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SEMICHAS CHAVER  
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COREN ON SUNDAY  
NIGHTS

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RABBI WEBER ON  
TUESDAY NIGHTS IN 20  
UPSTAIRS

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WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

RAMBAM SHIUR WITH  
R' TZVI RUBIN FRIDAY  
MORNINGS



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## Shabbos Zmanim

SHABBOS CHOL HAMOED

CANDLE LIGHTING 7:05 PM

### EARLY FRIDAY MINCHA:

1:35 PM & every 15 minutes from 1:45 PM until 4:15 PM

### FRIDAY NIGHT MINCHA/KABALLAS SHABBOS

18 Main 7:15 PM	20 Upstairs Chabad 7:10 PM	Shkiya 7:23 PM
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### SHABBOS

SHACHRIS	20 Upstairs- Vasikin 6:05 AM	18 Main- Ashkenaz 8:00 AM	Tent א 9:30 AM	20 Upstairs - Chabad 10:00 AM	in 18 Main 10:30 AM
	MINCHA/MAARIV	Pirchei 2:00 PM	18 Main Mincha 7:10 PM	Shkiya 7:24 PM	Tent א Maariv :40 8:04 PM

### LATE MAARIV MOTZEI SHABBOS:

8:45 PM & every 15 minutes until 11:45 PM | 18 Main

## Weekday Zmanim

### SHACHRIS: VASIKIN

EVERY 15 MIN  
from 6:15 AM until a half hour  
before chatzos

### MINCHA: MINCHA GEDOLA

EVERY 15 MIN. until an  
hour before shkia

EVERY 5 MIN. from an  
hour before shkia until 60

12 MIN. before plag

12 MIN. before shkia

### MAARIV: PLAG

EVERY 5 MIN. from shkia  
until 72

EVERY 10 MIN. From 72  
until 11:00 P.M.

EVERY 15 MIN. From  
11:00 .P.M. to 2:00 A.M.

## Services

**MIKVA**  
Open 24 hours. Mikva cards can be  
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**SOFER TRUCK**  
Open daily Sunday-Thursday,  
9:30AM-1PM, 4PM-6PM

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## RABBI DANIEL COREN

### Be A Mentch R' NOACH WEINBERG'S 48 WAYS

This is an article for *Shviei Shel Pesach*, a holiday that needs clarification, as most people do not even realize it is a *chag*. After the amazing experience of leaving Mitzrayim and all the miracles that led up to the Jews' departure, Bnai Yisrael must have reached an incredible level of Emunah. It didn't seem like the Jews were missing anything. So what else did Hashem want the Jews to experience at Yam Suf that was required for the creation of a Yom Tov and the climactic end to Pesach?

Another question: Mixed in the wonderful celebration of Pesach is the mitzvah of counting the *Omer*. This is very strange as counting the *Omer* is really like saying that it's not Yom Tov anymore. This is especially true outside of Israel where we keep an additional Seder night and at the same time are required to count the *Omer*.

The answer is really expressed in the Torah:

תעבדוּן אֶל הַאֱלֹהִים תַּחַת הַהָר, you will serve Hashem on the mountain. Focusing our celebration of Pesach only on the departure from slavery is the wrong way to view the reason for Pesach. While it is true that we say in the Haggadah that if Hashem just took us out-*Dayenu*, the Malbim explains that *Dayenu* doesn't mean it's sufficient. Rather, it's enough to require us to say thank you to Hashem. Indeed, for every little thing, we must thank Hashem because our lives cannot be fulfilled without *hakaras hatov*, which is one of our essential principles.

Leaving Mitzrayim is totally connected to our purpose of serving Hashem and being connected to Him. So how then do *Kriyas Yam Suf* and *Omer* tie in?

R' Chaim Vital tells us that the weeks between Pesach and Shavuot correspond to *derech erez* that precedes the Torah. If we want to receive the Torah, we need to prepare our *middos* and perfect ourselves.

This idea resonates with the concept of the

*Omer* as we say in the *Ribono Shel Olam* after counting the *Omer* that we will work on purifying ourselves each and every day of the *Omer*. The idea here is about changing ourselves, and, this requires much thought and more importantly, action. This is what the Jews needed after leaving Egypt and basically watching miracles occur in front of their eyes. They needed to express a real trust in Hashem by doing a physical act, and walking into the path of the water was performing that action.

R' Noach z"l taught how the 48 ways of wisdom mentioned in *Pirkei Avos* and are known to correspond to the 48 days of *Sefira* can be an amazing tool to prepare ourselves for receiving the *Toras Chayim*. You can find it on Aish.com, and it is now in the *sefer* in *Ioshon hakodesh*.

אין כל חדש תחת השמש.

SHIUR  
SCHEDULE

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR  
in R' Coren's office  
every Sunday at 8:00 PM



## RABBI YITZCHAK ADLERSTEIN

### Taking Blame

Based on *Daas Torah* by Rav Yeruchem Levovitz z"l, *Vayikra* pg. 57

*Moshe and Aharon entered the Ohel Moed. They left and blessed the people. The Honor of Hashem appeared to all the people.*

This reads like a complete mystery. Until now, everything has been meticulously scripted. All the construction had been completed. Following that, the Mishkan was erected each day for seven days and then taken down again. The *avodah* took place each day, with Moshe serving as *kohen gadol*. But the *Shechinah* had not yet made an appearance. Something was still missing.

Likely responding to the concern of the people, Moshe then told them that there was a set of special inaugural offerings for the *kohanim* and for the people that still needed to be brought. The impression was that those would be the final steps. After that, something would happen.

Indeed, it did. In the very next *pasuk*, we see a miraculous fire descending from Heaven and consuming the offerings on the altar. The people were duly convinced.

So the entire sequence is straightforward. The steps are commanded, performed, and the expected result happens. All makes sense, except for our *pasuk*. All of the *avodah* had

been completed. Aharon had brought the procedure to a close by descending from the altar and blessing the people. Why do Moshe and Aharon enter the *Ohel* and then leave, without the text offering any hint of what they were doing there?

Rashi has it figured out. Since they had finished the seven inaugural days and had now completed the inaugural offerings of the eighth day, and Aharon had conveyed closing remarks by way of his *brachah*, everyone believed that the Big Event was going to occur. The *Shechinah* would dramatically manifest itself, showing that their efforts to provide a place for it had been successful.

Nothing happened. This was a very bad sign. It meant that something was getting in the way of the *Shechinah* taking up residence with them. What else could it be but the sin of the Golden Calf?

At least, that is the way Aharon took it. He turned to his brother and said, "I did everything that I was supposed to. No response. It is clearly my fault. Hashem is angry with me because of my role in the *cheit haeigel*. You had me enter to do the *avodah*, which I did, only to be shamed and embarrassed!" Moshe took his brother by the hand, and they entered together. Inside, they performed no prescribed *avodah* but did what Jews always do. They poured their hearts out to Hashem. They asked for *rachamim*.

They left, and together offered a different *brachah* to the people: that all their work in assembling the Mishkan should meet with success. Immediately, they were answered.

Most people find it difficult to accept blame. This is all the more so when that blame can easily be shifted to others, especially if they are more likely to be the offending parties. The difficulty in assuming blame and responsibility is far greater yet when the offense produced a public tragedy.

Aharon's response when nothing happens after his *brachah* to the people, therefore, is extraordinary. He quickly senses that something is wrong and that it was some *cheit*, some failing that was shutting down the mission. He immediately determines that it must be the *cheit haeigel* and finds no one to blame but himself, despite the participation of people who were far guiltier. So certain was he of his blameworthiness that he felt personally embarrassed by what he saw as the failure of the Mishkan enterprise owing to his error!

We must follow suit, at least recognizing our culpability, even when others are also guilty. We must be prepared to recognize that our own role may have been critical, if not in directly bringing some punishment upon the community, then at least in withdrawing some of the Divine protection that would have staved it off.

# RABBI YY JACOBSON



## Matzah—The Food of Freedom

By the age of fifteen, we think we have it all figured out. There is nothing new to learn. The rest of life is simply reaffirming what we already know to be true. "I always knew that we can't trust that guy." "This family is good, and from that family stay away." We have a certain way of seeing the world, and we lock into it. As we get older, it becomes the "truth."

We are stuck in our perception. We are arrogant. We believe that what we think of life and what we think of ourselves and others is true.

The staple food of Passover is matzah. It represents the food of freedom. Why?

Matzah, as opposed to bread, is a humble food. Lots of care was taken that the dough should not rise. Matzah is the process of hum-

bling ourselves. Not breaking ourselves; rather, breaking our misinformed ego. It's the realization that I don't know. What I think is simply that—what I think. It's not the truth. We never know the full truth.

Matzah is the gateway to freedom. The message of matzah is that instead of living in our self-fulfilling prophecy of reality, we let go and become open to a new way of seeing things. There is always another way to see almost everything.

Who am I beyond what I think of myself? This is food (for thought) of hope. This is food (for thought) of healing.

Dare to let go of the shackles of your intellect. Dare to question what was solid and "true" for you yesterday. This is where you will meet the G-d of Abraham. This is the G-d that took us—and takes

us out of our perpetual state—of Egypt.

Dare to let go, and you will fall into the all-embracing hands of G-d.

The Impressionist artist Pierre-August Renoir (1841–1919) once said, "I am beginning to know how to paint. It has taken me over fifty years of work to achieve this result, which is still far from complete."

Renoir said this in 1913, at the age of seventy-two. By this time, the artist was a master at his craft. He was well established and considered by many to be the greatest living painter in France.

He knew the secret of not knowing. The secret of freedom.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

**MONDAY & THURSDAY** Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)  
**SHABBOS** Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)  
PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.

## UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOMBER MUNITZ



### America Is Not Different

When the previous Rebbe\* arrived in America from Europe, he declared that "America is *nisht andersh*." [America is not different than Europe when it comes to Yiddishkeit.]

The attitude was that in America, you cannot keep Yiddishkeit like in the *shtetl* in Europe; America was different. Many Europeans called it the "treifine [not kosher] America." In America then, even if the newly-arrived immigrant kept himself strong, in most families, the next generation would go OTD. In fact, a Crown Heights resident was walking with his young son on Eastern Parkway, passing by 770, and he said to his son, "You see these people with the black hats and beards? In 20 to 30 years, there will be none left." [Guess by whom this was told — by his Lubavitcher grandchild!]

The previous Rebbe declared that "America is not different." This concept expresses itself specifically by the Pesach Seder, when people keep the *minhagim* of their families going back many generations.

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\*Admor RaYYatz, 6th Chabad Rebbe

## RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG

### My Visit to the Army

Before Pesach last year, I visited *Machane Shura*, the headquarters of the chief rabbinate of *Tzahal*, accompanied by five members of my immediate family. Rav Binyamin Zimmerman, a member of the rabbinate of the Israeli Army who arranged the visit, introduced us to the head of the halacha department, Harav Avihud Shwartz. His presentation of the complex questions dealt with by the department was scintillating. He demonstrated a depth of knowledge and a finely-tuned approach to the *halachic* system worthy of a *posek* well beyond his approximately forty years. His reverence for *mor v'rabi* Harav Aharon Lichtenstein *zt"l*, with whom he learned for nine years, was remarkable. The combination of broad Talmudic scholarship, *halachic* mastery, and personal sensitivity that permeated Harav Schwartz's brilliant and lengthy *shiur* reflected his *rebbe's* unforgettable persona and is a tribute to both *rebbe* and *talmid*.

If Harav Schwartz dazzled our minds, the next presenter, Rav Menachem Wechsler, penetrated our hearts. A twenty-seven-year veteran of the army *chevrah kadishah*, his vast experience in the excruciatingly holy work of honoring the remains of fallen Israeli soldiers has done nothing to dim the emotional aspect of his virtuous personality and powerful presentation. Speaking in the spacious new (two-year-old) facility, he showed us the rooms used for *taharah*, cleaning the body. One was designated for female soldiers; another had a *mikvah*.

On October 7, 2023, Simchas Torah, hundreds

of bodies overwhelmed the facility. Most martyrs were civilians, and thus, *Tzahal* did not have the identifying data that they record for all soldiers. There was no record of who was missing and no knowledge of who was taken hostage. Many bodies were burned beyond recognition.

Rav Wechsler's heart-rending description of the heroic non-stop work of identifying the bodies, often using DNA, was overwhelming and unforgettable. The professionalism, including a trip to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, which is the top DNA lab in the world, matched the idealism of the devoted male and female *chevrah kadishah* in establishing certain identity, legally and *halachically*, as quickly as possible. Rav Wechsler's final speech in the "*cheder preidah*," the room where families of the victims bade them farewell, was emotionally overpowering. He called the room "*Kodesh Kodashim*," the Holy of Holies, and read a letter written by a bereaved father, filled with faith and pathos.

Rav Zimmerman then took us to a room filled with *sifrei Torah* from all parts of the world, donated to fulfill the needs of the soldiers throughout Eretz Yisrael and in Gaza. Even the ones unfit for use represent the eternity of our people, despite the constant efforts to destroy us. According to Rav Yaakov Emden (*Sulam Beis El*, p. 8), the unique historical phenomenon of a nation that has outlived all of the powerful empires that sought to destroy it and has survived with the Torah intact is a greater miracle than those that Hashem performed for our ancestors in Mitzrayim.



# RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



## Grape Juice from Concentrate Part II

There are different opinions as to the *halachic* status of grape juice from concentrate and whether it can be used for *Kiddush* and the like.

There is an interesting proof for the view that allows using such juice. The Mishna in *Shabbos* (*Shabbos77a*) discusses the exact *shiur* for various items that is necessary for one to be considered carrying on Shabbos. The *shiur* given for wine is a *kezai's*, the size of an olive in its congealed (concentrated) state. The Gemara explains that this is the amount that can be reconstituted and reverted back into wine by diluting it with water.

Tosafos explains that since this is the amount of wine necessary to result in a cup of wine, it is enough to be considered a violation of carrying something significant on Shabbos. It would seem that reconstituting the liquid will return it to being wine.

However, there is an obvious difficulty with this comparison. The Gemara there is discussing wine reverted from concentrate, which can retain its status. But we are discussing grape juice, which may lose its elite status in the concentrating process due to its losing its ability to ferment.

One can counter that this is still a valid proof, based on the following: In the times of the Gemara, the concentration process was done through heating, causing the evaporation of the liquid content, which would also affect the alcoholic content of the wine. While water evaporates at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, alcohol evaporates at a lower temperature, at approximately 173 degrees, and in the process of concentrating, the alcohol will unquestionably evaporate. As a result, the alcoholic content of the wine will be affected during the concentration process.

Thus, we see that the wine retains its elite status, even if the alcoholic content of the wine was affected. The same reasoning can be applied to the issue of grape juice, and even if the alcohol potential is

destroyed, it may still be suitable for all situations for which wine is required.

## ANOTHER CONCERN ABOUT CONCENTRATE – THE ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE GRAPE JUICE

One more crucial concern in the issue of concentrate is whether the condition of the grape juice becomes adversely affected (*nishtaneh l'grusa*) during this whole process. Is the final reconstituted product inherently inferior to the pure, unadulterated version?

For example, if wine is cooked, according to some Rishonim, it may be considered inferior, rendering its *brochah Shehakol*, and it cannot be used for *Kiddush*. However, we follow the other Rishonim, who rule that cooked wine does not lose its elite status, and it remains *borei pri hagafen* and can be used for *Kiddush* and the *arbah kosos*.

## RECONSTITUTED

There is a similar discussion relevant to grape juice that is reconstituted. Is the final reconstituted product of grape juice inferior to pure juice or not? The contemporary *poskim* disagreement on this point.

Some *poskim* maintain that the juice is not adversely affected and remains wine. Others rule that the juice is indeed affected, rendering its *brochah Shehakol* and not suitable when wine is *halachically* required. According to information gleaned from the esteemed Herzog family, it seems that the juice is affected to some extent by reconstitution (i.e., it is not as fresh). This may be the reason for a debate about whether or not this affects the wine's status.

## IN CONCLUSION

There are different opinions as to the *halachic* status of grape juice made from concentrate or reconstituted grape juice and whether they can be used for *Kiddush* and the like, which depends on how adversely the manufacturing process affects the grape juice.

## SHIUR SCHEDULE

### KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara  
Currently: **מסכת יומא**  
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei  
Dyoma and relevant topics

### NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha  
Currently: **הלכות צדקה**

### SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45 PM

Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM

Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

Maharal Shiur | 9:15-9:45

### ADDITIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS:

Yarchei Kallah / Shuirim on Legal  
Holidays - by acclaimed Guest  
Speakers

Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim  
Yeshivas Kiyumu v'Kiblu/Purim  
Shushan Purim

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”מצות עשה לשחוט הפסח Hilchos Korban Pesach 1:1 – רמב”ם  
בארבעה עשר לחדש ניסן אחר חצות”

“There is a *mitzvas aseh* to *shecht* the Pesach on the fourteenth of the month of Nissan, after *chatzos*.” The Rambam uses the *lashon* of “לשחוט,” while in regard to all other *korbanos*, the Rambam always uses a *lashon* of “להקריב,” that it is a *mitzvah* to *shecht* it. **Why does the Rambam write “לשחוט” by *Korban Pesach*, and why is it in fact different than all other *korbanos*? Why do we split the Hallel on the Seder night, something we do not do any other time of the year?**

If you have a *Korban Pesach* that no one could eat, then it is *posul*, while by other such *korbanos*, it would still be kosher. The difference is that the *ikar* part of the *Korban Pesach* is that it was to be brought a *korban*, to be *shechted*, in order to eat it. Other *korbanos*, although some of them are eaten, that was not the *ikar* part of the *korban*. Rather, the *ikar* was it being brought to Hashem as a *יצור*, to come seek the favor of Hashem. This is why the Rambam says the *lashon* of “לשחוט,” because it was different than all other *korbanos* in that the *ikar* part of the *Korban Pesach* was so that Klal Yisroel could eat it. (אמת ליעקב)

The very first *mitzvah* that Hashem gave to all Klal Yisroel was *Korban Pesach*. *Korbanos* are generally initiated by man. He **sinned** and needs to bring a *Korban Chatas*, or he wants to thank Hashem and brings a *Korban Todah*. However, the *Korban Pesach* is initiated by Hashem. He tells us that we must bring a *Korban Pesach*. What happens to that *Korban Pesach*? While there are some *korbanos* that the one bringing the *korban* does get to partake in the eating of it, it is not the main part of the bringing of the *korban*. However, with the *Korban Pesach*, the main part is the *shechting* it in order to eat it. Hashem was letting us know right at the outset, from the very first *mitzvah*, that we should know that in truth, every *mitzvah* that we perform is all for our benefit. Hashem gives us the *mitzvos* so that we can receive reward.

**We are told by the first *mitzvah* that the main part is for us to eat it. The *mitzvah* that we are doing for Hashem is really for us.** While by other *mitzvos*, we may not be able to see it so clearly, this is true by all *mitzvos*. This is why the main part of the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* is to eat it, to teach us that all the *mitzvos* that we do for Hashem are really all for us.

**Hashem does not need our *mitzvos*; they are all in place for our benefit.** We know specifically that the *afikomen* we eat is *k'neged* the *Korban Pesach*. **Our eating in the middle of Hallel is not separating Hallel; rather, it is part of Hallel. We thank Hashem for everything He did for us, and we eat, further thanking and showing Hashem that we recognize that we need to thank Him for the *mitzvos* that we are given, for they too are for us. It is all for us to eat and enjoy.**

We can now also understand why we call the *Yom Tov* “*Pesach*,” while Hashem calls the *Yom Tov* “*Chag Hamatzos*.” We focus on what Hashem does for us. He gives us a *Korban* “*Pesach*” and shows us that everything that we do for Him, is all for us. Hashem focuses on what we did for Hashem, that we had *emunah* in Hashem and left *Mitzrayim* quickly, so that we only had “*matzos*.” The *Yom Tov* of *Pesach* is a time for us to strengthen our *emunah* in Hashem and work on serving Him with pure joy, for we must know that He loves us, and everything that He does is for us.



**פסח - שחר של אכילת מצה.**

בבית הכנסת של חוג חתם סופר בבני ברק, היה הרב אונגר זצ"ל. 053 מתפללים היו בבית הכנסת. רובם ניצולי שואה עם מספרים כחולים על היד. עקיבא שטיינברג, אחד ממתפללים בית הכנסת של חוג חת"ם סופר בבני ברק, היה ניצול שואה. שנות הזעם באירופה איבד את אשתו ושישה ילדים, ונותר אדם צעיר בן 03 גלמוד וחסר כל. בוקר אחד, בהיותו בן 06, הגיע עקיבא אל רב בית הכנסת, הרב אונגר, כשהוא רועד מבכי: "רב, חלום נורא חלמתי בלילה", אמר בדמע, "אך כדי לספר אותו לרב, עלי להקדים ולספר את ההיסטוריה שלי."

הגעתי לאושוויץ בחשוון תש"ה. את כל משפחתי איבדתי ביום שבו הגעתי לשם. נשלחתי מיד לעבודת פרך איומה בבית חרושת לפחים. בסוף היום הראשון לעבודתי שם, כשאני עדיין בתוך היממה הראשונה לרציחתם של אשתי וששת ילדי, שכבתי על הדרגש שבור ומיואש. לפתע חשתי נגיעה רכה בכתפי. היה זה אברך בשם ר' אריה. 'עקיבא', הוא אומר לי, 'לא למדנו היום כלום, בא נלמד משהו'.

"ר' אריה איבד באותו היום את שמונת ילדיו, הוא היה תלמיד חכם וידע גמרות בעל פה. התחלנו ללמוד יחד, ור' אריה פשוט העיר אותי לחיים. על בשרי חשתי את מובנו של הפסוק: 'כי הם חיינו... ובהם נהגה יומם ולילה'.

ערב אחד, בחודש אדר, בשכבי על הדרגש אומר לי ר' אריה: 'עקיבא, עוד פחות מחודש פסח – איך נאכל כזית מצה? איך נקיים 'בערב תאכלו מצות'?!'. ר' אריה, זעקתי בייאוש, 'על מה אתה מדבר, אנחנו פה באושוויץ! היכן נשיג כאן מצה?'. ממשיך עקיבא לספר לרב הקשוב. 'עקיבא, עונה לי ר' אריה במתינות, 'אל תגיד ככה, אנחנו אמנם באושוויץ, אבל הקב"ה הוא כל יכול, 'הבא ליטרה מסייעין בידו! אל תדאג, עוד נזכה לאכול כזית מצה... כל אותו הלילה לא פסקו ההפגזות.

מטוסי האויב הפציצו מחסני נשק. למחרת פורים, כשאנו צועדים כהרגלנו לעבודה, גילינו, ששתי פצצות נפלו על מחסן החיטה. היה זה מחסן אדיר שהכיל טונות של חיטה שיועדו להזנת הצבא הגרמני. החיטה התפזרה על פני כל השטח כמו מרבד קסום של גרעינים.

הדבר היה לפלא: כמה חלמנו אתמול על מעט חיטה, והנה כל השטח מסביבנו מוצף בחיטה. "כשחזרנו מן העבודה בשעת לילה מאוחרת, מיהרתי להתכופף ולאסוף שני חופנים, אחד עבורי ואחד עבור ר' אריה. ר' אריה היה המאושר באדם.

עקיבא הוסיף ותיאר לרב אונגר כיצד מצאו אבנים, טחנו עימם את החיטים והפכו אותם לקמח. "כל לילה טחנו, עד שהגיע ה' בניסן. מיהרנו להכין את הבצק; מים, קמח, לישה מהירה, והנה, הבצק מוכן. ריידנו את המצה במהירות, ועם מסמר עשינו בה חורים. הוצאנו את הפח מן התנור בזהירות, בעזרת סמרטוט, הדבקנו עליו את הבצק, ותוך 3 דקות כבר היתה לנו מצה למהדרין. שני כזיתים הכנו לכל אחד. החבאתי את המצה מתחת לחולצה, ושבתו

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עקיבא, אם תוותר לי על השכר – אוכל לקבל אני את שכר המצווה האדירה הזו. אני מתחנן לפניך: אנא, וותר לי על השכר! השבתי לו: "אריה, אתן לך כל מה שתבקש ממני, אבל שכר של מצווה – אני לא מוכן!"

"ר' אריה עזב אותי בפנים עצובות, וככה התעוררתי", מספר עקיבא לרב אונגר, ופונה אליו בשאלה: "האם עלי לותר לו? הרי אני הוא זה שחטפתי מכות על המצה, אני הבאתי את החיטים, הסכם זה הסכם, למה עלי לותר? מצד שני, נשמתו של אריה כל כך התחננה..." <<< הרב אונגר שומע את השאלה ושותק. לבסוף הוא אומר: "שאלה כזו יש לשאול צדיק מן הדור הקודם, גש לרבי ממכונבא, יהודי קדוש של מסירות נפש ותשאל אותו".

הרבי ממכונבא שומע את הסיפור ועונה ברכות: "מן היושר עליך לותר!" הוא משיב לעקיבא. ומסביר: "33 שנים עברו מן הסיפור הזה, האם ניסית לחשב כמה ברכות זכית להגיד ב-33 השנים האחרונות? כמה מצוות, הנחת תפילין, שבתות, ועוד תמשיך עוד ועוד בשנות חייך. ור' אריה המסכן – כבר לא נותרו לו הזדמנויות יותר. האם לא ראוי לותר לו על הזכות הזו?"

עקיבא שמע את דברי הרבי, והשיב מיד: "אם כך, אני מוותר על השכר". אך הרבי ממכונבא לא מסתפק בזה: "היכנס לבית הכנסת הסמוך, פתח את ארון הקודש, ושם, בסמוך לספרי התורה הכרז בפה מלא ובלב שלם על מחילתך".

היה זה שעת חצות הלילה. עקיבא נכנס לבית הכנסת ומול ספרי התורה שבארון הקודש קרא: "ריבונו של עולם, אני מוותר לר' אריה בלב שלם על השכר של אכילת מצה בפסח תש"ה". באפיסת כוחות, שב עקיבא לביתו וצנח על מיטתו, כשהוא מותש ומלא מחשבות. באותו הלילה, שוב דהם לראות את ר' אריה בחלום, כאשר פניו מוארות מאוד: "יישר כח, עקיבא! היותך התקבל, אני מודה לך מעומק ליבי, בזכותך העלו אותי לכאלה מקומות. אין לי מילים להודות לך".

למחרת בבוקר שב עקיבא לרבי ממכונבא וסיפר לו על החלום השני.

הרבי התפרץ בבכי: "סיפרת לי על יהודי קדוש, שעבר ייסורי איוב, חי בקדושה ובטהרה, ידע ש"ס, נמצא בגן עדן במקום הכי נשגב, ושווה לו לעזוב את כל העולם הבא, לרדת פה לעולם ולהתחנן על עוד מצווה, כי שם הוא לא יכול לעשותה. ואנחנו חיים פה בעולם ומסביבנו מתגלגלות להן מצוות, בהישג יד, ומה נאמר למעלה!?! הרי יום אחד ניפגש, עם כל האפשרויות שהיו לנו. הבה נצל כל רגע שאנו כאן כדי לחטוף מצוות". הבה נייקר את המצוות, לא נחמיץ הזדמנויות שבאות לידנו, ונזכה לצבור באמתחתנו שקים מלאים לעולם הבא.

מסיים הרב ישראל מאיר שושן שליט"א: "יהודי יקר, אתה חי, הינך עדיין בעולם הזה – עולם העשייה, תייקר את המצוות. תחטוף כמה שרק נשמתך יכולה וכך תזכה להגיע לעולם הבא עם שקים אדירים של שכר ואושר נצחי".

בורא עולם מרעיד את העולם ומראה לנו כי העולם הזה אינו קבע, הוא רק מעבר לעולם הבא. הכל יכול להתמוטט ח"ו ברגע אחד, תרתי משמע.

זהו עולם המעשה, עלינו לחטוף מצוות, להתגבר על ניסיונות ולהתרחק מעבירות. שום דבר לא נשאר עם האדם לעולם הבא, אלא רק תורה, מצוות ומעשים טובים שעשה בחייו, הם יביאו לו את הנצח והאושר בעולם הבא!

למחנה, כשידי צמודה לגופי, ושומרת על המצה היקרה. "כשהגענו למחנה", ממשיך עקיבא לספר, "ראה אחד השומרים את תנוחת המזוזה, וצעק: 'ז'יד, מה אתה מחביא שם?' בתנועה חדה הרחיק את ידי מגופי, ושברי מצה צנחו להם בדממה על האדמה הקפואה. הנאצי לא הסתפק בזאת, ובמגפיו המסומרות ריסק את המצה עד דק. לקינוח הוסיף להכות אותי במכות אדירות. "צנחתי על המצה מחוסר הכרה. כעבור מספר דקות שבתי להכרתי. הייתי מיוסר כולי, שברי שברים, אך זכרתי שיש מתחתי אוצר. מצה מרוסקת אמנם, אבל גם בה אפשר לקיים מצות אכילת מצה. כשכולי זב דם זחלתי לדרגש ובידי האוצר היקר", ממשיך עקיבא לספר.

"חזרתי לדרגש, וכשכולי כאוב הראיתי לר' אריה כי נותר כזית אחד בלבד. ר' אריה פרץ בבכי: 'אתה הבאת את החיטים, אתה חטפת מכות על המצה, אבל אנא, רחם עליי, איך אעבור את ליל הסדר בלי לאכול כזית מצה?'"

"ר' אריה", עניתי בתקיפות, "אני מוותר לך על ארוחת הערב של מחר ושל מחרתיים, אבל המצה – חייך קודמים, אני מוותר!" "ר' אריה המשיך להתחנן: "עקיבא, אנא, תן לי את המצה, אומר אתך את ההגדה של פסח, מילה במילה, מהא לחמא עניא עד הסוף, אני מתחנן, תן לי את המצה!" "אין על מה לדבר, המצה שלי!", התעקשתי. ואז הזדקף אריה: "אתה יודע מה? בא נעשה עסקה. אני אוכל את המצה ואתה – תקבל את השכר. שכר עצום של 'לפום צערה אגרא!' הסכמתי לעסקה. הוא אוכל והשכר – שלי."

הגיע ליל הסדר. שבנו מן העבודה שבורים ורצוצים, ארבע כוסות לא היו, מצה – בקושי פירוורים של כזית, אבל מרור – היה לכולם בשפע. שכבנו יחד על הדרגש, ואמרנו את ההגדה בבכיות נוראות, מספר עקיבא. אני כבר לא החזקתי מעמד ונרדמתי מרוב בכי ותשישות. אך ר' אריה שאכל מצה, לא היה מסוגל להירדם מרוב התרגשות, וכי קלה היא בעיניכם, זכות היא לאכול כזית מצה בגיא צלמוות, באושוויץ. לפנות בוקר החל להתפלל שחרית בהודיה עצומה ובלחש. בתפילת הלל כבר שכח היכן הוא נמצא, באמרו 'אשר קידשנו' נתן צווחה של התרגשות, ממעמקי ליבו הטהור. השומר הגרמני זינק ממקומו, הצמיד את האקדח לראשו ולחץ על ההדק. נשמתו הטהורה והמזוככת יצאה על קידוש ד', ביום טוב ראשון של פסח.

"נשברתי לרסיסים", מספר עקיבא בדמע. "ר' אריה היה הרב שלי, אבי הרחוני, הוא החזיק אותי בתוך הגיהנום הנורא, כיצד אוכל לשרוד בלעדיו? הקב"ה נתן לי כוחות עצומים במשך שלושים יום נוספים. ב"ז באייר הגיעו אמריקאים. המלחמה הסתיימה. שקלתי 63 קילו. עור ועצמות. לא מצאתי עוד טעם בחיי."

"אך הקב"ה, אב הרחמים, הוא בעצמו מחיה המתים. אט אט התאוששתי. הקמתי בית בפעם השניה, ב"ה זכיתי בארבעה ילדים וכבר עשרה נכדים כן ירבו.

אתמול בלילה, הופיע ר' אריה בחלומי, כשכולו נורא הוד. 33 שנים אחרי אותו ליל סדר נורא הוד, הגיע אליי בחלום ר' אריה הקדוש, כשהוא לבוש בקיטל לבן.

"איפה אתה, ר' אריה?", זעקתי. "אני במקום שכולו אור", הוא השיב. "זכיתי להיהרג על קידוש ד'. כבר 33 שנה אני מחכה להזדמנות שיתנו לי לגשת אליך. היום לראשונה קיבלתי אישור.

עקיבא, על כל המצוות שעשיתי בעולם הזה יש לי שכר אדיר, אך מצוה אחת שעשיתי בעולם הזה, עד היום אין לי עליה שכר, וחסר לי מכר הרבה בשמיים, היא מצות אכילת מצה בליל הסדר תש"ה, כי היה הסכם בינינו, אני אוכל את המצה והשכר הולך לעקיבא.

## RABBI NACHUM WINKLER



### Can These Dry Bones Come to Life?

The *haftarah* established by our ancients to be read on Chol HaMoed Pesach does not mention Pesach at all. So why do we read Yechezkel's vision of dry bones on Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach? A logical question. With a logical answer. "*Zman Cheiruteinu*," our "Festival of Freedom," was never meant to be a simple "reminiscence" of the exodus from Egypt alone. It was not to be limited to our past redemption. "*Zman Cheiruteinu*" is better understood as the "Season of Freedom," and as such, our dream for a future redemption is part of the theme and the observances of Pesach.

It is with this understanding that we turn to the *haftarah* for Shabbat Chol HaMoed Pesach. The well-known prophecy of the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, found in the 37th *perek* of *Sefer Yechezkel*, captured the imagination of the early immigrants to Isra-

el, who saw the prophetic words as a message of renewal and rebirth, reflecting their view of the return of the Jewish nation to its homeland, where they labored to reawaken its lifeless agriculture and revive its ancient practices. They believed that, indeed, the dry bones would yet come back to life! And, seeing the once-arid land give forth her fruit and the once-barren country repopulated with her children, why should they not recognize Yechezkel's vision as coming true?

HaRav Amnon Bazak points out that Hashem's revitalization of the dry bones follows a specific progression. First, the bones will be brought together and connect to one another. Second, sinew and flesh will come up. Third, skin will be drawn over them. And, finally, "*ruach*," breath and spirit, will be blown into them and bring them to life. There will be separate phases to bringing life to the bones. The first three phases will focus on the physical structure of the dry bones, and only after that will Hashem grant them life by providing

them with "breath," i.e., spirit.

Rav Bazak contends that those who grieved over the *Churban* and suffered in the *galus* had little hope of ever seeing the rebirth of a devastated community. Hashem expresses their feelings in our *haftarah*: "... *hinei omrim...`avdah tikvateinu*" –"they [the exiled] proclaim, 'Our hope is lost.'" Clearly, the purpose of the vision to Yechezkel was to encourage this lost community that there would yet be a rebirth, that there would be another redemption, and that the dry bones would come back to life.

And this is also part of the message of Pesach. It is not enough to celebrate the past redemption from Egypt; one must also celebrate – and affirm – their belief in the future redemption from the Diaspora. And it is essential for our generation to use Pesach as a time to recognize the current miraculous redemption that we experience today.

*Od lo avda tikvateinu.*

## RABBI JAY KELMAN



### Counting to Eight

*And it was on the eighth day (Vayikra 9:1).*

While this verse is the beginning of a new *parsha*, the Torah clearly links it to the previous *parsha* in which the seven-day celebratory festivities for the dedication of the Mishkan are described. Interestingly, next week's *parsha*, *Tazria*, also begins with a reference to the eighth day. "When a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy, she shall be ritually unclean for seven days... and on the eighth day, the child's foreskin shall be circumcised" (*Vayikra* 12:2-3). The following week, *Parshat Metzora* describes how one afflicted with *tza'arat* and a *zav* or *zava*, those ritually unclean due to bodily emissions, also complete their purification on the eighth day.

The number seven in Jewish tradition represents the natural cycle of events, best displayed by the weekly cycle of seven days. If seven represents the natural order that G-d created, eight is what humans add to "improve" on G-d's creation or, to use biblical parlance, "conquer the world." The Mishkan was the symbol of G-d's presence in our midst. Yet it is man who must create the conditions so that G-d can dwell among us. It was on the

eighth day that the Torah tells us that "on this day, G-d will reveal Himself to you" (*Vayikra* 9:4).

While the construction of the Mishkan could not take place on Shabbat, once it was built, after man had created the dwelling place for G-d, sacrifices were to be brought even on Shabbat. Yet only communal sacrifices, not individual ones, could be brought on Shabbat, perhaps symbolizing that it is as a community, and only as a community, that the Jewish people rise above nature, demonstrating the eternal nature of our people.

We circumcise our sons on the eighth day, demonstrating that our physical bodies are to be sanctified. And here, too, a *brit milah* – more than a private celebration of the birth of a child – is the celebration of a link in the covenant dating back to Abraham.

*Tumah*, ritual uncleanness, often emanates from the natural functioning of the body; hence, it lasts for seven days. *Tumah* is closely associated with death, the "*avi avot hatumah*," the father of fathers of impurity." While we cannot defeat physical death, we can outflank it, creating a spiritual legacy that endures forever; that is the eighth day of purification.

Pesach and Sukkot, and all biblical holidays, reflect G-d's intervention in nature and either last seven days, occur after seven weeks, or take place in the seventh month. However, the rabbinic holiday of Chanukah, combining the heroic physical efforts of the Maccabees and the spiritual courage to light the menorah, not knowing where the next day's oil would come from, lasts eight days. Whereas on Pesach, we responded to G-d, on Chanukah, G-d responded to us.

Beginning the second day of Pesach, we count seven days and seven weeks. But it is on day 50, the beginning of the eighth week, that we accepted the Torah, when man gave meaning to G-d's creation. We also find this concept of double sevens where the seven cycles of the seven years of the *shmittah* cycle are followed in year 50 by the *Yovel*. It is during *Yovel* that the partnership of G-d and man reaches its peak; man must free any slaves he has, as "they are My slaves," and it is not meant to be slaves to slaves. Land reverts back to its original owner. Man must know his limitations.



## Who Gets the Credit?

The centerpiece of the Torah reading on the seventh day of Pesach is naturally the great song of Moses and of the Jewish people after their moment of deliverance from Pharaoh and the flooding sea. This song of Moses and of Israel is repeated daily throughout the centuries of Jewish life in our morning prayer service.

The exultation of the moment is still retained and felt many generations later in the unmatched prose and poetry written in the Torah. What makes this song unique is that there is no reference to human bravery, to the courage of the Jewish people in plunging into the sea, or to the leadership of Moses and Aaron in shepherding the Jewish people through this crisis. Rather, the entire poem/song is a paean of praise and appreciation dedicated to the G-d of Israel.

G-d operates, so to speak, through human beings and world events. Many times, His presence is hidden from our sight. Sometimes, it is even willfully ignored. In later victories and triumphs of the Jewish people and of Israel, it is the human element that helps fashion those victories and triumphs that is acknowledged and celebrated.

But here in the song of Moses and Israel, we have an acknowledgement of G-d's great hand without ascribing any credit to human beings and natural and social forces. I think that this is perhaps the one facet that makes this song so unique.

This is completely in line with the character of Moses, who is described in the Torah as being the humblest and most self-effacing of all human beings. There is no question that without Moses, there would not have been an exodus from Egypt nor the salvation of Israel on the shores of the *Yam Suf*. But it would be completely out of character for Moses to assign any of the credit for these enormous and miraculous achievements to himself or his actions and leadership.

Thus, the greatest of leaders and the most gifted of prophets attain that championship of leadership and prophecy by downplaying their role. Moses is well aware of his greatness and his unique relationship with the G-d of Israel. He is not naïve enough to think of himself as a plain, ordinary human being. To do so would really be a form of ersatz humility. But he is wise enough to realize that this exalted status that he has attained is little more than a gift that G-d has bestowed upon him.

From the beginning of his leadership career, when he attempted to refuse becoming the leader of Israel, till his last days on Earth, he retained this innate humility, which allowed him to be the strongest of leaders and the most courageous of prophets. There is a lesson in this for all later generations and for all of us who aspire to positions of leadership and importance. That is why this song of Moses and Israel is repeated daily in Jewish life.



## Thoughts on Hallel

### *Hallelu Et Hashem Kol Goyim*

A priest once asked Rav Chaim a question regarding a *pasuk* in Tehillim that we recite in Hallel. It says in Tehillim (117), *Hallelu et Hashem kol goyim, shabehuhu kol ha'umim*, all the nations of the world will praise G-d. Why? *Ki gavar aleinu hasdo*, because G-d showered us Jews with compassion. The priest did not comprehend why gentiles would praise G-d for showing compassion to the Jews. Rav Chaim Volozhin explained to the priest that we are not cognizant of all the evil schemes that you plotted against us. Only you know exactly what you have planned for us, and Hashem acts to protect us. That is to say, you may plan to blow up a bridge and destroy a caravan of Jews, but Hashem causes your explosive device to jam, and the Jewish caravan is saved. Only you are aware of this compassionate act of the Almighty, and therefore, only you can praise Him for His *chesed* toward us. Even in those generations where there appears to be tranquility, the other nations either plot unsuccessfully against us or seek to annihilate us not through physical means, but by doing all they can to degrade us spiritually. They recognize how G-d protects us even when it is not apparent to us.

### *Ana Hashem Ki Ani Avdecha*

A story is told that the Lev Simcha, one of the Gerer Rebbeim, told his *chassidim* to have special *kavannah* when reciting the words *ana Hashem* during Hallel. There was an argument among the *chassidim* as to whether the Rebbe was referring to *ana Hashem hoshia na*, or *ana Hashem hatzlicha na*. The Rebbe's son approached Rav Simcha to resolve the debate among the *chassidim*. The Rebbe responded that it was neither. He was referring to *ana Hashem ki ani avdecha*, which is the key to being a Jew: understanding that we are here to serve Hashem. Seder night in particular, we should state this verse with special concentration, special *kavannah*, as we are proclaiming that we went from being servants of Pharaoh to being *avdei Hashem!*

### *Ana Hashem Hoshia Na*

As we recite Hallel and feel like we are on top of the world, it seems a bit strange that we are also asking for a *yeshua*, for salvation. Similarly, on Sukkot, we perform *Hoshanot* at a time of tremendous celebration. We cry out *Hoshia na!* It would seem more appropriate to conduct *Hoshanot* on Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur rather than on Sukkot, which is *zman simchatenu*. The *Shemen Hatov* explains that calling out to Hashem should not be limited to an *eit tzara*, to challenging times. We should turn to Hashem even at times of celebration, during Hallel and on Sukkot, expressing that we know Hashem is in charge, no matter what we are experiencing. In addition, twice in *Tanakh* the statement *yehi Shem Hashem mevorach* appears: once in Tehillim (113:2), which is cited in Hallel, and the other at the beginning of *Iyov* (1:21), when it states *Hashem natan v'Hashem lakach, yehi Shem Hashem mevorach*. Thus, we recognize and turn to Hashem in times of difficulty, as well as in times of celebration.

## RABBI ELI MANSOUR



### A New Understanding of the Splitting of the Sea

The Torah reading on the seventh day of Pesach describes what is likely the most famous miracle told in the Torah, the miracle of *Keriat Yam Suf*, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds. Pharaoh's army had trapped Bnai Yisrael against the sea, and G-d miraculously split the sea to allow Bnai Yisrael to cross. The Egyptians continued chasing Bnai Yisrael into the sea, whereupon G-d sent the waters on them, drowning the entire army.

The *Ha'ketav V'ha'kabbala* (Rav Yaakov Mecklenberg, 1785-1865) offers a unique insight into how the miracle of *Keriat Yam Suf* unfolded, understanding this event much differently than the way it is commonly understood.

He begins by noting that the Torah speaks of Bnai Yisrael going into the sea with the words, "*Va'yavo'u Bnai Yisrael b'toch ha'yam*" – "Bnai Yisrael came into the middle of the sea" (14:22). *Ha'ketav V'ha'kabbala* observes that generally, the act of going into the sea is referred to not with the verb "*ba*" – "come," but rather with the verb "*yored*" – "descend." For example, a verse in *Tehillim* (107:23) speaks of "*yoredeh ha'yam b'aniyot*" – "Those who go down into the sea in boats." Why does the Torah use the verb "*va'yavo'u*," "came," in reference to Bnai Yisrael's going into the sea after the waters split?

To answer this question, *Ha'ketav V'ha'kabbala* explains that the splitting of the waters was not the primary miracle that occurred at this event. Rather, G-d lifted the ocean floor, such that it was flush with the seashore. The water, which would normally be displaced and thrown onto the shores around the ocean, instead split into two "walls" that floated on top of the elevated ocean floor, on either side.

Additionally, G-d dried the ocean floor so that it was smooth and paved, allowing Bnai Yisrael to easily travel across to the other side.

This explains why the Torah uses the word "*va'yavo'u*" to describe Bnai Yisrael's advancing into the sea. Normally, the verb "*yored*" is used because the ocean is, of course, much lower than the shore, such that going into the sea entails a descent of sorts. But at *Keriat Yam Suf*, the ocean floor was lifted, such that Bnai Yisrael did not have to descend. This was, in fact, a crucial part of the miracle. If Hashem had merely split the waters, Bnai Yisrael would have had to walk along a steep depression down into the ocean floor. This would have been exceedingly difficult. So instead, He raised the ocean floor, splitting the water in the process, so that Bnai Yisrael had a flat, smooth surface along which to travel.

On this basis, *Ha'ketav V'ha'kabbala* explains Bnai Yisrael's description of the miracle in *Shirat Ha'yam*, the song of praise that they sang after the miracle: "*Kaf'u tehomot b'lev yam*" (commonly translated as, "The depths froze in the heart of the sea" – 15:8). Based on several verses throughout Tanach, *Ha'ketav V'ha'kabbala* posits that the word "*kaf'u*" means "floated." And he cites the verse in the Book of *Mishlei* (30:19), "*derech oniya b'lev yam*" – that ships sail "in the heart of the sea," showing that the phrase "*b'lev yam*" refers to the surface of the ocean. Hence, the verse "*kaf'u tehomot b'lev yam*" means that the ocean waters "floated" on top of the sea's surface, which was elevated to the height of the shore.

The real miracle of *Keriat Yam Suf*, then, was not just the splitting of the water but the elevation of the ocean floor, which created a flat, smooth surface for Bnai Yisrael to travel on, so they could easily escape from the Egyptian army.

## RABBI MENACHEM LEHRFELD



### Count Up, Not Down

The *Omer* offering was made of barley, considered animal fodder in biblical times. At the end of the process, an offering made of wheat was brought to the Temple, symbolizing the growth from a state of base existence like an animal to one of higher spiritual readiness, like a human being.

Judaism emphasizes the power of change. You have immense potential, and right now, you are just beginning your journey. Compared to where you can ultimately go, you're still far from achieving your true greatness. That is why the emphasis is on the *Omer*, the barley, the animal food.

#### A STRANGE COUNTING

The counting begins with day one, moving up every subsequent day until day 49. Why don't we count down, like it's done at Times Square on New Year's Eve: ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one? Who counts *up* to ten? Eight, nine, ten, Happy New Year!

We count the *Omer* up, not down.

When you count down to something, whether it's a vacation, a promotion, or a wedding, you're eager to reach the end, often overlooking the journey itself. You want the intervening days to

disappear and to reach your destination. In contrast, counting up encourages you to appreciate each day's progress, to make each day count, focusing on the process rather than just the outcome.

During the counting of the *Omer*, each day is built upon the previous one, like constructing a building floor by floor. By the end of the *Omer*, if you have maximized this time period for personal growth, you are prepared to receive the Torah with a deeper understanding and greater readiness. You are ready to live as a full human being, represented through eating wheat, not barley.

Passover, the physical liberation from Egypt, was not the culmination but the beginning of a greater spiritual journey. Each day during the counting of the *Omer* symbolizes a step in your spiritual journey, encouraging you to keep ascending.

Whether it's toilet training or a more profound life goal, milestones are not endpoints but stepping stones. The real journey begins after the initial success. Growth and improvement are ongoing processes, with every milestone propelling you to strive for the next level of achievement.

Keep moving forward, strive for more, by making each day count, transforming your achievements into ongoing steps toward greater heights.

## RABBI LABEL LAM



### The Reward of Women

*Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women came out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam called out to them, "Sing to Hashem, for He is very exalted; a horse and its rider He cast into the sea." (Shemos 15:20-21)*

After all the spontaneous song over the destruction of the Egyptian army and the splitting of the Red Sea, we are finally treated to a snippet of the small sample of the concert performance of Miriam and the womenfolk. It's a little curious why these specific words are chosen. Out of the entire grandiose experience of witnessing the amazing salvation of the entire Nation via the direct hand of G-d, Miriam's choir is caught up with the refrain about the horse and its rider being tossed into the sea. Why is that point in particular singled out by the female singers?

There is a curious Mishnah in *Makkos* that analyzes why the Torah needed to add that three witnesses are valid to put a perpetrator to death. If two witnesses do the job, then what value is there in adding a third?

In order to properly appreciate Rabbi Aki-

va's solution, it is first important to know what a *zomeim* witness is. When witnesses give testimony, they are imposing a judgment on the person being testified about. It might cost him money, or it might cost him his life, depending on the nature of the accusation. There is a reflexive clause in the Torah that puts the witnesses themselves equally at risk. If it is found out that they, the witnesses, were somewhere so distant from the event they claim to have seen that it is impossible for them to have actually witnessed anything of the sort, then they are visited with whatever they are trying to do to the accused, whether it is money, lashes, or life itself. The third witness is not necessary for the establishment of the testimony, but his joining in puts him at risk, and he shares the exposure with the first two claimants. There is an inherent and perhaps object lesson implied here.

About this, Rabbi Akiva says that the third witness in the group only comes to be stringent on him and that you would make him a *zomeim* (even though the third person in the group is not necessary for forming a valid group of witnesses). And if the Torah punishes those who assist transgressors as it does transgressors, all the more so reward will be paid out to those who assist in

the performance of mitzvos as it is to those who perform mitzvos. (*Makkos* 1:7)

The women who are exiting Egypt now are excited by the splitting of the sea because they saw the largest impediment had just been removed, and they are one giant step closer to Mount Sinai and the reception of the Torah. The only problem is that the men are absolutely required to study the Torah, while the women are not saddled with that obligation.

The Talmud asks and answers: "What is the great merit of our women? That they educate their children, encourage their husbands to go out and learn Torah, and wait for them until they return from the study hall." (*Berachot* 17a) Women play a critical role in helping their husbands and children learn Torah. What value, what benefit do they get? Miriam alerted the women about this point, and they were cheering about that. What had the horses of the Egyptians done so wrong that they deserved to be thrown into the sea? They were only helping their masters. Well, they were punished too for that assistance. How much more so is there a reward for those who help with mitzvos.

## RABBI CHANOCH YERES

### A Short Vort - Shmini

*"And Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them." (Lev. 9:22)*

In *Parshas Shmini*, Aaron blessed the people of Israel immediately upon finishing the service of the offering in dedication of the Mishkan.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch asks what the connection is between these two acts (the offering and the blessing). Furthermore, the word used for "hands" is spelled without the second "yud" – not יָדַי, but rather, יָדַי.

He suggests that the Priestly Blessing is not a separate deed in and of itself. The blessing is ineffective if performed alone. Only when offerings are brought by the people of Israel as a unit does the Priestly Benediction take effect. In addition, no power was invested in the hands of the *kohanim*. "His hands" in the verse are missing the second letter "yud" to signify that the blessing is coming directly from G-d, not from the *kohen*.

## RABBI ELI SCHELLER



### Selective Kindness

These shall you abominate from among the birds, they may not be eaten; they are an abomination: the *chassidah*. (*Lev.* 11:13)

Among the non-kosher birds is the *chassidah*, the stork. It is called *chassidah* because it displays kindness (*chessed*) toward others of its species by sharing food with them. According to the Ramban, non-kosher birds are not kosher because of their cruel nature. If so, the *chassidah* should have been a kosher bird. After all, it bestows kindness upon its companions!

Man finds it easy to love his fellow man if they are similar to him. If he learns in my school, if he dresses like I do, then I love him, and I'll try to assist him whenever the need arises. If he's not like me, then I have no business with him and have no interest in helping him. However, the kosher form of *chessed* is to bestow kindness equally on all people, regardless of how similar they are to us. The *chassidah* acts kindly toward its companions, but *only* toward its companions. It does not act kindly toward anyone else. To Jews, that is not an admirable characteristic.

Many great people were known for their love and care for every single Jew, whether they wore a black hat, a white *kippah*, or no *kippah*. Being kind only to your own kind is not kosher!

# Pre-Pesach at Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim



Learning at Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim



Shiur with R' Don Blumberg at Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim



Shiur with R' Matisyahu Yehuda Weldon at Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim



The Father's Seder Workshop with R' Zev Freundlich



Shiur B'Inyanei D'yoma with R' Yosef Fried at Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim



**Erev Motzai**  
**Yomim Tovim Yomim Tovim**



Early Mincha	Late Maariv
1:32-1:31 PM מנחה גדולה	9:00 PM
1:45 PM	9:15 PM
2:00 PM	9:30 PM
2:15 PM	9:45 PM
2:30 PM	10:00 PM
2:45 PM	10:15 PM
3:00 PM	10:30 PM
3:15 PM	10:45 PM
3:30 PM	11:00 PM
3:45 PM	11:15 PM
4:00 PM	11:30 PM
4:15 PM	11:45 PM
4:30 PM	12:00 AM
4:45 PM	

18 Main Bais Medrash

**Erev Yom Tov**  
Wednesday, April 1 י"ד ניסן



Time	Location
Sof Zman Achila	10:29 AM - Magen Avraham 10:53 AM Gra & Baal Hatanya
Sof Zman Biur	11:44 AM - Magen Avraham 11:56 AM - Gra & Baal Hatanya
Chatzos	1:00 PM
<i>For Early Mincha Schedule, see Page 16</i>	
Candle Lighting	7:03 PM
Mincha	TBA
Mincha followed by Maariv	7:15 PM
Shkiah	7:21 PM

**חג כשר  
ושמח**

20 Upstairs  
Chabad

Tent א

**First Day Yom Tov**  
Thursday, April 2 ט"ו ניסן  
Tal



Time	Location
Shachris-Vasikin Neitz 6:37 AM	6:05 AM
Early Shachris	8:00 AM
Sof Zman Krias Shema	9:07/9:48 AM
Shachris	9:45 AM
Shachris	TBA
Shachris	10:30 AM
Mincha	6:00 PM 7:15 PM
Mincha	TBA
Shkiah	7:22 PM
Maariv Sefiras Haomer	8:04 PM
Candle Lighting	After 8:14 PM (50 min)



**Second Day Yom Tov**  
Friday, April 3 ט"ז ניסן



Time	Location
Shachris-Vasikin Neitz 6:36 AM	6:05 AM
Early Shachris	8:00 AM
Sof Zman Krias Shema	9:06/9:48
Shachris	9:45 AM
Shachris	TBA
Shachris	10:30 AM
<i>Friday Night Shabbos Chol Hamoed</i>	
Mincha followed by Kabbolas Shabbos	7:15 PM
Candle Lighting	7:05 PM
Mincha	TBA
Shkiah	7:23 PM

20 Upstairs  
Chabad

# Shabbos Chol Hamoed

Shabbos, April 4 ניסן 4  
Shir Hashirim

	Time	Location
Shachris-Vasikin Neitz 6:36 AM	6:05 AM	20 Upstairs
Early Shachris	8:00 AM	18 Main
Sof Zman Krias Shema	9:06/9:48	
Shachris	9:30 AM	Tent א
Shachris	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Shachris	10:30 AM	18 Main
Mincha	6:00 PM 7:10 PM	Tent א
Mincha	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Shkiah	7:24 PM	
Maariv V'sein Bracha	8:04 PM 8:09 PM	Tent א 18 Main

# Chol Hamoed SHACHRIS



Time	Location	Time	Location
6:04 AM Vasikin Neitz 6:32-6:31	20 Upstairs	9:15 AM	Tent ב
6:04 AM Vasikin ברכת כהנים Sefardi	18 Main	9:30 AM	Tent ג
6:15 AM	Tent א	9:45 AM	Tent ד
6:30 AM	Tent ג	10:00 AM	Tent א
6:45 AM	Tent ד	10:15 AM	Tent ב
7:00 AM	Tent א	10:30 AM	Tent ג
7:15 AM	Tent ב	10:45 AM	Tent ד
7:30 AM	Tent ג	11:00 AM	Tent א
7:45 AM	Tent ד	11:15 AM	Tent ב
8:00 AM	Tent א	11:30 AM	Tent ג
8:15 AM	Tent ב	11:45 AM	Tent ד
8:30 AM	Tent ג	12:00 PM	Tent א
8:45 AM	Tent ד	12:15 PM	Tent ב
9:00 AM	Tent א	12:30 PM	Tent ג
		12:40 PM	Tent ד

# Chol Hamoed MINCHA

Time	Location	Time	Location
1:31 PM מנחה גדולה	18 Main	7:00 PM	Tent א
1:45 PM	18 Main	7:05 PM	Tent א <sup>1</sup>
2:00 PM	18 Main	7:10 PM	Tent ב <sup>2</sup>
2:15 PM	18 Main	7:15 PM	Tent ג
2:30 PM	18 Main	7:20 PM	Tent ה
2:45 PM	18 Main	7:13 PM שקיעה מנין	18 Main
3:00 PM	18 Main	7:25 PM	Tent ד
3:15 PM	18 Main	7:30 PM	Tent א
3:30 PM	18 Main	7:35 PM	Tent א <sup>1</sup>
3:45 PM	18 Main	7:40 PM	Tent ב <sup>2</sup>
4:00 PM	18 Main	7:45 PM	Tent ג
4:15 PM	18 Main	7:50 PM	Tent ה
4:30 PM	18 Main	7:55 PM	Tent ד
4:45 PM	18 Main	8:00 PM	Tent א
5:00 PM	18 Main	8:05 PM	Tent א <sup>1</sup>
5:15 PM	18 Main	8:10 PM	Tent ב <sup>2</sup>
5:30 PM	18 Main	8:15 PM	Tent ג
5:45 PM	18 Main	8:20 PM	Tent ה
6:00 PM	18 Main	8:25 PM	Tent א (60 Mincha)
5:53 PM פלג מנחה מעריב	Tent א		
6:15 PM	18 Main		
6:30 PM	Tent א		
6:35 PM	Tent א <sup>1</sup>		
6:40 PM	Tent ב <sup>2</sup>		
6:45 PM	Tent ג		
6:50 PM	Tent ה		
6:55 PM	Tent ד		

Plag 6:05 PM  
Shkiah 7:25-7:26 PM  
Rabbeinu Tam 8:37-8:38 PM

# Chol Hamoed MAARIV

Time	Location	Time	Location
6:05 PM פלג מנין	Tent א	9:50 PM	Tent ב
7:25 PM	18 Main	10:00 PM	Tent א
7:30 PM	Tent ה	10:10 PM	Tent ב
7:35 PM	Tent ד	10:20 PM	Tent א
7:40 PM	Tent א	10:30 PM	Tent ב
7:45 PM	Tent א <sup>1</sup>	10:40 PM	Tent א
7:50 PM	Tent ב <sup>2</sup>	10:50 PM	Tent ב
7:55 PM	Tent ג	11:00 PM	18 Main
8:00 PM	Tent ה	11:15 PM	18 Main
8:05 PM	Tent ד	11:30 PM	18 Main
8:10 PM	Tent א	11:45 PM	18 Main
8:15 PM	Tent א <sup>1</sup>	12:00 AM	18 Main
8:20 PM	Tent ב <sup>2</sup>	12:15 AM	18 Main
8:25 PM	Tent ג	12:30 AM	18 Main
8:30 PM	Tent ה	12:45 AM	18 Main
8:37 PM	Tent א	1:00 AM	18 Main
8:50 PM	Tent ב	1:15 AM	18 Main
9:00 PM	Tent א	1:30 AM	18 Main
9:10 PM	Tent ב	1:45 AM	18 Main
9:20 PM	Tent א	2:00 AM	18 Main
9:30 PM	Tent ב	2:15 AM	18 Main
9:40 PM	Tent א	2:30 AM	18 Main

Plag 6:05 PM  
Shkiah 7:25-7:26 PM  
Rabbeinu Tam 8:37-8:38 PM

## Shevi'i Shel Pesach

כ"ו ניסן 7 April, Tuesday

	Time	Location
Candle Lighting	7:09 PM	
Mincha followed by Maariv	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Mincha followed by Maariv	7:18 PM	18 Main
Shkiah	7:27 PM	

כ"א ניסן, Wednesday, April 8

	Time	Location
Shachris-Vasikin Neitz 6:28 AM	5:55 AM	20 Upstairs
Early Shachris	8:00 AM	18 Main
Sof Zman Krias Shema	9:00/9:43 AM	
Shachris	9:15 AM	Tent א
Shachris	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Shachris	10:30 AM	18 Main
Mincha	6:00 PM 7:18 PM	Tent א
Mincha	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Shkiah	7:28 PM	
Maariv	8:10 PM	18 Main
Candle Lighting	After 8:20 PM (50 min)	

## Acharon Shel Pesach

כ"ב ניסן 9 April, Thursday

Yizkor

	Time	Location
Shachris-Vasikin Neitz 6:26 AM	5:55 AM	20 Upstairs
Early Shachris	8:00 AM	18 Main
Sof Zman Krias Shema	8:59/9:42 AM	
Shachris	9:15 AM	Tent א
Shachris Yizkor	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Shachris	10:30 AM	18 Main
Mincha/ Neilas Hachag	7:10 PM	18 Main
Mincha/ Seudas Moshiach	TBA	20 Upstairs Chabad
Shkiah	7:30 PM	
Maariv	8:10 PM 8:15 PM	Tent א 18 Main

For late Maariv schedule, please see page 16

## אחרון של פסח

The entire Kehilla is invited to join for

**נעילת החג**  
with Rabbi Coren

**Mincha 7:10 PM**  
**18 Main Bais Medrash**



## Erev Yomim Tovim Motzai Yomim Tovim

Early Mincha	Late Maariv
1:32-1:31 PM מנחה גדולה	9:00 PM
1:45 PM	9:15 PM
2:00 PM	9:30 PM
2:15 PM	9:45 PM
2:30 PM	10:00 PM
2:45 PM	10:15 PM
3:00 PM	10:30 PM
3:15 PM	10:45 PM
3:30 PM	11:00 PM
3:45 PM	11:15 PM
4:00 PM	11:30 PM
4:15 PM	11:45 PM
4:30 PM	12:00 AM
4:45 PM	

**18 Main Bais Medrash**

### Thanks for Everything

“Give thanks to Hashem for He is good, His kindness endures forever!” So begins Psalm 136, a psalm recited during Hallel at the Seder. The psalm consists of 26 expressions of acknowledgment of Hashem’s mercy and kindness toward us, all concluding with “His kindness endures forever.”

The first verse, Rav Nissim David Azran explains, is in actuality a dual acknowledgement and expression of thanks. He explains by means of a parable:

Reb Avraham was known for his deep devotion to the study of Torah. He learned day and night and was encouraged to do so by his wife. In order to enable him to learn Torah with deep devotion, she took upon herself the responsibility of providing sustenance for the household. More often than not, money was short, and the dedicated wife found herself unable to purchase basic provisions. The local storekeeper, aware of the dire situation, allowed the woman to purchase on credit. Every day, the woman would buy what she needed for the day, billing the sum to her account.

The storekeeper, while wanting to help the family, saw a bill growing every day with no payment in sight. One morning, he mentioned to the woman that the time to pay the balance was approaching. The woman was extremely troubled; she had no money to pay for the day’s food, let alone that for the past few months. She returned to the store the next day, hoping to buy some more time until she would be able to pay. Unfortunately, only a few days later, the storekeeper strongly hinted that he could no longer sell her anything on credit. The bill was due and had to be paid.

The distraught woman, who still had no money, had only one idea. She found a new store and asked the proprietor for a line of credit. Knowing the family and their situation, he gladly acquiesced. The woman started shopping at the new store on credit. As one might expect, over time, the bill grew and amounted to a sum that approached the balance they owed to the first storekeeper.

One day, the woman opened her mail. To her surprise, she found a sum of money inside an envelope. The money, from an anonymous benefactor, was intended to support the holy man and his family. The woman was happy – she finally had money to pay bills. However, she was faced with a dilemma: whom was she supposed to pay? She only had enough money to pay one of the storekeepers in full. Which debt should be retired first?

She presented this dilemma to her husband. She was of the opinion that the second storekeeper should be paid first. In this way, he would be placated and continue extending credit when it was needed. Her husband, however, was of a different mind. He believed the first storekeeper should be paid. He had extended credit for them initially, over a lengthy time period, and for that, he was owed not just a debt of money, but a debt of gratitude as well. Therefore, the husband suggested that the first storekeeper be paid in full.

Which approach was correct? Rav Azran suggests that both were correct. The best-case scenario, obviously, would be one in which both were paid in full. However, how is one to decide this dilemma, a conflict between thanking someone for kindness done in the past versus the importance of those good actions to be done for us in the future? Although there is no clear-cut answer for the couple, we ourselves are not faced with this dilemma. Hashem has provided for all of us. We have been sustained and blessed by the actions of Hashem. For this, we owe thanks. Yet, we must also acknowledge the kindness and mercy that we know will be shown to us by Hashem in the future. We are capable of praising for both, and we indeed do so. “Give thanks to Hashem for He is good,” for He has done so much for us in the past. “His kindness endures forever,” we must praise Hashem for that as well.



### Step by Step

After witnessing the splitting of the sea, our ancestors wandered for 49 days through the wilderness of Sinai, encountering real challenges that tested their newfound freedom. They faced water shortages, hunger that led to the miracle of *manna*, and even military confrontation with Amalek. These trials weren’t arbitrary hardships but essential lessons in self-reliance and faith. Each challenge revealed another aspect of what it meant to transition from passive slaves to active partners with the Divine.

This desert journey represents humanity’s archetypal growth process, the gradual transformation from recipients of revelation to worthy vessels capable of receiving G-d’s wisdom at Sinai. Each day built upon the previous one, each step forward earned through struggle and commitment.

This step-by-step journey is encapsulated in a countdown that has shaped Jewish spiritual life for millennia. For 49 consecutive nights, starting after the first day of Passover, Jews around the world perform the mitzvah of *Sefirat HaOmer*, counting the *Omer*, marking each day on a journey that culminates with the festival of Shavuot, commemorating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

When we count the *Omer* today, we are reenacting this transformative journey, recreating within ourselves the same spiritual readiness our ancestors achieved day by day.

#### YOUR PERSONAL EXODUS

Though we’re thousands of years removed from the original Exodus, the *Omer* count invites us to undertake this same transformative journey annually. The spiritual mathematics remain constant: meaningful growth requires both the inspiration of the first light, Passover, and the perspiration of the 49-day count.

The *Omer* period offers a sacred framework for sustainable growth; not through quantum leaps but through daily practice, gradual improvement, and faithful counting. So seize the opportunity and ask yourself, “Where have I experienced brilliant glimpses of possibility but struggled to maintain momentum?” Identify one quality you wish to cultivate between now and Shavuot. Then commit to a simple, daily practice that will build that quality incrementally. By the time you reach day 49, you won’t merely be anticipating revelation; you’ll have earned your place as a worthy recipient, capable of partnership with the Divine.

In our instant gratification culture, the *Omer* reminds us of an ancient truth: the most meaningful transformations unfold not in moments but in journeys, not in leaps but in steps faithfully climbed.



## Everlasting Faith

The Torah reading for the seventh day of Pesach describes the miraculous splitting of the sea and the song that Klal Yisrael sang afterward. One would imagine that the reading would end with the words of Miriam exhorting the women to praise and sing to Hashem (*Shemos* 15:21). And yet we read five more *pesukim* that depict how, after *Kriyas Yam Suf*, the Jewish people traveled for three days in the desert without water. Finally, they come to Marah, but they are not able to drink the bitter waters there, so they complain, and Hashem shows Moshe how to sweeten the water. Why do we end with this seemingly extraneous passage? It does not seem to be a fitting conclusion to *Kriyas Yam Suf* and the *Shiras Hayam*.

What is even more intriguing is how, just three days after witnessing the great miracle of *Kriyas Yam Suf*, the Jewish people complained about water. Chazal comment that even a maidservant saw divine revelation at the sea that prophets were not able to behold (Rashi, *Shemos* 15:2). The Ramban (*Vayeira* 18:1) explains that they merited such a vision because “they had faith in Hashem and Moshe, His servant” (*Shemos* 14:31), and they jumped into the sea. How did Klal Yisrael lose their faith so quickly that they complained about the lack of drinkable water?

The Ramban (*Ha’Emunah V’Habitachon*, 19) writes that when a person experiences a spiritual awakening, he should concretize his feelings by doing something substantive to translate his emotion into action. He suggests that this is the deeper meaning of the *posuk*, “If you arouse or awaken the love until you desire it – *ad shetech’patz*” (*Shir Hashirim* 2:7). Shlomo HaMelech is advising Klal Yisrael that when you have an intense feeling of *ahavas Hashem*, you should turn that emotion into something substantive, like an object (a *chefetz*). Crystallize your feelings and transform them into meaningful action. In that way, your emotion will not be just a fleeting passion. Rather, it will leave a lasting and permanent impression.

Since Klal Yisrael never concretized their emotional experi-

ence at the *Yam Suf* into something substantive, their spiritual high evaporated in just three days of wandering in the desert. Hashem responded by giving them mitzvos: “There he established for [the nation] a law and a rule – *chok u’mishpat*” (*Shemos* 15:25). Rashi explains that *chok* refers to the mitzvos of Shabbos and *Parah Adumah*. Why was Shabbos the first mitzvah that Klal Yisrael received in Marah?

The mitzvah of Shabbos is designed to strengthen our *emunah* in Hashem (see introduction to the *Mishnah Brurah*). One who observes Shabbos testifies to the fact that Hashem created the world (*Yisro* 20:11) and that He took Klal Yisrael out of Mitzrayim (*V’eschanan* 5:15). This is also the purpose of the mitzvos associated with the *yom tov* of Pesach in general and the *sefer* night in particular, to reinforce the idea of *hashgachas Hashem*, that Hashem is constantly orchestrating the events of history and of our personal lives (see the Ramban, end of *Parshas Bo*).

Klal Yisrael witnessed the ten plagues in Mitzrayim. They saw Hashem’s omnipotence, His total control over Pharaoh and his people. This heightened sense of *emunah* in Hashem reached its pinnacle at the *Yam Suf* when they saw the precise divine retribution, the *middah k’neged middah*, that Hashem meted out to the Egyptians for their persecution of Klal Yisrael (see Netziv, *Shemos* 14:31). And yet, because these feelings of *emunah* were not grounded in mitzvos, in substantive actions, they were not lasting. That is why Hashem gave them the mitzvah of Shabbos, which reinforces the concept of *emunah*, so that by observing Shabbos, they would be able to crystallize their feelings of faith into something real and give them a sense of permanence.

Thus, the story of Marah is actually a fitting conclusion to *Kriyas Yam Suf* because it was at Marah that Klal Yisrael received the mitzvah of Shabbos, the necessary *chefetz*, the vessel, through which they would be able to concretize the *emunah* they felt at the *Yam Suf* and transform that emotion into an enduring legacy.

# RABBI OZER ALPORT



## Never Again

The Beis HaLevi, who served as the rabbi of the city of Brisk, was once studying with his son, Chaim, when a man entered to ask a question. The man had gotten into a major disagreement with a friend of his. In the heat of the moment, he took a vow swearing that he would never again see his friend. However, the friend had just passed away.

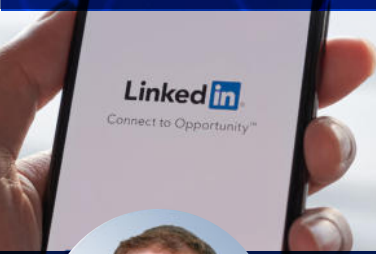
The man who took the vow served on the city’s *chevrah kaddishah* (organization that ritually prepares the dead for proper burial) and wanted to know if he was permitted to help prepare the body for the funeral. He reasoned that perhaps “seeing” his friend’s dead body wasn’t really considered seeing and wouldn’t violate his oath. He came to ask the rabbi’s opinion on the matter. The Beis HaLevi

turned to his son, Chaim, then a young lad of eight, to ask for his thoughts on the subject.

Chaim replied that the question is explicitly answered in Exodus 14:13. Moshe told the Jewish people not to worry, as they would never again see their Egyptian oppressors. However, several verses later (Ex. 14:30), we are told that they saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. The Midrash explains that they didn’t see the Egyptian bodies from a distance. Each Jew was able to discern the face of the Egyptian who had been his personal taskmaster, which would seem to violate the promise made by Moshe. Rather, we can conclude from here that “seeing” somebody after their death isn’t considered seeing at all.

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## The Sentinel

What is left for us of the blood of the Pesach offering on our doorways in Egypt is the *mezuzah* that we place on our doors.

On the outside of every *mezuzah* are inscribed the letters *shin*, *dalet*, and *yud*. These letters spell one of G-d's names, *Shadai*. Unroll the *mezuzah*, and in that self-same place where that name appears, but on the reverse side, is written another of G-d's names, the ineffable name of four letters *yud* and *heh* and *vav* and *heh*.

The name *Shadai* means “the One who said to the world *Enough!*” When G-d created the world, He did it in such a way that the Creation would have been continuous and unceasing. It would have gone on and on forever, expanding, becoming more and more and more. However, the Infinite Wisdom decreed that the Creation should be contained, limited. G-d said, “*Dai, Enough!*” Creation should go this far and no further.

Why are these two Names of G-d juxtaposed on the two sides of the *mezuzah*?

### REACH FOR THE SKY

According to Jewish law, the *reshut harabim*, the public domain, ascends vertically only to approximately three feet above the ground. Horizontally, it can extend everywhere, all over the world, but it never ascends. The street is trapped within the confines of this world. The *reshut hayachid*, the private domain, on the other hand, has no upper limit. In the home, the sky is the limit. That is where the ineffable Name, *yud and heh and vav and heh*, is revealed. It is in the home that a person can ascend heavenward. However, our ascent upward is proportionate to our limitation outward. That is why *Shadai* is on the outside of the *mezuzah*, while on the inside are *yud and heh and vav and heh*, the Name that has no restrictions.

The *mezuzah* tells us that if we say *Dai! Enough!* to the street, if we make a strong demarcation between all that the street stands for and the sanctity of the home, then inside, G-d's ineffable name, the name of *yud and heh and vav and heh*, can illuminate our homes and our lives.

## ZERA SHIMSHON

### Strangers in a Foreign Land

*The king of Egypt said to them, “Moshe and Aharon, why do you disturb the people from their work? Go to your own burdens!” (5:4)*

Rashi explains that since the Levi'im were not required to participate in the physical labor, Pharaoh specifically said, “Go to *your own burdens*,” meaning, go take care of what you have to do in your house, but not the physical labor that all the other Jews were required to do.

The Zera Shimshon asks why it is that *Shevet Levi* was not included in the decree of the physical labor. After all, the *passuk* that describes the decree of the Egyptian exile and bondage does not differentiate between any of the *shevatim*. The *passuk* says (*Bereishis* 15:13), *כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא, להם ועבדום וענו אותם*, “Your children will be strangers in a land that is not their own. They will serve them and oppress them.” From this *passuk*, it seems that everyone would be part of this decree of slavery. If so, why is it that the *shevet* of Levi was excluded?

The Zera Shimshon answers that the Medrash (*Rabba* 1:10) says that when Yosef HaTzaddik passed away, the Jewish people stopped keeping the mitzvah of *bris milah* because they wanted to be similar to the Egyptians. When this happened, Hashem made the Egyptians hate them.

The Zera Shimshon points out that it seems that had the Jewish people kept the mitzvah of *milah*, they would not have been subjected to the slavery and backbreaking labor of the Egyptian exile. How is this in keeping with the *passuk* that seems to say that the Jewish people would have been subjected to this decree regardless?

The Zera Shimshon suggests that there were two parts to the decree of going down to Egypt. Originally, the decree was only that the Jewish people would be strangers in the land. If, however, they would not keep the symbol of the Jewish people, the mitzvah of *milah*, then they would be subjected to the additional decree of slave labor. Being that the *shevet* of Levi kept the mitzvah of *milah*, they remained strangers but were not subjected to the physical labor. All the other Jews, who gave up the mitzvah of *milah*, were subsequently subjected to the second part of the decree, namely, the backbreaking slave labor.

The Zera Shimshon derives this from the wording of the aforementioned *passuk*. The *passuk* says, “Your children will be strangers in a land that is not their own. They will serve them and oppress them.” The *passuk* could have said, “Your children will be oppressed in a land that is not their own.” As well, once the *passuk* said that they would be strangers, there is no need to add “in a land that is not their own.”

The Zera Shimshon says that if the decree was indeed a two-part decree, this *passuk* is very well understood. The first part of the decree was that the Jewish people would be strangers in a foreign land. If they were to be noticed and live as though it were not their own land, by keeping their Jewish identity through the mitzvah of *milah*, then the decree would end there. This is why the *passuk* adds “in a land that is not their own,” to emphasize that if they would live as though it were not their land and not try to assimilate, then all that the decree would entail would be living as strangers in Egypt.

If, however, they would not keep this difference, the *passuk* continues to tell what the second part of the decree would be: “They will serve them and oppress them.” This is why the *passuk* says the decree in two parts and doesn't just say, “Your children will be oppressed in a land that is not theirs.”

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SCHEDULE

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BY RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM BURGER  
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# RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

## The Wisdom of the Waters

In *Shirat Hayam*, the jubilant song of praise sung by *Bnei Yisrael* after the miracle of the splitting of the sea, they proclaim, “*U’v’ruach apecha ne’ermu mayim*” (*Shemot* 15:8), which is commonly interpreted as, “And with the breath of Your nostrils, the waters were heaped.” As several commentators (including Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Seforno) explain, the word “*ne’ermu*” stems from the word “*areima*,” which means “pile” or “heap,” as in the phrase “*areimat chittim*” – “pile of wheat” (*Shir Hashirim* 7:3). The waters of the sea are described here as having been transformed into two tall “piles,” forming a path of dry land through which *Bnei Yisrael* were then able to safely cross.

*Targum Onkelos*, however, translates the word “*ne’ermu*” as “*chakimu*” – “were intelligent,” or “sly.” According to the *Targum*, the word “*ne’ermu*” is associated with the word “*arum*,” which is used, for example, to describe the sly, conniving snake in *Gan Eden* (“*V’ha’nachash haya arum*,” *Bereishit* 3:1). The waters were “cunning” in the way they split to form a dry path through which *Benei Yisrael* could cross. *Chizkuni* explains that the *Targum*’s translation means the waters of the sea were “wise” in that they drowned the Egyptians. The waters receded at the right time to allow *Bnei Yisrael* to cross and then fell back into place when the time came to drown the Egyptians.

It should be noted, however, that the word “*ne’ermu*” appears in the context of the sea’s initial splitting, when it miraculously formed two “walls” around *Bnei Yisrael*. In contrast, the drowning of the Egyptians is described only several verses later (10). Therefore, we might assume that if *Targum Onkelos* translates “*ne’ermu*” as a reference to wisdom and cunning, this description relates specifically to the waters’ splitting, and not to their drowning of the Egyptians.

Perhaps, the “wisdom” of the waters was the wisdom to discontinue one’s normal course of action. Since the time of the world’s creation, the ocean’s waters had remained in place in their basin, but now the time came for them to do something drastically different, to rise to either side in order to form dry land. It takes a degree of wisdom and intuition to make drastic changes, to discontinue something to which we have grown accustomed, when the need arises. Like the waters of the sea, we all have familiar habits and routines that have become second nature. There is a certain level of intelligence required to recognize when we must act differently and reverse our normal, habitual course of action. While habits and routines are, of course, vitally important for our stability and productivity, there are also times when, like the waters of the sea, we need to adjust our course due to extenuating circumstances. The “wisdom” of the waters is the wisdom to know when we need to follow our usual routine and when we need to disrupt it and do something different in light of new realities.

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## JOKES

My mother told me to get rid of all my chometz for Pesach... so I deleted all my cookies from my browser.

Salt water available in powder form. Just add water.

A husband was doing *bedikas chometz*, but he only found nine out of the ten pieces that his wife hid. She called the rabbi and asked him what to do.

The rabbi asked, "Was it a *kezayis*?"

"Yes," she answered.

The rabbi said, "If so, you have to continue looking."

After an hour, she called again, and the rav said, "You must continue looking."

Then she called up again a few hours later and said, "It's so late, and my husband is really tired from searching for so long. Can't I give him a hint?"

I got home from a chasunah last night, and my wife said, "I can't believe how drunk you are." Denying it, I said, "I'm not drunk."

She said, "Yes, you are."

I said, "No, I'm not."

She said, "Can you tell the time?"

I walked up to the clock and said, "I'm not drunk."

A carpenter in Chelm is fixing the roof, but as he works, he throws away about half the nails. The mayor is passing by and asks him why he's wasting so many nails.

The carpenter answers, "I take a nail out of the bag, and if it's facing the roof, I use it. If it's facing away, I know it's defective and throw it away."

The mayor tells him, "You fool! Those are for the other side!"



Brought to you by Uncle Benji, author of *Laughter is the best medicine: Kosher and Jewish jokes for the whole family*, volumes one and two, and *Jewish Joke Book for Kids*, volumes one and two, available on Amazon.

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Wednesday, March 25 - Monday, April 13

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10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**18 Main Bais Medrash**

Breakfast 9:15 - 10:00 AM

Lunch 1:00 PM

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Dayan of Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim

בענין שירת הים, שביעי של פסח

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