way around? Isn't our first obligation to torah and then to people?

From here we learn that first we must love another person, because the only way to bring another jew to torah is to love him." ~ Reb Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821).

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

From Struggle to Triumph!



In this week's Parsha, Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu Bo el Pharoh, to come to Pharaoh. Now grammatically this doesn't make much sense. The pasuk should say lech el Pharaoh, go to Pharaoh. Why does the Torah say come to Pharaoh?

Let's think about it. Moshe Rabbeinu was very intimidated by Pharaoh. He was scared, and he was almost despondent. He almost wanted to give up. He was at his wit's end. Moshe said I'm not going to Pharaoh. That's where challenge is and that's where hardship is. That's where the struggle is. That's where the darkness is.

I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the **Kotzker Rebbe** says something so beautiful: He says that when Hashem told Moshe come to Pharaoh, Hashem was saying, come to Me – I'm where Pharaoh is. You think you're alone when you go through that struggle, that hardship or that darkness? You're not alone. I am there. Hashem is saying I'm with you! I am doing what's best for you!

That's why, says the Kotzker, it doesn't say go to Pharaoh. Go to Pharaoh would mean Hashem is telling Moshe to leave His presence and to go on his own. To suffer. To be all alone. Hashem says come to Pharaoh – Come with me. You are not alone. You will never be alone! I am with you, and I will always be with you! The lesson to us is that

we are never alone. Even when it may seem bleak and dark, even when it seems ominous, even when it seems insurmountable, Hashem says come with Me! I'm with you! I love you! I care about you!

Before he came to America, **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zt"l** applied for a rabbinic position in Europe. He sincerely believed and prayed that he would receive this job. - Later it became known that a man of a lower stature was chosen for this prestigious job. Rav Yaakov was downtrodden and broken. He knew that he was a much better candidate for that position. Rav Yaakov didn't know what was going to be with him and his family. He didn't know how he would he put bread on the table. He had no choice – he had to move to America. When he came to America, he eventually became a Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivas Torah Vodaath and was one of the Gedolei HaDor.

Many years later, Rav Yaakov gathered his large family together and told them as follows: "The 'winning candidate' – the man who was chosen for the job was tragically killed out with the entire city by the Nazis. I davened so hard that I should get that job. I was so disappointed when I didn't receive that position. Now, however, it is all clear to me. If I had gotten that job none of you would be here today! Hashem spared my life!"

We never know Hashem's plans! When you are going through a time that may seem dark and bleak, know that Hashem is there, and that Hashem loves you!

"Every human being has a soul. A divine spark burning inside him. Sometimes it happens that a person moves away from their inner light. It may even seem as if the light of one's soul has been snuffed out. But the soul is like a pilot light; it never goes out completely. All she needs is someone to lovingly tend the embers until the spiritual fire springs forth again." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Night of the Locked Doors

The locking of the doors of their homes was a demonstration; a special demonstration that said: "We are hereby closing ourselves off from the *umos ha'olom* entirely. We're isolating ourselves from the people of the land because we have no interest at all in going out in their streets and mingling with them."

And therefore, you can be certain that when our forefathers fulfilled what they were told, **לֵךְ עַמִּי בֹּא בַחֲדָרֶיךָ וּסְגֹר דִּלְתְךָ בַּעֲדֶךָ** – Go into the house and lock the door behind you; they slammed the doors shut and they bolted it too. Not because they were afraid that some Egyptian would come in and not because they wanted to keep the Mashchis out. Oh yes! They wanted to keep out the biggest destroyer there is.

Because the biggest destroyer is the influence of *goyim*! If the influence of *goyim* comes into your homes, you're letting in the real Mashchis.

I'm not saying it's a problem to learn any technical skills from the gentiles or to use their inventions – you can even learn certain facts of nature from the gentiles. Why not? *Chochma*, no matter where it

comes from, is still *chochma*. Anything useful – absolutely, you hold on to.

Instead of walking on foot to go to the *beis haknesses* on the weekdays, we have a right to use a car. Even when we go to Yerushalayim when the time comes Moshiach's time, probably we'll go on the wings of some very beautiful and big super air-flyer. And even though many gentiles participated in designing it, nothing wrong with that. But having any kind of sympathy or sentimentality with the *umos ha'olam* and with their ideals and attitudes – the hankering after the ways of the gentiles – that's when we say that we close our doors to the world.



● Take Yourselves Sheep

Now, even though the Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim were loyal to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, it was very difficult to avoid having a certain affection for the sheep. The Egyptians respected the sheep; more than respected – it was *kadosh* to Egyptians. It's like in India where the cows are allowed to run wild; a cow could come trampling into your garden but it's forbidden to even throw a stone at it to chase it away.

I don't know how it is now, but not so long ago if you kicked a cow in India, that was the last thing you did in your life. And Egypt was no different; only it was the sheep instead of the cow.

And so it could happen in Mitzrayim that a Jew would pass by and he would see an Egyptian throwing, let's say, cabbage to a sheep wandering on the street. It's a mitzvah for him to honor his deity so he throws the sheep some cabbage that he was bringing home for supper. And the Jew might pass by and say, "Oh, what a nice looking sheep." Just to flatter the people of the land he would say that.

And so, even though you weren't an *oveid avodah zarah;* no, certainly not, but there's still a deference to the ideals of the gentiles. And that's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to uproot from the Bnei Yisroel before they would leave Mitzrayim and become a nation.

It's like the man who says, "I don't have, let's say, a Christmas tree in my house. Never!" But as he passes by the stores and he hears the holiday music coming out of the stores; they play it in order entice the customers in order to buy gifts for the season; so the carols are coming out of the stores and it's hard not to have some sentiment about it; you become sentimental about the season. So even though you certainly are a religious Jew; you don't subscribe to that at all, but a certain sentiment you have.

But that's also idolatry; if you have some respect for the abominations that they worship, the ideals and attitudes that they live with, that's already a mistake. - "I don't subscribe to it," you'll say, "but there's a certain beauty, a certain poetry in it." - Ooh, once you say that, you're hooked – you're in trouble. That's why Chazal say, **מִשְׁכוּ יְדֵיכֶם מֵעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה** – "Draw your hands away from idolatry." By pulling the sheep through the streets and making a demonstration that it means nothing at all to you, that's pulling your hand away from idolatry.

● The Guide to True Happiness

As they gathered to leave Mitzrayim, Moshe Rabbeinu told the people:

זָכוֹר אֶת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יְצָאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם ... הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב *Remember this day that you came out of Egypt …Today you are leaving in the month of spring*" (Shemos 13:4). Moshe Rabbeinu said to them "You're leaving today, and look outside! It's a beautiful spring day." And Rashi asks: Didn't they know it was spring? **אֶלָּא כָּךְ אָמַר לָהֶם, רְאוּ חֶסֶד שֶׁגּוֹמֵלְכֶם** — So what was Moshe Rabbeinu telling them? "*Pay attention to the kindness that Hashem is bestowing upon you,* — **שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם בְּחֹדֶשׁ שֶׁהוּא כָּשֵׁר לָצֵאת** *That He took you out in a*

month that is fitting for departure, **לֹא חַמָּה וְלֹא צִנָּה וְלֹא גְשָׁמִים** *—not too hot, not too cold, and not raining"* (Rashi 13:4).

The Alter of Slabodka said that the spring weather, with all of its varied pleasures, was chosen purposefully by Hashem to enhance the occasion of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Even in their mountain-high joy of liberation, and even though they were loaded down with the wealth of Mitzrayim, they were expected not to overlook the weather, the budding trees and the chirping birds.

And why not? Because it was so important for the Am Yisrael to learn — right then, when they were leaving the bondage of Mitzrayim to become *avdei Hashem* — that the happiness of a true servant of Hashem doesn't come from the great events of life. The great jolts of good fortune, the ecstatic moments of great happiness — a new car, a new baby, even Yetzias Mitzrayim — won't make a person truly happy. It's only the small gifts of life, like a balmy spring day or a bird chirping in the trees, that are the true happiness of life.

● Bitachon - Relying on Hashem

There is a principle called *bitachon*, which means trust in Hakodosh Boruch Hu. It's most fully treated in the sefer Chovos Halevovos; there's no other work where this is spoken about at such length. And in his famous Shaar Habitachon the Chovos Halevavos says as follows: **כְּדַי לְהַתְמִיד הַטּוֹבָה אַל יִבְטַח בָּהּ** – *In order to continue receiving some benefit that you have, you should not trust in it.*

It's a few words and it's easy to memorize. It means that trusting in something may cause it to be removed; and therefore, if you want to preserve what you have, make sure not to rely on it.

Now, the Nile was everything to Mitzrayim. Very good, absolutely they needed the Nile. But they relied on the Nile. They trusted in the Nile. And therefore when the time came to deflate the arrogance of Pharaoh and his people, the first plague was sent upon the Nile and that source of prosperity turned into a source of

foulness. As the river flowed through the land, it befouled the entire land and it became a source of desolation for Egypt. And that was the lesson that was intended.

And therefore, those organizations like the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee that are fighting to preserve the Constitution, they're a danger to us. They're fighting that the government should not give federal aid to the yeshivahs because it will attack the principles of the Constitution! They want to preserve the Constitution at all costs because that is their benefactor. That's their security blanket. These people are putting their trust in the Constitution instead of in Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Oh no! That's the most dangerous thing. That's our big sakanah; to trust in something other than Hashem. If we Jews wish for America to continue as a country of tolerance, of freedom, we should not put our trust in the Constitution. Our minds, our speech, our attitude must always be that it's Hashem and only Hashem.

The Nile is nothing and democracy is nothing and the Constitution is nothing. It's a big error to think that the Constitution is the wall that stands between us and persecution.

If we wish the Constitution to remain as a guarantee of freedom, we should not trust in it. We should trust only in Hashem. And then with the Constitution or without, our good fortunes will persevere. It doesn't mean you shouldn't encourage democracy, but don't trust in it! Because if you trust in it, if you forget that it's all Hashem, then just like the Mitzrim trusted in the Nile, the Constitution might just turn the country over on its head.

"The greatness of a single hour of Shabbos outweighs the greatness of all the holidays and festivals combined." ~ Chasam Sofer, Rabbi Moshe Schreiber [Sofer] (1762–1839)

The plagues In Egypt

נְטֵה יָדְךָ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בָּאַרְבֶּה - *"Stretch forth your hand over the land of Egypt ..."* (10:12)



Several exceptional facts occur by the plague of locust that doesn't appear by any other plague. Hashem told Moshe that he will send upon the Egyptians a plague that the Jews will relate to their children and grandchildren. He also says that it is a plague that the Egyptians fathers and grandfathers never saw. Hashem doesn't identify the plague. Moshe on his own somehow knows to send the locust. Why do these anomalies exist by this particular plague?

When Hashem eventually charges Moshe to rally the Arbeh, the Pasuk says *"Netei Yodcha…Ba'arbeh – Raise your arm… with locust."* Grammatically, this doesn't make much sense. It should have said, "Raise your hand and afflict the land with locusts." It is also of interest that the plague of locusts is followed by Choshech (the plague of darkness). Following Choshech was Makkos Bechoros (death of the firstborn). What is the significance of the sequence?

I heard from Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita, that perhaps the answer is as follows: The Egyptians were severe ingrates. They had no thankfulness for all that the Jews did for them in warding off the famine. They should have related to their descendants all the good that the Jews did – but they didn't. Hashem paid them back *Mida Keneged Mida* (measure for measure). He had the locusts come and destroy everything to bring on utter famine – which they would relate to their descendants! This will cause them to also remember

the previous famine that they were spared from because of the Jews. This way it emphasized the multi-generations specifically by this plague.

The next difficulty *"Netei Yodcha Ba'arbeh"* is answered because Ba'arbeh (the locusts) is the Gematria (numerical value) of 210. It was coming on account of the 210 years that the Egyptians embittered the Jew's lives, instead of recognizing their kindness.

Choshech (darkness) is the same letters of Shochach which means to forget. This was to again remind the Egyptians that they forgot all the goodness they experienced. Next, the plague of Bechoros (death of firstborn) came, because the way Hashem has us show Hakaras Hatov, gratitude, is through bringing the firstborn, whether it is offering Bikkurim (first fruits) or through the Bechor, firstborn, of a person or animal. Therefore, Hashem demonstrated that because of their lack of gratitude – He will take their Bechoros. Now the pattern and sequence is very clear and makes perfect sense.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

A Small Kindness

Rav Yechiel Michel Stern shlit"a, Rav of Ezras Torah, related the following story:

Those acquainted with me are aware that I am not a person inclined to believe in dreams or miracles, yet I cannot deny them when this story happened to me....

At the time, I was very ill, and my condition was grave. I had been diagnosed with cancer in the large intestine, and the doctors were pessimistic. Treatment options were few, and the ones available would greatly compromise my quality of life. I consulted separately with three specialists in the field, and each respectively asserted

that the only possibility was to undergo major surgery in which they would remove a significant portion of my large intestine.

I was devastated by the news, as I couldn't imagine resuming normal life afterward, but I also knew that I had no choice since the surgery was the only potential means of saving my life. With no other option, I scheduled the surgery, and with each day that passed, my anxiety escalated.

On the final Shabbos before the surgery, I went to sleep rather early and had a very peculiar dream. A man I hadn't seen for forty-two years appeared to me, a man I'd met at a time when I'd been very close to Rav Aryeh Levin, the legendary tzaddik of Yerushalayim, who was both a gadol b'Torah and renowned for myriad acts of chesed that he eagerly and lovingly performed for every Jew.

Following Rav Aryeh's lead, I often visited elderly, lonely Yidden in nursing homes in Yerushalayim, hoping to bring joy and comfort into their otherwise bleak lives.

One day, while making my rounds in a nursing home, I came upon an elderly resident who sat unmoving in his chair, his face a mask of agony. Concerned, I asked him if I could help him, but he politely declined.

"You seem in terrible pain," I said gently. "Perhaps I can do something to alleviate your pain?"

Exhaling a miserable sigh, the resident confessed that he had not managed to relieve himself for several days, and that he was in terrible pain. Pitying him, I immediately approached a nurse and repeated the man's complaint.

"Yes, it's a problem," she admitted. "The man has a physical issue that can only be treated in the hospital, and it is a costly procedure. We've contacted his children several times and asked them to take him to the hospital so he can be treated, yet they refuse, claiming

it's the nursing home's responsibility to provide both the treatment and the funding. The nursing home administrator refuses to subsidize the procedure, and the poor man is left to suffer-caught in a battle of wills."

Unable to witness the man's misery, I immediately called an ambulance and accompanied him to the hospital. He underwent the necessary procedure, and by the following morning was well enough to return to the nursing home. Before his release, the doctor approached me and chided me for neglecting my father's health. 'One more day and his heart would have given out. He could have died,' he said severely.

Since I was concerned about the potential chillul Hashem, I replied that I was not actually related to the patient at all, but merely a volunteer.

At the time, I was still a young avreich learning in kollel, and I received a monthly stipend of five hundred liras. Since I had ordered the ambulance, the bill, as well as the cost of the medical procedure, was charged to me, and I was shocked to see that the total amounted to three hundred liras.

The nursing home gave me the names and phone numbers of the man's children, and I was relieved to learn that one son was an affluent, distinguished member of the community. I contacted him, related the episode, and asked if he could please reimburse me for my expenses.

Clearly annoyed, he informed me that I had no business interfering, that the nursing home was responsible for the cost of any medical procedure, and that he had no reason to sponsor my volunteerism and pay for something that was not his responsibility in the first place. Realizing that my arguments and pleas were falling on deaf ears, I stiffly replied that I understood and that my family and I would somehow make do in the coming month with the two hundred liras left.

Several weeks passed, and every time I visited my elderly friend in the nursing home, he would thank me from the bottom of his heart for the tremendous act of kindness I'd done for him, how meaningful it was, and how much better he was feeling.

One day, during my regular visit to the nursing home, I noticed that the old man once again wore an expression of terrible agony. A quick investigation revealed that the original problem had not been resolved and the man's children and nursing home administration were still at odds, each claiming the other was responsible for transferring him to the hospital and financing the procedure.

Unable to bear the excruciating pain in his eyes, I did exactly what I'd done weeks earlier; I ordered an ambulance and accompanied him once again to the hospital. In the full knowledge that neither the family nor the nursing home would be reimbursing me for my efforts, I paid the fee for the ambulance and covered the cost of the procedure, returning him to the nursing home when he felt recovered.

This process repeated itself five or six times, until the family finally sent a member to reimburse me for the expenses I'd incurred from one visit to the hospital. I never heard from the family again after that.

Years passed, and I completely forgot about the old man in the nursing home, the ambulances and emergency procedures, and the act of kindness I'd done for an old, suffering man.

Yet now, forty-two years after we first met, the man appeared to me in a dream and declared: "I heard of the tzarah that afflicts you now, and I appealed to the Beis Din shel Ma'alah and cried, 'How can it be that a man who performed so much chesed for me shall be punished with the same organ?' The Beis Din shel Ma'alah agreed with me, and I have descended from Shamayim to tell you that you will enter the surgery and emerge unscathed!"

The old man faded away, and I awoke trembling. My dream had been so vivid, so real, that I felt it must be true. I would have the surgery, and I was certain there would be no long-term consequences affecting my daily life. From that moment, I felt perfectly calm, and that calm remains until today.

The change was instantaneous and felt by all, especially by my children. On Shabbos morning, I was relaxed, happy, and free. I sang zemiros Shabbos uninhibited, reveled in divrei Torah, and the simchah of Shabbos radiated from me. When they asked me what brought about the change, I answered them honestly, repeating every detail of my dream and concluding that I was convinced it was real. I added that for the first time ever, I truly related to the tefillah, "Zocher kol hanishkachos-He remembers all that is forgotten."

Even if the ba'al chesed himself forgets the act of kindness, Hashem never forgets, and He rewards every mitzvah. And, indeed, the operation was successful, just as I was promised in my dream.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker

Tefillin (Rabbi Daniel Fine)

וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וּלְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ, כִּי בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם - '***And it shall be for a sign upon your hand and for ornaments between your eyes, for with a mighty hand did the L-rd take us out of Egypt***.' 13:16

טוֹטָפֹת is an unusual word. What does it mean? Where does it come from?

Says Rashi - **תְּפִלִּין; וְעַל שֵׁם שֶׁהֵם אַרְבָּעָה בָּתִּים קְרוּיִין טטפת – "טט" בְּכַתְפִּי שְׁתַּיִם, "פת" בְּאַפְרִיקִי שְׁתַּיִם** - Tefillin. Since they are [composed of] four compartments, they are called **טוֹטָפֹת**, **טט** in Coptic [Coptic is an Afroasiatic dormant language closely related to Egyptian

dialects] meaning two, and **פת** in Afriki (Phrygian) meaning two [thus 2+2=4 boxes of tefillin].

What a strange thing! Since when do we use bizarre, vague, and rarely used foreign languages to describe Tefillin?

Rabbi Fine says that the roles of the **תפילין של יד** and the **תפילין של ראש** are very different. The tefillin shel yad represents a private witness – a symbolism of the connection between us and Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Which is why we always cover the tefillin shel yad with our sleeve.

The tefillin shel rosh however, is a public demonstration that we are Hakadosh Baruch Hu's chosen people. As it says in gemara **ברכות ו.** - **וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁהַתְּפִילִּין עוֹז הֵם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל — דִּכְתִיב: ״וְרָאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם ה׳ נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ וְיָרְאוּ מִמֶּךָּ״. וְתַנְיָא, רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַגָּדוֹל אוֹמֵר: אֵלּוּ תְּפִילִּין שֶׁבָּרֹאשׁ**

- *'And from where is it derived that phylacteries provide strength for Israel? As it is written: "And all the nations of the land shall see that the name of the L-rd is called upon you, and they will fear you" (Deuteronomy 28:10). It was taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: This is a reference to the phylacteries of the head.'*

- It is a public demonstration that we are Hashem's chosen people. And therefore, the expression to describe the **תפילין של ראש** is especially described in obscure foreign languages, to demonstrate that it is open to all the public. (See **רמב״ן שמות פרק יג,טז**)

"When a situation arises that causes us to worry, we should realize that Hashem wants to grant us something special, so He gives us the opportunity to earn it by overcoming our fears and placing our trust in Him. ~ Beis Halevi, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1820-1892).

מי ומי ההולכים (בעל הטורים)

וַיּוּשַׁב אֶת מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת אַהֲרֹן אֶל פַּרְעֹה, וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם, מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים - *'Moshe and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, worship the L-rd your G-d. Who and who are going?"'* 10:8

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ, בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבִבְנוֹתֵינוּ בְּצֹאנֵנוּ וּבִבְקָרֵנוּ נֵלֵךְ, כִּי חַג ה' לָנוּ – *'Moshe said, "With our youth and with our elders we will go, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our cattle we will go, for it is a festival of the L-rd to us."'* 10:9

The **בעל הטורים** says something fascinating: **מי ומי ההולכים. אמר פרעה למשה מה אתם מבקשים כל כך ללכת וכי אתם סבורים ליכנס לארץ, מי ומי ההולכים, כי כולם ימותו במדבר, חוץ מיהושע וכלב**

Pharoah was an astute person. He knew what was going on. He said to Moshe, "Why are you so keen to go? Do you really think that you are going to get into the land of Eretz Yisrael?" – He knew that that generation was going to die out in the desert, so he asks Moshe, "What's the point in going? Why are you making such a fuss, you're not even going to make it there? Who's going to go already? You are all going to die in the midbar except for Yehoshua and Calev."

מי ומי ההלכים בגימטריא כלב ובן נון. והשיבו משה, בנערינו ובזקנינו נלך, כי לא נגזרה גזירה לא על פחות מבן כ' ולא על יתר מבן ס' (ב"ב קכא ב):

The words **מי ומי ההלכים** has the same gematria as **כלב ובן נון**. These are the only two who are going to make it in.

We can now explain Moshe Rabbeinu's response: "No, **בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ** – We are going with our youth and our elders, because the gezeira of not going into Eretz Yisrael does not include them!"

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you just need to keep moving.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

זֵכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם



There is a famous **Ramban** at the end of this week's sedra. [**The Beis Aharon** would tell his talmidim to review it every single day!] - The Ramban explains the significance of remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim:

"*By remembering the great and open miracles, we will come to recognize the hidden miracles too, which is the basis of our entire Yiddishkeit.*"

"*One does not have a share in the Torah until he believes that everything that occurs to him, is a miracle. – There is no such thing as the natural order of the world.*"

This is the main purpose of telling over the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim. [That we are commanded to remember it twice a day.] – Why? – So that we should remember that everything that happens is by Hashgacha Pratis!

The **Chasam Sofer** asks, 'How does repeating the great miracles of **יצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם** lead us to recognize the Hashgacha Pratis in our lives?'

He explains this Ramban with an amazing parable: There was once a very talented artist, who created a very beautiful sculpture of a very realistic horse. After working on it for a few months, he placed it in the middle of a busy intersection. He watched many people coming and going, but nobody stopped to admire his stunning work of art! – it bothered him immensely. – "I worked on it for months, and

no one is even stopping to admire it! Maybe it's not as realistic as I thought?"

When he mentioned his feelings to a friend, the friend told him, "You fool, do you know why no one is stopping to admire it? It's because it's so realistic, they think it is a real horse! – There is nothing interesting about a real horse!"

"You know what I would do if I was you, I would take the horse and split in half. Then you would see that people would stop to take a look and admire it. They would realise what a beautiful work of art it is and appreciate it."

He did what he was advised, and everybody stopped to admire it, and was awed by his magnificent creation.

So too, explains the Chasam Sofer: Hashem created a brilliant universe. But people go through their whole lives taking it all for granted. – There is a sun by day and a moon by night. We don't recognize the Hashgacha Pratis happening every single minute. Therefore, Hashem orchestrated a one time **יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם** – upturning the laws of nature, and changing everything that we were used to. The ten Makkos, the splitting of the sea…, all for what? So that we should recognize the Hashgacha Pratis in every single day! By remembering the great miracles that occur every single day!

And if we remember these open miracles – we will recognize the hidden miracles too! – There is no such thing in this world as…'It's natural.'

"In times of worry and uncertainty, seek the warmth of others. Together, we can light a fire of hope and strengthen one another's hearts." ~ Piaseczner Rebbe, Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira (1889-1943).

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

A Gerer Chasid once received a postcard from his Rebbe, the Imrei Emes. The postcard was blank, except for one line which contained a series of letters as follows: **ח' ה' ל' ו' ל' י'**. The Chasid turned the card all around looking for some hint to this cryptic message but made no progress. Finally, he approached the Rebbe's brother, Rav Nechemiah Alter.

Rav Nechemiah looked at the letters and asked the Chasid when he last visited the Rebbe, and what they discussed. The Chasid thought for a moment and remembered asking the Rebbe for a Brachah and advice about six months prior, when his child was ill.

Rav Nechemiah asked, "And how is your child today?"

The Chasid replied, "Baruch Hashem, completely recovered."

Rav Nechemiah then asked, "And did you let the Rebbe know that?"

The Chasid was quiet, and he said that he did not.

Rav Nechemiah explained, "This is what the Rebbe wrote to you. The letters stand for the Pasuk in Yirmiyahu (4:22), **חכמים המה להרע ולהיטיב לא ידעו**, *'They are clever at doing wrong, but they are unable to do right.'"*

Rav Nechemiah said, "One must visit the Rebbe, not only in difficult times, but also when things improve, to let him know that they are better!"

"There are those who try to ascend to the heavens to reach The Blessed One. But I know that no matter where I am, Hashem will be there as well. ~ Rabbi Shalom Shachne of Prohobitch (1769–1802).

Back on the Rails - Rav Yechiel Spero



Rav Yisrael Aryeh Margolis lived in Galicia before WWII. While he was blessed with a magnificent family, he did not have the means to support all eleven children and could not find a sufficient local job. The Belzer Rebbe, who was intimately aware of Rav Yisrael Aryeh's greatness, recommended him for the position of Rav in a city in Hungary since he had the requisite capabilities to lead the congregation.

Eager to hire such an inspirational individual, the shul committee invited Rav Yisrael Aryeh to join their community to speak publicly and meet the prominent members of the city. He accepted the offer to see firsthand if it would be workable for his family as Galicia and Hungary were two different worlds.

In those days, there were only two trains a week from Galicia to Hungary. One of them departed on Wednesday and arrived on Sunday. The second train left immediately after Shabbos, arriving in the middle of the week. Wednesday was not an option, because it included travel on Shabbos, so he chose to travel after Shabbos, immediately after davening Maariv.

His Chassidim organized a minyan for him right at the station, but there was still one issue: where would he wash to eat bread for the Melaveh Malkah meal? To Rav Yisrael Aryeh, washing for Melaveh Malkah was non-negotiable. However, in those days, there was no way to access water on trains. Even at the train stops, there was no guarantee that there would be water available.

He discovered that the train was going to make a stop between Galicia and Hungary where he could find water. With all the details ironed out, he boarded the train and headed toward Hungary.

As planned, he hurriedly disembarked from the train and ran to retrieve some water so he could wash his hands to eat bread, but when he returned to the train, he encountered a Hungarian conductor, a virulent anti-Semite, who refused to allow him to board the train again.

Rav Yisrael Aryeh begged him to open the doors, but all he received was an antagonistic smirk in return. The whistle blew. The train was departing the station. He tried running after the train, but quickly recognized there was nothing more to do. With his suitcases and all his personal items still on the train, Rav Yisrael Aryeh stood helpless at the station in the middle of nowhere.

Deeply disheartened, it was time to decide where he wanted to go and how he would get there. He realized it would be best if he headed home by foot, a journey of three days. It was all for the best. He kept walking, enduring the bitter cold and brutal conditions, until he finally reached his town.

When he walked up to his house, he noticed through the window that the mirrors were covered, as if they were in mourning. Confused, he knocked on the door and let himself in. As soon as he entered, his family froze. And then they ran over to him, crying as if they had seen a ghost.

After hearing bits and pieces, Rav Yisrael Aryeh began to make sense of all he was hearing. The Chassidim witnessed him boarding the train. They had no doubt whatsoever that he was on board. Even his luggage was on the train. There had been a deadly train crash with no survivors. Since Rav Yisrael Aryeh's body was not found, it was assumed he was buried underneath the deep snow…

Rav Yisrael Aryeh never did travel back to Hungary and instead took a position in London where he created his legacy. His children became Rabbonim and community leaders who inspired the heart of English Jewry. Furthermore, his entire family was saved from the horrors of the Holocaust, having left Galicia before the clouds of

darkness descended upon European Jewry. - One nasty Hungarian anti-Semite was sent to seal off the doors and open the archway for generations of the Margolis dynasty.

בס"ד

למודי משה

An Interesting Story With R' Chaim Kaufman *zt"l*



In the 1950's, there was already talk about the possibility of putting a man on the moon. At the time, **R' Chaim Kaufman** asked the **Shotzer Rebbe** (Rabbi Shulem Moskovitz) "Will they ever put a man on the moon?" The Rebbe responded with a definitive "No!" He buttressed his answer by quoting the *pasuk* "The Heaven belongs to Hashem and the Earth belongs to mankind." (*Tehillim* 115:16).

As we all know, President Kennedy pledged early in his brief presidency that by the end of the decade of the 1960's, America would put a man on the moon, and so it was—on July 20, 1969, a man walked on the moon!

At any rate, R' Chaim Kaufman now had a strong question on the definitive answer given to him years earlier by the Shotzer Rebbe. This Rebbe was no longer alive by that time, so the author went to the **Biala Rebbe** and told him about his previous conversation with the Shotzer Rebbe.

The Biala Rebbe did not say, "The moon landing was all a fake—it took place in a Hollywood studio (as some claimed at the time). He did say that the event that occurred was not a contradiction to the cited *pasuk*. Even though America indeed placed a man on the moon, but Neil Armstrong could not survive on his own in the atmosphere of the moon. He had to bring oxygen from earth, he had to wear a space suit to protect him from the moon's environment. His lifeline was still the '*Aretz*' (Earth). He may have physically been on the moon, but since he still needed all the earthly elements to exist, he was still considered an 'earthling' – not a 'moonling.'

The eternal truth of the *pasuk* "*HaShamayim Shamayim L'Hashem v'ha'Aretz nasan livnei Adam*" remains. Neil Armstrong still remained a human being who belonged to the earth, his source of life.

Parshah Pearls (Adapted from the Ma'ayanah shel Torah)

◣ Learning from the Animals

וְגַם־מִקְנֵנוּ יֵלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ... כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ נִקַּח לַעֲבֹד אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ – ***"And also our cattle will go with us, because from them we will take to serve Hashem our G-d"*** (10:26).

Chazal explain that the bull which Eliyahu ha'Navi brought on Mount Carmel went gladly to be sacrificed, whilst that of the prophets of Ba'al refused to move from its place.

And that is what the Pasuk means here, says the **Malbim**, when it says "And also our cattle will go with us" - of their own accord, Moshe was saying, because they considered it a privilege to be sacrificed to Hashem.

And when he added "because from them we will take to serve Hashem our G-d", says the Malbim, he meant that they would take their cue from the animals; because if the animals were glad to serve Hashem, how much more so should we be!

◣ Making a Break

כְּשַׁלְּחוֹ כָּלָה גָּרֵשׁ יְגָרֵשׁ אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה - *"When he sends you, he will drive all of you out, completely"* (11:1).

Since G-d wanted Yisrael to leave Egypt, both physically and spiritually, once and for all, it was necessary to be driven out forcibly, the **S'fas Emes** explains.

Had Yisrael left on their own volition, they would have left with the sweet taste of Egypt together with its culture in their mouths, and this in turn, would have meant that some attraction to what they were leaving behind would inevitably have remained.

Now that they left by force however, from one moment to the next, they made a clean break with their past and became the Hosts of Hashem. Whilst all ties with Egypt and its culture were severed - forever.

Burst of Inspiration - Rabbi Jeremy Golker



It's a very strange thing. Klal Yisrael are ready to leave Mitzrayim, and Moshe Rabbeinu tells them that they need to take out silver vessels, gold vessels and fine Egyptian garments. **וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ כִּדְבַר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב וּשְׂמָלֹת**

Of all the things to take, why are they taking Egyptian clothing? Doesn't Chazal tell us that in the merit of three things, they were redeemed from Egypt? - **בזכות שלשה דברים נגאלו אבותנו ממצרים**. And one of them was **מלבושם** - they didn't change their manner of clothing. They didn't imitate Egyptian society.

So why does Moshe Rabbeinu tell them to take the Egyptian clothes, when one of the main reasons for their redemption was because they didn't wear Egyptian clothing?

I once heard a great answer from **Rav Zev Leff**:

A yeshiva bochur was in yeshiva in the late 1960's and was very much caught up in the spirit of the day. He was very taken by the 'hippy culture', the new style of music etc that had descended on the world. And he grew his hair very long to imitate that culture.

Inevitably, he was called in by the mashgiach who asked the bachur, "Why are you growing your hair long?"

The young man was prepared for the question, and he said, "Well, there's a precedent – The Torah talks about a Nazir who lets his hair grow, and I want to be like a Nazir! A Nazir is holy."

The mashgiach smiled and said, "Nice try!" – "If you wanted to be like a Nazir for holy reasons, we could talk about it, but you're doing it just to imitate the society in which you live. – You go and take a haircut!"

Says Rabbi Leff – 'There's nothing inherently wrong with fine Egyptian clothes. But if you are wearing them in order to imitate Egyptian culture, [with the risk of assimilation and integration into that society] then that's very dangerous. – But to wear them as part of their preparation to go into the *midbar*, that's ok.'

And therefore, it was ok that Moshe Rabbeinu told the Yidden to take שְׂמָלֹת.

"Every soul is sent to this world with the strength needed to fulfil its mission. Trust in the abilities you have been given, for they were chosen specifically for you." ~ Chiddushei HaRim.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

וַתְּהִי צְעָקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּמִצְרָיִם כִּי־אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֵין־שָׁם מֵת - "*There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead*." (12:30)

Q: Even in a home where there was no firstborn, the eldest of the household perished (Rashi). Why did Moshe only warn that the firstborn would die without warning about the eldest of the house?

A: Some Egyptians thought they could outsmart Hashem and Moshe. Warned of the oncoming plague, they took their firstborn and placed them into Jewish homes. Hashem killed those firstborn and also the eldest of the household from which each firstborn originated. Had Moshe warned them of this, they would have kept the firstborn home, and thus the eldest in the household would have survived.

Moshe intentionally did not warn them, so that their punishment would be twofold. The firstborn was killed to punish the Egyptians for not listening to Hashem to free the Jews, and the eldest remaining died because the Egyptians believed they could outsmart Hashem. That itself was a grave sin that was deserving of death.

Now, the Gemara in Sanhedrin, which is currently the course of study of Daf Yomi, recently spoke about warning people before they commit a crime. Why, then, did Moshe not warn them?

The Gemara explains that a 'chaver,' a person who has learned Torah, does not need a warning because he knows better. He knows without warning that what he's doing is wrong. Therefore, Moshe did not need to warn the Egyptians because by this time, at the end of the plagues, they should have realized that there was no way to ignore Hashem's will. They knew better, but didn't act on it.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff



The first mitzvah that the Yidden were given individually was **קרבן פסח**. It was the cornerstone of the life of a Yid. What was it about the **קרבן פסח** that was so central to Klal Yisraels' geulah and becoming who they needed to become?

On one hand, it showed their Emunah in The Ribbonoi Shel Olam. However there is one detail of the korban that requires explanation.

There is a famous **Chinuch** (**טז**) in this week's parsha where he talks about the fact that one mustn't break any bones of the **קרבן פסח**. Why just with the **קרבן פסח** was there this intriguing message to not break any of the bones while you are eating it?

The Chinuch explains that the *yesod* that Hashem wanted to teach Klal Yisrael was that they are "**בני מלכים**"- They are a people of great chashivus and nobility. They are aristocratic people. - They went from feeling like low lives to realising that they are people of the greatest chashivus. - When we realise our self-worth and prestige, then we can believe in who we are and what we are.

Many of the mitzvos of the **קרבן פסח** were to emphasize this understanding, that we are noble and refined people. Simple people break the bones when they eat. **שֶׁאֵין כָּבוֹד לִבְנֵי מְלָכִים וְיוֹעֲצֵי אָרֶץ לִגְרֹר הָעֲצָמוֹת וּלְשַׁבְּרָם כִּכְלָבִים, לֹא יָאוּת לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּכָה, כִּי אִם לַעֲנִיֵּי הָעָם הָרְעֵבִים** – '*For it is not honorable for the sons of kings and the advisers of the land to drag the bones and break them like dogs. Except for the impoverished among the people and the starving, it is not a proper thing to do this.*'

But we are not simple people – we are the 'Crown Jewels'. But we need to do things in order to show who and what we are. Every mitzvah that we do is so important and has such great value.



וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֹת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שָׁם וְרָאִיתִי אֶת הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בָכֶם נֶגֶף לְמַשְׁחִית בְּהַכֹּתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם - *'And the blood will be for you for a sign upon the houses where you will be, and I will see the blood and skip over you, and there will be no plague to destroy [you] when I smite the land of Egypt.'* 12:13

The question often asked is, "If Hashem knows everything, why did the Jewish People need to smear the blood on their doorposts so as not to be harmed by the plague?"

The HaKsav V'Hakabalah explains that by desecrating the god that they once served and smearing the lamb's blood on their doorposts, the Jewish People had reached the climax of their teshuvah process. Not only were they finally distancing themselves from the Egytpian mentality and idol-worshiping ideology, but they were willing to risk their lives by doing it so publicly. These acts, together, with the necessary trust in Hashem that He would not let any Egyptian kill them for their brazen dishonor of their god, was the sign that the Jewish People were finally worthy of being redeemed.

Therefore, the Ksav V'Hakabalah answers that the blood on the doorposts was not a sign for Hashem, but a sign for the Jewish People that they were finally separate from Egypt, and thus worthy of immediate redemption.

"The greatness of Hashem is that He is infinite, and yet He takes an interest in the smallest details of our lives. He oversees the entire universe and yet He listens to the prayer of a single individual." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller (1908-2001)



Our Personal Exodus

by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

In Parshas Bo, the makkos conclude with the death of the firstborn, and the Exodus from Egypt commences. In the Mishnah (Pesachim 10:5), the Sages express the centrality of the Exodus in Judaism: "A man is obligated to see himself as if he [personally] left Egypt."

We have experienced many extraordinary events in our history, and yet we are never required to envision ourselves as having been present, except in this case. Clearly, we are expected to develop a profound personal connection to the Exodus. How can we do this? Is it even possible to relate to the Exodus in a real way over three thousand years later?

Rav Shach would often tell people that we have trouble relating to the Exodus because we lack clarity regarding the Exodus. If we picture the persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Mitzriyim and how our ancestors survived it, our view of the matter will change. We must try to picture the Egyptian bondage in our minds. Imagine the living conditions of slavery, the makkos, and the way the Yam Suf looked as the Jewish nation walked through it. Imagination is a powerful tool. Through it, we can see ourselves leaving Egypt as we were commanded to.

Rav Reuven Fine, rosh yeshivah of Torah Vodaas, writes that the mitzvos themselves guide us towards this goal. So many mitzvos have an element of recalling Yetzi'as Mitzrayim, such as mezuzah, tefillin, tzitzis, Kri'as Shema, and Pesach, of course. More than simply acting as reminders, these mitzvos possess an intrinsic spiritual power to infuse the one who properly fulfills them with emunah in the Exodus.

Rav Fine adds that the mitzvah of seeing ourselves as having left Mitzrayim doesn't end there. Rather, we have an obligation to appreciate what leaving Egypt means in our own lives. Hashem's

plagues demonstrate that He completely controls the world. He and only He punishes the wicked, He watches over us constantly, and He redeems us from our troubles. When we do mitzvos that remind us of Yetzi'as Mitzrayim, we remember that Hashem is still with us now.

Rav Fine cites the Ramban (13:16), who comments on the unusual term the Torah uses for tefillin: "totafos." The word "totafos" connotes "drops." Rav Fine asks: what is Hashem dropping on us with the mitzvah of tefillin? He answers that tefillin have the ability to "drop," or infuse a palpable sense of emunah into us. As otherworldly as it may sound, when a person dons tefillin and recalls the Exodus (as per the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 25:5), he is infusing himself with a fresh dose of emunah and the awareness that Hashem is with him at all times.

Once, apostate Jews succeeded in having the **Vilna Gaon** summoned to a non-Jewish court on trumped-up charges. When the Gaon entered the court room, he slowly shifted the tallis that had been covering his tefillin shel rosh. The judges acquitted the Gaon immediately and ran out of the room before the trial even began.

The Gaon's students asked him how this miracle had happened. He explained that this was no miracle at all. The Gemara (Berachos 6a) states that when the nations see the tefillin shel rosh, they will be frightened. When one truly connects to the mitzvah of tefillin, his connection to Hashem is capable of achieving these results.

Another purpose of the Exodus was to teach us that Hashem redeemed us from slavery to transform us into His servants (see Rashi, Bamidbar 15:41). When we do these mitzvos, we need to connect to the idea that the whole purpose of our redemption was to subjugate ourselves to Hashem. "Freedom" does not mean that we now have time for ourselves. Our time belongs to Him. We must rest at times, of course, but only for the purpose of regaining our strength to serve.

Rav Moshe Mandel took this idea very seriously. Those close to him testify that he was unable to understand how people were able to skip a few minutes of their learning time. He even instructed his daughters, who did not have a constant mitzvah to study Torah, not to talk on the phone unnecessarily, as many mitzvos could be accomplished during that precious time. Rav Mandel exemplified what it means to be a servant of Hashem.

May we be zocheh to *see* ourselves as if we left Egypt and *become* proper servants of Hashem!



"Asking Their Egyptian Friends For Silver and Gold"

This week's parsha contains the following pasukim: "…Yet one more plague will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here…Speak now in the ears of the people and let them ask every man of his friend and every woman of her friend, jewels of silver and jewels of gold." [Shemos 11:1-2].

The Gerer Rebbe focuses in on the use of the word "v'yishalu" [let them ask]. Usually, the word yishalu connotes borrowing. We all know that in this situation the Jews did not intend to return the items for which they were asking. Why then does the Torah use the word "v'yishalu"?

The Gerer Rebbe explains that this is the first time that the Jewish people as a nation were "coming into money". Money, as we know, is a powerful force. On the occasion of the first time that they came into money, G-d instructed the people that it can make people or break them. Therefore, whenever one acquires wealth like this, it

they should always consider it "borrowed money". G-d may allow us to become rich, but we should view ourselves as merely the guardians of the money. We are only the trustees. It is not really ours. We cannot take it with us. It is not permanent.

Thus, from the Egyptian perspective, "you shall ask" (v'yishalu) "for money" is not really asking. The Jews were clearly TAKING the money from the Egyptians. However, they were instructed to consider it BORROWED money in relationship to themselves!



Darkness: A Symbolic Message Rather Than a Punishment

Parshas Bo contains the end of the Makos—the Ten Plagues—the ninth of which was *Makas Choshech*, the Plague of Darkness. I saw an interesting observation in the *sefer* Milchamos Yehuda from **Rav Yehuda Lubart, z"l**. He points out an anomaly that exists with this plague. With virtually all the other *makkos*, Moshe first warned the Egyptians and then the plague started. However, there was no warning prior to the Plague of Darkness. Why did *Makas Choshech* break the pattern?

The Milchamos Yehuda suggests a fundamental difference between *Makas Choshech* and all the other plagues. The other nine plagues from *Dam* (#1 – Blood) through *Makas Bechoros* (#10 – Death of the Firstborn) were punishments. These were Divine "slaps" to break the will of Pharaoh. - When punishing, there is a well-established principle: Punishments are not administered without prior warning (Yoma 81a; Sanhedrin 56b; Zevachim 107a). Even before punishing our children, we first warn them: "If you do this one more time, you are going to suffer the consequences!"

Makas Choshech was not the punishment. It was the warning! The warning was, "Pharaoh, you are blind! You cannot see what is happening before your very eyes. You should wake up and open your eyes and see what is happening to you and your people." The Plague

of Darkness, unlike the other plagues, was a symbolic message. There are none so blind as those who will not see. How does the Almighty convey this symbolic message to the King of Egypt? He does so by making *Choshech*. That was the warning for what was coming next – *Makas Bechoros*. *Makas Choshech* did not need any warning of its own. It was the warning.

Rav Lubart interprets another Medrash, using a homiletic, but very beautiful *drush*. The Medrash states that the Darkness of the Ninth Plague was as thick as a *dinar* (a certain kind of coin). But what does this comparison indicate? Darkness is not "thick" – it is the absence of light. If we turn off the lights in a room, it will simply be dark. There is nothing to feel. So what does the Medrash mean?

Rav Lubart explains that the Medrash is alluding to the fact that a *dinar* (money) can also cause blindness. People do crazy things – not only for money per se, but for all types of materialistic matters. People are blinded by the tremendous ambition to make money and accumulate wealth, possessions, or any physical pleasure.

Just like Pharaoh was blinded, and the Almighty tried to show him that he was blinded, so too are we also blinded by our drive to accumulate more and more material possessions and physical pleasures. - Maybe we are not as obtuse as Pharaoh, but we are also blinded – blinded by the *dinar*.

A man approached the **Kotzker Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern z"l**. "I don't understand," lamented the fellow. "Doesn't it say that one who runs away from honor will have honor pursue him? I have been running away from honor for years but it doesn't seem to be chasing after me." – "That statement is true," replied the sage, "and it does pursue one who truly runs away from it. Your problem is that you keep looking back to make sure it's following you!"

One Gains Holiness By Schlepping For Another Jew

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

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

Rashi states that here too, the special procedure of Pidyon Peter Chamor was a reward for the donkeys that helped the Jews transport the gold and silver they took out from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Donkeys are beasts of burden and Rashi says that each Jew left Egypt with several donkeys laden with booty. This can be seen as another instance of the same principle – G-d will not deny the reward of any creature.

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld asked the following question: Why do we not find the concept of "Kedushas Kelev" (Dog holiness), which would trigger a procedure to redeem first born dogs? Why is it that the donkeys were rewarded with sanctity and the dogs were given the scraps of treife meat?

Rav Yosef Chaim says that we see from here that one who "schleps" (carries a burden) for someone else becomes holy. The dogs kept

quiet. Fine. They were given a reward for that. But the donkeys "schlepped". That was hard work. That is a higher level of effort and for that they were rewarded with sanctity. One who helps another Jew becomes holy. If a donkey becomes holy for schlepping for a Jew, certainly a Jew will become even more holy for helping schlep for a fellow Jew.

Hidden Miracles

There is a famous **Ramban** at the end of Parshas Bo which explains why the Torah contains so many commandments that commemorate the Exodus. To name just a few T'fillin, Mezuzah, Pessach, Succah, and Kiddush are all "zecher l'yetzias Mitzrayim".

The Ramban explains that the Exodus set the record straight and debunked all the myths that were prevalent in the world. Some argued that the Master of the Universe did not exist. Others admitted that there was a Creator, but after Creation, He decided not to have anything to do with the world anymore. Still others believed that G-d Knows what goes on in the world, but does not care about it.

The Exodus contradicted all these theological errors. The miraculous unfolding of the events which led to the departure of the nation of slaves from the hands of the most powerful empire of its day proved that G-d created the world and still takes an active role in its direction, changing "nature" itself if it suits Him. This is why this historical event is so crucial for setting straight the "theological facts of life".

Since G-d does not want to create open miracles on an ongoing basis, it was necessary to provide commandments that remind us of the "open miracles" that occurred in the past. The Ramban explains that from the belief in G-d's ability to create "open miracles" (in the past), a person will come to accept the concept of "hidden miracles"

(that happen on a daily basis), which the Ramban calls the foundation of all of Torah. "For a person has no portion in the Torah of Moshe our teacher until he believes that everything that happens to us in all circumstances of life – whether private or public — are all miracles."

We need to believe that life itself is a miracle. The fact that I can stand here and talk and you can listen or the fact that the sun rises every morning in the eastern sky and sets every evening in the western sky is a miracle — except that these "miracles" are disguised as "nature". We become used to these things because they have happened throughout all our lives and perhaps throughout all of history, but they are miraculous, nonetheless.

I recently received the following letter. After hearing the above Ramban regarding "hidden miracles", I believe we can all have a greater appreciation of this letter and the story it tells:

In the summer of 2004, Andrew and Sharon finally became engaged and asked me, their Rabbi from Bel-Air California, if I would officiate at their wedding on December 5, 2004.

I told them I would be happy to officiate at their wedding provided they satisfied four basic requirements: (1) They are both Jewish; (2) The bride will go to the mikvah before the marriage; (3) The food at the wedding will be kosher; (4) Neither of them are currently married to another person and if they are currently married they must first obtain a Jewish divorce.

The couple agreed to the conditions, however Sharon told me that she had been married previously "but it was only for 6 hours and it was a mistake and I had the marriage annulled and I don't want to revisit it because it was a terrible mistake on my part."

I told her that in Judaism it does not matter if one is married for 6 hours or 6 years or 60 years — one remains married until the death of the spouse or one obtains a Jewish divorce.

"But the courts annulled my marriage, Rabbi. Please understand. It was a mistake."

"I am sorry, you need a Get", I told her.

"Rabbi, what if I can't find the 'mistake'? Am I doomed forever?"

I told her "I will be there for you. Let's contact the Jewish courts in Los Angeles, and they will help us get through this dilemma."

It took several weeks. This first husband was finally tracked down. I got in touch with the Beis Din in Los Angeles. They arranged the Get and the Beis Din told Sharon, "Now that you have your Get, you can get married, but not before 92 days from today." [based on the law of 'havchana,' which requires a waiting period before remarriage to preclude doubt regarding paternity issues of a child that may be born 7-9 months after the first marriage was terminated.]

The couple was now very distraught because this waiting period would push the wedding date past December 5th. All they could think about was their wedding plans, their honeymoon, their chosen dates. For days, they did not understand why they would have to wait until January 2005 before they could get married. But they finally agreed. After a few days, Andrew and Sharon called me back and told me that they wanted to do the wedding right in G-d's Eyes, so they began re-planning their wedding for January 23, 2005.

Still, in the back of their minds they could not understand why G-d was delaying their wedding. They could not understand that until December 26, 2004. Andrew and Sharon were supposed to be on the last days of their three-week honeymoon in a luxury hotel on a romantic island in the Indian Ocean, which was totally swept away by the 12/26/2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which took almost a quarter of a million lives.

"The best advice the Rabbi gave us was to follow the rules of G-d's Torah. He assured us that it would be a blessing for us in the end."

Rambam *Min HaTorah – Minayin?* (Where is Maimonides Alluded to in *Chumash*?)

As we all know, the Rambam played a major role in the development of *Klal Yisrael*. It is axiomatic that every major development in Jewish history is alluded to in the Torah. **The Vilna Gaon** was once asked – where is the name of the Rambam alluded to in the Torah? The Vilna Gaon cited a *pasuk* in Parshas Bo: "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Pharaoh will not listen to you, **לְמַעַן רְבוֹת מוֹפְתַי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם** - in order to **increase My wonders in the land of Egypt (*Revos Mofsai B'eretz Mitrayim*)**.'" [Shemos 11:9]. The beginning letters of the words **רְבוֹת מוֹפְתַי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם** are *Reish Mem Beis Mem*– Rambam.

This is amazing because the Rambam was in fact a "wonder" in the land of Egypt. He lived a great part of his life in *Eretz Mitzrayim* because he was persecuted in his home country of Spain. He ran away to Egypt where he lived in Alexandria and became the court physician. He literally became a "*mofes*" [wonder] in the Sultan's court.

He writes that lines of patients waited hours to see him. Despite all this, he authored his major works of Jewish scholarship that made a lasting impression on all subsequent Rabbinic literature. This is a Wonder. Thus, the Gaon pointed out that the words *Revos Mofsai B'eretz Mitzrayim* allude to Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, both in terms of their meaning and in terms of the acronym.

"Someone mentioned a particular tzaddik who had been known to have the ability to be mechayeh meisim, [revive the dead]. "Perhaps I too could revive the dead," the Kotzker Rebbe remarked, "but I much prefer to revive the living!"

לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח־בֵּיתוֹ עַד־בֹּקֶר

I saw the following thought in Rav Avraham Buxbaum's *sefer*. This is a beautiful insight and something to remember for the Pesach Seder. In describing the instructions given to Bnei Yisrael to be carried out during their last night in Mitzrayim, the *pasuk* says: "You shall take a bundle of hyssop and dip it into the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood that is in the basin, and as for you, you shall not leave the entrance of the house until morning." (Shemos 12:22). No one was allowed to leave their house the entire night, not until the next morning.

Our Seder is basically a reenactment of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. We try to do everything like they did the night before they left Mitzrayim. However, there is one anomaly. We do one thing at our Seder that was **not** done at that first Seder! When we say the paragraph "*Sh'foch chamoscha…*" (Pour out your wrath upon the nations who did not know you), we **open** the door.

Why do we open the door if we are trying to re-enact the first Pesach Seder? We should say "Don't open the door! Keep that door closed. Nobody leaves here until morning!"

We know from many different sources that *Klal Yisrael* was not worthy of leaving Mitzraim based on their own *zechus* (merit). The reason the *Ribono shel Olam* brought about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was in the *zechus* of the *Avos* and in the *zechus* of Moshe and Aharon – but not in the *zechus* of the Jewish masses.

The Zohar writes that when Lot and his family were saved from the city of S'dom, they were warned: "Don't look back!" The reason they were not permitted to look back is because when the *midas hadin* (attribute of judgement) is rampant, only people who are righteous and are therefore "*zoche ba'din*" (merit salvation based on judgment) are saved. However, even though Lot was the best of the people of S'dom, Chazal say that he was guilty of many of the same

moral shortcomings as the other inhabitants of S'dom. The Angels warned him not to look back because if he would look back, he would be caught up in the decree of judgment along with everyone else.

In fact, the Zohar lists three times in Chumash when people were not supposed to look because they were not *zoche ba'din*: (1) Noach in the *teivah* was told to not look out; (2) Lot could not look back at the destruction of S'dom, and (3) the Jews in Mitzrayim could not go out during the night of Makas Bechoros. *Klal Yisrael* were not permitted to go out that night because they too lacked the personal *zechus* to escape that decree. The *midas hadin* ruled in Mitzrayim that night and undeserving Jewish firstborns could have been killed as well had they "looked."

A person who is not worthy of a miracle or salvation should not look. The reason why we **open** the door during our Seder is in the hope that, G-d Willing, we will be *zoche* to salvation *ba'din* during the future *geulah* (redemption)! Therefore, when we conduct our Seder, we anticipate being *zoche* to personally witness the Divine wrath poured out upon the *goyim*.

The Sefas Emes in fact says that in the *pasuk* "And you shall not go out from the doorway of your homes ***ad boker***" (until morning), the term ***ad boker*** is an allusion to the **future redemption**, when we will hopefully be fully *zoche* to witness that salvation.

In 1805, Napoleon's armies surrounded the city of Pressburg, Hungary. The city was under canon fire, and the great **Chasam Sofer** gave his congregation a directive. "We must strengthen our dedication to shmiras halashon, guarding our tongues from speaking evil." - He explained the connection. Canons are fired in one location but the damage is done a great distance away. This is like words which can be spoken here but destroy over there.

Pharaoh! Wake Up and Smell the Coffee!

The Medrash in this week's parsha, on the *pasuk* "Go to Pharaoh…" [Shemos 10:1], states: "Rabbi Yehuda began by saying, 'Fortunate are the people who understand the call of the *Teruah* blast; *Hashem*, in the Light of Your Presence they walk." [Tehillim 89:16] This *pasuk* from Psalms is obviously associated with *Tekiyas Shofar*. It is recited on Rosh Hashanna after the completion of blowing the first set of Shofar blasts.

This is a beautiful *pasuk*, but what on earth does it have to do with "Go to Pharaoh…"? There are many fundamental *mitzvos* in Parshas Bo - *Pesach, Chametz, Tefillin, Bechor*. The *mitzva* of *Shofar* does not appear in this parsha! What on earth does "*Ashrei ha'Am yodei Teruah*" have to do with "*Bo el* Pharaoh?

The Chidushei HaRim cites in this connection a very famous **Rambam** in the third chapter of Hilchos Teshuvah. The Rambam writes there: "Even though blowing shofar is a Divine Decree (with no apparent logic), it carries a tremendous message within it (*remez yesh bo*): Arise those who slumber from your sleep, wake up from your drowsiness and repent."

A remez is a 'hint' and sometimes a 'hint' can be even more powerful than a long speech. Sometimes even the wink of an eye or the nod of one's head—the slightest gesture—can deliver a far greater impact than a twenty-minute oration. "A hint suffices for the wise."

When the Rambam says that *Tekiyas Shofar* contains within it a hint (*remez*), he is saying that *Klal Yisrael* respond to the *remez* of *Tekiyas Shofar*. There are no words that come out of the shofar—it is merely a series of sounds that emerge. But that sound is enough to send a message that I need to wake up from my slumber. This sound can sometimes be more powerful than the most eloquent of *drashas*. - The first time we hear the shofar—perhaps even in Elul, but certainly on the first day of Rosh Hashanna—we start to tremble. It sends a message. There is no screaming, there

is no yelling, there is no fire and brimstone, just that *kol shofar*—the hint within it. And*Klal Yisrael*responds.

The Chidushei HaRim explains that Rabbi Yehuda in the Medrash means as follows: Come and see the difference between the Jewish people and Pharaoh. Parshas Bo contains Plagues #8, #9, and #10. Pharaoh has already gone through seven plagues. He has been banged over the head time and time and time again. Wake up and smell the coffee, Pharaoh! Don't you see where this is headed? Why can't you figure it out? Why don't you respond? Are you blind? Are you deaf? Are you dumb? What is it that you do not get? They are going to take your entire country down the drain!

Such is sometimes the nature of people. They can be hit over the head, they can be yelled at, they can be slapped in the face, they can have cold water poured over their head. Everything! And still they do not wake up.

Rabbi Yehudah began and expounded: Fortunate is the nation who knows the *Teruah*. *Klal Yisrael* understand the *Teruah*. They hear one sound and already they intuitively understand the hint contained with it. That one sound already arouses them to repent. Such is the difference between Pharaoh and *Klal Yisrael*.

The Kotzker Rebbe was once asked why other religions, which are sheker, are so successful – they have spread throughout the world, while Judaism which is the Emes is so 'unsuccessful' – we are few in number and Jews are often deserting the religion.

The Kotzker said an amazing quip: "They serve Sheker, but they serve it with a sincerity as if it were Emes. We serve the Emes, but unfortunately we often serve it as if it was Sheker" – without proper sincerity.



Ten vicious plagues befall Mitzrayim in an amazing spectacle of Hashem's strength and power over the world.

Now, of course the purpose was to get Klal Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, and to show the power of Hashem. But the question begs to be asked… These 10 plagues one after the other, each one getting more severe – Was it really necessary to have all 10? Why couldn't Hashem have just brought one huge plague to blow away and annihilate Mitzrayim- why 10?

If you have ever made food for yourself, you know exactly how you like it. You favour particular ingredients and specific spicing and presentation. But, when you are cooking for others, you need to provide a wider selection, because you don't know how exactly they like it or all their particular preferences.

Says the **Dubno Maggid**, that's exactly what went on over here. The purpose of all these miracles was for every one of us to tell over to our children exactly what occurred in Mitzrayim. And in order to do that, The Ribboino Shel Olam had to create a variety of different plagues, because different people are impressed by different things. And therefore, to ensure that the story is passed down to

the next generation, Hashem created 10 completely different plagues.

What a message that is for ourselves and our own children. Not all our children fit perfectly into the 'cookie cutter'. Each one has their needs, their wants and their specific interests. It is up to us to find out exactly what talks to them and what inspires them. What gives them the ability to hold on tight to the Emunah in Hashem, even in difficult turbulent times.

All of us and our children are so different – yet cherished in Hashem's eyes.

Have an amazing Shabbos.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Emuna



Why is the section dealing with Tefillin in the end of Parshas Bo between the Makkos and Yetzias Mitzrayim?

Tosafos tells us in Mitzrayim we worked through performing the 39 Melachos. Hence, at Kiddush on Shabbos, we say **זכר ליציאת מצרים**. Tefilin binds us to Hashem as it says **וקשרתם** - to bind.

We don't wear Tefilin on Shabbos since it is a reminder of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Indeed, **שבת** is an abbreviation for **שבת במקום תפילין** , Accordingly, Tefillin is at the end of Parshas Bo because the purpose of Yetzias Mitzrayim is Emuna and binding ourselves to Hashem.



At a Pidyon Haben **the Gra** was asked the following: The Mekubalim say all Mitzvos are in Breishis. Where is Pidyon Haben? He answered that **בראשית** forms an acronym for **בֵּן רִאשׁוֹן אַחַר שְׁלשִׁים יוֹם תִּפְדֶּה**- *a firstborn son after 30 days should be redeemed.* Pidyon Haben is one of the more uncommon Mitzvos since it doesn't apply if a girl is born, born by caesarian, miscarriage, if either parent is a Kohen or Levi. If one merits, he gets the opportunity once in his life to do this mitzva.

A Bechor belongs to Hashem once he is born as it says **קדש לי כל בכור** - *sanctify to me every firstborn.* This is because Hashem saved the Jewish Bechor by Makas Bechoros where he killed the Egyptian one, as we say in Shacharis

כל בכוריהם הרגת ובכורך ישראל גאלת - ***all their firstborn You killed but Your firstborn Israel You redeemed***. Is it any surprise that the Gemara on Pesach- Pesachim- ends off with discussing Pidyon Haben as Pesach is the time of **בני בכורי ישראל** - my firstborn son is Israel. Through Pidyon Haben the father of the child gets him back as the father at the Pidyon says **חפץ אני לפדות את בני**

It is said in the name of **R' Pinchas Koritzer** among others that a Seuda of a Pidyon Haben is like 84 fasts; what one can rectify with 84 fasts can be rectified at a Pidyon Haben. In regard to Yaakov it says **כחי וראשית אוני**- *my strength and my initial vigour*, and this is when he was 84. These correspond to the 84 fasts since a Bechor is the first seed. Indeed, **פדיום** is a contraction of **פד יום**. Furthermore, in **פדת שלח לעמו**- Hashem sent redemption to His people, we have the initials **פד תעניות** (84).

What Are You Looking At?

After the plague of darkness Paroh says ... **אל תסף ראות פני כי ביום ראותך פני תמות**- *do not see my face anymore because on the day you see my face you shall die.* Moshe responds ... **ראות פניך** - *you spoke correctly, I shall never see your face again.*



R' Shlomo Radomsker (1800-1866) wonders why is it at this time that Paroh said this? Did Paroh want to see Moshe and Ahron until now?! Of course not, as they came to him to afflict him with the Makkos?

The Degel Machane Efraim (1748-1800) writes that when one looks at the face of a Tzadik, a light comes to his **נשמה**. The reverse also applies- if one looks at the face of the wicked. For this reason, it is forbidden to gaze at the face of a wicked person.

The Yismach Moshe writes that there are Tzadikim that when they look at wicked people they extract the sparks of Kedusha that lie within them. This is just like a magnet that draws iron toward it. For this reason, it is permitted for such Tzadikim to look at a **רשע** although it is usually forbidden since **להוציא ממסגר אסיר**; *they are removing a prisoner from confinement.*

Tzadikim elevate the sparks that are entrapped in the shells of impurity. This is what Yaakov and Yosef did in Mitzrayim. This is indicated in **ויצא מלפני פרעה**, as Yaakov extracted the sparks of Kedusha that lay within Paroh. The same applies here as it says **ויצא משה מעם פרעה**.

Since there was tremendous Kedusha within Paroh, Tzadikim such as Yaakov and Moshe were needed to extract such Kedusha. Ordinary people would be unable to do this. However, such people were able to do this with the regular Egyptians as it says **וישאלו איש מאת רעהו**

This is what is meant in **וינצלו את מצרים** - *they emptied Mitzrayim*. That is, they emptied it of all its Kedusha by extracting it. So, after all the sparks of Kedusha were extracted from Paroh, he said **אל תסף ראות פני** since he had no more sparks of Kedusha left in him. Therefore, **ביום ראותך פניך תמות** because it is forbidden to look at the face of a **רשע** unless there is Kedusha there to extract.

Tefillin- Did You Know…



Since this week's Parsha contains the Mitzva of Tefillin, we will cite some interesting facts regarding this Mitzva:

1) **The Gra** once told his student **R' Chaim Voloziner** that to fulfil the Mitzva of Tefillin according to all opinions of the Rishonim one will need to put on 64 pairs of Tefillin every day.

2) There are those, including Rashi and the **ר"ן**, who hold that there is no prohibition in putting on Tefillin on Shabbos. The Gra among others hold that it is permitted to put on Tefillin on Shabbos and Yom Tov if it is **שלא לשם מצוה**.

3) R' Chisda and Rabba Bar Rav Huna would daven Maariv with their Tefillin on.

4) In the times of the Gemara, those who lived in Eretz Yisrael also recited a Bracha upon removing their Tefillin- **אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לשמור חוקיו**.

5) After an illness, R' Yanai would only wear his Tefillin after three days passed- until he regained his strength. He was concerned that due to his weakness he couldn't concentrate properly on the Tefillin. In the summer, R' Yochanan would wear only the hand Tefillin (all day) since his head was too weak for him to wear Tefillin on it all day as he was adversely affected by heat.

6) The question is asked if one is born with two heads, which one does he put Tefillin on? The conclusion of that discussion is that one born with two heads won't live more than 30 days, let alone until the age of 13. Consequently, the question is unrealistic.

7) Halacha dictates that women are exempt from the Mitzva of Tefillin. What if they want to be stringent on themselves and wear Tefillin? We must protest. A woman who wears Tefillin may also be transgressing **לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה** - *male garb shall not be worn on a woman,* as Targum Yonasan comments on this Pasuk **לא...ותפילין** - a woman shouldn't wear Tzitzis and Tefillin.

During the emperor's visit to Krakow, when the Jews arrived in Shul to welcome him, they found that his portrait that had always hung on the synagogue's wall was missing. When the leaders of the community became aware of this, there was no time to bring another portrait.

When the emperor arrived and saw there was no portrait of him he asked **R' Shimon Sofer**, the Rav of the city, why his portrait wasn't in the Shul. R' Sofer replied that the Jews have a commandment called Tefillin in which we put them on every day as a sign. However on Shabbos, not only are we not obligated to put them on, but we are forbidden to even touch them. This is because the Shabbos itself is a sign between us and our Father in Heaven. We therefore do not need other signs. The same applies here: When you are not with us, we need a portrait of you to help us recall your likeness. But when we have the opportunity to benefit from the radiance of your

countenance, it is forbidden to look at your portrait, which is but a pale imitation of your Majesty.

The Wondrous Future Redemption



We learn about the ten plagues, and we realize how they are beyond our comprehension. This is how it was then- when we were redeemed from Mitzrayim. How about the future redemption?

In the name of the **Gra**, the following explanation is given. Parshas Bo begins with **בא אל פרעה** - *come to Paroh*. Let us take these words literally meaning enter inside the letters that make up the word **פרעה**. Being that **פ** is spelled **פה**, the inner letter is a **ה**. Inside a **ר- ריש**- is a **י** and **ש** . Inside the **ע- עין**- is **י , ן**. Lastly, inside a **ה- הא**- is an **א**.

So, the internal letters are **ה,י,ש,י,נ,א**. The sum of these letters is 376. That is the same Gematria as **עשו**. Edom- **עשו**- is the last Galus. This alludes to that we will be redeemed from Galus Edom with these Makkos.

To cap this off, let us again take the phrase **בא אל פרעה**literally. That is to say, combine the sum of the word **בא** (3) to **פרעה** (**אל**) (355). What is our total? 358, the same as **משיח** !

Five Fingers, Five Senses



When we say Shema we cover our eyes- with our five fingers. Being that the five fingers correspond to the five senses, covering our eyes with our five fingers is to accept **עול מלכות שמים** over our five senses. After all, many of the areas we fall in are because of our five senses. Examples- seeing the improper (sight), refraining from giving Tzedaka (touch), eating forbidden foods or overeating and the like (taste), smelling that which causes us to have a forbidden desire, hearing Lashon Hara and so on. Three times a day we take our five "senses" and recite Shema with them, making a powerful statement. The rest of the day we have a chance to live by that statement.

The Gemara tells us the names of our five fingers: **זרת**- pinky, **קמיצה** - ring finger, **אמה**- middle finger, **אצבע**- index finger and **גודל**- thumb. If we add these five to the word **יד**, we get a sum of 1,118. This is the exact Gematria of **שמע ישראל ה' אלה-ינו ה' אחד!**

When we put on Tefilin, we bind ourselves to Hashem. In fact, **תפלין** means to connect to as in **נפתולי אלקים**. Placing it on our arm and head, signifies subjugating my **מח** - mind and **לב** (desires and thoughts) to Hashem. In the Tefillin of the hand we have one compartment in contrast to the head Tefillin where there are four compartments. Is this random? Of course not, as the four compartments of the head Tefillin correspond to the four senses on the head (sight, smell, taste and hearing), whereas the one compartment on the hand Tefillin correlates to the one there- touch.

Number 15



Analysing the number 15 we see it is a steady upward progression. In fact, there are 15 **שיר המעלות**- song of ascents. At the Beis Hamikdash there were 15 steps that led down from the **עזרת ישראל** to the **עזרת נשים**.

Of the 30 kings and princes that come from **יהודה**, the 15th one was Shlomo- the pinnacle. Also, the moon is complete on the 15th of the month. Hashem's name **י-ה** has a Gematria of 15. We start the morning with 15 Birchas Hashachar. In **ישתבח** we recite 15 praises. After Shema at Shacharis we say **אמת ויציב** in which there are 15 **ו**'s which start off 15 expressions. In reference to a Talmid Chacham, there are 15 traits mentioned.

The number 15 associated with Pesach. Pesach comes out on the 15th of the month. In the Haggada we have 15 **דינו**'s. At the Pesach Seder, we have 15 steps- from **קדש** to **נרצע**. Parshas Bo which deals with Pesach, is the 15th Parsha from Breishis!

Predicting the Holocaust

In the plague of **חשך**, darkness, we see connections to the Holocaust. The Jews who didn't want to leave Mitzrayim to go to Eretz Yisrael died in the plague of darkness. Similarly, we know that in the 1930s, Jews were offered to go to Eretz Yisrael, based on the Haavara Agreement. Many, however, declined.

In connection with the plague of darkness, it is written **ויהי חשך על ארץ מצרים וימש חשך**, *there will be darkness upon Mitzrayim, and the darkness will become darker.*

Let us look at the letters above (**על**) the letters of **וימש**: above **ו** is **ה**, above **י** is **ט**, above **מ** is **ל**, and above **ש** is **ר** Astoundingly, these letters spell **הטלר**, Hitler **ימ״ש** ! Another correlation is that 12 of 15 million people died in **חשך**. But that was **וימש**—double darkness. Half of 12 million is six million, the number of those who perished in the Holocaust.



The Meshech Chochma (1843-1923) writes what seems like a prophecy: "Those people [Jews] who think Berlin is Jerusalem…will see those very people [Germans] rise up like a storm wind [to destroy them]." We all know what happened.

In the memoirs of **R' Mazah** we find a record of a talk given by the Maggid of Kelm that took place more than 60 years before the Holocaust:

The German will not prosecute the Jew with ordinary persecutions. When he rises to power, he won't just oppress the Jews, but rather he will make the hatred of the Jews like a Shulchan Aruch, code of law. Because of the sin of Geiger [founder of the reform movement in Germany], a new, German version of the Shulchan Aruch is going to arise against the Jewish people and there it will be written—the only thing to do with even the best Jew is kill him!

R' Shlomo Wolbe cites in the name of **R' Yisrael Salanter** (1810-1883) that in return for the "Reform Shulchan Aruch," which permits intermarriage with the Gentiles, the day will come when the Gentiles will write a Shulchan Aruch of their own, which will forbid them to marry Jews.

The enslavement in Mitzrayim didn't begin until all the **שבטים** died. Upon hearing of the death of **R' Baruch Ber Liebowitz** in 1939, the **Chazon Ish** closed himself up in a room and was heard sobbing

passionately, "Until now the pure and holy Torah study of R' Boruch Ber and **R' Shimon Shkop** protected our people from the Nazis. Now, who knows what will be." It wasn't too long after (in 1939) that the Nazis came.

In the winter of 1930 before preparing to leave the yeshiva and return to America, a student came to receive a farewell blessing from the **Chofetz Chaim**. In the course of the conversation, the Chofetz Chaim murmured, "Twelve million was child's play. Only in another ten years will the thing really begin." He repeated this until the young man realized what was actually being said. The reference was to the twelve million people who had been killed or wounded in World War One. Almost 10 years later (1939) World War Two unleashed its fury.

R' Michoel Ber Weissmandl (1903-1957) tells of a discussion he had with his rebbe, **R' Shmuel Dovid Ungar**, in 1931. R' Ungar was offered the post of Rav in Tirnau, which he refused, and instead remained with his yeshiva at Nitra. When R' Weissmandl pressed him to reconsider, he answered, "My heart tells me that the time is near when there won't be a yeshiva anywhere except Nitra, and I want to be there." Ten years later, when all the yeshivos of Slovakia were destroyed and only Nitra remained, R' Weissmandl remembered this prophetic moment with his teacher.

When Hitler rose to power in 1933, the **Ponovitcher Rav, R' Yosef Shlomo Kahanemen**, asked the Chofetz Chaim what the fate of their brothers in Germany and Poland would be, since Hitler had publicly declared that he aimed to wipe out the name of Israel. The Chofetz Chaim replied that Hitler wouldn't succeed, as no one had ever succeeded in uprooting and destroying our entire people.

The Ponovitcher Rav left the Chofetz Chaim, trembling over the imminent destruction of European Jewry, but his heart was sure that our Holy Land would be spared. And so it was. Over the entrance to the Ponovitch Yeshiva, which he subsequently founded in Bnei

Brak, the pasuk (Ovadia 1:17) quoted by the Chofetz Chaim was inscribed.

Tracing the ancestry of Haman, we find that he is a descendant of Amalek, who descends from Esav. What are we told about Esav? The Midrash compares him to a pig. When a pig lies down, it stretches forth its hooves—which are split and therefore have a kosher sign—as if to say, "I am pure." Esav and his descendants act the same way. The Germans are known to have been very nice on the outside. We now know how they were on the inside.

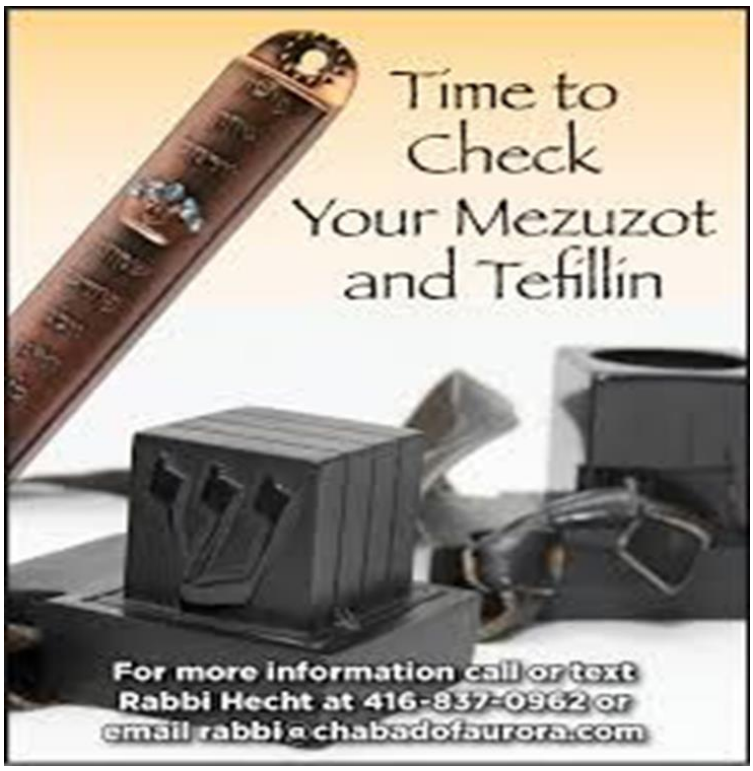
Reading through the Megilah, we notice that Hashem's name isn't found. Why? Because He was hidden. This is just as many felt Hashem was hidden during the Holocaust. The Gemara says about **גרממיא**, a province of Edom (Esav), that if they were to go forth unrestrained, they would destroy the entire world. **R' Yaakov Emden** writes that this refers to Germany. It is no wonder that this Gemara is found in Mesachta Megilah, the Gemara about Purim in which Haman, a descendant of Amalek, also wanted to wipe us out.

Protection of Mezuzos and Tefillin

On the Mezuza it is written Hashem's name **ש-די**. This is an acronym for **שומרי דלתות ישראל** - *guarding the doors of Israel.*

In Eretz Yisrael, there was a kindergarten where every child had lice for a long time. After checking the Mezuzos, they discovered in one of them that the word **ושננתם** was written **וכננתם לבניך** - **כנם** is lice. Once it was fixed, the lice problem vanished.

There was a man that lived in Boro Park who had an appetite which couldn't be satiated. This went on for months until he finally checked the Mezuzos where he discovered that it was written **ואכלת ואכלת** instead of **ואכלת ושבעת**- *you will eat and be satisfied.*



In an incident where one had a problem with his washing machine, he checked his Mezuzos. They found that there was a problem with the **ר,ך** of the word **בדרך**. That makes it spell **בד**, cloth.

Similar stories are told regarding Tefillin. A person whose heart was beating a little quicker than normal- three times in the amount that should normally be two times- decided to check his Tefillin. It was discovered that **לבבך** was written **לבבבך** (three **ב**'s instead of two).

In the year 1996, an Avreich learning in a Kollel in Telz Stone had various occurrences happen to his left hand. In one incident, mosquitos bit only his left hand. In another episode, he had a rash on his entire left arm and hand.

In yet another story when he was banging in a nail while building a Succa, he lost control and hit his left muscle- where his Tefillin were placed- leaving him with a big bruise. He then decided to get his Tefillin checked where it was revealed that it was written **וקשרתם על ידך**; *bind them upon your arm*, omitting the word **לאות**. Once this was corrected, these obscure occurrences stopped happening.

After Hurricane Sandy in 2012, a 49-year-old man feared that his Tefillin got wet, thereby invalidating them. After the Sofer checked them, he told the man there is no water damage but whoever wrote these Tefillin messed up on the same two letters throughout the Tefillin. The man expressed his frustration saying, "I can't believe that I am 49 years old and never fulfilled the Mitzva of Tefillin. The Sofer was shocked as he exclaimed, you're 49! The two letters that

were messed up in the Tefillin were a **מ** and **ט**. These two letters have a sum of 49!

These stories are related to realize some of the protection the Mezuza and Tefillin can serve.

Judgment in Mitzrayim



The Makkos lasted 64 days as each Makka was the duration of one week except Makkas Bechoros which was one day. 64 is the numerical value of **דין** as they were being judged now and as it says **דן אנכי**. In fact, the Gemara upon expounding a Pasuk says **והגבורה (דין)** refers to **יציאת מצרים** .The word **מטה**- stick, has the same equivalent as **דן** (54) since through the **מטה**, the promise of **דן אנכי** was fulfilled.

The **פאר אהרן** points out that the phrase **ביד חזקה ובזרע נטויה** - *strong hand and outstretched arm*, has the same equivalent as **דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב** (acronym for the 10 Makkos)- 501. Who brought the Makkos? Moshe and Ahron. **יד חזקה** refers to Moshe as it says **ולכל היד החזקה...עשה משה זרוע נטויה** refers to Ahron as he has an outstretched arm by Birchas Kohanim. We say in the Haggada that Hashem sent us out **מלאך - לא ע"י מלאך** forms an acronym of **אַהרן בַהן מַשה לַוי**.



Afikoman

We are taught that the Brachos of Yitzchak were given on Pesach. This is why we take the **אפיקומן**on Pesach since Yaakov took the Brachos from Esav then. An allusion is found in **בא אחיך במרמה** - your brother came with cleverness, as **במרמה** shares the same Gematria as **287 - אפיקומן**.

The **אפיקומן** is the middle Matza- the one that corresponds to Yitzchak, who is the one that gave the Brachos. One last hint is that the two **חד גדיא**'s allude to the two **גדיי עזים** that Yaakov gave Yitzchak for the Brachos as this took place on Pesach.



Pesach- Removing Evil

There are 365 days in a year. The word **נחש**- snake has a Gematria of 358. Subtracting 358 from 365, we come to a total of 7 as it is during the 7 days of Pesach that we get the ability to fight the **זוהמא**- filth of the snake. This is the meaning in **ביעור חמץ** which refers to the Yetzer Hara.

There is a Machlokes if the sin of Adam was with wheat or wine. For this reason, we have Matza (wheat) and wine (4 cups) as it is to rectify the first sin of man. Through this we may merit **משיח**. In fact, **משיח** has the equivalent of 358.

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב לשנו 11:7



Moshe informed Pharaoh that when the Jewish people left Egypt after the plague of the slaying of the first-born, none of the dogs would bark or wag its tongue at them.

Rashi writes (22:30) that as a reward to the dogs for obeying these instructions, the Torah commands us to give our non-kosher meat to dogs whenever practical. What is the significance of the fact that the dogs did not interact with the Jews as they left Egypt, and why is non-kosher meat considered an appropriate reward for their actions?

Rav Yitzchok Hutner points out that dogs don't always bark at people; often, they act quite friendly toward humans, and they are even colloquially referred to as "man's best friend." On the other hand, the Gemora (Beitzah 25b) surprisingly teaches that dogs are considered the most brazen and "chutzpadik" of all animals.

In what way does a dog's chutzpah manifest itself? Rav Hutner explains that the very fact that dogs think of themselves as man's best friend is the ultimate in audacity, as it demonstrates that they view themselves as equal to humans. This concept is the height of temerity, as it reveals that the dogs have no appreciation of the tremendous gap between them and us.

When the Jewish people left Egypt, they reached such a high spiritual level that even the dogs recognized that the tremendous chasm between them. As a result, they were afraid to bark at the Jews, or even to wag their tongues toward them in friendship. The

dogs' reward for this episode is that we are commanded to throw our non-kosher meat to them, as non-kosher meat symbolizes the divide between Jews and dogs. Because the dogs in Egypt were able to grasp and appreciate the difference between us and them, we reward them by giving them the meat that we are forbidden to eat.



The TorahAnyTimes - Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein The Beautiful Tattoo

For a number of years, I was privileged to teach 8th grade boys in the Crown Heights Yeshiva in Mill Basin, New York. With the student body primarily comprised of non-religious boys, emphasis was put on imbuing them with a genuine appreciation of Torah and Yiddishkeit. As it so happened, during one of my years teaching, one of the 7th grade students, Howey, was asked to leave the school due to his repeated disruptive behavior. The school ideally wished they could avoid doing so, though they felt it was necessary.

Years later, I was invited to the wedding of his older brother, who had been my student while in 8th grade. Despite it not being a fully religious wedding, I nevertheless decided to go for a short while and pay regards to my former student.

As I entered inside the wedding hall, I found my table number and headed over to take a seat. To my surprise, Howey was sitting at the table. I could sense that even now, years after he was thrown out of school, he was considerably upset at the administration's decision. Sitting next to him was his girlfriend as well, who was clearly not Jewish. I quietly took a seat and minded my own business, not wishing to intrude and offset him.

Howey, however, completely ignored me and the few other rabbis seated at the table, subtly conveying his annoyance and aggravation at his former rabbis, school and religious Jews. When the time for the first dance began, I knew what to expect. A

mechitzah would be put up, and the first song would be hava nagila where the rabbis would have the opportunity to dance with the chassan, after which they would leave. I planned on joining the dancing, although I had someone in mind whom I wished to greet beforehand.

Approaching Howey, I extended my hand and let out a smile. "Howey, shalom aleichem! How are you?" Howey, caught off guard, looked at me startled. "Listen," I said, "it's the hava nagila dance. I didn't throw you out of school, and in fact you were never in my class. Please don't be angry at me. Come, let's dance!"

Howey turned aside to his girlfriend for her approval. "Do you think I should dance with the rabbi?" "Sure," she happily replied, "go ahead. Just don't leave me here for too long."

Howey joined us, with me and his brother dancing alongside. A short while later, I was left dancing with just Howey himself. I knew that now was the time for me to say something. Pulling him close, I gave him a big kiss on his right cheek and whispered into his ear, "Howey, I apologize for what happened to you in yeshiva, but I just want you to know that I love you and you are a very special boy." As I said this to him, I could tell he was moved. But I wasn't finished.

Pulling him close again, I gave him a kiss on his left cheek and whispered into his ear, "But you need to know something else. You really cannot stay with that girl." I then finished dancing with him and headed back to my seat. Slowly gathering my things together, I proceeded to leave the wedding hall.

Howey continued to trail behind me and walk outside too. He wanted to tell me something. "You know Rabbi Wallerstein," he began, "I am a Buddhist. I traveled to the Himalayas and met this girlfriend of mine who is a Buddhist." I know understood why his head was completely shaved and he had huge tattoos of a Buddha on both his arms. I listened to what Howey had to say, after which I made the following offer.

"You know, Howey, Buddhism is an interesting religion. I do not know much about it, but maybe you would like to come to my Tuesday night class and tell us about it." Howey was taken aback, yet oddly interested. "You really would let me do that?" "Sure," I said, "I am very open. You never know; maybe I'll become a Buddhist. I don't know if I like that zero haircut, but you can tell us all about Buddhism." Howey was extremely excited to hear this, as was his girlfriend. "That would be amazing!" she cried out. "Can I come too?" "Let's start with Howey," I said, "and we'll see what happens."

The next Tuesday night, there was Howey standing in front of my class, lecturing all about Buddhism. After he spoke for quite some time, I got up and offered my own input. I first wanted to break the ice, so I began making light of Buddha. "Look Howey, "I said, "there is one thing which is bothering me. How can Buddha be g-d? He is extremely overweight and he hasn't lost one pound in two thousand years. If he's a g-d, he should be able to figure out a way to lose some weight!" I then continued with a more serious rebuttal of the many ideas he mentioned, which put my class back on track.

From that night on, Howey and I started talking to one another about Buddhism and Judaism. The next Tuesday night, lo and behold, Howey showed up to the class again, and so he did the next Tuesday night and the next Tuesday night. Three months later, he was no longer in touch with his Buddhist girlfriend. It was at that point that I suggested he leave America and go to Israel. "Let's go to Israel together and find a yeshiva that is suited for you."

Howey agreed to make the trip and enter a yeshiva. After spending some time in one place, he relocated and wound up in a different yeshiva, where he fell in love with Chassidus and changed his entire life around.

Two years later, he had made tremendous progress in his growth and devotion to Yiddishkeit, and wore the part with a long beard and peyos. He then gave me a call. "Rebbe," he said, "I need to come back

to America." Strongly suggesting that he stay in Israel as it provided him with the best and healthiest framework for continual growth in Judaism, I got the message across, although sensed he was still concerned about something. "Here in Israel I will never find a shidduch. I have a Buddha on one arm, another Buddha on the other, and plenty of other tattoos on my back and chest. Who is going to marry me in Israel? Maybe in America I will find someone who would be willing to put up with me." Hearing Howey's worries, I compromised. "Just give it a couple more months. If by then you don't find a shidduch, you can come back to America."

A month later, I was back on the phone with Howey, who was now known as Chaim Simcha. "Rebbe, you won't believe it! One of my teachers set me up with someone and she seems to be a good match." But Howey was still very worried about something. "She comes from a regular family, though, and I have no idea how I am going to explain the story behind all my tattoos." In the past, Howey could be seen walking down the streets of Israel on the hottest day with a long-sleeve turtle neck, just so he could hide all the tattoos. They were literally all over his body. "As soon as I tell her about them, she is going to run…"

"Look," I said to Howey, "you have come so far in Yiddishkeit. Don't say anything until you've gone out a few times, and if things are going well and she really likes you, maybe she will then understand and it will not be as bad as you think."

A little while later, I got a call from Howey. He had gone out five times and everything was going very well. "Rebbe," he nervously said to me, "what am I going to do now? I like her and she likes me, but I know that if I tell her about the tattoos she will jump out of the car that very minute." "Howey," I gently yet firmly said, "Hashem runs the world. You have to do what you have to do." He was understandably anxious about the situation, but there was no other option. He needed to tell her the truth.

At the end of the next date, as Howey pulled up in front of Kfar Chabad, he turned to her and said, "I have to tell you something." As soon as Howey said that, the girl's mind began to imagine one thing: marriage. "I think he is going to propose now," she thought to herself. "I need to tell you this," continued Howey, "but please don't react right away." By now, the girl was almost certain that Howey was going to propose, so much so that she was nearly sticking out her finger, waiting for a ring to be slipped onto it. "Don't worry about it," she said, trying to allay his fears. "Just say what you have to say."

"There is something about me which is a little different." "What do you mean?" she asked. "Well…wait a minute." Howey proceeded to pull his arm out of his jacket sleeve. And then she saw his tattoos. "Wait," Howey interjected, "that's not the only one I have. I have another one on my other shoulder and more on my chest and my back." The girl sat there silently, taking everything in.

"I understand and accept the fact if you do not want to see me again. This was my past and it has left its consequences." Howey continued rambling on and on, until the girl interrupted him. "Okay, I heard everything you have to say. Now let me tell you what I have to say.

"I only see one tattoo, and that is the tattoo on your soul. You are so spiritual. I see that you have G-d's name of Y-K-V-K tattooed on your soul and that is the only tattoo I see. Don't you worry about anything else."

Howey let out a sigh of relief. "By the way," he said, "will you marry me?"

Today Chaim Simcha lives with his beautiful family in Bnei Brak. Here was someone who saw past this boy's outer appearance. She saw beyond the external tattoos and discerned the one true and beautiful tattoo of spirituality and G-dliness. The same is true of us all. Embedded deep within each and every Jew lies a pristine neshama full of purity and potential. All we must do is learn to see

beyond the outer façade and perceive the real person which lies beneath. And when we do so, we will unquestionably find a world of inner beauty awaiting to shine.

Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis - The Call of the Rooster

ויאמר לכו עבדו את ה׳ *And he said, "Go, serve Hashem…"* 10:24



Around forty years ago, at a reception dinner for the Hineni organization, a lady came to see me. She was currently in her second marriage and had an important issue she wanted to discuss. "Rebbetzin," she said, "I need your help. My teenage son is absolutely brilliant. He is in fact so brilliant that he obtained a position on Wall Street despite his young age. But his smarts got him into trouble when he managed to embezzle tremendous sums of money and was caught. Taken to court, the judge said that since he was a minor, he would release him through custody if an organization was willing to accept responsibility for him."

And then the woman looked straight into my eyes. "Rebbetzin, would your organization be able to accept responsibility for my son?" Thinking about it for a moment, I knew that it would be an awesome challenge to do so. But then I realized that here was a *yiddishe neshama* which needed help. And so, I said to the mother, "Let me meet him."

When the boy was later brought to see me, I looked at him and said, "My dear child, let me tell you something. If you will join our organization, you are going to learn a new way of life. You are going to pray regularly, and the first blessing you are going to say in the

morning is, '*Hanosein la'sechvi vinah* – Blessed are You, G-d, Who grants wisdom to the rooster.'"

Without a moment's delay, the boy looked at me. "The rooster? You are thanking G-d for the rooster?" "Yes," I said, "the wisdom of the rooster. I know what you are thinking. You believe that the rooster is this brainless creature G-d created. But let me tell you that you can learn three life lessons from the rooster. And if you always remember this, you will be set for life.

"First and foremost, as we say in the blessing, the rooster possesses the capability '*Le'havchin bein yom u'vein laylah* – To distinguish between day and night.' The rooster can discern between light and darkness, between right and wrong and between truth and falsehood. A person can have the most gifted of minds, but such brilliance can be warped and misused. You can be the greatest physician or scientist and build gas chambers and crematoriums. It is only through the knowledge of G-d that a light is cast into the darkness and matters become clear.

"Secondly, the rooster crows every morning, rain or shine, summer or winter. The rooster is always in uniform even when it is not in the mood. The same is true of you. You are a Jew every single day of your life, in illness and health, in poverty and wealth, in Auschwitz and Jerusalem. Never forget who you are; you have a purpose and a mission as a Jew.

"And lastly, the rooster knows that no matter how dense the darkness is, morning will always come. There is always hope, irrespective of where you find yourself in life."

And then I shared with him the following anecdote.

"When the Nazis ym"s arrived to deport my family along with many others, they knocked on our door and shouted that we have a few minutes to get out of the house. Anyone who resisted would be shot or beaten. While panic filled us all, my father's mind was preoccupied

with something very dear to his heart. He wished to smuggle out the *tefillin* of my great-great grandfather, the *Menuchas Asher*, and the manuscripts of Torah novella on multiple Talmudic tractates from my great-grandfathers, Rav Mordechai Bennet and the Be'er Yitzchak.

"But let me ask you," I said to the boy, "what was my father thinking? Would those manuscripts be published in Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen? Wouldn't my father have been more prudent to smuggle out a can of sardines, a piece of jewellery or some money?

"But the rooster knows," I continued telling this boy, "that no matter how dense the darkness is, morning will come. My father wasn't the only one who thought this way.



The Piacesner Rebbe, as well, while in the Warsaw Ghetto never put down his pen from continuing to write *divrei Torah*. When asked by his students, 'What is the Rebbe doing? They will kill us all! For whom is the Rebbe writing this?' The Piacesner Rebbe replied, 'As long as I am alive, I have a mission to write Torah and teach Torah; the rest is up to G-d.'

"When the war came to a close, amid the rubbles of the ghetto where my family used to live, a Polish gentile boy found the manuscripts of my great-grandfathers. And what can I tell you? When an American soldier recognized the Hebrew writing, he said to himself, 'My Jewish chaplain would be so happy to have this.' And with that, he purchased the manuscripts off the little boy for a bar of chocolate. The rest is history. The manuscripts have been published and are now being studied in *yeshivos* all around the world.

"These are the messages the rooster sends with his crow," I concluded telling the boy. "We must always look to discern between that which is right and wrong by consulting with our Torah leaders and Jewish law; be aware of our mission as Jews; and remember that no matter what life sends our way, we are an eternal nation who never gives in or gives up."

The call of the rooster is a call to each of us. It calls us to stand up straight, peer into our lives and proudly march forward with a sense of purpose. Each and every morning, bright and early, the rooster reawakens us and reminds us of our purpose in life. All that is left for us is to answer its call.



Shabbos

Back in the early 1900's, Shabbos observance was a major challenge in America. Many stories have been told of people who sacrificed so much just to keep Shabbos, and many of those righteous people are the reason that we, as a nation, are here today, flourishing in America. Those people had a very unique quality: they didn't just sacrifice for Shabbos - they did it with love, excitement and hislahavus, so that younger generations will see the beauty in their actions.

A story is told of a man who came to the shores of America with the utmost commitment to keep Shabbos. Week after week, he changed jobs and barely had enough money to support his family. One day, he landed a job as a watchman for an apartment complex. It was a great opportunity for him because not only was he was able to keep Shabbos, he was also able to move into a small apartment at the front of the building, rent-free. It wasn't very luxurious, but it served its purpose, and at least his family had shelter and food and could begin living decently. That was except for one considerable problem. The coal to heat up the building was stored in his apartment, and the dust and particles began to affect him and his

kids. His children looked much darker than the average Jewish child, and even their clothing became black with coal dust.



One fine day, a Jewish man was walking down the street in Manhattan when he saw two black kids talking in Yiddish! Startled by what he thought he was seeing, he drew closer to see if it was just his eyes fooling him. To his amazement, he realized that they were not African-American children at all, but rather two Jewish boys with very dark skin and not very clean clothes.

After inquiring who they are and where they live, the man asked if they could tell their mother to come speak with him. The woman arrived at the man's office and explained how difficult their situation was; how they have no money and were forced to live in a small apartment full of coal and that's why her kids look the way they do.

The wealthy businessman was visibly moved and felt terrible for this family. He immediately pulled out five $100 bills from his pocket with explicit instructions to the lady to find her family a new apartment. The lady was beside herself with joy and couldn't stop praising and thanking the generous man for his donation. He was an angel, heaven sent! Just as she was about to leave his office, she casually asked him if he was shomer Shabbos, to which he replied that he was not. The woman's face changed colours, "In that case,"

she said, "I'm sorry but I cannot accept money from Jews who are not shomer Shabbos." She handed him back the bills, picked herself up and left without taking a penny. The man couldn't believe his ears. Here was a lady who was barely making a living but wouldn't take money because he was not shomer Shabbos.

That night, he told his wife the story. "Look at this crazy woman who wouldn't take money just because we aren't keeping Shabbos!" However his wife had a different take on the matter. "Do you remember your promise when we came to the shores of America?" She asked him. "You promised me that as soon as our situation improves you were going to start keeping Shabbos. Now it's been a couple of years already and our situation is quite good, but you still don't keep Shabbos! Look how low we have fallen that even our fellow Jews won't take money from us!"



Her words penetrated his heart. From then on, the family became complete shomer Shabbos Jews, spreading the radiance of Shabbos to all their friends and neighbours. They had but one message: the more excitement and enthusiasm a person puts into his mitzvos, the more his children will follow in his footsteps, sanctifying the name of Hashem in the interim.

"Even though we have many challenges in life, we have so much to be thankful for. Hashem does so much good for us. We must be appreciative of all the good that we see and for all the good that we are not even aware of".

Rav Fischel Schachter - A Life-Changing Story

והגדת לבנך And you shall tell your son… (Shemos 13:8)



As my career as a rabbi began with storytelling, I would travel from school to school and captivate the hearts and minds of children. Usually enthralling and exciting, the stories were well liked and attended by many children. However, there was one particular time when matters went awry.

I had told a particular story in about fifteen other locations, but this time for some reason the children were not interested. One of the kids in fact began to sarcastically and facetiously shout every so often, "Ha-ha-ha! That's so funny…" Sooner than later, many of the other children as well caught on to the rude laughter of the child and in unison shouted, "Ha-ha-ha! That's so funny…" They were clearly having a better time repeating this line than listening to my story.

However, it suddenly hit me.

As I stood there with a half an hour remaining to speak without any other teacher in the room, I began to think to myself, "My storytelling career is over." I considered at one point facing the children and saying, "You are a bunch of mechutzafim (impolite children)!" but I figured that it would not go over too well. Then I thought about storming out of the room and making a scene. However, it suddenly hit me.

I began to think, "Listen to yourself. You are angry at the kids, angry at the principal and basically angry at everybody. There is only one person you are not frustrated with: yourself. Maybe Hashem wants

something from you right now?" And so, needing to think quickly, I realized that perhaps for some reason Hashem was indirectly telling me to switch the story. And so I did. I remember having heard a story that very day from Rabbi Boruch Rabinowitz, principal of the school Torah V'Daas, about Rabbi Yaakov Meir Shechter. Taking a deep breath in and hoping for the best, I began telling the kids the following episode:

Rav Yaakov Meir is blessed with many children. Unfortunately, however, many of them are not well. In particular, his daughter is very sick both physically and emotionally, and must be detained to a wheelchair. With an unpromising future, she was depressed and dispirited.

One day, Rav Yaakov Meir decided to take his daughter up high in the mountains in Ramat Shlomo. As he pushed her along and she took in the breathtaking sight surrounding her, she turned to her father and asked, "Tatti (father), do you love me? "Of course I do," Rav Yaakov Meir replied. "Do you love me more than anything else in the world?" she persisted. "Yes, I really do." "Will you do anything for me?" she asked again. "Yes, I will do anything possible for you," he answered. "If that is so," continued his daughter, "I want you to push me off the cliff. I am in pain and depressed. There is no hope for my life. Push me off the cliff; my life is full of misery."

Looking down at his daughter, Rav Yaakov Meir said, "I cannot do that." "Why not?" she sternly asked. "You said you will do anything for me!" "It is true that I said I love you," explained her father, "but my love pales in comparison to the love Hashem has for you. And if Hashem loves you that much, I cannot let my love get in the way of His. Right now He is giving you a heart which is beating and lungs which are letting you breathe. He clearly loves you dearly."

As I finished relating this story, I left the room. The principal, noting my departure and hearing the story I had just told over, turned to me and said, "We called you for Chanukah; not for Tisha

B'av." But I wasn't going to explain myself, and so I continued on home.

Later that night, the phone rang. It was a parent of one of the children from the school. Thinking to myself that I will most certainly be told, "How could you have said such a story? My child cannot go to sleep at night! I was also a rascal when I was a kid and I still ended up alright!" I prepared myself to hear a long-winded speech. But it was nothing of that nature. The father said, "I want to thank you very much." I wasn't sure if I heard him correctly, until he explained what he meant:

I also have a similar situation at home with a child who is not well. All my other children are taking it very hard, forcing them to go to therapy and express their feelings. I have one son, however, who does not talk at all. He doesn't say a word. He is the most depressed about the situation of all the siblings. Today, however, when he came home, he said to me, "I want to tell you a story." He proceeded to tell me the story you related today, and then asked me, "Does Hashem love our sister?" I assured him that Hashem loves her dearly, putting him at ease. It was the first time we had a healthy conversation in a long while. Rabbi, I cannot thank you enough. You have helped my son and our family immensely."

As I listened to this father speak, I knew there was a reason my first story did not go over well. Hashem wished for me to tell this other story and change the life of a young child. The father concluded by asking me, "How did you know by looking at the kids which story to tell? You did a great job!" "Experience," I said as I let out a smile; "it's all experience."

Sometimes we will be thrown a challenge in life which seems overwhelming and impossible to handle. It may be a child misbehaving or difficulties at home. But we would be wise to realize that at that very moment Hashem is speaking to us. He is telling us, "You can do this! You can overcome this situation!" And believe it or not, when we

muster the strength to deal with whatever faces us, the results we produce may be more than ever expected. Instead of just telling another great story, we tell a life-changing story.

Tefillin

The mitzvah of Tefillin is considered the greatest positive mitzvah in the entire Torah. **The Baal HaTanya, R' Schneur Zalman of Liadi zt"l** writes that the entire Torah is connected to Tefillin. For this reason every person needs to be careful in this mitzvah and one who wears Tefillin merits a portion in the World to Come. The fire of Gehinnom does not overtake him and all of his sins are forgiven.



The following story was told over by the Lakewood Mashgiach, **R' Matisyahu Salomon shlit'a**, who heard it directly from **R' Shmuel Greineman zt"l**, brother-in-law of the **Chazon Ish, R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz zt"l**. There was once a gathering in Radin, at the home of the **Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Kagan zt"l**, which was attended by many of the great Rabbanim and Roshei Yeshivos of Poland and Lithuania, in order to find a way to fund the Yeshivos and provide food for the starving students. The meeting went on for an extended period of time and many ideas were bandied about, but they could not come to any conclusion. It was agreed to adjourn the meeting and reconvene the next day.

The Chofetz Chaim was very pained at the lack of progress and remained sitting in his place well after the other participants had left. R' Shmuel Greineman, who was in attendance, could not bear to see the Chofetz Chaim so pained; it appeared as if the students'

deprivation was literally affecting his health and countenance. R' Shmuel wished to alleviate the Tzaddik's pain and suffering and remained in the house racking his brain to come up with a solution. He closed his eyes for a few moments and then he suddenly opened them. He had come up with what he thought was a fantastic idea.

He was going to put on Tefillin the next morning by Shachris. Since



Tefillin is such a great mitzvah, and its reward is so valuable, it must surely be enough to support all of the Yeshivos on an ongoing basis! He decided right then and there that he was prepared to give his reward for the mitzvah of Hanochas Tefillin the next day to all the desperate Yeshivos so that they could sustain themselves on its merits. They would never be lacking again. He was so convinced of the merit of his idea, but he nevertheless felt the need to run it past the Chofetz Chaim and gain his approval. He jumped up and ran over to the Chofetz Chaim, who was still sitting and thinking in the same place. He approached the Tzaddik and told him, "Rebbi, I believe I have found the solution!"

Upon hearing these words, the Chofetz Chaim's face lit up and he asked what it was. R' Shmuel explained that he was planning to give his reward for the mitzvah of Tefillin the next day to the Yeshivos, so that they could support themselves! The Chofetz Chaim looked at R' Greineman, smiled and said, "Mein Kind, my son, the Ribono Shel Olam will not accept this." He then went on to explain. "If a small child found a check for a million rubles on the street, he would probably take it to the candy store thinking that he could obtain a

bag of candy for it. What would an honest and responsible storeowner do upon looking at the check? Would he take it for a bag of candy? Of course not. He would tell the child that the check is worth much more than a bag of candy, and that the child should try to return it at once."

The Chofetz Chaim then powerfully advised, "If you would only know how much putting on Tefillin just one morning is worth, more than supporting all of the Yeshivos together! Hashem will most certainly not accept your request - it is not responsible! This is what Chazal mean when they say there is no reward that can be given for a mitzvah in this world, in other words, the whole world is not enough to satisfy the greatness achieved by the performance of one mitzvah!"

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

11:7 וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנֹו



Just picture the Jewish people leaving Mitzrayim. Millions of men, women and children - the excitement, the happiness, the noise level! What a feeling of freedom - of awesome miracles happening all around them. What an incredible experience! And yet, the Torah makes sure to tell us that just as this amazing exodus was poised to take place, not one dog all throughout Mitzrayim, made so much as a bark! So what? Would it really have been so terrible if a dog barked? Would this minor irritation cause such discomfort to the Jewish people that the Torah felt the need to write it?



Rabbi Zelig Pliskin comments that we learn a tremendous lesson from this posuk (and maybe this is the secret to the segulah to say this posuk in the presence of a dog so as not to be harmed by it). Although it is true that a barking dog would surely not have marred Bnei Yisroel's happiness as they were going from exile to freedom, it would have put a "blot" however small, on their joy. It might have "shterred" them - even the slightest bit.

When someone is experiencing an uplifting or joyous occasion, we should be careful not to say or do anything that will diminish their happiness. For example, if your neighbour buys a new suit, don't tell him that you saw the same suit in another store for $100 cheaper. Or, if one of your children comes home with an A- on his report card, don't comment on the minus - praise them for the A!

R' Yechiel Mordechai Gordon zt"l used to say, "The face of a person is a Reshus Harabim (public property). One must be careful to always show others a 'happy face' because a sad or downcast expression causes people to feel bad. One must not be the cause of 'nezek' (damage) to public property." The dogs in Egypt teach us how far we must go not to cause the slightest irritation or unhappiness to our fellow Jews.

You can try to turn your back on G-d, but He's everywhere so you'll just be facing Him from another direction.

12:33 וַתֶּחֱזַק מִצְרַיִם עַל־הָעָם לְמַהֵר לְשַׁלְּחָם מִן־הָאָרֶץ



The suffering and tribulations that the **Chiddushei HaRim, R' Yitzchok Meir Alter zt"l**, underwent in his lifetime are almost beyond description. As a young man, he was destitute, with nary a penny in his pocket. He and his wife had fourteen children, of which only one son and three daughters survived to adulthood and married. By the time he died, only one of his children remained alive. Soon after his wedding, he lived in abject poverty. However, his mind never focused on the negative; rather, he was always learning Torah and serving Hashem to the best of his abilities. One day, his young bride asked him,

"Most people worry about parnassa and how they will live. How come you never worry about such things?" R' Yitzchok Meir answered, "Who says I don't worry? Of course, I worry. But your father took me as a son-in-law because he said I am a genius. As such, I figured out how to do all my worrying in one single minute - something other people need at least three days to worry about!" She looked at him sharply and asked, "But what good is one minute of worrying?" To which he replied with a smile, "Indeed! My one minute of worry accomplishes the same (nothing) as their three days of worry!"

Although Bnei Yisroel were waiting for their freedom for 210 years, the moment they were actually released from slavery came amidst a rush and urgency to hurry up and leave Egypt as soon as possible. The Egyptians literally "took hold" of the Jews and forced them out. There was no time to prepare food, no time to bake bread, no time

to get ready. For when Hashem wants a person to do something, there is no time to waste - it's time to get up and move! And the same goes for other aspects of life. If a person is meant to have something - good or bad - there is no time to sit and worry over it. What's meant for you is yours. What's meant for another is his. Worrying about it - even for a minute - is a waste of time.

R' Moshe Midner zt"l (quoted in Nesivos Shalom) would say: וּלְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אוֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם 10:23



During the Plague of Darkness, the Jewish people were blessed with a Heavenly and Divine light. Even today, Yidden can acquire this special light. However, this is a unique light that an individual person can never attain. Why? For this light will only shine בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם- in their dwellings.

When a group of Yidden sit together, they can acquire this unique light, but not on an individual basis. As a result, when Yidden come together on Shabbos and other occasions and sit together in their dwellings, they can merit to uplift and promote this special light."

The Most Difficult Mitzvah

The most difficult mitzvah to perform? - To live al kiddush Hashem. ~ R' Dovid Feinstein zt"l.

Rabbi Dovid Gurwitz shlit'a (Mizmor L'Dovid) would say: איש את אחיו לא ראו



The last letter of each word adds up to 713, which is the value of the word **תשובה**. The first letter of each word adds up to 233, which equals the value of the words **יהי אור** (let there be light). It is important for a Jew to remember that **חושך** (darkness) is not always what it appears to be. The intensity of the darkness can sometimes cause a person to 'see the light' and eventually bring him to a life of real repentance and Teshuvah. Hashem is the creator of time and 'Time Management' was the first mitzvah He gave to Klal Yisroel (**החודש הזה לכם**). The word **שעה** (hour) can also mean "to turn" – **ואל קין ומנחתו לא שעה**. Each hour is really a chance to turn in the right direction - or wrong. It's up to us!"

12:2 הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחָדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה

The mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh, sanctifying the new moon, is the first mitzvah given to the nascent Jewish nation in Egypt, and forms the basis of the Jewish lunar calendar wherein all the festivals are found.

The Sukelener Rebbe, R' Eliezer Zusia Portugal zt"l, says that there is a great Hashgacha that Hashem affords a Yid who is scrupulous in the mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh. He would relate the following story: During the early to mid-19th century, the Russian Czar and various maskilim of the time were greatly distressed by the regal bearing and power of the famed **Rizhiner**

Rebbe, R' Yisroel Friedman zt"l. Through his royal conduct, which was well-known and documented, the Rizhiner greatly uplifted the level of the downtrodden masses.

The maskilim had long been plotting to bring about the Rebbe's downfall, but without success. In 1838, when R' Yisroel was forty years old, he was arrested on charges of being complicit in a murder. An informer brought evidence that the Rizhiner had ordered the execution of a second informer and the Czar was only too happy to send the police to arrest him. As the Rebbe was taken into custody he cried, - even as I am taken to be locked up I am not afraid. One thing upsets me, though, - that You, Hashem, will be with me - the Shechina will also be in Golus with me."

Following the orders of the Czar himself, the Rebbe was locked up in the notorious Kiev dungeon under terrible conditions in a small, dark and damp cellar. No charges were ever brought against him, nor was he ever put on trial. But these things didn't bother the Rizhiner as much as the fact that he was unable to perform certain mitzvos while in prison.



One mitzvah in particular that he was most distraught over was his inability to do "Kiddush Levana" - blessing the new moon, which requires one to stand under the night sky and see the moon before making the blessing.

The Rebbe was never allowed out of his cell and the guards were most strict about this. It pained him that he could not properly do

this mitzvah. One night, the Rizhiner was lying in his cell when he heard the sound of groaning coming from outside his door. He heard Yiddish words and realized that the guard was Jewish. He quickly knocked on the door. The guard opened it and the Rebbe saw a large, physically imposing man standing before him. He may have been big and burly, but deep down his heart was as soft and tender as befitting a true Yiddishe Neshama.

The Rizhiner said to him, "My dear Jew, please allow me to walk outside for a few short minutes to fulfil a very important mitzvah. I will be very quick and no one has to know the wiser." The guard took pity on the Rebbe but he was terrified to disobey a direct order. This prisoner was never allowed to go outside and if he was caught doing so, not only would the Rebbe suffer, but the guard in charge would pay dearly.

"Rebbe, my shift is over in a few short minutes and if the new guard will show up and find me escorting you outside, he will report me." But the Rizhiner's soft voice and promise of blessings were too much to ignore. Finally, the guard agreed to allow him outside for just a few minutes. R' Yisroel stood in the prison courtyard and poured out his heart to his Creator.

He gazed at the shining moon and davened with such tremendous emotion and intensity. The mitzvah that had been eluding him was finally within his grasp. Tears poured down his cheeks as he said the timeless blessing and, indeed, time seemed to stand still. As far as the guard was concerned, though, time had not stopped at all - it was moving along quite rapidly!

Fifteen minutes went by, and then another fifteen minutes. The guard was sweating profusely, terrified that he was about to be caught, but he could not muster the nerve to halt the Rizhiner Rebbe's immense prayers.



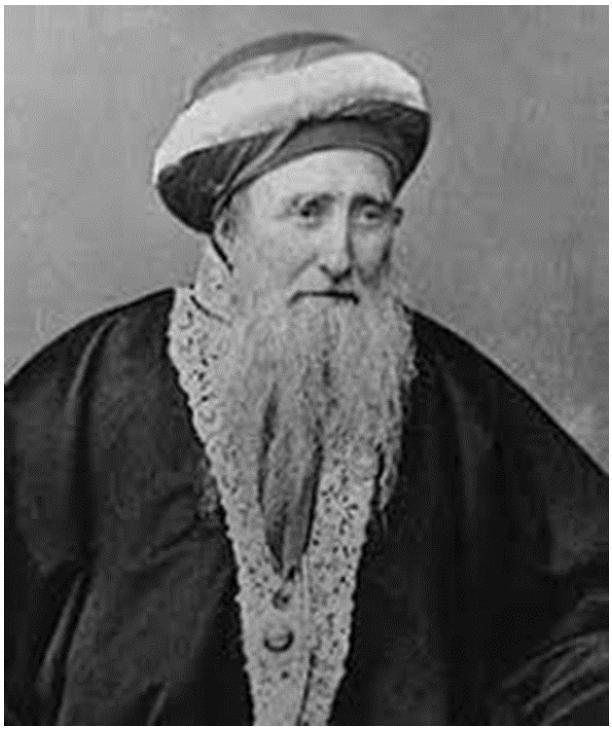
Finally, after forty-five minutes, the Rebbe completed the blessing and dutifully went back into his cell, accompanied by the astonished and relieved guard. Literally, seconds later, the new guard came through the door, apologizing to his comrade. "I am so sorry. I have no idea how it happened, but I got lost on my way here. I walk this route every day and it is not far, but tonight, the moment I left my house, I became totally and completely lost. I could not find my way here. It took me over 45 minutes to find this place!" Said the Sukelener, "'A mighty man's steps are established.' Every step a person takes is orchestrated from above - and if he gets lost, that too was meant to be!"



Drush V'Chiddush וַה' הִכָּה כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיְהִי בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה- 12:29

Regarding the tenth and final plague, the **Mechilta** writes about the terrible suffering that came about from the death of the Egyptian firstborn: "The custom in Egypt was that when a firstborn child died, the family would paint a portrait of the child on the wall of the house to remember him. On the night when Hashem struck the firstborn Egyptian sons, all the paintings suddenly dissolved causing the family much pain."

Furthermore, writes the Mechilta: "The Egyptians would bury their dead inside their homes. On the night of Makkas Bechoros, dogs dug underneath and opened up their graves. They removed the bones of the firstborn that were buried there and they frolicked playfully with the bones. This was as painful for the Egyptians as the day they buried their children."



In his sefer Ruach Chayim, **Chacham Rabbeinu Chayim Palagi zt"l** quotes the words of the Mechilta and adds that not only did firstborn Egyptian sons die, causing the parents and families to suffer immensely, but even the dug-up bones of previously dead firstborn children experienced great pain and tribulation when the dogs removed them from their graves and tossed them around like playthings. Chacham Palagi likens this to the widespread Jewish custom of rattling a "Gragger" and banging loudly when the name of the wicked Haman is intoned during the reading of Megillas Esther.

He says that one of the reasons for this custom is because each time we bang and rattle, it causes tremendous pain and suffering to the soul and bones of Haman, who feels each bang down to his very depth. Similarly, when the dogs played with the bones, it caused great pain and suffering to the souls of the dead Egyptian children.

The remez is contained in the posuk in Tehillim: **פרימו מארץ תאבד**- "You shall destroy their fruit from the earth." The word **פרימו** includes the same letters as **פורים**. On Purim, we further "destroy from the earth" the wicked Haman who is buried there and feels the pain of our blows.

11:7 וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ





A man and woman once came before the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, **R' Yehoshua Ehrenberg zt"l**, and informed him that they wished to get divorced and asked the Rav to prepare a Get. In addition to the couple, a very large, loud and offensive dog, attached to a leash held by the man, was part of the equation.

The canine was insufferable. It refused to stop barking and whining the entire time. No matter how much the man and woman tried to calm it down, it just continued barking, annoying everyone in the Beis Din. R' Yehoshua listened to the complaints of the couple but he could not take his mind off the dog, which never stopped barking throughout the proceedings.

The man and woman apologized for their pet's unruly behaviour but the Rav found it out of the ordinary and was determined to find out why. He asked a series of pointed questions and asked for more proof.

It was then that the man broke down and admitted that this woman was not his wife. His real wife was back at home and refused to go through with the divorce so he tried to circumvent this by having another woman pose as his wife. The Rav recognized that something was amiss because the dog kept barking. Obviously, it recognized that the woman was an imposter and did its part to alert the Beis Din!

In Egypt, the dogs were smart and recognized where and when to bark. We commend and even reward the dogs for this behavior, because they went against their nature to help the Jewish people accomplish their goal. In Agra D'Kalla, the **Dinover Rav zt"l** writes that not only did the dogs not bark by the plague of the firstborn, but even by the darkness they were silent. This allowed the Jews to enter the homes of the Egyptians and identify all the valuables they would later take!

Concepts In Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

After **מכת ארבה** (locust), Pharaoh seemed to have had enough and was about to cave in. He asked Moshe "**מי ומי ההלכים**" - Which Jews will be going? Moshe answered: "We will leave with our youth, our elders and our children!"

To this, Pharaoh said, "This I cannot allow – **לכו נא הגברים** - I will only allow the men leave." The meforshim explain that **גבר** refers to men between the ages of twenty to sixty. Thus, Pharaoh was very cunning. He wanted to separate the youth from the elders. By doing so, he wished to end the growing relationship of **בנים ובני בנים** that every Jew aspires to have. He wished to cut off the Jewish people at their source - their elders. Moshe Rabbeinu answered him and said, **בנערינו ובזקנינו נלך**- No! Our youth will go out hand in hand with our elders, because only then **חג ה' לנו**- it will it be a Yom Tov for us and for Hashem.

R' Dovid Cohen Shlit'a says that the word for grandchild in Yiddish - "Einekel" - is derived from a posuk in Parshas Shemos: **והסנה איננו אכל**- the burning bush was not consumed. The word **איניקעל \ אכל איננו** teaches us that the relationship between grandchildren, children, parents and grandparents must never be severed. It is a strong bond that is a cherish to behold.

This is exactly what Pharaoh's strategy was and this is why Moshe flatly turned down Pharaoh's offer! With this in mind, it is appropriate to mention a vort from the Bobover Rebbe, **R' Shloime Halberstam ZT"L**, who says there is a mesorah (tradition) that the word **ולמען** appears only twice at the beginning of a posuk in the entire Torah. Once in our parsha: **ולמען תספר באזני בנך ובן בנך** and the second time in Devarim: **ולמען תאריכו ימים על האדמה**. The Rebbe beautifully connects these two posukim by saying that if a person is zocheh to learn Torah with his children and grandchildren, then even after he leaves this world, he will have a long life **אריכת ימים** in Olam Haba, as if he were still amongst the living. Their relationship is **אכל איניקעל** \ **איננו** - it can never be consumed! May we all be zocheh, with Hashem's help, to such relationships.

וַיָּקָם פַּרְעֹה לַיְלָה הוּא וְכָל־עֲבָדָיו וְכָל־מִצְרַיִם וַתְּהִי צְעָקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּמִצְרָיִם כִּי־אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֵין־שָׁם מֵת

There once was a fellow who had a very interesting quest in life. He wished to be called an "Apikores" - an atheist. He started his quest by transgressing every sin in the Torah, but nobody called him an "Apikores." They called him other names (which are not fit to print), but not the one he actually wanted.

What really bothered him, was that there was a fellow in a faraway town known as "Moshe the Apikores." How did he reach that ignominious status, while it continued to escape his own grasp? He decided to visit his idol, "Moshe the Apikores," and see for himself.

His idol opened the door and, sure enough, he was exactly what he thought he would be. Moshe was eating a ham sandwich, smoking and writing on Shabbos Yom Kippur.

He asked Moshe, "What's the secret, how did you obtain the distinction of being called an 'Apikores'?" Moshe asked him, "Have you studied the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud?" The man replied, "No, of course not." "How about Mishnayos and Chumash?" The

answer was no. "What about Kuzari, Moreh Nevuchim, or the Dialogue between the Ramban and Pablo Christiani (an apostate)?"

"Wait a minute," said the guest, "I want to be an Apikores who doesn't believe in these things. Why should I learn them?" "My friend," concluded Moshe, "If you learned everything like I have, and you still don't believe, then you are an Apikores. But if you know nothing, then you're not an Apikores - you're just one big 'Am Haaretz' - Ignoramus!"



The Kotzker Rebbe said that the Maskilim of his day were not really Apikorsim. In a time of need, they were hiding somewhere with a Tehillim in hand!

If you want to see a real Apikores, said the Kotzker, look at Pharaoh. Hashem wreaked havoc on Egypt with 9 terrible plagues. Now, Moshe warns Pharaoh that the bechorim will die at midnight.

A normal person would not go to sleep. Certainly, not the King, since he himself was a first-born. But not Pharaoh. He got into pajamas and went to sleep as if it was an ordinary night. Says the Kotzker, "He was an authentic, blue-blooded Apikores."

For one who reflects on Hashem's kindness, there is no such thing as despair in the world. — Chazon Ish (Emunah U'bitachon, 2)

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

13:16 וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ כִּי בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם

The word **ידך** in this posuk is written differently than usual. It reads, **יד כה** which chazal explain as **יד כהה** which means "weak hand." For this reason, Tefillin is placed on the left hand - the weaker hand. The question is, the Torah states clearly that Tefillin is meant as a sign- **אות** that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, **בחוזק יד** - with a strong hand. If so, why do we put Tefillin on our weaker hand?



R' Moshe Bick ZT"L explains that it is to teach us that Hashem is the only power in the world. He is the One Who is Strong and Mighty, He makes everything in the world. If we were to place our Tefillin on our right hand, we might be under the erroneous impression, **כחי ועוצם ידי** - we did it all ourselves! To remind us that only Hashem brings us parnassa, shidduchim, children and hatzlacha, we put the Tefillin on the weaker hand as a sign.

A man once came to the **Satmar Rebbe ZT"L** and told him with great pride how he built up his flourishing business all by himself - with his own ten fingers. The Rebbe answered, "By inz hays dos siyata d'shamaya!" (We call that Divine Intervention!)

This idea is one that we must internalize constantly and take to heart. However, to the rest of the world, to the nations who look down upon us, we have another sign. This one is for all to see. That

is the Tefillin shel Rosh, about which it says in Devarim (כח:י) וְרָאוּ כָּל־עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם ה' נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ וְיָרְאוּ מִמֶּךָּ This is to proclaim to all the world the greatness of the Jewish people. We carry the Name of Hashem on our heads, and the entire world is afraid.

The Tefillin that we wear serve a dual purpose: Tefillin shel Yad is for US to remember the Yad Hashem, and recognize the fact that we are not the ones with the power - only Hashem can make things happen. The Tefillin shel Rosh is for OTHERS to see the holiness of the Jewish people and to fear us.

May we all be zoche to understand and internalize the great lessons of Tefillin to truly bond us to Hashem.

The Brisker Rav, R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik ZT"L would say:

"'Pharaoh rose up at night .... and he called to Moshe and Aharon at night.' The repetition of the phrase 'at night' seems to be totally extraneous. But it is not, because the last time Pharaoh had met with Moshe he curtly threatened, 'On the day you see my face you shall die!'

The Torah therefore tells us that Pharaoh, when he now rushed to seek out Moshe and Aharon, stressed to them that he was calling to them only 'at night' - not during the day, so that they would not have to fear him carrying out his threat of execution, which was only issued for 'the day you see my face.'"

"Whenever feeling downcast, each person should vitally remember, 'For my sake, the entire world was created.'" —Baal Shem Tov

Education

The Jewish people are the only people in history to predicate their survival on education. The most sacred duty of parents is to teach their children. Judaism is a religion whose heroes are teachers and whose passion is study. The Egyptians built pyramids. The Romans built the Coliseum. Jews built schools. That is why we alone, of all the civilizations of the ancient world, are still alive and strong, still continuing our ancestors' vocation, our heritage intact and undiminished.

In this parsha, Moshe speaks of the duty of parents to educate their children. We should encourage our children to ask questions, so that the transmission of the Jewish heritage would be not a matter of rote learning but of active dialogue between parents and children.



Once, while travelling on behalf of Yeshivas Torah Ohr, the Rosh Yeshivah, **R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg ZT"L** was lodging at the home of a talmid from many years previously, who lived in Baltimore, Md. The talmid was extremely attentive to the Rosh Yeshivah's every need and made him feel as comfortable as he possibly could.

At the time, a former associate of this talmid, a man who came late to the lifestyle of a religious Jew, but who had begun to make serious headway in his observance of Torah and mitzvos, was visiting Baltimore from his hometown in Los Angeles, together with his wife and two children. They were staying nearby and called to see if they could get together.

The talmid from Baltimore told him that he was presently hosting one of the leading rabbis in all of Israel, and he was welcome to come over to meet the Torah giant. "Bring your wife and children as well,"

he was told, so that they all can receive blessings from the rabbi. And why not? The home was constantly filled with people, men, women and children, coming in and out all day long, eager to receive a blessing from R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg.

When the family arrived, the host immediately escorted them into a side room, which led into the dining room where R' Scheinberg was sitting. Awed by the sight of the elderly rabbi, the couple stood back and watched in reverence as he greeted each visitor with a smile and tremendous warmth.

This young family had never seen such a holy looking man, and they truly could not take their eyes off of him. Suddenly, their 7-year-old son, Craig, broke free of his parents, ran right up to the venerated sage, and exclaimed, "Hey, they promised me that there was going to be only one rabbi here, and there are so many of them!"

Horrified, Craig's parents quickly ran to get their son. They admonished him quietly for his impatience and told him that he must be extremely respectful in front of the rabbi. Craig appeared to be duly chastened. But it was not long before the little troublemaker was up to a new antic.

At a lull between visitors, young Craig ran up to R' Scheinberg once more and without the slightest hint of pretension, he introduced himself. "Hi! My name's Craig," he said, congenially. "What's your name?" Craig's parents gasped in embarrassment. Mortified at their child's insolence, they were prepared to grab him away once more, when the elderly Rosh Yeshivah indicated that he was not at all upset with the boy's behaviour. Just to prove his point, he took the child's hand and pulled the young man closer to him to answer his question. "My name is Chaim Pinchos," he said softly. "How are you?"

And just like that, the elderly Tzaddik conducted a down -to-earth conversation with a young boy from a non-religious background, as if the two of them were long-time friends. The conversation lasted for

a few minutes and Craig returned to his family with a huge smile plastered on his face.

After his conversation with their son, the Rosh Yeshivah turned to the parents and taught them an important lesson in parenting. "There is no such thing as a bad question. If your child asks a question, then feel blessed that he is asking you questions. That is a sign of a healthy child, who has a healthy relationship with his parents. He is looking to grow, and that is a tremendous blessing. The moment that he stops asking questions, that is when you know that you are in trouble, as he now feels a disconnect with the people he should trust most."

Torah Gems

וַיַּהֲפֹךְ ה' רוּחַ־יָם חָזָק מְאֹד וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־הָאַרְבֶּה וַיִּתְקָעֵהוּ יָמָּה סוּף לֹא נִשְׁאַר אַרְבֶּה אֶחָד בְּכֹל גְּבוּל מִצְרָיִם 10:19

The posuk tells us that the locust arrived in Egypt carried by "an east wind," but were swept away by "very powerful sea-wind." If they came in on an average wind, why did they need an especially strong wind to leave?

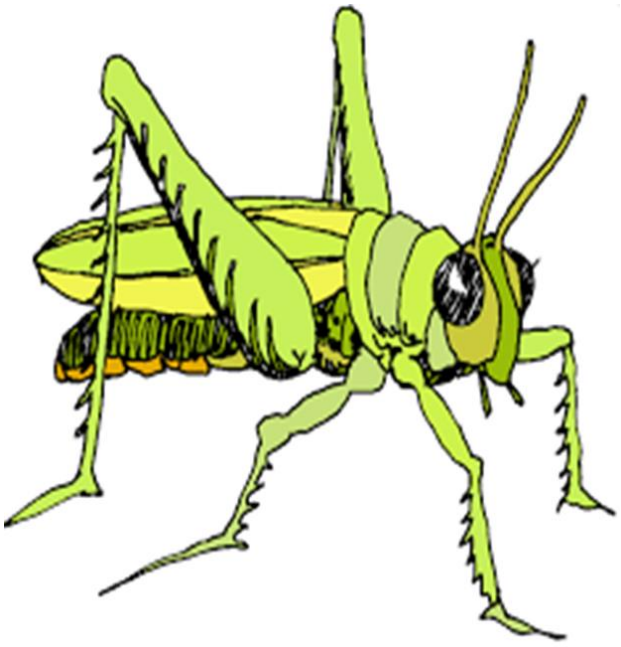
Rashi quotes the Medrash that the wind that carried away the locust from Egypt, also carried away any salted locust that the Egyptians had captured and were intending to eat.

The Medrash Tanchuma further notes that these salted locust were kept in pots and barrels, and they too, were also blown away. Since normal winds cannot extract locust from pots, hence this "very strong sea-wind" may be akin to the "great and strong" wind that Eliyahu HaNavi saw "ripping mountains and crushing rocks."

Due to this exceptionally strong wind, the pots and barrels that contained the salted locust may have become smashed, allowing the wind to carry off the locust.



R' Shmuel Dovid Walkin ZT"L provides an interesting interpretation to this "very strong sea-wind" in light of the above Medrashim. He cites the **Vilna Gaon ZT"L** (Torah Shleimah), who quotes the manuscript of Maayan Ganim, that when the Torah states, "not one locust remained," it comes to teach us that not only did the locust depart the boundaries of Egypt, but the living locust went and carried off the salted dead ones to deprive the Egyptians of their benefit. Thus, even these dead locust that were being prepared for the delectable delight of the Egyptian society, were carried away by the wind.



Now, when the locust arrived, they were all alive, jumping and shrieking, and a normal wind sufficed, since "*a live (being) carries itself.*" However, when it was time for the locust to go, a much stronger wind was needed since Chazal tell us that the dead weigh more than the living. The added weight of live locusts carrying dead ones was what warranted the need for the very strong wind.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיַּעַל הָאַרְבֶּה עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּנַח בְּכֹל גְּבוּל מִצְרָיִם כָּבֵד מְאֹד לְפָנָיו לֹא־הָיָה כֵן אַרְבֶּה כָּמֹהוּ וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא יִהְיֶה־כֵּן 10:14

There seems to be a contradiction here and Rashi raises the question. In Sefer Yoel, we are told that in the times of Yoel HaNavi, there was a plague of locust that produced more locust than ever before in history. However, our posuk here tells us that there was never such a terrible plague of locust as the one that afflicted Egypt? How can they both be right?

The Chasam Sofer ZT"L gives us a beautiful answer and a wonderful insight into understanding people. He says that in Mitzraim, although



the actual number of grasshoppers was less than later in history, the devastation they caused was far greater because of all the plagues that came before and wreaked havoc on the land.

When the locust arrived, they finished off anything and everything that was left in the decimated land of Egypt. Such total devastation had never been seen before, not because of the number of locusts but rather because of all the destruction that took place prior to **מכת ארבה**.

This idea can help us understand people who seem to overreact to situations that, to us, don't seem to be so terrible. We think to ourselves, "If that would happen to me, I would never get so upset."

or "Why is he making such an issue out of this; let him just get over it!"

The truth is that we don't know how much suffering a person has undergone before and this seemingly "minor" incident is the straw that broke the camel's back!

This idea can not only help us understand the reactions of others, but even our own! How "terrible" something is, is subjective. Let us use this idea to judge people favourably when it seems to us that they are getting carried away. Just by being empathetic to their feelings will help them tremendously.

Tefillin- Acupuncture



The following excerpts are taken from the Journal of Chinese Medicine, October 2002: *"Tefillin is an ancient Jewish prayer ritual that uses two small leather boxes; one is placed on the biceps of the weaker arm with a strap tightly wound around the arm, while the second is placed on the head, with a head strap tied in a knot at the base of the skull." "The purpose of tefillin is to raise spiritual consciousness of the men who wear it.*

If we examine where the knots and wrappings are placed from a clinical point of view, it appears that the tefillin and wrap form a potent acupuncture point formula focused on the Du Mai central governing vessel, and aimed at elevating the spirit and clearing the

mind." "Along with the three major skull points; Shangxing DU-23 (which treats Psychosis and nearsightedness), Fengfu DU-16 (dizziness, headaches, stroke), Shenting DU-24 (mental disorders, epilepsy), the tefillin wrap contacts a good number of the 50 acupuncture points on the arm. These include: Chize LU-5 (panic and anxiety), Hegu LI-4 (anti-spasmodic effects, sinuses,eyes), Faiyuan LU-9 (calms the mind), Shaohai HE-3 (improves memory), Houxi SI-3 (dementia, sorrow, fear)."

"If someone were to ask an acupuncturist what was being treated, there is no doubt that mental and shen issues would be mentioned. What is surprising is that such a point formula would be found in a non-Chinese procedure practiced for thousands of years. It may be that the originators of the tefillin ritual had some inkling of its special effects, even though they lacked the depth and specific knowledge we have today."

Who are they fooling? Hashem knew every possible benefit way before the Chinese figured it out.The "Originator" gave us a treasure: ***to heal us both spiritually and physically!***

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ZT"L (Kotzker Rebbe) would say:



"The Korbon Pesach was eaten **על מצות ומרירים**- *with Matza and bitter herbs*. The difference is that Matza may be swallowed whole whereas if one did not chew the Maror before swallowing it, he has not fulfilled his obligation.

A person must chew his Maror; he has to digest and contemplate his bitter portion carefully. One must seek to understand and ponder why he has been allotted a bitter portion from Heaven and what he can do to correct it. To simply 'swallow' his suffering whole will not help him to discover what it all means and what exactly Hashem wants from him. "

Torah Gems

The Chasam Sofer, R' Moshe Sofer ZT"L writes that as we know, Hashem does not allow His Name to be associated with evil or negative actions. By the tenth plague, the killing of the Egyptian firstborn sons, though, the Name of Hashem is specifically mentioned a number of times, to teach us that killing the wicked people in this world is not only good for the benefit of the world, it is good for the benefit of the wicked person himself! Through his death by the Hand of Hashem, the rasha is actually bringing about a Kiddush Hashem!



There is another reason why Hashem Himself killed the firstborn Egyptians and did not send the Angel of Death as He would normally do. **The Michtav Sofer, R' Shimon Sofer ZT"L** relates that the gemara Chagiga 4a recounts a fascinating story how one time, the Angel of Death was sent to kill a specific person, but by accident he took the soul of a different person who had the same name! Somehow, the angel made a mistake.

Now, we know that one of the three great merits through which Bnei Yisroel was redeemed from Egyptian bondage was because they did not alter their Jewish names. Had they changed their names and took on those of their Egyptian neighbours, then on the night of the tenth plague, it is conceivable that the Angel of Death could have mixed up the names and instead of killing Egyptians, he might have killed Jews instead. Thus, Hashem would have had to do the job Himself. But now that they did not change their names and the Angel of Death would not have made such a mistake, the very fact that Hashem did it Himself is a demonstration of His love for His chosen people!



Saved by Tefillin

It was a bright and clear Autumn morning, and a young religious Jew was rushing to Boston's Logan International Airport to catch a flight to Los Angeles. This was not a flight he could miss; quite a bit depended on him getting to L.A. today and the business meeting he was scheduled to attend would not wait for him.

Thankfully, he reached the airport in time and was even able to settle down in the terminal for a few minutes while waiting for his final boarding call. Finally, he boarded the plane, watched the doors close, and sat down. He rummaged around in his carry-on bag and then stopped. Frantic, he suddenly realized that he had left his tefillin on the seat next to him in the terminal boarding area. Immediately, he jumped out of his seat and approached a stewardess. He politely explained the situation to her and asked if it would be possible for him to go back and retrieve his tefillin. They were on a seat, just a few short feet from the gate. It was, he said, very valuable and very important. The stewardess, though, did not seem to be impressed. Citing procedure, she told him that once the doors of the plane closed, no one was allowed off the plane. She could

notify airport security and they could look for his items in the terminal but she was not in a position to allow anyone off the plane.

After a few moments of arguing, he realized that she was useless. Not about to take this sitting down, he asked if he could speak to the pilot to obtain special permission. Surely the pilot would understand.

He caused enough of a ruckus until finally, the pilot was consulted. But he, too, cited procedural rules and refused to comply. Now, he was at a loss. He knew that he could not trust an airport worker to find his tefillin and hold onto them until he got back. He was not about to lose this precious mitzvah, or let his holy tefillin get lost like that, so, not knowing what else to do, he started yelling at the top of his lungs, "I am going to lose my tefillin! They won't let me get my tefillin!" Everyone turned to look at this young man gone crazy.

The crew tried to hush him; at first, they politely asked him to be quiet and sit down. Soon, their entreaties became more forceful. But he refused to stop making a fuss - a rather loud fuss. He carried on this way for a few more minutes, and even the other passengers began complaining.

At that point, the flight crew capitulated and told him that they would let him off the plane, simply because he was a nuisance. He assumed that he could grab his tefillin from the terminal and run back onto the plane. The whole ordeal would take less than 90 seconds, but after letting him off the plane, they quickly closed and resealed the door once again and would not let him back on. It was clear that they were not going to wait for him. No matter. He was not about to lose his tefillin, even if it caused him great inconvenience or cost his business a loss. He left the plane, never to re-board.

That flight was United Airlines, # 175; the second plane to reach the World Trade Centre on the awful morning of September 11, 2001. The plane, and everyone aboard, disintegrated in a fiery ball

that killed thousands of people in the worst terrorist attack in history. But one Jew was spared.



This young man's devotion to a mitzvah saved his life. The consequence of his actions does not end there. Originally, the terrorists planned for both towers to be struck simultaneously to maximize the explosive carnage. Later it was learned that due to this whole tumult, the take-off of flight 175 was delayed, causing a space of 18 minutes between the striking of the two towers. The fact of the matter is that this delay made it possible for thousands more people to escape alive from both buildings.

Literally thousands, if not tens of thousands, of lives were spared during those 18 minutes because one Jew would not forsake his beloved tefillin.

R' Yisroel Friedman ZT"L of Rizhin would say: "The posuk states: 'Sanctify unto Me all the first-born.' (13:2) Just as the first-born is especially holy to the Almighty, so too, must the first few minutes of the day be dedicated to Hashem and to His Torah. Once a person has established this firm foundation, the rest of the day will likewise be secure."

Saved by the Mezuzah



Menachem, an Israeli soldier on leave, hitched a ride from the North with a newly arrived American visitor to Israel, who just happened to be on his way to Har Nof, where Menachem and his family lived. In halting Hebrew, the American tried to make conversation, and Menachem did his best to make himself understood. The soldier shared the purpose of his visit to Har Nof. "Our sergeant informed us that tonight we are all to go home and spend time with our families. Tomorrow, we will become part of the ground offensive, our unit being the one that will enter deepest into Lebanon and we will not know how long it will be before we see them again or even if, in fact, we ever will.

So I am going home not just to spend time off with my family but to take leave of them and say goodbye. Just in case…" These words had a subduing effect, and they continued on in silence for some time.

When they reached Har Nof, the soldier began to thank his new American friend and bid him farewell. But the American quickly said, "Wait! I have something for you." Carefully drawing a beautiful Mezuzah encased in silver from his carry-on luggage, he unwrapped it and handed it to the soldier, whose eyes widened in wonder. "I was planning on giving it to my hosts here," he said, "but I want you to have it.

Do you know what it is?" Menachem responded, "Of course, that's a Mezuzah! We used to have one on every door of our house." He paused for moment reflecting. "That is, until my brother, an elite soldier in the army at the time, was killed during an ill-fated raid on a suspected terrorist stronghold.

Shortly after, my parents decided to move us from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, not able to live with the ghost of my brother in every room. When I asked my father why he hadn't put any Mezuzot up yet, he answered angrily, 'Can't you see? G-d had forsaken us. We believed in Him our entire lives - your mother and I - and what did we get in return? G-d took our first-born son away from us. Some day you too will be required to serve in the army and who knows what will be?'"

The American handed him the Mezuzah and said, "Please, take this and place it in your shirt pocket. It is said that anyone on their way to perform a mitzvah will be provided with its special protection. Do not go into battle without it."

With a smile he added, "When you return from the war, you and I will put this up in your home together. Is that a deal?" The soldier smiled, nodded in agreement and thanked the American for the thoughtful gift. They embraced and Menachem turned one last time to wave before entering his home.

For days there was no news. And then came the fateful report: Menachem's name was one of those reported killed in heavy battle in Lebanon. Stunned and heartbroken, the American walked around in a daze for quite some time, until he decided that he must visit the family during the shivah and explain his recent but special connection with their son.

Finding the home, he walked inside and was surprised to find smiling, happy faces all around. "You are a friend?" someone asked, pulling him along joyously. "You must come see him." He was led into a room where he found a smiling Menachem propped up on a bed. "My friend," called out the soldier, "You saved my life! How can I ever thank you? I owe you everything."

Menachem explained that he was shot twice and thought to have died, but miraculously the bullet meant for his heart did not penetrate. Silently, he took an object out from his shirt pocket. He

opened his hand to reveal the silver Mezuzah his American friend had given him only days before. Embedded in it was a single bullet! "Do you remember your promise?" Menachem asked. "Yes, of course," said the awestruck American. Hobbling to the front of the house, Menachem opened the door and held the Mezuzah in place, as the American hammered the nails to affix it to the doorpost.

Then, he kissed it reverently as tears coursed down not only his cheeks, but those of his father's, who stood beside him. The bullet meant for Menachem's heart, remains a part of this special Mezuzah that helped save a hero's life, and there it remains as a monument until this very day.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



The Chazon Ish zt'l would take off his eyeglasses to learn Torah. He said they disturbed his concentration. But he wore them outdoors.

He explained, "Someone may nod his head to me in greeting, and if I won't see, I won't be able to return his greeting. He may get insulted…"

"If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you. But if I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you." —Menachem Mendel of Kotsk

Olam HaBah



In his youth, the **Steipler Gaon zt'l** lived in Hornsteipel, and studied in the Novardok Yeshiva. Once, when he was home, someone said to him, "Could you bring a letter to my son who also learns in Novardok?"

The Steipler Gaon readily agreed. But World War One broke out, and the Steipler didn't return to the yeshiva. He held on to the letter though, hoping that one day he could complete his shlichus. It took about eight years, but he finally met the person to whom the letter was intended, and he gave him the still sealed letter. The receiver was overjoyed to receive the letter. He read it with awe because it was from his father, who wasn't alive anymore.

The letter said, "My dear son: How are you? Please remember and don't forget to bring the salted herring with you when you come home."

The Steipler would often repeat this story. We can learn from it the Steipler's zeal to help his fellow man. He kept this sealed letter, for eight years, until he was able to give it to its rightful owner. This story is also a reminder to be careful with our time. We should fill our days with Torah and mitzvos and good deeds. Otherwise, the years pass and we may have nothing to show for them beyond salted herring.

Parshah Thoughts By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Rav Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro quotes **Rav Shabsi Yudelevitch** (Drashos HaMaggid, Moadim II p. 294), who says that Makas Choshech, Darkness, was the most severe of all the Plagues. How bad could it have been, particularly if no Egyptians died in that plague?

Rabbi Yudelevitch answers from the Pasuk (10:23) that in the darkness, the Egyptians could not see each other. Throughout the Plagues, no matter how difficult the plague was, they still had each other for support and encouragement to help them endure the suffering.

However, as Rabbi Shapiro emphasizes, there is nothing worse than having no support when going through a difficult time. Recognizing this concept, we can try our best to be there for others, to help increase their happiness in their times of joy and to ease their burdens in any of their difficult times.

"Most people are concerned about their own material needs and another person's spirituality. It should be the other way around: a person is obligated to be concerned with his own spirituality and the material well-being of others. The material needs of my neighbour are my spiritual need." ~ R' Yisrael Salanter zt"l.

L'Maaseh



Rabbi Binyomin Pruzansky tells an amazing, true story, which took place in Gaza during an operation that took place a number of years ago with the Israeli army. The fighting in Gaza was fierce, and Jews in America were looking for ways to increase the spiritual armour that protected the young soldiers in the IDF.

Many people increased their Torah learning and Tefilah for the benefit of their own 'individual soldier', and would say extra Tehilim on their behalf. One project that became popular in Shuls and communities throughout the country was a campaign to supply the soldiers with Tzitzis, which is the strongest armour a Jew can wear, as it provides protection to one's body as a Mezuzah does for a house.



Rav Moshe Tuvia Lieff was one Rav who participated in this mission, and raised money to purchase Tzitzis for tens of thousands of Israeli soldiers who did not have their own.

After the war Rabbi Leiff heard a story that illustrated the life-saving power of this protection. Some soldiers were assigned a delicate and dangerous mission that would take them, undercover, into enemy territory to search for a certain group of terrorists.

To do the job, they had disguised themselves in Hamas uniforms, but underneath, they wore the Tzitzis they had just received from the

American Tzitzis campaign. They entered the building they needed in Gaza and began searching for the terrorists, knowing that any moment they could be discovered and killed.

All at once, the mission went wrong. The soldiers were discovered and were being shot at by terrorists hiding in different places in the building. The soldiers made their way to the roof of the building, in an attempt to lose their attackers, and out of their hiding places.

As they reached the roof of the building, they saw a welcome sight: an Israeli helicopter had come to save them! However, in one terrifying moment, their relief turned into panic. The helicopter was not positioning itself for a rescue, but it was getting ready to fire!

The men suddenly realized that because of their disguises, they had become targets. With only seconds left before the helicopter would open fire, there was no time to make radio contact with the pilot, and there was no place to take cover on the roof of a building. The group's leader screamed out to his soldiers, "Take out your Tzitzis!" Frantically they grabbed for their Tzitzis and began waving them in the air.

When he saw this strange sight, the helicopter pilot, who literally had his finger on the trigger, held his fire. He realized that no matter what they were wearing on the outside, their Tzitzis had shown instantly who they were on the inside, and they were saved!

"To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times, what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks, but a special heart that listens." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994).

Etz Chaim - Stories of Gedolim



Young Chaim would not let the Nazis break him. Physically, perhaps, they could beat and starve him. But they could not take away his deep connection to Hashem, nor his love for his fellow suffering brethren. Despite it all, Chaim remained positive, helpful and happy, confident that he was part of the chosen nation and not the depraved beasts who were running the concentration camps. Chaim made sure to help Jews in need, though it came as a great risk to him.

There was one particularly sick person who everyone avoided, lest they catch his contagious disease. Added to his illness, he has been blinded by Nazis. The man's situation seemed hopeless and most despaired of his recovery. But not Chaim. Determined to help, Chaim tended to the sick man selflessly and miraculously, the man's condition improved. But Chaim's optimism and upbeat attitude did not escape the Nazi's attention.

The camps were supposed to be a place of misery and torture and Chaim was not following the script. Chaim had to be disposed of and one day, he was ordered to be taken outsider the camp and shot. Even on the road to his murder, Chaim did not give up. He begged and pleaded with Hashem to save him in the merit of the chesed he had performed with the sick man. And Hashem heard his prayers. "I'll shoot into the air and you run into the forest", the Nazi surprisingly commanded.

Chaim couldn't believe what was happening, but, sure enough, he heard a gunshot and proceeded to run as quickly as he could into the nearby forest and was miraculously saved. Chaim eventually became

the great Rov of Antwerp, **Rav Chaim Kreiswirth zt"l**, and continued to live his life of emunah, service to Hashem and chesed to his fellow yidden, following the path he had set for himself in the worst of places and prevailing despite the many evils that had surrounded him.

Coming or Going? Written by Moshe Kormornick



Many people comment on the first line of this week's Torah portion. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה "Hashem said to Moshe, *COME* to Pharoah"…surely if someone told another to do something they would say – *GO* to that place.

We must remember that the Torah is written by an all knowing G-d, One who does not make mistakes, and every word written in the Torah was done so in order to teach us something.

When is the time where it is appropriate to say *COME* to Pharoah? – only when it is G-d saying *COME* WITH ME. Ordering someone to *GO* somewhere denotes that 'I will stay here and you go there' in this case G-d is saying that no matter the apparent difficulty in the task, no matter the hard times and troubling circumstances you may face – I'll be here with you always…in fact, it is the most difficult circumstances when G-d goes further than saying 'I'll be there too' or 'I'll be with you'. He acts like a true parent and says "*COME* with

me – there's no need to be scared or worried , as long as you're with me you'll be fine".

R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk says that the term "Come to Paroh" means that Hashem is saying to Moshe: "Paroh is a powerful man, but don't be afraid of him, come with me and I will protect you"

It is in our best interest to remember that we are always in the presence of the All-Knowing Creator of the World, our loving Parent.

As long as we remember that everything will be ok!

The Kli Yakar makes it clear as day.. or night - B A Rose



Paroh told Moshe You shall no longer see my face, for on the day that you see my face, you shall die!".

Now after the death of the firstborn plague, Pharoah desperately needed to talk to Moshe to tell him that the Bnei Yisroel should leave Mitzrayim. He sent for Moshe but why would Moshe come? Surely Moshe remembered what Pharoah said and certainly would not show up.

The Kli Yakar answers that the answer lies in the extra word in the pasuk. First the Pasuk says (12:30) "VaYokom Paroh Leiyla" Paroh got up in middle of the night when Makas Bechoros struck. The next pasuk says "VaYikra L'Moshe V'Aharon Leiyla", Paroh called to Moshe and Aharon in the night. Why does the pasuk say again the word 'Leiyla" we already know that it was the night? The extra Leiyla, explains the Kli Yakar, was Pharaoh's answer to Moshe's fear about Pharaoh carrying out his threat of killing Moshe. Pharoah said the "day" I see you, you will die but now it was nighttime.

Alternatively says the Kli Yakar, Pharoah said the next time I see your face. Since it is night time and it is dark outside Pharaoh tried to assure them, I won't actually see your face and therefore my threat is not applicable.

I can think of worse things than darkness!?! by D Fine



Not so many years ago, London had its great fog. Basically, the fog was so thick that darkness descended on London for about 3 days and people had to stay indoors. But people coped; they just chilled for 3 days! Now, this roughly seems to match the plague of darkness brought upon Egypt, so why exactly was that plague so terrible?

When archaeologists find ancient Egyptian tombs, they find riches buried with the bodies; gold, silver, etc. Why did they do this; your possessions do not stay with you after death? It seems that in Egypt (and it's not so different nowadays), who you are was measured by what material possessions you had. So, people were buried with wealth to show that they were important.

Thus, you can imagine the sheer torture when HaShem brought the plague of darkness upon Egypt. Everyone was cut off from their possessions because they couldn't see them; they lost their status in society, and everyone had to live with themselves and who they really were - not just what they owned. ***[Heard from Rav Lippa Rabinowitz]***

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה 10:1 And Hashem said to Moshe: "Come to Pharaoh"

Rav Yosef Bechor Shor, one of the Baalei Tosefos, writes that the appropriate grammar for this verse should really have been, "Go to Pharaoh", not "Come to Pharaoh". Why does the Torah phrase it like this?

The answer Rav Yosef Bechor Shor gives is that the verse is grammatically correct depending on your perspective. For instance, someone would only say "Go.." if he was not planning to accompany him. However, Hashem was telling Moshe not to worry- for wherever he will go, Hashem will be with him. Therefore, "Come to Pharaoh" is appropriate, for Hashem was saying, "Come with Me".

Hashem's message to Moshe is the same message that we say everyday in the final words of the *Adon Olam* prayer: "*Hashem is with me, I shall not fear*". When we are doing what we know is right, we are being told, just like Moshe, that Hashem will always provide for our needs and always be there by our side.



The following true story which occurred a few years ago in Antwerp shows just how a husband and wife were able to actualize this message and enjoy the results of Hashem being right there with them.

Reb Chaim and his wife sat down at their table after a long hard day. "Boruch Hashem, we have been blessed

so much, and I'm not complaining," the wife announced, looking nervously at her husband. "It's just that we now have twelve children, *bli ayin hara,* and there is no more room in the house, and we really can't afford any more children Although we are coping, isn't twelve enough?"

The husband lovingly sympathized with his wife and then began to speak about the importance of relying on Hashem. He then reassured her that He never gives anything to anyone that is impossible for them to handle.

"Since you are healthy and our only concern is a financial one", He suggested, "I think that we should leave everything in Hashem's hands, for if He blesses us with another child, He will surely provide us with the means to support that child, as He does with all of our children. Remember we are not just having children for our sakes, we are building Hashem's army". Reb Chaim said to his wife.

The woman accepted her husband's words and within a short period of time, she was delighted to find out that she was pregnant again.

On the day that the baby was born, in the same hospital, an exceptionally wealthy gentile died leaving no heirs or family. Years earlier, he had declared in his will that all his money should be given to the largest family in Antwerp since he had never married and had no family to give the money to.

Now there were several families in Antwerp with twelve children, but no family with thirteen children. Well at least there was no family until the day that the gentile died, when there was one Jewish family who had officially become the largest family in the city, having just been blessed with their thirteenth child!

"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez

וּלְמַ֣עַן תְּסַפֵּר֮ בְּאָזְנֵי֒ בִנְךָ֣ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ֗ אֵ֚ת אֲשֶׁ֣ר הִתְעַלַּ֣לְתִּי֔ בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם 10:2 ***and in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians***









The mitzva of retelling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim explains the **אור החיים הקדוש** was actually the main reason that Hashem brought the makkos on Mitzrayim to begin with! It was mainly to instil Emunah into the hearts of the B'nai Yisroel. But why did the Torah choose to write this mitzvah specifically here, by the makka of **ארבה** more than by any of the other makkos?

So the **בני יששכר** in his sefer **אגרא דכלה** brings us a nice **רמז** to see the connection:

In the Haggadah Shel Pesach, we find 4 sons regarding the mitzvah of retelling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim- 4x **בן** -

בן+ בן + בן +בן= 208 which is the gematria of **ארבה**!

"Gam zu l'tova. This too is for the good." —Nachum Ish Gamzu, Talmud, Taanis, 21a

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה 10:1 ***Hashem said to Moishe, Come to Paraoh***



The eighth Makka of **ארבה** - locusts would now be brought upon the land of Mitzrayim. Later on in posuk ז we find that Moshe and Aharon come to Paraoh and warn him about this plague. However here in our Pasuk, we do not find Hashem telling them to warn Paraoh. Hashem only says, "Come to Paraoh".

Rashi explains that the words **בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה** mean that Moishe should come to Paraoh and warn him. The **אמרי נועם** explains that the warning was that Hashem would soon harden his heart if he didn't send the Yidden out of Mitzrayim.

But where else do we see that this warning was specifically regarding the makka of **ארבה**?

The **שמנה לחמו** finds a beautiful hint in these 3 words that Hashem said to Moishe:- **בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה** is an anagram of **אף על ארבה**. ***Also regarding ארבה there shall be a warning!***

"Man's task in the world, according to Judaism, is to transform fate into destiny; a passive existence into an active existence; an existence of compulsion, perplexity and muteness into an existence replete with a powerful will, with resourcefulness, daring, and imagination."—Rabbi Joseph Solovetchik

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה .. בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבְבְנוֹתֵנוּ ..נֵלֵךְ..וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יְהִי כֵן ה' עִמָּכֶם.. לָא כֵּן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים.. כִּי אֹתָהּ אַתֶּם מְבַקְּשִׁים 10:9-11



Moshe Rabeinu says to Pharaoh, that we will leave Mitzrayim with our sons and our daughters. Pharaoh replies, "Hashem will be with you.. but not so! Only the men shall go with you.. because that is what you want".

The conversation here needs some explaining. Why did Moishe specify who would be leaving, and why did Pharaoh only want the men to go?

So the **בן איש חי** explains as follows: Shloime Hamelech writes in Mishlei **מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טּוֹב וַיָּפֶק רָצוֹן מֵיְ-ה-וָ-ה -יח:כב** ***One who has found a wife has found good, and he has brought out kindness and favour from Hashem.***

When a man **אִיש** and a woman **אשה** get married, the Shechina **י-ה** is brought into the house. This is the **טוב** that the Pasuk over here is discussing. And what brings forth the kindness of Hashem?- when the couple is blessed with children.

The birth of a baby boy brings the kedusha of the final letter **ו** in Hashem's name.

The birth of a baby girl brings the kedusha of the final letter **ה** in Hashem's name.

Together with the father **י**, mother **ה** , son **ו** , and daughter **ה** , Hashem's name is complete- and His favour is brought forth.

Moishe Rabeinu wanted to take the ***sons and the daughters*** along with him to achieve the greatest chessed from Hashem's name. Pharaoh understood this and said - **יְהִי כֵן ה' עִמָּכֶם** – "You wish to take the men, women, sons and daughters with you, so that you will merit all four letters of **יְ-ה-וָ-ה** with you; and draw from Hashem's kindness!"

And that's when Pharaoh got nervous - **לֹא כֵן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים** "No, you may only go with the ***men***"

Pharaoh reasoned, that by withholding the women and only allowing Moishe to leave with the men, they would be missing the kedusha of the last letter **ה** in Hashem's name. They would not merit the **רצון** of Hashem!

As Pharaoh concluded, **כִּי אות ה אַתֶּם מְבַקְּשִׁים** – I understand that it is the ***letter*** **ה** you are after! Pharaoh was afraid that Moishe would take away the letter **ה** from his name- **פרע ה** turning him into – **עפר** - nothingness! ***(Ben Ish Chai)***

Living Jewish

לֹא־רָאֻ֥ו אִ֖ישׁ אֶת־אָחִ֑יו וְלֹא־קָ֙מוּ֙ אִ֣ישׁ מִתַּחְתָּ֔יו *They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place* *(10:23)*

The worst kind of darkness is when a person does not see his brother or extend his hand to help the needy. When one ignores his responsibilities and makes believe that the problems of others don't exist, the end result is that he himself will suffer and not be able to rise. (*Chidushei HaRim*)

"Don't be afraid of discovering that the 'real you' may be different than the 'current you.'" —Rabbi Noah Weinberg



דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב׃

Please, speak into the ears of the people, and let them borrow, each man from his friend and each woman from her friend, silver vessels and golden vessels."

Since when did the Egyptians become our ***friends?*** After all the Yidden had been subjected to, this seems very strange.

The answer is that during the Makkah of **חושך**, The Mitzryim couldn't move and were in danger of dying. The Yidden had rachmonus on them and fed them, despite all that they had been through.

In recognition of this mercifulness, the Mitzriyim classed them as friends, and therefore willingly gave them their precious items.

Observe at Its Designated Times

וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֲדָהּ שמות יג,י

The Baal haTurim states that the word "le'mo'adoh" contains a 'Vav' (after the 'Mem'), a hint that one is obligated to wear Tefilin only six days in the week (Tefillin are not worn on Shabbos).

Moreover, he says, there are six Yomim Tovim in the year that we also do not wear them - Pesach, Shavuos, Rosh ha'Shanah, Yom Kippur, Succos and Shemini Atzeres.

A Shabbos Vort – Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein

וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ 11:7 ***But to all the children of Israel, not one dog will whet its tongue***



The Dubno Maggid once visited a certain town, and as was his custom, requested to deliver a *drashah* in the local shul.

The members of the congregation, who had drifted far away from the proper path, agreed to allow the maggid to speak- on one condition. "we have heard", said the community leaders, "that you illustrate your ideas with splendid parables. We would very much like to hear your parables. However, the members of the congregation have absolutely no interest in hearing pesukim from the Torah. We are therefore allowing you to speak, but with one stipulation: parables are fine, but no pesukim!"

"Perhaps you will allow me to first draw a parable to the words which you have just spoken," said the maggid.

"A teacher decided to take his students on a hike through a nearby forest. As they neared the forest, the teacher turned to his students and exhorted them, "My dear students, if on the way through the forest, dogs attack us – have no fear! Simply recite the verse ***וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ***. It is known that saying this verse is beneficial as a protection against dogs".

After several minutes of trekking, the teacher and his students were attacked by a pack of dogs. When he caught a glimpse of the dogs, the teacher wasted little time- and fled. The students, seeing their teacher run for his life, did the same.

When they reached a safe area, the students asked their teacher, "why did you flee? Why did you not recite the verse, like you told us?"

"My students," responded the teacher, "you are correct, the verse would have indeed protected me. ***But what could I do, as the dogs didn't give me a chance to recite any pesukim!"***

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן.. דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל ***Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Aaron.. Speak to the entire community of Israel*** 12:1-3

But did Aaron speak? Asks Rashi. Rather Moishe and Aaron gave honour to one another.



Rabbi Akiva Eiger and Rabbi Yaakov of Lisa were travelling together to Warsaw to take part in a large rabbinical gathering. The two gedolei Yisroel sat next to each other and discussed Torah topics the entire trip.

The Jews of Warsaw gathered in their hundreds to greet the two greatest Torah scholars of the generation and led them in a magnificent horse drawn coach.

In their desire to accord honour to the gedolim, the talmidei chachomim of Warsaw released the horses, and began to pull the coach themselves instead of the horses!

When Rabbi Akiva Eiger witnessed this staggering display of honour, he thought, "To whom are these people paying tribute? To Reb Yaakov of course!" With that, he got off the coach, and he too, began pulling the coach. Reb Yaakov, who had not even noticed that R' Eiger had left the coach, peered from the window and thought, this is honour fit for a king! Can there be any doubt that it is for the great Rabbi Akiva Eiger?

R' Yaakov immediately descended and joined the others in pulling the coach. In their excitement, the people of Warsaw continued drawing the coach until someone noticed that it was empty.

Such was the honour that gedolai Yisroel would accord to one another!



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

The Chasam Sofer points out that there is a Gemara in Bava Kama 60b **ת״ר כלבים בוכים מלאך המות בא לעיר כלבים משחקים אליהו הנביא בא לעיר**. When the Malach Hamovess is in the city, then the dogs bark. when Eliyahu Hanavi is in the city then the dogs play around with each other. Yet in this week's parsha it says וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנֹו 11:17. ***But to all the children of Israel, not one dog will whet its tongue.***

Hakodosh Baruch Hu has made a distinction between Mitzrayim and Klal Yisroel. We say in the Haggada - **וַיּוֹצִאֵנוּ ה׳ מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל־יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׁלִיחַ, אֶלָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בִּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבְעַצְמוֹ** "***And Hashem took us out of Egypt" – not through an angel and not through a seraph and not through a messenger, but [directly by] the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself.*** In which case, the

Malach Hamovess was not there. Therefore, no dog moved its tongue. There was absolute silence on this night!

In The Makka of חושך the Kli Yakkar points out a beautiful Sofei Tavois

לֹא־רָאֹ֥ו אִ֖ישׁ אֶת־אָחִ֑יו וְלֹא־קָ֣מוּ אִ֔ישׁ מִתַּחְתָּ֖יו שְׁלֹשֶׁ֣ת יָמִ֑ים וּלְכָל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל הָיָ֖ה אֹ֥ור בְּמֹושְׁבֹתָֽם ***They did not see each other, and no one rose from his place for three days, but for all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.*** 10:23

The last letters of וּלְכָל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל הָיָ֖ה spell **לילה**. What was there for the Yidden at night? אֹ֥ור בְּמֹושְׁבֹתָֽם- *light in their dwellings.*

The entire 6 days when there was darkness for Mitzrayim, by day and by night. That darkness was taken from the night of Klal Yisroel and superimposed onto the night and day of Mitzrayim. And the light of the day was taken and given to Klal Yisroel.



The Yidden had a phenomenal number of things to do in these six days. There were 2.4 million Jews that died during this time that had to be buried without the Mitzriyim seeing. They also had to go into their houses to see what valuables were worth taking. This all happened at night.

Says the **Chasam Sofer**, why did Hashem have to bring the Makkah of **חושך**? If Hashem didn't want the Mitzriyim to see all this, then why didn't He simply make them blind?

We all have our five senses that we use. We expend a certain amount of energy on each one. If a person R'L is unable to use one of his senses, then they gain more sensitivity in their remaining senses. The energy that would normally be divided

out for all the senses is now intensified for the remaining ones. A person who is unable to see would be able to hear with more clarity.

Had the Mitzriyim been made blind, then their remaining senses would have worked better. However Hakodosh Baruch Hu wanted to make this a Makkah. So Hashem made it so that they were not blind, but that they were unable to see. So they were using excess energy in trying to see. And therefore, their remaining senses would not function as well as normal.

The Chasam Sofer says even more:- It says in Tehilim 105:28 שָׁלַח חֹשֶׁךְ וַיַּחְשֵׁךְ וְלֹא־מָרוּ אֶת־דְּבָרוֹ ***He sent darkness and it darkened, and they did not disobey His word.*** What is this referring to?

There is a Sefer called Chochmas Shloime Rabosi. In it , it is written that during the Makkah of **חושך** it was not just darkness- a lack of light, but there was a density to the darkness. So that when they heard something, the sound was distorted. When a child cried because it was scared, the sound was indiscernible whether it was a human, spirit or animal sound. This brought a terrible fear and petrifying visions on to them and disorientated them. This was the opportune time for the Yidden to accomplish their tasks.

The Mitzriyim were left in a vulnerable position. The Yidden could have taken this opportunity to kill all the Mitzriyim, and the Egyptians realised this, which increased the fear even more. Why didn't they? Because Yoseph hatzadik says Tagum ben Uziel made the Yidden promise that they would not leave Mitzrayim until Hashem would tell them through a Navi, that it is time to go.

This is what the Pasuk means:- שָׁלַח חֹשֶׁךְ וַיַּחְשֵׁךְ וְלֹא־מָרוּ אֶת־דְּבָרוֹ ***He sent darkness and it darkened, and they did not disobey His word.*** The Yidden waited for the command to go out.



Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld- *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

This week in parshas Bo, we have got some of the Makkos that occurred in Mitzrayim. We focus on the ninth Makko - חושך -Darkness. We understand that this had a tremendously devastating effect on the Egyptian people. And people might question, why is darkness so traumatic?

Let us try to understand exactly what happened. Chazal tell us that in the very first three days of this Makko of darkness, the Egyptians were unable to see each other, but they could move around. The next three days were very different. The Egyptians couldn't even move around. The darkness was so thick, that it weighed them down. They were stuck in mid-motion. Those that were standing, couldn't sit. Those that were sitting, couldn't stand. So it is true that this was a horrifying experience, but it seems a little far-fetched to suggest that this Makko was more traumatic than any of the previous eight plagues had been!

Says **Rabbi Shabsi Yudelevitz** the maggid of Yerushalyim, there were many maggidim who went from community to community to try to bring people closer to the Ribono Shel Olam. And there was one such maggid who arrived in a village far off the beaten path. There were very simple Jews residing there. They didn't know much about Torah and Mitzvos. He gets up and he speaks about the Ribono Shel Olam. He talks about Gehenem and Gan Eden.

One person gets up and says, "Rebbe, I would like to go to Gehenem!" He says, "excuse me?" "No, Really, I would love to go to Gehenem". The Maggid looks at him and says, "why on earth would you want to

do that". He says, "let me explain. I am going to live the rest of my life as an observant Jew. I will try to do what I can. More than that I don't know. Eventually after 120 years, I will be called to my rightful place in Gan Eden to enjoy the spiritual pleasures in store for those who obey Hashem. But I have a problem- who am I going to talk to? The Rabbis? The Talmidei Chachomim? All the righteous people? With all due respect Rabbi, those are not my peers. I have never had a relationship with those type of people. My friends are simple Jews. They know very little about Jews or religion. They will all be in Gehenem. I want to go there with them so that I will have company and someone to talk to. Otherwise I will go out of my mind from boredom."

Said the Maggid, "You are making a tremendous mistake. You think that in the Olam Ha'emes- the true world, that you are going to meet up with your friends? No, Gan Eden is a place full of incredible light, overwhelming joy and happiness. All the righteous sit together sharing the pleasure from the *Ziv Ha'Shechina* . The Tzaddikim have the opportunity to meet again.

It is very different to the morbid, dreary scenario in Gehenem. There, darkness reigns. You can't say or see anything. You can't even raise your hands or lift your leg. Gehenem is a very lonely place. There is nothing there but you".

That is what happened in Mitzrayim. During the Makko of **חושך**, the Egyptians were engulfed in such thick darkness, that the loneliness made it much worse. They could not share their feelings of fear, anguish, grief, or frustration. True, the earlier plagues caused much devastation and destruction, almost destroying the entire country, but at least there, the Egyptians didn't suffer alone. That gave them a measure of comfort.

In the Makko of **חושך**, no one could see his brother or friend-**לֹא־רָאֹו אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו**. This was a tremendous hardship. This teaches us that sometimes we are not alone. We are with others. To share their

Simchas, to share their pain. This is what was so devastating for the Egyptians.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

The Uniqueness of Markkas Arbeh

וּלְמַ֣עַן תְּסַפֵּר֮ בְּאָזְנֵי֒ בִּנְךָ֣ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ֗ אֵ֚ת אֲשֶׁ֣ר הִתְעַלַּ֔לְתִּי בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם When HaShem tells Moshe about makkas Arbeh, He makes the following intriguing statement. HaShem tells Moshe, "*I am bringing these makkos in order to tell your children all that I did when I brought you out of Mitzrayim.*" Why is this makkah specifically chosen to demonstrate to the children what HaShem did?



Rav Yerachmiel Kram (quoted in the Kuntrus 'Ohr Hahar' 7:pg. 301) gives a remarkable answer. When Moshe demands that Pharoh let Klal Yisroel leave, Pharaoh in principle agrees. The only requirement that Pharoh had was that the children would have to stay behind. Moshe rejected this offer as all of Klal Yisroel had to leave, the children included.

It comes out, that the fight between Pharoh and Moshe right before makkas Arbeh was in regard to the children specifically. Therefore, when we want to tell the children about what HaShem did for us, we choose the makkah of Arbeh, in order to highlight their importance.

Maaseh Emunim



Much has been written about the special segulah of reciting the brachah of Asher Yatzar with kavanah for healing and yeshuos. The segulah is brought down in the name of early sages, and many gedolim have recommended it.

There are many stories that prove the effectiveness of this segulah, including this remarkable story told first-hand by the person who made it:

For many of us, the word 'colitis' is not particularly familiar. But for those who are familiar with the term, it symbolizes endless suffering that upends their lives. Colitis is an inflammatory disease of the digestive tract. It has no cure, and the greatest doctors have despaired of finding an effective medication. The best researchers have not found a clear cause for the onset of the condition.

Anyone who has ever experienced digestive illness, R"l, certainly is familiar with the suffering. But for those who experience the symptoms of colitis, and the suffering that comes with it, will shudder at the mere mention of the name of the illness. Colitis is an inflammatory disease caused by an overreaction of the immune system, which is generally supposed to protect the body. Colitis badly affects the large intestine, and causes flare ups of severe pain, as well as other symptoms that significantly affect day to day function of people who suffer from it. Often, it can lead to hospitalizations and in some cases, even to surgeries during which parts of the large intestine are removed.

When Reb Shmaya, a distinguished talmid chacham who teaches Torah to many, began to suffer from digestive symptoms, he thought it was a virus or food poisoning from spoiled food. But as the days went by, and his condition did not improve, he went to the doctor. Reb Shmaya described his condition, and the doctor sent him to do comprehensive tests. The results pointed conclusively to a diagnosis of colitis.

When the final results arrived, Reb Shmaya was summoned to the doctor's office, where the doctor explained the condition and what he could expect. For Reb Shmaya, the worst part of the news was the fact that there was no known cure for the disease, and anyone who is diagnosed with it is expected to suffer through it for the rest of his life.

Reb Shmaya left the doctor's office dazed and confused. Blessed with strong emunah and Yiras Shamayim, the doctor's firm diagnosis and prediction for what was ahead did not undermine Reb Shmaya's emunah. He didn't think for a moment to accept the bleak predictions and to capitulate to the rule of nature. Still, the news was hard for him to absorb.

He spent the time it took him to get home to strengthen his emunah that Hashem is the greatest Healer of all, and the cure for the disease is in His hands. Reb Shmaya knew that he had to rectify the things that he needed to fix and to strengthen himself in certain areas, and b'ezras Hashem, there was nothing that could prevent Hashem from sending him the help he needed from Above. Of course, Reb Shmaya did not ignore the doctors' advice. He began to adopt some lifestyle changes that they suggested, which included a vegan diet and a significant change in the types of food he consumed. But at the same time, he thought about what he could do to strengthen himself spiritually.

After consulting his rabbanim, he decided to adopt the well-known segulah brought down by early sages: He began to recite the brachah

of Asher Yatzar with genuine kavanah and from the written text. Even when he was sometimes lax, he did not give in, and continued to adhere to his resolution. Moreover, he tried to encourage all those around him to focus on the importance of saying this brachah with kavanah.

From day to day, he sensed that he was finding deeper meanings in the brachah, and hence, his feelings of gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu also intensified.

Some time passed, and he went to the doctor for routine tests. When the results arrived, the doctor could hardly contain his surprise: finally, after a long time of the disease getting worse, there were encouraging signs of improvement.

From that point on, Reb Shmaya began to feel some relief. The pain and the symptoms began to ease, and a few months later, ceased entirely. The tests that he took the next time around indicated that indeed, while the illness was still present, its symptoms seemed to have stopped, and it was not bothering him. He resumed functioning fully and the memory of the disease all but faded.

Thirteen years passed, and in time, his observance of his kabbalah faltered somewhat. Again, he found himself reciting Asher Yatzar hastily, like many other people. The reminder was not long in coming. The diseased reared its head with full intensity, and he suffered terrible pain. This time, he decided to go to the biggest expert in the country, who is also the department head at one of the large hospitals in Israel. But the doctor didn't have much to tell him. Like his predecessor, he told Reb Shmaya that there was no cure for the disease. He could ease the pain somewhat, but there was no way to prevent the symptoms from recurring.

He didn't need a stronger reminder than this. Once again, Reb Shmaya decided not to resign himself to the doctor's predictions, and resolved once again to strengthen his recital of Asher Yatzar with kavanah. Additionally, he decided to have increased kavanah

when saying the brachah of Refa'einu. This time, he was not surprised when shortly afterwards, the symptoms disappeared once again. If that was not enough, the tests that he did as per the direction of the specialist surprised them both – Reb Shmaya's intestines had completely healed.

The disease disappeared completely, with no explanation. The doctors all concurred it was nothing short of a miracle. "I was able to clearly see," Reb Shmaya concluded, "that the tremendous power of healing is in the hands of the person himself. If he would just undertake to strengthen himself and rectify that which needs fixing, then his yeshuah is guaranteed from Above, from the Hand of the Healer of al flesh and the Mafli la'asos."

Vechol Maaminim



14 Shevat, is the yahrtzeit of the mekubal, **Harav Daniel Frisch**, author of Masok Midvash on the Zohar Hakadosh. The Siddur Masok Midvash says to say this tefillah each day in order to rectify the amens that are said without the right kavanah:

"Ribbono shel Olam, it is known before You that I am a flesh and blood human and I do not have the strength to have kavanah when reciting amen, Yehei Shemei Rabba, and Baruch Hu Ubaruch Shemo as I should. Therefore, may it be Your will that the kavanah of amen, Yehei Shemei Rabba and Baruch Hu Ubaruch Shemo that I say today should rise On High with the seridim that know how to have kavanah for them properly."

That Sinking Feeling: The Tragedy of the Costa Concordia By Rabbi Benjamin Blech

I was a passenger on the *Costa Concordia* that just made headlines around the world as it sunk off the coast of Tuscany.

No, thank G-d I wasn't on this last harrowing voyage which resulted in horrible injuries and loss of lives. It was in the summer of 2008 that I had the opportunity of serving as rabbinic scholar-in-residence for a kosher program on this magnificent ocean liner. And I won't ever forget the luxury, the beauty, and the latest state-of-the-art technology that was evident throughout.



A high-ranking member of the crew gave me a private tour, pointing out some of the remarkable advanced equipment and GPS which insured our total safety. What stayed with me was his jocular reference to a famous ship of a century ago, as he assured me that "no one will ever have a *Titanic* experience here."

And yet that's exactly what happened. How could that possibly be? With all of our scientific progress, how can a ship still go aground? The answer has profound implications for our understanding of the real root cause of such tragedies.

There was actually no reason for the *Titanic* to be in that dangerous area. It was only because people in 1912 were awed by the prowess of the *Titanic* to the degree of hubris that permitted the order to be given to sail "full speed ahead" through icy waters.



This order was given by the *Titanic's* owners to recapture the trophy for fastest crossing of the Atlantic from the Germans in order to secure increased revenue for their venture, and was executed by the captain of the *Titanic*, who selected a northern crossing which was much shorter than the traditional southerly route used by the mariners for that time of year.

This disaster was completely avoidable. North Atlantic crossings held perils well known to mariners, and firsthand reports of ice conditions had reached the officers of the Titanic earlier in the day. The *Titanic* had a radio, and both sent and received a steady stream of messages throughout the voyage.

Wireless operators had two functions – track weather reports and transmit messages for the rich. They made their money from the latter. On April 14, 1912, another ship, the *California*, continually sent wireless messages to the *Titanic* that a large iceberg (one million tons) was in *Titanic's* path.

Receiving these messages annoyed the operator trying to get messages out for their rich patrons. The *Titanic* operator demanded the *California* stop bothering him. They did and turned off their wireless. The messages never made it to the Captain. The 1,517

people who died were killed by greed. No matter how good the technology of the *Titanic*, it could not compensate for moral error.

The *Costa Concordia* was the proud symbol of contemporary scientific marvels. It, too, was unsinkable. Its GPS unerringly kept it on a safe course. Yet the ego of the captain who wanted to go closer to shore so that he could show off his "toy" to friends on the island overrode every precaution. A GPS, just like G-d's Perfect System for guiding us through life, otherwise known as the Torah, can only give us direction. It can't force us to carry out its will. We still have the freedom to obey or to disregard its warnings. But what we can never avoid is the consequences of our actions.

That's why our moral choices, dictated by a commitment to higher ethical principles, will always be more important than our scientific achievements.

That lesson goes back many thousands of years to a major biblical story. It was the tower builders of Babel who are portrayed as the first age of technology. Until then, people were farmers or shepherds. They responded to nature but did not know how to control it or shape it. But the time came when they learned how to build bricks and fashion homes impervious to the weather. Overwhelmed with a sense of importance, they decided to build a tower with its top in the heavens so that they could topple G-d from his throne.

What they desired above all, the Torah tells us, was "to make for themselves a name." With scientific advancement came the ego of the technocrat who was convinced that his intellect made G-d unnecessary.

It was not too long ago that the first astronaut, the Russian Yuri Gagarin, in the same spirit as the builders of the tower of Babel said on his return from outer space, "I looked and looked, but I didn't see G-d."

But the end of the biblical story makes clear the price that must always be paid when we choose self-worship over the authority of a divine GPS. With all of its brilliance, the society of the tower of Babel doomed itself to extinction.

Bricks became more important than people. When a brick fell and shattered, they cried but when a person toppled to his death they ignored him. Feelings were replaced by formulas. Human speech and communication no longer mattered. Talk became babble. Technology created a seemingly more perfect world - peopled by those who were far more imperfect.

What I think needs to be stressed as the ultimate lesson is how much we need to reorder our priorities.

Reports of what went on as the *Costa Concordia* sank are chilling as they reflect upon so much of contemporary behaviour. When the *Titanic* went down, women and children were given precedence.

A great majority of them survived because of the chivalry of those, like Benjamin Guggenheim, who chose to stay behind, changed into his evening clothes, and said to those to whom he gave his seat in the lifeboats, "We dressed in our best and are prepared to go down like gentlemen."

Today's passengers fought with the crew for the few seats that offered the chance for survival. The captain was amongst the first to flee, giving the lie to the noble ideal that the captain goes down with the ship. The strong pushed aside the weak. And the moral order that defines us as civilized, as the best of creation, as those formed in the image of G-d seeking to emulate his divine attributes, also perished with the victims.

We live in an age that worships every new scientific breakthrough. We are obsessed with gadgets meant to make our lives easier and more fun-filled. Yet we spend so little time stressing the importance

of a value system without which all of these advances are meaningless.

This tragedy happened because of human error. It was compounded by striking moral failures. What it requires from us now is the reminder that our emphasis on technological achievements must be joined to greater concern for ethical growth. Only with a commitment to both can we prevent disasters of *Titanic* proportion.

Plague #8 - Locusts



Moshe spread his staff over Egypt and an easterly wind blew all day and night, delivering a swarm of locusts that covered every inch of Egypt. Never before or after had such a scene been witnessed.

Question: But the biblical book of Yoel makes the same claim!? **Answer**: Yoel used many species of locusts, while Moshe used only one. (Rashi)

Question: So why was G-d stingy in providing Moshe with just one species?

Answer: It wasn't necessary to have more than one, because most of the crop was already destroyed by the hail. As the plague intensified, Pharaoh hurries to summon Moshe, confesses his guilt, and begs him to quickly remove "just this death." (Exodus 10:17)

Question: Why the rush? The locusts had already finished their feast!

Answer: Pharaoh was afraid the locusts might lay eggs and he would have a locust problem every year. The Egyptians, seeing they had no food, decided to feast on the locusts (a local delicacy). They froze, dried, pickled, and stored as many locusts as they could catch. They dined on locust pie, stuffed locust, and the best restaurants served locust delight and on Shabbos (you guessed it!) locust kugel! (Rashi)

But when the westerly wind blew away the locusts, "not one locust remained in the entire land of Egypt" (Exodus 10:19) - including all the locust they had stored up. G-d had meted out a punishment measure-for measure: The Egyptians forced the Jews to tend their crops, so they now lost everything.

Divrei Torah Ba'er Heitev

הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב ***Today you are leaving, in the month of the springtime.*** *(Shemos 13:4)*



It says in the **Zohar HaKodosh**, that in the Zechus of Klal Yisroel eating Matzoh on Pesach, they are spared from judgement on Rosh Hashonoh. This is hinted in this Possuk "Hayom - Today". Hayom is referring to Rosh Hashonoh (Zohar HaKodosh Bo 32:2). As to say Today – Rosh Hashonoh, we prevail in the Zechus of the Matzoh that we have eaten during Chodesh Ho'Aviv, in Nisson, on Pesach.



Parsha Pages -Drashios from the verses of Tefillin: והיה לך לאות

על ידך - בגימטריא זרֹע שמאל This alludes to the concept of putting the arm Tefillin on your "left" arm.

תורת ה' בפיך - בגימטריא זהו קריאת שמע This alludes to the law to say a minimum of Shema Yisrael while wearing Tefillin.

וקשרתם אותם implies a constant binding

בפיך What goes in your mouth must come from a Kosher source, so too the parchment on which the four portions of the Torah that are placed in the Tefillin must come from Kosher animals.

והיו לטוטפות בין עיניך The word **והיו** is plural indicating that the head Tefillin should be worn when both the hand and head Tefillin are worn. Thus, the head Tefillin is removed prior to removal of the hand Tefillin.



Essential Rabbi Nachman – Sunbeams

All the pleasures of this world are like sunbeams in a dark room. They may seem solid, but when a person tries to grasp hold of a sunbeam, he finds nothing in his hand. The same is true of all worldly desires. *Sichot Haran #6*

Tefillin And the Wings Of The Dove



1. When one wears Tefillin and focuses on Hashem, he merits HaShem's protection.

2. Doves do not fight with their beaks like other birds but protected themselves from predators with their wings by staying in flight (and not resting unprotected on the ground). They have the ability to rest one wing at a time, while staying airborne with the other wing (Tosfos). Similarly, when the Jews are not performing one mitzvah they are performing another mitzvah. Elisha only took off his head Tefillin, but keep on his arm Tefillin (probably covered by his clothing). Even when forced to stop one mitzvah, he "flew" with another mitzvah.

3. **Ritva** says this story is the source of manner in which we wrap our head Tefillin. We wrap the straps of the head Tefillin around either side of the Tefillin like the shape of "wings of a dove."

Time to Pray!

In last week's Parsha, we read about the beginning of the redemption from slavery in Egypt. Hashem speaks to Moshe telling him"...I have heard the groan of the Bnai Yisroel whom Egypt enslaves..." We see here that the redemption was largely due to prayer. The following true story will inspire us all to pray with feeling.

From here we can see the power of prayer. **Rabbi Abraham Yehoshua Heschel, the Rebbe of Kopischnitz (1888-1967)** was a lover of his people. In post-WWII America, he carried the pain and suffering of countless individuals on his weak and frail shoulders.

Indeed, often when he heard the problems of others he would break down in uncontrollable weeping. The grief of his fellow Jews tormented him much more than his own afflictions, and countless times the Rebbe put his name and honor at risk in an attempt to help others.

Once a broken survivor of the Nazi inferno showed up at the Rebbe's door. He had just arrived from Europe and was hoping to settle in America. His wife, however, had been refused entry due to her ill health and was on Ellis Island awaiting imminent deportation.

The man was inconsolable and indicated that if his wife was indeed deported, he wouldn't think twice about taking his own life. "Don't worry, please don't worry," implored the Rebbe. "I promise you that by next week your wife will be here together with you!"

Upon hearing the Rebbe's words an immediate feeling of calm overtook the distressed man, and greatly relieved, he went away a new person. **Rabbi Morgenshtern**, one of the Rebbe's disciples who had witnessed the scene, gathered up his courage and asked the Rebbe how it was possible for him to make an outrageous guarantee like that with such ease. It was no less than promising a miracle!

"You saw how desperate the poor man was," the Rebbe replied. "My first concern was to calm him down and thank G-d, I succeeded. At least for the next week he will feel better. If after a week he sees that I was wrong and his wife was deported, he will say, 'Avrohom Yehoshua is not a real Rebbe, Avrohom Yehoshua is a liar.' But at least for a week I succeeded in bringing some peace into his life."

With that the Rebbe took his Tehillim and began to recite its verses with intense emotion. As the tears were streaming down his face he could be heard pleading, "Please, G-d, please, see to it that Avrohom Yehoshua didn't say a lie. I was only trying to help a Jew in a pathetic situation. Please don't let me be a liar..."



In this fashion his prayers continued long into the night. The Almighty heard his prayers. The woman was granted permission to stay in America, and was reunited with her husband and they lived "happily ever after." The Rebbe's prayers were answered!

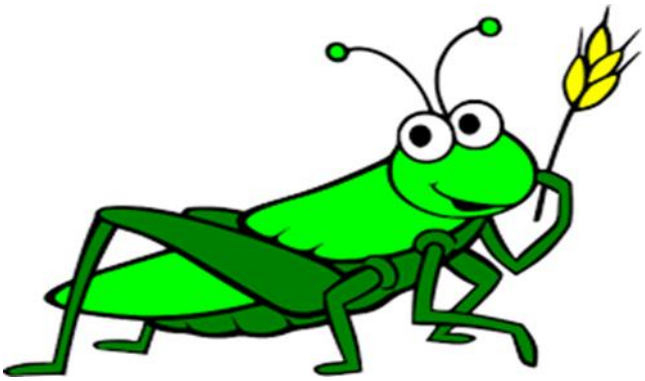
Strong Wind -Oznayim LeTorah



Why was it necessary for a very strong wind to take away the locust (Shmos 10,19)? Whereas it was only a regular wind that brought the locust to Egypt (10,12)? The locust were selected just like the frogs. Both displayed a characteristic that showed a lesson to Jews throughout the ages.

The locust were pleased to be selected to avenge the opponents of HaShem and His people. Thus, they easily and willingly enabled a regular wind to bring them to Egypt. However, to did not desire to leave their "job" and a strong wind was needed to force this to leave.

The lesson for the Jews is that when one goes to shul or to the Bais haMedrash or to any other mitzvah one should go willingly and with joy. However, when it is time to leave, one should refrain oneself from appearing as if one is running away from the mitzvah.



The Mockery of the Mitzrim

וּלְמַ֣עַן תְּסַפֵּר֮ בְּאָזְנֵי֒ בִּנְךָ֣ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ֗ אֵ֚ת אֲשֶׁ֣ר הִתְעַלַּ֔לְתִּי בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם ***and in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians*** 10:2

The pasuk says that with this makkah you will tell your children how I "mocked" the Mitzrim. What does it mean that I mocked them?

Perhaps we can explain as follows. The Gemara (Shabbos 90b) tells us a remarkable piece of information; that the children used to play with grasshoppers as their toys- שֶׁמַּצְנִיעִין אוֹתוֹ לְקָטָן לְשָׂחוֹק בּוֹ . Pharoh did not want to let them Jewish children go out, so what does HaShem do? He lets the children fight this battle. The Mitzrim are punished not with sophisticated weaponry; but rather with the "weapons" of the kids. Indeed, this makkah was terribly embarrassing for the Mitzrim.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

A shul is a very special place which must be treated with the proper *kavod*, honour and respect, and the *Gemara* (*Megillah*) says that a *shul* is Hashem's House and has special *kedushah*. Aditionally, a *shul* should be arranged nicely by keeping the chairs and tables neat and in order, and the *seforim* and *siddurim* should be arranged and organized on their shelves as well.

The *Medrash* tells us (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 21:14) that Yehoshua bin Nun was *zocheh* to become the leader of the Jewish people after Moshe *Rabbeinu* passed away because, among other things, he used to wake up early to set up the benches in the *Shul* every morning!

A Wedding Feast for Everyone By Shloimy Weber



When **Rav Mattisyahu Salomon** and family moved to Lakewood, they quickly developed a close friendship with their neighbors, the Epsteins. When one of the Salomon girls got engaged, the Epsteins were thrilled and couldn't wait to dance at her wedding. Sadly, Rabbi Epstein passed away a few weeks after the engagement. The Epsteins were plunged into mourning, and knew that attending the wedding would be out of the question.



On the day of the wedding, the Epsteins came home to find a note that read, "To our dear friends, the Epsteins: Please do not prepare dinner this evening. Your dinner will be served to all of you shortly. We will miss you at the wedding, but we wanted you to share in our happiness, so the caterer will be at your home with the wedding meal shortly. May we share future simchas, the Salomons."

A truck soon arrived from the wedding hall, bringing the full meal, including dessert, for the whole family. Not only that, but the Salomons sent someone with fresh photos from the wedding, so the

Epsteins could enjoy the wedding while they ate the wedding feast! Although the Epstein's weren't literally by the wedding, the Salomon's, who were obviously busy with a million different other things, did not leave them out.

Comment: Parsha Vayigash lists everybody who went down to Mitzrayim. The reason the Pasuk (Bereishis 46:6) did this is to teach us to never leave somebody else out or forget about others. May we always remember this important rule, and always think about others, rather than only ourselves.

The Strongman of Shklov From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



After a visit to the city of Shklov (where he had gone because of the controversy between the early chasidim and their opponents,) **Rabbi Shneur Zalman** of Chabad decided to return home. The opponents, in their anger, plotted to throw stones at the Rebbe as he departed.

When the chasidim got wind of their plan they met to decide on a course of action to protect the Rebbe. One of them, a particular strong and robust 18-year-old youth named Dovid, stood up and declared that he would accompany the Rebbe and make sure that no harm befell him.

When the time came to leave, a crowd of people armed with stones surrounded the Alter Rebbe's carriage in a threatening manner. Young Dovid, in the Rebbe's defense, ripped a tree out of the ground and faced the menacing group: "I will kill anyone of you who dares to

lift a hand against this holy *tzadik*!" he roared. The crowd backed off, believing that he would carry out his threat. Dovid was then able to accompany the Rebbe to the outskirts of the city unmolested. As soon as they were outside the city of Shklov the Alter Rebbe climbed out of the carriage and said to the boy, "Dovid! You were responsible for actually saving my life. May you live to be 120!"

A century later, one day before he was to turn 120 (!), Dovid called the *chevrah kadisha*, the burial society, to his side. Although now a very old man, Dovid was still in good health. Together, he and his guests made a 'lechaim' on some whiskey. The very next day, on his 120th birthday, Dovid passed away.



Bread or Stockings? By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

One of the great *chassidic* leaders of the past generation was **Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam**, the Klausenberger Rebbe. Scores of legends have been related and written about this extraordinary sage, especially about his experiences in a concentration camp and the encouragement he provided for his fellow sufferers during the war and after their liberation.

Assuming the role of surrogate father to surviving orphans, he consented to offer each of them, boys and girls, the parental blessing customarily given before Yom Kippur. After blessing one such girl he gently urged her to wear stockings for the sake of feminine modesty. When she asked in return whether her severely limited funds should be used for buying bread or stockings, this warmhearted Torah giant quickly removed his own stockings and gave them to her.

Second-Hand Tefilin by Yerachmiel Tilles



It was the custom in Berditchev that the *tefilin* of deceased townsmen would become the property of the local burial society, whose director would sell them for the benefit of the *Chevrah Kaddisha*.

One day this functionary received a visit from the chief rabbi of the town, **Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**, who asked to be shown all the *tefilin* on hand, for he wished to buy a pair for himself. The Rebbe soon chose a particular pair. The director, a clever fellow, reasoned that the *tzadik* would not have come along to simply buy himself a nondescript secondhand pair of *tefilin*: there must be more to this purchase than met the eye. So he said: "Rebbe, I am willing to sell you all the pairs of tefilin you see here except for this pair. This pair I am not willing to part with."

But Rabbi Levi Yitzchak made it clear that it was only this pair that interested him, and he earnestly begged to be able to buy it. So finally, the director said: "Very well, I will agree to sell them to you but only on condition that you tell me what is so special about them that makes you seek this particular pair."

"Very well," said the *tzadik*. "As you no doubt know, for many years the brothers **Elimelech of Lyzhinsk** and **Zushya of Hanipoli** wandered about among the townships and villages, with the aim of firing their fellow Jews with a desire for repentance.

"Whenever they arrived at some place for the night, one of them would address the other as if he were a sinner turning to his rebbe, weeping over his imagined sins and requesting a suitable penance. And while so doing within earshot of their host he would list all the transgressions of which the host was in fact guilty.

"Overhearing his seeming confession of another, the host would recall that he too, as it were, had sinned in a like manner, and this recollection would cause him to repent.

"Arriving one night at the house of a Jew who lived in a certain village, Reb Zushya began to tearfully beg his brother to prescribe a penance for his negligence. Throughout his life, he had never had his *tefilin* checked to see whether the verses inscribed on the parchment scrolls inside them were still in valid condition. And now he had at last given his *tefilin* to a scribe for checking, and had found that there were no scrolls inside them whatever! If so, then he had lived all his life in an illusion, and clearly fell into the unfavorable category of a head that has never worn *tefilin*."

"At this point Reb Elimelech took over, and explained to his brother what a serious state of affairs this was. And as their host overheard this dialogue, he recalled that he too had never given his *tefilin* to a scribe for checking. He ran off to fetch them, and when they were opened he found that they were utterly empty! Alarmed by his discovery, he sobbed out his story to the two visitors, and begged them to direct him as to how to repent.

"Reb Elimelech now turned to Reb Zushya and said: 'Please write out a set of scrolls for the *tefilin* of our host. And as you do so, make it your solemn intention to draw down into their words the kind of light from Above that will be of the intensity appropriate to a man who had never fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* in his life.'"

"Reb Zushya took out parchment, quill and ink, and devoutly inscribed the passages required. Then he rolled up the tiny scrolls, placed them inside the black leather boxed of the *tefilin*, and returned them to their owner.

"But the Divine light that those tefilin now irradiated was of an intensity that this man was unable to bear. Soon after this incident he moved to Berditchev, and a short while later, died in our city.

"And these," concluded Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, "are the selfsame tefilin which thus found their way into the hands of our local burial society."

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Chaim Zaitchek – For Maximum Effect Say Your Piece And Disappear

After Moshe told Paroh the devastating repercussions of Makas Arbeh, and before giving Paroh a chance to speak, the Torah says (Bo 10:6) **וַיִּפֶן וַיֵּצֵא מֵעִם פַּרְעֹה**, Moshe turned and left without giving Paroh a chance to comment. The Medrash Rabba says that Moshe Rabbeinu saw Paroh's men looking at each other in a way that showed they believed what he said, and therefore he left. If he thought he finally got through to them why did he leave?

Rav Chaim Zaitchek says that often when a person tells a person that he did something wrong, even if the person knows that what was told to him is the truth, he will reject the rebuke if only to show that the person was not right. A person is more willing to admit mistake and change if it is a product of his own decision and not thrust upon him by someone else. If his admission of failure will give the other person victory, he will cling to his wrong ways for dear life, even if he knows it is wrong and harmful.

As soon Moshe saw that Paroh's men grasped what was happening he disappeared in order to give them their space. He wanted to let them think it over and decide for themselves what to do and not to face off with them in battle of wills.

Often, we rebuke our kids and, so to say, stand in their faces waiting for them to submit. This, says Rav Chaim, will create an artificial hurdle to their coming around to understanding our side, and it will make it that much harder for them. When "educating" your child, learn from Moshe Rabbeinu, and end your drasha with a quick exit. Let them contemplate your words on their own terms without you banging it into their head with a hammer. If you "VaYifen Vayeitzei",

there is a better chance that "Vayushav" (Bo 10:8), they will come calling after you quicker than you think.

Paroh Dares Moshe To Take The Kids To Shul

After having second thoughts and calling back Moshe and Aharon after their warning of the upcoming Makas Arbeh, Paroh tells them (Bo 10:10), יְהִי כֵן ה' עִמָּכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁלַּח אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־טַפְּכֶם ***"So be it. May Hashem be with you just as I will send you and your little ones."***

This seems to imply that just as he will not send their children, he will not send them. Then right after that, he says, "Take only the men." Was he letting them go or not?

If you've ever taken a child to Shul, or anywhere for that matter, you know that in order to serve Hashem properly you need peace of mind. Peace from the children that is. **The Shalal Rov brings Rav Moshe Yehuda Leib MiKutna** who explains with this concept the above enigmatic conversation between Paroh and Moshe and Aharon.

Paroh asked Moshe, "Do you think Hashem will be with you if you take the children? With them around, it will be impossible to get any real service done. Therefore, if you are serious and not just using this as a ploy to escape, then you will take only the men. Your demand to take the children undermines your secret intention to escape."

"Hashem doesn't give to those who worry – Hashem gives to those who ask." – Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa Zt'l

"The only time you fail is when you fall down and stay down."

Revach L'Neshama - Ben Ish Chai - Think Twice Before Eating in The Dark

Moshe warns Paroh about the upcoming Makka of locust. וְכִסָּה֙ אֶת־עֵ֣ין הָאָ֔רֶץ וְלֹ֥א יוּכַ֖ל לִרְא֣וֹת אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ וְאָכַ֗ל אֶת־יֶ֙תֶר, they will cover the visible surface of the land so that one will be unable to see the land, they will eat all that was spared (Bo 10:5). **The Ben Ish Chai** in Ben Yehoada Al HaTorah asks, why does the Torah discuss the darkness before the real destruction of the total devastation of the remaining crop? Isn't the darkness trivial compared to the main damage?

He answers that the gemara (Yuma 74b) says that blind people are ever fully satisfied when they eat because they do not see the food. Therefore, says the Ben Ish Chai, Hashem sent a heavy locust that cast a darkness that would not allow the locust to see while they were eating. This way they wouldn't be satisfied and would keep eating until there is not a crumb left in the entire Mitzrayim.

Jewish Education Program Queens - In Honour of Hashem



וַיֹּ֤אמֶר מֹשֶׁה֙ כֵּ֣ן דִּבַּ֔רְתָּ לֹא־אֹסֵ֥ף עֹ֖וד רְא֣וֹת פָּנֶ֑יךָ

"And Moshe said, you have spoken well; I will see your face again no more!" (Shmos 10:29)

In one circumstance in Parshas Bo, Moshe acted one way, in defense of Hashem's honor. Later in this same parsha, Moshe acted in a totally opposite way. Yet, that too was done for Hashem's honor. What? Why? And How?

After the plague of Darkness, Pharaoh requested that Moshe return to his palace. Pharaoh was ready to allow the Jews to serve Hashem in the desert; "Even your children can come – only your animals must remain". Moshe refused Pharaoh's limitations. Pharaoh responded, "Leave my presence! Beware not to see me again, for if you do, you will die!" Moshe responded strongly, "You are correct. I will not see you, again". Hashem then appeared to Moshe, in Pharaoh's palace. Hashem told Moshe about the next (and last) plague so that Moshe could warn Pharaoh about it (as he warned him before every plague).

What right did Moshe have to respond to Pharaoh this way? He knew that a final plague would be coming, and that Hashem would have to inform him about it. He also knew that Hashem had never given him prophecy in the idol-ridden city itself but rather outside the city. Moshe put Hashem in a tenuous situation – How could he do that? Wouldn't it have been better had Moshe not responded to Pharaoh's insult?

Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt'l explained that Moshe's response to Pharaoh was not an emotional reaction but a calculated decision. As a leader of the Jews and as one sent on his mission by Hashem, he understood that a slight to his honour was a slight to Hashem's honour. That demanded Moshe's stinging response to Pharaoh, even though it forced Hashem to say a prophecy in such an impure place.

Earlier in the Parsha (Shmos 10:11), Moshe acted totally differently. After being warned of the imminent plague of locusts, Pharaoh, pressed by his servants, called Moshe back to his palace. Pharaoh was willing to let the Jews go to serve Hashem in the desert. However, when Pharaoh heard that Moshe wanted the children to go as well, he refused. Then Pharaoh kicked Moshe and Aharon out of his palace.

The Riva (one of the Ba'alei HaTosefos) asked, why did Moshe and Aharon wait until Pharaoh kicked them out of the palace? That was embarrassing to them. They must have sensed where the

conversation was headed and should have left sooner, on their own. Why did they wait? The Riva answers, Pharaoh had specifically sent for Moshe and Aharon to return to the palace. Therefore, they didn't leave until Pharaoh gave them permission to do so.

Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt'l brought out a beautiful lesson from this. Pharaoh was a rasha, a very evil person. He enslaved the Jews with backbreaking labour while torturing and killing many of them. Yet, since he initiated the invitation, it would have been a lack of derech eretz for them to leave on their own. What an amazing insight to the obligation of appropriateness. Moshe and Aharon understood that since Pharaoh had invited them to the palace, the appropriate action was to wait until Pharaoh dismissed them even though he was a wicked person. Moshe and Aharon knew that it brings true honour to Hashem when **we** act with derech eretz, proper conduct, regardless of whether or not the other party is intrinsically deserving of it. When we follow in the ways of the Hashem and His Torah, we actually sanctify the name of Hashem.

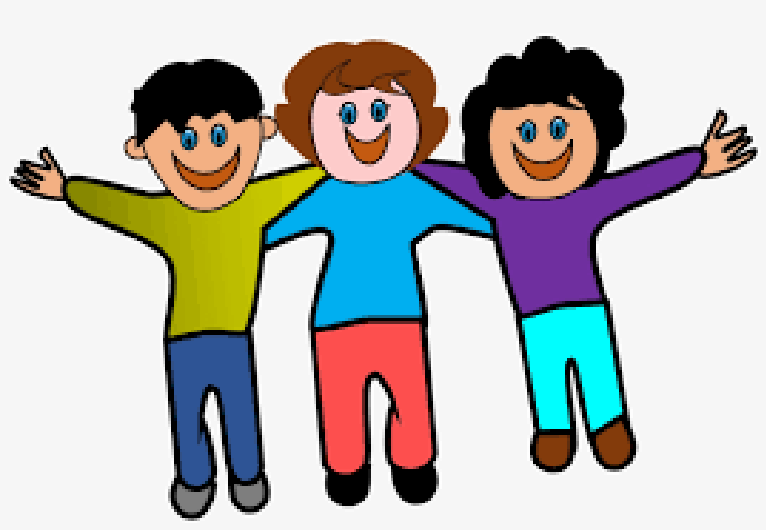
In the first circumstance, Moshe acted one way, in defense of Hashem's honour. In the second example, Moshe acted in a totally opposite way. Yet, that too was done for Hashem's honour.

Knowing what to do in different situations is often very difficult. We must always follow the dictates of the Torah, taught to us by our leaders, as they guide us towards proper behaviour, in a manner that increases the glory of Hashem.

Derech eretz to all people is a fundamental principal of the Torah and brings honour to Hashem.

"To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time."

Revach L'Neshama -Can a Mitzri Be A "Friend"?



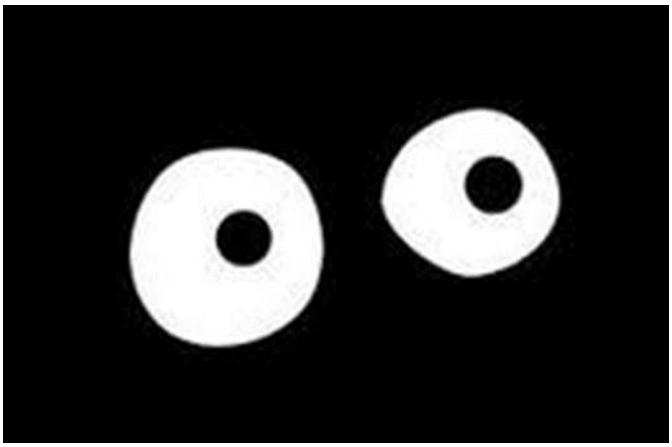
When the pasuk (11:2) describes how the Jews will clean Mitzrayim out of their wealth, it states, וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ;"A man will request from his "friend" silver and gold vessels. "Friend" in this pasuk refers to the Mitzriyim. The Meforshim ask, why are the Goyim described in this pasuk as a "friend"?

The Sechel Tov answers, the Mitzriyim had such regret after the Makos, for having caused so much pain to the Jews, they then acted towards Klal Yisroel with tremendous friendship and "Rayus" . The Torah alludes to this friendship by calling the Mitzriyim "Friends" of the Jews.

R' Bechaye offers a different answer. Although whenever the Torah says "Friend" it refers to a Jew and excludes a Gentile; this is only after Matan Torah when the Goyim rejected the Torah and Klal Yisroel accepted it. Since they rejected the Torah they can't be referred to as "Friends" of Klal Yisroel. However, before Matan Torah even a Goy can be called a "friend" of the Jews.

"A person who takes a walk of 100 feet and a person who walks 2,000 miles have one major thing in common. They both need to take a first step before they take a second step." —Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

Revach L'Neshama -Rav Elyashiv - Even The Mitzrim Loved The Dark



The Medrash tells us that Hashem asked the Malachim if the Mitzrim should suffer the plague of Choshech and they unanimously agreed. This implies that they dissented to the other Makkos. Why did they protest the other makkos and what was different about Choshech that they agreed?

Rav Elyashiv answers that the Malachim in question here include the Sar or minister of each nation that is represented in Shamayim by a Malach. Surely by each of the Makkos, Uza, the Sar of Mitzrayim, dissented. So did the Sar of the seven nations living in Eretz Yisroel who knew exactly where Bnei Yisroel were headed after being freed from Mitzrayim.

Choshech was different because Chazal tell us that under the cover of the darkness of Choshech, Hashem killed the 80% of the total population of the Bnei Yisroel who did not merit to leave Mitzrayim. They were buried before the Mitzrim knew what happened. This great devastation was a uniting cause to all he malachim in Shamayim. Now that Bnei Yisroel would suffer through this makka, even our enemies unanimously agreed to go forward with it.

R' Nachman of Breslov ZT"L would say: "Chazal tell us that we must always judge others favourably. We must also judge ourselves favourably."

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Shimon Schwab - Moshe's Unleashes His Long Awaited Slap To Paroh

וַיֵּצֵא מֵעִם־פַּרְעֹה בָּחֳרִי־אָף (Bo 11:8). After informing Paroh about Makas Bechoros, Moshe storms out in a fit of anger. Rashi says that he was angry that Paroh said he doesn't want to see him ever again. **Rav Shimon Schwab** asks, since when would Moshe, the most humble of men, get angry at being insulted? Moreover that is when Moshe had the Nevua about Makas Bechoros, which is not possible when angry (Pesachim 66b)? Not only that but Reish Lakish says (Zevachim 102a) that Moshe actually gave Paroh a slap!



Rav Schwab answers that Moshe was commanded by Hashem to have respect for Paroh (Rashi Va'eira 6:13). Moshe obeyed this commandment as part of his shilchus. Even moments before when telling Paroh what would happen after Makas Bechoros, he talks respectfully and says that Paroh's men will come to look for Moshe and bow down to him, when in actuality, Paroh himself would come running in middle of the night. However as soon as Paroh told Moshe he will never see him again, Moshe realized that his mission in dealing with Paroh had come to an end.

Now Moshe was no longer a Shaliach of Hashem but rather a private citizen. As such, as an act of Kiddush Hashem he vehemently protested Paroh's constant Chilul Hashem and avenged it with a well placed slap. A well deserved slap that private citizen Moshe waited a long time to give.



Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

***"ויפן ויצא מעם פרעה" "And he turned his back and left Pharaoh."* (10:6)**

QUESTION: Why concerning locusts, the eighth plague, does the Torah tell us that Moshe left immediately after giving the warning?

ANSWER: Moshe always came to Pharaoh as Hashem's messenger to inform him of the coming plague. Moshe thought that Pharaoh was an extremely stubborn man and, therefore, he always pleaded with him to relent and listen to Hashem about letting the people go.

Before the plague of locusts, Hashem said to Moshe, "Go to Pharaoh and warn him, for I have hardened his heart" (10:1). Moshe now realized that it was not Pharaoh's stubbornness, but Hashem causing him not to listen. Thus, there was no purpose in his pleading with Pharaoh to let the people go.

Therefore, after delivering the message of the coming plague of locusts, he immediately turned his back and left. (**שער בת רבים**)

"Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement… Get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed." — Abraham Joshua Heschel

Revach L'Neshama – The Kotzer Rebbe - Who Was Waiting For Moshe In Paroh's Palace?

10:1 וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה ***And Hashem said to Moshe: "Come to Pharaoh"***

Hashem tells Moshe **בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה**; Come to Paroh. Shouldn't he have said "Go to Paroh"? **The Kotzker Rebbe** says this teaches us an important lesson. Wherever we are and whatever we face we should never feel like we need Hashem to come with us. That is because the place that we are going no matter how vacant it seems or how far removed it appears from Hashem's presence, nevertheless he is already there. In good times and bad, Hashem is there. Wherever you are and wherever you go the Shechina is there.

Even in the lowest place of all, the palace of King Paroh, Hashem says to Moshe, "***Come*** to Paroh's palace." I am there already and waiting for you.

Vedibarta Bam

ויאמר אליהם לכו עבדו את ה׳ אלקיכם מי ומי ההלכים: ויאמר משה בנערינו ובזקנינו נלך ***"And he said to them, 'Go and serve G-d your G-d; Which ones are going?' Moshe said, 'With our young and with our old shall we go.'"*** **(10:8-9)**

QUESTION: Moshe's request to Pharaoh was very explicit: "Let my people go!" Why now, after having endured seven plagues, did Pharaoh ask, "Which ones are going?"

ANSWER: The words, "*mi vami haholchim*" (**מי ומי ההלכים**) have the numerical value of 216, the same as "*Kaleiv uBin Nun*" (**כלב ובן נון**). Pharaoh was telling Moshe, "I know your ultimate plan is to bring the Jews to *Eretz Yisrael,* but you should know that you are wasting your time, because they will all die in the wilderness and only Kalev and Bin Nun (Yehoshua) will live to reach *Eretz Yisrael.*"

Moshe replied, **בנערינו ובזקנינו נלך** — "Do not worry, all those who are now under 20 or over 60 will also survive the wilderness and come to *Eretz Yisrael.*" (**בעל הטורים**)

*** * ***

Alternatively, Pharaoh, slowly but surely, began to realize that fighting Moshe was a lost cause. Instead of being stubborn and refusing to let the Jewish people go, he decided to use reverse psychology. Pharaoh said to Moshe, "I am your friend who would not want to see you as an outcast or a failure.

Many years have passed since you left Egypt. I know the people better than you do. I do not doubt your sincerity in wanting to take them to serve Hashem, but I urge you stop your campaign because, *mi vami haholchim* — which ones are going?! None of these people are interested in leaving Egypt to go seek a new way of life."

Moshe smiled and replied, "You are greatly mistaken. Just open the doors and give them freedom, and I assure you that young and old, men and women will eagerly run to serve Hashem."

Vedibarta Bam

***"ויהי חשך אפלה בכל ארץ מצרים שלשת ימים" "And there was a thick darkness in all of Egypt for three days."* (10:22)**

QUESTION: Rashi explains that during the first three days of darkness, no one was able to see anyone else. During the succeeding days, the darkness was so thick that if an Egyptian was sitting, he was unable to stand up, and if he was standing, he was unable to sit down.

Every plague lasted seven days (except the plague of the firstborn). Why did the plague of darkness last only six days?

ANSWER: When the Jews left Egypt and travelled in the desert, clouds of glory accompanied them. During the day the clouds would clear a path in the desert, and at night a pillar of fire lit up the camp.

When the Egyptians pursued the Jews, the Torah says, "There was a cloud of darkness [for the Egyptians] and the night was illuminated [for the Jews through a pillar of fire]" (14:20). Thus, Hashem reserved the remaining seventh day of darkness to punish the Egyptians when they chased after the Jewish people. (**מדרש רבה שמות י"ד, ג**)

Vedibarta Bam

דבר נא באזני העם וישאלו איש מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה כלי כסף וכלי זהב ***"Speak in the ears of the people. Each man should borrow from his friend and a woman from her friend silver and gold vessels."*** **(11:2)**



QUESTION: 1) The word **רעהו** means "friend." Are the Egyptians considered friends of the Jews? 2) Why was it necessary to speak "in the ears" of the people, i.e. to keep it secret?

ANSWER: Hashem wanted the Jews to leave Egypt laden with gold, silver, and valuables, which they would borrow from the Egyptians. But how could this be easily accomplished? Wouldn't an Egyptian ask, "How do I know I can trust you?"

Therefore, Hashem told Moshe that first each Jewish male should borrow from *rei'eihu* — his *Jewish* friend and that each female should borrow from *re'usah* — her *Jewish* friend. When the Egyptians would see the friendship and trust among the Jews, the

Jews would find favour in their eyes and the Egyptians would readily agree to lend them gold and silver.

Since this was a scheme to get the gold and silver from the Egyptians, it was necessary that the message be "spoken into the ears of the people" and kept secret. (**שער בת רבים - מלבי"ם**)



Vedibarta Bam

"ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב לשנו"
***"But against any of the children of Israel no dog shall whet it's tongue."* (11:7)**

QUESTION: Why did Hashem specify dogs instead of simply saying, "No wild beast will harm them"?

ANSWER: The *Gemara (Sanhedrin* 105a) says that Lavan, Bilam, and King of Aram are the same person. Lavan chased after Yaakov, wanting to destroy him and the future of the Jewish people. Years later he returned in the form of Bilam and advised Pharaoh to drown the Jewish children, and later, in the days of Balak, he came to curse the Jewish people. In the time of the Judges, when the Jewish people angered Hashem through their improper behaviour, He exiled them for eight years under the regime of Cusham-rishatayim. He, too, was a reincarnation of Lavan. (See Judges 3:7-11.)

The acronym of the names "Cushan," "Lavan," and "Bilam" (**כושן לבן בלעם**) spells the word, "*kelev*" (**כלב**) — "dog."

Hashem told Moshe, "Throughout history, the wicked will always reappear and attempt to annihilate the Jewish people. However, be assured that neither Lavan in all his disguises *(kelev),* nor any other enemies, will succeed, G-d forbid, in destroying the Jewish people."

Vedibarta Bam

QUESTION: What lesson can we learn from a leap year?

ANSWER: The secular calendar follows the solar year, the cycle of the sun, and consists of 365 days. The Jewish calendar follows the lunar system, the cycle of the moon, and is approximately 354 days. To make up the difference of close to 11 days, every few years we have a leap year, after which we actually end up a few days ahead of the solar year.

The leap year serves as a reminder that everyone has an opportunity, from time to time, to make up for what he has failed to accomplish in the past. Furthermore, just as the leap year not only makes up for the deficiency, but provides an "advance" on the future, a Jew must also intensify his efforts in his service of Hashem and store up additional merits. (**לקוטי שיחות**)



Vedibarta Bam

"אל תאכלו ממנו נא ובשל מבשל במים כי אם צלי אש" ***"Do not eat of it partially raw, or cooked in water, only roasted over fire." (12:9)</3>***

QUESTION: The meat of the sacrifices may be eaten by *Kohanim* in whatever manner suits their palates. They may eat it cooked, broiled or roasted, etc. (Rambam, *Ma'aseh haKarbanot* 10:10). Why did Hashem insist that the *Pesach*-offering be eaten only roasted with fire?

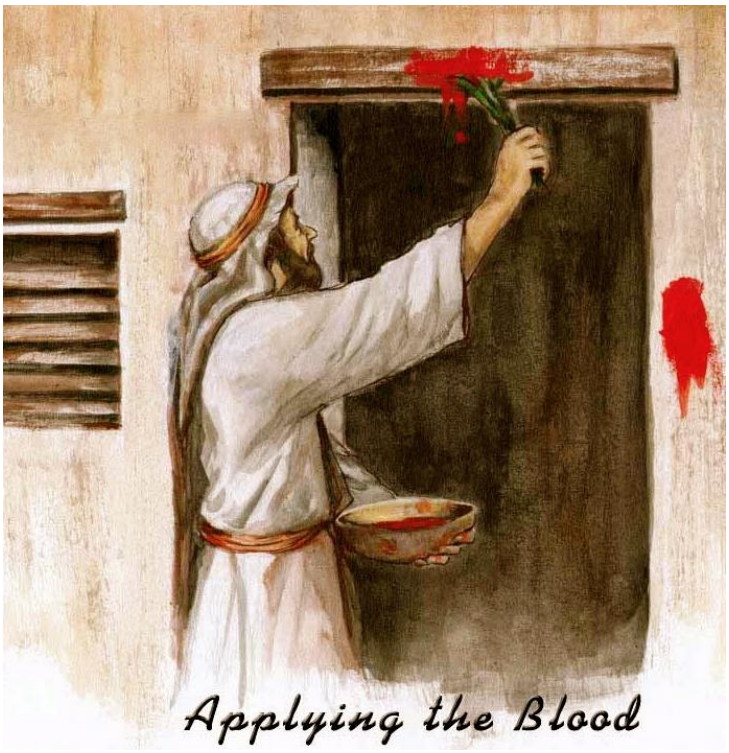
ANSWER: Partially raw and fully cooked meat hardly have an aroma. Roasted meat, however, can be smelled at a distance.

The Jews slaved in Egypt for many years and were petrified of their Egyptian masters. Hashem's command to offer sheep, the animal worshipped by the Egyptians, as a *Pesach*-offering, frightened them. In order not to arouse the wrath of the Egyptians, they were going to eat it partially raw or fully cooked, hoping that the Egyptians would not notice.

Consequently, Hashem told Moshe to tell the people, "Enough is enough! Stop walking with your heads bowed down. Lift them up and be proud of the fact that you are Jews and free people. *Roast* the sacrifice on fire, let the aroma be smelled from one end of Egypt to the other, and let the entire country know that you are proudly worshipping your G-d."(**דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות**)

Vedibarta Bam

***"וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל כאשר צוה ה' את משה ואהרן כן עשו"" "And the Children of Israel went and did as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aaron, so they did."* (12:28)**



QUESTION: Since it says that the Jews did as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aaron, the words "*kein asu*" — "so they did" are superfluous?

ANSWER: Hashem told Moshe and Aaron to instruct the Jewish people that "They shall take some of its blood and place it on the two doorposts and on the lintel upon the houses in which they will eat it" (12:7). Moshe, however, called the elders of Israel and told them, "You shall take a

bundle of hyssop and dip it into the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts" (12:22).

Why did Moshe deviate and change the order saying first lintel and then doorposts?

There were three who played a pivotal role in the Exodus from Egypt: Hashem, Moshe and Aaron. The lintel which is above the door represents Hashem. The two doorposts represent Moshe and Aaron. Hashem's primary interest was that the people properly appreciate and recognize what Moshe and Aaron had done for them. Therefore, He instructed that priority be given to the two doorposts — Moshe and Aaron. On the other hand, Moshe and Aaron were exceedingly humble. Thus, they wanted that all the credit to be given to Hashem. Consequently, they instructed the Jewish people to first put blood on the lintel, i.e. to show gratitude to Hashem.

The Children of Israel decided that recognition should be given to Moshe and Aaron first in view of their dedication and self sacrifice on their behalf.

Hence, the *pasuk* relates that "the Children of Israel did as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aaron." That is, they first put blood on the two doorposts and afterward on the lintel. The added words "*kein asu*" — "so they did" — is to emphasize that they did it specifically this way and *not* the way Moshe and Aaron would have wanted them to do it. (**כלי יקר**)

"Man's task in the world, according to Judaism, is to transform fate into destiny; a passive existence into an active existence; an existence of compulsion, perplexity and muteness into an existence replete with a powerful will, with resourcefulness, daring, and imagination." ~ Rabbi Joseph Solovetchik

Vedibarta Bam

"ותהי צעקה גדלה במצרים כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת"
***"There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead."* (12:30)**



QUESTION: Even in a home where there were no firstborn, the eldest of the household perished (Rashi). Why did Moshe only warn that the firstborn would die without warning about the eldest of the house?

ANSWER: Some Egyptians thought they could outsmart Hashem and Moshe. Warned of the oncoming plague, they took their firstborn and placed them into Jewish homes. Hashem killed those firstborn and also the eldest of the household from which each firstborn originated. Had Moshe warned them of this, they would have kept the firstborn home, and thus the eldest in the household would have survived.

Moshe intentionally did not warn them, so that their punishment would be twofold. The firstborn were killed to punish the Egyptians for not listening to Hashem to free the Jews, and the eldest because the Egyptians tried to outsmart Hashem.(**עדות ביוסף**)

"The world is new to us every morning—and every man should believe he is reborn each day." —Baal Shem Tov

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

After Moshe informs Pharaoh of the final Plague, the Death of the Firstborn, he leaves Pharaoh's presence in anger (11:8). What caused Moshe to suddenly become angry?

Rav Shimon Schwab, *zt"l*, explains that Moshe felt that for Pharaoh to be resilient and uncaring is one thing. However, to still be stubborn knowing that thousands of people will die in a Plague is foolish. This is what got Moshe so upset. Sometimes people can be callous and selfish, but there has to be a limit when it is guaranteed to hurt or even kill others.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

When Shabbos ends, there is a mitzvah to escort the *Shabbos Queen*. For this reason, there is a *minhag* to light candles on *Motzaei Shabbos* in her honour. It is also customary to say special *tefilos* after *Havdalah* (*Mishnah Brurah* 300:3).

One of these special prayers is *'V'yiten Lecha'*, which has many *brachos* mentioned in it, and we ask Hashem for these *brachos* to be fulfilled during the upcoming week.

Rav Mendel of Riminov used to say that the *tefilah* of *'V'Yiten Lecha'* helps us make it from this Shabbos to the next Shabbos On *Motzaei Shabbos Kodesh*, there is a tremendous *segulah* for easy *parnasah* by saying the words *'Eliyahu HaNavi'* exactly 70 times— no more and no less! (*Sefer Segulos Yisroel*)

"In spirituality, the searching is the finding and the pursuit is the achievement." —Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski

V'halachtah B'drachav - The Ways of Hashem - Working on our Middos

Rav Yisroel Spira, *zt"l*, the *Bluzhever Rebbe*, had immense love for a fellow Jew, and during the holocaust, he displayed tremendous courage because of this love for others that he had. In the concentration camps, it was forbidden for anyone to pass notes to each other.

One time, a note being passed between two people was intercepted by the wardens. This was a terrible breach in the rules of the camp, and the Nazis were determined to punish whoever sent the note. However, finding the culprit was not that simple. They knew that the *Bluzhever Rebbe* was well respected by all the others in the camp, and they brought him before them.

In a mocking tone, one of the Nazis explained the crime and said, "You're the Rabbi here, surely you can find out who sent this note."



They told him, "You have twenty-four hours to deliver this man to us. If you don't, then you will suffer the punishment for him!"

Without hesitating, the *Rebbe* opened his shirt and bared his chest. "There is no need to wait twenty-four hours. You can kill me right now! I can assure you that I will *never* give over a fellow Jew to be punished by you or anyone else!"

The *Bluzhever Rebbe* was sure he would be murdered on the spot as he said this, however, even these cruel men were impressed by his sincerity and selflessness. The guard told him, "Rabbi, you are truly a good Jew, but the others are all pigs."

The *Bluzhever Rebbe* replied, "You are mistaken. The other Jews are great and wonderful people. I am the lowest among them all!" The guards were so impressed by the *Bluzhever Rebbe*, they dismissed him and allowed him to leave unpunished.



Vedibarta Bam

***"ויהי חשך אפלה בכל ארץ מצרים שלשת ימים לא ראו איש את אחיו" "There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. One did not see his own brother."* (10:22-23)**

QUESTION: Since they were unable to see *anything;* why is there an emphasis on not seeing one's own brother?

ANSWER: Many years ago a man emigrated from a small town in Russia to the United States. His business enterprises were blessed with success and he became very wealthy. A few years later, his brother arrived, found his way to the successful brother's house, and presented himself to the doorman as the brother of his master. The doorman directed him to the waiting area and afterwards came back with a message that his master had no brother. He sent back a number of signs hoping that his brother would recognize him. Again the doorman came back: "Sorry, my master says he has no brother and does not know you." Disappointed and hurt, he told the doorman to tell his master, "I advise him to make a will immediately, because he does not have much time left to live."

Petrified, the brother rushed to the door and asked in alarm, "How can you make such a statement? My doctor proclaimed me in excellent health!" The immigrant brother looked his brother in the eyes and said, "The city in which we grew up as brothers was very small and poor. The townspeople were unable to afford a full-time physician. I studied first-aid and administered their medical needs. From my experience I learned that when a patient can no longer

'recognize' his own brother, his situation is extremely serious and he has little time left to live."

Some aspects of the plague of darkness are unfortunately prevalent in contemporary times. Sadly, there may be Jews enveloped in darkness who do not recognize fellow Jews as their brothers and deserve to be helped materially and spiritually. Such conduct endangers the continuity of the Jewish community.

Hopefully, like the Jews of Egypt we, too, will merit, "For all the Children of Israel, there was light in their dwellings." Everyone will see the true light and do the utmost for his brother — his fellow Jew. (**מיוסד על אשכול ענבים - פרדס יוסף**)

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Rav Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro quotes **Rav Shabsi Yudelevitch** (*Drashos HaMaggid, Moadim* II p. 294), who says that *Makas Choshech*, Darkness, was the most severe of all the Plagues. How bad could it have been, particularly if no Egyptians died in that plague?

Rabbi Yudelevitch answers from the *Pasuk* (10:23) that in the darkness, the Egyptians could not see each other. Throughout the Plagues, no matter how difficult the plague was, they still had each other for support and encouragement to help them endure the suffering.

However, as Rabbi Shapiro emphasizes, there is nothing worse than having no support when going through a difficult time. Recognizing this concept, we can try our best to be here for others, to help increase their happiness in their times of joy and to ease their burdens in any of their difficult times.

A woman who was bitterly unhappy once came to **Rav Aryeh Levine**'s home, and pleaded, "Let me sit in your house, and let me cry and weep before you." Rav Aryeh Levine kindly replied, "You may surely sit, and even cry, but not before me. Direct your tears to *Hashem*, the Holy One who listens to the cries of His children."



Taking a seat, the woman simply began a sad story, unable to stop crying. Rav Aryeh said to her, "Do not cry, *Hashem* will surely have mercy!"

A short while later, the woman returned to him, and said that her situation had not improved, but it had worsened, and she cried again with bitter tears. Rav Aryeh did his best to comfort her, seeking words that would touch her heart.

Finally, the woman said, "I will accept your words of comfort, but can you please tell me what became of the thousands of tears I shed over the *Tehilim*, when I said its words to *Hashem*, imploring Him to help me? Was it all for nothing?"

Rav Aryeh gently answered, "I will tell you that after 120 years when your life on earth ends and you come before the Heavenly Court, you will find out how many severe and harsh decrees against the Jewish people were torn up, because of those precious holy tears that you have shed. Not one teardrop goes to waste. *Hashem* counts them like pearls, and treasures them!"

Hearing this, she started crying again, but now with tears of happiness that all her suffering and *Tefilah* were truly not in vain. Sometime later she came back to Rav Aryeh and said, "Dear Rabbi, please tell me again those beautiful words. What happened with all of those tears of mine that I wept?"

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וגם צדה לא עשו להם Also, they had not made provisions for themselves *(12:39)*

Rebbe Aharon Leib Shteinman, *zt"l*, was once travelling to the United States, and his family prepared his suitcase for him. When the *Rosh HaYeshivah* saw all the many preparations, he considered how much thought went into the packing of the suitcase. He said, "I am going to the United States, a land of plenty, and if I am missing something, I can buy it. I am travelling for just ten days, and still they are all going about filling the suitcase with everything that I might need.

If so, then how much must we prepare our 'suitcase' of *Mitzvos* that we take to the World to Come?! As *Chazal* have stated (*Yalkut Shemoni, Remez* 145) 'light suitcases for a distant journey'. Every Jew must be concerned that his suitcase is filled with *Mitzvos* for the World to Come." (*Umatok HaOhr*)

Pearls of Wisdom …*A Word for the Ages*

A young father once needed a complicated heart procedure, and he was unsure if he should inform his elderly parents about it. He approached **Rav Elazar Shach, *zt"l***, and asked him for his advice, and Rav Shach insisted that he tell his parents, but not get into how serious his condition or the procedure was.

The man hesitated and said, "Why should I worry them needlessly?" Rav Shach responded, "You don't realize the power of a parent's Prayer, and you must not forgo such valuable assistance!"

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS BO



Pointless Work - Rabbi Amram Sananes

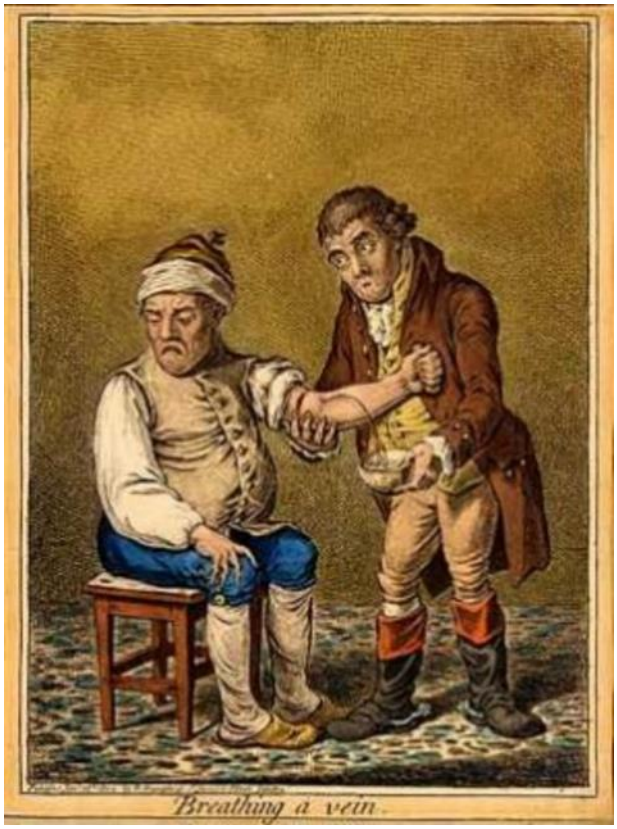
Rav Avrohom Pam *zt"l* told a story about a man who received a lengthy prison sentence of hard labour. He had to push a large wheel round and round for fifteen hours a day. The work was exhausting and monotonous.

One day he asked the jailer why the wheel was being turned, and he was told that the wheel was attached to a mill outside the cell, which ground wheat. Upon hearing this, the man's efforts took on a new purpose. He imagined that his toil was producing flour for bread that would feed a hungry child somewhere. He visualized the satisfaction of an old woman on a cold winter morning eating a bowl of hot cereal made from the crushed wheat. These thoughts kept him going through the arduous years of labour.

When the day finally arrived and he was released from his captivity, his first request was to see the mill that the wheel was attached to. The guard looked at him with puzzlement. "*What are you talking about? There's no mill here, the wheel is attached to nothing! That was your punishment!*"

When the man heard that his back-breaking efforts for all those years had been in vain, he collapsed and died. This is what Pharaoh intended to inflict on the Israelites. As humans, we need to have a sense of accomplishment and when that's taken away from us, it can destroy us!

The Selfish Doctor And Pharmacist



Someone came to the **Rebbe of Neschiz zt'l** and told him that he is ill and needs a refuah. The Rebbe advised him to go to the doctor of Honipoli. A few days later he returned to the Neschizer Rebbe and said, "I was in Honipoli, and sought their doctor, but they don't have a doctor at all!"

The Rebbe asked, "What do the people do when someone is ill?"

They turn to the to their Father in heaven.

"That was my intention. You should turn to the Doctor of Honipoli, who is Hashem. Pray to Him, and you will have a refuah sheleimah."

Rebbe Gedalyah Moshe of Zvhil zt'l told that he was once in a city that had only one doctor and one pharmacist. The doctor and the pharmacist took advantage of their monopoly and charged very high prices for their services.

The townspeople convened and decided that they won't use the doctor and the pharmacist anymore. If someone was ill, they would turn to Hashem. A year later, the townspeople reviewed what occurred that year in their town, and they discovered that no one in their town died that year, except for the doctor and the pharmacist.

The Zera Kodesh writes, "A Yid should never lose hope. He should never say that…I'm unable to pray with pure thoughts, and…my prayers can't go up to Hashem… Because even when a person is at a very low level, and he is unable to pray properly, nevertheless… Hashem sees that he's yearning to pray properly, and his yearning is precious to Hashem.

"And one can make a prayer about that itself. He can shout and plead before Hashem that he has become so distanced from Him, until he is unable to pray before Him. He can ask Hashem for compassion that Hashem should help him pray, so he can express himself fully before Hashem… This is how they were redeemed from Mitzrayim…" (*Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.)*

The Prayers of a Shipwrecked Passenger



Reb Yeshayah Barkdaki, zt'l, was on a ship, headed to Eretz Yisrael. The shipwrecked not very far from Yafo. He held on to his son and daughter and started swimming with them ashore. But he felt he didn't have enough strength, and if he continues to swim with both children, they would all three drown.

What should he do? Which child should he save and which one should he leave behind? After a quick review of the halachos, he said to his daughter, with a very broken heart, that he didn't have strength to take both of them ashore, and according to halachah, the son's life comes before hers.

When she heard this, she started to cry, "Father! Don't let me drown in the sea! Have mercy on me!"

Her heartbreaking calls ripped his heart. Reb Yeshayah Bardaki prayed and felt miraculously rejuvenated. With renewed strength, he swam with both of his children to Eretz Yisrael.

Years later, before Reb Yeshayah's petirah, he reminded his daughter about that time. He said, "Do you remember when your life was in danger, and you called out to me and my compassion was aroused? My daughter, whenever you're in a difficult situation, call out to Hashem. Say, 'Father! Save me!' and you will be answered.

"I am a human being, my compassion and my strength is limited, but I couldn't refuse your cries. Certainly then, when you call out to our Father in heaven, whose compassion and whose abilities are limitless, you will be saved…"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Avraham Yaakov *HaKohein* Pam, *zt"l*, lived with a very simple lifestyle, and never took favours from others. He was always offered rides to and from the *Yeshivah*, but he always refused because he never wanted to impose on anyone. Instead, he would walk the few blocks and sometimes lean on a shopping cart for support.

One day, when he was ready to go home from *Yeshivah*, it was raining outside. A *Talmid* wanted to drive him home, but Rav Pam gently refused. As Rav Pam walked down the street, the student walked behind him holding an umbrella to protect Rav Pam from the rain.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* didn't notice this until they got to the corner, and when he saw what the young man was doing, he told him that a few drops of rain would not hurt him.

The student responded, "But the *Rebbe's* hat will be ruined!" Rav Pam smiled and said, "The hat is old. The Jew is old. It's better for you to go back to the *Bais Medrash* and learn!"

"Perhaps this is the moment for which you have been created." —Esther 4:14

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l

How Are We to Understand Suffering?

QUESTION: Is it a kindliness of Hashem that people are suffering in this world?

ANSWER: Now, let's take a visit to all the dentist's offices. The dentists are devils. They're standing with instruments of torture, and they're inflicting suffering on people. And when they get through with them, they say, "Pay me!"



Should We Close all Dentist Offices?

We should close down all the dentist offices! Of course we understand the dentists are angels of mercy. For that little bit of suffering we're going to be spared a great deal of trouble later in life.

Therefore we understand that people in the hospitals are being given a treatment. Some are being treated so that when they come out they will be happier for the rest of their lives. Some are being treated, they should be happy in the next world, because the next world is the real life.

Now if you're trying to solve the problems of this world by ignoring Olam Habah, then I explained once: it's like a child going into a wedding hall and he sees people giving all their coats away through a little hole in the wall to a man, and they get back a little piece of paper. And the child asks, "What kind of business is that?"

He doesn't know that they are putting their coats away for awhile; they're going into a wedding hall where they are going to enjoy a lot

of things. And therefore if you don't know that there's a lobby and there's a wedding hall, you won't understand this world. This world is only a lobby. Olam Hazeh Domeh L'prozdor, it's a lobby for Olam Habah. Haskain Atzmicha B'prozdor, prepare yourself in this P'rozdor.

Now some people are lazy, they didn't prepare themselves for Olam Habah. So here is a man walking with his overcoat in a posh fancy wedding hall. So the usher at the entrance says, "Nothing doing, sir." And the man says, "I want to go with my coat." So the usher pulls off his coat from him. And so some people didn't prepare themselves for Olam Habah and they're still covered with all kind of woolly things.

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "My friend, come into the hospital, let's remove a little bit from you. This bad Midah, arrogance, and other wrong things, so you should be ready for the next world." And therefore people suffer in the hospitals, and then when they die they're purified, because suffering humbles a man.

You can't be an arrogant person when you're in a hospital bed. When you need a bed pan and you're embarrassed, you ring the bell, and the nurse brings the bed pan. You have to move your bowels on a bed pan, you can't be "stuck up" in that situation. It's very humiliating, and it's the very best experience for a lot of people.

They have to be humiliated to get to the next world, because Ga'avah Rosh Kol Chatos, arrogance is one of the worst qualities. Also, suffering teaches the person to sympathize with others. And a man who goes through it himself, he is in a hospital bed, even though he dies in the hospital he dies a better man, he has sympathy for mankind.

And therefore the hospital is nothing but a dentist's office where the people are getting fillings that will last them forever and ever.

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l



QUESTION: Why does an orange have sections?

ANSWER: In order that you shouldn't ruin them when you open them up. If they were all one section and you punctured one of them, so now all the rest immediately begin to deteriorate.

Since they're separately packed packages, so you take out one section and you puncture it and let the juice drool down over your lips, and you know that a fresh package is waiting for you. Each one is isolated from the other.

In the case of the apple, you don't need that because the juice is not in a state of flowing. If you bite into an apple, it happens sometimes that some of the cider drips down, but it's not that plentiful. And secondly, there's another reason why the fruits have different forms; because each one is supposed to attract our attention in different ways.

That's why there are white roses and red roses and pink ones and yellow. Why aren't all roses red? The answer is, you'll stop looking at them. But because they are so different in color, so if your mind was wandering when you passed by the red rose bush, you might be attracted to think about the yellow rose bush. Therefore you have different kinds of fruits and different kinds of taste.

So when you were eating an apple you weren't thinking, ah!! You missed an opportunity to enjoy that apple and wonder at the marvels of it! Now, maybe when you'll eat an orange, maybe that will stimulate your imagination, because that's the purpose of the orange, to think about the Creator. Let's say you ate an orange also

unthinkingly, so you're trying a pear now. A different taste, maybe this will wake you up.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is trying His best, He's using all kinds of enticements to get you to think, and that's why things are different in this world.

Middos

Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt"l*, was once asked if one should sleep on *Shabbos*? He answered, "Absolutely. Absolutely! However, that doesn't mean that you should climb into your pyjamas and remain there all *Shabbos*, because *Shabbos* is a wonderful opportunity for much better things than sleep.

However, you must understand that sleep is extremely important for our health. It's extremely important for our mental health and it's being neglected by very many people. So, *Shabbos* is a good opportunity to catch up on your sleep. Because of *Shabbos*, many people are able to survive the week. Otherwise, they would collapse from lack of sleep. So certainly, you should utilize *Shabbos* for sleep. But of course, don't overdo it.

And by the way, since you mentioned the subject, I will tell you that you must be careful to go to sleep every night on time. And make sure that you get enough sleep, because due to lack of sleep, many, many people have ruined their lives!"

"A person who avoids loshon hora and utilizes his power of speech in a positive way is forever enhancing the spiritual power of his words. Thus, the torah study and prayer which emanate from his lips are endowed with an exhalted spiritual light".- The Chofetz Chaim, Zt''l, Sefer Shmiras Haloshon.

Learning from a Moser The Value of Davening

Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, Rosh Yeshivah at the Mir Yeshivah, once related the following story: A long time ago, there was a Jewish man who was a Moser, meaning that he would go to the secular government and inform the goyim about what the Jews were doing just to get them in trouble, and he often caused them to face terrible punishments. He was a horrible Rasha who caused terrible problems for the Jewish people.

The Gedolim of the time came together to see if they could put a stop to his troublemaking, and they decided that because of his actions, Halachah dictated that he was Chayav Misah, that he deserved the death penalty. They agreed that the best and only way to deal with him was to put him to death, so they devised a plan.

They would appoint him to be the Chazan one Tefilah, and while he was leading the prayers in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei, they were going to grab him, tie him up, and throw him into the river so that he would drown and this was their Psak. They did exactly as they decided, and they got rid of him, and there was once again peace for the Jews.

A few days later, however, this Moser came to one of the Rabbanim who Paskened that he was Chayuv Misah in a dream. He said to the Rav, "I want to tell you something. I'm up in Shamayim now, and I want you know that you Paskened correctly. I was Chayuv Misah for my actions. I was putting the lives of Jews in danger.

"But I have just one question for you. Why didn't you at least let me finish the Shemoneh Esrei I was in the middle of? The least you could have done for me was to let me say the words of 'Shema Koleinu', 'Selach Lanu', and 'Refa'einu'! You don't realize how much every one of those words means in Shamayim!" Rav Finkel taught that this is what the power of Tefilah really means! *(Torah U'Tefilah)*

Did you know

The blood on the doorposts was on the INSIDE? Yup. Hashem doesn't need reminders that we're inside. He loves us and wouldn't forget.

But sometimes WE forget about the special relationship we have with Him. That's why we need reminders to keep us on track and making sure we realise just how special He thinks we are.



Is it Okay to Drink Coffee All the Time? By Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l

You have touched on a very important topic and that is the slavery to habit. Many people have habits. Now, let's say you're a slave to smoking. Now, if you're a slave to smoking you have to know that you have lost your free will.

I was once in Boro Park and across the street I saw a man who I knew, who was standing with a Yerushalmi. So I went across the street and this Yerushalmi tells me that he's very ill. He came to America for treatment because his lungs are diseased. He's telling me this and he's puffing on a cigarette. So I said to him, "Why don't you stop smoking?" So he tells me in Yiddish, "Don't tell me that."

He's an eved. An eved Caanani. He sold himself out to this habit. He's not a free man anymore. He's a slave.

Some people are slaves to drinking alcohol. I know a man who drinks and becomes inebriated. A shikur. Many people are like that. They drink too much. They're slaves to a good bottle of schnapps. They're slaves to nothing.

And eating as well. People can even be slaves to eating. People overeat. Overeating is not good for your health. And it's a shibbud. `Every type of shibbud - of being mortgaged, enslaved - to wrong habits is a person giving up his freedom. The freedom to make something out of yourself. I never drank coffee. As long as I can remember I never drank any coffee. Why should I drink coffee?! It's unnecessary. To become meshubad to a habit?!

Some people are coffee addicts. They must have coffee all the time. They're slaves. And any habit that enslaves you means that you can't serve Hashem bi'shleimus.

The Siddur Speaks



Rav Avigdor Miller was once asked, "How can we stop people from talking during Chazaras HaShatz and Kriyas HaTorah?"

Rav Miller responded, "You have to read to them what is written in the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch. It says, 'Anybody who talks unnecessary talk', now, unnecessary talk means, if it's something that's dangerous, so you have to tell someone to watch out. Otherwise, you don't talk. And if you do talk then, 'he's a sinner, and you have to scold him.'

All around, that's how it should be. If you see somebody talking, everybody should start shouting 'Sha! Sha! Sha!' All around. 'His sin is too big to forgive.' That's a terrible thing to say. His sin is

too big to forgive because it's a sin of Chilul Hashem.

If everybody is standing or sitting in Shul, and the Chazan, the leader, is speaking for them to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and this nincompoop, this empty head, this leitz, turns to his neighbour to

exchange idle conversation, it means that he is negating everything that goes on.

Nothing is worth anything in comparison to his little unimportant desires. And so, it's Chilul Hashem. He's profaning the glory of Hashem. 'Gadol Avono MiN'so!' That sin can never be forgiven. Even if you want to do Teshuvah, you cannot repent from Chilul Hashem. And you have to say it over and over in the ears of the people. People must be told! You have to throw it in their teeth again and again, until finally some people will listen!"

Middos



For many years, the local grocery store in **Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach, zt"l**'s, neighbourhood was run by a widow, and to operate such a store, it consumed every ounce of her strength. Delivery vans would pull up at dawn, and the truckers would deposit crates of milk products on the sidewalk. Later, the widow would drag them inside when she opened the store.

One day, to her delight, she saw that the crates had been placed at the front entrance, considerably easing her workload.

This phenomenon recurred the following morning and continued day after day. One morning, the widow felt that she should thank the drivers personally for helping her by making her work so much easier, so she arrivied at the store very early.

However, to her amazement, when the vans appeared, the men deposited her delivery on the edge of the sidewalk as they had always done in the past. Perplexed, she stood on the pavement

wondering how the heavy crates had transported themselves to her door, when suddenly, Rav Shlomo Zalman appeared, with his Tallis bag under his arm. One by one, he lifted the heavy crates, and deposited them in front of the grocery store, and then after, he hurried off to Shul!

L'Maaseh



The Chida, Rebbe Chaim David Azulai, zt"l, once made an ocean voyage on a trip to Italy. On the ship, there was also a Jewish merchant who was carrying a large shipment of non-Kosher cheese.

During the voyage, the merchant tried to persuade the Chida to give him a Hechsher, a Kashrus certificate for his non-Kosher cheese, so that he could sell it to the Jewish communities as well as the non-Jewish communities. However, the Chida knew that the cheese was not Kosher, so he firmly refused the proposals of the merchant. Seeing that persuasion wasn't working, he decided to coerce the Chida into giving the Hechsher by force.

He hired a few of the ship's sailors, and they attacked the Chida in the middle of the night and threatened to throw him into the sea if he didn't meet the merchant's request. With no other choice, he was forced to write certificate for the evil merchant.

He signed the letter and dated it with a Pasuk from this week's Parshah: Tuesday, from the week of **וְכָכָה תֹּאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מָתְנֵיכֶם חֲגֻרִים** "This is how you must eat it, with your belt tied to your waist" from the book of Shemos, of the year 5513.

When the merchant arrived in Italy, he announced that he had cheese from Israel that was Kosher L'Mehadrin, with the Hashgacha of the famous Gaon, the Chida. As was customary amongst the Jews, the merchant was asked to present his Hashgacha certificate to the local Rav. The Rav carefully read the wording of the letter, and when he reached the concluding sentence, he stopped, astonished at why the Chida would add the words "from the Book of Shemos" after writing the Pasuk. Wasn't it common knowledge that this Pasuk was found in Sefer Shemos (Bo 12:11)? There had to be some kind of deeper meaning.

The Rav thought about it for a while, until it suddenly became clear to him. The Chida's intention of the word Shemos was not to reference the name of the Parshah, but rather to the Rashei Taivos, Sh"nayim M"ikra V"Echod T"argum (**שמו"ת**), which is the

Mitzvah to say the weekly Parshah twice and the translation of it into Aramaic by Onkelos one time, and it was a hint for him to look at the Targum on the Pasuk that was quoted.

The Rav then looked at the Targum on this Pasuk and the words, **וְכֻסָּהּ תֹּאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מָתְנֵיכֶם חֲגֻרִים** -'your belt tied to your waist', in Aramaic is, **חַרְצֵיכוֹן יְהוֹן אֲסִירִין,** which means 'your waist tied with a belt'. However, Chartzeichon, in Hebrew, can also refer to cheese, and Asirin sounds like the word 'Asur', which means forbidden.

The Rav understood the message. The Chida was hinting that the cheese was Asur, and it was forbidden. The Rav immediately ordered the merchant to be imprisoned in the community jail, and during the investigation, the merchant admitted that he obtained the Hechsher from the Chida with force and violence.

The Rav subsequently said, "Baruch Hashem, for He gave wisdom to those who fear Him!"

Torah Tavlin

הוּא־הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה לַה' שִׁמֻּרִים לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדֹרֹתָם 12:42

As a source of chizuk to people, **R' Yisroel Belsky zt"l** would tell the following parable: On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbour was attacked and thousands of American naval officers and seamen were killed. The U.S. declared war on Japan. They then mounted a counterattack and drove the Japanese back until they neared the Japanese mainland. The military high command planned the attack which they hoped would end the war, but soon they encountered a problem.

The Japanese had fortified the beachheads and taken up positions on many Pacific islands which served as a barrier to any possible invasion. One island in particular seemed very heavily fortified, as if this island was the Japanese staging ground for most of their firepower. Japan could not be invaded unless that island was first conquered. But to take it, it would be necessary for volunteers to come forward and invade the island for what seemed like a suicide mission. There was no other way to clear the island.

A group of brave marines volunteered for the task and set out for what seemed to be their final mission. However, upon reaching the island, they quickly discovered that the tanks and guns that they had seen from afar were in fact inflated balloons that looked like exact replicas of heavy weaponry. The entire beachhead contained dummy munitions and there weren't even any Japanese soldiers there to defend the island.

Bnei Yisroel were redeemed due to their emunah. When one faces seemingly insurmountable challenges, he should first determine the correct approach to the problem and place his full trust in Hashem. Then, said R' Belsky, he may be pleasantly surprised to discover that the challenges were not insurmountable, and in fact, can be dealt with and overcome.

Maaseh Avos Siman L'Bonim

וַתְּהִי צְעָקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֵין־שָׁם מֵת 12:30



The city of Lodz, located about 85 miles southwest of Warsaw, contained the second largest Jewish community in pre-war Poland, after Warsaw. At the turn of the twentieth century, the **Rav, R' Eliyahu Chaim Meisels zt"l**, was sought after for his sagacious wisdom, piety and righteousness, and he earned the respect and affection of both the Chassidishe and Litvish communities residing in the city, a feat nearly unmatched at the time.

Lodz was a city dominated by a clique of prosperous, assimilated industrialists and merchants. In addition to overseeing the provision of basic religious needs, the Rav worked energetically to convince many of his community's wealthiest assimilated members to join in organizing a series of institutions to serve the growing numbers of impoverished Jews drawn to economic opportunities in Lodz. Stories about R' Elya Chaim credit him with preventing pogroms in Lodz and protecting Jewish interests in the city and beyond.

One specific story stands out and was spoken of with awe and incredulity, among the citizens of Lodz. It is recorded in old Chevra Kadisha records from that time-period and it recounts the following incident. In the late 1800's, a calamitous plague - most likely Typhus - broke out in the city of Lodz, affecting its residents and the nearby environs. The plague swept across the area felling Jews and gentiles alike.

Accounts from local newspapers from those days reported that the plague prowled among the citizens and villagers in a terrifying way

and there was almost no house without someone ill. Mortality was huge and carpenters around the city and nearby towns did nothing but build coffins. "People walk around apathetic because there was no way to prevent the plague," wrote one Polish newspaper.

Another delivered an even more dramatic account: "Funerals usually take place without crying, because often the whole family of the deceased lies in a fever and there is no one to cry over the coffin. It often happens that a mother lying unconscious in a fever does not know that her dead child is being taken away from the house." Often death came very quickly. "In the morning you are healthy, in the evening you are gone" one could hear constantly back then.

R' Elya Chaim remained healthy throughout the terrible days when the plague ravaged his community and he worked above and beyond to care for and assist all those in need. He called for public fasts and demanded even more charity from those who could afford it. He practically didn't sleep as he was called from house to house to soothe his constituents and often say Viduy and recite Krias Shema with them before they passed away.

Finally, R' Elya Chaim decided that enough is enough and he must be more proactive if he wished to remove this terrible catastrophe from among his midst. One day, he suddenly appeared in the middle of the day, wearing the special white kittel that he only wore on Yom Kippur, as well as his Talis and Tefillin. As curious bystanders watched in awe, R' Elya Chaim marched to the Lodz Jewish cemetery and halted as he reached the front gate. Then, in an ethereal voice that sounded almost other-worldly, he announced: "I will not allow the Malach Hamaves (angel of death) to take one more person from my city. Hear me now. It is either you or me! Either you go or I will go!"

With that, he walked silently into the cemetery and laid himself down inside the front gate. He took out a sefer Tehillim and began to daven with copious tears streaming down his cheeks that Hashem

remove the plague from the city. He didn't care if onlookers watched him with their jaws agape. He needed to stop the plague right now and he intended to make sure that happened.

Members of the Chevra Kadisha were called and they were the first ones to testify that their great and holy rabbi's efforts bore fruit. R' Elya Chaim insisted that he would not leave until the plague was gone and he did not have to wait long. Within a short while, the infections began to drop and soon nobody was becoming sick anymore. And those who were sick, started to get better and their symptoms faded, almost overnight.

People in Lodz would comment with a mixture of love and devotion, that their holy Rabbi literally forced the angel of death to leave the city of Lodz.



Short And Sweet Story Of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin

The great tzaddik, **Rav Zalmele of Volozhin, ZT"L**, led a simple and humble life. In order to minimize his worldly pleasures, and as a means of developing humility, he adopted a practice of never asking for anything. His family learned to anticipate his needs, without him ever verbalizing a request.

When the great **Reb Yisroel of Sklav, ZT"L**, was told of this practice, he begged to differ. He said that a few years back, Rav Zalmele had come to him and clearly asked for a loan of a few coins in order to buy a piece of cake. **Rav Binyomin of Volozhin, ZT"L**, Rav Zalmele's brother, asked Reb Yisroel if his brother had simply said that he intended to buy cake, or had he specified a type of cake? The answer was that he had asked for a few coins to buy honey cake.

Reb Binyomin laughed! He explained that his brother spent his whole day engrossed in Torah study, and many times he forgot to eat

properly. Their mother had instructed him that he must eat some honey cake every morning in order to have strength.

"So," said Reb Binyomin, "it is true that my humble brother never asked for anything." However, his brother felt that eating honey cake every morning was a fulfilment of the mitzvah of *kibbud eim* (honouring one's mother), and he therefore verbalized his need to borrow money so that he would heed his mother's wishes.

Comment: The need for one to develop humility is evident in the Parsha. Moshe and Aharon came to Pharaoh and said in the name of Hashem, "Until when will you refuse to be humbled before Me" (Shemos 10:3, see Targum).

***Rav Michel Feinstein, ZT"L**, explained that a lack of humility was the core of Pharoah's problem. His ability to explain away all the plagues and his excuses as to why he would not let the Jewish People go, were all because he did not humble himself in front of Hashem. So too, we may be guilty of at times excusing away our inability to do various good deeds and Mitzvos. When we to recognize Hashem's greatness and learn to be more humble, our servitude of Hashem will become so much stronger.*

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The Baal Shem Tov gives an insight into the concept of "loving your friend as you do yourself." When a person gets up in the morning and considers himself, he thinks, "I am basically a good person. Of course, I have my faults and shortcomings. I know I am not perfect. But I am more good than bad!"

This, the Baal Shem Tov says, is how we must evaluate our friends. We must say, "He is basically good. He may have his flaws. He's not perfect. But he is more good than bad. I can certainly overlook his faults!"

The Parshiyos of the Ten Makkos and Yetzias Mitzrayim

The Parshiyos of the Ten Makkos and Yetzias Mitzrayim teach us an important lesson for all time. Pharaoh's evil decrees and the trials and tribulations of the Jews during the Egyptian exile did not come about because Pharaoh had so decided of his own accord. Rather, the Holy One blessed be He hardened Pharaoh's heart, eventually causing all of His wonders and miracles to be revealed.



The lesson we can learn from this is that everything comes from Hashem; when a Jew encounters something that prevents him from properly serving Hashem, this is meant only as a test, whose purpose is to awaken the powers hidden within the person's soul. When the person overcomes this test, and perseveres in his holy mission in life, he is then rescued from all difficulties. **(R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson *zt"l*)**

Beneath the Surface By R' Shmuel Winzelberg

החדש הזה ראש חדשים ***This month shall be for you the beginning of the months*** (12:2)

There is a Halachah in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 429:2) that 'we do not say Tachanun in the entire month of Nisan'. **The Chida** writes that this is hinted at in this Posuk: 'This month shall be for you the beginning of the months' – the entire month
should be like Rosh Chodesh. Just as on Rosh Chodesh we do not say Tachanun, so too the entire month of Nisan we do not say Tachanun.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

לֹא־רָאֹ֥ו אִ֖ישׁ אֶת־אָחִ֑יו וְלֹא־קָ֣מוּ אִ֔ישׁ מִתַּחְתָּ֖יו שְׁלֹשֶׁ֣ת יָמִ֑ים 10:23 ***"A man did not see his brother, nor did a man rise from his [low] place."***

The darkness was impenetrable. Even the air was heavier so their voices did not carry, and they could not converse with one another.

Chacham Dovid Zoued z"l of Aram Soba writes that this teaches us about the troubles many of us experience. When we find ourselves in low places, unable to rise above our challenges, it is because previously, "A man did not see his brother." Because we fail to look at the needs of others, we are brought low and find ourselves stuck in a rut. Were we concerned about our fellow Jews, however, we would be able to rise above it all, as Hashem would lift us up.

Similarly, the **Vilna Gaon** explains why we found favour in the eyes of the Egyptians when we wanted to borrow the gold and silver items. The Torah says, "borrow a man from his friend, and a woman from her friend." Would we call the Egyptians friends? No, explains R' Eliyahu. But the only way to find favour in the eyes of the Gentiles is to treat each other right, considering each Jew as our friend, our brother, and our sister.

Lessons of our Sages Through the Ages

Upon his visit to New York in the 1920's, **R' Boruch Ber Leibowitz z"l** was presented with the Key to the City by New York Mayor Jimmy Walker. At the public ceremony, Mayor Walker said: "Rabbi Leibowitz, you and I both wear crowns of leadership. I wear the crown of the greatest city in the world, New York City, while you wear the crown of the greatest people in the world, the Jewish People." "The difference between us," he concluded, "is that I wear my crown **upon** my head, while you wear your crown **in** your head."

The Jewish Weekly

Something I heard from **Rabbi Mirvis**, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth is that in Parshat Bo, after many years of persecution and slavery, Bnei Yisrael were ready to leave Egypt. And then Hashem tells them, **ולא יחרץ כלב לשונו** I will guarantee, He said, 'that not a single dog will bark' as you emerge forth from Pharaoh's Egypt.

It's all very nice that no dogs will bark but what difference at all would that make to anyone? **The Rashbam and Ibn Ezra** both suggest that Hashem wanted to guarantee that nothing whatsoever would mar the exhilarated feeling and experience of joy for the people. In Sefer **Orchot Tzaddikim**, written in Spain in Medieval Times, the author tells us that sometimes you might be preparing a large dish of food, and let's say there are twenty ingredients, nineteen of which are absolutely perfect and wonderful, but with the twentieth, there is something wrong with it. It might even be a small spice, but that twentieth ingredient could spoil the entire dish.



Similarly, let's say if somebody had a Simcha and there are 300 guests and 299 of them say such wonderful things and you know that it was such a special day in your life, and everything was perfect. Then along comes one guest, the only one – and he or she, has got a complaint. Something or other was wrong for them. So, what will then play on your mind afterwards? It will probably be the comment of that one single person, and that could spoil all your memories of that day.

Similarly, Hashem wanted to guarantee, that not even a dog would bark as the Bnei Yisrael were emerging from Egypt after so many years of sadness and bondage. He didn't want anything to spoil their great exhilarated experience.

The message for us is, that when it comes to happy times of others, let us not become the dog who barks, let's enhance their occasion for them and guarantee that it will be always in their minds, the most special day in their lives.



The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

וְלְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה׳ כִּדַבֶּרְכֶם 12:31 Few Words

One must be very careful with his words and not speak excessively about mundane matters. We learn this from the Gemara (Brachos 61A) that says: *"Rav Huna said in the name of Rebbe Meir: A person should always use few words before Hashem, as is stated (Koheles 5:1): 'Do not be rash with your mouth, and let your heart not be hasty to utter a word before Hashem." One Who Guards His Speech Merits a Long Life:*

The verse states (Mishlei 21:23): *"One who guards his mouth and tongue protects himself from sufferings of the body."* The Medrash Socher Tov says that a person's life and death depend on how he uses his mouth. If one is careful with his words, he will live. If he is not, he will die. This is as the verse states (Mishlei 18:21): *"Life and death are in the power of the tongue."*

The Chidushei Harim quotes an "ancient sefer" as saying that every person is born with a set amount of mundane words that he will say during his lifetime. One can live as long as he does not exceed his limit of words. Therefore, one who is careful not to talk too much can merit a long life.

Sefer Yitav Lev (Parshas Mishpatim) and other holy sefarim also say that one who guards his mouth from speaking too much mundane talk will merit a long life. They explain that one's life is dependent on one's speech, as is stated (Shir Hashirim 5:6): *"My soul went out when he spoke."*

This teaches us that every word one says takes away a bit of life. Of course, this does not apply to words of Torah. Such words actually provide life, as is stated in davening (Maariv): *"When I lay down and when get up, I speak about Your laws because they are our lives and lengthen our days."*

Do Not Kill With Your Mouth



It is related that **Rav Aharon Hagadol of Karlin zy"a** once travelled by foot to visit the court of the **Magid of Mezhritch zy"a**. On the way, he came across a group of wagon drivers, who invited him to join them in the wagon they were travelling in. As they rode, the wagon drivers spoke negatively about the residents of their town and made fun of many people.

Rav Aharon suddenly interrupted them to ask them a bunch of questions about horses. They were happy to discuss this topic and they spoke about horses for the rest of the ride to Mezhritch.

When the residents of Mezhritch realized that Rav Aharon was on this wagon, they came running and surrounded the wagon from all sides. The wagon drivers, who were unaware that their passenger was such a distinguished person, asked him, "Why did you speak to us about horses for the entire trip?"

He answered them, ***"I saw that you were killing people will your words. It's better to kill horses than to kill people!"***

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

The Arizal famously writes that if the Jewish People would not have left Egypt at that very moment, they would have sunk to the 50th level of impurity — leaving them eternally trapped under the auspices of Egypt.

This statement is very difficult to understand. After all, the Jewish People alive at the time had experienced all ten plagues. They had circumcised themselves and eaten the Pesach Offering. And they had survived the plague of darkness in which most of the nation perished due to their lack of desire to follow Hashem into the wilderness. If so, how could this be the most dangerous point of their time in Egypt where if they would not have left, they would have been trapped forever? Surely they were at their spiritual peak?!

Rav Shalom Schwadron answered that it is specifically because the Jewish People had witnessed so much and developed their faith in Hashem to such a high degree, that if they did not jump on the moment of inspiration to take the next step, the opportunity would have been totally lost. Accordingly, if they would have lingered in Egypt another minute without grabbing the opportunity to leave, they would have relinquished it forever. Rav Shalom concluded his answer with the following: "There is nothing worse than someone who experiences an appreciation of greatness but chooses to remain the same."

In fact, greatness is not something that we should wait to experience. Instead, we should seek to develop it within ourselves. Specifically, explained **Rav Baruch Ber**, when it comes to our own abilities. In this vein, Rav Baruch Ber once said of himself, "I aspired to become great like Rebbi Akiva Eiger, and remained Reb Boruch Ber, but if I would have wanted to be Reb Boruch Ber, nothing would have become of me."



Parshas Hamonn - Reb Mendel Riminover's Segula

Tuesday of ***Parshas Beshalach***, is a special day. *Seforim* tell us that it is extremely prudent to utilize this day to pray for *parnassah*, livelihood, for the next 12 months.

It is a widespread and accepted custom to recite "*Parshas Hamonn*," the portion in the Torah that describes the way Hashem provided *monn* (i.e., *parnassah* from heaven) for the *Yidden* in the *Midbar*. This can be found in *Sefer Shemos*, *Perek* 16: 4-36.

It is customary to read the *pesukim* twice and the *Targum* once, and also to recite a short *tefillah* for sustenance beforehand.

Reciting this *parsha* reminds us that just as Hashem sustained the Jews then, so too, He – and He alone – provides for each and every one of us now.

With *Hashgacha Pratis*, Hashem looks after our every need down to the most minute and seemingly mundane detail.

As is known, there is a segula from **R' Mendel of Riminov ZY"A** to read Parshas Hamon the Tuesday that Bashalach is read.

The source for this is Reb Menachem Mendel of Rimonov. (The author of *Lechem Abirim* heard this from the Paya Rov shlita, who heard this from his father, who heard it from Reb Sholom Shtropkover, who heard it from his father, the Shiniva Rov) Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz shlita says that just saying *Parshas Hamon* without having *emuna* is not what was intended.

A segula for *parnasa* is supposed to bring us to increase our trust in Hashem. The *Ramban* at the end of *Parshas Bo* says that one has no share in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu until he believes that everything that happens is a miracle and there is no such thing as - "nature".

The Rama starts off Shulchan Aruch-Orach Chaim by saying: "Shivisi Hashem Linegdi Tamid" – "I place Hashem before myself always". This is not easy for most to do. Perhaps this is one thing that a segula does. It gets us to realize that Hashem is always there.

If one does any of the many segulas, they are merely reminders of "Shivisi". No one could have anything against doing something with the intention to remember "Shivisi". For those that just want to go through the motions and aren't interested in remembering that Hashem is the only One that controls everything, then … Hopefully this will get us to think about what we are doing and bring us to real emunah.

The *Mechilta* says: "the Torah was only given to those who ate *mon*". Based on the *Ramban* we can understand this to mean that through internalizing the message of *Parshas Hamon* we can have a share in the Torah.

Some people say: "what do you need this *segula* for; just *daven* to Hashem". On the other hand, others think they can just say this and will automatically get rich.

It doesn't say anywhere that it's a *segula* to get "rich". Reb Nosson of Breslov explains that the main *brocha* of *parnasa* is when one accepts it from Hashem with *ratzon tov*, is *someach bechelko* and has *emuna* that this is the will of Hashem and it is all for his good.

He says further that "only this is called *ashirus* and *parnasa*" and even if one has great wealth but doesn't have *nachas ruach* from it, always has worries about his money, is jealous of people who have more than him, etc., then that is not called *ashirus*. (*Likutei Halochos, Netilas Yodayim L'seuda* 6:85)

Reb Nachman of Breslov teaches that one should ask Hashem for every single thing he needs; nothing is too great or too trivial to *daven* for. A person has to receive everything through *tefila*, otherwise, although he may get everything he needs without *tefila*, he receives it like an animal. (*Sichos Haran* 233)

If we don't get what we want, we need to believe that Hashem is doing this for our best. So, really all we need is *tefila*, but if we don't fully believe that every minor item comes only through Hashem, then the *tefila* is not proper *tefila*.

The *Mishna Berura* (1:13) quotes the *Yerushalmi Brochos* that says one who recites *Parshas Hamon* every day will not be lacking sustenance. He says that the point is to bring us to the realization that everything comes about through *hashgacha*.

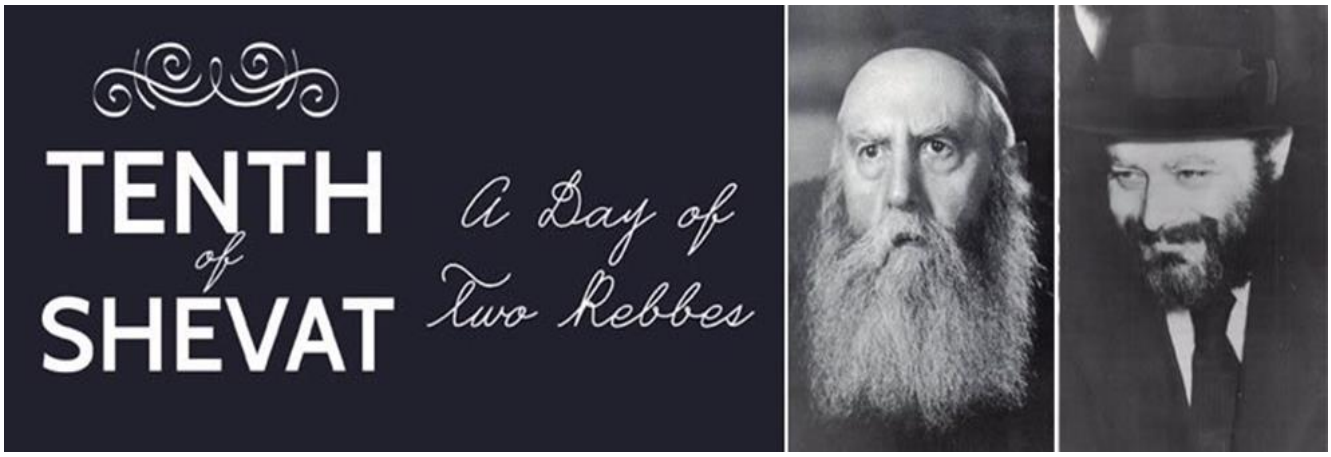
This could help us understand why this *segula* is in the week of *Beshalach*. People are generally involved in studying the *parsha* of the upcoming Shabbos starting from the *mincha* of the previous Shabbos. Therefore, in the week of *Beshalach* one will be able to have a better understanding of the words of *Parshas Hamon*. But, why specifically Tuesday?

Though the reasons of Reb Mendel Riminover aren't known, I would like to humbly suggest a few possibilities.

First, several *pesukim* before *Parshas Hamon* it says that Klal Yisroel went three days without water in the desert. Moshe *davened* and they got water. From here we see that you can even get water in a desert by *davening*. Therefore, saying *Parshas Hamon* on the third day of the week reminds us of this.

Tuesday is the day that vegetation was created. On this day, we remember that without Hashem creating what He did on this day, we wouldn't even have bread to eat.

There are various other reasons, but are too extensive for this kuntrus. Maybe you can think of some yourselves.



This day, so relevant to every Jew in our generation, is surely a day for reflection, learning, prayer, positive resolutions and acts of loving-kindness.

On Shevat 10 on the Jewish calendar, upon the passing of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, **Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn**, of righteous memory, in 1950, leadership of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement passed on to his illustrious son-in-law, **Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson**, of righteous memory.

In the decades that followed, the Rebbe revolutionized, inspired and guided the post-Holocaust transformation of the Jewish people that continues to this day.



Short Biography of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn Sixth Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, 1880-1950 the sixth rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, was one of the most remarkable Jewish personalities of the twentieth century. In his seventy years, he encountered every conceivable challenge to Jewish life: the persecutions and pogroms of Czarist Russia, Communism's war on Judaism, and melting-pot America's apathy and scorn toward the Torah and its precepts.

He was the only son of **Rabbi Sholom DovBer**, the fifth Rebbe of Chabad. On Elul 13, 5657 (1897), at the age of seventeen, Yosef Yitzchak married Nechamah Dina, daughter of Rabbi Abraham Schneersohn and granddaughter of the **Tzemach Tzedek**, the third Chabad rebbe.

Upon his father's passing in 1920 Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak assumed the leadership of Russian Jewry just as Communism's all-out war on Jewish life was moving into high gear. His fight to preserve Judaism was characterized by his all-consuming *mesirat nefesh* - an unequivocally selfless devotion to the physical and spiritual needs of a fellow Jew and unshakable faith in what he stood for. He dispatched teachers and rabbis to the farthest reaches of the

Soviet Empire, establishing a vast underground network of schools, mikvaos, and lifelines of material and spiritual support.



Stalin's henchmen did everything in their power to stop him. In 1927 he was arrested, beaten, sentenced to death and exiled; but he stood his ground, and by force of international pressure he was finally allowed to leave the country.

Upon arriving in New York after his rescue from Nazi-occupied Warsaw in 1940, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak took on a no less formidable challenge: the frigid spiritual atmosphere of the western world. There was no telling Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak that his was a losing battle; from his wheelchair, he rallied the Jewish young of America under the cry that "America is no different," that also in this bastion of materialism the timeless truths of Torah can take root and flourish. He established yeshivas and day schools, a publishing house for Jewish books, a social service organization and community support networks throughout the country. By the time of his passing in 1950 he had laid the foundation for the global renaissance of Torah-true and chassidic-flavored Jewish life, heralded by his son-in-law and successor, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

Short Biography of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory (1902-1994), the seventh leader in the Chabad-Lubavitch dynasty, is considered to have been the most phenomenal Jewish personality of modern times. To hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of sympathizers and admirers around the world, he was — and still is, despite his passing — "the Rebbe,"

undoubtedly, the one individual more than any other singularly responsible for stirring the conscience and spiritual awakening of world Jewry.



The Rebbe was born in 1902, on the 11th day of Nissan, in Nikolaev, Russia, to the renowned kabbalist, talmudic scholar and leader Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson. Rebbetzin Chana (1880-1964) was known for her erudition, kindness and extraordinary accessibility. Her courage and ingenuity became legend when during her husband's exile by the Soviets to a remote village in Asian Russia she labored to make inks from herbs she gathered in the fields — so that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak could continue writing his commentary on kabbalah and other Torah-subjects. The Rebbe was named after his ancestor, the third Rebbe, **Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch**, with whom he later shared many characteristics.

From early childhood he displayed a prodigious mental acuity. By the time he reached his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe was considered an *illuy*, a Torah prodigy. He spent his teen years immersed in the study of Torah.

In 1928 Rabbi Menachem Mendel married the sixth Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in Warsaw. For sixty years she was the Rebbe's life partner; she passed away on 22 Sh'vat in 1988. He later studied in the University of Berlin and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. It may have been in these years that his formidable knowledge of mathematics and the sciences began to blossom.



On Sivan 28, 5701 (June 23, 1941) the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States, having been miraculously rescued, by the grace of Almighty G-d, from the European holocaust. The Rebbe's arrival marked the launching of sweeping new efforts in bolstering and disseminating Torah and Judaism in general, and Chassidic teachings in particular, through the establishment of three central Lubavitch organizations under the Rebbe's leadership: *Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch* , *Kehot Publication Society*, and *Machne Israel*, a social services agency. Shortly after his arrival, per his father-in-law's urging, the Rebbe began publishing his notations to various Chassidic and kabbalistic treatises, as well as a wide range of response on Torah subjects. With publication of these works his genius was soon recognized by scholars throughout the world.

After the passing of his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, in 1950, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson reluctantly ascended to the leadership of the Lubavitch movement, whose headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. Soon Lubavitch institutions and activities took on new dimensions. The outreaching philosophy of Chabad-Lubavitch was translated into ever greater action, as Lubavitch centers and Chabad Houses were opened in dozens of cities and university campuses around the world.

The Rebbe keenly understood that our every action is part of a bigger picture. Every good deed we do brings humanity closer to the ultimate goal, the era of cosmic perfection and universal awareness of G-d, known in Judaism as the time of Moshiach. The Rebbe spoke tirelessly about this time, demonstrating how the world is heading

closer and closer to this special era and how every person can actualize it by increasing in acts of goodness and kindness.



On Monday afternoon (March 2, 1992), while praying at the gravesite of his father-in-law and predecessor, the Rebbe suffered a stroke that paralyzed his right side and, most devastatingly, robbed him of the ability to speak.

Two years and three months later, the Rebbe passed away in the early morning hours of the 3rd of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, in the year 5754 from creation (June, 12 1994), orphaning a generation.

He had an uncanny ability to meet everyone at their own level — he advised Heads of State on matters of national and international importance, explored with professionals the complexities in their own fields of expertise, and spoke to small children with warm words and a fatherly smile.

With extraordinary insight, he perceived the wealth of potential in each person. His inspiration, now accessible through his writings and videos, boosts the individual's self-perception, ignites his awareness of that hidden wealth and motivates a desire to fulfil his potential. In the same way, many a community has been transformed by the Rebbe's message, and been given — directly or indirectly — a new sense of purpose and confidence.

In each case the same strong, if subtle, message is imparted: "You are Divinely gifted with enormous strength and energy — actualize it!"

Regarding saying Parshat HaMan

The Yerushalmi says: **כל האומר פרשת המן מובטח לו שלא יתמעטו מזונותיו** – Whoever says Parshas HaMon is guaranteed that his parnossah won't be lacking.

That Yerushalmi is brought down in the Tashbetz and other Rishonim. The Shulchan Orech OC 1:5 says that it is good to say Parshas Hamon (and other additional Tefilos) every day.

So why don't most people do so?

Because right before the Shulchan Orech talks about additional Tefilos he says that it is better to say less with Kavana than more without. Saying Parsha Hamon is not some magical incantation that will give Parnossah.

The Mishna Berura 1:13 says:

ויכול לומר פרשת העקידה ופרשת המן אפילו בשבת. ואין די באמירה אלא שיתבונן מה שהוא אומר ויכיר נפלאות ד' וכן מה שאמרו בגמרא כל האומר תהלה לדוד ג' פעמים בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עוה"ב ג"כ באופן זה. וטעם לאמירת כ"ז כי פרשת עקידה כדי לזכור זכות אבות בכל יום וגם כדי להכניע יצרו כמו שמסר יצחק נפשו ופרשת המן כדי שיאמין שכל מזונותיו באין בהשגחה פרטית וכדכתיב המרבה לא העדיף והממעיט לא החסיר להורות שאין ריבוי ההשתדלות מועיל מאומה ואיתא בירושלמי ברכות כל האומר פרשת המן מובטח לו שלא יתמעטו מזונותיו

You may say the parsha of the Akeida and the Parshas HaMon even on Shabbat. it is not sufficient with mere saying, but rather he must think into and recognize the wonders of Hashem. And so too that which they say in the gemara that anyone who says Ashrei three times every day is guaranteed that he will be a ben olam haba, is in this manner. The reason for the saying of all this is because: the parsha of the Akedah is in order to recall the merit of the forefathers every day, and also to humble his yetzer, just as Yitzchak was moser nefesh.

And the parsha of the Manna is such that he will believe that all his food/livelihood comes through special Divine direction {hashgacha pratis}, as it is written {and understood midrashically} "and the one who took more did not end up with more and the one who took less did not end up with less," to teach that increasing effort does not help at all. It is found in Yerushalmi Berachos that anyone who says the parsha of the Manna {others have here: every day} he is guaranteed that his livelihood will not decrease.

For most people saying Parshas Hamon every day will just end up as another thing to quickly read. They would be better off focusing on what is already a part of Davening than adding extra things to say.

SEFAS TAMIM
FOUNDATION • Emphasizing Everyday Emes

Chizuk – Inspiration

Rav Yehuda Zev Segal ZT'L, the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, relates the following amazing story in his Sefer Yireh V'daas, where he records a Kabbalah, a tradition, about a student of Rav Chaim Volozhiner who became very ill and had to return home from yeshiva. Rav Chaim sent another student to accompany him home so that the sick student would not be alone on the trip.

The two students stayed overnight at an inn. The next morning, while settling their bill, they realized that they were seven small coins short. The healthy student told the innkeeper that he would settle the bill on his return to the yeshiva after he dropped the sick student home. However, on his way back, he forgot about his commitment and did not repay the innkeeper. Rav Chaim had instituted a policy in his yeshiva that learning would never cease in

his Bais Midrash. The students learned Torah in shifts for 24 hours each day. Rav Chaim himself would often take a shift as well. During a late-night shift, Rav Chaim was learning in the Bais Midrash when an image of the sick student, who had recently passed away from his illness, appeared before him.

"Why have you returned to this world and appeared before me?" asked Rav Chaim.

"I will tell you Rebbe" said the boy. "Boruch Hashem, my judgment in Heaven was very favourable. However, there was one thing that was very concerning, I was told that I still owe seven coins to an innkeeper, and I cannot enter Gan Eden if I owe money. I pleaded that it was not my fault and that I had died and my friend simply forgot to repay the money. The Heavenly Tribunal heard my pleas, and I was granted permission to return to this world to resolve the matter. Please arrange for the repayment of this small debt so that I may enter Gan Eden. **("Life's Ladder - Reaching New Heights in Avodas Hashem" by Rabbi Zev Smith**)

Speak Only Halfway

It is related that chasid once came to **Rav Avrohom of Parisov zy"a**. The man cried bitterly that his daughter was engaged to a chosson who lived far away, and he had just found out that the groom stuttered badly. He asked, "Should I break off the engagement?" (This was in a time before telephones and other means of communication, and people would rely on a shadchan to make a match between a boy and girl, who would only meet right before the wedding.)

The Rebbe answered, "So what if he stutters? So he'll speak very little! I saw written in an ancient sefer that a person is born with two hands, two feet, two eyes, two ears, and one mouth. Why does a

person have two of other limbs and only one mouth? So that he will speak only half as much as he hears, sees and walks."

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

In this week's sedra, it says (12:17) **וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמַּצּוֹת כִּי בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** – The simple meaning is that you should be careful with the matzos, and You should be careful that they bake within 18 minutes, so that they shouldn't become chometz.

However Chazal teach us, as Rashi says, that the word matzos, can be read mitzvos. This comes to teach us that **כדרך שאין מחמיצין את המצה כך אין מחמיצין את המצווה** – Just like you don't delay when you make the matzos, similarly, when you are doing a mitzva, **אם באה לידך עשה אותה מיד** – if you have an opportunity to do a mitzva, don't delay, and do it right away.

Rav Hutner in Pachad Yitzchok asks, why did The Torah choose to tell us here the idea of enthusiasm in these words of matzos and mitzvos? He said that there is a very deep lesson here.

When you do a mitzva with less enthusiasm, fine, you have done the mitzva, but you didn't do it with enthusiasm. The fact that these two words are interchangeable, teaches us that a mitzva done without enthusiasm, means that there is a flaw in the mitzva itself. You have to do every mitzva with enthusiasm. Whether you are davening, learning or doing a chesed. It shouldn't be a half-baked thing [no pun intended]. It should be done with excitement and a whole heart.

I will tell you something very beautiful. When **Rav Gifter** was niftar, his daughter Mrs Shlomis Eisenberg told me that when her father was a bochur, he had pictures of gedolim hanging on his wall. Amongst them was a blank space on which he had written- Why not me?! I could also be among the gedolim one day. This was his enthusiasm that he guided himself to reach the level to also become a gadol hador. And he certainly was.

Short Vorts – Rabbi Chaim Flom - Appreciate What You Have

וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל־הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ ה׳ אֱלֹקיךָ ***"And you shall rejoice with all the good that Hashem gave you."*** (Devorim 26:11)

"This is one of the nicest weddings that I've ever attended. When it finishes, all you have to do is tell the caterer that the liver wasn't so good."

When the Jews left Egypt, the Torah says וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ ***"and to all the Jews no dog barked"*** (Shemos 11:7). **Rav Zelig Pliskin** explains that G-d made this miracle, because we were joyous at being liberated from slavery, and G-d didn't want that joy minimized in any way. Even though the dogs' barking seems insignificant, Hashem is letting us know that even a small minimization of joy should be avoided.

Don't be a party pooper!!

Anger Issues By R' Ilan Meirov



A man came to his Rav and said,"Kavod Harav, I only have one problem in my life – I always get angry. When my wife or kids get me angry, I erupt! Rabbi, could you help me fix this issue?"

The Rabbi sits him down to listen to some of the issues that he has. He then asks the individual to leave the office and wait in the waiting room.

The Rabbi calls his gabbai into his office, and tells him **in a loud voice**, "The guy sitting in the waiting room has anger issues, and I

want to test him. Do me a favour and make me a cup of tea. As you walk past him, ensure that you pretend to trip, and spill some tea onto him!" - In the meantime, the guy sitting in the waiting room has overheard this whole conversation!

So the gabbai leaves the office and prepares a tea for the Rabbi. As he is walking past the visitor, he '*trips*', and spills the tea on the individual. He says, "Why did you trip me up you idiot. Your feet were in the way. Now I've spilt the Rabbis tea." He continued to egg the individual on, to try to anger him. The individual says calmly, "I think you may have tripped over your own feet. But it's ok, don't worry about it."

Shortly after, the Rabbi calls the individual back into his office. He said to the man, "You are a Tzadik, I wish I could be like you. You were waiting outside patiently waiting for me to call you back in, and my gabbai came and spilt tea on you, and you didn't even get upset or angry – you are a Tzadik!"

The guy thinks, 'Should I tell the Rabbi or not?' So he says, "Kavod Harav, I will be honest with you – the truth is that I overheard you talking and I knew that the spilling of tea onto me was only a test. That's why I was able to restrain and control myself, and not have a fit of anger."

The Rabbi looks at the man, and he says, "I want you to know, that the next time that your wife or children get you angry at home – It's only a test, it's a test from Hashem! If you are able to pass my test, you are able to pass Hashem's test also."

This world is full of tests. Be prepared for them and pass them.

"To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks but a special heart that listens." — Menachem Mendel of kotsk

1,000,000 Amens By R' Yaakov Mizrahi

Ha'Saba Mi'Kelm said that it was worthwhile for the whole world to be created in order for one person to say just one time **ברוך הוא וברוך שמו**!

Imagine that; 6,000 years for one utterance!

However, 1,000 times **ברוך הוא וברוך שמו**'s are not even equal to the power of one **אמן**! And 1,000 **אמן**'s don't add up to one **אמן יהא שמיה רבא**! And 1,000 **אמן יהא שמיה רבא**'s don't add up to one word of **תורה**!

That means you need a billion **ברוך הוא וברוך שמו**'s or 1 million **אמן**'s to even get close to one word of Torah!

Can you understand, comprehend or fathom the greatness of even one word of Torah?

A Smile or a Cup of Milk By R' Ari Neuwirth



The Gemara Kesubos 111b discusses: 'What's better, someone that shows another the white of his teeth (a nice smile), or one who gives another person in need a glass of milk?

Which is a more benevolent act – the smile or the drink of milk?

The Gemara says that the person who smiles at someone else is greater than the one who gives a cup of milk. - Why?

The answer is that when I give someone a cup of milk, I am only sustaining this person momentarily. He is satisfied for a few minutes – maybe even an hour. But after he finishes the milk, and he's satisfied, he's back to square one, he needs more milk!

However, when I smile at you, I'm not just smiling at you because I'm a nice guy, but I'm encouraging you, because I see that you are someone special. When I see someone special, - I smile, I'm happy to see you!

How does the recipient feel when they receive a smile? They feel good! They feel happy! They feel satisfied! They feel encouraged!

How long do all these feelings last? A lot longer than a cup of milk!

It's not just a smile. A smile comes with encouraging words. The first step is a smile. Now say something positive. "Good morning." –"I'm happy to see you." – "You look great." – "You look wonderful."

Do you know how far this goes? It doesn't cost anything to help lift up their spirits!

He Doesn't Need You By R' Ari Bensoussan



The world is perfect, even without you doing anything to it. The world doesn't need you to do anything to it. Do you think Hashem needed another Jewish lawyer? Another Jewish doctor? Do you think that Hashem needs us to be involved in anything inside the world? – Of course not, Hashem's running everything in this world.

So, if the world is perfect, on Shabbos we are supposed to sit back and say, "The world is perfection, and it does not need me to do anything whatsoever." – So why did Hashem create you?

There was a reporter who wrote right after JFK got assassinated – 'I thought America was over, finished. But years later, I came to

recognize that there is nobody in this world who is so important, that the world can't go on without them.'

The world doesn't need you to do whatever you do 6 days-a week. So, why did Hashem create you?

That my friend's is the point of Shabbos. It is to sit down and say, "If the world is perfect without me, and Hashem is running the world either way - and yet Hashem put me here. So, what does Hashem want and expect from me?"

The Gemara says that when you take big steps during the week, you lose some of your eyesight. But when you look at the kiddush wine and the lights of Shabbos and Havdala, this sight is restored. **The Maharsha** says, 'You get your eyesight back, because the rest of the week you lose focus of what is real, but on Shabbos, you learn the reason why Hashem created you- and that is to have a relationship with Him!'

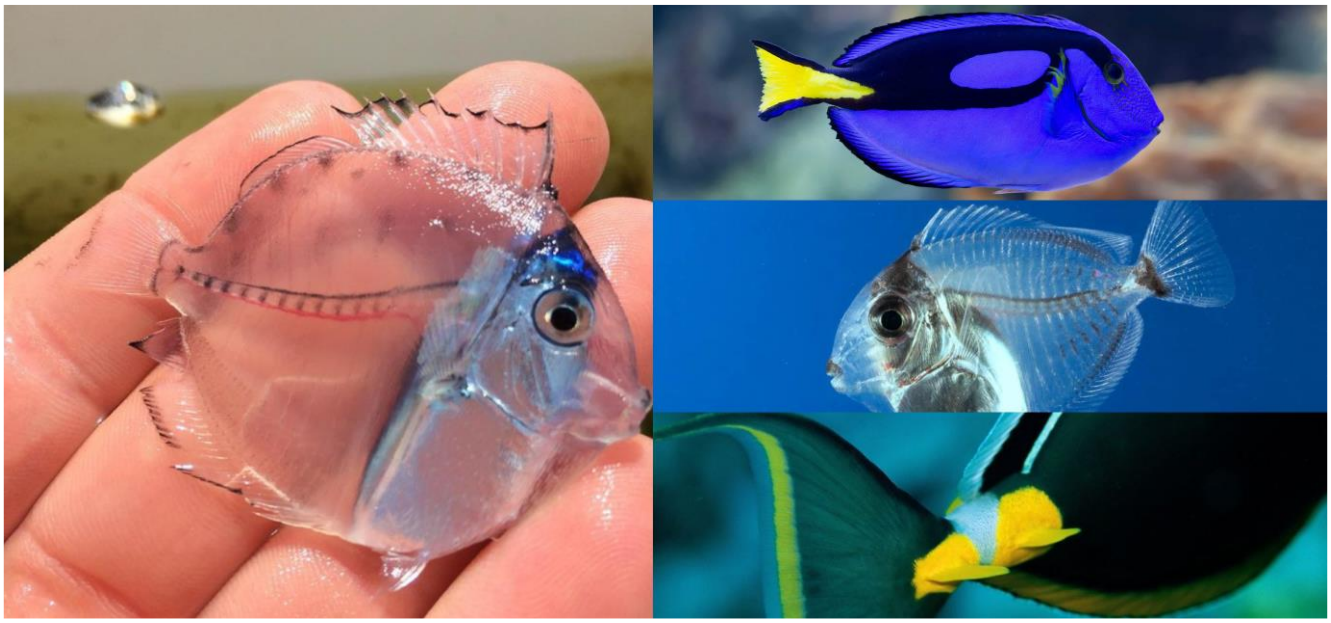
The rest of the week, we are too busy running after everything else. But on Shabbos - **בא שבת בא מנוחה**. That means on Shabbos you are supposed to sit down, and you are supposed to think – What am I really doing in life that is making me big? What am I doing in life that I am demanding of myself **ניצחיות**? What am I doing that will stand me in good stead in this world and the next that will echo for eternity? What am I doing for my own **מֵעֵין עוֹלָם הַבָּא**?

If you leave Shabbos having asked yourself that, and demanded of yourself, then yes – The beauty of Shabbos will spill over to the rest of the week.

Do that not, and you are going to remain with the same old Shabbos that you got everywhere else – It was beautiful, it was nice, you had heartburn, but not much else!

Table Talk -Celebrating Hashem's Creation - The Transparent Surgeonfish

Look at this image of a transparent fish. Is this real? Is that a hoax?

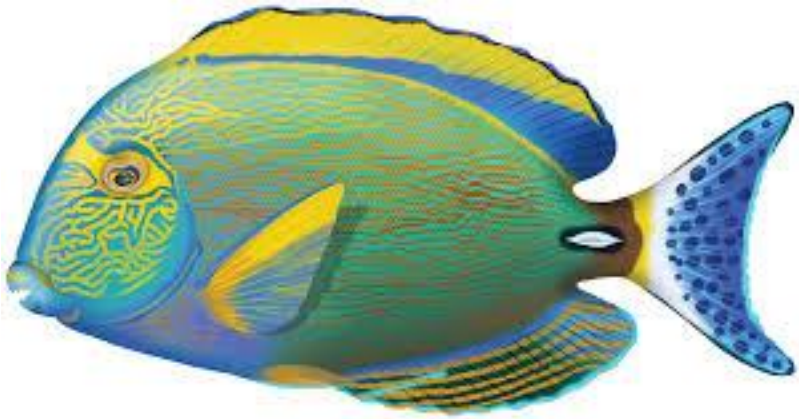


It is real. It is the juvenile stage of a surgeonfish. Some suggest that it is transparent because it makes the fish nearly invisible underwater when it can't defend itself. When the fish gets older, however, it has a powerful method of self-defence. Let's look at the fascinating surgeonfish together. Why is it called a surgeonfish? Is it a doctor?

The surgeonfish has the scientific name of Acanthuridae. The scientific name is derived from the Greek words akantha and oura, which loosely translate to "thorn" and "tail," respectively. The fish is called a thorn-tail. This refers to the distinguishing characteristic of the surgeonfish, which is that a fin near the tail is extremely sharp, like a thorn. More precisely, it is actually as sharp as a surgical scalpel, and that is why it got the name surgeonfish.

They have scalpel-like scales, one or more on either side of the tail. The extremely sharp scalpel near their tail is used to defend themselves. Any predator that dares to mess with the surgeonfish may get viscously slashed. The spines are dangerously sharp and may seriously injure anyone who carelessly handles such a fish.

Though they don't usually attack humans, a human who annoys a surgeonfish can suffer a serious cut that may need stitches to close up. These are surely 'look but don't touch' fish. A quick swipe of a surgeonfish tail and you might need a surgeon-human to sew you back up.



Surgeonfish can grow to as long as 6.5 feet long. Most, however, are smaller and are between half a foot to around 2 feet long. Surgeonfish are in the same family as tangs and unicorn fishes. They usually live in tropical seas, usually around coral reefs. Many of the species are brightly coloured. Adult surgeonfish have beautiful colours. People admire the surgeonfish for its beauty.

Many surgeonfish species have jewel-like colours and nearly psychedelic patterns. Male surgeonfish also change colours when they're ready to breed. Seeing the beautiful colours of the surgeonfish almost makes you forget that they have a razor on their back that can shred things to pieces.

Surgeonfish may have the ability to be vicious, but they are actually gentle vegetarians.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

As The Chassidim surrounded the deathbed of the Ba'al Shem Tov, they heard their Rebbe utter his final prayer:- "Let me not be brought to arrogance…" (Tehilim 36:12)

A Quick Mayseh - A Story to Warm the Heart



Reb Yissachar Ber of Radoshitz was a close disciple of **Reb Yaakov Yitzchak, the Yid HaKadosh ("Holy Jew") from Peshischa**. It once happened that the young Reb Yissachar Ber travelled to the city of Peshischa in order to visit his esteemed master. As he ascended a hill on the outskirts of the village, he heard shouts and cries from the valley below.

As he drew closer, it became clear that the sounds were coming from none other than the home of his rebbe! Confused and frightened, he hurried down the hill. When he arrived at his master's house, he found the Yid HaKadosh, on the verge of tears, gathered with his wailing family members around a baby's crib.

The tzaddik informed his disciple that his son had fallen ill and was on the verge of death. He then took the child out of its crib and placed him in the student's arms. "You have come at just the right time!" exclaimed the rebbe. "We don't know where to turn! Take the child. I am certain that you will be able to return him to me in a healthy state."

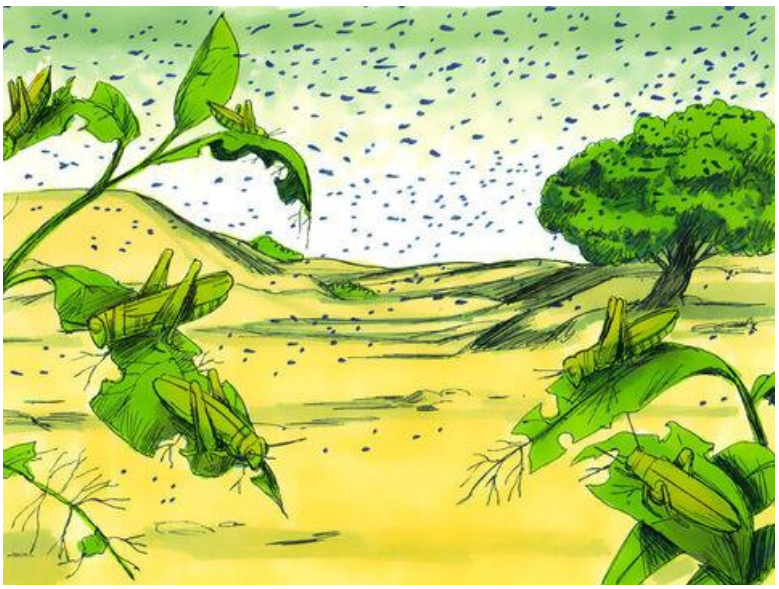
Yissachar Ber was perplexed. Never in his life had he healed anybody! He was quite sure that he lacked any such powers. He was just a simple Jew! However, he heeded the words of his beloved rebbe and took the baby into the next room. Looking into the pure face of the infant, he began to pour out his soul before Hashem, the tears streaming down his face. An hour passed by in intense prayer. When he looked down, he found that the baby had improved to the point where it was no longer in danger.

'There is nothing more powerful than a heartfelt prayer that bursts forth from a humble heart, saturated with simple faith in Hashem's infinite power.'

*"**Thank You Hashem**" is a powerful sound bite. These simple words are a prayer, blessing, appreciation, sanctification, and expression of spiritual intimacy—all in one. Jews from all walks of life utter them in all life circumstances, finding meaning and strength in direct access to Hashem. Our mission is to ignite that passion and pride in every Jew worldwide. To remind us all that Hashem exists in every single aspect of life. That He loves each of us in every situation, environment, and spiritual position. And that by saying His name with gratitude, we return His love every day.*

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע"ה בן ברוך הלוי נ"י

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה ***Hashem said to Moshe, 'Come to Pharaoh…*** 10:1



The 8th Makka of **אַרְבֶּה** locusts would now be brought upon the land of Mitzrayim. Later on, in Pasuk **ד'** we find that Moshe and Aaron come to Pharaoh and warn him about this plague. However here in our Pasuk, we do not find Hashem ***telling*** them to warn Pharaoh. Hashem only says – "***Come to Pharaoh***."

So, Rashi explains that the words **בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה** mean that Moshe should come to Pharaoh and warn him.

The Imrei Noam explains that the warning was – that Hashem would soon harden his heart if he didn't send the Yidden out of Mitzrayim!

But where do we see that this warning was specifically regarding the makka of **אַרְבֶּה**?

The **שמנה לחמו** finds a beautiful hint in these 3 words that Hashem said to Moshe:- **בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה** is an anagram of **אף על ארבה!** – 'Also regarding **אַרְבֶּה** there shall be a warning!'

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע"ה בן ברוך הלוי נ"י

וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם... וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח־פֶּסַח הוּא לַה' ***And it will be when your children say to you, "What is this עבודה to you? You will say, "It is a Korban Pesach for Hashem…" (12:26-27)***

There is a Medrash **פליאה** on this Pasuk which says as follows: **מכאן ששואלין ודרשין בהלכות הפסח קודם הפסח ל' יום** *'From here we see that one should begin learning the halachos of Pesach 30 days before Pesach.'*

The question is, where do we see this in our Pasuk?

So, the **Vilna Gaon Zt'l** finds a hint in two words from our Pasuk… **זֶבַח־פֶּסַח** – ***'Slaughtering the Pesach.'***

Let's 'slaughter/ cut' each letter of the word **פֶּסַח** and see what we are left with…

Half of the letter **פ** (80) = **מ** (40)

Half of the letter **ס** (60) = **ל** (30)

Half of the letter **ח** (8) = **ד** (4)

This spells out the word **למד** (**ל** -30). And **למד** also means to **learn**! One should LEARN about Pesach 30 (**למד-ל**) days before Pesach!!

"The husband who wants a happy marriage should learn to keep his mouth closed and his chequebook open. "

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע״ה בן ברוך הלוי נ״י

וּלְמַעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בִנְךָ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלַּלְתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם 'and in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians' 10:2



The Mitzvah of retelling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim explains the **Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh** was actually the main reason that Hashem brought the makkos onto Mitzrayim to begin with! It was mainly to instil Emunah in the hearts of the B'nei Yisrael.

But why did the Torah choose to write this mitzvah specifically here by the makka of אַרְבֶּה more than by any of the other makkos?

So, the **בני יששכר** in his sefer **אגרא דכלה** brings us a nice to see the connection:-

In the 'Haggadah Shel Pesach', we find 4 sons regarding the mitzvah of re-telling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim. 4 x **בן** .....

בן + **בן** + **בן**+ = 208 which is the gematria of אַרְבֶּה!

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע״ה בן ברוך הלוי נ״י

וַיֹּאמֶר משֶׁה... בְּבַנֵּינוּ וּבִבְנוֹתֵינוּ ...נֵלֵךְ ... וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יְהִי כֵן י-ה-ו-ה עִמָּכֶם ... לֹא כֵן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים ... כִּי אֹתָהּ אַתֶּם מְבַקְּשִׁים ...

Moshe said, "With our youth and with our elders we will go, with our sons and with our daughters … So he [Pharaoh] said to them, "So may Hashem be with you… Not so; let only the men go now and worship the L-rd, for that is what you request…"



The dialogue here needs some explaining. Why did Moshe specify who would be leaving, and why did Pharaoh want only the men to go?

So, the **Ben Ish Chai** explains as follows: Shlomo Hamelech writes in Mishlei **מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טוֹב וַיָּפֶק רָצוֹן מֵ י-ה-ו-ה**

'***He who has found a wife has found good, and has obtained favour from Hashem***.' (18:22)

When a man - **א י ש** and a woman – **א ש ה** get married, The Shechina - **י-ה** is brought into the house. This is the **טוב** that the Pasuk over here is discussing.

And what brings forth the kindness of Hashem? - When the couple are blessed with children.

The birth of a baby **boy** brings the kedusha of the letter **ו** in Hashem's name. The birth of a baby **girl** brings the kedusha of the final letter **ה** in Hashem's name.

Together with the father(**י**), mother(**ה**), son(**ו**) and daughter(**ה**), Hashem's name is complete – and His favour is brought forth.

Moshe Rabeinu wanted to take the ***sons and the daughters*** along with him to achieve the greatest chesed from Hashem by uniting both the **ו** and the **ה** to form Hashem's name.

Pharaoh understood this, and said ... **יְהִי כֵן י-ה-ו-ה עִמָּכֶם** – You wish to take the men, women, sons and daughters with you so that you will merit all four letters of **י-ה-ו-ה** with you;and draw from Hashem's kindness!

And that's when Pharaoh got nervous - **... לְאׇ כֵּן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים** – No, you may only go with the **men**..

Pharaoh reasoned that by withholding the women, and only allowing Moshe to leave with the men, they would be missing the kedusha of the last letter **ה** in Hashem's name. They would not merit the **רצון** of Hashem!

As Pharaoh concluded: **... אַתֶּם מְבַקְּשִׁים [אות ה] כִּי אֹתָהּ** – 'I understand that it is the letter **ה** that you are after!' - Pharaoh was afraid that Moshe would take away the letter **ה** from his own name **-פרעה** turning him into **עפר** – nothingness!



Bottle It! by Rabbi Sender Haber



The end of this week's Parsha was one of the highest points in the spiritual history of the Jewish nation. The Jewish people were almost ready to leave Egypt. They had suffered enough, they were caring for one another, and they had very strong Jewish identities.

G-d gave us Mitzvos. On the first of Nissan, we were given the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh. Shortly afterward, on the tenth of Nissan, the Jewish people were commanded to select a lamb for the Korban Pesach. Technically, they didn't need goats until the 14th – 4 days later- but G-d wanted us to be engrossed in Mitzvos.

And with pride, excitement, and enthusiasm The Jewish people performed these Mitzvos. They gathered the sheep, tied them to their bedposts and prepared for the seder. As Pesach approached Moshe and Aharon circumcised all of the Jewish males. Finally, on the fifteenth of Nissan, all of the Jewish people were seated in their homes enjoying the first Pesach Seder. At exactly midnight a wave of death passed through the country and killed all of the Egyptian first-borns. Not one of the Jewish homes suffered a loss. They were protected by the Korban Pesach. They heard death all around them while they sat safely and securely in their homes. The Talmud tells us that the Pesach seder is "**אתכא דרחמנא**" – G-d is our host and we are sitting at His table. The Jewish people were closer to G-d than they had ever been before.

As this was taking place Pharaoh made his way frantically to the Jewish quarter, tracked down Moshe and Aharon, and begged them to leave Egypt. They hadn't packed and they had no time to prepare

food for the way but they went unquestioningly following Moshe and, by extension G-d, into the desert. Many years later G-d would 'reminisce': "I remember the days when you were just a young Kallah – a young bride – you followed me out to the desert into a land that was totally desolate".

Before all of this occurred, Moshe addressed the Jewish people. He went over all of the last-minute laws and prepared them for what would happen. He said to them "You are leaving Egypt and you are going to arrive in the land that G-d has created for you. Be sure to continue to keep the holiday of Pesach and the seder with all of its halachos. Be sure to tell your children about this day."

He continued "And when your child asks **מה העבודה הזאת לכם?** – What is the big deal? Why are you doing all this hard work? **ואמרתם אליו** – You should say to him: This is my Korban Pesach for G-d. When we were in Egypt we were not that different from the Egyptians. We had no mitzvos. But when we did these mitzvos G-d punished all of the Egyptians and spared us and our homes".

The Hagada tells us that the Torah spoke of Four Sons: the Wise son, The Wicked son, The Simple son, and the son who does not know how to ask questions. The Hagada goes on to quote verses in this week's parsha (mostly) and tells us which pertain to each of the sons.

When Moshe told the Jewish people "You will have a son who will ask **מה העבודה הזאת לכם?** – Why are you doing all this hard work?", he was describing the Wicked son. Presumably, The Torah should continue with the answer given to the wicked son: knock out his teeth and tell him **בעבור זה עשה ה' לי** G-d did this for me when I was in Egypt – for me and not for you. If you were there you would not have been saved. Moshe, however, did recommend this answer at all, he said: **ואמרתם אליו** – You should say to him: This is my Korban Pesach for G-d. We did this and G-d punished all of the Egyptians but spared us and our homes.

Why did Moshe use ask the question of the wicked son, but give an unrelated answer?

Perhaps we can explain, based on the **Kli Yakar**, Moshe's answer was not directed at the wicked son (that will come later) it was directed at the rest of the Jewish people and at the parents.

Moshe said to the Jewish people: Right now you are on a high, you have never been closer to G-d and the purpose of the mitzvos are clear to you. You think that the rest of your existence as Jews will be the same way.

You think that you and all future generations will be able to maintain this constant connection to holiness. Let me tell you about reality. One day, you are going to have a son and he will have no idea what you are doing. He will ask **מה העבודה הזאת לכם?** – What is the big deal? Why are you doing all this hard work?" G-d will not always be as obvious as He is right now."

What can we do about this? Moshe told the Jewish people: "stop for a moment and appreciate the feelings and emotions of what you are experiencing. Define it, bottle and put it somewhere safe. One day when you are challenged you will be able to pull that memory out of your pocket and say "I remember that moment when I did the Mitzvah of Pesach. I felt closer to G-d than you can ever imagine".

We often experience spiritual highs. We need to save souvenirs, memories or commitments, from these highs to give us support at the times when we are low.

May we merit to have only high points in our observance of mitzvos.

"Thank You Hashem for opening doors *in my life that I didn't even knock on!*"



שמואל זנוויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry)

וַיּוּשַׁב אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבִבְנוֹתֵינוּ בְּצֹאנֵנוּ וּבִבְקָרֵנוּ נֵלֵךְ כִּי חַג־ה' לָנוּ

"And [Pharaoh] said to them {to Moshe and Aaron}: Go serve the L-rd your G-d. Who and who are going? And Moses said: We will go with our young men and our old men, with our sons and daughters" (10:8-9)

Our tradition is that it was common for the elders to precede the young; That's why, when the people heard that Moshe preceded the boys to the old men - it didn't seem like it to them. However, Moshe explained to them that the order of their ascension to the land should be the order of their descent into Egypt. Joseph the younger was the first to come down from Egypt, followed by his father and his older brothers. And the departure for freedom should start with the young; "Measure for Measure". This is why Moshe said, "We will go with our young men and our old men."

Even in our days, the return to Eretz Yisrael was made in a similar pattern. At first young people came from Russia, Poland and other countries who began to build the country, and their parents came after them.

Every Shabbat evening parents, who have recently arrived in Israel from Tunis, Algiers, Morocco and other countries, pray a special prayer of thanksgiving to Hashem - for the fact that many years earlier their sons insisted on immigrating to Israel.

During all this time they did not want the parents to leave their homes and shops. However, when the situation in their countries

worsened, when their property was confiscated and life became unbearable, they got up and went, in the end, to Israel - where their sons were already waiting for them, who helped them build new homes for themselves.

Torah Is Light

לֹא־רָאֹ֥ו אִ֖יש אֶת־אָחִ֑יו וְלֹא־קָ֣מוּ אִ֔יש מִתַּחְתָּ֖יו שְׁלֹשֶׁ֣ת יָמִ֑ים וּלְכָל־בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל הָיָ֥ה אֹ֛ור בְּמֹושְׁבֹתָֽם *'There was pitch darkness over the whole land of Egypt for three days. No one saw his brother, and no one rose from under him for three days, and all the Israelites had light in their settlements*" (10:23)

How can one explain that for the Israelites there was light, while the Egyptians only had darkness? Chassidim say - based on the midrash that compares the Torah to light - that the light comes from within, because the Israelites were constantly studying Torah.

It is said that many years ago, when the Land of Israel was under Turkish rule, a cruel judge forbade the Jews of Safed to light candles at night. And so every night the whole city, which before was illuminated by the lights that rose from the houses of diligent Torah scholars, is completely engulfed in darkness.

But in spite of this, light emanated from the windows of Rabbi Yosef Karo's house at night. It seemed that he was breaking the banning order, and it also seemed that this rebellion was spreading, as every night more and more windows were lit up, and the sound of Torah learning could be heard everywhere. When the lights became more and more numerous, the guards reported the violation of the order.

Fecha, at the head of his cavalry regiment, galloped furiously towards the Jewish quarter. First he stopped at the door of Rabbi Yosef Karo's house, from where the brightest light came. Without knocking on the door, he burst into the rabbi's house - and there an amazing sight was revealed to his eyes: the rabbi was sitting and

looking at his holy book, and the whole room was illuminated by a precious light, which seemed to come from the walls - since no lamp was lit there.



Faha examined the walls and saw that they were covered in fireflies. When he asked for an explanation, the holy rabbi replied that during the day the room was completely full of fireflies, and that from the hour of twilight onward they illuminate him - and also fly to all those houses in Safed where Torah is studied. (*Everyone knows how fireflies got their name, but many people don't know how the insects produce their signature glow. Fireflies have dedicated light organs that are located under their abdomens. The insects take in oxygen and, inside special cells, combine it with a substance called luciferin to produce light with almost no heat. Scientists are not sure how the insects regulate this process to turn their lights on and off.*)

"I don't understand," said the amazed Faha, "why do the fireflies sit all day in your room, instead of soaking up the sunlight?"

The rabbi answered him, with a twinkle in his eyes: "It seems that the Torah illuminates not only the lives of the *lomdin*, but also the fireflies."

Seeing the decisiveness in the enlightened face of the holy rabbi, Fecha decided to issue a new order: "Illuminate your homes again! The previous order is cancelled. I can impose my will on people, but this matter is beyond my power."

Wherever Jews study Torah, there is light.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נְטֵה יָדְךָ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיִהְיֶה חֹשֶׁךְ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וְיָמֵשׁ חֹשֶׁךְ
Hashem said to Moshe, "Stretch forth your hand toward the heavens, and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt, and the darkness will become darker."



Rashi brings a p'shat, that in the second set of three days, the Egyptians couldn't even move around and had to grope around because the חֹשֶׁךְ became so thick. It wasn't just a lack of light, but it was tangible.

The pesukim continue to describe what happened. ***לֹא־רָאֹו אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו וְלֹא־קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחְתָּיו שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וּלְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אוֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם*** ***- They did not see each other, and no one rose from his place for three days, but for all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.***

The Kli Yakar says that The Riboino Shel Olam took the darkness of night from Klal Yisrael, and put that on the Mitzriyim. So for the entire six days it was fully light in Goshen – 24hrs a day and in Mitzrayim, there was 6 full days of complete darkness 24hrs a day!

This is the sofei teivos of **וּלְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה = לילה** that even at night-time, there was light **בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם!**

This is one of the things that we should mention at the Seder – that we had light during this whole Makkah. The Yidden required this light because 4/5ths of the Yidden were killed during this time. There were 600,000 men left, therefore there were over 2.4 million people that were killed and required burying – this necessitated as much daylight hours as possible, so that the mitzriyim should not see what was happening.

The Medrash says that not only could the Mitzriyim not move, but also their speech was impaired and distorted due to the thickness of the חֹשֶׁךְ. So, not only could they not comfort their children by hugging them, but they couldn't even calm them by speaking reassuring words! And when they did speak, they thought that they were hearing the voices of demons. (Hashem actually created destructive angels, to confound them even further.)

The Egyptians heard the B'nei Yisrael rummaging through their premises and belongings. Hashem told Moshe to tell Klal Yisrael to start borrowing things from the Mitzriyim - **דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב** (11:2) Pretended that you are borrowing them, and really you will never give it back. Why did Hashem have to say **נָא** - please?

Rav Shimshon Rephael Hirsch says that the world depicts the Jew as a money grabbing people. (*Recently the definition of a Jew by the OED was, - 'A grabbing or extortionate money lender or usurer, or a trader who drives a hard bargain and deals craftily! Google definition was –"to bargain with somebody in a miserly or petty way"!*) The Mitzriyim thought the same of the Yidden. In fact, Pharaoh when said to them, "**הָבָה נִתְחַכְּמָה לוֹ פֶּן־יִרְבֶּה וְהָיָה כִּי־תִקְרֶאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסַף גַּם־הוּא עַל־שֹׂנְאֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם־בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ** *'The Jews have become wealthy from us. It is all our things that they have taken. They are just after our money and wealth.'*

The Mitzryim thought to themselves, that we heard the Jews rummaging through our belongings – they must have cleared us out and stolen everything of value. After the Makkah, they find to their surprise, that not a thing is missing! They were astounded! They had a newfound respect for the Yidden. They were really honest people.

But when Moshe Rabeinu requested that they borrow things with the intention of never returning the items, the Yidden were horrified, as they had just solidified the self-image that the Jews weren't

cheats and thieves – in realty they were trustworthy and honest. Now you want us to renegade on this?

This is why Hashem said to Moshe **דַּבֶּר־נָא please!** This stuff is rightfully yours, and you are never going to see these people ever again!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

The Pasuk says, that on the night that Klal Yisrael came out of Mitzrayim - **וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ** ***'But to all the children of Israel, not one dog will whet its tongue.' (11:7)***

There is a Gemara in Pesachim 113a – Rav had a son (Rav Asi). He said to him, "You shouldn't live in a city where the dogs don't bark, because if there are no dogs there, then the thieves will come out. (the dogs will not be there to bark and reveal their whereabouts.)

So we know that on the night of Seder night, there were no dogs barking. This resulted in a field day for the thieves!

As a remembrance of this event, we ***steal*** the Afikoman at the Seder!

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

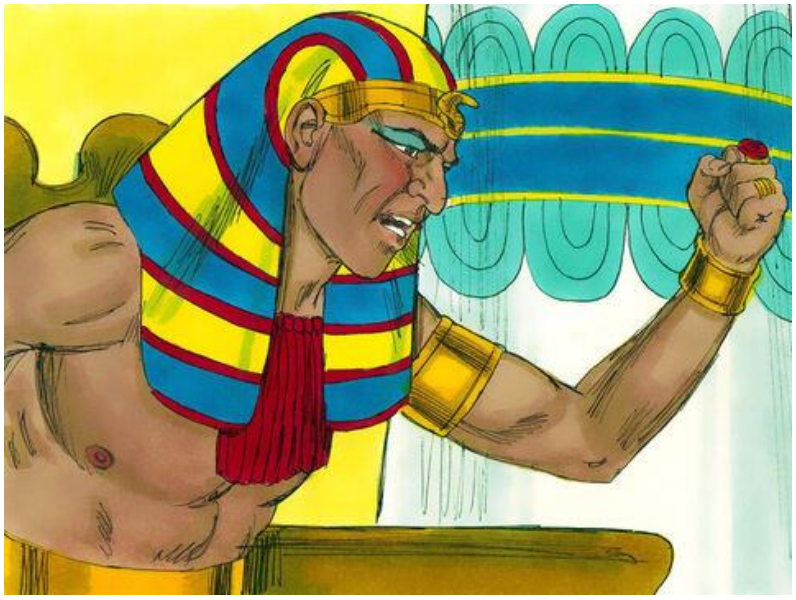
If one prays to Hashem for something out of a sense of entitlement – that is a defective prayer, for one's merits are limited.

If however, a person prays to Hashem for something due to Devine mercy – That is proper prayer, for His mercy is limitless. - Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

כִּי אִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה לְשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עַמִּי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא מָחָר אַרְבֶּה בִּגְבֻלֶךָ For if you refuse to let [them] go, behold, tomorrow I am going to bring locusts into your borders.

The locusts will devour anything that is left over in the land. There will be nothing left. The Medrash says, that not only did the locusts eat the left over food that was growing in the fields, but also devoured all the fabrics, rugs, soft furnishings and tapestries etc.



The Pasuk says – **וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שִׁתִּי אֹתֹתַי אֵלֶּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ**
Hashem said to Moshe: "*Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order that I may place these signs of Mine in his midst.*"(10:1)

Rashi says, **והתרה בו** - '*Go and warn him.*'

What does Rashi mean with '***warn him***' – warn him what?

'Warn him that I have hardened his heart.' This is going to be where you make a spectacle of Pharaoh. You will walk inside his palace, and you will tell him, "You know that I have been requesting of you to let the Jews go – I have got news for you- Hashem has now hardened your heart, and you are now incapable of letting them go!"

Pharaoh replies, "What do you mean, I can do whatever I want."

"So, go on – let them go!"

"I don't want to let them go."

"Because you can't. If you have a choice, show me, and let them go."

"No, I'm definitely not letting them go."

"The reason you're not, is because you can't!"

Pharaoh is in an impossible situation. He is now defeated. **הֲטֶרֶם תֵּדַע כִּי אָבְדָה מִצְרָיִם** – 'Do you not realise that Mitzrayim is battered , completely annihilated?' **שַׁלַּח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים וְיַעַבְדוּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיהֶם** - '***Let the people go and they will worship their G-d***.'

וַיּוּשַׁב אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיכֶם מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים – Who is going? 50% of you can go.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבְבְנוֹתֵינוּ בְּצֹאנֵנוּ וּבְבְקָרֵנוּ נֵלֵךְ – We are all going. **נֵלֵךְ** is gematria of 100 – 100% of us are going, we are all going!

So, Pharaoh says,**לֹא כֵן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים** ***'Not so; let the men go.'***

Moshe Rabeinu answers, "That's not good enough, we are all going, as Hashem said, **שַׁלַּח אֶת־עַמִּי וְיַעַבְדֻנִי**.

The Sar Sholom of Belz Zt'l says, Pharoah said, **שַׁלַּח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים** - **אנש** is gematria of 351. The plural - double of that (meaning **אֲנָשִׁים**) is 702, which is the gematria of **שבת** .

Pharaoh was saying that only send the men who keep Shabbos. They can serve Hashem, because they do it every week. There is no need to send anybody else. So, Pharaoh says,**לֹא כֵן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים** - Only the **גְּבָרִים** can go. **גבר** is the gematria of 205. The plural - double of that (meaning **גְּבָרִים**) is 410, which is the gematria of **קדוש** !

Pharoah was saying that only if they are kadosh – tzadikim, can they go. So Moshe Rabeinu answers, " Hashem said - **שַׁלַּח אֶת־עַמִּי**, - Chazal say that even if you have a coal which is dying out, and is just an ember **- גחלים עוממות** – we are taking even those! We are not leaving anybody behind.

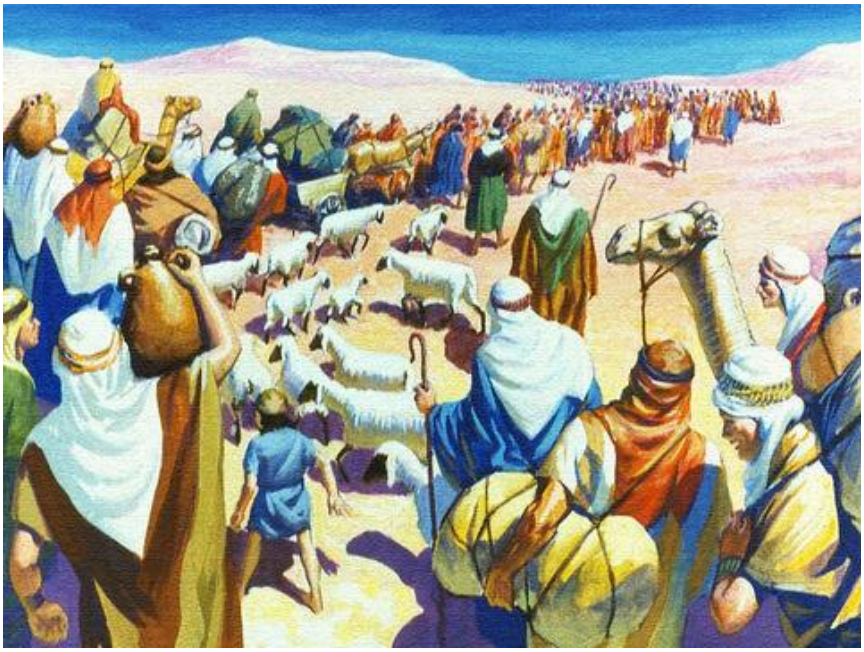
The Zohar Hakadosh says that Pharaoh is the Yetzer Hara. The Yetzer Hara comes along, and he says, " You might keep Shabbos,

but you are not a **קדוש**. If this is true, then it's not worthwhile keeping everything else."

Moshe Rabeinu says, "No, that is not our way. Our **מהלך** is that Torah and Mitzvos is for everyone, even for the **גחלים עוממות**. Nobody is excluded.

Love of Mitzvos

וַיִּשָּׂא הָעָם אֶת־בְּצֵקוֹ טֶרֶם יֶחְמָץ מִשְׁאֲרֹתָם צְרֻרֹת בְּשִׂמְלֹתָם עַל־שִׁכְמָם *'The people picked up their dough when it was not yet leavened, their leftovers bound in their garments on their shoulders.'* (12:34)



Why did they carry the sacks of heavy dough on their shoulders when they had plenty of animals that could do the shlepping for them?

So, **Rashi** brings a **Mechilta** that says **אף על פי שבהמות הרבה הוליכו עמהם מחבבים היו את המצווה** *'Although they took many animals with them, they [carried the remaining matzoth and bitter herbs on their shoulders because] they loved the mitzvos. — [from Mechilta]'* And this was just the leftovers!

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving. "

The Rosh Yeshivah's Unusual Request



Rosh Yeshivah HaGaon HaRav Gershon Edelstein made a rare request during a sicha he delivered in his home on Thursday evening.

"Those who speak words of chizzuk to the public, even in chadarim [boys' schools] and yeshivos ketanos and gedolos, it's kadai to speak about Ahavas HaBriyos and V'Ahavata L'Reiyacha Kamocha – it's a Klal Gadol B'Torah," HaRav Edelstein began.

"There's a Gemara – 'Amar Rebbe Akiva – Zeh Klal Gadol B'Torah.' What is a 'Klal Gadol B'Torah?' I've already said this – there's a little sefer from **Rebbe Chaim Vital** called *Shaarei Kedushah* – that midos tovos are the yesod."

"It's not written in the Torah about midos tovos – it writes about gaava regarding a melech – but it doesn't write about anger and all other types of midos. There are many good midos that aren't written about in the Torah."

"That's because midos tovos is the yesod of nefesh ha'adam – that's what Rebbe Chaim Vital writes in *Shaarei Kedushah*. That without middos tovos, a person is not a ben-adam [person]. The shleimus of a person is being a ba'al midos tovos."

"Therefore it makes sense that if one is speaking words of chizzuk that it should be about midos tovos. Whoever speaks words of chizzuk to the public, it's clear that it is kadai, what is best, where the greatest zechuyos are – is regarding midos tovos. And when one speaks about it – it has an influence."

"Each one should speak about middos tovos, divrei chizzuk, v'ahavata l'reiyacha kamocha, v'halachta b'drachav [one should follow in Hashem's ways]," the Rosh Yeshivah concluded.

(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series



Pidyon Haben - וְכָל בְּכוֹר בָּנַי אֶפְדֶּה – *'And every firstborn of my sons I will redeem.'* 13:15

The Seforno says : **כדי שיהיו מותרים בעבודת חול – *'I redeem them in order that they can lead regular lives.'***

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky Zt'l says that it appears to be that if the bechor would not have a *Pidyan Haben*, he would remain in a status of kedusha, and would not be allowed to do mundane tasks. We would have to refrain from giving him any menial work.

Now, we want him to be able to do that, so we are *podeh* him, which will enable him to do **עבודת חול**.

If this is the case, asks Rav Yaakov, "Why do we make such a big simcha and seuda at the Pidyan Haben? We are actually minimizing his kedusha!?"

Also, the Cohen says at the ceremony - **וְיִכָּנֵס זֶה הַבֵּן לְחַיִּים לְתוֹרָה וּלְיִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם *'May this child enter into life, into the [study of] Torah and fear of heaven.'***

This differs to what we say by a Bris:- **כְּשֵׁם שֶׁנִּכְנַס לַבְּרִית, כֵּן יִכָּנֵס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים *'Even as he has entered into the***

covenant, so may he enter into the [study of] Torah, chupah, and good deeds.'

Why the different wording?

Reb Yaakov says that there is a fundamental difference between the appreciation of what we are doing on this world, as opposed to what the **אומות העולם** are doing.

The **אומות העולם** believe that **רוחניות** and **גַּשְׁמִיוּת** are two completely separate entities. There is a **גוף** and there is a **נפש** –A physical part of a person, and his soul, as two distinct entities. You can't do both. Either you either abstain from the physical side, or you focus on your human side.

However, we as Klal Yisrael know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has fused the **גוף** and the **נפש** within us together as one entity. We have been placed in this world to enjoy the physical things (**מעלה לקדושה**) as well as the **רוחניות**.

So when we bentch the firstborn child, we don't want him to be limited to only one entity of kedusha, but it is a tremendous simcha that we bentch him that he should have both entities, in order to carry out the will of Hashem – as we were created. He is now becoming what a Yid is meant to be and use both the **רוחניות** and **גַּשְׁמִיוּת** for the right purpose!

However, this transformation from a kodosh, is fraught with trepidation, therefore we give him a specific bracha - **וְיִכְּנֵס זֶה הַבֵּן לְחַיִּים לְתוֹרָה וּלְיִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם** – this will help him to stay on the straight and narrow, while doing **עבודת חול**. in order to do the will of Hashem in the proper way.

"With faith, there are no questions; without faith, there are no answers".~ The Chofetz Chaim, Zt''l

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

Makkos Bechoros



Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zt'l asks a thought-provoking question.

We know that on erev Pesach, we have **תענית בכורים**. Anybody who is a first-born, or who has got a son who's a firstborn, must fast on Erev Pesach until they have been part of and joined in with a Siyum.

Firstly, in Halacha, there is no real specific source for this. So, where does it come from? Secondly, we never find another fast that finishes (culminates) at the time of making a Siyum? And thirdly, who fasts? Anyone who is a first-born – Why? Because in Mitzrayim, if there was a first-born Yid, he could have been killed with the first-borns of Egypt at that time.

Rav Shlomo said, "Hang on one second, I'm a first-born, but not necessarily a direct descendent of a first born in Mitzrayim, in which case, I was never in danger, and therefore I shouldn't need to fast at all?"

Rav Shlomo says that the fact that we break the fast by making a Siyum has got nothing to do with **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**. He suggests that in the Beis Hamikdash on Erev Pesach it was a very busy time with all the Avodah happening. This was the 'National day' for the Cohanim. All of Klal Yisrael were there for the Korban Pesach. But the main *kavod* went to the Cohanim – they were the star performers.

There could have been a *bechor* standing there, thinking – "That could have been me, we could have been part of this!" (before the chet ha'Egel, the bechorim did the avoida). This could result in tremendous **עֲגְמַת נֶפֶשׁ** for him, to the extent that he would lose his appetite, and he won't be able to eat.

To commemorate this – We fast! So, why do we break the fast with a Siyum? How does this console this bechor?

Shlomo Hamelech says: **יְקָרָה הִיא מִפְּנִינִים מִפְּנִינִים** '*Torah is even more precious than the most valuable jewels and desirable things that there are in the world.*' (Mishlei 3:15) And the Gemara (Horiyus 13a & Sotah 4b) says **אפילו מכהן גדול שנכנת לפני ולפנים** – 'Torah is even more precious than the opportunity of doing the Avodah like the Cohen Gadol in the Beis Hamikdash!'

By learning Torah, you can reach the same closeness to Hashem as the Cohen Gadol doing the avodah! So we say to the bechor, "We understand your **עֲגְמַת נֶפֶשׁ**, so we have a relief for you, which is learning Torah at a Siyum! So we break the fast by making a Siyum, and in this manner, we console the bechor!

His Prayers Are Answered

The Shlah Hakadosh (Shar HaOsiyos, Os Shin) writes that the reason people of past generations had their prayers answered immediately was because they were careful not to misuse the 22 letters of the aleph beis through idle chatter and other types of speech that harm the tongue. Since their mouths were pure, their prayers tore through the Heavens.

This is because every word that emanates from a pure mouth is beloved by Hashem and can break through all barriers to reach Him.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

Makkos Bechoros

וּמֵת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכֹר פַּרְעֹה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסְאוֹ עַד בְּכֹר הַשִּׁפְחָה אֲשֶׁר אַחַר הָרֵחָיִם וְכֹל בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה 11:4

The Meforshim ask, why is it called **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**? None of the other Makkos are prefixed with the word **מַכַּת**?



Moshe Rabeinu comes to Pharaoh and tells him that there is going to be **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**.

When the bechorim heard this, they went to their friends, and started an uprising. They went to Pharaoh to complain. Pharaoh wasn't interested – 'So I will lose some more people, (even prestigious ones) so what? I'm still not letting the Jews go.'

So, besides thousands of bechorim getting killed in the Makko, they had an uprising and civil war and killed thousands of Pharaoh's soldiers. This is why it is called **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**, because it wasn't just the bechorim that died, there was this added element of death and destruction, caused by the bechorim themselves!

Furthermore, Chazal tell us that there was a huge number of bechorim that died, (there were even multiple deaths in one household). The dogs went to the graveyards and dug up the bodies and dragged them back home to their houses. Even the images and effigies of their loved ones were dug up and smashed.

Even more then this, because of the intense heat in Egypt, the mounds of corpses began to decompose. This caused a rampant infectious disease to spread all over Mitzrayim, killing many thousands more! So the Bechorim caused others to die – It was a **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת** -A plague caused by the bechorim themselves!



וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם... מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים... וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבְזִקְנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ... כִּי חַג־ה' לָנוּ ***He (Pharaoh) said to them, "Which ones are going…" Moshe said, "With our youngsters and with our elders we will go… because it is a festival of Hashem for us." (10:8,9)***

Pharaoh finally showed a crack in his armour. He was prepared to allow *some* Jews to leave, and he was willing to negotiate concerning who may leave and who must remain. Moshe *Rabbeinu* replied that he had no room for negotiation, no juncture for compromise. They were *all* leaving. Pharaoh countered, saying that he would allow the adult men to go. Moshe said it was insufficient, "We will go with everyone – from our youngsters to our elders."

They were at an impasse, with Moshe insisting on including the young children and even feeble elders, and Pharaoh contending that this dispensation was only available to the able-bodied men.

Clearly, the debate between Moshe and Pharaoh epitomises the varied approaches to education and the wide chasm that existed between the Torah perspective and the pagan viewpoint expressed by Pharaoh – which has found purchase even in contemporary society.

Pharaoh was of the opinion that service to the Almighty belonged in the domain of the male adults. Children had no place in the ritual service. Moshe argued that we Jews see everyone as a worthy

member of the nation. Children who do not commence their Torah education at a young age will be hard-pressed to adhere to it when they get older.

Furthermore, for the Jew, religion is a way of life. It sustains him. Children require religion at the earliest opportunity. It is their lifeline.

Horav Aizik Ausband, zl, explains the idea behind Moshe's rejoinder, *Ki chag Hashem lanu;* "It is a festival of Hashem for us," and its message to Pharaoh. Why *lanu*, for us? It would have sufficed to say that it is a holiday.

He explains that parents do not take their children to a wedding of a close friend. They have no place there. If it is a family wedding, however, all family members are invited and expected to attend. This is what Moshe intimated to Pharaoh. *Maamad Har Sinai*, the Revelation at *Har Sinai* where we received the Torah, was no simple experience. It was a family wedding during which we were wed to the Torah. This was personal and, thus, mandatory requirement for all family members.



Torah *chinuch* begins as soon as a child is able to respond to instructions. For some, this begins at birth. **The *Chazon Ish, zl***, related that from his very birth, his mother insisted on washing *netillas yadayim*, his hands, in the morning when he woke up. It was her deepest desire that, from his earliest infancy, he grow *b'kedushah u'b'taharah*, with sanctity and purity.

This idea is supported by the ***Ben Ish Chai***, who encouraged mothers to wash their infants' hands.

The *Brisker Rav, zl*, stated that for both boys and girls, Jewish education begins with washing their hands. In this manner, they are eventually inculcated with the notion that distancing oneself from *tumah*, ritual contamination, is a requisite for a Torah Jew.

It is related that when ***Horav Chaim Kanievsky, zl***, was but a child of two-years-old, his father, the venerable ***Steipler Gaon, zl***, would call him over and say, "*Nu*, jump up on the chair and tell me the names of each *meseches*, tractate, in *Shas*, the *Talmud*." The lad jumped up on the chair, and, in a sing song voice, to a tune that the *Steipler* sang to him when he put him to bed at night, he rattled off all of the *mesechtos*. As he said the last one (*Uktzin*), he added, "And now give me the sweets!"

My postscript: When a child is raised with such *chavivus*, love, for Torah; when he sees from his earliest moments of cogency what his parents value, it is no wonder that he attained such extraordinary proficiency in those *mesechtos*.

The *Ponovezher Rav, zl*, related an inspiring story concerning ***Rebbetzin Meita Schlesinger, a"h***, wife of ***Horav Yechiel Michel Schlesinger***, founder and *Rosh Yeshivah* of Kol Torah. When the *Rav* was yet a young man, he founded a *Kollel* (in Lithuania) for young Torah scholars who would dedicate their entire days and nights to Torah study. These were not ordinary young scholars. They were the cream of the *yeshivah* world who would one day go on to become *rabbanim* and *roshei yeshivah*.

The idea of *kollel* was then a novelty, but, the *Ponovezher Rav* was no ordinary *gadol*. His innovative nature spurred many of his projects. His dedication to Hashem and love of Torah and *am Yisrael* are what catalysed the merit for achieving Hashem's blessing.

One night, the *Rav* took a walk and noticed a woman with a young child walking back and forth outside the *kollel*. Every once in a while, she would stop next to a window and listen to the sound of Torah emanating from the *kollel*. This went on for an hour.

This (what appeared to be) strange behaviour prompted the *Rav* to ask about this woman. Who was she? Perhaps she was in need of assistance? He walked over to her and asked, "Who are you, and why are you walking back and forth with your little boy by the *kollel*?"

The woman replied, "I am the wife of *Rav* Yechiel Michel Schlesinger, who sits by that window learning. I come here at night because my husband leaves the house early in the morning and returns late at night. We hardly see each other during the course of the day. My greatest pleasure is to stand outside 'his' window and listen to him learning. Also, I want my young son to hear and absorb the sounds of Torah."

That little boy grew up to be ***Horav Moshe Yehudah Schlesinger, Shlita***, who has served as *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Kol Torah* for over fifty years.

As a background to the story, *Rebbetzin* Schlesinger hailed from an aristocratic family in Hamburg, Germany. She could have chosen to live a life of luxury and entitlement. She instead chose Torah, because her greatest love was reserved for Torah. She sought a husband who was likeminded. They left Germany for Lithuania where her husband would achieve his greatest success in Torah. Aware of all this, the *Rav* told the woman who was inspired by the *kol*, sound, of Torah study, "One day, your husband will establish a *yeshivah*. I will advise him to name it *Kol Torah* in your honour.

In 1939, *Rav* Yechiel Michel left Europe together with his wife and their young family and emigrated to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he founded *Yeshivas Kol Torah* – a fitting tribute to the dedication to, and love of, Torah that was the hallmark of his home.

"Character is a person's only real possession." ~ Rabbi Yisrael Salanter.



אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אֶחָד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ

The Maharal (*Gevuras Hashem* ch.60) shows how many aspects of the *korban Pesach* represent the number One. For example, it must be (12:5) **בן שנה** , one year old; (**בבית אחד יאכל** 12:46) , eaten in *one* house; and it is forbidden to break any of the bones into *two*, which means the bones must remain *one*.

The Maharal (*Gevuras Hashem* ch.60) explains this because the *korban Pesach* reminds us that everything comes from the One Hashem. Nothing happens by itself without Hashem!

Small Steps



Hashem didn't command Pharaoh to free the Yidden forever. Instead, he asked that he let the Yidden go for a three-day holiday in the desert to serve Hashem, after which they would return. ***This is because Hashem doesn't expect a person to do more than he can handle***. Pharaoh wasn't capable of sending out the Yidden from Mitzrayim forever. Therefore, Hashem requested less.

Similarly, when we do teshuvah, be aware that teshuvah is a process, and it takes time. Hashem isn't asking us to do more than we can handle.

A student once saw **Reb Binyamin Rabinowitz zt'l** studying seven hours straight, without interruption, and he asked Reb Binyamin how he attained his hasmadah. Reb Binyamin replied, "When I was younger, I made a kabbalah that I will learn the first fifteen minutes of seder without interruption. After doing this for a while, I took on myself that I won't speak for the first half-hour of seder. Then, from time to time, I added on some more time, and now I am up to seven hours straight, without interruption!"

The Steipler Gaon *zt'l* said, "With ten laughs, one can travel from Bnei Brak to Yerushalayim." In those days, the trip from Bnei Brak and Yerushalayim was quite long.

The Steipler's counsel was to think of the journey in ten sections. Each tenth isn't all that far. As the Steipler called it, "It's a laugh." You laugh, you jump, and you've travelled a tenth of the distance. Do that ten times, and you travelled the entire way to Yerushalayim without noticing the long ride.

This can be used as a counsel to make *avodas Hashem* appear easy. Let's say a person wants to study Torah for two hours. If he isn't used to it, it seems like a very long time. But if you divide two hours into tenths, it is just twelve minutes for each section. Twelve minutes is "a laugh." It isn't so hard to study for twelve minutes. Do that. And then do another twelve minutes. It's not so hard. Do it ten times, and you've learned for two hours straight.

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* gave a similar counsel to a *bachur* who was having a hard time studying Torah for a long time. The Chazon Ish advised him to learn a little from many *sefarim* because many short tasks are more manageable than one giant task.

Boundaries

It states in the Parasha(12:4), **ולקח הוא ושכנו הקרב אל ביתו** , "***He and his neighbour who is near to his house***…"

Reb Tuvyah Weiss zt'l, the *gaavad* of Yerushalayim, asks that the *pasuk* seems to refer to the same concept twice because isn't a neighbour someone who is near his house?

The *pasuk* discusses inviting people into one's home to eat the korban Pesach. The Torah warns us to take a neighbour who is close and near at heart. This means someone who fears Heaven as you do. Don't befriend someone with a different level of *yiras Hashem* than you.

It states (12:3), **שה לבית** , "***a lamb for each household***."

Chazal call young children **שה**, sheep. The Torah tells us **שה לבית**, keep your children at home. Don't have them go to places where there are bad influences.

Every Good Deed Is Precious

A *bachur*, studying in Lithuania, was returning home to Switzerland. He planned his return trip through Radin to see the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l**. He arrived in Radin at 2:00 a.m. It was cold and snowing. An older person met him at the Radin train station and asked him where he wanted to go.

"And who are you?" the *bachur* asked.

"I'm Zvi Levinson, the Chofetz Chaim's son-in-law."

"I want to go to your *shver*."

"Where are you planning to sleep tonight?"

"I don't have a place."

Reb Levinson zt"l took him to his house and offered him supper.

"I don't want to eat. All I want is to sleep."

Just as he covered himself with the warm blanket, he remembered that he hadn't yet *davened Maariv*. The *bachur* wanted to get out of bed to *daven*, but he allowed himself just one more moment of comfort under the blanket. As expected, he fell asleep.

In the morning, he *davened Shacharis* and went home with Reb Levinson to eat breakfast. Then Reb Levinson took him over to the Chofetz Chaim.

The *bachur* took out a piece of paper from his jacket, where he wrote all the questions that he wanted to ask the Chofetz Chaim, but before he could say anything, the Chofetz Chaim was already speaking.



"Bachur'l, I remember the era when the Czars ruled. At that time, there was so much money, even if money fell to the ground, people didn't bother bending down to pick it up. There was no need to; there was so much. But today, when a copper coin falls to the ground, people rush to pick it up."

The *bachur* wondered why the Chofetz Chaim, the leader of the nation, was reminiscing. But he soon found out. The Chofetz Chaim told him, "There was a time when the Ribono Shel Olam had *tana'im*, *amora'im*, etc. If a regular *bachur* forgot to *daven* a *Maariv* in those days, it wasn't so noticeable in heaven because there was so much spirituality in the world. But in our generation, every small deed is precious. When a *bachur* forgets to *daven Maariv*, the void is noticeable in heaven."

The bachur later said that he hoped the earth would open up under his feet and swallow him up because the Chofetz Chaim saw with his *ruach hakodesh* that he hadn't davened maariv that night. But the

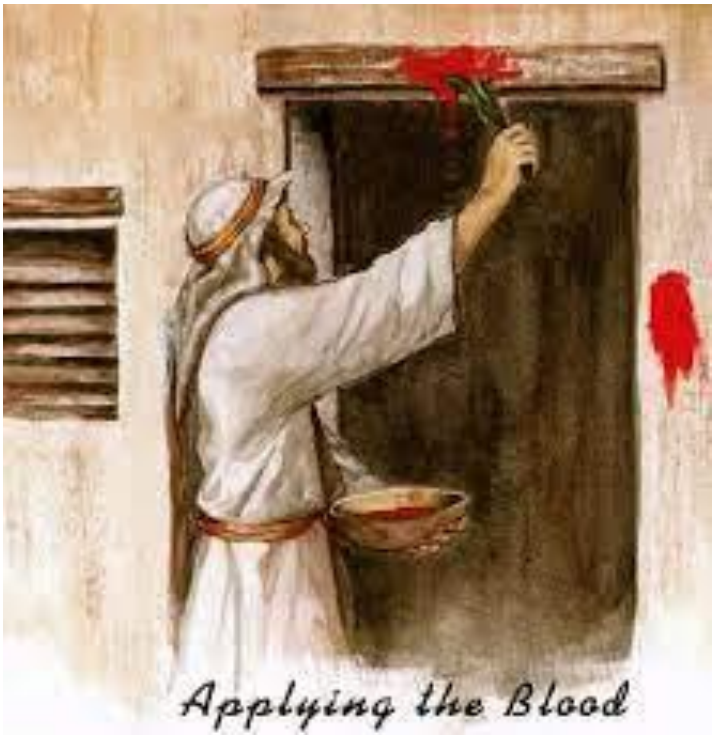
chizuk the Chofetz Chaim gave him was enormous. He discovered that Hashem values his good deeds and waits for them because when there is a lack, every good deed is precious.

The Chofetz Chaim taught him a *Rashi* from *parashas* Bo (12:6). *Rashi* says that the time for redemption arrived, but the Jewish people didn't have merits. Hashem commanded them to circumcise all males and to bring a korban Pesach. These mitzvos made them worthy of redemption.

The Chofetz Chaim asked, how are these mitzvos sufficient? At that time, the Jewish nation was at the 49th level of impurity. Can two mitzvos totally change them and make them worthy of redemption?

The answer is, the Chofetz Chaim explained, that precisely because they were so low, their mitzvos were so precious. In a time of spiritual deficiency, every small mitzvah is highly valued and accepted in heaven.

אַ ייִד בלייַבט אַ ייִד



וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה בָכֶם נֶגֶף לְמַשְׁחִית בְּהַכֹּתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם... וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח־בֵּיתוֹ עַד־בֹּקֶר ***There shall not be a plague of destruction upon you when I strike in the land of Egypt. You shall not leave the entrance of the house until morning. (12:13 * 12:22)***

The Jews were warned to stay home during the destruction that Hashem was wreaking in Egypt. What about the Jew who left his house? Did he perish together with the Egyptians?

Rashi alludes to such a situation when he comments concerning the *pasuk*, "There shall not be a plague of destruction upon you." If a Jew happened to be in an Egyptian home during the plague, was he smitten together with his Egyptian host? No. This was Hashem's promise: "Jews will not die."

Mishnas Rashi wonders why there is a question that a member of the Jewish People would suffer in the destruction. Just because he happened to be in an Egyptian home during the plague is not reason for inclusion in the punishment – or is it?

Mishnas Rashi explains that we must first ask ourselves what a Jew is doing in the house of an Egyptian. Apparently, a Jew who felt comfortable visiting an Egyptian must have been dealing with some severe spiritual deficiencies. If, after all the Egyptians did to *us*, he had the temerity to visit and maintain a social relationship with one of them, he was profoundly challenged in his spiritual realm. Furthermore, after Egypt endured so much from the plagues that devastated Egypt, one would think that by now the most obtuse person would acknowledge that Hashem was involved in every aspect of the world. Yet, this person defied Hashem and left his house to pay a social call to his Egyptian friend!

While outwardly he may have appeared to be a Jew, his self-loathing actions indicated that he would have liked to be perceived as an Egyptian. This is grounds for the assumption that he should have been treated as an Egyptian and suffered their punishment.

Thus, the Torah writes, "There shall not be any plague of destruction upon you." A Jew remains a Jew, regardless of his nefarious actions. A Jew has no exit strategy. Hashem protects him. He always leaves the "light on" for His children – regardless of their errant behaviour. That is what parents do.

When we see a Jew who, for reasons, has chosen – or was a victim of his parents' choice – to negate Torah and *mitzvah* practice, it's

not a reason for us to look at him askance. If Hashem accepts him the way he is – so should we.

Impressions go two ways. When a non-practicing Jew looks at us in a disapproving manner, it is no less inappropriate. We are inclined to accept everyone who might be different from us even when he/she: adheres to and lives a life of moral deviance and abandon; chooses to liberalise his/her moral/ethical compass; or rejects the Divine Authorship of the Torah, including all the ramifications that result from this belief. Yet, when an observant Jew walks by with his *Tzitzis* proudly displayed, wears a *Tallis* in the street on *Shabbos*, or displays our distinctive mode of dress (both male and female), they cringe, snub, and, at times, make uncalled for remarks.



Rabbi Abraham Twerski, zl, related that he was once on a bus, dressed in his usual *chassidic* garb. A passenger who was displeased with his mode of dress, accosted him. "Why can't you people catch up with the times? You aren't living in Europe. We are in modern America. Get with the programme!"

Rabbi Twerski replied that he was Amish. When the passenger heard this, he apologised profusely and even lauded him for adhering to his traditions!

A Vessel for Holiness

Sefer Charedim (Perek 4) writes: "If a person always judges others favourably and speaks well of others, he will become a vessel and a pipeline for holiness. But if he does the opposite, stay away from him."

Torah Temima הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים 12:2



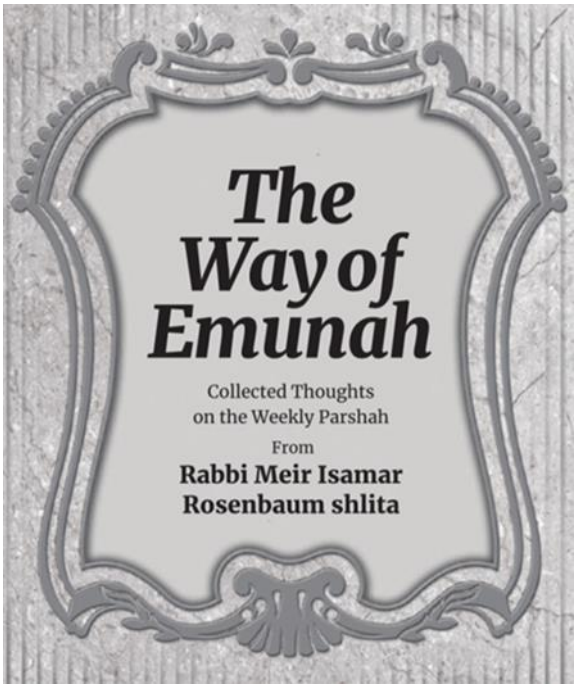
The renewal of the moon every month attests to Hakadosh Boruch Hu's constant involvement in running the world, and is therefore similar to what we experienced at krias yam suf. Since we are witness to this which is like greeting Hashem, we stand as we say kiddush levana.

Killing Time



"A Jew knows that his life has a profound purpose, and his soul has descended beneath the Heavenly Throne to this earth to accomplish a mission that only he can fulfil. He was not placed on this earth just to "kill time". Whatever he accomplishes in his life on this earth will be what must sustain his soul for all eternity." (Rav Pam on the Chumash)

"Thank You hashem for the things I cannot understand, for they give me priceless opportunities to trust You." [Stories To Inspire]



Hashem Walked Together With Moshe

Sefer Divrei Meir relates in the name of Rav Meir Premishlan zy"a that **Rav Zusha of Anipoli zy"a** (whose Yahrzeit is on the 2nd of Shevat) once was praising his son to the **Magid of Mezheritzh zy"a** and saying, "My son knows how to learn!"

The Magid told him, "When he reaches the age of bar mitzvah, bring him to me." When the boy turned 13, Rav Zusha brought him to the Magid.

The Magid asked him, "What is this week's Parshah?" The boy answered, "Parshas Bo." The Magid then asked, "Why does it say: 'Bo el Pharaoh' (which literally means 'come to Pharaoh')? Shouldn't it say: 'Lech el Pharaoh' ('go to Pharaoh')?

The boy answered, "Bo means '***come with Me***.' Hashem was telling Moshe that He would go with him to Pharaoh!"

"***A person who lives with Emunah, and trusts in Hashem, will be saved in a manner that they could have never imagined." – R' Pinchas Koritzer Zt'l. .[Stories To Inspire]***

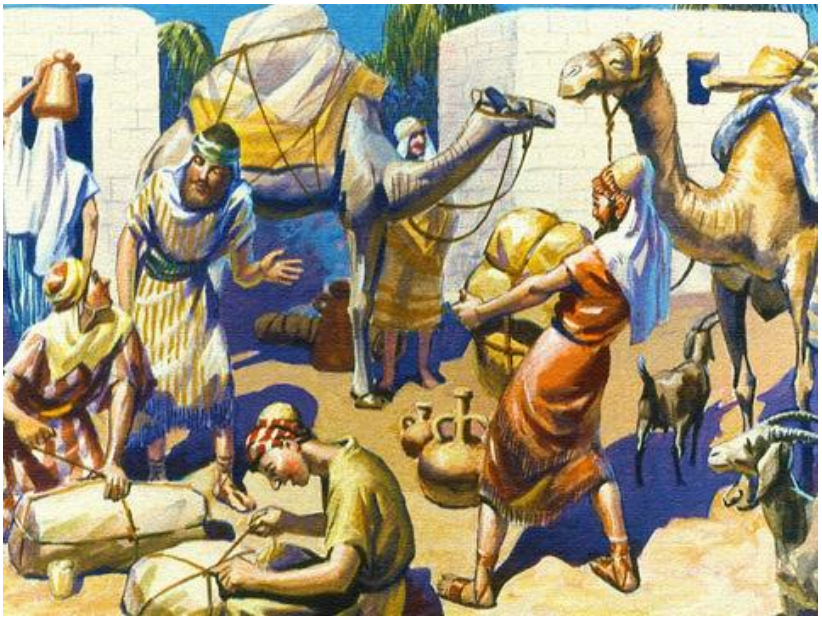
Divrei Torah Ba'er Heitev

Rabbi Nochum of Shtefinesht ZY"A once said to the Chasidim gathered around him: "If we could hang all our troubles and sorrows on pegs, and we were allowed to choose those we liked best, each of us would take back his own, for other people's would seem even more difficult to bear." • Sipurei Chasidim.

They "Borrowed" as Payment for Their Work

דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב

'Please, speak into the ears of the people, and let them borrow, each man from his friend and each woman from her friend, silver vessels…' (11:2)



Why did Hashem tell the Yidden to borrow vessels from the Egyptians? Why didn't they just take what they wanted?

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy"a (Sefer Kol Simcha) answers by quoting the Gemara (Sanhedrin 91A) that relates that Alexander the Great asked why the Jews never returned the items they took from the Mitzriyim.

A man named Geviha ben Pesisah answered that the Egyptian booty was payment for the 210 years that the nation worked in Egypt.

Rav Bunim explains that had they taken the booty by force, they would have had to return it, as it would have been considered to have come into their hands in a forbidden way. When one steals from a non-Jew, it is forbidden to keep the items that were stolen. However, because they borrowed the items, it came into their hands in a permitted way. Therefore they were permitted to keep it as payment for their years of work.

"When something disappointing happens, yet we believe that it is from Hashem – for the good. This Awareness will rebuild the Beis Hamikddash!" – R' Elimelech Biderman. [Stories To Inspire]

Some Egyptians Wore Jewish Clothes

וְשָׁאֲלָה אִשָּׁה מִשְּׁכֶנְתָּהּ וּמִגָּרַת בֵּיתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב וּשְׂמָלֹת וְשַׂמְתֶּם עַל־בְּנֵיכֶם וְעַל־בְּנֹתֵיכֶם. The pasuk (3:22) says that the Yidden borrowed clothing from the Egyptians for their sons and daughters.

Rav Pinchos of Koretz zy"a (Imrei Pinchos) asks how the Jews could wear Egyptian clothing? We know that the Jews never changed their style of clothing as long as they were in Egypt. If so, what would they do with non-Jewish clothes?

While it is true that the Jews never changed their clothing, some of the Egyptians did. Some of them had begun wearing Jewish-style clothing, and the Jews were able to use those garments.

It Looked Like He Was Offering a Pesach So He Said Hallel



Sefer Abir Haroim relates that **Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Kaliv zy"a** once travelled to spend Shabbos Parshas Bo with his rebbi, **Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk.**

Rav Elimelech requested from Yitzchok Isaac that while he was saying divrei Torah, he should go out of the room, stating that he had a specific reason for this. However, Rav Yitzchok Isaac wanted to hear the divrei Torah and he did not agree to leave the room. - When Rav Elimelech began saying words of Torah, Rav Yitzchok Isaac jumped up and started to run back and forth. He began to scream the words of Hallel in a loud voice.

All of the other people there were very confused and had no idea what he was doing, until he explained that when Rav Elimelech said divrei Torah, he brought so much kedusha down to this world that

he looked like he was bringing a Korban Pesach. That is why he began to recite Hallel!

In a similar vein, it is written in Sefer Maaseh Hashem (Dinov) that the author of **Sefer Yagel Yehuda zt"l** related that he heard the following story:

The Ateres Tzvi related that he once spent Shabbos Parshas Bo in the court of **Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov zy"a**. During the tish, Rav Moshe Leib spoke about topics related to yetzias Mitzrayim. His words created a tremendous hisorerus, to the extent that everyone who was there felt like it was the night of Pesach.

Even though the chametzdige challos were on the table, it felt like Pesach, and Rav Moshe Leib recited Hallel with everyone who was present. The Ziditchoiver Rebbe concluded by saying, "Everyone was so inspired that they literally felt like it was Pesach. But I knew that it wasn't Pesach."



"אין צייר כאלוקינו" - (מסכת ברכות דף י/א)

"There is no artist like Hashem. He is painting a mural that takes 6000 years. The story of creation, the story of humanity and the story of Klal Yisrael. It is a very long mural. He is painting this amazing thing called history.

If you've ever seen a painting or a mural and you go very close and stick your nose into the painting, you won't see much, because you are so limited by your perspective - you don't see the whole thing. You have to step back and then you can begin to appreciate the artwork. That is the problem with human beings. We try to figure things out, but unfortunately, we're limited by time and space, and we don't see the whole picture." ~ Rabbi Yissocher Frand.



Why Is the Firstborn Donkey Holy? - Yehuda Shurpin



Peter Chamor (Redeeming The Firstborn Donkey)

קַדֶּשׁ־לִי כָל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל־רֶחֶם (13:2)

Many are familiar with the mitzvah of *pidyon haben*, redeeming the firstborn son on the thirtieth day of his life. Additionally, there is the related mitzvah that the firstborn male offspring of any kosher domesticated mammal (cows, sheep, goats, etc.) is sacred, and is to be given to a *kohen*, who eats it as a sacrifice in Jerusalem. Nowadays, since there is no Holy Temple in which to bring sacrifices, the *kohen* waits until the animal develops a blemish that disqualifies it for a sacrifice, and then it may be consumed like any other kosher animal.

And then there is the donkey.

The donkey is unique in that unlike all other non-kosher animals, there is a special mitzvah called *peter chamor,* redeeming the firstborn male donkey.

Since this is one of the rarest mitzvahs to be performed nowadays (how many Jews do you know who own donkeys?), before getting to the question of why the donkey is unique, we will give a very basic overview of the mitzvah.

Holy Donkey!

From its birth until it is redeemed, a firstborn donkey is considered to be holy, on a similar level as an animal designated as a Temple sacrifice. Hence, you may not ride it or have it carry something for you; it is even forbidden to use its hair.

The obligation to redeem it lasts from its birth until its death. However, it is ideal that the mitzvah be done as soon as possible.

The owner takes a sheep or goat (or an item worth the full value of the donkey), makes a blessing, and states that he is redeeming the donkey in exchange for the lamb, kid or other item of value.

Afterward, the sheep or goat is given to the *kohen*. Once the donkey is redeemed, both it and the item it was exchanged for lose all holiness, and the respective owners can do with them as they please.

Why the Donkey?

Addressing the question of why the donkey was singled out, as opposed to horses, mules, camels or other non-kosher work animals, the Talmud explains that:

a) It is a *gezirat hakatuv*—a Divine edict with no logic or reason provided; and

b) The donkey was rewarded for assisting the Jewish people during the Exodus from Egypt by carrying the riches the people had been given by their erstwhile neighbours. This was crucial, as it facilitated the fulfilment of G-d's promise to Abraham that his descendants would leave Egypt with great wealth.

The Midrash explains that the reason for the mitzvah of *peter chamor* is that we should always remember the miracle that G-d did for us during the Exodus from Egypt, when He killed all of the Egyptian firstborn—who are compared to donkeys in the Book of Ezekiel—and saved all the Jewish firstborn. Some add that this is why we exchange it with a sheep, since the Jewish people are compared in Scripture to a sheep.

The Chassidic masters explain that the Hebrew word for "donkey,"- חמורis linked to the word for "material," - חמור. Thus, in redeeming the firstborn donkey, a non-kosher animal, we learn to uplift even the coarsest elements of the material world, even that which appears to be negative.

This, the Rebbe explains, is also why the prophet Zechariah describes Moshiach as one who rides a donkey. For Moshiach will usher in an era when the chomer, materiality, has become refined and transformed to the point that is a positive force in our Divine service, just as the most spiritual of creations.

May we merit the ultimate Redemption speedily in our days!

Why the Rush to Leave Egypt? By Yossy Goldman



Do you know why we eat matzah on Passover? It all started back in Egypt.

וַיְהִי בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יָצְאוּ כָּל־צִבְאוֹת ה' מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם "*And on that very day all the legions of G-d left Egypt.*"[1] Rashi, quoting the Midrash, explains: "*When the time of redemption arrived, G-d did not delay the Exodus even for as much as the blink of an eye.*"

Indeed, they left Egypt in haste.

"*They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened, for they were driven out of Egypt and they could not delay.*" וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהְמֵהַּ

Why couldn't they wait for the dough to rise?

Do you know how long it takes for dough to rise? Over the years, my wife has taught many hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of women to bake challah. Her home-baked challah is legendary in our community. So one day I asked her: How long does it take for dough to rise? About three or four hours, she said.

I don't get it. Our ancestors had spent 210 years in Egypt. They couldn't wait a few more hours? Why the mad rush?

Conventional thinking suggests that they needed to hurry before the Egyptians changed their minds and reneged on their offer of freedom.

Really? After suffering through 10 devastating plagues, being wiped out physically, financially, and emotionally, would the Egyptians really want still more trouble? Was that a realistic concern?

Surely they were so badly beaten that they couldn't wait to say "good riddance" to those who had made their lives so miserable. Pharaoh himself was a broken man with no more appetite for resistance. He'd lost his own son in the final devastating plague.

So the question remains, why the rush?

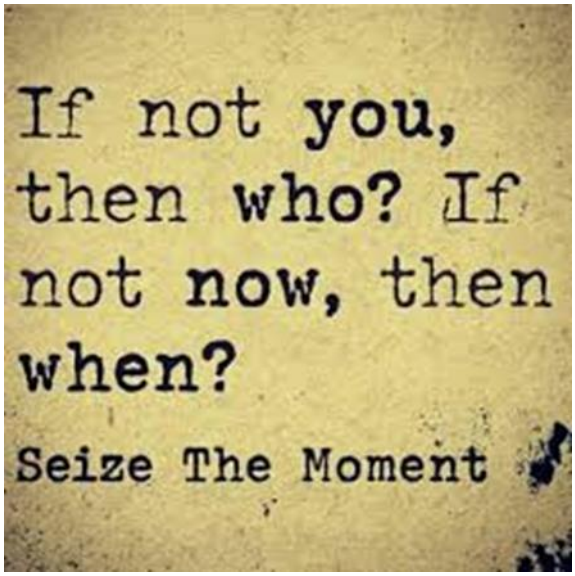
The Rebbe offers a novel approach to this difficulty, arguing that it wasn't the Egyptians who were the problem—it was us!

G-d wasn't concerned that the Egyptians might have gone back on their offer of liberation, but that the Israelites themselves might have had a change of heart.

"Better the devil you know … " goes the old proverb. It must have been quite a leap of faith for the long-time slaves to leave the infrastructure of Egypt and head out into an unknown wilderness.

I can just imagine their thinking: *Here, we have a roof over our heads. True, there are no luxuries, but we do get fed every day. What will we have in the wilderness? No food, no shelter, not even water. We'd have to be crazy to leave an established country and wander off into uncharted territory. Even with all our problems, are we not better off just staying here in Egypt?*

When they reached the Red Sea and realized they were trapped, there were many who clamoured to return to Egypt. Better to be a living slave than a dead free man?



So, when the moment of the Exodus arrived, it was a dramatic window of opportunity. Had they not grasped it with both hands at that very moment, it's possible that these and other doubts might have crept in and delayed the whole experience. Thank G-d, they did seize the opportunity.

Frankly, it can happen to all of us. We all get comfortable in our little slaveries, and daily drudgeries. They might not be ideal, but they are far less intimidating than the challenges that come with new opportunities. There's an old Yiddish proverb that expresses this idea: "*May we never get used to what we **can** get used to.*" With the passage of time, we become weary, worn down, and what was previously intolerable becomes all too acceptable.

We've all experienced missed opportunities at various points in our lives. The house we could have bought, the stocks we could have sold, even the man or woman we could have married. But we hesitated, and as another old proverb goes, "*He who hesitates is lost.*"

In our Jewish lives, too, we should take advantage of the many opportunities now available to us that we may not have had when we were younger. Regular Torah study, more time in the synagogue, a new mitzvah. There is so much on offer today that we easily can make up for any lost opportunities.

It takes courage to grasp the moment and embrace new visions and horizons. When opportunity knocks, let's not miss our chance.

Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results.

Torah Compilations with Yossi

Were we liberated from one form of servitude, only to enter another?

In Parshat Bo, the Torah describes how Hashem commanded Moshe to appear before Pharaoh, King of Egypt. There he demanded in Hashem's name: **שלח את עמי ויעבדני** '***Let my people go so that they shall serve me***!' Thanks to the miraculous intervention of Hashem we were redeemed from servitude in Egypt and, seven weeks later at Mount Sinai, we embraced a life full of Torah and mitzvot – an existence filled with servitude to Hashem.

Some people might wonder: what kind of freedom is this? Are we so free if there is a long list of do's and don'ts that we must comply with at all times?

The Mishna in Pirkei Avot puts it as follows: - **שֶׁאֵין לְךָ בֶּן חוֹרִין אֶלָּא מִי שֶׁעוֹסֵק בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה** -'*There is actually no-one who is as free as the person who studies Torah.*' (6:2)

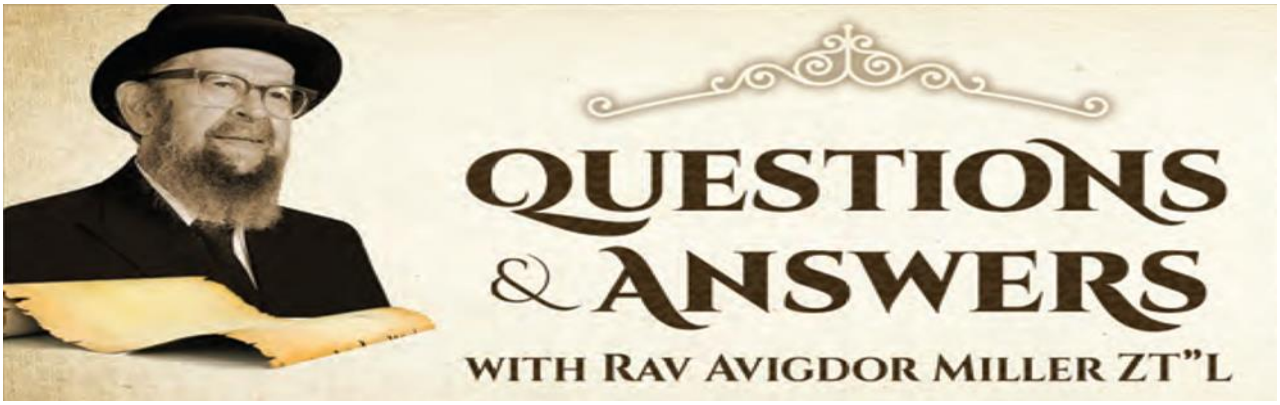
How can we understand this? One of my favourite quotations, which is anonymous, goes as follows: "***The slave to the compass has freedom of the seas. The rest must sail close to the shore***."



The Torah is our compass. The Torah provides us with an opportunity to lead lives of meaning and joy. There is so much room for individuality and spontaneity within the context of the 613 do's and don'ts of the Torah.

Every responsible educator and parent knows how crucially important it is to raise our children to reach their own personal potential; to be able to achieve what they can as unique personalities within the context of a loving and healthy discipline.

Without such discipline, without any inspirational compass, it is possible for a person to abuse their freedom and for their lives to be filled with mayhem. We have so much to be grateful for. Thanks to the freedom that we attained when we left Egypt we were able at Sinai to receive the Torah and thanks to the Torah, we can utilize our freedom responsibly because the Torah is our eternally true and inspirational guide and compass.





When someone gets sick or hurt, he shouldn't blame Hashem, but he should look to blame himself for not taking care of himself properly. But shouldn't we be looking back to see which sins we did to cause Hashem to punish us with the cold or the virus or whatever it is?

Absolutely. Absolutely! **יפשפש במעשיו**. He must search out his deeds. **אם רואה אדם שיסורין באין עליו יפשפש במעשיו**– *If a person sees that troubles are coming upon him, he should search out his ways and his deeds* (Brachos 5a). But among the **פשפוש** that he searches should be, "What did I do to neglect my health? Am I getting enough sleep? Am I dressed warmly? Am I eating properly? Am I careful when I cross the street?"

You shouldn't neglect those sins either. A person is responsible to take care of himself. Hashem says, "I gave you a body and you have no right to neglect it." So while you're searching out your

deeds remember that this as well is a very important subject to look for. Because often you are the cause of your sickness because you don't take care of yourself. And that's also a sin against Hashem.



If I see a frum Jew who's not so good, should I love him for being a Jew or hate him for the bad things that he's doing?



If you see a frum Jew who is doing something wicked, let's say. Let's say a frum Jew is standing in line in front of the movies. Of course he's not a frum Jew. But suppose you see a Jew with a yarmulke standing in line in front of the movies. So you say, "Ah, a yarmulke! Ah! That's wonderful!" A yarmulke means "oter Yisroel b'sifarah, You crown Yisroel with glory"; and that tifarah, that glory, means you believe in Hashem.

Anybody who wears a yarmulke, he's demonstrating, "I believe in Hashem." Even a small little yarmulke; so he's a modeh b'miktzas, but he's still one of ours. That already is very great. But it's a pity that he's taking that crown and he's taking it into a stable full of manure, full of tzoah. So you have two attitudes: here, he's a meshugene or a shoteh; he's wasting his money. Suppose a man stands in line for a chance to dip his head in a trough full of manure. Only four dollars today! A special! You get a headful of manure! So he's a meshugene. It's a pity on him. At the same time you should think he's wearing a yarmulke too. So it's a problem; you have to have both attitudes.

"Whenever feeling downcast, each person should vitally remember, 'For my sake, the entire world was created.'" —Baal Shem Tov

My Word Is A Word - Etz Hachaim – R' C T Blau

When Rav Boruch Ber once returned home from a trip to America, Rav Boruch Ber told people that he learned 3 words in English when he was in America. "What were they?" they asked Rav Baruch Ber. Rav Baruch Ber responded "***I vill try***". "And what do those words mean?" Rav Baruch Ber replied, "Gornisht!"

How much do we value a word given? The way Rav Baruch Ber described the meaning of the words "I vill try" was that by many it means absolutely nothing! Gornisht mit gornisht, is obviously not the correct mehalech. We have to understand and realize that a word is a word is a word! No two ways about it.

Daf HaYomi just finished Nedarim. In Nedarim we learned that the entire background of Nedarim is based on the pasuk **לא יחל דברו** , which is all about the importance of staying true to our word and the havoc caused by one who does not keep to his word **ח״ו** .



I once heard a story from **מו״ר Rav Moshe Ahron Stern זצוק״ל** that happened with the **Imrei Emes of Ger**. The Imrei Emes once planned to go together with another person to the **כותל** . They were planning to meet at 5:00.

At 5:05, the other person still had not come, the **אמרי אמת** told his Gabbai that they would wait 2 more minutes for him to come. 2 minutes passed, and the he had not come, so the **אמרי אמת** took a taxi to the **כותל** on his own.

About half an hour later the other person came to the Kosel. The **אמרי אמת** asked the other person if he knew the time when they had

made up to meet. He answered, "Yes, 5:00." The **אמרי אמת** asked, "Why weren't you there?" He answered, "I am **למעלה מן הזמן** !" I am above time!

The **אמרי אמת** replied, "You are not **למעלה מן הזמן** . You're **למטה מן הזמן** . If you would know what time is, and the **חשיבות** of time, you would not say that you are **למעלה מן הזמן** "

I think there is an additional lesson to be derived from this story. That is, the idea that a word is a word and if you make up a set time to meet someone it is not correct to deviate from your word.

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstien related from a great Gadol that if a Battim Macher **commits to you** to give your Tefillin by a specific day and he is not true to his word he is not considered someone who is worthy to make your Tefillin in the first place merely because of the fact that he is not someone who is true to his word.

Rav Zilberstien brings a story about wealthy fellow who hired a sofer to write a sefer Torah for him on condition that it would **be ready** on time for his father's yahrtzeit. The sofer agreed and he started writing. As the date got closer, the sofer was working very hard. A few days before the date the sofer finally finished yet after it was checked by computer there found a number of mistakes. Unfortunately, he could not manage to have the corrections ready on time.

The sofer decided to be dishonest and pretend that it was ready. The Sefer Torah was given over and the Hachnasas Sefer Torah was done b'sheerah u'vizimra.

During the week after the Hachnasas Sefer Torah the sofer worked tirelessly, fixing the last mistakes without anyone knowing. The sofer did not manage to fix everything before Shabbos when the Shul was going to be using the Torah. He was too embarrassed to tell anyone and instead caused many brachos levatalos Hashem Yerachem!

A while after this story the sofer wanted to repent and he approached Rav Zilberstein and asked what he must do to repent. When the question went to **Rav Chaim Kanievsky זצוק״ל** Rav Chaim said that since the Soifer did not keep true to the deal that he would have the Sefer Torah ready on time for the yahrtzeit, he must give the money back to the wealthy man or get mechillah. A word is a word!



Sometimes people borrow money and promise to pay it back at a certain time yet when it comes the time they act as if it is normal to ignore the return of the payment on the exact date that they made up.

Rav Zilberstein brings yet another story about a Yid who borrowed money from Rav Chaim Kanievsky **זצוק״ל** and promised to return the money on a specific date at a specific time of day.

The day was about to come and the fellow saw he could not manage to repay it on time. He approached Rav Chaim and asked to make a new date instead. Rav Chaim apologized and told the fellow, "I relied so much on your word that I already told someone else to come to me a half an hour after the given time you told me you would pay it back so that he would be able to borrow the money."

This has to be the mehalech and the seriousness of our word.

The Ben-Ish-Chai brings a story about a fellow who soon after he got married his father-in-law promised to give him 300 gold coins on erev Pesach. The fresh son-in-law, also a Talmid Chochom, trusted his shver, and he borrowed money to buy whatever he needed for

Yom Tov and he promised everyone that he would pay them back on erev Pesach.

Erev Pesach came and an envelope came from his shver. However, there was no money at all in the envelope! All that was there was a short letter written by his shver "I wish you a chag sameach and I bless you with wealth and money and honour…. Yours truly, the Shver."

The son-in-law was not too happy that the money was nowhere to be seen and he went to his shver to get an explanation. He said to his shver "I do not need letters, it was money that you promised me that I expected to see, what happened to the money?"

The shver smiling from ear to ear replied, "I thought I took a son-in-law who is a Talmid Chochom who would have the intellect to understand my intentions of my letter!" "I feel terrible to disappoint you, but I would be thrilled if you could explain to me what is it that I was meant to understand by your letter."

The Shver explained "Everyday, I say a tefilla -

רבון העולמים אתה ציוויתנו להקריב קרבן התמיד שיכפר בעדנו, ועתה יהא שיח שפתותינו חשוב ומקובל ומרוצה לפניך, כאילו הקרבנו קרבן התמיד

This, too, was my intention by you. Since I can't pay you what I promised I meant to give you my blessing and say to you that it should be to you **כאילו** I sent you the money that I promised you…"

The son-in law, a Talmid Chochom, was not very pleased by this. He asked his shver, 'On the seder plate we have an egg as a **זכר** for the chagigah and a **זרוע** as a **זכר** for the **קרבן פסח** .

Why don't we have another spot on the seder plate as a **זכר** for the **רכוש גדול** that Hashem gave the Yidden?

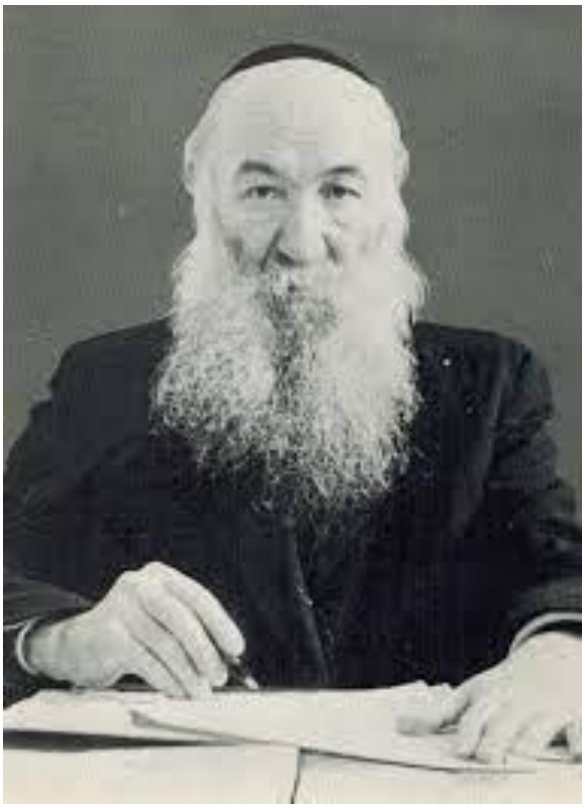
The son-in-law explained **זכר** and **יהי רצון כאילו** is something that could **only** and only apply when it comes to bein adam l'Makom. Since nowadays we can't actually bring korbanos to Hashem, so we can ask

Hashem to accept our korbanos ***as if*** we brought them and we **can** make a zecher for them as well. Whereas, when it comes to what we have and what we can afford when it comes to our *rechush* there are no zecher's and there are no **כאילו** 's.

If we made a promise bein adam l'chaveiro and gave our word to someone, there are no two options or **כאילו** 's, we have only one option - **TO KEEP TO OUR WORD!**

Reb Yoel On The Parsha - רבי זלמן סורוצקין

כי גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתמהמה "...*since they were driven out of Mitzrayim and could not delay*..." פרק יב פסוק לט



Klal Yisrael were not able to remain in *Mitzrayim* any longer. *Chazal* teach us that had they remained there for even another moment, they would have sunk to the depths of impurity, reaching the fiftieth level of *tumah*.

Question: During their entire exile in *Mitzrayim*, *Klal Yisrael* continued to hold on to their distinct Jewish national identity. They did not change their dress, their names, or their language. If they could maintain these three things, why were they not able to ward off the threat of assimilation?

Furthermore, our present *galus* has lasted over two thousand years. Though we are not perfect, we do not sense an imminent threat of spiritual extinction looming over us. What difference is there between our present day hard times and the hard labor of our ancestors in *Mitzrayim*?

Answer: The answer lies in one word: **Torah**. In *Mitzrayim*, the *Yidden* had not yet received the Torah, which is the only true protective shield against assimilation. Despite their allegiance to the three nationalistic traits that distinguished them from Egyptian society and ultimately were their merit for the *Geulah*, they would have assimilated if they had remained in *Mitzrayim* one more moment!

Jewish "nationalism" without Torah is not a sufficient safeguard against spiritual extinction. Our only hope for our Jewish spiritual survival is Torah. - ***Protected by Torah, we shall never assimilate.***



Saying Of The Week With Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"***Learn to disconnect from your money, for it controls the mind of people***."

During the plague of *choshech* (darkness), Pharaoh told Moshe (Shemos 10:24) : **לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה רַק צֹאנְכֶם וּבְקַרְכֶם יֻצָּג** "***go but leave your sheep and cattle***".

The Ramban says the reason for this was that if the Jews were trying to run away, they'd now be unwilling to do so as their main assets were their sheep/cattle. Pharaoh used a strategy to entrap here that has stood the test of time. People are so attached to their money that it controls their entire lives. Let's not allow our attachment to money veer us onto a path against our Creator. We must follow His laws even if it means suffering a financial loss. Let's try to think about the issues of possessing money and how it isn't the source of happiness. This way we can always follow in Hashem's ways.

Parshah Pearls *(adapted from the Ba'al ha'Turim and P'ninim mi'Shulchan ha'Gro)*

וַיַּעַל הָאַרְבֶּה עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּנַח בְּכֹל גְּבוּל מִצְרָיִם And They (the Locusts) Rested, *"And they encamped within all the borders of Egypt"* (10:14).

The word "va'yonach" is also written in Yisro (20:11) ***"va'yonach ba'yom ha'Shevi'i (and He rested on the seventh day)".*** To teach us, says the **Ba'al ha'Turim**, that the locusts rested on the Shabbos, giving Paroh a day of respite.

Alternatively, it hints at Chazal, who have said that the obligation of blowing the Shofar and fasting when there is a plague of locusts, is confined to weekdays, but does not apply to Shabbos.

They went Out on Pesach

וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ פַּרְעֹה לֵךְ מֵעָלָי – *"And Paroh said to him, Go away from me*" 10:28.

The numerical value of **מֵעָלָי** is equal to that of **בפסח**, says the Ba'al ha'Turim, and that is precisely when they left Egypt.

Let's Get Practical - Acquiring Bitachon

The Egyptians relied on the Nile and it was smitten first by Hashem. As the **Chovos Halevavos** explains, "something you rely on will not last".

Bitachon means that we rely exclusively on Hashem. This week, I will attempt to acquire this attitude of relying only on Hashem. Every day during davening, when I say the words **וְלֹא נֵבוֹשׁ כִּי בְךָ בָטָחְנוּ** – "***let us not lose out because we trust in You***", I will bli neder take a moment to reflect on this great lesson, that we rely only on Him.



The Ten Makkos And Yetzias Mitzrayim

These Parshiyos teach us an important lesson for all time. Pharaoh's evil decrees and the trials and tribulations of the Jews during the Egyptian exile did not come about because Pharaoh had so decided of his own accord. Rather, the Holy One blessed be He hardened Pharaoh's heart, eventually causing all of His wonders and miracles to be revealed.

The lesson we can learn from this is that everything comes from Hashem; when a Jew encounters something that prevents him from properly serving Hashem, this is meant only as a test, whose purpose is to awaken the powers hidden within the person's soul. When the person overcomes this test, and perseveres in his holy mission in life, he is then rescued from all difficulties. **(R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson *zt"l*)**

Maaseh Avos Siman L'Bonim

The Ramban at the end of the parsha, beautifully explains that the whole purpose of miracles in this world is to dispel the myth that there is no G-d, or there is a G-d but He does not know or care about what goes on in this world. This was the philosophy of the Egyptians. They either denied the existence of Hashem or denied Divine Providence.

Thus, Hashem made open miracles which over-ruled the "laws of nature" to establish once and for all that He is the Master over all and cares what people are doing. He punishes individuals who disobey Him and rewards those who listen to Him.

We are commanded to remember the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim with many mitzvos, because through contemplating their meaning, one will come to Emunah in Hashem. Those who believe in and follow foreign philosophies "have no portion in the Torah of Moshe."

The Chiddushei Harim once told over the following story. Many years ago, a great warrior arose, a Cossack, who became a high-valued minister in the government. Due to his newly prominent position, he was gifted with an Egyptian-Arabian horse, one of the most beautiful and rarest horses in the world.



The Cossack prized his new horse and would not let it out of his sight. He washed it and combed its hair and would ride around town enjoying people's awed reactions. It happened that he needed to travel to another town on government business but he refused to let his horse out of his sight.

He hired a watchman to accompany him on his trip and while he slept at a local inn, the watchman was required to stand in the stable and literally never take his eyes off the horse. He explained to the guard that his life depended on the well-being and safety of his horse and he even offered a few suggestions how to keep himself awake during the long night hours.

"Perhaps you can come up with some deep and philosophical question to mull over throughout the night. This way, your mind will remain active and fresh and you will not fall asleep on the job!" The guard nodded in agreement.

The minister went to sleep but after two hours, he could not stay in bed. He was too worried about his horse and if it was being watched properly. Stealthily, he slipped into the stable and was happy to note that the watchman was wide awake, staring directly at his horse. "My good man," said the minister, "Did you come up with a philosophical question?"

The guard replied, "Sir, I did as you told. I am contemplating a deep and mysterious problem. The problem is this: when one bangs a nail into a wall, there remains a hole in the wall. I was wondering, where did the wood from the wall go?"

The minister smiled. "That is a deep and penetrating question. Carry on and soon you shall have an answer." He went back upstairs and got into his bed. After two more hours of sleep, he again awoke and was having misgivings. He needed to check on his valuable horse again and tiptoed silently back into the stable.

Once again, the watchman was standing erect, facing the horse, almost looking it directly in the eyes. "Well," said the minister, obviously pleased, "you are doing a fine job watching my horse. What interesting question is occupying your brain now?"

The guard bowed reverently. "My lord, I was wondering; when one eats a bagel, it has a hole in the middle. After finishing the entire bagel, where does the hole go?"

The minister was impressed. "Excellent question. I'll leave you to it ..." The minister went to sleep for the remainder of the night. In the morning, he woke with a start and needed to see his horse. He ran down to the stable where he found the watchman sitting on a chair, head in his hands, his prized horse nowhere to be found. "What is going on here? What have you been thinking about all this time? Where is my horse?"

The watchman replied, "Your honour, this question is the hardest of them all. I simply cannot come up with an answer. How is it that I am

standing here all night, watching your horse, and yet, somehow, it was stolen from right under my nose?!"

"This is the way of heretical philosophy," explained the Gerrer Rebbe. "A person thinks of all different explanations for his existence, what makes a human being operate, and how the world continues to run. All the while, as he thinks his lofty thoughts, his G-d, his Creator, the Master of the World, is stolen out from right under his nose!

A person must know with a firm belief that Hashem runs the world and that his job is to be a 'Tamim' - not subscribe to philosophies of apikorsis!"

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



One of the purposes of the plagues in Mitzrayim was so that all future generations can retell the story to their children in order that they appreciate Hashem (10:1). **לְמַעַן שִׁתִּי אֹתֹתַי אֵלֶּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ**.

Rav Yaakov Galinsky, zt"l, notes that it is necessary to give over these stories because a story has the power, when presented properly, to make the listeners actually experience it as though it is

happening right now. Even though we know most of the basic details of the experience in Mitzrayim, when we hear it as a story, we are able to gain more, and actually feel it as if it were presently happening.

The Avnei Neizer points out that the **Targum Onkelos** on the words 'V'higadeta L'Vincha', to tell it over to your children, is 'U'sechavi Li'vrach'- show it to your children. By telling a story we can actually make our children feel that they are experiencing leaving Mitzrayim!

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Rav Elya Dessler, zt"l, would give his Talmidim a feeling for the eternity of Olam Haba. "Imagine that you are at the largest beach in the world, and Hashem grants you the time to watch one seagull visit once every thousand years, which comes to the beach, and picks up only a single grain of sand at a time, and flies away with it. Can you imagine how much time it would take for the seagull to empty the entire beach of all its sand?

However, as much time as it would take for the seagull to do this, it is still nothing when compared to the eternity of Olam Haba. Olam Haba is forever, and it is infinitely longer than it would take to clear the beach of sand.

With this thought," Rav Dessler said, "one should weigh the simple, fleeting pleasure one gets in this world, especially pleasure that comes from Aveirah, and weigh it against the reward that one will get in Olam Haba, which will last for eternity!"

Working on our Middos



Rav Yitzchok Hutner, zt"l, Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, developed a close relationship with countless Talmidim. They would call their Rebbe, the Rosh Yeshivah, to share good news with him, and he would rejoice like a father.

On one such occasion, a Talmid called to report that his wife had just given birth to a baby girl. Uncharacteristically, Rav Hutner responded, "Yes, please call me back in fifteen minutes."

When the Talmid called back, Rav Hutner said, "When you called earlier, I had a visitor with me who still does not have any children after many years of marriage. Had I rejoiced over the birth of your child in front of him, it might have caused him pain over his situation. Now, I am alone, and I can respond properly. Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!"

Nefesh Shimshon – from the teachings of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l – *Afraid to Go to Pharaoh*

***וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה* 'Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh."** (*Shemos* 10:1)

Here *Moshe Rabbeinu* is commanded to go to Pharaoh, yet the verse says, "Come to Pharaoh."

Chazal say in the ***Zohar*** on this verse that *Moshe Rabbeinu* was afraid to go to Pharaoh, so *Hashem* said to him, "Come with Me."

The question is why, when it came to *makas arbeh,* the plague of locusts, did *Moshe Rabbeinu* need special help from *Hashem* in order to go to Pharaoh? Why was he suddenly afraid?

Early Torah sources say that Moshe's fear stemmed from the fact that seven plagues had already gone by. The number seven expresses nature, whereas the number eight expresses the supernatural, that which is above nature.

Moshe saw that seven *makos* didn't make Pharaoh budge. In other words, nothing related to the natural world was capable of moving him. Pharaoh must be connected to *lemaalah min hateva,* to the supernatural. Moshe was thus afraid to fight him, and *Hashem* needed to come with him, so to speak.

Since Pharaoh is in truth the *Yetzer Hara,* we can learn from here that the *Yetzer Hara* has supernatural power. This explains why *Chazal* say: If *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* would not help a person, he could not overcome the *Yetzer Hara.*

This is why *Hashem* said to Moshe, "Come with Me to Pharaoh." Only by means of *Hashem's* Torah, which is the antidote to the *Yetzer Hara,* can a person defeat him.

Tidbits by Rabbi Ira Zlotowitz

וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כֵּן עָשׂוּ "*And the Bnei Yisrael went and did as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon, so they did*" (Shemos 12:28)

Rashi explains that the words **כֵּן עָשׂוּ** - "***so they did***" refer to Moshe and Aharon specifically, saying that they, as well, fulfilled Hashem's commandments. The question is obvious: Why does the pasuk need to say that great people like Moshe and Aharon performed this Mitzvah?

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that the primary chinuch we give our children, and those around us, does not derive from what we preach, but rather from what we practice. The Torah is teaching that even Moshe and Aharon - who were the primary teachers of Torah to Klal Yisrael - influenced Klal Yisrael primarily through their actions.

Although a private person may not consider himself to be a mechanech or teacher per se, the actions of an individual constantly guide the next generation and set an example for those who look to him for direction.



Limuday Moshe – R' Moshe Harris - The Dog

In describing our miraculous departure from Mitzrayim, the pasuk makes a special mention of dogs:

וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ־כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ לְמֵאִישׁ וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה לְמַעַן תֵּדְעוּן אֲשֶׁר יַפְלֶה יְהוָה בֵּין מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל – '***But to all the children of Israel, not one dog will whet its tongue against either man or beast, in order that you shall know that the L-rd will separate between the Egyptians and between Israel***.' (Shemos 11:7).

The meforshim explain, the silence of the dogs was a part of the distinction that Hashem made between the dying Mitzriyim and the nascent Jewish nation.

Chazal teach that the dogs were rewarded for their part in the miracle. As the Mechilta explains (on this pasuk), the Torah therefore assigns non-Kosher meat to dogs (Shemos 22:30). We throw them our non-Kosher meat because Hashem remembers their unnatural silence in Mitzrayim.

Saying the Pasuk, **ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב לשונו**, when Scared of a dog seems to be a widespread custom amongst Jews, that if they are in a situation when they are scared of a dog they recite this pasuk.

Is there any source for this? I have looked around to find a source and I haven't found anything. There is a Gemara in Berachos (56b) which says that if a person dreams about a dog, upon awaking he should immediately recite this pasuk.

Perhaps this is the source for the widespread minhag. If you are aware of any other source please let me know. Does saying the Pasuk, **ולכל בני ישראל לא יחרץ כלב לשונו**, help in other dangerous situations?

I heard from someone who used to walk **R' Avrohom Gurvitz shlita** (Rosh Yeshiva of Gateshead Yeshiva) to yeshiva on his way to give shiur, that he once asked him: If one is being confronted by a violent Geordie [non-Jew who lives in North-East England] and is scared, if he can say this pasuk?

He said that one could. However, presumably one must do more than just saying the pasuk, and one needs to have in mind that Hashem runs the world and Hashem is the one who is looking after him. The pasuk should just be used to help stimulate one's kavonah.

Personally, I would advise one to use the well-known segulah of **R' Chaim Volozhiner**, and to say and think about **אין עוד מלבדו** – how Hashem is the one and only G-d".

The Importance of Time



In this week's parsha we have the mitzvah of sanctifying the new moon **הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים** (12:2), which is the first mitzvah that Hashem gave to the Jewish people as a collective nation.

The Seforno explains that also included in this mitzvah was the most precious commodity of all – **time** – and the freedom to do with it whatever one desires. Until this point, the Jewish people were

enslaved and forced to spend their time fulfilling the demands of their Egyptian taskmasters. As Hashem prepared to take the Jewish people out of Egypt, He told Moshe to inform them that now for the first time, **החודש הזה** – this month, **לכם** – is yours, because you will have the freedom to use your time as you see fit.

Rav Avrohom Yaakov Pam notes that while this freedom was certainly welcome news to the Jewish slaves, it is also a double-edged sword, for with it comes responsibility. He suggests that just as the Sanhedrin was commanded to sanctify the new month, so too every Jew is expected to sanctify every moment of his day, and just as people devote significant time and energy to researching the best investments for their money, so too we should focus on how to achieve the maximum return on the precious time that we are granted by "investing" it wisely in Torah and mitzvos.

The concept of having control over our time, and being accountable for how we choose to spend it, is so essential that it is the message of the first mitzvah that Hashem gave to the Jewish people.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for us to utilize all of our time productively, as the **Rambam** writes (Hilchos Deios 6:1) that it is human nature to be influenced by our neighbours, and we are surrounded by a culture that does not value time and even has an expression called "killing time."

The Chasam Sofer was once asked, "How long does it take to become a gadol?" He replied that it takes only five minutes. The incredulous questioner asked him what one could possibly do in five minutes to become so learned.

The Chasam Sofer explained that every time there was a five-minute delay, such as when one is waiting in line at the grocery store, or waiting for a wedding to begin, most people allow that time to idly go to waste. The secret to reaching the highest levels of piety and becoming a gadol is to make a conscious effort to utilize all those five-minute intervals. The yetzer hara attempts to convince us that

this concept does not apply to us, because we will never be talmiday chachomim on the level of the Chasam Sofer.

This attitude is mistaken, as the mitzvah that teaches our responsibility to use our time productively was presented to the entire Jewish nation. Even if we are not on the level to utilize every spare moment for Torah study, our time can still be used for chesed and other mitzvos, as the following story illustrates:

Rav Pam was once told that an acquaintance of his had been hospitalized. Because Rav Pam was a Kohen, he was unable to visit his friend in the hospital due to the possibility of being exposed to the impurity transmitted by a dead body. Instead, Rav Pam wrote him a short note expressing his best wishes for a speedy recovery. Unfortunately, the man did not recover and passed away.

At the funeral, one of the speakers mentioned that the deceased had received a handwritten note from the well-known rosh yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, which he eagerly showed off to all of his visitors. When this was relayed to Rav Pam, instead of rejoicing at the support and inspiration that his letter had provided, he began to cry!

He explained that it took him less than five minutes to write the short message, yet it made such a difference in somebody else's life. This made him realize that he would now have to provide an accounting for every other five-minute period in his life and whether he had used it equally productively, a message that applies to each of us.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky who was most renowned for maximizing his time through his numerous learning sessions throughout the day, which enabled him to finish the entire Torah yearly. Because of his reputation for his encyclopedic knowledge, he used to receive a number of letters daily, asking for legal rulings and sources for various customs and opinions. He use to reply to each of them, but because he valued his time, he would respond with the epitome of terseness, often writing only one or two words, such as **אסור** -

forbidden, or **מותר** – permitted, or **עיון צריך** – it is unclear and needs further study".

R' Ozer Alport relates that he has a chavrusa who has a friend, who possesses the record for the shortest reply ever sent by Rav Chaim. After sending off his question, he anxiously came home each day to check if the reply had come.

When it finally arrived, he eagerly opened up the envelope only to discover that … it was completely blank inside! He knew that Rav Chaim was known for short replies to avoid wasting time, but in this case it seemed like he had wasted a stamp and an envelope.

However, on further reflection, the questioner recognized the true brilliance of Rav Chaim. He had recently gotten engaged, and because he had an unusual Yiddish name, he decided to write to Rav Chaim to confirm how his name should be spelled in the kesubah. He realized that when Rav Chaim addressed the envelope to him, he had already answered the question, and therefore there was no need for him to waste the time required to write his name a second time inside the envelope.

In addition to resolving the chosan's question about the proper spelling of his name, Rav Chaim also taught him an even more valuable lesson about the value of every second.

Chizuk In The Parsha

וּלְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אוֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם but for all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.

Chazal tell us that the *Yieden* were not affected by the **מכות** in **מצרים** . But only in rare instances, such as during **מכת ערוב** , does the **פסוק** explicitly make the distinction. One other such example was during **מכת חושך** , where there was petrifying darkness for the Egyptians but "for all of **בני ישראל** there was light." What is the significance of this particular distinction?

ר' ישראל מ'רוזין, the **נר ישראל**, explains this **פסוק** to be referring to the inner essence of every *Yied*. Just like a diamond deep beneath the ground, encrusted in mud and dirt, is still a priceless diamond, so too a *Yied's* **נשמה** is pure and precious.



Indeed, every morning, each and every *Yied*, regardless of what he's done or where he's been, recites confidently: **אלוקי נשמה שנתתה בי טהורה היא**, *the soul You have placed within me is pure.* But just like the diamond, it needs to be given a chance to shine. It needs to be brought out, polished and shined, and then placed in an appropriate, velvet setting in order for its full lustre to be appreciated.

So too the **נשמה**, with the necessary polishing and placement, can shine forth brilliantly no matter the darkness that might envelop it.

This was the point of the distinction of **מכת חושך**. While all around there was a heavy fog of blackness, for the *Yied*, for every *Yied* – **לכל בני ישראל** – there was light.

This idea provides a vital message of **חיזוק**. There is no such thing as a *Yied* of darkness. Deep down somew here, **במושבותם**, there is always light. It just needs to be brought out into the open so that it can shine forth and dispel the darkness…

בא אל פרעה

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu To "come to pharaoh" instead of "go to pharaoh", because when life presents us with difficult challenges ("going to pharaoh") Hashem says to us "come, we'll go through this together" ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.



וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו The L-rd said to Moshe: "Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants." 11:1



כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת־לִבּוֹ

Hashem means that Moshe would now understand that He had hardened Pharaoh's heart. The reason that Hashem reiterated this point was that the that nature of a person even the most obstinate one. Would have broken down by now if he had experienced what Pharaoh had endured during the last seven plagues. Only Hashem's intervention would have accounted for his continued refusal to let Klal Yisrael Leave.

Hashem did not, of course, interfere outright with Pharaoh's free will; rather He performed a miracle such as the wheat and spelt's resistance to the Makah of hail, to give Pharaoh a chance to delude himself that Hashem's power did not extend to those two categories of grain, thereby causing him to refuse Hashem's demand to free Klal Yisrael.

When Hashem said **כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי** He referred to that phenomenon the miracle of the wheat and spelt's survival. It is also possible that Hashem's words were directed primarily at Moshe who must have

despaired of the purpose of going to Pharaoh time and again without accomplishing his mission.

Hashem told Moshe that Pharaoh's stubbornness was not that of an ordinary human being, but the reason he could not respond as he should was that Hashem Himself had hardened his heart. The moment Hashem decided not to interfere with whatever motivated Pharaoh's decisions he would relent and send the Jewish people out of Mitzrayim which is indeed what hapened. - **וְאֶת־לֵּב עֲבָדָיו**

The reason Hashem also had to harden the heart of Pharaoh's advisers was so that they would not urge him to release the Jewish people. Hashem had to do so in order to bring the plagues not only on Pharaoh but on the whole nation of Miztrayim.

If Pharaoh had been the only one punished, this would not have made an impact on the people. Although Hashem had not mentioned this detail to Moshe at the beginning of his mission, and He had spoken only of hardening Pharaoh's heart at that time, He had told Moshe the essential part of what would happen.

Perhaps Hashem wanted to explain to Moshe at this stage that not only Pharaoh was at fault, but also his servants. He may have been prompted to do so now because of Moshe's gratuitous remark that both Pharaoh and his servants had not yet developed true fear of Hashem.

Moshe's comment had indicated that he had not previously understood the word "Pharaoh" to include also Pharaoh's entourage. Therefore Hashem explained to him that the obstinacy of the servants could also be explained by the same phenomenon as that of their master, i.e. that Hashem had interfered with their normal decision-making process. Up until now, Moshe had assumed that the servants were naturally obstinate whereas Pharaoh had only remained obstinate because Hashem had interfered.

Parsha pages

Blood on the Doorposts – The First Mitzvah of the Jewish House

How and where did the Jews place the blood on the doorposts?



The Jews had held onto the lambs for four days. Now in the afternoon of the 14th of Nissan they were to schecht the lambs, put the blood on the doorposts and then eat the lambs that night at their Sedar. At midnight, their house would be passed over during the killing of the first-born. They also already knew they were leaving Egypt the next day. The name of Passover comes from this action.

So, did they just slab the blood onto the door posts in any way it happened? Did they make it look like a Mezuzuah or a Menorah (Mitzvos of which they were not yet aware)? Did they put the blood on the inside so that the Jews would see it at the Sedar? Did they place the blood on the outside as is HaShem needed it in order to spare the first-borns in that house?

The Holy Zohar comments that the Mitzvah was for the Jews to spell out the four-letter name on the doorposts with the blood, so the destroying angel would not strike that house.

How could the Jews write the four-letter name knowing they were leaving the house the next day? The Egyptians would either

destroy or desecrate the homes which would be a disgrace to the name of HaShem.

Maharil Diskin suggests an answer from the difference of opinions in the **Mechilta**. The Medrash brings two opinions as where the blood was placed. One opinion was the blood was placed on the doorposts on the inside so that the Jews would see the Mitzvah during the Sedar and the night's other events. The other opinion was the blood was placed on outside so that the destroying angel would see the sign of the Jewish house.

He suggests that there is no argument, but the blood was placed in such a way as to fulfil both opinions. The four-letter name was written on the inside in mirror-image (left-to-right) and then would not be considered the actual inerasable Name. However, the blood or the destroyer angel had the ability to see/be seen on the outside in the correct format (right to left). Therefore, there would not be any disgrace to HaShem with this type of writing after the Jews left these houses.

The Lesson from this mitzvah is, that a Jewish house must contain and promote Jewish values such as Torah study, hospitality, etc. Yet, the house must "radiate" the light of Judaism **outside** to the public.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman -Torah Wellsprings

Chessed Generates Chessed

Moshe Rabbeinu instructed the Jewish People to collect valuables from their Egyptian neighbours before they left Egypt. **דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב** "***Let them borrow, each man from his friend and each woman from her friend silver vessels and golden vessels***" (11:2).

Why does the Torah use the word רֵעֵהוּ - friend, to describe the Egyptians.

The Vilna Gaon (Kol Eliyahu) zt'l explains that actually, Hashem requested that the Jewish nation should first borrow from one another clothing and valuable utensils. That created an atmosphere of chessed in the world. Only then, when they asked the Egyptians to lend them gold and silver utensils and expensive clothing did they agree.

This is because chessed generates more chesed. The chessed the Yidden did with one another swayed the Mitzrim's hearts to do kindness with the Jewish nation.

Makkos חֻשַּׁךְ



I was walking in the street in Yerushalayim, and I saw this young woman who looked distressed. I asked her, "What's the matter, is everything ok?"

She looked at me and said, "Rabbi, I'm Meorah Haim. I'm from the seminary here."

I said, "Yes, how are you?"

She responded, "Rabbi, you won't believe what just happened."

I said, "Tell me what happened, maybe I can help you."

She said, "It's such a ***baal haagan***, you won't believe it. I was on the bus, and I wanted to get off to do some shopping. I went to the bus baggage compartment to retreive my suitcase, but it slipped further in."

"So, I climbed into the baggage compartment to get it out, but the driver, bless him, closed the doors on me, with me still inside!

"It was pitch black – חָשֵׁךְ!"

Nowadays we have cameras in the baggage compartment, but back then, they didn't. חָשֵׁךְ! – Poor woman!

She started screaming, "**Driver, stop**!" But he obviously couldn't hear her. He continued driving down the street. She was rolling around with the suitcases, poor woman, inside this dark suffocating place.

"She said, Rabbi, I'm all sweating and scared, and you won't believe what happened next. All of a sudden, I heard another person – **a man**- who was also stuck in the luggage compartment! He screamed at me, 'Hey, what are you doing in here? Get out now! We're alone – **it's Yichud**!!'

I said, 'Yichud, are you crazy? I can't breathe, I'm suffocating, and all you are worried about is Yichud? Don't you think I would leave right now, if I could?'

"He screamed – Yichud – GET OUT!" I said, "Don't be daft!"

She told me, 'I was sitting there shaking as he screamed – **Yichud**.'

At the next bus stop, the driver opened the doors, and we both tumbled out.

I asked her, "Where is this lunatic?"

She said, "There he is, across the street."

I went up to him and said, "Are you Meshugge? You see a poor woman who got stuck in the luggage compartment, shaking from fear, and instead of attempting to calm her down, and telling her – Let's open people's suitcases and see what's inside…, or sitting down and sharing experiences, - You yell at her? Are you crazy?"

He told me, "But Rabbi, **it is** Yichud!"

I told him, "It's **not** Yichud – It's your first date on a shidduch!"

He told me, "What first date?!"

I said, "This is your first date! Give me your contact information please." I took his details and then asked her for hers. She asked me why I wanted them. I said, "***This lunatic is going to be your husband***!"

They met, and they are now happily married!!

I learned a very big *Yesod* – (secret) that day. What did she think while she was stuck in the luggage compartment?

"Why is Hashem doing this to me?" And she didn't know that behind it – was her shidduch!

Frum.Org -Michael Winner

וְגַם־עֵרֶב רַב עָלָה אִתָּם "***And also the mixed multitudes went up with them.***" (Shemos 12:38).

I saw a wonderful thing from **Rav Shimshon Pincus Zt'l** on this.



As we know, when the Jewish nation left Egypt, there was a large group of non-Jews who left with them. They saw and understood which side to stick with, and Moshe allowed them to come with. However, it was proven to be quite fatal, as they ended up starting several tragic episodes that took place before arriving in Eretz Yisroel.

Similarly, Shimshon, who was one of the Judges before the Beis HaMikdash; when he took Dalila as a wife, she became his

downfall. And so too with Shlomo HaMelech, when he took the daughter of Pharoah as a wife.

Each of these individuals thought that the time was right to "repair the world," by bringing together our world and theirs. And all three cases ended in tragedy.

The Midrash writes that Shlomo HaMelech wanted to marry Pharoah's daughter on the day he inaugurated the Beis HaMikdash, joining two simchos together. At that time, Hashem said, "Which 'simcha' should I accept? This one or that?" and decreed that eventually the Beis HaMikdash would be destroyed.

So, asks Rav Pincus, if Hashem was angry about this arrangement, why did He decide that the Beis HaMikdash was to be destroyed? What did the Beis HaMikdash "do" to deserve such a punishment? Rav Pincus answers that it was because of the Beis HaMikdash, which represents the unity of Hashem and the Jewish people, Shlomo HaMelech thought that it was the right time to bring the two worlds (Jewish and non-Jewish) together in harmony. Therefore, the "cause" of such thinking was to be destroyed.

Therefore, one must be careful, especially when on a "spiritual high" to be wary of "changing the world." When on such a high, a person often mistakenly believes that since he has "seen the light," he can show other "less enlightened" people the "true path"… even those who are really on a higher level than he! And in the end, he can harm other people. Not only that, but he then realigns his life to his new mission of fixing the world, while turning away from his true mission of fixing himself.

I believe the lesson is clear... sometimes the only world we can fix, is our own personal one.

With that, I wish you all a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita - בִּרְכַּת הַלְּבָנָה

The Arizal asks why do we dafka mention **שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם - עֲלֵיכֶם שָׁלוֹם** in the text of Kiddush Levanah?



The Gemara tells us that the sun and the moon were originally equal in size and luminosity. The moon said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "Master of the Universe! Is it possible for two kings to wear one crown?" How can two lumineres share the same spotlight? - He answered: "Go, then, and diminish yourself." Indeed, the moon shrunk in size and brightness.

We often get threatened by other peoples greatness. We think that there's not enough room in this world for two people to be equally successful.

The Arizal says, this is why we insert the Sholom Aleichem – to indicate that there is complete sholom between us. We are not jealous of each other! There is room for all of us to be successful! One person's success is not a threat to anyone else. This is why we wish peace on each other especially at this special time.

This is a fundamental lesson – There is enough room for all of us to be happy, successful and at peace!

[**The Magen Avraham** (Sanhedren) says differently: When we say תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָה וָפַחַד בִּגְדֹל זְרוֹעֲךָ - ***'Let fall upon them terror and dread at the greatness of Your arm…'*** The people near you might think that you are refering to them. To appease them just in case they get the wrong idea, we straight away say שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם to them!]

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Mothers have the particular power to impart emunah in their children

Before makas arbeh, Pharoah was about ready to permit the Yidden to serve Hashem in the desert. But he made a condition. He said

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם מִי וָמִי הַהֹלְכִים, וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בִּנְעָרֵינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵינוּ נֵלֵךְ בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבִבְנוֹתֵינוּ בְּצֹאנֵנוּ וּבִבְקָרֵנוּ נֵלֵךְ כִּי חַג ה' לָנוּ, וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם... לֹא כֵן לְכוּ נָא הַגְּבָרִים וְעִבְדוּ אֶת ה' כִּי אֹתָהּ אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים - *"[Pharaoh] said to them, 'Go, worship Hashem your G-d. Who and who are going?" Moshe said, "With our youth and with our elders we will go, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our cattle we will go, for it is a festival of Hashem to us.' … [Pharaoh] said to them… " Not so; let the men go now and worship Hashem, for that is what you request*." (10:8-11)

Pharaoh refused to let the women and children go along. Moshe replied נֵלֵךְ ... וּבִבְנוֹתֵינוּ בְּבָנֵינוּ , "*With our sons and with or daughters… we will go*." He said that the women and the children must also go to the desert to serve Hashem.

The Ridvaz of Slotzk zt'l explains the root of their debate. Pharaoh knew that he didn't have any power over Bnei Yisrael when they kept to their emunah. Pharaoh also knew that the transmission of emunah is dependent on the mother's influence. Therefore, he didn't permit the women to go to the desert to celebrate the holiday. He feared that during this three-day holiday, the nation would become stronger in their emunah, and Pharaoh didn't want the women to benefit from it. He wanted them to remain in the impure land of Mitzrayim, and then, the emunah that the husbands bring back won't last for long.

(ביאורים והנהגות להגר"מ שטרנבוך שליט"א)

Caution with Bein Adam l'Chaveiro

It states (11:7) ,וּלְכֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֶחֱרַץ כֶּלֶב לְשֹׁנוֹ – which means that on the night of yetzias Mitzrayim, no dogs barked before a Yid.

Hinted in these words is another lesson. - יֶחֱרַץ... לְשֹׁנוֹ , alludes to sharp words.

The Ruzhiner zt'l (Irin Kadishin) explains that the pasuk hints at the prohibition of speaking sharply and unkindly to one's fellow man. One should always speak sweetly, kindly, and softly, as it states (Mishlei 15:1) מַעֲנֶה רַךְ יָשִׁיב חֵמָה , "A gentle reply turns away wrath."

לֹא יֶחֱרַץ , don't be sharp with your tongue, rather כֶּ – לֶב , your mouth should be kind as your heart is kind.

This lesson is related to the makah of Choshech. Regarding Choshech, it states לֹא רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו, "A person didn't see his brother." (10:23)

The Chidushei HaRim zt'l explains that the greatest darkness is when it is so dark that one doesn't see his fellow man. This is when one is only interested in himself and doesn't care about helping others.

The pasuk then writes, וְלֹא קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחְתָּיו "no one rose from his place". - The Chidushei HaRim explains that this means that one doesn't receive aid from heaven. Because there is a rule: When one helps others, Heaven helps him. When one doesn't help others, וְלֹא קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחְתָּיו , he can't get up. He doesn't receive the salvations he needs.

Reb Pinchas of Koritz zt'l (Imrei Pinchas, בהעלתך שי"ט) says that every Yid possesses a holiness and a uniqueness that no one else in the world has. - When we think about this, we are inspired to help our fellow man, for his importance is enormous.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

The Hand Of Hashem

When one explores the makkos and the nature of the Egyptian punishment, one can see the 'Yad Hashem', clearly, in action.

In fact, the pasuk says this clearly. For the third plague, Aharon smote the earth with his staff and swarms of lice attacked Egypt. Even Pharaoh's magicians were amazed by this and declared "It is the finger of G-d."

It is not just in the makkos that Heavenly masterminding can be seen. In many areas of life, if we look carefully enough, we see the Divine hand at play. One area where this is more manifest than others, is shidduchim.

Rabbi Yaakov Bender Shlita, is an acclaimed Rosh Yeshiva in New York and a master mechanech. In his latest book – 'A heart for Another' – he shares many stories that he heard from his mother, Rebbetzen Basya Bender. One of her favourite stories are about her Aunty Leah, who had grown up in the town of Steibst, Russia, the daughter of a wealthy estate owner.

One day, young Leah was walking through the fields near her home when she heard cries in the distance, and went to see where the noise was coming from. She saw a peasant boy on the ground weeping. Leah asked him what was wrong.

He told her that he felt his situation was hopeless. He was young, talented and intelligent and had dreams of having a real education, but he came from a family where such ambitions were mocked. His father berated him, telling him that he came from a family of peasants, and that he was destined to be a peasant as well.

Leah felt bad for the teenage boy, and that night, she told the story to her father. He saw his daughter's genuine compassion and desire to help another person, and recognising that such a middah should

be encouraged, handed her an envelope with money to give to the peasant boy.

The next day, she went out to the fields where the boy was working and gave him the gift from her father and with it, the chance to follow his dreams.

Initially, he did not believe that she was serious, but once he realised that the gesture was sincere, he thanked her and turned and left, off to a new life. That was the end of the story as far as Leah was concerned. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu was orchestrating something from on high.

The years passed by. Aunty Leah married and started building a family of her own.

One Leil Shabbos, there was a commotion in the streets of Steibst and the frightening news quickly spread that Russian soldiers had descended on the town, seizing local young men to join the army under the Cantonist decree of forced conscription.

Feeling virtuous, the commanding officer announced that any boy who voluntarily registered for the army would be allowed to remain home for the remainder of Shabbos, spending one last day with his family before being forcibly taken to the military camp.

Everyone understood the dark fate facing these young men. Being drafted meant that many of them would, inevitably, lose their connection to Yiddishkeit or being killed in action.

It was Shabbos, but this was Pikuach nefesh, and that night, a delegation of the community leaders was sent to a nearby town, where **Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spector** served as Rav at the time.

Along with his berachos, he gave them advice. He told them that 'Aunt Leah' (using her full name), a woman of nobility and distinction, should represent them and go ask the governor of the region to intervene. She was to don her finest clothing and travel in the finest

carriage available, pulled by a team of fine horses, so that her arrival would make an impression.

Along with that advice, he added an assurance that she would succeed and also merit arichus yomim v'shonim – a long and productive life.

Aunt Leah accepted her mission and, accompanied by the tefillos and berachos of the people, she headed for the governor's mansion, travelling all through that Shabbos night, arriving in the morning.

Though she had no appointment, the fact that she alighted from an impressive looking carriage and dressed so elegantly, gave her instant respectability. She confidently walked through the gateway and with Rav Yitzchak Elchonon's beracha at the forefront of her mind, she ignored all guards and officials and walked straight into the office of the governor.

The governor was seated at his desk and looked up when she came in. He stared at her for several moments and as Aunt Leah was about to explain the reason for her visit, the governor rose to his feet in respect for her, bowing deferentially.

"I will never forget your act of kindness," he said. "You were just a child, but you made all the difference to my life."

And at that moment she understood. This was the peasant boy from the field. And she also appreciated the saintliness and vision of Rav Yitzchak Elchonon who had sent her on this mission.

She then explained why she had come, and the governor, immediately, sat down to write a letter of protection, and stamped it with his seal. "Present this to the commander," he said, "and he will honour it."

Aunt Leah rushed back to Steibst to a heartbreaking scene. In the town square, boys were being ushered into a wagon, their parents offering their final, heartbreaking cries of love.

Aunt Leah walked through the crowd of soldiers and approached the commander, handing the letter. He was clearly awestruck and immediately told his soldiers to release all the boys. The army left Steibst, empty handed, the decree averted.

Rebbetzen Bender heard the story directly from Aunt Leah, who lived until the age of ninety-seven, healthy and well until she was niftar.

The lessons of this story are clear – the importance of compassion and hearing the cry of another and how good deeds live on and are remembered.

Good Shabbos, Aaron Leitner

Short Story Of The Week By Yoni Schwartz

There was a Jewish woman in desperate need of a kidney transplant. There was one problem: her PRA level was extremely high, which meant that her chances of finding a donor were nearly impossible. In fact, the largest database of kidney donors in the world was scanned and not a single match was found.

An event was later run for her, and luckily, she found a match. Somebody asked her what merit she had to find a donor despite the overwhelming odds. She responded, "I don't know, but maybe the following story can shed some light."

"Years ago in the concentration camps," the woman explained, "my grandmother met an SS guard who did something very nice for her: he gave her a pass to freely roam around the concentration camp so that nobody would bother her. This pass ended up being a lifesaver. Being that she had two old parents, she begged the SS officer for passes for them as well. Reluctantly, he agreed. Then, somebody came up to her asking if she could obtain one more pass. As much as she wanted to help, she was afraid that should she push the SS guard too much, he would retract the original passes.

The person said, 'It's not for me, it's for the Bobover Rebbe, and we need the pass to save his life.'"

The woman continued, "My grandmother could not take the risk of asking for another pass. However, she told the person, 'I am a professional artist, and I will make a precise duplicate for the Rebbe.' She painstakingly worked on it for many hours, making sure each detail was perfect. Finally, after much work, she finished. The Rebbe got his pass, and his life was saved."

The story gets better, though. After the transplant, people asked the donor what merit she had to save this woman's life. She said, "I don't know, but maybe the fact that I'm a descendant of a great line of Rabbis had some impact. In fact, the Bobover Rebbe is my grandfather."

At that point, realizing the Divine Providence at play, everybody froze and embraced the moment.

Comment: In this week's Parsha, Bo, we learn about the greatest revelation of Divine Providence in history: the exodus from Egypt. Though everyday life sometimes seems like a lonely hike through the barren desert of time, in truth, each step is guided by the loving hand of the One who hears our prayers, feels our pain, and fights our battles, no matter the enemy and no matter the age.

Though it may not always be obvious, for us, just like for Eliyahu HaNavi, Hashem is in the "קוֹל דְּמָמָה דַקָּה" the still small voice, guiding us, loving us, and protecting us.

"Emunah is not a destination – it is a journey. It is something we must constantly work on and strive to strengthen." – The Chofetz Chaim.

One Who Kills Time is Legally Crazy



In this week's *parsha* we have the mitzvah of *kiddush hachodesh* [sanctifying the new moon], the first mitzvah Hashem gave the Jewish people as a collective nation.

The *Seforno* suggests that this first mitzvah also included the most precious commodity of all: time, and the freedom to do with it whatever we choose. The ability to spend our time as we see fit is freedom, and control over our time is a prerequisite to doing all the other *mitzvos*.

Rav Avrohom Yaakov Pam symbolically suggests that the first mitzvah is not only for the *Sanhedrin* to sanctify the new month, but also for every Jew to sanctify every moment of his day. Just as people devote tremendous time and energy to seeking out the best investments for their money, so too should we focus on how to achieve the maximum return with the precious time that we are granted and how to wisely "invest" it in our futures.

The Gemara (*Chagigah* 4a) defines a *shoteh* (crazy person who is exempt from *mitzvos*) as someone who throws away what he is given. If so, Rav Pam suggests that someone who adopts the American hobby of "killing time" is legally crazy!

Every Morning

"The world is new to us every morning – this is G-d's gift, and every person should believe he is reborn every day." ~ Baal Shem Tov.



Who's Bringing Mashiach?



I would like to share with you an incredible story — one that would be hard to believe if it weren't for the fact that it is documented from **Rabbi Nosson Wachtfogel** (1910–1998), the late Mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshiva.

When **Rav Aharon Kotler** *zt"l* (1891–1962) was *niftar*, his *talmidim* were shattered. He was not only their Rosh Yeshiva, the fire that had lit their *avodas Hashem* — but he was their father, the one who looked after all their needs. With his passing, it felt as though the world had dimmed, and they struggled to imagine how to move forward.

Rav Nosson rose to comfort them with a story that, he said, was both authentic and profoundly stirring.

"A talmid of our yeshiva once shared a dream. He saw Mashiach lying asleep. Giants tried to rouse him — but nothing helped. The **Chasam Sofer** (1762–1839) appeared and pleaded with him to awaken, but Mashiach remained still. Rav Aharon Kotler himself stepped forward and tried urgently to wake him, yet even that did not break his slumber.

"And then," the Mashgiach continued, "a handful of unassuming yeshiva *bochurim* — simple boys, unknown to the world —

approached. They called out 'Wake up!' And in that instant, Mashiach opened his eyes, rose, and came alive."

The *talmid* sought validation from Reb Nosson, and the Mashgiach affirmed that the message rang true. (Years later, the Mashgiach's son, **Reb Elya Ber Wachtfogel**, Rosh Yeshiva of Zichron Moshe in South Fallsburg, confirmed that the *bachur* who had that dream was **Rav Yankel Shiff**.)

The Mashgiach concluded:

"We no longer have our Rosh Yeshiva to shake the heavens for us. But do not tremble — take heart. Because it's not *gedolim* alone who will bring redemption. It's us — the ones who learn, who daven, who struggle and rise again. We — ordinary *bochurim*, ordinary Yidden — hold the power to wake Mashiach!"

Burst of Inspiration – Rabbi Jeremy Golker

The Pasuk says in this week's Sedra, **דַּבֶּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רְעוּתָהּ כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב** - HaKadosh Baruch Hu tells Moshe Rabbeinu, we're getting ready to go out, tell the Jewish people that they should go to their Egyptian neighbors and they should take the silver vessels and golden vessels.

That's a fulfillment of the promise that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave Avraham Avinu, **וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יֵצְאוּ בִּרְכֻשׁ גָּדוֹל** - This event is the direct fulfillment of the **בְּרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים**, where HaKadosh Baruch Hu explicitly promised Avraham Avinu that although his descendants would be enslaved, they would ultimately leave with **"great wealth"** (Beraishis 15:14). - And therefore they should take the **כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב** of their Egyptian neighbors.

The difficulty is, the Pasuk says, **וְיִשְׁאֲלוּ** , '*They should borrow.*' They're not borrowing anything. They're not planning on giving this

back. They're taking this forever. Why does the Torah use an expression of borrowing וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ?

The Chidushei Harim, says an amazing insight.

This is the first time the Jewish people have encountered wealth as a nation. And the Torah is teaching us an important life lesson about how we engage with money and with wealth.

There's nothing wrong with money. But we have to appreciate that it's a gift that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has entrusted us to be custodians of this money and to use it productively and wisely. And therefore, he's saying treat it as if you're borrowing it because when you borrow something you just engage with it differently.

Imagine you would go to a car rental and you're hiring a car for 24 hours over three days and you're sitting in the car and you're sipping a coffee. You can be more careful with that coffee but you don't want to spill it and have problems when you return the car. That if you were sitting in your own car you'll be a bit more blasé about drinking the coffee.

Well, so too, when you have money, HaKadosh Baruch Hu has given each of us finances and money. We have to use it prudently because we're only custodians of the money. After 120 years, we'll have to give an accounting of how we use that money.

So the Torah is teaching us how we should engage and relate to our money. Treat it as if you're borrowing it, that it's there for 120 years and you'll have to account of how you use the money that you're given wisely and productively.

"Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing the monkey bars. You must let go at some point in order to move forward."



Parents & Grandparents Brought Back to Witness the Results of Their Intentions

At the beginning of Parshas Bo, Moshe and Aharon tell Pharaoh "…***For if you refuse to send forth My people, behold, tomorrow I shall bring arbeh (a locust swarm) into your border. It will cover the eye of the land so that he will not be able to see the land; and it will consume the remaining residue that was left to you by the hail, and it will consume all the trees that grow for you from the field. They will fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all Egypt, such as your fathers and your grandfathers have not seen from the day they came onto the earth until this day.***" (Shemos 10:4-6).

The Sefas Emes derives an inference from this last pasuk: The pasuk says that the parents and grandparents of the Egyptians never saw such a plague of locust until this day.

The Sefas Emes says that the Ribono shel Olam brought back their parents and grandparents who already died, in order that they should be able to witness the plague of arbeh. They never saw such a locust plague until this day, but today they did see such a plague!

We thus have an instance of techiyas hameisim (resurrection of the dead), not for tzadikim (righteous people), but for resha'im (wicked people), in order that they witness this terrible plague that befell their children and grandchildren.

The Sefas Emes further references an oft-quoted passage from the Zohar in Parshas Pinchas which states that when a person makes a simcha (e.g. – a chassanah, a bar mitzvah, etc.), the neshamos (souls) of the parents and grandparents who are no longer in this world,

come, in some sense, to the simcha to witness and 'participate in' the joyous family occasion.

The Sefas Emes makes the interesting observation: The Ribono shel Olam takes the neshamos of the parents and grandparents of Yiden from Gan Eden and brings them to the simcha so that they should be able to witness the joyous event of their descendants.

On the other hand, the Ribono shel Olam took the resha'im – the parents and grandparents of the Egyptians, who also made Klal Yisrael suffer so much, not in order that they should see and enjoy the simcha of their children and grandchildren, but so that they should see and 'participate in' the suffering of their children and grandchildren.

The Sefas Emes says: When a person makes a chassanah and he takes his children down to the chuppah k'das Moshe v'Yisroel and the parents are good and the children are good – part of the credit is due to the 'machshavos tovos' (good thoughts) that the parents and the grandparents invested into their children. The Ribono shel Olam says "They have a part in this chassanah.

The reason this next generation is able to bring their dear children down to the chuppah is because of all of the 'machshavos tovos' that the parents and grandparents implanted in their children. Even if those thoughts and aspirations were not all fully fulfilled, the "machshava tova" was there, HaKadosh Baruch Hu joins a "machshava tova" to action even if the action was never fully consummated.

The reverse is true regarding the goyim. The Egyptians and their ancestors were all part of this evil plot to destroy Klal Yisrael. Their "machshava ra'ah" (evil thought) was a cause of this suffering.

The Ribono shel Olam says: You caused this to happen? You implanted these wicked tendencies in your children? You are going to see the "nachas" of them suffering from the arbeh.

Rosh Chodesh

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים - *"This month shall be for you the head of the months ...* " (12:2).



The daughter-in-law of **Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld** tells the following story about her father-in-law.

After the death of her mother-in-law, she and her husband with their family moved into her father-in-law's apartment. In those days, before the advent of washing-machines (that do the family wash at the press of a button), they would hire a woman to do the laundry.

This woman, who was usually from a poor Yemenite family (as the pay was extremely low), would sit next to a tub of washing and rub away from sunrise to dusk.

Early one morning, before R. Yosef Chayim had left for Shacharis, voices of a quarrel could be heard emanating from the Batei Machseh area where R. Chayim lived. The Rav asked his daughter-in-law to go and investigate the source of the trouble. So she put on a morning robe and went to see what was going on. She soon returned with the following story.

It appears that a local woman had engaged a Yemenite woman to do her washing. When the latter arrived early in the morning to begin work, her employer informed her that her services were not required. Her employer it seems, she had forgotten that it was Rosh Chodesh, and the prevalent Minhag was not to work on Rosh Chodesh.

All the Yemenite woman's pleas that her husband was ill in bed, and that if she did not work that day, she would have no money with

which to feed her children, fell on deaf ears. Minhag was Minhag, and that was that!

When R. Yosef Chayim heard that, he asked his daughter-in-law whether she had no odd jobs to offer the unfortunate woman. And when she replied in the negative, he asked her to quickly run and fetch the Yemenite woman and to arrange for her to do their own washing. To let a poor Jewish woman suffer was a far greater sin, he maintained, than to contravene a Minhag.

She ran to fetch the woman, and had just set her up by the tub to do the washing, when the woman's employer came running to the Rav's house. 'If the Rav is allowed to do the laundry on Rosh Chodesh,' she explained, 'then so am I'!

The Sefer Torah That Was Taken Out "By Mistake"

This story took place in a small shtiebel in Yerushalayim on Chaf-Ches Tishrei, the second day of Parshas Noach. It was a regular Monday morning. The tzibbur had finished davening, and the Sefer Torah was taken out for Krias HaTorah. Everyone was waiting for the baal koreh to begin leining — but it wasn't starting.

People began looking around, trying to understand what was happening. Then they realized the problem. They had taken out the wrong Sefer Torah. Instead of taking out the Sefer Torah already rolled to Parshas Noach, they had mistakenly removed the master Sefer Torah — the one used for Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. That Sefer Torah was rolled all the way back to Parshas Pinchas. Now they had no choice. They had to roll it forward — from Pinchas all the way to Noach.

Anyone who has ever rolled a Sefer Torah knows how long that can take. The gabbai began carefully rolling, and the tzibbur waited patiently. The man who was about to receive the aliyah was standing

at the bimah. He hadn't brought a sefer with him, because he assumed the leining would begin immediately.

As he waited, his eyes wandered — and he noticed something written on the mantle of the Sefer Torah lying open on the bimah. "This Sefer Torah was donated l'zecher nishmas a precious bochur, who was niftar b'tmei yomav, taken from this world at the young age of seventeen. He was the child of Holocaust survivors."

The man froze. Because that very day — Chaf-Ches Tishrei — was the bochur's yahrzeit. He could not believe what he was seeing. The Sefer Torah that had been taken out by mistake was written l'zecher nishmas a young bochur — and it was now being used for Krias HaTorah on the exact day of his yahrzeit.

At first, many people in the shul were annoyed by the delay. But one man standing toward the back of the shtiebel — someone who knew the calendar well — suddenly spoke up. "Rabosai," he said, "you don't yet understand what just happened here." He explained that Chaf-Ches Tishrei always falls exactly four weeks after Erev Rosh Hashanah, meaning it always falls on the same day of the week. Because of the halachic principle of Lo Adu Rosh, Rosh Hashanah can only fall on Monday or Tuesday. If Rosh Hashanah is on Monday, Chaf-Ches Tishrei falls on Sunday — with no Krias HaTorah. Only when Rosh Hashanah falls on Tuesday does Chaf-Ches Tishrei fall on Monday — allowing Krias HaTorah. In the last thirty years, this alignment occurred only five times. The next time will be in 20 years.

Hashem orchestrated that this year — on one of the rarest calendar alignments possible — they would take out the wrong Sefer Torah… so that this neshama could have Krias HaTorah on his yahrzeit.

Rabbi Menachem Feifer concluded that this was not coincidence, but Hashgacha Pratis, precise and exact. And if we open our eyes, we see it every single day.



Inspired by Time - The Yid Who Thought It Was Too Late – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach zt"l was once approached by a Yid late at night in Bnei Brak. He was a grown man with a family, with responsibilities – and with many years behind him that weighed heavily on his heart. - He stood in front of Rav Shach trembling. Not out of fear of the gadol hador – but out of fear of what he was about to say.

"Rebbe," he said quietly, "I think I missed my chance."

Rav Shach looked up at him.

The man continued, "I know what a Yid is supposed to be. I know what Torah expects. I've heard the shmuessen, I've learned the sefarim. But life happened. I made choices. Years went by. And now I look at myself and I don't see someone who can still be redeemed."

Rav Shach did not answer immediately. He closed the sefer in front of him and asked a single question.

"Tell me," he said, "when did Hashem take us out of Mitzrayim?"

The man was surprised. "When we were at our lowest," he answered.

"When we were in mem-tess sha'arei tumah."

Rav Shach nodded.

"And why do you think Hashem waited until then?" he asked.

The man was silent.

Rav Shach said softly, "So that no Jew would ever be able to say the words you just said to me." - He paused, then added:

"If Hashem wanted a perfect nation, He would have redeemed us earlier. If He waited until we were broken, confused, and spiritually exhausted, it means that brokenness itself is not a barrier to geula."

The man began to cry.

"But Rebbe," he said, "I'm not who I was supposed to be."

Rav Shach answered: "Hashem did not take us out because of who we became. He took us out because of who we are."

The man later said that nothing dramatic changed that night, but for the first time in years, he stopped believing that it was too late. And that, Rav Shach taught him, is already the beginning of geula.



Push the Boulder

Rabbi Wallerstein would famously say:

"I told you to push the boulder. That was the only request."

"Yes, but I did push the boulder, Hashem, every day for half an hour, just like You told me to. And it's worthless! What did it do? It didn't move even one inch!"

"Yankel. Yankel! I told you to push the boulder. I never said you were to move the boulder..."

"It's your job to push that boulder. And when I'm ready, and I know the time is right, that's when I will do my job of moving that boulder. But you were never meant to move it. Only to push it..."

Sometimes we fail to believe that we can return and become great again. And indeed, we might be right – if it is us doing it. We may have gone too far. However, who was the One who took us out of Mitzrayim? It was Hashem Himself –

לֹא עַל יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שָׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שָׁלִיחַ, אֶלָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בִּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבְעַצְמוֹ.

We too, in our personal meitzarim, with our personal limitations, must know: we must do our part, and Hashem does the rest. Even what seems to us as impossible – nothing is impossible for Hashem.

So as we finish the third week of Shovavim and enter the fourth, as we read the parshiyos of nissim and geula, let's not waste a moment, and jump right in. Let us bring an end to our personal meitzarim, and merit our personal geulos, and most importantly bring the ultimate geula for all of Klal Yisrael, with the building of the Beis Hamikdash.



Parsha Points to Ponder

Q At the conclusion of most plagues, the source of the plague disappeared. Why did Hashem cause a strong west wind to carry the locusts into the Red Sea (10:19) instead of eliminating them completely?

A The **Paneiach Raza** explains that Hashem specifically sent the locusts into the Red Sea so that when Pharaoh and the Egyptians pursued the Jews there, the locusts emerged to attack them once again.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

וֶהֱוֵי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת–***"You should judge all men favorably (Avos 1:6)***

Who appointed you to the prominent position of a judge? The answer is: Someone who looks at another in a favorable light is worthy of that exalted title." – The Chozeh of Lublin.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

There is a powerful vort on this week's sedra from **Rav Shlomo Kluger Zt'l**. - He says as follows:

If you review this week's parsha, you will see that after the makkoh of choshech (Plague of Darkness), Pharoah told Moshe Rabbeinu - **לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה'... גַּם־טַפְּכֶם יֵלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם** - "*Everyone out – All of you may leave, including the children*!" - **רַק צֹאנְכֶם וּבְקַרְכֶם יֻצָּג** – "*Only your sheep and cattle shall remain.*" (10:24) Moshe Rabbeinu replied, "**וְגַם־ מִקְנֵנוּ יֵלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ** – You will send our livestock along with us as well."

Rav Shlomo Kluger says – Pharoah had already allowed everybody to leave, except for the animals. And, straight after this came Makkos Bechoros.(Plague of the Eldest)

For what reason did Hashem bring this final makkoh? Specifically, so that the animals could also leave Mitzrayim!!? Is this why we celebrate Leil Shimurim? Because of the animals?

Reb Shlomo Kluger gives an incredible answer:

Yes, Hashem knew that there would come a time when people would behave like animals... Human beings standing on two feet, but sadly, their behaviour would be like that of animals! And those people will think – 'Will Hashem really take me out of Mitzrayim?'

To these people Hashem says, "You see that I brought a special plague (Makkos Bechoros) specifically to enable the animals to come out of Mitzrayim." – "I can do it for you too – return to Me!"

A person might think that he has fallen to such a low level equating himself to an animal, but just as Hashem brought a makkoh especially for the animals – He can do it for you! No matter how far you have strayed, Hashem will take you out of Mitzrayim – every single Yid! Hashem is waiting for every Yid to return.

Rabbi Shlomo Hoff Shlita





In Jewish tradition, specifically within the Midrash Rabbah and other commentaries, the plague of frogs served a specific geopolitical purpose: resolving a long-standing border dispute between Egypt and its neighbors, particularly Ethiopia.

According to the Midrash, when Hashem sent the plague of frogs, the pasuk states אָנֹכִי נֹגֵף אֶת-כָּל-גְּבוּלֵךְ בַּצְפַרְדֵּעִים -I will smite "all **your** borders" with frogs. (7:27) The frogs acted as a biological boundary marker. They swarmed every inch of Egyptian soil but did not cross into Ethiopia. This precision clearly demonstrated the exact limits of Egypt's sovereignty, as the frogs "would not become illegal immigrants" in neighboring lands.

Some commentators suggest this was a message of middah keneged middah. Just as the Egyptians disregarded the personal boundaries and freedom of the Israelites, Hashem enforced clear, undeniable physical boundaries upon Egypt through the plague.

Besides for the frogs, a similar interpretation exists in Midrashic literature regarding the plague of locusts; they also served a geopolitical purpose of defining Egypt's borders. Just as with the frogs, the swarms of locusts miraculously landed and remained precisely within the recognized geopolitical boundaries of Egypt.

Wherever Egypt had a long-standing or ambiguous border with a neighbor (like Kush/Ethiopia), the path and extent of the locusts adjudicated the actual G-d-determined location of the boundary.

וַיַּעַל הָאַרְבֶּה עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּנַח בְּכֹל גְּבוּל מִצְרָיִם -The pasuk emphasizes that the locusts covered "all the land of Egypt", and "rested in all the borders of Egypt," a description that the Midrash interprets as a Divinely precise operation. (10:14)

This midrashic teaching suggests that both plagues provided clear, undeniable, and universally recognized physical proof of the limits of Egyptian sovereignty, resolving conflicts that human politicians and generals had failed to settle.

To provide a permanent visual marker after the frogs died, the Midrash describes that the land was later marked by the growth of crops. The crop associated with the marking of borders during these plagues is the bean - **'polim'** - (***pol*** or ***ful*** in Hebrew/Aramaic).

A similar tradition exists for the locusts. The locusts would devour everything in Egypt up to the very last millimeter of the border. By observing where the crops remained untouched, the two nations were able to draw a definitive boundary line that was never disputed again. (Shemos Rabbah 10:2)

The Tchebiner Rav (Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld asks – Why did we need the locusts to do exactly the same job as the frogs?

He answers that inbetween these two plagues, was the plague of 'Barad' which completely and utterly destroyed these crops/markers that they planted, so the boundaries were indistinct again.

He brings a proof for this from the pasuk in Tehilim 105:33 - **וַיַּךְ גַּפְנָם וּתְאֵנָתָם וַיְשַׁבֵּר עֵץ גְּבוּלָם** - ***"He struck their vines and their fig trees, and He shattered the trees of their borders [territory]."*** - *The very infrastructure of their agriculture was physically destroyed by the preceding hail.*

Chapter of the "Man" - פרשת המן



Do you need a good income? The commentators cite the Talmud Yerushalmi that one who recites this chapter on the **Tuesday of *Parshas Beshalach*** is assured that his sustenance will not be lacking.

Likewise, it is a segulah for livelihood to say it every day. And Rabbi Yosef said, "So that he may believe that all his needs are is attended to." And in Yerushalmi (Brachos) it is written that **anyone who says Parshas Haman every day is assured that his sustenance will not be reduced.**

Chazal said, **"Anyone who says the Chapter of Man daily will not lack a livelihood."** - It is permissible to say the Chapter of Man on Shabbos, even though prayers for livelihood are not said on Shabbos.

Is Reciting Parashas HaMan This Week an Authentic Tradition? Why Should we Trust this Segulah (Spiritual Remedy)?

There is a widespread custom to recite Parashas HaMan. It describes the way Hashem provided manna for the Jews in the desert, on the Tuesday prior to the Shabbos of Parashas Beshalach.

Many people recite this chapter daily, as a special prayer for parnassa (livelihood). Reciting Parashas HaMan (the verses about the manna), is considered a 'segulah' – a special merit – for sustenance in the year ahead.

The main problem with segulos is ascribing power to spiritual remedies, as opposed to believing with our full heart that there is no source of blessing besides Hashem. We must fully believe that Hashem alone is the One Who has the power from beginning to end. Neither astrology, cloud gazers nor seances have independent power. Therefore, we are commanded, "You shall be pure with Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 18:13).

Segulos can be helpful as long as we remember that, ultimately, everything is in Hashem's hand. Moreover, we must differentiate between the segulos. There are segulos based on real Torah sources. Yet, there are also modern segulos, without a Torah tradition, that look suspiciously like darchei emori (the ways of the Emorite).

Our Sages teach us that certain times are Eis Ratzon – a time where certain types of tefilos are more powerful- for example, the well-known Tefilas HaShelah on behalf of our children, to be said Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan.

The best segulos are always Torah and tefilah. Torah learning is a positive mitzvah that outweighs all other mitzvos (Mishna Peah 1:1). Therefore, we can never go wrong with any segulah based on actual Torah learning, like reading Parashas HaMan, which installs and strengthens within us emunah in Hashem as the ultimate source of our parnassa.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Riminov recommended reciting the verses of Parashas HaMan (Shemos 16:4-36) on the Tuesday preceding Shabbas B'Shalach, by reading the original Hebrew twice, and the Aramaic translation once.

I believe that for those who aren't fluent in Hebrew it is preferable to read the English instead of the Aramaic translation.

Why Recite Parashas HaMan?

When our ancestors were in the wilderness, a month after the Exodus from Egypt, they faced a tomorrow with no food. Understandably, they asked Moshe Rabbeinu if he had taken them into the desert to starve to death. Hashem responded that, in the morning they would see that He had not forsaken them.

Parashas HaMan tells the story of the manna that G-d brought down from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. The manna had spiritual qualities and it satisfied every person's taste. The Israelites received the manna directly from heaven, every day until they reached the borders of the promised land.

When people lose their jobs or their savings (G-d forbid), they need a reminder that Hashem never forsakes us. Reciting Parashas HaMan helps us strengthen our bitachon (trust) that G-d runs the world and that nothing can be taken for granted.

By reading the account of how Klal Yisrael was sustained by Hashem in the desert for 40 years, we ingrain in ourselves that our livelihood comes only because Hashem wills it. …It's not a magic incantation but an affirmation of Hashem being the "Hand that feeds us."

By reading Parashat HaMan with prayerful intention, we express our invocation to Hashem that we, together with all of Israel, should be able to provide for our families. By reciting these verses – especially during the et ratzon (recommended time) – we appeal to Hashem that He choose to bless us with abundance. We thereby acknowledge that all things come from G-d. He will decide whether to answer our prayers or not.

The week of Shabbos B'Shalach is a special and powerful time, connected to Hashem's power that controls physicality. Reciting Parashas HaMan then makes a powerful connection for sustenance.

Torah Sources for Reciting the Parashat HaMan

The power of reciting Parashas HaMan daily is noted in many halachic sources. It is mentioned in the Yerushalmi Brachos, in the Arba Turim, Orech Chaim 303; and in Shulchan Aruch. - It is also brought down by the Mishnah Berurah, quoting the Talmud Yerushalmi, that anyone who recites Parashat HaMan will not lack sustenance. He furthermore quotes the Taz (siman 256) that reading it alone isn't sufficient. We must understand from the reading that our livelihood comes about through Divine intervention. And we must contemplate what we are saying and recognize Hashem's wonders…

The reason for saying… Parashas HaMan is in order to ingrain the emunah that all our sustenance come about through individual providence, as it states, "whoever gathered much did not have more, and whoever gathered little did not have less." - This teaches us that excessive histadlus (effort) doesn't help a bit.

It states in the Yerushalmi Berachos, "Anyone who recites Parashas HaMan every day is guaranteed that he will never lack sustenance (Mishnah Berurah 1:27-29).

The benefit of reciting Parashas HaMan is furthermore cited in Aruch Hashulchan 1:22 and Shulchan Aruch HaRav 1:9). Shevet Mussar by R. Elijah ha-Kohen ha-Itamari, (Jerusalem 1863) brings down that the segulah of Parahast HaMan is to read it twice daily, together with the Targum (translation). Siddur Segulat Yisrael says to recite it with the cantillation (tropp or the musical Torah notes).

The source for the custom to read Parashas HaMan on Tuesday preceding Shabbas B'Shalach is Reb Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, one of the four primary disciples of the Noam Elimelech. [During the 22 years that Rav Mendel was Rebbe in Riminov, not one family living in that town lacked parnassa.]

The Tur put it simply when he wrote (Orach Chaim 1): "It's good to recite Parashas HaMan!"

Spiritual Lessons to Integrate from Parashas HaMan

Parashas HaMan ingrains within us the lesson that our sustenance is determined by Hashem alone. Whether gathering a lot or a little manna, everyone received exactly the same (Shemos 16:18). No matter how many hours of hard work we put in, we get the amount of money we are supposed to receive.

At times it can be hard to believe that what we earn has nothing to do with our own efforts. Not 50%, not 5%, and not even .01%. 100% of our livelihood is from the help of Heaven. Therefore, we must believe that we won't lack if we work less in order to learn more Torah and perform mitzvos.

Too much luxury only makes us forget G-d (Devarim 32:15). Regarding the manna it states, "Let no one leave over [any] of it until morning." This teaches us to abstain from trying to accumulate enough wealth for generations. When we trust that Hashem will take care of tomorrow, we can go easy on the saving plans. - During the 40 years in the desert, no one had any money put away for a rainy day. In the wilderness, there wasn't a crumb to be had at the end of the day. Nothing was saved away for the future.

Many of us might recite Parashas HaMan with the intention of gathering wealth for the future, rather than concentrating on Hashem Who is providing our sustenance right now. Let's not forget that the manna was a test of trust: how much bitachon the Israelites had in Hashem's power to provide.

Let us recite this section in the Torah while ingraining its eternal messages, by strengthening our trust in Hashem as our sole provider!

"Hashem's love is like the ocean; It is vast and deep, and no one can fathom its depths." – Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita



Rabboisai this week, Parashas Bo, Parashas HaGeula. The ultimate Geula of every Yid in all situations finds itself in Parashas Bo. B'Ezras Hashem, as we read the Parasha, we should be zocher individually and collectively, to Geulas Yisroel.

I'd like to share a vort which the Tata Zechrono Livracha, כַּפָּרַת מִשְׁכָּבוֹ , used to often say over, and it's a vort which reflects a lot of his life's attitude in this Inyan.

The parasha towards the end in Perek יג talks about the mitzvah of Achilas Matzah. In Pasuk ו it says, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מַצֹּת. In Pasuk ז it says, מַצּוֹת יֵאָכֵל אֶת שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים. So, it's an interesting repetition of the Pasuk.

The Goan teaches the following. שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מַצֹּת is talking about **your** mitzvah, the mitzvah that you need to eat **yourself**. But the next Pasuk is hinting to the inyan of קְמְחָא דְּפִסְחָא, helping other people to be able to eat their matzah, also looking after their requirements. - That's יֵאָכֵל, it shall be eaten. I have a chiyuv to see that it shall be eaten through others, besides for my mitzvah to eat myself.

And then the Gaon says an incredible thing.., 'In the first Pasuk it says, תֹּאכַל מַצֹּת without a ו, but in the next pasuk it says מַצּוֹת יֵאָכֵל, with a vov. Why is that?

The Gaon explains that when it's talking about the pasuk of **תֹּאכַל** – 'you shall eat', **מַצָּת** is spelled without a vov. A small amount is adequate. For you yourself, you can be satisfied and content with a small amount. You don't need to look for extra, for full measures of your requirements. A small amount of matzah suffices for personal fulfillment.

But when it talks about **יְאָכֵל**, when I need to make sure others have, it's **מַצּוֹת** it's spelled with a vav. I need to make sure that their requirements are met fully - One must provide abundantly for others, ensuring their needs are fully met, reflecting a higher level of responsibility and care.

As I said, this reflects very much the Torahs of my father's life.

UKforTORAH@gmail
Authentic Hashkofa from Gedolei Yisroel

Insights Into The Torah Perspective From Great Personalities Of The Last Generation & Beyond

Here is a **concise, tightened version** that preserves the main biography and legacy while removing repetition and excess detail.

3 Shevat: Rav Shmuel Dovid HaKohen Munk

Rav Shmuel Dovid HaKohen Munk was born in Germany to a rabbinic family originally from Galicia. When Nazi persecution intensified, the family escaped to Eretz Yisroel in 5699, when he was fifteen. Despite severe poverty, he studied with great diligence in Yeshivas Kol Torah and in the Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikva under Rav Eliyahu Dushnitzer.

As a young man he frequently visited the Chazon Ish, whom he regarded as the final authority in halachic matters, and he developed close relationships with leading rabbonim of Yerushalayim, particularly those of the Eida Chareidis.

Rav Munk became a talmid chochom of outstanding stature. He received semicha from Rav Chanoch Dov Padwa of London and from rabbonim of the Eida Chareidis. After teaching in the yeshiva of Rav Reuven Bengis, he later served as rav of the growing chareidi community of Haifa, where he devoted himself to building Torah life, strengthening kashrus, and establishing the city's first kollel.

Gedolei Yisroel from many circles held him in great esteem, including figures such as Rav Elazar Menachem Shach, Rav Shlomo Wolbe, Rav Shmuel Wosner, and leading rabbonim of Yerushalayim. Rabbonim from around the world consulted him on difficult halachic questions and corresponded with him on a wide range of Torah topics.

Among his most important works is the responsa collection **Pe'as Sadcha**, widely cited in halachic literature. He also republished rare Torah works, including texts in Kabbalah, and left extensive correspondence and writings that were published after his passing.

Despite lifelong hardship—including poverty, illness, and childlessness—Rav Munk was known for his warmth, humility, and unwavering commitment to truth.

A distinctive aspect of his legacy was his outspoken Torah perspective on Zionism and the State of Israel. At a time when many avoided the subject, he wrote and spoke openly on the issue. In his anonymous work **B'ein Chazon** (published in 5729 and 5736) he addressed the halachic questions surrounding the state and participation in Israeli elections—one of the earliest Torah works to analyze the topic.

Later, in **Gargarim B'rosh Amir**, he further discussed the halachic implications of Israeli political participation and related issues, including the pressures surrounding the recitation of Hallel on Yom Ha'atzmaut. Additional responsa on related subjects later appeared in further volumes of *Pe'as Sadcha*.

Rav Shmuel Dovid Munk passed away on 3 Shevat 5741. He left behind a legacy of profound Torah scholarship, personal sacrifice for the strengthening of Yiddishkeit, and unwavering dedication to authentic Torah hashkafah.

יהי זכרו ברוך.



A wealthy Jewish businessman, **רב אברום** Weiss, was away on business in Switzerland. After months of negotiations, he finally signed an extraordinary deal, one that would earn him hundreds of millions of dollars. That night, he went back to his hotel room, exhausted but elated. He lay in his bed, his mind racing; the **צדקה** he could give, the institutions he could support, the legacy he could build.

He fell asleep feeling deeply satisfied. At 2:00 AM, there was a knock on the door. Groggy and confused, he got up, opened the door, and froze. Standing there was his **רבי**.

רבי, what are you doing here? he whispered in shock. The **רבי** smiled warmly and said, "I heard what happened today and I came to wish you **מזל טוב** and drink a small **לחיים** with you." They sat down, the **רבי** raised his cup, and they drank a **לחיים**.

After a few moments, the **רבי** said, **רב אברום**, perhaps you'd like to participate in a **מצוה** and give me a donation. - Without hesitation, **רב אברום** took out his checkbook and wrote a very generous check. As the **רבי** stood up to leave, **רב אברום** walked him to the door and

said respectfully, **רבי**, thank you for coming, but forgive me for asking, why couldn't this have waited until tomorrow?" The **רבי** looked at him and said softly, "Because today the money is still profit, but tomorrow it becomes capital, and people don't like giving from their capital." The **רבי** gave him a final **ברכה** and disappeared into the night.

Pharaoh suffered from 'terminal gratitude amnesia', enslaved the Jewish people, conveniently forgetting that it was **יוסף** the **ייד** who had saved Egypt and made it the most powerful empire that the world had ever seen. He simply chose to ignore the ten lessons that **השם** was trying to teach him, which resulted in **השם** taking away his freedom of choice.

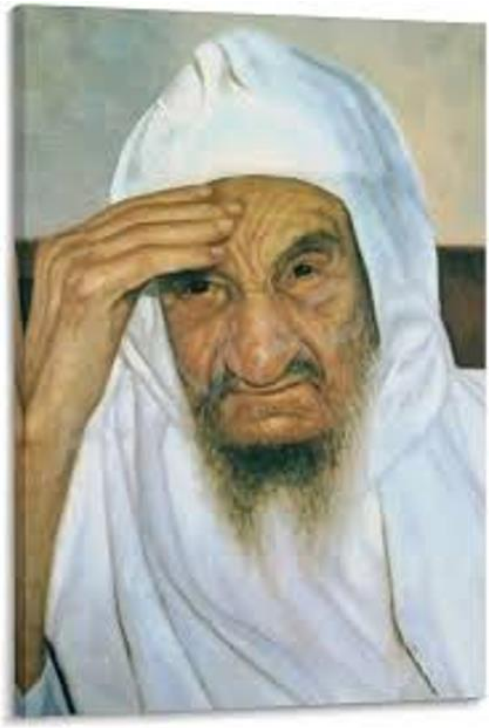
None of us are immune from gratitude amnesia. The human mind is a wonderfully flexible organ. It's all too easy to think that what we have is our own capital. It's not. Every penny we have, every bit of happiness we experience, every moment we are healthy, is no more than a gift from above. That's the message that we're being taught in this week's **פרשת השבוע**.

I want to wish you all a beautifully uplifting **שבת קודש**.

The Weekly Vort - The Baba Sali

◣ **R' Yisrael Abuchatzeirah —known to the world as Baba Sali —** was born in the year 5650 (1890), on Rosh Hashanah, in the city of Tafillalt, Morocco. He was born into a family whose very name evoked awe. His father, R' Massoud, was the eldest son of the great R' Yaakov Abuchatzeirah, a renowned *mekubal* and *tzaddik* whose holiness was legendary throughout Moroccan Jewry. From his earliest years, it was evident that the child Yisrael possessed unusual spiritual attributes. While other children occupied themselves with the games and distractions of youth, Yisrael

devoted himself to building his character and immersing himself in Torah study.



◣ One day, his father, R' Massoud, noticed that Yisrael very upset, and he asked what had happened. The boy explained that he had argued with one of the neighborhood children. The other boy had taken something that belonged to him, and although Yisrael repeatedly asked for it back, the child refused to return it.

"So what did you do?" his father asked. With his eyes lowered, the young Yisrael admitted quietly, "I cursed him." R' Massoud reacted with seriousness. "Your mouth has a power the strength of which you cannot yet measure," he rebuked him. "Your words can seal the fate of men. Promise me that you will never curse anyone. You must only bless." The child gave his word.

◣ Even while he was still a youth, people began coming to R' Yisrael to receive his *brachos* — for livelihood, for health, for success. Followers of the Abuchatzeirah family understood that the *brachos* of young Yisrael carried extraordinary power. His *tefillos* seemed to pierce the heavens, and wondrous *yeshu'os* were attributed to his intervention.

While still living in the shadow of his father, R' Yisrael developed into a magnetic personality. Those burdened with troubles were drawn to him instinctively, seeking *brachos*, advice, and spiritual guidance. As the years passed, his reputation for miraculous intervention spread throughout Moroccan Jewry. Problems were eased, illnesses disappeared, and difficulties were resolved through his *tefillos*. It was during this period that he became known as *Baba Sali* — "our praying father."

◣ When Baba Sali was nineteen years old, his father passed away. It was naturally assumed that he would take over the leadership of his father's yeshivah. However, in characteristic modesty, he declined. Only after much pressure did he agree to assume the role of Rosh Yeshivah and deliver daily *shiurim*. It was then that his immense scholarship became fully apparent. He was revealed to be a *talmid chacham* of extraordinary breadth, expert in all areas — Gemara, halachah, and Kabbalah alike. Yet in keeping with his deep humility, Baba Sali instructed his *talmidim* not to record his *shiurim*. He wished his scholarship to remain hidden. For this reason, he left behind no written works.

◣ On one occasion, Baba Sali delivered a lengthy and intricate *shiur*, weaving together a remarkable number of complex commentaries with dazzling clarity. As always, he warned his *talmidim* not to record a word. One *talmid*, however, felt unable to restrain himself. After reviewing the *shiur* repeatedly with a friend, he felt confident he could preserve it. Determined to commit the *shiur* to writing, he waited until he was alone and took up his quill. But the moment he began to write, his mind went blank. Not a single detail could he recall. Frustrated, he returned to his friend and once again they reviewed the *shiur* carefully. Again, he secluded himself to write — and again his memory failed him completely. No matter how hard he tried or how deeply he concentrated, he could not remember a word. When he returned to the *beis medrash*, Baba Sali approached him calmly and said, "If you want to remember what I have taught, do not try to record it. You will only forget it all." The message was clear.

◣ At every opportunity, Baba Sali spoke of Eretz Yisrael. He yearned to visit the Holy Land. He constantly praised its holiness and believed that a person could elevate his character more easily by living there. His grandson, R' Dovid — son of Baba Meir, who was Baba Sali's eldest son — once described his grandfather's deep longing for Eretz Yisrael: "I remember how we would go every Friday

to visit the *kevarim* of *tzaddikim* buried in the small cemetery in Tafillalt. Occasionally, we would stop at the grave of someone who had come to Morocco to collect funds for Eretz Yisrael but had died before completing his mission. My grandfather would stand before the tombstone, sigh deeply, and say, 'When will my feet once again tread the dust of Eretz Yisrael?'"

◣ In 1921, at the age of 31, Baba Sali set out on his first journey to Eretz Yisrael. The trip was long and arduous. When he finally arrived, many *talmidei chachomim* were already waiting at the shore to greet him. Word of his arrival spread quickly. When he reached Yerushalayim, Roshei Yeshivah, *mekubalim*, and prominent *rabbonim* came to welcome him and receive his *brachos*. Hundreds of people gathered to meet the young R' Yisrael Abuchatzeirah. Many came out of simple curiosity — to see this remarkable man whose reputation for *limud haTorah*, *yiras Shomayim*, and spiritual purity had preceded him.

◣ During his stay in Eretz Yisrael, Baba Sali traveled to Tzfas, where he met many great *talmidei chachamim*, including the renowned R' Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri. Baba Sali, barely past thirty, and R' Alfandri, already over one hundred years old, sat together for a long time discussing profound matters of Kabbalah.

◣ While in Tzfas, the Baba Sali wished to *daven* in the *beis knesses* of the Ari HaKadosh, which had long been locked. It was said that those who had previously entered met tragic ends, so the doors were sealed. Soon after arriving in Yerushalayim, he traveled to Tzfas and asked that the key be obtained. The elderly key-holder at first refused, saying it would be like taking a life, but finally agreed — on condition that Baba Sali be tied with a rope in case tragedy struck. Trembling, he waited outside. Baba Sali entered with his assistant holding his garment. As he opened the door, a brilliant light filled the room. He approached the *aron kodesh*, removed a *sefer Torah*, and read briefly. Then he told his assistant to let go. When they

emerged safely, the old man embraced him in awe and relief. The story spread quickly, and from then on, the *shul* was reopened once again.

◣ In Morocco, when a son was married, the entire town — including the poor — was invited. At the close of the celebration, the *ba'al simchah* would offer each guest five drinks of arak, circulating with a bottle and glasses while others stood ready with refills. Then he reached Baba Sali, who would take the bottle and begin pouring for himself and those around him. Wrapping it in a towel, he continued pouring — enough to equal more than two full bottles. Yet when he returned it, the towel fell away, and the bottle was just as full as when he had first received it.

◣ At a *seudah* that began in the afternoon, Baba Sali spoke at length as daylight faded. The town's electricity, powered by a generator that shut down early, was expected to go out, and the guests grew uneasy. Calmly, he assured them, "The lights will not go out," and continued speaking. When the cleaners began clearing away dishes in anticipation of darkness, he gently stopped them. "Didn't I tell you the lights will not go out?" The seudah concluded late, the clean up was completed — and only then did the city lights suddenly shut off. As he left, Baba Sali quietly remarked, "If you think there was a miracle, you are mistaken — the watchman simply fell asleep."

◣ The Arabs revered the Baba Sali, coming to him for *brachos*. When he hosted *seudos* and invited the public, the Arabs would attend, sitting at special tables outdoors, hoping to glimpse the holy man of their city.

◣ Once, a cruel and feared governor attended a *seudah* where Baba Sali was present. As he extended his hand to be kissed, the Rav refused — and publicly rebuked him for his wicked conduct. The guests were certain revenge would follow. Days later, the governor was struck by a mysterious, life-threatening illness that no doctor could cure. Realizing he had angered Baba Sali, his family begged the

Rav's pardon and promised he would change his ways. Forgiven, the governor quickly recovered — and from then on became a devoted admirer of R' Yisrael.

◣ R' Avraham Sabag, Baba Sali's shamash in Morocco for ten years, described an *avodah* beyond nature. Every morning at 4 a.m., before *Shacharis*, Baba Sali immersed in the *mikvah* — even in winter, when the water froze and a hole had to be cut through the ice. R' Avraham would walk ahead with a kerosene lamp, descending some 80 steps to the deep underground well, calling out each number while the Baba Sali focused on their mystical significance. One morning, R' Avraham lost count and quietly corrected himself. In the pre-dawn darkness, Baba Sali suddenly said, "It seems to me that you made a mistake in the numbers." Even without a word spoken, nothing escaped him.

◣ Under no circumstances did the Baba Sali forgo his daily immersion. The path to the *mikvah* was dangerous. It passed through a field that, at certain times of the year, was infested with poisonous snakes and reptiles. "There were times I feared for my life," R' Avraham admitted. "I confessed this to the Rav. He would reassure me, saying perhaps they were sent by Hashem. In time, I became accustomed to them, and they no longer frightened me." The *tevillah* itself was accompanied by profound kabbalistic meditations. After returning home, Baba Sali would *daven Shacharis* with a select *minyan*. He was particular about who was permitted to join. For example, he did not allow anyone who shaved to *daven* in his *minyan*.

◣ Following *Shacharis*, he would learn uninterrupted for hours. He frequently fasted. If not fasting, he would eat a small amount before returning to his *seforim*. He would then receive the first of the hundreds who came daily to seek his counsel and *brachos*. From early morning, people waited outside his home. He often invited them to eat and drink, and it was not uncommon for entire groups to join him for a *seudah* in the afternoon.

◣ R' Avraham was frequently sent to purchase supplies. At times, Baba Sali would request fruits or vegetables that were nowhere to be found in the market during that season. At first, R' Avraham was tempted to protest that such items were unavailable. But he soon learned that whatever the Baba Sali desired would somehow appear.

◣ Baba Sali sometimes fasted from Motzei Shabbos until erev Shabbos, eating nothing day or night. He also fasted on erev Rosh Chodesh (Yom Kippur Katan) and usually on Mondays and Thursdays. On Shabbos and Yom Tov, his table was crowded with guests — many of them poor but learned. Though the meals in his home were elaborate, he rarely partook. He abstained entirely from meat and subsisted on simple vegetables.

◣ Baba Sali slept only two or three hours per night. The remainder of his time was devoted to communal responsibilities, study, and those who sought his *brachos*. Nightly he would rise to recite *Tikkun Chatzos* and continue studying with such intensity that he was oblivious to surrounding noise.

◣ With his own funds, he built a *beis medrash* in Tafillalt and refurbished the city's *mikvah*. During the Yamim Noraim, he often served as *ba'al tefillah* and blew the *shofar* himself. On Simchas Torah, he embraced and kissed the Torah, singing and dancing like a *chosson*. At the Pesach Seder, he sat at the head of the table in white garments, majestic as an angel. On Chanukah, the lighting of the *menorah* was accompanied by lengthy sacred meditations. On Tisha B'Av, when reciting *Kinnos*, his voice trembled with grief. He wept as though mourning a loved one. Hearing his sobs, others would gather and sit upon the floor in mourning.

◣ He always entered the *beis knesses* first to prevent others from standing in his honor. If people were already present, he requested they not rise. When they ignored him, he devised a plan: he would wait until they were already standing before entering.

◣ He frequently spoke of his grandfather, R' Yaakov Abuchatzeirah, referring to him reverently as "Sidnah, Rebbe Yaakov." On his grandfather's *hillulah*, he prepared a regal *seudah* and used his grandfather's golden cup.

◣ When R' Avraham, his *shammash*, entered a year of mourning for his father, he informed the Baba Sali that he could not partake in meals outside his home. Baba Sali responded: "First of all, my house is your house. Secondly, eating here is part of your work. And third — and most importantly — whatever you eat is in honor of my holy grandfather, R' Yaakov. You have nothing to fear."

◣ All who entered his chambers with heavy hearts left filled with hope. He listened patiently for hours. The learned and the needy received financial support. Many brought *kvittlach* — money given with requests for *brachos*. Yet Baba Sali did not accept money from everyone. When he did accept funds, he carefully separated and designated each packet. Once, a delegation of prominent French Jews came to meet him. To R' Avraham's astonishment, Baba Sali refused to see them — twice. Offended, they went to the governor to demand intervention. The governor replied, "I certainly do not have the impudence to tell this holy man what to do." Baba Sali explained his refusal: "They wish me to bless them and will give money for it. But I know where their money comes from — and it is forbidden." Eventually, he agreed to see them. After hosting them generously, one of the men placed a large sum of money on the table. Baba Sali said, "I cannot accept money tainted by *chillul Shabbos*." The group admitted they owned a restaurant open on Shabbos. Baba Sali told them that if they closed on Shabbat, he would accept their money and bless them with success. They agreed. He returned part of the money to them as a blessing and distributed the rest to the poor.

◣ R' Avraham, as his *shammash*, witnessed countless miracles. Once, when pouring wine at a crowded gathering, he feared it would run

out. Baba Sali whispered, "Avraham, do not fear. I have blessed it." The wine never diminished. On one occasion, R' Avraham drank too much and collapsed. Baba Sali placed his hands on his forehead, and instantly his clarity returned. When R' Avraham worried about neglecting his store, Baba Sali assured him, "Work half an hour a day, and you will earn as much as a full day." And so it was.

◣ Wave after wave of North African Jews moved to Eretz Yisrael until the great exodus slowed to a trickle. When most of Moroccan Jewry had already settled in Eretz Yisrael, Baba Sali finally resolved to fulfill his lifelong dream of living there as well. In 1964, he stepped down from his position as leader of the Jewish community of Tafillalt. Hundreds of broken-hearted well-wishers escorted him from the city to the port. Tears flowed freely, and with aching hearts they bid farewell to the Baba Sali who had guided them for so many years.

◣ For most of the voyage to Eretz Yisrael, Baba Sali remained secluded in his cabin, immersed in Gemara and Kabbalah. About a week before reaching Eretz Yisrael, a violent storm erupted. The captain ordered life jackets as panic spread and asked that Baba Sali pray for the ship's safety. Calmly informed of the danger, he requested wine and cake in order to bless Hashem, and asked for the golden *becher* of his grandfather, R' Yaakov. After reciting the *brachos*, he instructed his *shamash* to refill the cup and pour the wine into the raging sea three times, each time declaring, "By the *zechus* of R' Yaakov!" With great difficulty, the *shamash* crossed the wildly rocking deck and did as he was told. The moment the wine touched the sea for the third time, the storm ceased. The ship steadied and soon sailed over glasslike waters. The stunned captain, crew, and passengers lined up to thank Baba Sali, but he insisted no mention be made of the miracle until they reached shore. Only then did the captain host a *seudas hoda'ah* — while Baba Sali himself seemed unaware of any cause for excitement.

◣ When Baba Sali arrived in Eretz Yisrael, hundreds came to greet him. He settled in Yavneh with his son-in-law and nephew, R' Avraham Abuchatzeirah, where many Moroccan followers lived. Soon, crowds sought his *brachos* and counsel, and he resumed giving *shiurim*. He then moved to Ashkelon for a brief stay, and in 1970, settled in Netivot, among its large Moroccan community. He took a simple immigrant apartment, but a cement wall between two units had to be removed. The work moved slowly in the heat, until Baba Sali calmly told the foreman, "Call me at three o'clock and say it's finished." Though it seemed impossible, once he left the blocks quickly gave way, and at exactly three the call came: the job was done. That night volunteers helped move him in, and he made a small *seudah* to thank Hashem, inviting all who assisted for a *l'chayim*. Soon, his modest Netivot home drew a steady stream of visitors seeking *bracha* and guidance.

◣ Baba Sali was exceedingly vigilant regarding personal sanctity. Women did not enter his room but conveyed their requests through the *gabbai*. Even at Shabbos and Yom Tov meals, they were seated separately. When walking outside, he kept his eyes lowered and sometimes pulled his hood over his face. His modesty extended even to the *mikvah*, where he carefully removed and replaced garments only while submerged. Even in old age, when others assisted him, he was careful never to be exposed improperly.

◣ He constantly emphasized emunah. When blessing someone over a bottle of water, he would repeat, "It is not the water that helps, but your *emunah* in Hashem." He maintained that even ordinary faucet water would suffice if accompanied by sincere belief. When a distraught husband once described his wife's emotional illness, Baba Sali advised that if they strengthened their adherence to modesty and purity she would recover — and within days she did.

◣ From youth he practiced severe discipline, undertaking prolonged fasts and isolating himself in study to rid himself of physical desire.

Throughout life he ate sparingly. Once, during a festive meal, he chewed a single forkful of food for nearly an hour so that guests would feel comfortable eating. On another occasion, after tasting a delicious dish, he stopped and remarked that it was "too tasty" for someone who sought no pleasure.



◣ His devotion to *tefillah* was exacting. Minchah was always an hour before sunset, Ma'ariv precisely at nightfall, and Shacharis at sunrise. He refused to nap lest he miss Minchah and once left his feet uncovered on a winter night so he would not oversleep Shacharis. Those around him witnessed moments that revealed *ruach hakodesh*, such as announcing the time for Ma'ariv precisely when others were debating whether it was still day.

◣ R' Mordechai Sharabi declared that when Baba Sali *davened*, even prosecuting angels fled. Yet Baba Sali refused to reveal Kabbalistic secrets, saying that even one word could require months to explain. He once insisted that an "unclean thing" be removed from the house; when a heavy closet was moved, a lizard was found behind it exactly as he had indicated.

◣ His commitment to Torah study was relentless. From sunrise he learned for hours, without interruptions. When his eyesight weakened, others read to him for hours on end. He maintained an extraordinary memory, claiming that once he learned a page of Gemara he never forgot it.

◣ A man once traveled from a distant city to see the Baba Sali, who instructed that he be served a meal. It was still morning, and Rabbanit Simi had not yet begun preparing the noon meal. "If so,"

said Baba Sali, "at least serve him a piece of fish." The Rabbanit searched but found no fish. She sent word that as soon as fish could be purchased it would be prepared. The Rav replied firmly, "There is a piece of fish in the refrigerator. Please bring it." The refrigerator was thoroughly searched. Every dish was removed and inspected, yet no fish was found. They returned to the Rav embarrassed. He then called R' Eliyahu Alfasi, the *gabbai*, and instructed him to retrieve the fish. R' Eliyahu emptied the refrigerator completely. At last, hidden inside a small plastic bag wedged beneath a pot and covered by a bowl of food, he discovered a small piece of fish. It had been there all along. The fish was served, and those present understood again that nothing was concealed from his awareness.

◣ A man passed away at a young age, leaving behind a widow and seventeen children, the eldest soon to be married. During *shivah*, the eldest son demanded the lion's share of the inheritance, arguing that he bore responsibility to build his home first. His mother refused, knowing her late husband would never have agreed to deprive the other children. She brought the matter before Baba Sali's *beis din*. After hearing her, the Rav turned to the son and asked, "Do you seek blessing or curse? If you desire blessing, return everything to your mother so she may raise your brothers and sisters. If you desire curse, take what you wish." The young man immediately withdrew his claim. The money remained with the widow, and in time the blessing indeed rested upon the son; he prospered and was able not only to support himself, but also to help sustain his family.

◣ His commitment to Torah study was absolute. From his earliest youth he learned daily for long hours with his father, R' Massoud. After his marriage, he would *daven* Shacharis at sunrise and learn uninterrupted until late morning. Visitors were told to wait until he finished his learning. Even family members entering the room would not draw his eyes from the *sefer*. In later years, when his eyesight

weakened, he had others read to him continuously. R' Eliyahu once read from the Zohar slowly, pondering the words. Baba Sali gently corrected him: "Read, do not think. Read at the speed to which I am accustomed." He insisted that even those immersed in yeshivah study learn *Chok L'Yisrael* daily. After completing that *sefer*, he would recite five *perakim* of Tehillim, completing the entire book monthly. "Every Jew must complete Tehillim each month," he would say. "The words of Dovid HaMelech possess immense power."

◣ A rabbi once found himself invited to two *seudos mitzvah* on the same evening — one in Netivot at Baba Sali's home and another for a *bris milah* in a distant city. Baba Sali assured him he would attend both. Despite the rabbi's concern over the travel time, the Rav repeatedly signaled that he should remain. After the Netivot *seudah*, the rabbi traveled home unhurriedly, convinced he had missed the *bris*. Upon arrival, he learned that a dispute over the honor of *sandek* had delayed the *bris*. Ultimately, they decided to wait for him. Not only did he arrive, he was given the honor.

◣ A dramatic episode involved a man carried in on a stretcher after doctors had despaired of his survival. Baba Sali blessed him and instructed him to drink nightly from a specific bottle of water. Weeks later the man returned walking upright. He recounted that in a dream Baba Sali had shown him a picture of Dr. Rafael Carso of Tel Aviv and directed him to seek treatment there. The doctor prescribed new treatment, and the man recovered. When Dr. Carso himself later called seeking a *bracha* for illness, R' Eliyahu recognized the name and arranged a meeting. Upon seeing him, Baba Sali smiled and repeated, "Through dreams I will speak."

◣ A young girl who had been paralyzed for years returned walking unaided after Baba Sali instructed her to wash her legs with blessed water. She brought with her an entire department of physicians from Beit Levinson Hospital who had treated her and declared her condition irreversible. They came seeking *brachos* for themselves.

◣ For a year and a half, the daughter of a close friend of the Baba Sali was gravely ill. In and out of hospitals, she grew steadily weaker as doctors failed to diagnose what many called an incurable "oriental virus." Finally confined to Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva, she lay under constant supervision while her father, having spent all his savings on treatments, watched helplessly. In desperation, he brought her one Friday to the Baba Sali—but that day the Rav himself was ill and not receiving visitors. The father returned heartbroken. Over Shabbos, the Rav's condition worsened and he was hospitalized as well. Remembering the sick child, the *gabbai* summoned the father. As the Rav was being discharged, he blessed the frail girl and instructed that she be removed from the hospital within the hour, relying only on "the Doctor who heals without payment"—Hashem. Though unsure how to arrange it so quickly, the father rushed back, convinced the reluctant doctor to sign a release, and hurried home to Ofakim. On the way, the child—who had not eaten for months and had been sustained intravenously—suddenly asked for food. She ate normally, regained strength, and within a week was completely well. When they returned to thank the Rav, he said, "It was not me, but the Doctor who takes no money," and asked that she commit to a Torah life. That very day, she asked to be enrolled in a religious school.

◣ Among the many who came seeking salvation was Eliyahu of Cholon, hospitalized and awaiting the amputation of both legs due to advanced thrombosis. Urged by a friend to seek a bracha, he slipped out of the hospital before surgery and came to the Baba Sali. Unable to approach because of pain, he was asked by the Rabbanit whether he observed Shabbos or put on *tefillin*. Through tears he admitted he did not. The Rav told him that if he sincerely did *teshuvah* and committed to Shabbos, Hashem would heed his plea. Eliyahu accepted upon himself full *teshuvah*. After drinking tea served at the Rav's request, he struggled to his feet and, to his amazement, walked to kiss the Rav's hand. Strength filled his legs. Students at

Yeshivat HaNegev rejoiced as he walked unaided. When he expressed fear the cure would fade, the Rav assured him that in the merit of his commitment, the decree had been annulled. Doctors at Ichilov Hospital later confirmed there was no need for surgery. When asked how he performed the miracle, the Rav simply said, "I told him, 'Stand up.'"

◣ In 1977, Chaim Abuhatzeira's newborn daughter was diagnosed with a hole in her heart. Doctors decided to hospitalize her for two years before attempting risky surgery. Unable to bear the emotional or financial strain, Chaim sought the Baba Sali's bracha. Despite the crowd, the Rav sent word that that very day the infant would leave the hospital healthy and blessed a bottle of water for her. At the hospital, the doctor warned him not to give the baby the water, suspecting it unsafe. Trusting the Rav, he replaced her bottle with it. Soon after, new tests showed the hole had vanished. The baby was discharged that same day, exactly as foretold.

◣ A childless man visited the Baba Sali repeatedly, but each time the Rav deferred him, sometimes saying only, "When Hashem wills it," or, "I cannot." Finally, the man declared he and his wife would stop pursuing doctors and rely solely on Hashem. "That is good," the Rav replied, adding cryptically, "The doctor will heal." In Elul 5733 (1973), the Rav declared that in the coming year, **תשל"ד** (5734), she would bear a child—rearranging the letters to form **שתלד** , "she will give birth." Before Rosh Hashanah he reiterated that he had *davened* and his *tefillos* were accepted. That year, the couple merited a child.

◣ A young father from Bnei Brak brought his daughter suffering from severe stomach pains caused by worms. Doctors prescribed weeks of heavy medication, but first he sought the Baba Sali's advice. The Rav laughed gently, saying there was no room in such a small body for worms, blessed her, and sent them off. The next day,

examination revealed perfect health. Her regular doctor later confirmed there was no trace of illness.

◣ A woman from Netivot suffering excruciating stomach pains asked the *gabbai* to seek a *brocha*. The Rav sent her a large slice of melon, instructing that she eat it and recover. Though doctors had forbidden melon, she trusted the Rav and ate it. By morning, her pain had completely vanished.

◣ Shortly after childbirth, the wife of one of Baba Sali's *talmidim* became seriously ill and required several blood transfusions. She grew too weak to nurse her newborn, and when she returned home, the baby refused both regular milk and special formula. Desperate, she turned to Rebbetzin Simi to ask Baba Sali's guidance. When told of the problem, Baba Sali was puzzled. "Why is the child suffering? Doesn't the mother have milk? Tell her to feed him." Astonished, the woman suddenly felt her strength return. She went home and was able to nurse her baby successfully.



בשנות השבעים

◣ A grieving family once came to Baba Sali after their brother, called to army reserves, had gone missing. Officials had given up hope. Baba Sali invited them to eat and drink, lifted his *becher*, and said, "*L'chaim*." He was overheard murmuring, "Shall he who cleans no longer clean?" He assured them their brother was alive and would return soon. Two weeks later, the soldier returned safely. At a *seudas hodaah* in Baba Sali's home, the young man revealed that every Friday he quietly cleaned his *shul* in

Petach Tikva. Smiling, Baba Sali repeated, "Shall he who cleans no longer clean?" attributing his rescue to that hidden *mitzvah*.

◣ The wife of a Rosh Yeshiva in Yerushalayim suffered life-threatening hemorrhaging. Doctors were helpless and advised seeking a *tzaddik's tefillos*. Two *talmidim* hurried to Baba Sali, who promised immediate recovery and sent a bottle of water, instructing that she drink and wash with it. As soon as this was done, the bleeding stopped and she regained consciousness. The Rosh Yeshiva later became a devoted *talmid* of Baba Sali.

◣ In 1940, while traveling by bus in Eretz Yisrael, Baba Sali asked the driver to stop so he could daven *minchah*. The driver let him off but the bus then refused to start. Only after Baba Sali finished davening and reboarded did it start immediately.

◣ On a rainy day, a driver insisted on taking Baba Sali from Netivot to Yerushalayim without payment. Both ways Baba Sali offered to pay, at least for fuel. The driver later discovered the gas gauge had not moved at all despite the long trip. Baba Sali recounted a similar earlier incident in which a car miraculously used no fuel, concluding it was clearly a *bracha* from Hashem.

◣ On Purim 1978, a crowded celebration at Baba Sali's home ended with a chandelier crashing to the floor. Calmly he said, "A new one is coming; this will atone for those gathered." Fifteen minutes later, someone arrived with an ornate chandelier he had long intended to present as *mishloach manos*.

◣ When R' Yosef Deutsch of Yerushalayim fell ill, his son came for a *bracha*. Baba Sali said cryptically, "He is in the water," and promised to *daven* for him. Later it was discovered that at that exact time R' Deutsch had insisted on going to the *mikveh* despite his weakness.

◣ When his grandson Menachem was born, the entire city of Netivot celebrated, and at the *bris* everyone arrived in Yom Tov clothing.

The Rabbanit asked Avi Kohn, a devoted *talmid* of Yeshivat HaNegev and an experienced photographer, to film the event. He came fully prepared with extra film, batteries, and powerful floodlights. But the moment he directed the bright lights toward Baba Sali as he sat by the *Kisei Shel Eliyahu*, a 1,000-watt bulb immediately burned out. Avi replaced it, yet when the light again shone into the Rav's face and he motioned for it to be lowered, the second bulb also failed. The same happened when he turned the camera toward Baba Sali and R' Yissachar Meir. Switching to still photography, Avi discovered the flash worked when aimed elsewhere but not when pointed at Baba Sali. When the baby was brought in, the equipment suddenly worked again—until the infant reached Baba Sali's arms, when everything stopped. Shaken, Avi fled to his room, refusing to return until he received the Rav's permission. At the *seudah*, the pattern repeated: when Baba Sali signaled he did not wish to be filmed, the camera and flash failed; when he consented, they worked. To those present it was clear – the equipment functioned solely according to the Rav's will.

◣ In his *tefillos*, Baba Sali would often express his readiness to be an atonement for the sins of Klal Yisrael. When he saw or heard of another's suffering, he would sigh deeply and plead with Hashem to transfer the decree to himself instead. He was once overheard whispering, "Hashem, I am ready to enter a furnace of fire and give my life as an atonement for this Jew," mentioning the person explicitly by name and mother's name.

◣ A frequent visitor to Baba Sali's home was constantly struck by the extraordinary hospitality there. From early morning until late at night thousands passed through the house, and each was offered food and drink, many invited to full meals. In his heart the visitor wondered why the Rav was so lavish—such generosity seemed excessive, beyond even what the wealthy displayed. One evening Baba Sali asked him to stay overnight so they could learn together in the morning. After Shacharis, the Rav opened a Gemara and read

a passage concerning Rava and a poor man who regularly ate delicacies and fine wines. When questioned why he burdened the community with his expensive tastes, the poor man replied that if Hashem created such bounty and made it available to him, he should not reject it. At that very moment Rava's sister, whom he had not seen for a long time, arrived bearing precisely those exotic foods and wines. Rava accepted it as a Heavenly sign and told the poor man to eat and be satisfied. Closing the Gemara, Baba Sali turned to his guest and explained, "Whatever I am given is not for me but for those who are in my house at the time. This is not my house—it is the house of Hashem, and all His children may enter and eat to their hearts' content." The visitor, who had never expressed his private doubts, stood in awe at how the Rav had answered the unspoken question within his heart.

◣ On certain days, the Rav's family would quietly limit visitors because the strain was weakening him. They were careful to do so discreetly so he would not notice. Once, however, he saw that the door was open yet no one was entering. When told that people were being turned away for his health, he became upset and said, "How can a Jew be turned away? What if he has a problem and I can help him?" He firmly instructed that no one was ever to be denied entry, showing that he placed the needs of others above his own health.

◣ Even late at night, after receiving visitors all day, he remained ready to open his door to those in need. In Eretz Yisrael his hospitality exceeded even what it had been in Morocco. He honored each guest generously, and in earlier years almost no visitor left without eating. He would often insist that a person eat something before presenting his request.

◣ In his later years, when crowds filled the waiting room day and night, he had to be selective about serving food. Once, a young man invited to eat slipped food into a bag, thinking no one noticed. The Rav gently called him over and quoted *Birchas HaMazon*, explaining

that the Torah phrase "into your vessel you shall not place" is hinted in the wording. Then, instead of embarrassing him, the Rav generously packed food for him to take home to his wife and blessed him. His soft words of rebuke were always delivered with love and accepted as such.

◣ One Rosh Hashanah, he invited a student from Yeshivas HaNegev who had often driven him during the year. When the student arrived at 9 p.m., he explained that he had not yet davened because the yeshiva custom was to learn first and *daven* later than the townspeople. The Rav told him to return and *daven* with the yeshiva before coming back. Three hours later, after the lengthy Rosh Hashanah *tefillah*, the student returned and was astonished that everyone had waited. The Rav immediately made *Kiddush* and treated him warmly throughout the *seudah*, never allowing him to feel uncomfortable.

◣ The Rav never forgot those who helped him. His love for every Jew was limitless, and he derived personal joy from bringing happiness to others. At weddings, *brissim*, and *pidyon haben's*, he would say, "I do this for myself — there is nothing I enjoy more than making another Jew happy."

◣ Through his warmth, he brought many closer to Torah. Sometimes he would offer a *bracha* on condition that a person improve in *mitzvah* observance or correct a bad *middah*. Many initially changed for the sake of the *bracha* and eventually became sincere *baalei teshuvah* whose lives were transformed.

◣ He kept coins and candy on hand for children, ensuring that every child left with something. Once, when he ran out of coins and was offered paper bills instead, he refused. He explained that children treasure coins more than paper money; in their innocent eyes, a simple coin feels more valuable. He wanted them to leave truly happy.

◣ A man once poured out a long, painful tale of suffering while many waited outside. After he left uplifted and hopeful, the gabbai

entered and found the Rav bent over, weeping bitterly. "Sometimes I hurt so for these people," he said tearfully. "I *daven* that my hands be cut off as an atonement for their misery."

◣ He cherished even simple Jews who came to *daven* in his home, regardless of their scholarship. "These are holy people," he would say. "Their faith and love of Torah are pure. They deserve the highest honor."

◣ When a couple married for only two days came for a *bracha*, he immediately ordered a lavish *sheva brachos* and invited everyone present. After the *seudah*, when the *chosson* attempted to give him money, he refused and instead handed the young man a packet of bills, explaining that now he had many expenses.

◣ Many troubled couples sought his guidance, agreeing to accept whatever he ruled. In Morocco especially, couples who came seeking divorce often left reconciled after he patiently heard both sides and worked tirelessly to restore peace.

◣ He paid individuals to learn 18 *perakim* of Mishnayos daily on his behalf, saying it was difficult for him to see the letters clearly. He also paid young students monthly to learn Zohar, appointing them as his messengers in Torah study. In Netivot, he would visit Yeshivas HaNegev and distribute money to every student, then repeat the gesture in the *yeshiva ketanah*. He ensured each boy received his *bracha* and gift so he could learn with peace of mind.

◣ He shared a deep bond with Rabbi Yosef Eliyahu Deutsch, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Anshei Maamad in Yerushalayim—their relationship described as "Yisrael loved Yosef." They would speak for hours whenever they met, and after one long separation, the Rav even recited *Shehechiyanu* upon seeing him again. When Rabbi Yosef fell ill, the Rav became despondent and soon suffered partial paralysis from which he never recovered. After Rabbi Yosef's passing, the news was initially withheld, but the Rav sensed the truth; when told, he wept bitterly and said the world had lost one of

its pillars. When the family came to visit, he urged them to continue strengthening Torah, and to his son he said, "I fought and fought, but I lost," revealing the depth of his love.

◣ Even in frailty, Baba Sali insisted on rising for visiting *talmidei chachamim*. Once, in great pain and with assistance, he stood until a distinguished *gadol* was seated before sitting down himself.

◣ He tirelessly supported young couples, especially those whose *chassanim* wished to remain in yeshiva. Often there was little money for weddings. Every *chosson* received a generous gift, and if told how much had been saved, the Rav would frequently double the amount, becoming a true partner in building their new home.

◣ Baba Sali was deeply concerned for the poor of his community, especially before Yamim Tovim. He assured they had money for food, clothing, and all their needs, so they would not feel ashamed before their neighbors. Whenever he bought clothing for himself or his family, he would purchase an extra garment for a poor person. One year, shortly before Pesach, he had to leave home for a month and would not be able to distribute the aid personally. He entrusted a large sum of money to one of his sons, instructing him not to delay and to ensure the poor received everything necessary for Yom Tov. The son faithfully distributed the money, and when Baba Sali returned, he confirmed that the families had bought fish, wine, matzah, and meat, and had sent their gratitude. But when asked if clothing had been purchased, the son admitted he had not done so. Immediately, Baba Sali hired tailors, though they warned the garments would not be ready in time. Undeterred, he began the work anyway and called the poor families to see what was being prepared for them. "Even if they cannot wear the clothing on Yom Tov," he explained, "the joy of knowing it is coming will gladden their hearts during Yom Tov."

◣ In Morocco, where he led the community of Tafilat with firmness in halachic standards yet compassion for personal struggles, Baba

Sali once visited a remote village. Before accepting hospitality, he asked to see the local *mikveh*. The leaders were embarrassed: it had long been abandoned, the water putrid, the structure crumbling, and infested with snakes and scorpions. The townspeople traveled elsewhere for immersion.

Despite warnings of danger, he insisted on entering, declaring he would not leave until the *mikveh* was made kosher. Removing his shoes, he waded into the foul water and began bailing it out, enlisting the help of the humiliated but inspired elders. When it was emptied, he lifted his hands to Heaven and *davened*, "We have done our part; now You do Yours." Immediately, clouds gathered and rain poured down, refilling the *mikveh*. Yet he then expressed concern: according to the *Beis Yehudah*, iron pipes invalidated the *mikveh*. Though the villagers protested—unwilling to forfeit such a miracle—he insisted no spiritual risk could be taken. They emptied it again, replaced the pipes with wooden ones, and once more he *davened*, invoking the author of *Beis Yehudah* to intercede. A second deluge fell, filling the *mikveh* properly, and the village was left uplifted by both the miracle and his uncompromising devotion to *halachah*.

◣ A distinguished rav had been childless for eighteen years and came to seek a blessing. The gabbai introduced him, but Baba Sali seemed unusually moved, sensing the depth of his pain. He promised to *daven* with all his heart for healthy children. The visitor responded with heartfelt *emunah* in Baba Sali's power to bring a *yeshuah*, words that filled him with joy. After sharing arak and cookies, he gave his *brocha*. Within a year, a son was born. In time, more children followed, transforming their home from sorrow to joy. The grateful father returned repeatedly with good news and eventually asked for a *brocha* to live to see all his children's weddings.

◣ It was customary in Morocco for the rav to make *Kiddush* in the home of a prominent member of the community on Shabbos or Yom

Tov. One Rosh Hashanah, Baba Sali went to a wealthy jeweler's home, where lavish delicacies awaited him. Before making *Kiddush*, he asked that the man's sons join them. Embarrassed, the host admitted they were playing cards and did not conduct themselves as proper Jews. Baba Sali was shaken. "Today is Rosh Hashanah—the Day of Judgment! Are they not afraid?" When the father begged him to wait so as not to anger his sons and jeopardize his livelihood, Baba Sali rebuked him: "Your wealth comes from Hashem, not from them." Refusing to remain, he left. Later that night he remarked that in Heaven it was being decreed that the man's wealth be taken. Sometime afterward, while visiting Casablanca, he saw a destitute man scavenging in a hotel kitchen and recognized him as that jeweler. The broken man fell at his feet, and Baba Sali blessed him for a better future.

◣ At a grand *Hachnasas Sefer Torah* Baba Sali was invited to speak among other *gedolei Torah*. In the midst of his address, a community leader nervously informed him that the city generator would shut off at 10 pm, plunging the hall into darkness. The switches were in the mayor's building and could not be extended. Baba Sali replied calmly, "As long as there is the sound of Torah, there will be light." Indeed, as the Torah speeches and discussions continued late into the night, the lights remained on. Only when conversations drifted to mundane matters did the lights suddenly go out, leaving the people awed by the clear message.

◣ An elderly woman who had served the family since Morocco, and who had been blessed by the saintly R' Yaakov Abuchatzeira that she would never lose her eyesight, once slipped and struck her head, suddenly becoming blind. Distraught and unwilling to become a burden, she insisted the *brocha* must stand. When informed, Baba Sali told her that if R' Yaakov had blessed her, she had nothing to fear. He instructed her to perform *netilas yadayim* properly in the morning and *daven* sincerely for her sight to return. She went home reassured, and the next day her vision was fully restored.

◣ One of his most devoted admirers was an Arab, who came to regard him as a holy man. Their bond began when Baba Sali needed a taxi for a long journey. The driver protested he lacked enough fuel even for one direction, let alone the return trip. Baba Sali assured him there would be enough. Skeptical but persuaded—on condition of full payment even if stranded—the driver agreed. Astonishingly, they completed the entire journey without refueling. Though paid, the driver refused the money, feeling privileged to have served him. From then on, he sought Baba Sali's *brachos* and told all who would listen of the miracle.



◣ After moving to Eretz Yisrael and settling in Netivot, Baba Sali would often make sudden trips to Yerushalayim. One night, returning close to midnight with his wife, *gabbai*, and a young yeshiva student driving, the car repeatedly stalled on the road. Unable to fix it, the driver suggested calling a taxi and waiting until morning, but the Rabbanit feared leaving him alone overnight. She asked Baba Sali to bless them. After a few moments of deep concentration, he suddenly cried out, "Get up! Now drive!" The young man immediately started the engine and drove smoothly all the way home to Netivot without further trouble.

◣ Baba Sali was deeply concerned for the poor in his community. He made sure they had sufficient money for food, clothing, and all their needs before the Yomim Tovim, so they would not feel ashamed before their neighbors. Whenever he bought clothing for himself or a family member, he would purchase an extra item for a poor person as well.

◣ One year, he had to leave home for a month before Pesach and would not be able to personally distribute his usual assistance. He entrusted one of his sons with a large sum of money, urging him not to delay and to ensure the poor received what they needed. The son faithfully distributed the funds before Yom Tov. When Baba Sali returned, he confirmed that food—fish, wine, matzah, and meat—had been purchased, and that the poor conveyed their gratitude. But when he heard that no clothing had been bought, he immediately hired tailors. Though they said the garments could not be completed before Yom Tov, he insisted they begin. He then called the poor to show them what was being prepared, explaining to his family that even knowing they would receive clothing after Yom Tov would increase their joy during it.

◣ In Morocco, Baba Sali guided the Jewish community of Tafilalt with firmness in matters of obligation but with great sensitivity to personal hardship. Once, upon visiting a remote village, he was warmly received by the community leaders and Rabbonim. Before accepting any hospitality, he asked to be taken to the local *mikveh*. The community head embarrassedly admitted it had long been abandoned—its water putrid, its structure crumbling, and dangerous to enter. The townspeople traveled elsewhere for a *mikveh*. Despite their warnings about stench, falling debris, and even scorpions and snakes, Baba Sali insisted. Declaring he would not leave until the *mikveh* was made kosher, he entered, removed his shoes, lifted his garments, and began bailing out the filthy water himself.

Ashamed yet inspired, the community elders joined him. When it was emptied, he raised his hands to Heaven and cried, "Hashem, we have done our part; now do Yours." Immediately, heavy rains fell and refilled the *mikveh*. The villagers rejoiced at the miracle and felt spiritually uplifted. Yet Baba Sali expressed concern. According to the Beis Yehuda, he believed the *mikveh* might still be invalid due to its iron pipes. The villagers resisted emptying the miraculously provided water, but he refused to allow a questionable *mikveh* to

exist. The water was drained again, and wooden pipes replaced the iron ones. When complete, he prayed once more—invoking the author of the Beis Yehuda—and again a deluge came, refilling the *mikveh* properly. Only then did he return home, leaving behind an inspired and strengthened community.

◣ A Rav from a distinguished lineage had been childless for eighteen years. He came to Baba Sali for a *brocha*. Though initially quiet and reflective, Baba Sali promised to *daven* with all his heart. Baba Sali joyfully shared refreshments with him and gave him a heartfelt *brocha*. Within a year, a son was born. Over time, more children followed, transforming their home from sorrow to joy.

◣ In Morocco it was customary for Baba Sali to make *Kiddush* in the home of a prominent community member on Shabbos or Yom Tov. One Rosh Hashanah, Baba Sali went with his *shammash*, R' Moshe Shetrit, to a wealthy jeweler's home. Lavish delicacies were set before him, and he requested wine for *Kiddush*. The host asked him to wait for his sons.

When Baba Sali inquired why they had not come from *shul*, the man reluctantly admitted they spent Shabbos mornings playing cards. Shocked, Baba Sali rebuked him sharply, asking if they were not afraid on the Day of Judgment. The jeweler begged him to wait, fearing business repercussions. Baba Sali refused, declaring that wealth comes from Hashem, not from irreligious sons, and left angrily. Later that night, he remarked that in Heaven it was being decided to take away the man's wealth. Sometime afterward, while in Casablanca, Baba Sali saw a destitute man scavenging near a kitchen. Recognizing him as the former jeweler, he blessed him when the man tearfully begged for help.

◣ The town of Irfud once celebrated a grand *Hachnasas Sefer Torah* and invited Baba Sali. During his speech, a leader warned that the city generator would shut off at 10 pm. Baba Sali replied, "As long as there is the sound of Torah, there will be light." Indeed, the

lights remained on throughout hours of Torah discussion. Only when conversations turned mundane did the lights suddenly go out.

◣ An elderly woman who had long served in his household—having also known his father and grandfather, R' Yaakov Abuchatzeira—once declared she would never lose her eyesight because R' Yaakov had blessed her with lifelong healthy vision. One day she fell, struck her head, and became blind. Distressed, she insisted the *brocha* could not fail. Baba Sali reassured her through his *gabbai* that the *brocha* stood firm. He instructed her to perform *netilas yadayim* properly in the morning and *daven* with *emunah*. The next day her sight was fully restored, and Baba Sali arranged a *seudas hoda'ah* in gratitude for the miracle.

◣ One of Baba Sali's devoted admirers was an Arab. Once, when a taxi was needed to return Baba Sali home—a long journey—the driver protested that he lacked sufficient fuel and that the tank could not hold enough for a round trip. Baba Sali assured him there would be enough fuel both ways and accepted all the driver's conditions, even agreeing to full payment if they stalled early. Remarkably, they completed the journey without issue. The astonished driver refused payment, saying he had merited the privilege, and from then on, he sought Baba Sali's blessings.

◣ Baba Sali would often request to travel to Yerushalayim for brief visits to study certain *sefarim*, then return to Netivot. On one late-night return trip, the car stalled repeatedly. The driver and *gabbai* could not fix it and suggested arranging a taxi, planning for the driver to stay with the car overnight. The Rabbanit feared for his safety and asked Baba Sali for a *brocha*. After a moment of intense concentration, Baba Sali suddenly shouted, "Get up! Now drive!" The young driver immediately obeyed, and the car started smoothly, just like that, carrying them safely home.

◣ A young scholar, married four years without children, came to Baba Sali demanding not only a *brocha* but a promise that he would

have children. The *gabbai* warned him that Baba Sali only *davened*—he did not make promises. Yet when Baba Sali blessed him and again refused to promise, the man insisted he would not leave without one. Seeing his desperation, Baba Sali called for arak, poured *l'chaim* for them, and declared, "I promise you that this year you will be the father of sons." It was already Shevat, leaving only seven months in the year, and he had said sons, plural. Shortly before Rosh Hashanah, the man returned—his wife had prematurely given birth in the seventh month to twin boys. Four years later, with no further children, the man again met Baba Sali. The Rav smiled and said, "This time next year you will father more sons." When the man cautiously asked if this meant twins again, Baba Sali replied, "Yes. It is her nature to bear twins." A year later, twin boys were born once more.

◣ A worried young man from the yeshiva community in Netivot came when his wife, five months pregnant, had not felt any movement. Baba Sali reassured him: "On Rosh Chodesh Elul, when everyone rises early for Selichot, the child will rise as well." On the first day of Elul, as the Sephardi community rose for Selichot, she felt movement for the first time. Baba Sali later blessed them with a healthy son to be named Yisrael, predicting he would become a great man in *Am Yisrael*.

◣ Baba Sali's recitation of *Tikkun Chatzos* was a heart-rending experience. He requested that no one enter during that time. Once, Rabbanit Simi forgot and entered, seeing him bent over on the floor with a small puddle beside him. Thinking something had spilled, she asked what it was. After reminding her that no one was to enter, he told her never to reveal what she had seen—it was tears he had shed over the *Shechinah* in *galus*.

◣ When a Sabena airplane was hijacked and forced to land at Lod Airport, Baba Sali locked himself in a room to *daven* for the hostages. Those nearby heard intense cries and wailing at a specific moment. It was later discovered that at that exact time, Israeli

forces stormed the plane and rescued the captives. When questioned, Baba Sali said only that he had suffered deeply for them and thanked Hashem that salvation had come.

◣ During the Moroccan famine of 1951, an Arab worker deliberately set fire to a Jewish food distribution center and perished in the flames. Though investigations proved the Jew in charge, Alu Lif, was innocent, the government fined him heavily and sought to confiscate his property. His wife, hoping to protect their possessions under Moroccan law, asked the community leader to transfer ownership to her name, but he feared retaliation. Baba Sali, visiting at the time, insisted and personally signed the transfer. Within days, the court overturned its ruling, fully exonerating Alu Lif except for a minor fine for the worker's clothing.



◣ A man arrested for illegal foreign currency dealings refused police offers to betray associates in exchange for freedom. Facing heavy fines and prison, he was persuaded to seek Baba Sali's *brocha*. Baba Sali told him everything depends on *simcha*—he must cast off depression and trust in Hashem. After uplifting him with a joyous *seudah* and *piyutim* of Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzeira, Baba Sali assured him he would receive no prison term and only a small fine. In court, despite expectations of harsh punishment, the judge dismissed most charges and imposed a fine of only 40,000 pounds.

◣ Under an anti-Semitic governor in Morocco, six Jews were arrested on Erev Shabbos for sending money to Eretz Yisrael. Panic spread, but Baba Sali calmly assured the community that the solution would come after Shabbos. At a Melaveh Malkah, he opened a siddur

and read the words, "Your fear will depart and you will be released from prison," proclaiming that the men would be freed that night. Moments later, a messenger burst in announcing their release.

◣ A mourner in his year of *aveilus* was called for reserve army duty and feared he would miss saying *Kaddish*, as he had sworn to his late father. Baba Sali reassured him that in the merit of Kaddish, his service would be delayed. Repeated official letters postponed his duty again and again until the year of mourning concluded; only afterward was he summoned.

◣ During the Yom Kippur War, a yeshiva staff member drafted to Sinai sought Baba Sali's *brocha* for release, believing his civilian work insignificant. Baba Sali told him not to worry—they would send him back. Days later, due to an "administrative mistake," he was released because of a supposedly "key civilian position." An officer later admitted it had been an error—they had meant to release someone else with a similar name—but once he was freed, they left it that way.

◣ A poor debtor in Netivot, unable to repay immediately, struggled with a policeman who came to arrest him. The officer, who had asthma, collapsed during the scuffle. Fearing arrest, the man fled and sent a friend to seek three *brachos* from Baba Sali: that he not be jailed, that the policeman recover, and that he repay his debts. Baba Sali assured him all would be well—the policeman would recover, the court report would fail, and he would win. In court, the policeman inexplicably stammered through his own report until the judge dismissed the case, even rebuking the officer. Soon afterward, the debtor unexpectedly acquired funds and repaid all his debts in full.

◣ One Rosh Chodesh Elul, Baba Sali suddenly asked his *shammash*, R' Eliyahu, to prepare immediately for a trip to Yerushalayim. "My soul yearns to be at the Kosel," he said urgently. "I must be there quickly, before it is too late." Arrangements were made without delay, and the two set out from Netivot. During the drive, Baba Sali

sat restless and anxious, peering through the window again and again as if searching the horizon for the holy city. When they finally arrived in Yerushalayim, a chair was brought for the frail *tzaddik*, and he sat down to rest. Bending his head and leaning on his hands, he remained silent for several moments. Then he slowly stood and asked to be helped back into the car. "It is time to go home," he said quietly. R' Eliyahu was astonished. Baba Sali had traveled all this way while weak and ill—yet he had not even gone up to the Kosel. "Does the Rav not wish to go to the Kotel?" he asked. Baba Sali replied simply, "I have completed my *tefillah*." The return trip was entirely different. On the way to Yerushalayim he had been tense and impatient; now he was calm and serene. Those traveling with him could not understand the transformation. When they arrived home in Netivot, Baba Sali said with quiet joy, "*Boruch Hashem*—now everything will be all right."

◣ Jews from every corner of the world came to visit Baba Sali in Netivot—simple Jews, scholars, and even great Chassidic Rebbes who themselves had thousands of followers. The Rebbes came to discuss Torah with him and hear his insights. Often a distinguished Rebbe would leave saying in amazement, "Everyone knows that he is a holy man and a miracle worker—but few realize his mastery of Gemara, Halachah, Aggadah, and matters of judgment."

◣ Although these great leaders came seeking his *brachos*, Baba Sali never accepted honor from them. Just as their own *chassidim* brought them *kvitlach*, so these giants would present *kvitlach* to Baba Sali. Yet he regarded himself as insignificant before them and would instead ask them for *brachos* and advice.

◣ Baba Sali first visited Eretz Yisrael in 1928. During that trip he sought out the greatest *tzaddikim* in the land, especially in Yerushalayim and Tzfas. Among those he visited was the famed *mekubal*, R' Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari. This elderly sage did not receive most visitors, even prominent ones. Yet when Baba Sali came,

he welcomed him warmly and drew him close. When R' Alfandari blessed him, Baba Sali humbly asked that the great *mekubal* accept a *brocha* from him in return, saying, "Let not the blessing of a simple man be insignificant in your eyes." R' Alfandari immediately protested. "*Chas v'shalom*! Yours is not the *brocha* of a simple man. You are a great person worthy of blessing others. Who should bless if not the man who fears Hashem? And in our generation—you are that man." Baba Sali was only about thirty years old at the time.

◣ During that same visit, Baba Sali spent time in the yeshivos of the *mekubalim* in Yerushalayim. On one occasion he discussed a difficult passage in Kabbalah with the head of one of the yeshivos and later sat down among the students to learn quietly. When several students approached the Rosh Yeshivah with questions, he pointed to Baba Sali and said, "As long as this holy guest is here, I am not your teacher. Go and ask him."

◣ A well-known mashgiach and baal mussar from one of the leading yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael once came to Netivot after hearing about Baba Sali's greatness. Their first meeting led to many others, and they developed a deep friendship. When people around him spoke with amazement about Baba Sali's wonders, the mashgiach remarked calmly, "Why are you so surprised? In his hands are the keys to nature. If he wishes, he can even change a person's nature."

◣ Baba Sali constantly sought out the greatest *Gedolim* of the generation in order to bask in their holiness. When he heard about the renowned Chazon Ish, R Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, he immediately traveled to Bnei Brak to meet him. When the Chazon Ish saw him, he remarked with wonder, "This *tzaddik* works entirely for the sake of Heaven." Baba Sali, for his part, praised the Chazon Ish's greatness in Torah and attributed it to the tradition he had received from students of the Vilna Gaon. The meeting left a deep impression on Baba Sali, who returned to visit him several times.

◣ Baba Sali met several times with the Satmar Rebbe, R' Yoel Teitelbaum. Their first encounter occurred unexpectedly in France when Baba Sali entered a *shul* to *daven* and discovered that the Satmar Rebbe was there. Curious about the unfamiliar visitor, the Rebbe sent his *shammash* to ask who he was and then invited him to speak privately. The Satmar Rebbe blessed Baba Sali, and Baba Sali later said that the *brocha* had borne fruit. He held the Satmar Rebbe in the highest regard, often praising him to visitors. Whenever a Satmar *chassid* came to see him, Baba Sali would warmly invite him to sit at his table. When news arrived of the Satmar Rebbe's passing, Baba Sali wept bitterly. "The world has lost something," he said. "The world is empty."

◣ In 1983, the Ribnizer Rebbe came to Eretz Yisrael and expressed his wish to visit Baba Sali in Netivot. Baba Sali ordered his home cleaned and prepared in honor of the guest, and many people gathered to witness the meeting of the two *tzaddikim*. When the Ribnitzer Rebbe arrived, however, he first asked to rest before seeing Baba Sali.

After refreshing himself and learning for a while from several *seforim*, he finally set out for Baba Sali's home. Part of the way he insisted on walking, explaining, "I am going to meet a *tzaddik*; it is more fitting to go on foot." Before entering the room, he washed his hands and told his followers to show the utmost respect, "for we are about to enter the presence of a king."

At that very moment, Baba Sali—speaking to those in his room—used nearly the same words about the Ribnitzer Rebbe. The two holy men spoke for a long time. Baba Sali personally served him food and drink, while the Rebbe presented him with a tray and elegant cups as a gift. When the Rebbe asked for a blessing, Baba Sali protested that he was not worthy—but the Ribnitzer Rebbe replied, "I came to Eretz Yisrael just to receive a *brocha* from Baba Sali."

◣ When the Lelover Rebbe came to Netivot in 1971, as soon as he entered the room, Baba Sali apologized that he had not been informed earlier, saying he would have prepared a more fitting reception. "I came only to see your face," the Lelover Rebbe replied simply. "That is enough for me."

Baba Sali repeatedly urged him to join him for a meal or at least a small refreshment, but the Rebbe politely refused each time. He explained again that he had come solely to behold Baba Sali. The two *tzaddikim* parted with great affection and humility, each asking the other's forgiveness. Later the Lelover Rebbe told his followers that Baba Sali had achieved extraordinary spiritual refinement through years of self-discipline—nights of uninterrupted learning, fasting, and immersing himself in cold *mikvaos*. "To receive a *brocha* from such a person," he concluded, "is itself a great *zchus*."

◣ Even when illness weakened him in his later years, Baba Sali never relaxed the spiritual disciplines he had accepted in his youth. When confined to his bed, he would ask family members to help him stand so that he could recite certain *tefillos* properly. Too weak to rise alone, he would lean on others but insisted on standing while saying Modeh Ani and other *brachos*, reciting each word slowly and with concentration.

◣ On one occasion he asked a man in his house to accompany him to the *mikvah* late at night before performing a *mitzvah*. The path was dark and dangerous, and the man hesitated but finally agreed. Truly he was not so enthusiastic about going so late at night. When they reached the *mikvah*, however, the door would not open. The man tried several times with his key and finally told Baba Sali that it must be the wrong one. Baba Sali looked at him and said gently, "The door will not open because you do not truly wish to immerse. The *yetzer hara* is preventing you." He then struck the door lightly with his walking stick and told the man to try again. This time the door opened easily. "From Heaven," Baba Sali said, "a person is helped

along the path he chooses." With great joy he then immersed himself in the the *mikvah*.

◣ The performance of *mitzvos* was a central priority for the Baba Sali, and he derived immense joy from them. This was quite evident in the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras HaOmer*, which for him was a completely new *avodah* each day. He would prepare for hours beforehand, yearning for the proper time to arrive. More than an hour before nightfall, he would already grow restless, asking, "When can we *daven* and fulfill the *mitzvah* of counting the *Omer*?"

◣ After *davening*, when everyone else had already completed the counting and moved on to singing and *piyutim*, the Baba Sali would only then begin. He would recite the *brocha* with extraordinary concentration, focusing on the meaning of every letter according to Kabbalistic intent. Each day, with its unique spiritual designation, was approached with careful thought and precision. He would even review the correct count repeatedly with a *minyan*, and sometimes awaken family members in the middle of the night to confirm that he had indeed counted properly. On one such occasion, after repeatedly disturbing his family, he explained his behavior. "Do you think Hashem needs our counting?" he asked. "Hashem grants us the merit of performing *mitzvos* each day. Therefore, we must be extremely careful to do them properly. The better we perform each *mitzvah*, the greater the *zechus* we receive."

◣ His meticulousness in *halachah* was legendary, and his family took great care to ensure he would never inadvertently compromise the standards he had accepted upon himself. One Friday night, after the Rebbetzin had lit Shabbos candles, she signaled to one of the girls in the home to adjust the pots on the *blech*, since she herself could no longer do so. Later, at the Shabbos *seudah*, the Baba Sali refused to eat anything placed before him. Despite the Rebbetzin's pleas, he would not touch the food. Finally, he explained: he could not eat food that had been involved in an even indirect desecration of Shabbos.

Only then did the Rebbetzin realize that even the subtle adjustment of the pots had violated the stringency he upheld.

◣ People from surrounding villages would often bring gifts—fruits, vegetables, eggs, and more—in gratitude for his *brachos*. Once, a farmer arrived with baskets of produce and waited at the doorway. Suddenly, the Baba Sali instructed his wife to tell the man to bury everything, declaring it forbidden. When questioned, the farmer insisted the produce was his and properly obtained. The Baba Sali calmly asked when it had been harvested. "Friday," the man replied quickly, adding that he certainly had not worked on Shabbos. The Baba Sali reacted sharply: "After desecrating Shabbos, you still deny it?" Confronted with this, the man broke down and admitted the truth. He accepted upon himself to properly observe Shabbos and eventually became fully observant, even becoming a devoted follower of the Baba Sali.

◣ On another Shabbos, the Baba Sali again refused to eat, this time the *chamin* (cholent) The Rebbetzin could not understand why, as everything had been prepared properly before Shabbos. Only after Shabbos did the explanation emerge. A neighbor casually mentioned that she had "fixed" the pot Friday night by nudging it onto the fire to improve it. The Rebbetzin then realized why the Baba Sali had refused to eat—it had been tampered with on Shabbos. From Heaven, he had been protected from benefiting from even an unintended desecration.

◣ The Baba Sali was also exceedingly strict in matters of *kashrus*. He would not eat food prepared in others' homes, even when attending a *seudah*. Instead, his household would prepare food for him to bring along. Discreetly, when no one noticed, he would substitute his own food so as not to embarrass his hosts while still maintaining his standards.

◣ At times, he would refuse to accept money from those who came for *brachos*, without explanation. One man, who had once been

healed through his *brocha*, returned when he fell ill again, pleading with the Baba Sali to accept payment, believing his recovery depended on it. Despite his tears, Baba Sali refused. Only when the man committed to accepting upon himself the yoke of *mitzvos* did Baba Sali accept the money and bless him for a full recovery.

◣ Near Baba Sali's chair stood two boxes: one for regular donations, and another for money of questionable origin. When he felt it inappropriate to refuse money outright, he would accept it but place it in the second box. That money was never used for personal purposes; instead, it was distributed to yeshivos and institutions of Torah. At times, he would even give such money directly to *talmidim*, asking them to *daven* that the donor do *teshuvah*.

◣ Many who came to Baba Sali were not yet observant, but were drawn in times of need. Once, a wealthy, non-observant man came for a *brocha*. Upon hearing that he did not keep Shabbos, the Baba Sali urged him to leave, giving him a quick *brocha* so as not to prolong the encounter. When the man offered a large sum of money, Baba Sali firmly refused, even when the man insisted he would give more in the future. Later, the man attempted to give the money to the Rebbetzin, but she too refused after being warned. Baba Sali explained simply: the money was completely forbidden.

◣ Although he was often asked to serve as *sandak* at a *bris*, Baba Sali generally declined. Leaving his home disrupted his intense schedule of *avodah* and learning, and physically it was difficult for him. On one occasion, however, he had agreed due to a prior commitment. On the day of the *bris*, he asked to be released from his promise. When the father begged him to reconsider, Baba Sali quietly explained his reasoning. "If I come," he said, "the honor may arouse jealousy among those present. I do not want to cause any discord between you and your friends." Understanding the depth of his sensitivity, the father agreed. Baba Sali's concern for peace and

the feelings of others outweighed even the great honor of serving as *sandak*.

◣ Years ago in France, Baba Sali suffered a serious eye condition and was treated by a renowned specialist, Dr. Kalitsky. Though he recovered, Baba Sali never forgot the kindness. "I am obligated never to forget this favor," he would say. Many years later, a French Rav came seeking a *brocha* for his gravely ill wife. After blessing her, the Rav mentioned that his wife was Dr. Kalitsky's daughter. Baba Sali immediately sat upright, his face glowing. "Your father-in-law restored the light to my eyes—I owe him everything!" he declared. "Now I can repay him. Your wife will be completely healed." The man returned home to find her fully recovered, and it was later discovered that her condition had turned around the very day of the *brocha*. When Dr. Kalitsky later passed away, Baba Sali could not attend the *levayah*, but insisted—despite rarely leaving his home—on visiting the family during *shivah*. He spoke at length about the doctor's kindness, explaining simply: "I owed him a great debt. Whatever I can do to repay it, I must."

◣ Baba Sali was meticulous about the writing of *mezuzos* and tefillin, often instructing *sofrim* on the *kavanos* they should have. He would recount how his grandfather, R' Yaakov Abuhatzeira, supervised a sofer writing in his home. Though in separate rooms, R' Yaakov would concentrate on the mystical meaning of each letter.

Once, he suddenly interrupted the *sofer* and instructed him to rewrite a specific letter in a specific place. The *sofer* protested—he had checked everything carefully—but R' Yaakov insisted. Upon rechecking, the error was found exactly where indicated. "If I could not perceive the proper meaning," R' Yaakov explained, "how could the letter have been written correctly?" Because of this, Baba Sali insisted that *sofrim* write only by daylight, never by artificial light, ensuring absolute precision in holiness.

◣ At age eighteen, Baba Sali ordered a pair of Rabbeinu Tam tefillin. The next day, his father, R' Masoud Abuchatzeira, told him of a dream in which R' Yaakov appeared and instructed him to give his own tefillin to his son. Baba Sali was astonished—he had just ordered the same pair the day before. The family celebrated with a festive *seudah*, recognizing the clear Heavenly orchestration.

◣ Baba Sali regarded the beard as sacred and would strongly object to shaving. He once shared that until age forty, his beard did not grow, causing him deep anguish. One night he wept and davened intensely: "How can I fulfill Hashem's will if my beard does not grow?" That very week, it began to grow—and from then on, it flourished. Whenever he told this story, he would lovingly cradle his beard and say, "*Boruch Hashem*, I never trimmed or damaged it—it remains completely holy."

◣ A young man once asked Baba Sali for a *brocha* for children. At first, Baba Sali declared, "You will never have children," leaving the man shaken. Then he added, "If you want children, let your beard grow—do not touch it at all." Trusting the words of the *tzaddik*, the man complied. Soon after, despite repeated negative tests, his wife was finally confirmed to be expecting.

◣ Another young man delayed growing a beard, claiming it would hinder his chances of finding a *shidduch*. Baba Sali did not pressure him. After the young man married, he returned, and Baba Sali gently reminded him to now fulfill his commitment. When the man later came back with a full beard, Baba Sali warmly greeted him: "You are like a new creation. You have risen to a higher level. Blessed are those who come in peace."

◣ While in Eretz Yisrael, Baba Sali received urgent news: a decree in Morocco threatened to shut down all yeshivos. He rushed back, but upon arrival his car was involved in a fatal accident, and he was detained. Insisting on contacting the governor, he secured a meeting. When they spoke, Baba Sali suddenly told him, "Mazal tov—

you have just been appointed Minister of the Interior." Moments later, the news was confirmed. With his unexpected rise to power, the official turned to Baba Sali and asked how he could be of assistance. Baba Sali did not hesitate—he spoke about the looming decree and the devastating blow it would deal to Torah education throughout Morocco. Deeply moved, the minister immediately used his newfound authority to annul the decree, ensuring that the yeshivos could continue to flourish. Only then did the full picture emerge. This very official owed his life to Baba Sali. As a child, he had been gravely ill, and it was Baba Sali who had blessed him with life. For a period of time, the boy had even been raised in Baba Sali's own home, forming a deep, if long-forgotten, connection. Now, years later, that child had risen to a position of immense power—precisely at the moment it was needed. What seemed like a sudden twist of fate was, in truth, a carefully orchestrated act of *hashgachah*, with Baba Sali's earlier *chessed* coming full circle to save the Torah institutions of an entire country.

◣ Baba Sali's *avodah* included extreme self-discipline. During a snowstorm in Morocco, he asked *talmidim* to pile mounds of snow. Then, in private, he lay unclothed beneath the snow, covered completely except for his face, in order to subdue his physical nature. After several minutes, he rose, dressed, and quietly returned to learning as if nothing had happened.

◣ Baba Sali once said, "If my mother were alive, I would carry her on my shoulders and dance." On the *yahrzeit* of his mother, despite feeling weak, he hosted a large *seudah*, declaring that the guests had been sent from Heaven to honor her. During the meal, he gave a rare, deep explanation of *Eishes Chayil* according to Kabbalah.

◣ A troubled teenage boy once came with his distressed mother. His appearance and behavior reflected rebellion and inner turmoil. Baba Sali sent the mother out and spoke softly to the boy, tears in his eyes as he repeated, "If my mother were alive, I would carry her on

my shoulders." The words pierced the boy's heart. He broke down, ran to his mother, and begged forgiveness. Baba Sali then told him a story: His brother, R' Dovid Abuhatzeira, once spoke with slight impatience to their father. Their father rebuked him, saying, "I thought you were a diamond—I see I was mistaken." Devastated, R' Dovid exiled himself for a year in silence and *teshuvah*. Only after deep repentance was he restored and embraced. Hearing this, the boy was transformed. Baba Sali blessed him: "If you honor your parents, you will be blessed with goodness." From then on, the boy changed completely, and people would say of him, "Fortunate is the one who bore him."

◣ On Sunday night, the 20th of Shevat, 1984, the Baba Sali gathered close associates for his annual *seudas hilula* in honor of his grandfather, R' Yaakov Abuchatzeira. He sat with them for a long time, sharing *divrei Torah* in his grandfather's name, singing his *piyutim*, and encouraging all present to strengthen their Torah and *yiras Shomayim*. The next day, after *Shacharis*, he learned as usual and later participated in another *hilula*, despite not feeling well. Though urged to rest, he insisted on continuing and even asked that more people be invited, expanding the gathering.

◣ A few hours later, it became clear he was in significant pain, though he tried to conceal it. Doctors were called and advised hospitalization. That night, Rabbanit Simi and R Eliyahu Alfasi remained at his side, and by Tuesday there was slight improvement, though the doctors still insisted on further testing.

He was taken to Be'er Sheva in a convoy of taxis with family members—unaware this would be their final journey together. Specialists examined him and recommended he remain hospitalized, as news spread and thousands called in for updates. Across the world, *tefillos* and Tehillim were recited, and in Yerushalayim, near the *Kosel*, public notices called for *tefillos* on behalf of Baba Sali.

◣ His final Shabbos was spent in the hospital, with R' Tzion Shetrit at his side. Despite intense pain and being connected to IVs, Baba Sali asked that *tefillos* be recited aloud so he could follow, keeping pace and urging that they not be interrupted. He participated in *Kabbalas Shabbos* and the *seudah*, though he murmured words that could not be understood. He slept very little, often waking, attempting to speak, and occasionally groaning in pain while Rabbanit Simi held his hand. In the morning, he again followed *Shacharis*, and the *parashah* and *haftorah* were read from a Chumash. Later, during the reading of Parashas Beshalach, he motioned to continue beyond the usual point until the *pasuk*, "Hashem will fight for you, and you shall remain silent," where he signaled to stop. The rest of Shabbos passed with Tehillim and quiet vigil until Maariv and *Havdalah*.

◣ Although the doctors expressed cautious optimism and suggested he might soon return home, those close to him sensed otherwise. His murmured words and gestures indicated he was preparing to take leave, even as they tried to reassure him. At times he urged those present with intensity, "Arise, arise! Awaken, awaken!" After Shabbos, R' Baruch and R' Eliyahu arrived, and though weak, he greeted them warmly with "Gut Voch" and "Shavua Tov." The family felt hopeful, especially with talk of discharge, yet through the night he spoke softly, and one phrase was clearly heard: "May my passing be an atonement." When told he would soon return to Netivot, he responded with deep humility that his life was of no worth and that he wished his suffering to atone for Klal Yisrael.

◣ On Sunday morning, after a difficult night, R' Baruch realized his father was no longer breathing. Hearing no heartbeat, he rushed for a doctor, who attempted resuscitation but soon declared that Heaven had claimed him. The news spread rapidly, and grief swept across the world as the tzaddik of the generation had passed. That Sunday, from across Eretz Yisrael and beyond, multitudes gathered in Netivot for the *levayah*. With no cars permitted due to the crowds, people from every walk of life walked together,

accompanying their beloved Baba Sali on his final journey. On the 4th of Shevat, 1984, he was laid to rest, returning to his Maker with a pure *neshamah* and leaving behind thousands who felt like orphans without him.

A Tale of Two Questions

It was a few years ago before Corona, I was giving my morning **שיעור** to men and there was a man there, 45 years old, and he's looking at me and I see he wants to ask a question but he's having trepidation, he's nervous, he's anxious. So I encourage him, I say **פרעג, פרעג**, ask. Na, na. I push him, ask, I want to hear your question.



Na, na, it's a stupid question. I'm like I'm not continuing this class until you ask your question! I love stupid questions because they're usually the most brilliant questions. So he asked the question. It was a good question, I answered the question, we went on.

At the end of the class, I said I'm just wondering, do you know why you were so afraid of asking the question? Everybody asks questions here, I don't mind, I like questions.

So he says yeah, I'll tell you the story and he says it in front of everybody. He says he was a boy in grade two and they were learning **פרשת בא** and **פרעה** tells **משה רבנו** that the women and the youth he should leave in Egypt, the elders can leave. So **משה** says we're going to go with our youth and with our elders and then he says **בבנינו ובבנותינו נלך**, we'll go.

Why does it say twice **נלך** in the **פסוק**? It could have just said one sentence. The teacher, who didn't have such pedagogical sensitivity,

says oh these questions you'll ask for the **סדר**. This is not a question you ask. It's a foolish question.

And he told me since then whenever a child asked a question and they wanted to make fun of the question they would say **בנערינו ובזקנינו**. I never asked a question again in my life. So this is the first time I asked a question in class at the age of 45. That's why I was hesitant.

At the **שיעור** sitting, the **חתן** last night, **ישראל למרס** is his name, **מזל טוב** to the **למרס** and **מייזלס** families. And he says let me tell you my story. He was learning here in Monsey and he said I asked a question, I was also in second grade. And when I finished asking the question the teacher says **ישראל**, come with me to the principal's office.

I'm like oh you're not allowed to ask questions, I'm going to get punished. It was an innocent question. I'm like oh, what did I do? He brings me to the principal's office, I go into the office and he tells the principal this boy asked a question. It was such a beautiful question, I was so inspired by it I wanted the principal should hear - ask the question again.

And he asked the question again and the principal gives him a big piece of chocolate for asking such an amazing question. And **ישראל** looks at the class, he said and since then I didn't stop asking questions!

It's one word that shatters somebody's dignity or builds somebody's dignity. It's so important, especially people in education. - ***Don't be stingy with warmth***.

To love Hashem,you must love His creations. Every human being carries a Divine spark; when you love others, you love Hashem. ~ Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk.



Krakow once had 350,000 Jews. And as the war progressed, many of those Jews were herded into the ghetto. And then many of them, most of them, were herded out of the ghetto. We stood on one street corner they have in the middle of the Krakow ghetto, they have like a square, and in that square they show you this is where the Jews would all gather and they have to commemorate that, they have chairs, like individual chairs just sitting there facing in the direction that the Jews were taken.

And then there's like one chair going the other direction because some Jews didn't go that way. And then we go on a block and we're looking at an apartment building and this Rabbi Yossi Cohen says look at that apartment. The last two remaining Jews in the whole Krakow, a city that was Jewish for over 700 years back from way before the *Rema*, over 700 years this city had thousands of Jews. In the middle of the war there was a last two Jews, Moshe and Mendel Brachfeld.

Moshe and Mendel Brachfeld were two brothers that somehow survived it all. They were hiding in an apartment and a few days before *Pesach*, there was a bakery we literally saw the bakery like across the street, said there was a bakery. Somehow they got some flour and some water and they made themselves some *matzot*. And they sat up there in their apartment making a *Pesach Seder*, the last *Pesach Seder* of the Jewish community of Krakow.

Moshe says to his brother, it's *Zman Cherutenu*. It's supposed to be the time of our freedom. This is our freedom? Look at us, this is our freedom? And his brother says to him, Mendel puts his arm around

his brother and he says, let me tell you. He says we say in *Hashkivenu*, that's in *Arvit* every night, we say that *Hashem* should put us in *Cherut Olam*, the Jewish people have freedom forever.

How can you say we have freedom forever? We've gone through so much. He says the answer is our freedom doesn't necessarily have to do with what's happening around you. Freedom has to do with your actions, your words and your thoughts. If your actions are actions of free people, your words are words of free people and your thoughts are thoughts of free people, then you are free.

And they made their *Seder* in the most celebration that they could. A few days later the Nazis came bursting through the door of their apartment and they were both caught. And the Nazis naturally were going to take the two of them to be killed. But this Nazi who found them decided that he's very proud of the fact that he has the last two Jews.

There were hundreds of thousands of Jews in this city and I have the last two Jews! So he paraded these brothers around and never killed them. They survived the war. And the man, the tour guide right after telling the story showed us a picture of these two brothers, these two young men after the war. And then he showed us another picture of the two of them with so many of their children.

And then he showed us the pictures maybe 40, 50 years after the war, these two men, one with a long beard, one clean-shaven, these two brothers dancing at the wedding of one of their grandchildren. And he said these are two brothers that were in this apartment right here. They had nothing, a little bit of *matzah*, or whatever they called *matzah*. All they had is the Jewish stubbornness.

We keep going, we keep surviving, we keep thriving, we keep marching, we keep talking, thinking and acting no matter what happens around us.



The *Segulah* of *Kiddush Levanah* to Be Saved From Death That Month

There is a very special *segulah* attached to the mitzvah of *Kiddush Levanah*.

The *Kaf HaChaim* (426:11) quotes the *Eliyah Rabbah* (582:7): The *Sefer Or Chadash* writes that the *chassid* R' Moshe Meizlish told him the following story: A Jew was attacked at night by non-Jews who wished to kill him. He asked them to allow him to perform one mitzvah before his death. The moon was new, so he recited *Kiddush Levanah* with great concentration. When he jumped three times, as is customary, a strong wind lifted him and he escaped.

He also told me that one who recites *Kiddush Levanah* need not fear death that month from the day he recites *Kiddush Levanah* and onwards.

However, the *Sefer HaBris* explains that this means he is saved from a strange or unnatural death not all deaths (see *Tosfos Chaim*, on *Chayei Adam, Klal* 118, end of *s.k.* 19).

A similar story appears in *Yosef Ometz* (*Dayan* in Frankfurt, year 1610 – *ois* 476): Robbers captured a man and tied him to a horse. While traveling at night, he saw the moon shining and asked the robbers to stop so he could recite *Kiddush Levanah*. They agreed. As he recited the blessing, his ropes miraculously came undone, and he escaped safely.

בס"ד

למודי משה

Why We Do Not Recite *Kiddush Levanah* Under a Roof

The *Rema* (*O.C.* 426:4), quoting the *Hago'as Alfasi*, rules that *Kiddush Levanah* should not be recited under a roof. The *Magen Avraham*, quoting the *Maharil*, explains: So that one isn't the same *ohel* [tent] as *tumah*, and is sure that he is in a place of *taharah* [purity] when reciting the *berachah*.

The *Bach*, *Magen Avraham*, and *Mateh Moshe* all mention another reason: *Kiddush Levanah* is like greeting the Shechinah, so we go outside like what one would do when going to greet a king.

However, in pressing circumstances — illness, danger, or dirty alleyways — one may recite it indoors through a window. Preferably the window should be open, but if impossible (due to cold, etc.), it is permitted as long as the moon's light shines toward him.

The *Mesirus Nefesh* of the Ruzhiner Rebbe Not to Recite *Kiddush Levanah* Under a Roof

The holy Ruzhiner Rebbe (Rebbi Yisrael), while imprisoned, insisted with *mesirus nefesh* on reciting *Kiddush Levanah* outdoors, not under a roof.

R' Moshe Avraham Brozovski *zt"l* was once traveling on a train in Russia when he met an elderly non-Jewish soldier who, despite his age, was still full of strength. The soldier told him that the reason he merited such strength and long life was because of a blessing he had received from "Rabiner Yisrael Friedman" — the Ruzhiner Rebbe. He then related the story behind that blessing:

Rebbi Yisrael had been imprisoned, and since the government understood who he was — and knew that his chassidim would pay enormous sums to free him — they held him in a remote fortress.

They appointed special guards whose sole task was to watch him around the clock. Throughout the day and night, the guards would rotate shifts to ensure that this precious prisoner was constantly watched. To guarantee that the guards performed their duty properly, a strict ruling was issued: if the Rebbe disappeared, the guard on duty would be executed.

One night, the Rebbe wished to recite *Kiddush Levanah* under the open sky. He asked the guard to allow him to step out onto the balcony to say a short prayer. Although the guard understood that the Rebbe was a holy *tzaddik* and had no intention of escaping, he feared for his life — the next guard might arrive and see what was happening — so he refused.

The Rebbe then promised that if the guard would let him go outside, he would give him a blessing for whatever he desired. The guard agreed and asked for a blessing of "strength and long life." The Rebbe gave him the blessing, and the guard opened the door and let him out.

The guard continued his story: As the Rebbe began the blessing with deep devotion, his body suddenly disappeared, replaced by a pillar of fire. Terrified for his life and desperate to return the Rebbe to his cell, the guard panicked — he could not see him at all. After four hours, the Rebbe returned to human form and hurried back inside. The guard locked the door just moments before the next guard arrived.

The incoming guard apologized for being late, explaining that although he knew the way to the fortress even in the dark, somehow that night he became lost and wandered through unfamiliar streets, eventually finding himself in another city. What should have taken only a few minutes had inexplicably taken four hours.

The soldier concluded: "You see with your own eyes how the Rebbe's blessing was fulfilled — I reached old age and still have the strength of my youth."

To prove his strength, he kicked the side of the train with such force that the entire carriage shook, and for a moment it felt as though the train might tip over.

Rav Schwab and The Life Insurance of *Kiddush Levanah*

One *berachah* that Rav Schwab was very careful about was *Kiddush Levanah*. The *Be'er Heiteiv* (602, 4) quotes the *Or Chadash* who said that he heard that from the time a person is *mekadesh* the *levanah* he needn't fear that he will die that month. Rav Schwab, therefore, considered *Kiddush Levanah* as life insurance.

Even though some opinions say that in Tishrei one should wait till after Yom Kippur and in Av until after Tisha B'Av, Rav Schwab never waited. Similarly, although the *Rema* rules (*Orach Chaim* 426, 2) that if *motzei Shabbos* is before the tenth of the month, one should rather wait until then, Rav Schwab would not do so. (Some differ with the *Rema*). Thus, as soon as he saw the new moon when it was big enough, he would immediately recite the *berachah* — he did not wait for a *minyan* or even for three people to join him.

One winter night, he happened to attend a family *simcha* in Philadelphia in the early part of a month. As his son walked him to the car, the moon was nowhere to be seen. At the time, Rav Schwab was already plagued by arthritis, so his son carefully placed pillows for support so that he would not be jolted about during the ride back to New York. As they were finally set to start out, Rav Schwab sighted the new moon, and exclaimed, "Ah, the *levanah*!"

Immediately he bounded out of his seat, held on to the roof of the car and started saying *Kiddush Levanah*. When he finished, he turned to his son and asked him if he had already said it. When the reply was negative, Rav Schwab insisted that his son do likewise.

Finally, Rav Schwab was back in proper position and they set out on the trip. As they approached the toll booths at the entrance to the

George Washington Bridge the car struck a patch of black ice and began to skid out of control. His son feared that the car would crash but it suddenly stopped just in front of the toll booth. Rav Schwab commented, "Didn't I tell you to make *Kiddush Levanah*?"

When he was forced to be transported in a wheelchair his attendants knew about his *Kiddush Levanah* habit and when they saw the new moon would ask him, "Rabbi, do you want to bless the new moon?"

If *Kiddush Levanah* is such a big *segulah* how did the *mal'ach hamovess* finally catch up with the Rav? One can see from many Gemara's (e.g. *Mo'ed Koton* 28a, Shabbos 30b) that when a person's time comes the *Mal'ach Hamovess* will win out in the end.

With Rav Schwab and his *segulah* it happened in the following way: On Sunday, the fifth day of Adar I, Rav Schwab was struck with a heart attack. Thus he was taken to Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital. He hadn't yet sighted the new moon. Immediately after the heart attack he was placed in the intensive care unit. On Tuesday he was told that if in the next twenty-four hours his condition would stabilize he would be moved to a nice, large private room. He asked the staff which side of the hospital it would face. When he was told it faced the west side, he insisted that he wants a room with an eastern exposure, because he reckoned that would enable him to make *Kiddush Levanah*.

However, it was not to turn out that way. The very next day after lunch, the Rav again felt pain in his arm, a sign of another heart attack. Thus, Rav Schwab was told he had to wait still another two days.

His move kept being postponed until it was the thirteenth of Adar. Rav Schwab woke up in his room in the late afternoon. He asked his children what time it was. When they told him, he said, "Ah in one hour will be the night of Purim Koton and I'll be able to say *Kiddush Levanah*."

Once again, *HaKodosh Boruch Hu* confounded his plans. About six twenty, he had still another heart attack. This time they started saying *Vidui* and *Shema*. Each time they would say "*Hashem Hu HaElokim*" his pulse would shoot up. With the seventh "*Hashem Hu HaElokim*," his *neshomoh* departed from this world, missing *Kiddush Levanah* but leaving the *segulah* intact. *(Taken from an article written by Rav Yosef Fleischman)*

A *Segulah* to Be Saved from Toothache



The *Ta'amei HaMinhagim* (pg. 203, *He'aros*) brings a *segulah* from the Radziner Rebbe: If one wishes to be protected from toothache, then during *Kiddush Levanah*, after reciting **כך לא יוכלו כל אויבי לנגוע בי לרעה** three times, he should add each time the words: **ולא יהיה לי כאב שיניים** — "I should not have a toothache."

The *Sefer Otzar Pelois HaTorah* (*Bo*, pg. 253) brings that R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l* told him that he heard such a *segulah* from the *Ya'ares Devash*.

R' Chaim further related, that his mother once told him that once she had a toothache, and she told her husband the Steipler, and reminded him to *daven* for her teeth during *Kiddush Levanah*. Immediately after *Kiddush Levanah*, the pain left.

The one who relies on Hashem is not afraid of anything ~ Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner.

Wake Me Up - R' Aharon Pessin



There was a guy who was very, very **מקפיד** in **מצוות**. Very, very **מקפיד**. But not so **מקפיד** in **מצוות בין אדם לחבירו**. Between man and **הקדוש ברוך הוא**, everything...

ooh... all the **הידורים דאורייתא דרבנן**. When it came to **מצוות** between him and especially his wife, that's where it stopped.

So there was one month where he wasn't able to do **קידוש החודש**. He wasn't able to do **קידוש לבנה**. And it's the last night, a lot of clouds, and at 10 o'clock he says to his wife, 'Listen, I'm tired. I'm going to sleep. You're staying up and just look up. When you see the moon coming out, come and wake me up.

A woman that does whatever her husband asks. What can she do? She stays up. **משה'לה** went to sleep and his **רבנית** is out there.

10, 11, 12, 1, 2... 2:30! Finally, the moon is slowly coming out between the clouds. So she runs to her husband, '**משה'לה, משה'לה**, get up, get up, get up, go sanctify the new moon!

'**משה'לה, משה'לה, משה'לה, מקדש לבנה, משה'לה, משה'לה**!' You try talking to **משה'לה** at 2'o'clock in the morning. No one to talk to.

'**משה'לה, משה'לה, משה'לה**, 10 minutes, 15 minutes... after 20 minutes... 'What? What did you say?' '**משה'לה**, the moon is out there. It's waiting for you to sanctify it. Go and be **מקדש הלבנה**!'

Oh... okay, okay. He starts stretching his arms and he slowly gets up, he washes his hands, he gets dressed, and finally it's 3:05, he's out there. He looks and he looks.

Where's the moon? There's no moon! And he comes back to the house and he starts yelling at his wife, 'Why did you wake me up? What are you doing? You fool, you're such a fool!

And his wife looks at him and says, 'You know **משה'לה**, I am a fool. I am a fool. The **לבנה**, the moon is so much smarter than me. When the moon realized you're coming to sanctify it, it ran away. But when you came to sanctify me under the **חופה**, I stayed. You're right, I am a fool. The moon is much smarter than me.'

That's why we say in **דאוונען, לעולם יהא אדם ירא שמים**.

בפשטות, A person should have **יראת שמיים**.

לעולם יהא אדם, first be a **מענטש** and then do **יראת שמיים**. Be a **מענטש** between you and your wife, between you and your fellow and then look for all the **הידורים, יראת שמיים, דרבנן ומדאורייתא**.

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Head & Heart - A Lithuanian gadol, a boy from Morocco, and a special pair of tefillin

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת בא**.

After World War II, the very end of World War II, a very special **ישיבה** started up in France, **ישיבת חכמי צרפת** in the town of Aix-les-Bains. The **ישיבה** still exists today, 75 years later, I believe. There were some very special **רבנים** who started it, and they had a very special **ראש ישיבה, רב חיים יצחק חייקין**, who was a **תלמיד** of the **חפץ חיים**, and it was primarily set up for refugees from the war, many of them orphans.

Among the **רביים** who came to take part in that **ישיבה** was the great **רב מרדכי פוגרמנסקי זצ"ל, רב מוטל פוגרמנסקי** as he was known. He was a **גאון** in all areas of **תורה**, a great **צדיק**. He had done much helping people in the suffering of the Kovno Ghetto. And when he came to the **ישיבה**, at the same time a boy came to the **ישיבה** from Morocco.

This was the first boy from North Africa, from Morocco, who came to join the Aix-les-Bains **ישיבה**. His name was Aaron Monsonego, and

he noticed how special **רב מרדכי** was, and **רב מרדכי** noticed something very special about him. Aaron said that after **דאוונען**, he noticed **רב מרדכי** looking at him and looking at his **תפילין**. He thought that perhaps **רב מוטל** noticed how beautifully square his **תפילין** were, what's called the **ריבוע**.

There's an art to getting the **תפילין** to be nicely square. And **רב מוטל** approached him after **דאוונען**, and he said, "Tell me" right, he spoke with him in Hebrew, even though he spoke with most of the other students in Yiddish he said, "Tell me, where are these **תפילין** from?"

So Aaron told him, "My father bought them for me in Paris, and the **פרשיות** were written by **רבי יעקב חיים סופר** in **ירושלים**, the **כף החיים**, the author of the **כף החיים**.

רב מוטל asked if he could please be able to put on those **תפילין**, and he asked for him to give them to him every day after **דאוונען** so that he could put on those **תפילין** as well.

This week's **פרשה** we have the lesson of **תפילין**, the **מצוה** of **תפילין**, and obviously **רב מוטל** sensed how special these **תפילין** were. But I'd like to focus on a few different lessons from this.

Number one is the understanding, sometimes people are too divided in terms of what comes from a **ספרדי** world or an **אשכנזי** world.

ספרדי תפילין are written in a different **כתב**, but **רב מוטל** knew to appreciate and desired the **קדושה** that was there. People that know told me that the **כף החיים** was known for being a master of the **כוונות**, of the particular intentions that are meant to be had spiritually when writing the **פרשיות** of **תפילין**. It makes sense that a **צדיק** like that sensed that, not only the **ריבוע**.

Another aspect that's very important is that this young man was the first **תלמיד** who came over from Morocco. That must have been very difficult to leave your family, to come to a place where you were the only boy from North Africa. **רב מוטל** gave him this tremendous **יחס**, this tremendous attention, and valued his **תפילין**, his family heritage.

The relationship went on so that Aaron really was the **שמש**, he was **משמש רב מוטל** there at that time and gained a lot from him.

That boy, Aaron Monsonego, went on to learn many years in that **ישיבה** and others, and then to become the Chief Rabbi of Morocco. I believe that that was also part of what the **גאון, רב מרדכי פוגרמנסקי** was doing.

תפילין are on our head, and **תפילין** are also on our arm, as we say in the **תפילה** beforehand, **כנגד הלב**, opposite and corresponding to our heart. A great **גדול** in **עם ישראל** always combines the two, head and heart.

This small vignette, I think portrays that aspect of **רב מוטל פוגרמנסקי**, and to see the effect that it had in producing a very great **תלמיד חכם** who had a tremendous influence on young people from Morocco and beyond for many, many years to come.

Have a wonderful **שבת, כל טוב**, and **בשורות טובות** to everyone.