

טיב הקהילה

Pesach

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ט"ו ניסן תשפ"ו

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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ

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רבינוביץ שליט"א

English edition

באנגלית

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טיב המערכת

I shall pass over you ופסחתי עליכם

Two children competed with each other to see who would climb the stairs in a building faster. One of them decided that he would go up the stairs by skipping steps, two at a time, and indeed he reached the top much faster than his friend, by a large margin. What does this have to do with us? Pesach is called by the name of "passing over," as we say in the Haggadah: "Why is it called Pesach? Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu passed over the houses of our forefathers in Egypt." And in the Torah, on the words (Shemos 12:13) "And I passed over you," Rashi HaKadosh explains: "Every 'passing over' is an expression of skipping and jumping; 'and I passed over'—He would skip from the houses of Israel to the houses of Egypt, for they were dwelling one among the other." That is to say, the chag of Pesach is a time of "skipping"—but over what do we skip?

'שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו' - "Seven days you shall eat matzos," says the Torah (12:15). And between chometz and matzah there are two differences, which correspond to two traits that we must cling to, as opposed to the negative traits from which we must distance ourselves.

The first trait: lowliness of spirit. Matzah must be thin and low, for if it rises even slightly, it is already chometz. So too is the way of the yetzer tov—to attach itself to one who is humble. In contrast, chometz rises and swells upward more and more; so too the yetzer hara, which brings into a person's heart arrogance and haughtiness, which cause fermentation within a person's heart.

The second trait: contentment with little. Matzah is made only from flour and water, whereas with chometz additional ingredients are added to increase more and more flavors. This alludes to the yetzer hara, which seeks to add more and more bodily pleasures and desires of this world, whereas the righteous are satisfied with little, as Rebbe HaKadosh testified about himself that he did not derive pleasure from this world even with his small finger.

Therefore, the prohibition of chometz is more stringent than all other prohibitions in the Torah, for it is forbidden even in the slightest amount, and everyone is more stringent with it beyond what is ruled in the Shulchan Aruch.

It is known from the holy sefarim that on every chag, an illumination descends into the world just as it was the first time. And on Pesach, we are able to skip and leap further in spirituality than we are able to throughout the entire year. Especially in these traits, which are the foundation for growth in Torah and good character. And at the time of eating matzos, which symbolize humility, and reciting the Haggadah—which is called peh-sach ("the mouth speaks")—we are able to subdue our yetzer hara, to skip over it, and to ascend to lofty levels.

- Tiv HaMoadim - Pesach

This night is entirely light; the night shines like the day—Leil HaSeder, on which we went out from Egypt. And until this very day, in every single year, a person merits to go out from his own Egypt—the Egypt within him—and "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" on this night.

And a person must know that each individual has within himself his own Egypt, and on this night, the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, each one merits and is able to leave the Egypt within him.

And the matter is that Egypt is the yetzer hara. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, said (Shemos 5:2): "לא ידעתי אתה" - "I do not know Hashem," and this is the yetzer hara of Egypt, which proclaims and declares publicly: "I do not know Hashem."

And when a Jewish person merits to leave the Egypt within him, and goes out from servitude to eternal freedom, removing from himself the chains and bonds of Pharaoh's slavery—then he merits to accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, the opposite of Pharaoh's words, "I do not know Hashem," for now he knows his Master, he knows Hashem.

Therefore, on this night which is strong with mitzvos, he should intend in every mitzvah and in everything he does that his intention be for the fulfillment of the commandment of the Creator—to bring pleasure to Hashem, to accept upon ourselves the many mitzvos that are on this night, both those that are from the Torah and those that are Rabbinic—all of them together should be with the ultimate purpose of bringing pleasure to the Creator Yisbarach Shemo.

Why is this night different - מה נשתנה הלילה הזה

And here the son asks: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" Each one asks four questions. The common denominator in all these questions is that a person asks: Why is this night different—that on all other nights I can do as I wish? I can eat both chometz and matzah, I am not obligated to dip, I sit as I wish and according to my desire, I eat whatever vegetables I want; whereas this night is entirely restrictions. On this night, in every matter there are limitations—we eat only matzah, we specifically eat marror, we dip twice, and we sit only in a reclining manner. These are the four questions that every son asks his father.

Alongside these four questions, which come to teach us from the furnace of creation about this exalted night, there are additional questions: What is the reason that our Chazal instituted the drinking of four cups?

The time of our freedom - זמן חירותינו

Rather, the reason is as follows: throughout all the days of the year there is a yetzer hara. The yetzer hara confuses us in all ways and manners, and we battle with it. Therefore, sometimes we eat chometz and sometimes matzah. All year we sit at the table as we wish; we also have no obligation to dip the vegetables that we eat, and there is no requirement to eat marror. We are fighting against the yetzer hara, and like in a war, sometimes there is something to eat and sometimes there is not.

In a time of war, there is no fixed manner of sitting, and so on—the circumstances change, and each one conducts himself according to his ability.

But on Pesach, HaKadosh Baruch Hu takes us all out of Egypt. He removes from us the yetzer hara, which is called Egypt, and He gives us the strength and the mind that we should all unite and become one—in one type of food and in one manner of sitting. All recline like princes; we are not now in a state of war—we have gone out to freedom from the yetzer hara.

We now have the ability to dip twice before the meal; we eat only matzah as we wish.

We have many merits on the night of the Seder. Aside from the mitzvos mentioned in the Haggadahs, we must know that every act that we perform as our Chazal instituted for us—whether to uncover the matzos or to cover them, to lift the cup or to place it down—every single act contains a mitzvah. When one hides the afikoman, there is a mitzvah in it; the “stealing” of the afikoman is also a mitzvah. Every action that we perform on this night is a mitzvah.

לחוג - To celebrate the chag of Pesach את חג הפסח

In our times, all of the Jewish people sit and recline on Pesach with abundance. There are many distributions of kimcha d'Pischa. Almost all of the residents of Eretz Yisrael have blessing in their homes and have enough for the needs of Pesach—aside from those whose pride misleads them and they are embarrassed to take from the distributions; they may not have sufficient provision.

“...Give us the Pesach” הפסח...”

The righteous Rebbe Zalman Brizel zt”l, from the choice flour of Jerusalem, may it be rebuilt, was about forty-five years ago in Meron for Shabbos. In those times there were not yet charitable kitchens and there was no food for distribution. However, Rabbi Zalman had people who gave him wine and challos, fish and meat; all the needs of Shabbos were brought to him, and they made sure that nothing was lacking.

Rabbi Zalman complained and cried and said: “Ribono shel Olam, wine You have given me, challos You have given me, all the needs of Shabbos You have given me, also meat and fish and all delicacies. Ribono shel Olam, I request from You—give me also the Shabbos! I want to enjoy the very sanctity of the day of Shabbos. All the food without the Shabbos is worth nothing; I have no enjoyment from it. The food is only an addition to the day of Shabbos; it is not

the essence and the purpose of Shabbos.” Thus did Rebbe Zalman express his request and his desire.

So too we shall stand in awe and say: Ribono shel Olam, You have given us matzos and wine, You have given us vegetables and marror, You have given us vessels and utensils—everything we have in abundance and plenty. But Ribono shel Olam, give us the Pesach—give us the Chag of Matzos—that we should have understanding to celebrate the Chag of Pesach with uplifted spirit. Give us the strength to leave Egypt and Pharaoh. All the days of the year we are slaves to Pharaoh; we stumble and sin with the full assistance of the yetzer hara. Give us, alongside all the physical matters, also a measure of spirituality. Give us the removal and nullification of the yetzer hara from our hearts—that Pharaoh who says, “I do not know Hashem.” We want to eliminate such a yetzer hara. We want understanding for the matzah; we want to know Hashem. We want to be servants of Hashem, as we say on the night of Pesach: “These are the servants of Hashem.”

We all say: “Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and celebrate Pesach,” for of this we have more than enough. Now we ask for the Pesach itself.

הללו עבדי ה' ולא עבדי פרעה

These are the servants of” Hashem and not the servants of “Pharaoh

On Pesach we also say in the Tefillah and afterward in the recitation of the Haggadah: “These are the servants of Hashem.” Initially, before Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, they were servants of Pharaoh. After the Exodus from Egypt, we were freed from the hand of Pharaoh and Egypt and entered under the shade of Hashem, and we are servants of Hashem.

The definition of servants of Hashem is that we perform and fulfill all the commandments of Hashem and the enactments of our Chazal in a manner of lechatchilah. A servant fears his master very much, and he performs his work in a manner of lechatchilah. So too are the servants of Hashem—they do what is ruled in the Shulchan Aruch. They do not seek to act bedieved; they do not rely on leniencies and various unusual allowances. Pharaoh said, “I do not know Hashem.” Bnei Yisrael left the bondage and merited to know Hashem—to know what the halachah is and what the proper practice is.

A certain man told me that in the days of the establishment of the state, his mother

would say to her children: “Now that the state has been established, you have two choices—you can either be servants to those who established this impurity, or you can be faithful servants of Hashem. In any case, you will be servants; the only question is—to whom will you be servants?”

To the extent that a person accepts upon himself more to be a servant of Hashem, according to the yoke of Torah and mitzvos that he accepts upon himself, the burden of worldly matters will decrease and fall away from him.

ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם

And you shall circumcise the” “foreskin of your heart

On the night of Pesach we draw close to Hashem, as we said, through the many mitzvos. We are redeemed from the yetzer hara—the exodus from Egypt and the removal of Pharaoh from every heart. On the night of Pesach, we circumcise the foreskin of the heart; we purify and cleanse the heart from every sin and from the yetzer hara. Just as at a bris, Eliyahu HaNavi comes when the foreskin of the flesh is removed, so too on the night of Pesach, when we circumcise and remove the foreskin of the heart, Eliyahu HaNavi also comes to every home.

The difference between them is that the foreskin of the flesh applies only to males, but the foreskin of the heart applies also to women. Therefore, anyone who repents on the night of Pesach in a manner of “doing good,” to think during the performance of the mitzvos about the essence and not the secondary aspects, fulfills the commandment of “and you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart,” and merits that Eliyahu HaNavi, זכור לטוב, will come joyfully to his home.

May Hashem help us, and we should merit to part from the yetzer hara permanently, and all the days of the year to serve Hashem with ease. And from now and forever, only pleasantness and joy all our days, and we should merit to celebrate the Chag of Pesach according to its halacha and its law, and we shall eat there in the Beis HaMikdash speedily in our days from the offerings and from the Korban Pesach, until we merit to see the consolation of Zion and Yerushalayim and the coming of Mashiach Tzidkeinu speedily in our days, together with all of the House of Israel, and Mashiach Tzidkeinu speedily in our days, amen selah.

טוב הפרשה שביעי של פסח

ויושע ה' את ישראל

Hashem saved Israel

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וייראו העם את ה' ויאמינו

The people feared Hashem and they believed

Bnei Yisrael went out of Egypt on the first day of the Chag of Pesach. After a week, during Pesach, they passed through the Sea of Reeds as they fled from the Egyptians. At the Sea of Reeds, they saw signs and wonders just as there had been in Egypt with the Ten Plagues.

And these matters are explicit in the *posukim* (Shemos 14:30-31): 'ויושע ה' ביום ההוא את ישראל מיד מצרים וירא ישראל את מצרים מת על שפת הים: וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה אשר עשה ה' במצרים וייראו העם את ה' ויאמינו' - "And Hashem saved Israel on that day from the hand of Egypt, and Israel saw the great hand that Hashem had wrought in Egypt; and the people feared Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant."

Two additional things were added to Israel at the time that they stood on the shore of the sea: they received awe of exaltedness, and they were strengthened in faith. Through the merit of these two things, where one causes and brings the other, they merited that the sea was split for them, and then Moshe and Bnei Yisrael sang.

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The seventh day of Pesach - בב"י - עי של פסח

"And He brought out His people Israel from among them to eternal freedom; He caused His children to pass between the divisions of the Sea of Reeds. The Master of Wonders

drowned and submerged our oppressors in the sea." Although these were idol worshippers and those also were idol worshippers, nevertheless, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in His abundant mercy, brought us through the sea on dry land. Bnei Yisrael saw the great miracle despite the fact that they had worshipped idols; this instilled in them faith, this strengthened within them fear of Hashem, as it is said: "And the people feared Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant."

Idol worship is the most severe transgression. One who worships idols is rebelling against the Kingdom of Heaven—a rebellion against the Kingship—and the punishment of one who rebels is death. Here there was a double and multiplied miracle: Bnei Yisrael had worshipped idols, and yet HaKadosh Baruch Hu saves them from the hand of Egypt and brings them through the sea. Therefore, they merited: "And they feared Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant."

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אמונה ויראת שמים - ביזת הים

Faith and Fear of Heaven – the Spoils of the Sea

Immediately after they saw Egypt dead upon the shore of the sea, they plundered them and took from them silver and gold. The strong faith brought them abundant bounty—the spoils of the sea. An abundance of faith and fear of Heaven brought them physical abundance as well. This teaches us an iron rule: one who believes in Hashem, one who believes in the righteous, and who fears Hashem, will merit both spiritual and physical abundance together.

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**אאהוב כל איש ישראל אך לא להתי-
חבר עמם**

**To love every Jew, but not to as-
sociate with all**

Incidentally, when we mention that

they were idol worshippers, it is appropriate to note the wondrous statement of the holy Rebbe, the author of *Ahavas Yisrael* of Vizhnitz zy"ta, who said: "To everyone—and not with everyone" [meaning: to be good to every person, but not to be with everyone].

These words apply to us in every generation. Although HaKadosh Baruch Hu loves all Jews wherever they are, so too it is incumbent upon us to love every Jew wherever he may be. However, alongside this, one must be careful not to be with everyone—not to associate together with those who engage in idolatrous practices.

It is possible and even necessary to love them as Jews, but not to be with them, not to connect with them; and sometimes one must even flee from them as one flees from fire, so that they should not cause us harm or spiritual damage, and the like.

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אמונה בה' ובמשה עבדו

Faith in Hashem and in Moshe His servant

Furthermore, one must know that in the Song at the Sea it is written: "And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant." When a person wishes to know the extent and strength of his faith in Hashem, he must examine how much he believes in Moshe His servant—in the righteous leaders of the generation. According to this, he will know correctly whether his faith in Hashem is pure and complete or not.

There is a profound message in the words of the *posuk*. Bnei Yisrael are described in the Torah as a stiff-necked people, and the prophets also lamented over Israel that they did not listen to their words of rebuke. Yirmiyahu HaNavi, in Megillas Eichah, laments and relates that they placed him into a pit of mud and put a stone upon his head in order that he should die. Yirmiyahu would arouse the people of his generation with

The spiritual spoils of the sea

ישועת ישראל

The salvation of Israel

words of rebuke and admonition, and they did not wish to listen; the people of his generation went further and placed him into a pit so that he would die.

So it was in all the generations that followed as well: people sealed their ears from hearing; the leaders spoke and warned, and the public did not wish to listen.

Therefore, the exile came. In the days of Yirmiyahu HaNavi, this led to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, as Yirmiyahu had warned them all those days. And afterward, when there was no longer a Beis HaMikdash, the belittling of the sages of the generation and its leaders brought upon us the exile, which has already continued for thousands of years.

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כי אם לשמוע דבר ה'

“But to hear the word of Hashem”

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In our times we see that, thank G-d, many of Bnei Yisrael go to the *derashos* of *maggidim*. The public is not hungry for bread, but rather to hear the word of Hashem. This matter brings about a beneficial rectification for the sin that earlier generations sinned in degrading the prophets.

It is brought in *Sfas Emes* that those preachers in our times who speak words of mussar to strengthen the people in closeness to Hashem and faith are reincarnations of the prophets who were in their times, whom they disgraced in their days; and they were brought back in reincarnation so that people today can rectify the wrong that our forefathers committed. And each one of us must have a Rav and teacher, to submit before him and to listen to the voice of his words.

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“And Hashem saved Israel on that day from the hand of Egypt”—this is the essence of the day. The great salvation that occurred on the Seventh Day of Pesach was that Hashem saved Israel completely from the hand of the *yetzer hara*, which is called Egypt.

For on this day, Bnei Yisrael went out completely from the fear that had existed until that day—that perhaps the Egyptians would pursue and capture Israel again into captivity in Egypt and enslave us to the nakedness of the land. On the Seventh Day of Pesach, however, in His abundant mercy and kindness, Hashem saved us definitively from the hand of Egypt.

אהבה ויראה - Love and fear

On this day we inherited a good and great gift, as it is written: “And the people feared Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant” (Shemos 14:31). On that day we merited complete faith and fear of Hashem—*yiras haromemus*, which is a higher fear, a fear that comes together with love for Hashem. We saw miracles beyond nature; this brought us love of Hashem and fear of Hashem. When one leaves the husk of Egypt, when one is freed from the shells and abominations, one merits both fear and love, and through the power of both, one merits faith in Hashem and in Moshe His servant, as we have already said that through faith one can attain love and fear, for one without the other is not possible.

Many speak about the spoils of the sea: Israel saw the Egyptians dead; they saw all their golden chariots; they went and plundered the spoils of the sea; each one had ninety donkeys loaded with gold. But we must know that this is not the main point at all—this was only the secondary aspect. The main thing was the spiritual plunder from the sea—what Israel merited at that moment in faith, fear, and love. This brought them closeness to Hashem; they began to perceive Hashem—“שׁוֹיֵתִי ה' לִנְגִי” - “I have set Hashem before me always” (Tehillim 16:8). Although there were those who claimed, “These are idol worshippers,” and they sought to prosecute and to hinder, nevertheless the greatness of the day—a day so auspicious—did not allow them to interfere. And HaKadosh Baruch Hu remembered His kindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel, and on that day they saw the salvation of our G-d (Tehillim 98:3). This implanted within all of Israel faith and fear; it entered deeply into their hearts, until together they all gave thanks, crowned Him, and sang “Az Yashir.”

If we utilize the spiritual aspect of the spoils of the sea—if we are wise to take the plunder for the service of Hashem, in faith and in fear and love, for closeness to G-d—then we will merit also the physical spoils of the sea: good matches, abundant livelihood, satisfaction from children, and all good in the world.

‘וְצַדִּיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִי’ - “And a righteous person shall live by his faith” (Chabakuk 2:4). On the Seventh Day of Pesach we should strengthen ourselves in faith until we become worthy of the title “and a righteous person shall live by his faith,” and we will receive all the blessings, influences, and spiritual advantages that are stated regarding the righteous in the Torah and in the teachings of our Chazal—to merit all the blessings in the Torah, amen.

טיב המעשיות

The Obligation of Inner Redemption

The Rambam writes (Hilchos
:Chometz u'Matzah 7:6

”כָּל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיִּב אֶדְמָה לְתַרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ
כְּאִלּוּ הוּא בְעַצְמוֹ יָצָא עִתָּה מִשְׁעַבְדּוֹ מִצְרַיִם,
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דְּבָרִים ו, כג) ‘וְאֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם’ וְגו’

“In every generation a person is obligated to show himself as though he himself has now gone forth from the bondage of Mitzrayim, as it states (Devarim 6:23), וְאֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם - And us He brought out from there,’ etc. And regarding this matter Hakadosh Baruch Hu commanded in the Torah (ibid. 5:15), וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עַבְדְּ הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצִיאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם - And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Hashem your God took you out from there —meaning, as though you yourself were a slave and went forth to freedom and were redeemed.”

The source for this is found in the Mishnah of Arvei Pesachim (Pesachim 116b), and the author of the Haggadah incorporated it into the Haggadah, and he added:

“Not only our forefathers did Hakadosh Baruch Hu redeem, but He redeemed us as well along with them, as it states (Devarim 6:23), וְאֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן לְבִיא אֶתְנוּ לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם - ‘And us He brought out from there, in order to bring us, to give us the land which He swore to our forefathers.”

It emerges clearly that the obligation of a Jew on Pesach is to show himself—and to draw upon himself—the experience of Yetzias Mitzrayim, for he himself now truly goes forth, in actual reality, from his own personal bondage of Mitzrayim each and every year. This is because within him there exists servitude and captivity, from which he is redeemed to freedom on this night.

Along the path of the Rambam’s approach, the novel words of Maran the Chasam Sofer ז”ל are elucidated, in Derashos Chasam Sofer (Derashos Pesach 5580, p. 268), where he writes as follows:

“The early chachamim ask: Why was no berachah instituted for, ‘Who has commanded us to recount the Exodus from Mitzrayim’? Some answer that it is included within the berachah of Asher Ge’alanu. However, this is seemingly difficult—why do we not recite a berachah [before the performance of the mitzvah] before beginning to recount the Haggadah?

“We can explain as follows: It is taught in Perek Arvei Pesachim (Pesachim 116a), ‘One begins with disgrace and concludes with praise —We were slaves.... At first our forefathers were idol worshippers, etc. Just as a person is obligated to see himself as though he went out of Mitzrayim, so too is he obligated to see himself as though he had been an idol worshipper, and now the Omnipresent has drawn him close to His service. And tonight he begins serving Hashem anew, with the mitzvos performed on this night.’

“We find regarding the immersion of converts that the berachah is recited only after immersion, because prior to immersion

he cannot say, ‘Who has commanded us’ (Pesachim 7b). So too here—prior to recounting the Exodus, he cannot say ‘Who has commanded us,’ because he is still in the state of one who had been an idol worshipper. After the recounting, when he can declare, ‘Who has commanded us,’ it is then included in the berachah of Asher Ge’alanu.”

At first glance, these novel holy words require reflection. How can the status of a Jewish man on the night of the Seder, prior to recounting Yetzias Mitzrayim, be derived from the status of a gentile prior to immersion—who is unable to say, “v’tzivanu”? Is it conceivable that each year, before the reciting of the Haggadah, his status is like that of a non-Jew who has not yet converted and therefore cannot be commanded?

Even according to his foundational explanation of the Mishnah—that a person must consider himself as though he had been an idol worshipper and is now drawn close—still, it is difficult to classify his status initially as that of a gentile to the extent that he cannot say “v’tzivanu.” After all, he recites many berachos containing the word “v’tzivanu” even before recounting Yetzias Mitzrayim, including berachos over the very mitzvos of the night, such as Kiddush and the berachah over Hallel. This is perplexing.

Moreover, the case of a gentile prior to immersion is fundamentally different: he is not commanded at all and may remain a gentile if he chooses; only after immersion does he enter the realm of “v’tzivanu.” This is not the case with a Jewish man on this night—he is already commanded and obligated to come and recount Yetzias Mitzrayim, precisely in that mode of seeing himself as though he had been an idol worshipper initially. Why, then, should he not stand and recite “v’tzivanu” properly regarding a mitzvah he is presently obligated to perform, even before beginning the recounting?

However, according to the words of the Rambam—that “he himself now goes forth from the bondage of Mitzrayim”—it emerges that the essence of the inner Exodus is effected in every generation, within each individual himself, who must uproot the element of goyishkeit from his heart.

Thus, each year, prior to recounting Yetzias

Mitzrayim, in the depths of a person’s heart there exists a dimension of Mitzrayim and a dimension of idolatry, chas veshalom—for as the Chasam Sofer taught, one must recognize the idolatry embedded within a person. In that dimension, he is indeed considered as being in the category of a “gentile.”

Therefore, it is precisely this goyishkeit and latent idol worship within him that obstruct the berachah over the mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, just like a gentile prior to immersion. He cannot say “v’tzivanu” regarding this mitzvah, for it stands in contradiction to the blessing, until he brings himself forth—through the power of recounting the Exodus—by seeing himself as exiting the idol worship and goyishkeit within him.

Only then can one recite Asher Ge’alanu as a fitting berachah over a redemption occurring now, in living reality, on this very night—after having brought himself out of idol worship and drawn close to the Shechinah. This explanation stands well; consider it carefully.

See what is written in Meshech Chochmah (Parashas Beha’aloscha), that the Korban Pesach of every year has the status of a korban geirus. Likewise in Or Same’ach (beginning of Hilchos Mechusrei Kapparah). In Sefer Dvar Avraham (vol. 3:19), his words are cited and praised.

In the final year of his life, my revered father ז”ל, went during Chol Hamoed Pesach to visit one of the elder gedolim of that generation—following his lifelong custom of ascending during the festival to visit the righteous sages of the generation.

Despite his great frailty, being old and advanced in years, he refused to forgo this sacred Jewish custom, and went with great effort to the home of the gaon.

When he arrived, the elderly rav rejoiced greatly with him, and they spoke affectionately about the unique mitzvos of the festival of Pesach. As is the way of Torah giants, they traversed the breadth of Torah together, and the words were as joyous as when they were given at Sinai.

In the course of their discussion, they mentioned the words of the Rambam concerning the obligation of a Jewish man on Pesach “to show himself as though he himself has now gone forth from the bondage of Mitzrayim.” When the gaon heard these words, he sighed softly and said to my father:

“Baruch Hashem, I have merited all that is required on the Seder night—to fulfill all the mitzvos of the night: matzah, marror, the arba kossos, and so forth. But the most difficult matter for me of all was fulfilling these words of the Rambam—to show myself and to feel with clear sensation as one who has truly now gone forth from the bondage of Mitzrayim.”

I have mentioned elsewhere how my father ז”ל, would constantly arouse us in the days

preceding Pesach, based on what he received from his teacher, the holy tzaddik Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kopshitz zt"l, among the elder chachamim of Yerushalayim of the previous generation. He taught that the primary service of a person on the Seder night is the fulfillment of this law—to show oneself as though he himself has now gone forth from the bondage of Mitzrayim.

For this, one must labor and toil with extensive preparation before the festival—preparing the soul to cleave with the whole heart to the inner essence of the festival and to the holy influence of the inner Exodus from Mitzrayim. But if one falls into the festival without inner preparation, without contemplation and attachment to the content and meaning of Yetzias Mitzrayim, it is impossible to merit any true spiritual attainment at all.

The days preceding Pesach in the great city of Krestitz, renowned for holiness, were filled with intense labor and constant activity, as part of the extensive preparations for the great festival drawing near. Each year, a large crowd would arrive to celebrate Pesach in the shadow of the tzaddik.

One of the most essential commodities for Pesach in those days was the kartoffel—potato—which was used extensively throughout the festival. Due to the pronounced scarcity of many products that did not then exist with enhanced Pesach supervision, numerous dishes and foods were prepared from potatoes.

One year, as Pesach approached, there was a severe shortage of potatoes throughout Hungary. In the entire city of Krestitz not a single potato could be found.

When the Rebbe saw that the distress was grave, and that all the efforts of the communal activists had yielded nothing, he resolved—having no alternative—that he himself must go out to the surrounding towns to seek and search for the necessary and indispensable provisions for the honor of Pesach.

On one of the days before Pesach, in the early afternoon hours, the holy Rebbe ascended his carriage and set out on his sacred journey, undertaking immense preparation to receive the many guests destined to arrive and celebrate the Festival of Freedom in the holy court. And wondrously, only a few hours passed, and toward evening the Rebbe was already seen returning through the gates of Krestitz, with a long caravan of wagons trailing behind his elegant carriage—wagon after wagon, all filled abundantly with potatoes.

The great crowd in the beis midrash rushed out immediately and enlisted themselves to assist in unloading the precious cargo. At once, the many sacks were hoisted onto the shoulders of the chassidim and carried inside to the enormous communal kitchen of Krestitz.

After all the goods were brought into the beis midrash, and the many sacks of potatoes were placed in orderly fashion, the chassidim gathered around the faithful gabba'im and asked them to explain how this great "miracle" had come about. For after many weeks during which potatoes could not be obtained anywhere in Hungary—despite numerous activists going out everywhere to search and search, returning empty-handed—the Rebbe had gone out and, within mere hours, returned with an enormous yield sufficient, bountifully, for all the days of the festival, with many sacks remaining even afterward.

The gabba'im related the matter exactly as it had occurred. While traveling, the Rebbe suddenly instructed them to stop in a small, remote village—barely visible on the map—where they had never been before. They entered the village; the Rebbe seated himself in the local beis midrash and instructed them to investigate thoroughly whether the desired merchandise could be found there, saying: "Ich shmekh do kartoffel..." ["I smell potatoes here."]

Indeed, the holy spirit of our Rebbe proved precise and accurate. After several inquiries, it became known that there was a Jewish man in that village who possessed a very large quantity of potatoes. However, this Jew had decided to keep the matter secret for the time being, waiting for potato prices to soar, at which point he intended to sell them at an enormous price and enrich himself from this trade.

When the faithful gabba'im learned of this, they returned to the Rebbe, who was waiting in the beis midrash, and reported to him the "discovery"—that there was indeed a Jewish man who possessed an abundance of potatoes. The Rebbe rejoiced greatly and said: "Let us go to the field of this individual and attempt to purchase the merchandise from him."

Upon arriving at the man's home, he received them with great honor. Although he was not among the Rebbe of Krestitz's chassidim, he had already heard of him, for his name had spread throughout the land. He brought the tzaddik into his home, served a small drink and refreshment to the Rebbe and the entire entourage. After the Rebbe drank and wished the homeowner le'chaim, blessing him with holiness, he immediately approached the matter for which he had come.

The Rebbe removed from his belongings a very large sum of money, placed it upon the table, and said to the man: "Surely you are aware of the immense public that comes to Krestitz in honor of the upcoming Pesach. We now require a very large quantity of potatoes. State your price, and I will give it."

The man replied that the large stock in his possession was not for sale at present and refused to sell it.

The Rebbe attempted to raise his offer, naming an exceptionally high sum—far above the market price—but even this the man refused. Even as the Rebbe continued to increase the price again and again, the Jew persisted stubbornly: "This merchandise I will not sell under any circumstances!"

Suddenly, the righteous Rebbe Reb Yeshayelev turned to the man, and with his face aflame asked forcefully: "Then you yourself tell me—what do you desire as your payment?"

The Jew, a simple and straightforward man, answered immediately: "If the Rebbe agrees—then in exchange for the Rebbe's share in the World to Come, I am prepared to sell the potatoes."

Instantly and on the spot, the Rebbe agreed to the transaction. They sat down and drafted a valid legal document in full accordance with law. Two of the gabba'im signed as witnesses, and the document explicitly recorded all the terms and details of the agreement—that the holy Rebbe grants his entire share in the World to Come to this Jewish man in exchange for the stock of potatoes in his possession.

Immediately, numerous wagons were hired, which arrived with their drivers at the field. The great quantity of produce was carefully loaded onto the wagons, with the Rebbe himself overseeing the work, ensuring that, chas veshalom, not even the slightest trace of chametz would be mixed in. Thus, the entire great caravan set out on its journey back to Krestitz.

Present at that occasion were several of the great rabbinic leaders of Hungary, devoted chassidim of the Rebbe, who were deeply astonished by this extraordinary deed. They asked the holy Rebbe himself how it could be possible to "sell" his entire share in the World to Come for simple potatoes. Granted, had it been for matzos shel mitzvah or wine for the arba kosos, one might understand that for the sake of a mitzvah it would be fitting to pay such a vast price—but potatoes have no inherent mitzvah on Pesach, and for karpas one could use another vegetable.

The holy Rebbe answered them simply and sharply: "What need do I have for my share in the World to Come—if Jews are left hungry on Pesach?"

And it was indeed a wonder!

The holy tzaddik Rav Yitzchok Eizik of Kaliv zt"l, was renowned as one of the greatest righteous men of his generation, a worker of wondrous salvations throughout the land.

One year, in the days preceding Pesach, the tzaddik spoke with fiery holy fervor about the lofty spiritual levels to which one may attain on the night of the Seder—a night that shines as day, when all gates of wisdom are opened.

For this reason, Eliyahu Hanavi comes to every Jew, for on that night there is a special elevation and closeness to the Shechinah, each person according to his level. A person of stature may merit to behold him face to face, and it is not difficult to merit a gilui Eliyahu, a revelation of Eliyahu, on the night of Pesach.

When several of his distinguished disciples heard this, their souls yearned to merit that night a gilui Eliyahu, and they entreated their holy master to grant them this exalted level.

The Rebbe instructed them to travel to Pressburg and endeavor to recline at the Seder table of the Maran the Chasam Sofer zt"l. He added, however, a warning that they must conduct themselves wisely, to observe carefully and understand all the actions and movements of the tzaddik.

The disciples did as their master commanded. They set out on their journey and arrived at the home of the Chasam Sofer, requesting to be his guests for the festival of Pesach. The Chasam Sofer rejoiced greatly over such distinguished guests, for their countenances testified that they were great Torah scholars—rabbanim and men fit to render judgment.

When the great night arrived, these disciples merited to be seated at the table of the king. They remembered well their master's instruction to keep their eyes open and learn from every conduct of a tzaddik. Throughout that entire night they bound themselves deeply to the soul of that holy and righteous man, never taking their eyes off him. He conducted the Seder with a mighty hand and bestowed upon them much of his Torah and holiness.

When they reached the stage of Shulchan Orech, a portion of hot soup was served to each of the participants, with one kneidel placed within it, in accordance with the custom of Ashkenazim who eat shryyah on Pesach. These chassidim, however, who were stringent upon themselves not to eat shryyah, did not know how to act. For the kneidelach (dumplings) are made from flour, and perhaps there might be concern for a grain of wheat that had become chametz in water. Therefore, some of them did not eat the soup at all, while others ate the soup but refrained from eating the kneidel.

Later that radiant night, when they reached Shefoch Chamoscha and approached the door to open it, as is the custom, a high-ranking "general" suddenly entered the house, his uniform adorned with many decorations. He appeared tall and handsome. Immediately upon entering, he went straight to the place of the Chasam Sofer, who rejoiced greatly at his arrival, greeted him, and returned his greeting. They exchanged a few brief words quietly, and afterward embraced one another and parted with tears in their eyes.

After Pesach, when the disciples returned to

their master in Kaliv, he questioned them about all the conduct and customs of the Chasam Sofer. After they recounted everything, he said to them: "I asked you to act wisely—why did you not approach that 'general' to exchange greetings? He was none other than Eliyahu Hanavi himself! And since you merited to see him while conscious, you should have asked him for a berachah." As for the kneidel they had refrained from eating, the Kaliver said that in the kneidel of the Chasam Sofer one could taste the flavor of the Korban Pesach.

It is told of the venerable elder, among the most ancient of the revered rabbanim of Yerushalayim—Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri, zt"l—that one year, on Erev Pesach, a dreadful theft occurred in the home of the tzaddik. Apparently, one of the gentile neighbors, who was familiar with Jewish practices and customs, took advantage of the great commotion of that holy day, entered unseen, and stole from the house an enormous sum—two hundred gold Napoleons, a vast fortune in those days.

When the theft was discovered, great distress arose in the tzaddik's home. Everyone searched and investigated in an attempt to identify the thief, and there was much anguish and darkness. However, when night fell and the great festival of Pesach began, the tzaddik immediately instructed that all involvement with the theft be set aside, that everything be removed from the heart, and that the chag be received with joy and goodwill.

When the Rav returned from shul and entered his holy chamber to conduct the Seder, he said: "It is true that two hundred Napoleons were stolen from us, but our hearts and our minds were not stolen. Let us now give all our hearts and minds to fulfill the mitzvos of this night properly and fittingly!"

The disciples testified regarding that Seder night of that year that it shone with a wondrous, exalted light, unlike anything seen for many years in the home of the tzaddik. He was filled with joy and clarity of heart, and entirely immersed in supreme deveikus to the Shechinah.

As we draw close to the exalted days of Pesach, let us conclude with joyous blessing and elevated prayer before the splendor of our master and teacher, our guide and illuminator of our paths, the ga'on shlit"a; before his esteemed sons, the honorable rabbanim shlit"a, who always stand at his righteous side; and before the honored members of the community and their families, and all faithful readers together with all Klal Yisrael.

May we soon merit to eat of the sacrifices and the korban Pesach, with our complete redemption, with the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash speedily in our days—Amen.

Sefiras Ha'omer — Days of Yearning and Expectation

In one of the holy derashos of the Rebbe of Mishkenos Haro'im shlit"a, during Pesach, his address centered on the great mitzvah of Sefiras Ha'omer, which we begin on the morrow of the first day of Yom Tov and continue until the festival of Shavuos.

Among his words, he cited the well-known teaching of Sefer Hachinuch concerning the root of this mitzvah (mitzvah 306), that it expresses the great yearning with which Israel loves and longs for the receiving of the Torah.

These are his holy words:

"From the roots of the mitzvah, according to the plain meaning: for the entire essence of Yisrael is only the Torah... and it is the main reason and cause for which they were redeemed from Mitzrayim—to receive the Torah at Sinai and fulfill it... for it is their ultimate purpose and the greatest good for which they were redeemed. And this matter is greater for them than freedom from servitude (Sefer Hachinuch, mitzvah 306).

"Therefore, because it is the entire essence of Klal Yisrael, and for its sake they were redeemed and rose to all the greatness they attained, we were commanded to count from the morrow of the Yom Tov of Pesach until the day of the giving of the Torah [Shavous], to demonstrate within ourselves the great desire for that honored day, so deeply yearned for by our hearts etc., like a servant counting the days etc., when he will go forth to freedom; for counting shows a person that all his salvation and all his desire are directed toward reaching that time."

The Rebbe emphasized these words and explained that we can bring them closer to the heart through a fine illustrative account, one that helps the ear grasp the matter clearly.

He related as follows: It was well known that the holy Rebbe of Gur, the Imrei Emes zt"l, was among the great leaders of Orthodox Jewry. As part of his conduct, he would frequently set out on sacred journeys—whether to serve as sandak at a bris milah of one of his chassidim, or for other needs of mitzvah and leadership.

Many times, when he returned home from such journeys, he would first enter his room, immediately take out one of his many notebooks, and record several holy entries. Only afterward would he resume his regular schedule.

One of his close grandsons, who noticed this practice several times, approached him and asked about the purpose of these notes each time the Rebbe returned from traveling.

The Rebbe, his grandfather, answered that he had received a tradition from his father, Maran the author of Sefas Emes zt"l, that there are four divisions in Torah: (1) בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ — when you sit in your home;

(2) וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ —when you go on the way;
 (3) וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ — when you lie down [to sleep];
 (4) וּבְקוּמְךָ —when you arise [in the morning] (Devarim 6:7).

These constitute four distinct portions of Torah, each unique to its own domain and nature, and each further divided according to those who engage in it.

Since, unfortunately, most people do not properly fulfill the mitzvah of וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ, it follows that this portion of Torah is available in great abundance, and the roads are filled with much Torah that travelers do not occupy themselves with. Consequently, when a holy Jew does engage in Torah while traveling, a tremendous Torah light is immediately bestowed upon him. Therefore, Torah study on the road carries exceptional siyatta diShmaya, and one can easily attain wondrous insights through the mitzvah of וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ that he would not achieve elsewhere.

“For this reason,” the Rebbe concluded, “each time I set out on a journey, beautiful and sweet Torah insights are renewed for me from this great heavenly abundance, and immediately upon my return home I sit down to record all these chiddushei Torah in my notebooks.”

So too, he explained, is the matter with the mitzvah of Sefiras Ha’omer. From the words of the Chinuch, we learn that the days of the Omer are filled and overflowing with anticipation and yearning, like a servant looking forward to freedom, toward the exalted moment of receiving the Torah. Yet many among Klal Yisrael

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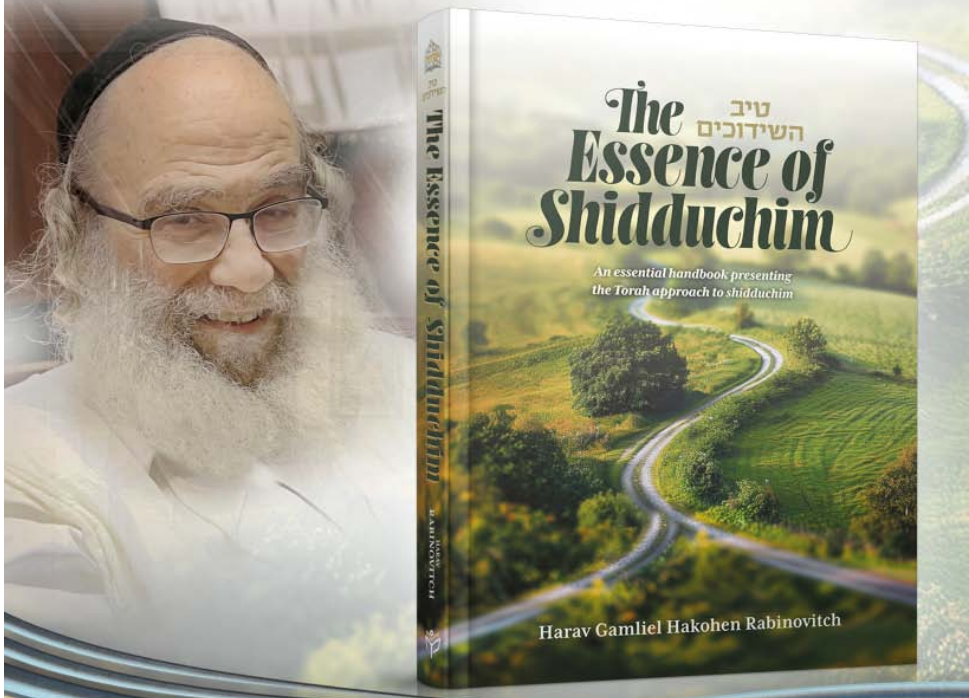
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do not utilize these lofty powers. Thus, this period overflows with an immense abundance of closeness to the Shechinah.

Therefore, it is exceedingly fitting to seize this auspicious time, for one can readily merit exalted levels in the service of Hashem, when such tremendous abundance is available—at a time when few attach themselves to the pleasant radiance of these sacred days.

In a similar vein, the Chasam Sofer zt”l wrote in his discourses (Derashos, vol. I, Parashas Zachor, p. 185), that at times a Jewish man merits the portion of Torah belonging to another person who did not utilize his share in Torah. This are his words:

“Each Jew is granted a portion in the Torah of Hashem, every soul according to its measure. And even though he himself may derive no

benefit from it—being foolish and lacking understanding—nevertheless, the benefit reaches one of his sons after him, or a grandson, or one of the later generations...”

“One must inquire: Why would the Wise One, Baruch Hu, perform such an apparently futile act—to scatter sparks of Torah within every soul, among whom many will not succeed in the labor of Torah and wisdom? What need is there to implant such a root in vain, and what benefit does this yield?”

“Rather, the matter is this: so that the Torah of Hashem will never be nullified. For we see that the sanctity of prophecy, which was implanted within us, eventually ceased—because it was not rooted within all of Israel, but only within select individuals.

Therefore, He implanted the Torah within all of Israel, and a covenant was made that it would never be nullified...” (see there at length).

Thus it is clear that the portion of Torah implanted in a foolish and unlearned person—who does not study Torah and does not engage with his share—passes to his son, his grandson, or later generations. At times, it may even disperse among all of Klal Yisrael and reach another individual, so that the Torah may endure in the world.

For each and every Jew possesses a unique portion in the Torah, and all portions together are required for the Torah to exist in the world. If one himself does not merit revealing his portion, that portion must inevitably pass to another Jew who will merit it.