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12 MIN. before shkia

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Guarding the Matzos – Guarding the Mitzvos

A POWERFUL PERSPECTIVE FROM THE CHASAM SOFER ON PESACH, SHABBOS, AND THE ENERGY OF MITZVOS

There is a fascinating moment that happens to many *baalei keriah*. When reading the Pesach *laining*, we reach the words “*Ushmartem es hamatzos*.” And for a split second, the reader almost says the wrong word. Instead of matzos, he instinctively wants to say mitzvos. Why?

Because Chazal famously teach: “*Al tikrei matzos, ela mitzvos*.” – “Do not read it as matzos, but rather, mitzvos.”

This well-known *drasha* contains a profound insight into the nature of mitzvos themselves.

Two remarkable teachings of the Chasam Sofer, found in his *sefer Toras Moshe*, open a window to this idea and help us appreciate not only Pesach, but also Shabbos and the entire period from Pesach to Shavuos.

THE MONTH THAT DEFINES US

The passage we read on *Shabbos HaChodesh* begins with the declaration in the Book of Exodus, *Parshas Bo*:

“*HaChodesh hazeh lachem*” – “This month shall be for you.”

The Torah introduces the month of Nissan as the first month of the Jewish calendar.

The Chasam Sofer laments something that many of us may not even notice. When people hear the phrase “the first month,” what do they instinctively think of?

January.

But according to the Torah, the first month is Nissan.

The Chasam Sofer, therefore, suggests a fascinating practice. When one needs to write the secular date, for example, on a check, he recommends writing the month spelled out rather than as a number. Doing so reminds us that the number “one” truly belongs to Nissan.

This is not merely a technical point about calendars. It reminds us that Nissan represents our beginning as a nation. It was the moment when we became the people destined to serve and connect to Hashem.

GUARDING THE MATZOS — GUARDING THE MITZVOS

Later in the same *parsha*, we read the famous command “*Ushmartem es hamatzos*.”

Chazal interprets this as “*Ushmartem es hamitzvos*.” Just as matzah must be guarded carefully so it does not become *chametz*, so too, mitzvos must be guarded carefully, performed without delay.

But the idea goes even deeper.

Recently, in my daily videos, we discussed the *brachah* known as *Birkas Hallanos*, recited when seeing blossoming trees during Nissan. The Gemara in *Brachos* 43 describes the blessing:

A person who sees trees budding recites a *brachah* thanking Hashem, “Who did not leave anything

lacking in His world and created beautiful creations for people to enjoy.”

At first glance, this seems like a simple appreciation of nature. Yet it actually expresses a profound idea about the purpose of creation itself.

Interestingly, the *halachic* details of this *brachah* became the subject of great discussion among the *poskim*. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef writes extensively about this in *Yabia Omer*.

Among the questions debated are:

Must the *brachah* be recited specifically on a fruit tree?

Must one see two trees, or is one sufficient?

Although the Gemara uses the plural “trees,” early printings actually read the word in the singular. This supports the practice of great authorities such as R’ Moshe Feinstein and R’ Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who were known to recite the *brachah* upon seeing even one fruit tree.

At first glance, this may seem like a minor technical debate. But in truth, studying the details of a mitzvah is itself an expression of “*Ushmartem es hamitzvos*.”

To guard a mitzvah means to cherish it enough to study it carefully.

SHMIRAH MEANS ANTICIPATION

The word *shmirah* does not merely mean guarding.

As Rashi explains, regarding the verse describing Yaakov reflecting on the dreams of Joseph, the phrase “*v’aviv shamah es hadavar*” means that he waited and anticipated. *Shmirah*, therefore, means looking forward to something.

This sheds light on the phrase *shomer Shabbos*.

It does not simply mean someone who refrains from *melachah* on Shabbos. It describes someone who anticipates Shabbos the entire week.

The Zohar explains that Shabbos represents a form of spiritual wedding between Hashem and the Jewish people. This explains why many aspects of Shabbos resemble stages of a wedding:

Friday night davening includes *Atah Kidashta*, paralleling *kiddushin*.

Shabbos Mincha concludes with *Atah echad*, representing the moment of *yichud*, the union between us and Hashem.

THE FIRST JEWISH COUNTDOWN

This idea becomes even more powerful beginning with the month of Nissan and continuing through Pesach until Shavuos.

What exactly are we celebrating when we leave Mitzrayim?

R. Nissim of Gerona (the *Ran*), in his commentary to *Pesachim*, reveals a remarkable detail.

When Hashem took the Jewish people out of Egypt, He told them through Moses that they would serve Him on the mountain in fifty days. Immediately, the Jewish people began counting.

They could not wait.

They were not merely marking time; they were expressing anticipation.

That meeting at the mountain was not simply a

gathering. It was the most momentous wedding in history, the giving of the Torah. Every Jewish wedding echoes that original moment of connection.

WHY THE AFIKOMAN MAY BE EATEN IN A RUSH

This leads to the second fascinating insight of the Chasam Sofer.

The Torah says regarding the *Korban Pesach*: “*Va’achaltem oso b’chipazon*.” – “You shall eat it in haste.”

The Chasam Sofer suggests a remarkable interpretation. On the night of the *Seder*, a person should become so deeply engaged in telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* that time simply disappears.

He becomes so immersed in the discussion of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* that he suddenly realizes that the time for eating the *afikoman* is almost over, and he must eat it quickly.

At first glance, this seems strange. Why would the Torah want us to rush?

But according to the Chasam Sofer, that rush is not a flaw. It is a sign of success. It means the mitzvah of telling the story has completely captured our attention.

THE MEANING OF “RETZEI V’HACHALITZEINU”

This idea connects to another phrase that many people find surprisingly difficult to translate.

On every Shabbos, we say “*Retzei v’hachalitzeinu*.” When I once asked people what the word *hachalitzeinu* means, many struggled to translate it. The commentators offer several interpretations.

R’ Ovadia of Bartenura, commenting on the Mishnah in *Eruvin*, explains that it can mean something related to “*zarzeinu*”—grant us energy, eagerness, and alacrity in serving Hashem.

Every *Shabbos Mevarchim*, we say a related phrase, “*chilutz atzamos*.” While it may sound like we are discussing chiropractors, the deeper meaning is that we ask Hashem for strength and vitality to serve Him. Not merely to perform mitzvos, but to perform them with energy, enthusiasm, and urgency.

THE SECRET OF MITZVOS

The Zohar teaches that the word mitzvah is related to *tzavsa*, connection.

Hashem gave us 613 mitzvos so that we can connect to Him, the Source of all goodness. This is the deeper meaning of the teaching “*Ushmartem es hamatzos*” – “Guard the matzos.”

Meaning: Guard the mitzvos. Treat them as precious opportunities. Study their details. Anticipate them. Run toward them.

Sometimes, that even means becoming so immersed in the mitzvah that we suddenly find ourselves rushing to finish the *afikoman*.

But that “rush” is not anxiety. It is the energy of a Jew who is fully alive within the world of mitzvos.

SHIUR
SCHEDULE

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

RABBI YY JACOBSON



Passover in Japan

Twenty-nine years ago, I observed a Passover in Japan.

It was a few weeks before Passover 1997. Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky of Chabad World Headquarters in Brooklyn requested that a colleague and I travel to the Far East and conduct public Passover seders for the Jewish community living in the remote city of Kobe. Our journey to Japan and the numerous encounters with hundreds of Jews residing in that part of the world remain etched in my heart.

My friend, Moshe Leiberman (today a rabbi in Boston), supervised the meticulous procedures of koshering the synagogue kitchen for Passover and preparing the food for the seder. We did not know how many people to expect; there are wandering Jews to be found in every corner of Japan. To our astonishment, our first public seder attracted close to two hundred Jews, most of them from very secular backgrounds. Some had not attended a Passover seder in decades.

The energy was great. We sang, danced, ate the crunchy matzah, and drank the tasty wine. The guests were into it, eating up the dis-

cussions as much as the delicious meal.

At the conclusion of the seder, I addressed those who attended as follows:

"I want you to know, I have celebrated many a seder night in a very observant Jewish community in New York. Yet I get the feeling that G-d's most lovable seder was the one done right here, in Kobe, Japan! Many of us here this evening may be unaware of the detailed seder rituals and customs, and so many of us may not even know how to read the *Haggadah* in Hebrew. But, my dearest brothers and sisters, the sincerity and the passion of so many Jews thirsty to reconnect with their inner soul, this I've never seen before during a Passover seder, and I thank you for allowing me this special opportunity."

I felt that what I said stirred up deep emotion in the audience. I could see tears streaming from some people's eyes. But one woman was sitting at the other end of the room and weeping profusely. She later approached me and related her personal tale.

"I grew up in a very assimilated home," the woman said. "I know almost nothing about Judaism. I've been living here in Japan for more

than twenty years, working as a school teacher and involved in the mystical disciplines of the Far East."

She related to me that she was uninterested in attending the seder, as she felt completely alienated from Judaism, yet a friend persuaded her to come.

"The only thing I remember about Judaism," she continued, "was that my grandmother would always tell me that I have a special spiritual connection. Why? "Because you are the tenth generation of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev."

"Who is Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev? That my grandmother never knew. She just knew that he was some great man who lived in Eastern Europe. And she insisted that I always retain this piece of history in my memory.

"So thank you, Rabbi, for serving as the messenger of my holy grandfather to bring me back home this Passover night," the woman said to me.

I wiped a tear from my eye and thanked the Almighty for sending me to Japan for Passover.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

MONDAY & THURSDAY Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Women's 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 SHALOM BER MUNITZ



To The Parent, Each Child Is the Only One

The Haggadah says that there are four types of children. One is a *chacham*, one is a *rasha*, one is a simpleton, one does not know how to ask. The Haggadah just said that there are four types of children, followed by each type. Why the extra word *echad*, one, for each type of child?

The Haggadah is making a very important point. While to everyone else, the child might be a *chacham* or *rasha* or any other type, to the parents, each child should be considered and treated as *echad*, the one and only child. [Then, you find the good and *nachas* in each child.]

==== At a *farbrengen* with Mashpia Harav Yosef Bukiet in the name of his father, the Rosh Yeshiva Harav Chaim Meir Bukiet z"l.

Yud Alef Nissan, *yom huledes* of the Rebbe. The Rebbe was named after the Tzemach Tzedek.

Yud Gimel Nissan, *yom hilulah* of the Tzemach Tzedek, Admor Menachem Mendel, 3rd Chabad Rebbe, grandson of the Baal HaTanya

RABBI SHRAGA FREEDMAN



Proper Dei'os and Middos

Rav Neuhaus, a *talmid* of Rav Matisyahu Salomon, became the *rav* of a prominent *shul* that had a vibrant night *kollel*. The *shul* was located on a narrow road near a fire station, a street frequently used by fire trucks. Unfortunately, some of the *kollel* members would park along the side of the street but failed to pull up close to the curb, making it difficult for fire trucks to pass quickly. This became a serious problem. The fire chief eventually sent a letter to the *shul*, asking that cars be parked properly. He concluded with a warning: If the situation didn't improve, he would issue an ordinance banning parking on that street altogether. Rav Neuhaus posted the letter in the *shul*, but it had little effect. People continued parking carelessly. Soon after, the *mashgiach* visited the city, and Rav Neuhaus brought the matter to his attention.

Without a moment's pause, Rav Matisyahu said, "**You must close the kollel!**"

"What?" Rav Neuhaus asked in disbelief. "But it's a thriving *kollel*. So much Torah is being learned there!" The *mashgiach* stood firm. "The *Gemara* says about someone who learns Torah without the intent to fulfill it that it would be better had he never been born. Torah must lead to action. **If this kollel isn't producing proper dei'os and middos, then it's missing the point.**"

What animated Rav Matisyahu most during those talks was the topic of driving habits. It pained him deeply when people who identify as *bnei Torah* ignored traffic laws, driving recklessly or aggressively. To him, such conduct was both a breach of the proper *golus* demeanor and a contradiction to the *middos tovos* that *bnei Torah* are supposed to embody. In his view, this was no small matter.

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



Grape Juice from Concentrate

As we find ourselves in the midst of the “wine season,” getting ready for Pesach, it would be appropriate to discuss the *halachic* status of grape juice made from concentrate, a topic that is relevant to all. Is grape juice made from concentrate *halachically* suitable for *Kiddush* every *Shabbos*, and specifically for drinking the four *kosos*?

You definitely won't need to “concentrate” too much for this topic, so just sit back and enjoy the discussion.

REASONS NOT TO USE CONCENTRATE

There is an extensive discussion amongst the *poskim* whether or not grape juice made from concentrate can be used. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Minchas Shlomo* 1:4) allowed it. Here are some of the reasons he gives:

In general, the *brocha* on wine and grape juice is *borei pri hagafen*, and they can both be used for *Kiddush* and other religious functions that require the use of wine. This is spelled out in the Gemara (*Bava Basra* 97b), “a person can take freshly squeezed grapes – i.e., grape juice – and recite on it *Kiddush*.”

But there is an obvious question: *Borei pri hagafen* is a special *brocha* that *Chazal* instituted for wine due to its unique qualities. One of the main qualities of wine is that it is an intoxicating drink. If so, how can that extend to grape juice, which is not intoxicating? The basic explanation given is that juice squeezed from grapes has the ability to ferment and become wine. It therefore already gets this special status of wine, and *borei pri hagafen* can be recited, and it can be used for *Kiddush*.

However, when grape juice is taken and made into a concentrate, it can no longer ferment and become wine. In addition, in general, wine can usually be diluted, giving the water added to the initial wine the status of the wine. However, in the concentrated version, any water added might not attain the wine status, making it just a flavored grape drink. That being the case, Rav Shlomo Zalman maintains that this juice loses this special status of wine, and the *brocha*

should no longer be *borei pri hagafen*, nor should it be usable for *Kiddush*.

REASONS TO ALLOW USE OF CONCENTRATE

Other *poskim* suggest that this process does not affect the juice's elite wine status, and the *brocha* is still *borei pri hagafen*, and it can still be suitable for *Kiddush* and the four *kosos*.

One of the issues mentioned was that in order for grape juice to be considered “wine,” it must retain its ability to ferment. But if that is true, perhaps any grape juice that was cooked or even grape juice that was pasteurized might have a similar concern because that process may also impinge on its ability to ferment.

This definitely has a great bearing on much of the grape juice industry, since much of the grape juice sold is cooked to make it *mevushal*. In addition, the pasteurization procedure done on all wines and juices may be considered *halachically* equal to cooking the wine. Yet it is clear that wine that was cooked does retain its elite “wine” status. This ruling can be found in *Shulchan Aruch* (*O”C* 202:11).

This would lead us to suggest that even after the juice is cooked, it may still be possible for the fermenting process to take place (such as by adding external yeast to facilitate the fermenting); thus its wine status will not be affected.

Another possible explanation can be that grape juice will always retain its elite status, regardless of its fermenting ability being hindered. The only time it would be necessary to have the fermenting capability would be when it is needed for use on the *Mizbeiach*, where the Torah clearly requires wine that is intoxicating (*haseich nesech sheichar lashem* – *Bamidbar* 28:7). This is just one of the arguments given to sanction the use of grape juice made from concentrate.

IN SUMMARY

There is a major question as to the status of grape juice that was reconstituted from concentrate. According to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, grape juice is not recommended for use for *Kiddush* and the four *kosos*. Others do allow it.

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

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אינם מבינים את ההלכה בשכלם, עליהם לקיימה. ואם בתחילה גיחכנו על תמימותם של בני פפויא, הרי שעתה

אנו מתבוננים בהם במבט של קנאה, ושואפים לקבל משהו מאותה אמונת חכמים שיקדה בלבבותיהם. מי יתן ומכה אף אנו לכך, הלוואי ונשכיל להאזין ברטט קודש ולקבל ללא פקפוק את הוראותיהם הברורות של גדולי דורנו שליט"א, במאבקים ציבוריים ובהוראות לכל יחיד ויחיד, באותה תמימות וללא סייג, בלי לחשוב שמא לא הובאו בפניהם כל הצדדים בענין, או אולי מישהו הציג בפניהם את הנתונים באופן שונה, ועל כן החליטו לא כפי מה שאנו חושבים שצריך להיות... תהיות וספיקות כאלו, באות מכח המחשבה שאנו חכמים ויודעים הכל, ואין לנו שום נגיעות, וכל ההשלכות הנובעות מצעד כזה או אחר שיעשה, נהירים לנו בבירור, ושיקול הדעת שלנו הוא הנכון והצודק. וממילא, אם גדולי הדור הורו אחרת ממה שאנו סבורים שהיה צריך לנהוג, אז כנראה יש כאן אצלם איזו תקלה כביכול, שצריכים לדעת מה היא, ולמעשה, בודאי הצדק הוא איתנו.

כדי לשרש ולעקור את התקלה הזו, קבעו לנו חז"ל בגמרא את המעשה הזה, כדי לצייר בפנינו דוגמא חיה, איך עלינו לציית למרותם של גדולי הדור, ללא עוררין. גם כאשר לפי הנראה לנו הם הורו לנו על שמאל שהוא ימין ועל ימין שהוא שמאל.

לכאורה, יכולה לעלות בליבנו המחשבה, כי ציות כזה לחכמי הדור יכול להיות רק נחלתם של התמימים והטפשים, עמי הארץ. אבל תלמיד חכם שיודע ללמוד דף גמרא היטב, ומבין את יסודות ההשקפה, לא יכול להגיע לציות כזה. אך לא כך הם פני הדברים, הציוו "ועשית ככל אשר יורוך", שעליו דרשו חז"ל "אפילו יאמרו לך על ימין שהוא שמאל ועל שמאל שהוא ימין", הוא ציווי המוטל על כל אחד ואחד מישראל, וחובתנו וזכותנו היא לקיימו כהלכתו בכל מצב ובכל זמן.

הבהרות, לא טענו טענות. כולם באו עם משאלה אחת ויחידה. שהרב יתן להם מהמים שלו, כדי שיוכלו לאפות מצות כדון. לא היה בכל פפויא מי שפקפק על זה, אף אחד לא שאל ולא תמה על כך, הם הבינו כי אם כך לימד אותם הרב, הלכה היא, ואף אם אינם מבינים את ההלכה בשכלם, עליהם לקיימה.

ואם בתחילה גיחכנו על תמימותם של בני פפויא, הרי שעתה אנו מתבוננים בהם במבט של קנאה, ושואפים לקבל משהו מאותה אמונת חכמים שיקדה בלבבותיהם. מי יתן ומכה אף אנו לכך, הלוואי ונשכיל להאזין ברטט קודש ולקבל ללא פקפוק את הוראותיהם הברורות של גדולי דורנו שליט"א, במאבקים ציבוריים ובהוראות לכל יחיד ויחיד, באותה תמימות וללא סייג, בלי לחשוב שמא לא הובאו בפניהם כל הצדדים בענין, או אולי מישהו הציג בפניהם את הנתונים באופן שונה, ועל כן החליטו לא כפי מה שאנו חושבים שצריך להיות... תהיות וספיקות כאלו, באות מכח המחשבה שאנו חכמים ויודעים הכל, ואין לנו שום נגיעות, וכל ההשלכות הנובעות מצעד כזה או אחר שיעשה, נהירים לנו בבירור, ושיקול הדעת שלנו הוא הנכון והצודק. וממילא, אם גדולי הדור הורו אחרת ממה שאנו סבורים שהיה צריך לנהוג, אז כנראה יש כאן אצלם איזו תקלה כביכול, שצריכים לדעת מה היא, ולמעשה, בודאי הצדק הוא איתנו.

כדי לשרש ולעקור את התקלה הזו, קבעו לנו חז"ל את המעשה הזה בגמרא, כדי לצייר בפנינו דוגמא חיה, איך עלינו לציית למרותם של גדולי הדור, ללא עוררין. גם כאשר לפי הנראה לנו הם הורו לנו על שמאל שהוא ימין ועל ימין שהוא שמאל.

לכאורה, יכולה לעלות בליבנו המחשבה, כי ציות כזה לחכמי הדור יכול להיות רק נחלתם של התמימים והטיפשים, עמי הארץ. אבל תלמיד חכם שיודע ללמוד דף גמרא היטב, ומבין את יסודות ההשקפה, לא יכול להגיע לציות כזה. אך לא כך הם פני הדברים, הציוו "ועשית ככל אשר יורוך", שעליו דרשו חז"ל "אפילו יאמרו לך על ימין שהוא שמאל ועל שמאל שהוא ימין", הוא ציווי המוטל על כל אחד ואחד מישראל, וחובתנו וזכותנו היא לקיימו כהלכתו בכל מצב ובכל זמן.

אמר רב יהודה, אשה לא תלוש אלא במים שלנו. דרשה רב מתנה בפפויא. למחר אייתו כולי עלמא חצבייהו אותו לגביה, ואמרו ליה הב לן מיא. אמר להו, אנא במיא דביתו אמרי.

ביאור הדברים הוא, רב מתנה דרש לבני פפויא את ההלכה שלימד רב יהודה, שיש ללוש מצות רק במים שלנו. אך תושבי המקום לא הבינו את כוונתו. הוא אמר שיש לאפות מצה רק ב"מים שלנו", בלשון הקודש, וכוונתו הייתה למושג הידוע בהל"מ, שהמים המשמשים לעשיית המצה צריך שתעבור עליהם לינת לילה, שישאבו אותם סמוך לשקיעה, אולם בני פפויא חשבו שכוונתו היא "מים שלנו" – שכוונתו שצריכים להשתמש דווקא במים שלו. ומשום כך, באו למחרת כל בני המקום אל רב מתנה, וכל אחד הביא עמו את החבית שלו, וכולם כאחד ביקשו ממנו, "הבא לנו מים", מתוך מחשבתם שיש צורך להשתמש דווקא במים שלו לעשיית המצות. והוצרך רב מתנה להסביר להם, שלא לכך נתכוון, אלא כוונתו היא שיש צורך בכך שהמים ילינו במשך הלילה, כדי שיהיו קרים ולא יחמיצו את העיסה.

הבתבוננת ראשונה במעשה זה, הדברים הדברים נראים נגוחים. מחשבתם של בני פפויא נראית מחשבה טפשית. אנו מנידים ראש ברחמנות על אותם אנשים תמימים, שהעלו על דעתם שיש צורך להשתמש דווקא במים של החכם שלימד אותם את הלכות עשיית המצה. כאשר אנו שבים ומתבוננים בכך, עולה מאליה תמיהה רבה. לשם מה סיפרו לנו חז"ל מעשה זה? האם באו ללמדנו כמה טיפשים היו בני פפויא? הרי ידוע שכל דבר שנקבע בגמרא יש בו תועלת לדורות, ולא הזכירו סיפורים בעלמא, סתם כך כדי להעלות חיוך על פניו של הלומד. אם כן, מה הוא המסר החבי בתוך סיפור זה שאותו הזכרנו, מה אנו צריכים ללמוד ממנו.

ביאור נפלא ביארו בזה רבותינו, והוא מובא בספרים מכמה מקורות. רשכבה"ג מרן שר התורה הגר"ח קניבסקי זצוק"ל, כתב ביאור זה בספרו "ארחות ישר" (ערך כבוד רבו ות"ח) ומציין שכך כתוב בשם מרן הגאון רבי ישראל מסלנט זיע"א, וכך היה מרן הגר"ח רגיל להזכיר ביאור זה בשם הגר"ר ישראל זצ"ל. לעומת זה, בשו"ת אוריין תליתאי (סי' נו) כותב ביאור זה בשם סבו הגדול רבינו יעקב מליסא, בעל התיבות משפט וחוות דעת. ובספר מעינה של תורה על הגדה של פסח, וכן בספרים נוספים, מובא ביאור זה בשם הגאון הקדוש מסוכטשוב, בעל ה"אבני חזר".

ההסבר המובא מפי רבותינו זצוק"ל הוא, שממעשה זה, ומההתנהגות של בני פפויא, אנו יכולים ללמוד מוסר השכל גדול. אמנם נכון, בני פפויא היו תמימים, ואף עמי הארץ, ומתוך כך הם פירשו את דברי הדרשן בצורה שגויה. אולם, הבה נתבונן, מה היה קורה אם רב מסויים, מורה צדק ומנהיג קהילה, היה אומר בדרשת שבת הגדול, ימים ספורים לפני חג הפסח, שיש להשתמש לאפיית המצות דווקא במים שלו. איזו סערה היתה פורצת לאחר מכן. תוך זמן קצר סימני שאלה רבים היו מרחפים באויר. איך ייתכן הדבר? מדוע המים של הרב טובים יותר ממים אחרים? מה עם המצות שאכלנו בשנים שעברו, וכי המצות ההם היו פסולות? מעולם לא שמענו הוראה כזו מהרבנים הקודמים, וגם אבותינו לא שמעו כך מרבנותיהם, איך ייתכן שרב זה מערער את המוסכמות שעליהם גדלנו עד היום, ואומר הלכות לא מובנות בהיגיון שהן נוגדות את המקובל בדינו? ואולי בכלל יש לו אינטרסים, אולי הוא רוצה להרוויח כסף ממכירת המים, ולשם כך הוא מציב את הדרשה החדשה והלא היגיונית הזו.

אך מה היתה תגובתם של בני פפויא? מה הם עשו לאחר ההלכה החדשה ששמעו מפיו של המרא דאתרא, רב הקהילה שלהם? "למחר אייתו כולי עלמא חצבייהו אותו לגביה, ואמרו ליה הב לן מיא".

כולי עלמא, ממש כולם, ללא עוררין. כאיש אחד הם התייצבו, כל אחד עם כדו או חביתו, הם לא ביקשו הבהרות, לא טענו טענות. כולם באו עם משאלה אחת ויחידה. שהרב יתן להם מהמים שלו, כדי שיוכלו לאפות מצות כדון. לא היה בכל פפויא מי שפקפק על זה, אף אחד לא שאל ולא תמה על כך, הם הבינו כי אם כך לימד אותם הרב, הלכה היא, ואף אם



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Gan HaTorah

ישבת הנורא OR שבת הגבור AND שבת הגדול

Why is this Shabbos called “*Shabbos Hagadol*”?

Why were the *Anshei K’neses Hagdolah* called as such?

The Gemara in *Yuma* answers because they returned words to *Shemoneh Esrei*, they returned the crown of glory to its place. מסכת יומא – 69 – “איה גבורתיו, איה נוראותיו” – Yirmiyah and Daniel wanted to take out the words “גבור” and “נורא” from *Shemoneh Esrei*, for they felt that, being that Klal Yisroel were in *golus*, and the Might and Awesomeness of Hakodosh Boruch Hu were not seen in the world, these words should be omitted for that time. The *Anshei K’neses Hagdolah* said that these words must not be omitted. Hakodosh Boruch Hu’s refraining from taking actions against His enemies, that is His Might and Awesomeness. The question on this is that they wanted to remove the words “גבור” and “נורא,” while the word “הגדול” was always there. Thus, **why call them the הגדולה אנשי כנסת הגדולה for returning the words גבור and נורא?**

Shabbos Kodesh brings *aliyah*, elevation, and *kedusha* to the entire world. However, it is not equal to all; rather, it is to each person on his level. There are people who on Shabbos do not even come close to others of the weekday. The more one prepares himself and makes himself holy during the week, the more he is elevated on Shabbos Kodesh.

By returning the words of “גבור” and “נורא,” it demonstrated גדולה רחמיו, the great *rachamim* of Hakodosh Baruch Hu. The Gemara says that the creation of the world is also referred to as “גדולה,” for the actual creation of the world looks like it is not Hakodosh Baruch Hu running the world, for He placed *teva*, nature, in the world. It is only through the *tzaddikim*, who separate the good from the bad in this world, and they make it known that what we see is nature. The Rambam says that Avrohom Avinu had a great desire to have a complete nation that would testify to the *malchus* of Hakodosh Baruch Hu, and Hakodosh Baruch Hu gave Avrohom a guarantee that he would be a great nation. Shabbos Kodesh was the first mitzvah that Klal Yisroel did as a גדולה, a great nation, all of them keeping Shabbos Kodesh. Thus, **this Shabbos is called, “שבת הגדול,” as Klal Yisroel became the great nation that recognized and accepted the *malchus* of Hakodosh Baruch Hu.**

Shabbos Kodesh is a special and holy day. It is a day that is exclusive to Hakodosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisroel. It is the day that demonstrates the bond between Hakodosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisroel. The *Anshei K’neses Hagdolah* were called “גדולה,” for the word connotes that which is great and has no boundaries. **The *Anshei K’neses Hagdolah* reinserted the words of “גבור” and “נורא,” for Hakodosh Baruch Hu has no boundaries at any time. He is always גדול!**

This Shabbos showed that there were no boundaries between Hakodosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisroel. The Shabbos when Klal Yisroel were going to leave Mitzrayim was the first Shabbos that Klal Yisroel observed as a nation. This was proof that Hakodosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisroel had and will always have a special bond, a bond that cannot be broken. **We call this Shabbos *Shabbos Hagadol*. It is the great Shabbos, for this was the beginning of the special relationship with Hakodosh Baruch Hu, a relationship without boundaries. It is a time for us to revel in the *kedusha* of Shabbos Kodesh and seek to come close to Hashem.**

The Punishment of A Sinner

The *Yalkut* says (*Yechezkel* 358) that *Chachma* (Wisdom) was asked what the punishment of a sinner should be, to which it answered, “Sinners are persecuted by evil.” Prophecy answered, “The soul of the sinner shall die.” The Torah said, “The sinner should bring a *korban*, and he will be forgiven.” Finally, Hashem said, “He shall do *teshuvah*, and he will be forgiven.”

The Zera Shimshon asks: Why did each one of these attributes pick these answers as the remedy for the sinner?

He explains as follows. *Chachma*’s response is because the Gemara says (*Yoma* 39a) that a sinner’s heart becomes blocked, and the Torah cannot reside there. The Mishnah in *Avos* says (3:8) that one who forgets something he learned (due to negligence) is as though he has forfeited his soul. Therefore, *Chachma*, the attribute associated with Torah knowledge, responded that the sinner who caused his heart to become unable to learn or remember his Torah is to suffer, for he should be treated as one who gave up his soul.

Prophecy answered, “The soul of the sinner shall die.” This is because the Mishnah says (*Sota* 9:15) that fear of Heaven leads to piety, which leads to *ruach hakodesh*, which in turn leads to the ability to revive the dead. If someone lacks the first step of fear of Heaven and sins and does not allow himself the possibility of reaching the levels of reviving the dead, he should be punished as such!

The Torah said, “The sinner should bring a *korban*, and he will be forgiven.” Regarding the sinner, it says (*Psikta D’Eicha* 2) if only they (the sinners) would have continued to learn Torah even as sinners, they would have eventually returned to Hashem through the light of the Torah. The point of the *korban* is to bring one to the awareness of Hashem. (Possibly based on the reasoning of the *Rishonim* who say that offering *korbanos* is to uproot the belief of the idolaters who worship animals. By slaughtering them, one shows that there is no power other than Hashem.) This is why the Torah’s response is that the sinner has to offer a *korban*.

Finally, Hashem said, “He shall do *teshuvah*, and he will be forgiven.” This is because Hashem only desires that all the souls be repaired, and therefore, He created the concept of *teshuvah* so that sinners can return easily.

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Safeguarding the Matzos

“And you shall safeguard the matzos.” (12:17)

The literal interpretation of the verse is that one should approach the preparation of the matzos with extreme caution, for the slightest delay could cause the dough to become *chametz*, leavened, thereby invalidating the matzos for use on Pesach. Rashi cites a Midrashic interpretation that states that by changing the vowels, the word “matzos” can be read as “mitzvos,” making the verse an injunction requiring us to perform all mitzvos with *zrizus*, alacrity. When a person has the opportunity to perform a mitzvah, he should not allow it to become “leavened.” Rather, he should perform it immediately.

The comparison that the Midrash draws between the preparation of matzos and the performance of mitzvos raises the following difficulty: If a person prepares the matzos without the necessary alacrity, he invalidates them. However, while not the preferred manner, procrastination in the performance of mitz-

vos does not invalidate them.

Additionally, the following Talmudic dictum requires explanation: “A person should always involve himself in Torah and mitzvos, even with improper motivation, for through their performance, he will come to do them with the proper motivation.” Why does the performance of a mitzvah with improper motivations have merit, while the performance of mitzvos with proper motivations but without alacrity is compared to valueless *chametz*?

If a woman sends her child to buy some groceries, he goes out of a sense of obligation to his mother. If, when he returns, his mother informs him that she forgot a certain item, the child will make another trip to the store, albeit reluctantly. If this scenario persists, each time the mother asks him to make another trip, the child’s reluctance will build until he gets to the point where he resents his mother having asked him to go in the first place. He may, in fact, even voice his resentment by speaking disrespectfully to his mother.

It would have been preferable for his mother not to have asked him to go altogether, for what began as an act of respect spiraled into

a flagrant display of disrespect.

However, if the mother offered her child a monetary incentive, the child would perform the task happily. The explanation for this is as follows: The longer a person performs a task with resistance, the greater his reluctance will be. He will reach a point of such great resentment that he will loathe performing this task. However, incentives would alleviate his reluctance, and he may even come to enjoy performing the task.

A person may have the correct intentions in the performance of a mitzvah, but if he performs it in a lax manner, he indicates that he is doing it with resistance. This resistance can grow to the point where he loathes the performance of the mitzvah. Therefore, Chazal refer to a mitzvah performed without alacrity as *chametz*. On the other hand, if a person performs a mitzvah enthusiastically, he may come to love the performance of that mitzvah even if that enthusiasm is generated by rewards or incentives. Therefore, Chazal encourage such behavior.

RABBI DON JARASHOW



What Three-Year-Olds Must Know

Every three-year-old knows it, at least to some extent. But what is it about these questions that makes them so central? What message are *morahs* really teaching our youngest children?

Rav Melech Biderman relates the following incident in his *Haggadah*. One year, on the first day of Pesach, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach approached a group of children in the Gra Shul and asked them if they had said the Four Questions at their *sefer* the night before. They excitedly told him they had.

“And what answer did you receive?” he asked.

“*Avadim hayinu*,” one of the children replied confidently.

Rav Shlomo Zalman smiled and gently asked, “But didn’t you ask the same questions last year and receive the same answer? And the year before that as well?”

As the children paused, unsure how to respond, Rav Shlomo Zalman recalled being a young boy himself, walking with his father to the *Kosel* on Pesach. Along the way, they met the Yerushalayimer Rav, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnen-

feld, who posed that exact same question to him. The young Shlomo Zalman had no answer, and he remembered bursting into tears, overwhelmed by the desire to understand why we repeat the same questions year after year when the answer never changes.

Perhaps the answer can be understood through the words of the *Ohev Yisrael*, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apta. He explains that although we are commanded to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* every day, the mitzvah of recounting the Exodus on the night of Pesach is fundamentally different. Throughout the year, we may say the words or hear the story, but they do not always penetrate our hearts.

On the night of the *sefer*, however, a special spiritual light is revealed. It is a time when the heart is open, and a father is given a unique ability to instill the foundations of true *emunah* into the souls of his children. The same words that may feel familiar or routine during the year can suddenly reach much deeper.

This is why the *sefer* is structured around repetition. The same questions are asked, and the same answers are given, because we are not the same people each year. As we grow, mature, and experience life, we gain new vessels to re-

ceive the message. Each Pesach, we are invited to internalize the story on a deeper level and to pass that depth on to the next generation.

The *Shlah Hakadosh* writes that each Yom Tov brings with it a unique light from above. That light renews us spiritually and allows us to reconnect with Hashem in a fresh way. Pesach is not simply a commemoration of past miracles, but a present opportunity for renewal and growth.

The power of *Mah Nishtanah* lies not in novelty, but in its constancy. The questions do not change, yet their meaning deepens year after year. They invite us to pause, to reflect, and to allow the light of Pesach to illuminate our lives.

Perhaps this is what we are teaching our children. These questions are not lines to memorize and recite. They are invitations to open our hearts and to engage with our *emunah* at every stage of life.

No matter how old we are or how familiar the *sefer* feels, it is never too late to ask again. This Pesach, let us remember that while the questions remain the same, the answers have the power to lift us to new spiritual heights. Pause. Reflect. Ask *Mah Nishtanah* once more. Who knows what new understanding it may reveal this year?



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The kehilla had the privilege of hearing Reb Shmuel speak in the shul for several years on Tishah B'Av, where his powerful words left a lasting impression on all in attendance.



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RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND



Baseless Love

Rav Avraham Yitzchok HaKohen Kook (1865-1935), the first chief rabbi of Eretz Yisrael in modern times, was an outstanding genius, but he was a controversial figure. Certain rabbinic personalities of the “old *yishuv*” took issue with many of his ideas and positions. Once, Rav Kook was speaking somewhere, and a zealot started yelling at him in the middle of his *drasha*. The outburst did not faze Rav Kook — he continued with his *drasha* — but it was certainly a *bi-zayon* (embarrassment) for this Torah giant.

Later that same year, Pesach time rolled around. Rav Kook distributed *maos chittim* [*kimcha d’Pischa*, i.e., charity funds for the Passover holiday] to those with financial needs for the upcoming holiday. He presented his *gabbai* [secretary] with a list of the poor people to whom the charity funds should be distributed. Lo and behold, this very zealot who had so inappropriately embarrassed the chief rabbi earlier that year was on the list to receive *maos chittim*.

The secretary told Rav Kook, “I refuse to give this person the money! How could you give such a person money after what he did to you?”

Rav Kook told his *gabbai*, “If you do not deliver the money to him, I will!” The chief rabbi explained his rationale for giving him the money: Chazal say that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam* (baseless hatred of one Jew for another). There is a famous maxim that if the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*, the only way it will be rebuilt is with *ahavas chinam* (baseless love of one Jew for another).

Rav Kook explained: *Ahavas chinam* means that you love the person for no reason, just like *sinas chinam* means that you hate the person for no reason. But Rav Kook analyzed it as follows: When one Jew loves another Jew for “no reason,” that is not really *ahavas chinam*, because there is a mitzvah of *vahavta l’reyacha ka’mocha* (love your fellow Jew like yourself). I need to love

every Jew according to Biblical law. Thus, the fact that I love another Jew cannot be called *ahavas chinam* — that is an *ahava* for which we are bound by oath from the time of Har Sinai! What then is *ahavas chinam*? It is when a person insults you and embarrasses you, and you have every justification in the world to put him on your ‘enemies’ list and to totally ignore him, and nevertheless, you show him love and compassion and give him money when he is in need. That is *ahavas chinam*.

Pesach is approaching. During Nissan, the Jews were redeemed, and in Nissan we are destined to be redeemed. This is the time to practice “*ahavas chinam*.” This is conjecture on my part, but perhaps this is why Rav Kook waited until before Pesach to give him money. He specifically wanted to do an act of *ahavas chinam*, for which we will merit the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, during the month in which we are destined to be redeemed.

RABBI YISRAEL REISMAN



Leaving Egypt Twice

When did we leave Mitzrayim? There are some places in the Torah that indicate leaving by day, and there are some places where it indicates leaving by night. This needs a *hesber*.

Rav Schwab in *Parshas Re'eh* (16:1) says an immensely important *yesod* in *Yetzias Mitzrayim* that is *nogea* to all of us. We have to stop a minute and appreciate that there was a physical exodus from Mitzrayim and there was a spiritual exodus from Mitzrayim.

Rav Schwab says that Klal Yisrael had two *Yetzios Mitzrayim*. There is one *yetziah* that is *Mi'Mitzrayim* and one *yetziah* that is *Mai'Eretz Mitzrayim*. *Mai'Eretz Mitzrayim* is the physical leaving of the Land of Mitzrayim. There is another *yetziah*, the *yetziah* of Mitzrayim, leaving the influence of Mitzrayim, stopping to be *meshubad* to the culture of Mitzrayim that was all around Klal Yisrael. After this *yetziah*, the Jews were a nation unto themselves.

At night, the Jews went out of Mitzrayim. They were no longer a part of the Land of Mitzrayim; they physically left the Land of Mitzrayim. But Klal Yisrael also separated itself, divorced itself from being part of Mitzrayim, and that happened by day.

Which is more important, leaving the Land of Mitzrayim or leaving Mitzrayim? It is true that we left the land of Mitzrayim, but that is not the main

thing. The main thing is that we made ourselves separate from the Egyptians.

And so, this is a *yesod gadol ad meod* about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. We don't celebrate leaving the land. What we celebrate is that we are not part of Mitzrayim, and this is a very basic idea.

When a Yid travels to Eretz Yisrael *biz'maneinu*, unfortunately, in many cases, they are only leaving Eretz America; they are leaving the land of America, and they are going to Eretz Yisrael. It's a trip. They are going from one place to another. So if it is a little uncomfortable to be there, if there is an inability to travel around to the degree you want to, alright, so they will go somewhere else. That is one thing.

But there is something else. There is a leaving of America. *Halevai*, we could leave America even while we are in America; this is not an easy thing to do. It is very hard to leave America behind. But you have to know, if you want Eretz Yisrael to be meaningful for you, it is not enough *Yetziah Mai'Eretz* America, you need a *yetziah* *Mi'America*. You must separate yourself from the land that you were in up until now and become part of something that is much, much more. You have to appreciate what Eretz Yisrael has to offer.

RABBI AVI GELLER

Like 70 years

When the Sages demoted their leader, Rabban Gamliel, they offered the premiership to Rabbi Elazar Ben Azarya, who was 18 years old at the time. Rabbi Elazar consulted his wife, who correctly predicted the reinstallation of Rabban Gamliel. While Rabbi Elazar was prepared to accept the position (even temporarily), she countered, "Your beard is black, while the Sages are gray. They will never respect your decisions!"

Rabbi Elazar reluctantly agreed, and he went to sleep intending to forgo the honor. In the morning, he found that his beard had turned gray. This was a heavenly sign that he should become the leader.

"I am like 70 years," proclaimed Rabbi Elazar. Although he was only 18, he resembled a person aged 70. (By adding the numerical value of the word Ben [52] to his age [18], it equals 70.)

Despite this sign from heaven, Rabbi Elazar could not convince the other Sages to accept his opinion concerning the last paragraph of the Shema. Since this section deals with the mitzvah of *tzitzit*, which applies only during the daytime, and also the mitzvah to remember the Exodus, which specifies "all the days of your lives," the opinion of the other Sages was to omit the third paragraph during the evening prayer.

Rabbi Elazar disagreed and was eventually aided by a young student, Ben Zoma, who explained the verse "All the days of your lives" to include the evenings as well.

The other Sages had a different interpretation. The prophet predicts that the miracles of the Messianic era will overshadow the miracles of the Exodus. If so, when the Messiah arrives, we should stop remembering the Exodus! Therefore, the verse stresses, "All the days of your lives" to include the days of the Messiah as well.

A chassidic interpretation: "All the days of your life, to bring the Messiah," means that the goal of our days is to achieve the final redemption!

RABBI RON JAWARY

All Who Are Hungry

"This is the bread of our affliction. All who are 'hungry' (physically), come and eat. All who 'need' (spiritually, emotionally), come and celebrate."

With these words, we begin the Passover *Hagaddah*. We take ourselves back to 1313 BCE and begin the transition from slavery to freedom.

One possible reason that the Rabbis started the *seder* this way is to teach us that through sharing with others, both on a spiri-

tual and physical level, we can change ourselves. A person who can't share his blessings, his time, or himself is really a slave to those things.

True freedom is to understand that the only meaningful choices we have in life are the ability to decide what to do with what the Almighty has given us. This could be why the Rabbis taught that if someone studies Torah and doesn't share it, he has missed the whole point. If someone only accumulates and cannot share, everything he owns

is the bread of his affliction. He becomes a slave to himself.

One of the lessons we learned in Egypt was how to be concerned with the plight of those around us. As we celebrate our freedom, we should take the time to ensure that all who "need" and all who are "hungry" are taken care of. It is our chance to begin our journey from slavery to freedom, giving us the opportunity to make meaningful choices in life, to be a conduit through which G-d's blessings can enter the world.

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Pre-Pesach Shiurim

יום ה' פרשת צו - Thursday, March 26

שליט"א R' Don Blumberg

Rosh Hakollel Koteil Yisroel V'Shimshon of the West Side

בענין החג

12:00
PM

יום א' י"א ניסן - Sunday, March 29

שליט"א R Matisyahu Yehuda Weldon

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יום ב' י"ב ניסן - Monday, March 30

שליט"א R' Shimon Schreiber

Rav Bais Michtav Sofer Binyamin

הידורים בסדר אפיית מצה

יום ג' י"ג ניסן - Tuesday, March 31

שליט"א Rabbi Moshe Jofen

Rosh Yeshiva Bais Yosef Nevardok of Monsey

בענין סיפור יציאת מצרים

12:15-1:00 PM
18 Main Beis Medrash

RABBI EFREM GOLDBERG



Every Last Crumb

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator. The circumference of the collider is 16,565 miles, and it contains thousands of magnets. It was built with the collaboration of over 10,000 scientists and hundreds of universities, as well as more than 100 countries, and it cost \$4.75 billion. In 2009, the collider overheated and shut down. Scientists were perplexed and investigated what went wrong. The problem was found at a compensating capacitor, one of the points where the main electricity supply enters the collider from above ground. Sitting there was a bird munching on a baguette. It turned out that a crumb had fallen into the collider, causing the overheating. Ten thousand scientists and \$5 billion couldn't stop the impact of one crumb.

The power and potency of a crumb are at the core of Pesach. The Talmud (*Pesachim* 29b) tells us that *chametz* in food is forbidden in the smallest quantities, and that, while in most cases with prohibited food, we apply the concept of "*bittul*," nullification of a small amount amidst a much larger amount, when it comes to *chametz*, one crumb is not nullified, even in a thousand parts.

The *Meor Einayim* (*Tzav*), Rav Menachem Nochum of Chernobyl, points out that the letters in the words "*chametz*" and "*matzah*" are almost exactly the same. The *mem* and *tzadi* are in both words. The only difference is that *chametz* has a *ches*, and *matzah* has a *hei*. The only difference between those two letters, a *hei*, ה, and a *ches*, ח, is a tiny little line, a speck of ink. That *mashehu* of a line seems so insignificant, so seemingly inconsequential, it is easy to dismiss. But the truth is that that *mashehu* is what makes all the difference between the words *chametz* and *matzah*.

Says the *Meor Einayim*, the *yetzer hara* works not by convincing us to violate a major boundary or commit an egregious mistake. It works perniciously by telling us that something is only a *mashehu*, it's tiny, insignificant, what difference does it make? What does it matter if you come a bit late to shul or *schmooze* a little during davening? Does Hashem really care if a *mashehu* of what you declare as a business expense isn't really? Is a *mashehu* of *lashon hara* really going to hurt anyone?

Slowly, those small things add up until a person doesn't recognize themselves anymore. On Pesach, *chametz* is *assur b'mashehu* to teach us how important everything, even what seems so small, truly is. One crumb of *yetzer hara* can corrupt an invaluable *neshamah*.

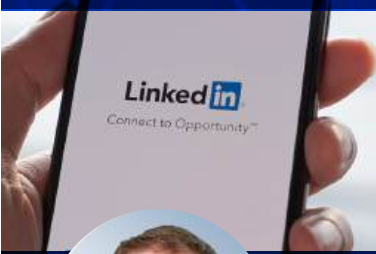
The *Be'er Heitev*, in his commentary on *Shulchan Aruch*, quotes the *Arizal*, who says that a person who is careful about a *mashehu*, a negligible amount of *chametz* on Pesach, is guaranteed not to make a mistake the whole year.

I don't read this statement as a metaphysical promise as much as a strategy for change. If over Pesach you can learn to be disciplined even about the "*mashehu*"s of life, if we can learn not to dismiss or minimize the small things, we will live our most disciplined selves.

Don't underestimate the impact of a crumb. One *mashehu*, a drop of ink, is the difference between a *hei* of *matzah* and a *ches* of *chametz*. Don't let the *yetzer hara* convince you not to care about the *mashehu*.

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JOKES

I think I want a job cleaning mirrors... it's just something I can see myself doing.

You do not need a parachute to jump off an airplane. You need a parachute to jump off an airplane twice.

I called my husband on his cell to warn him about this crazy driver on the news who's speeding down the highway in the wrong direction.
He replied: "I know! There are hundreds of them!"

A shul was raising money for a new building. One man proudly announced, "Rabbi, I would like to donate \$5,000 to the shul."
The rabbi said, "That's wonderful! When can we expect it?"
The man replied, "As soon as I have it."

A professor was known for being very forgetful. One day, his wife said, "On your way home, please buy a loaf of bread. And if they have eggs, get a dozen."
He came home with 12 loaves of bread. His wife stared at the bags and asked, "Why did you buy so much bread?"
The professor answered, "Because they had eggs."



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.

RABBI DR. AVRAHAM TWERSKI, Z"L



Passover, Freedom, and Shabbat HaGadol

The idea for my *Haggadah, From Bondage to Freedom*, came from a recovered drug addict. Attending his father's *seder*, he interrupted his father when the latter began reciting *Avadim Hayinu* (we were slaves unto Pharaoh). "Father," he said, "can you truthfully say that you, personally, were ever a slave? You may not be able to appreciate what it is to be free. I can say that I was a slave. When I was in my addiction, I had no freedom at all. I was under the tyranny of drugs. I did many things that I never thought myself capable of doing. I did them because I had no choice. I was a slave to drugs, and they were my master. Today, I can make choices. Today, I am free."

Drugs are not the only form of enslavement to which people are subject. People who smoke in spite of the knowledge that they are destroying themselves are slaves to nicotine. Some people who are dangerously overweight are slaves to food. Some people are driven mercilessly to achieve acclaim, and others to accumulate more wealth than they could ever consume. All of these drives are essentially tyrannical dictators that control a person.

The sacrifice of the sacred sheep (designated as such on *Shabbat HaGadol*) was a rejection of idolatry. It was a repudiation of the compulsivity of our mundane drives. It was our Declaration of Independence, not only from the rule of Pharaoh, but also from the ruthless tyranny of our internal drives. We would now be free to choose what is right and proper, even if it is in defiance of a bodily urge.

The festival of Passover is far more than an Independence Day celebration. The Torah writings say that the happenings of the first Passover set a precedent and that all subsequent Passovers have the magic of that momentous event.

A high level of spirituality is not easily achieved. It requires much effort in divesting oneself of character defects that are antagonistic to spirituality. Some of these may be deeply ingrained and may resist being eliminated.

The Israelites in Egypt were at the lowest possible level of spirituality. Yet in that sorry state, the Israelites were privileged to a Divine revelation, as the *Haggadah* says, "'With great awe' refers to the revelation of the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence)." Several days later, at the dividing of the Reed Sea, there was a Divine revelation so intense that the least of the Israelites had a prophetic vision greater than that of the prophet Ezekiel (*Rashi, Exodus 15:2*). For there to be so great a spiritual experience while not having emerged from so lowly a state was a unique phenomenon.

Passover is *zeman cheiruseinu*, which is not simply the time when we became free, but the time when we were freed, the time when G-d delivered us from enslavement. Just as one may be a slave to a cruel taskmaster, one may also be enslaved by the tyranny of one's bodily drives or by addictive habits. Breaking loose from these may be very difficult, but it is much easier on Passover. All that is necessary is a sincere desire to become spiritual, and the Divine blessing will enable one to achieve that desire.

Rabbi YY Jacobson שליט"א

שבת הגדול דרשה
Shabbos Hagadol Drasha

פרשת צו
י' ניסן March 28

5:45 PM
followed by Mincha

Tent ג

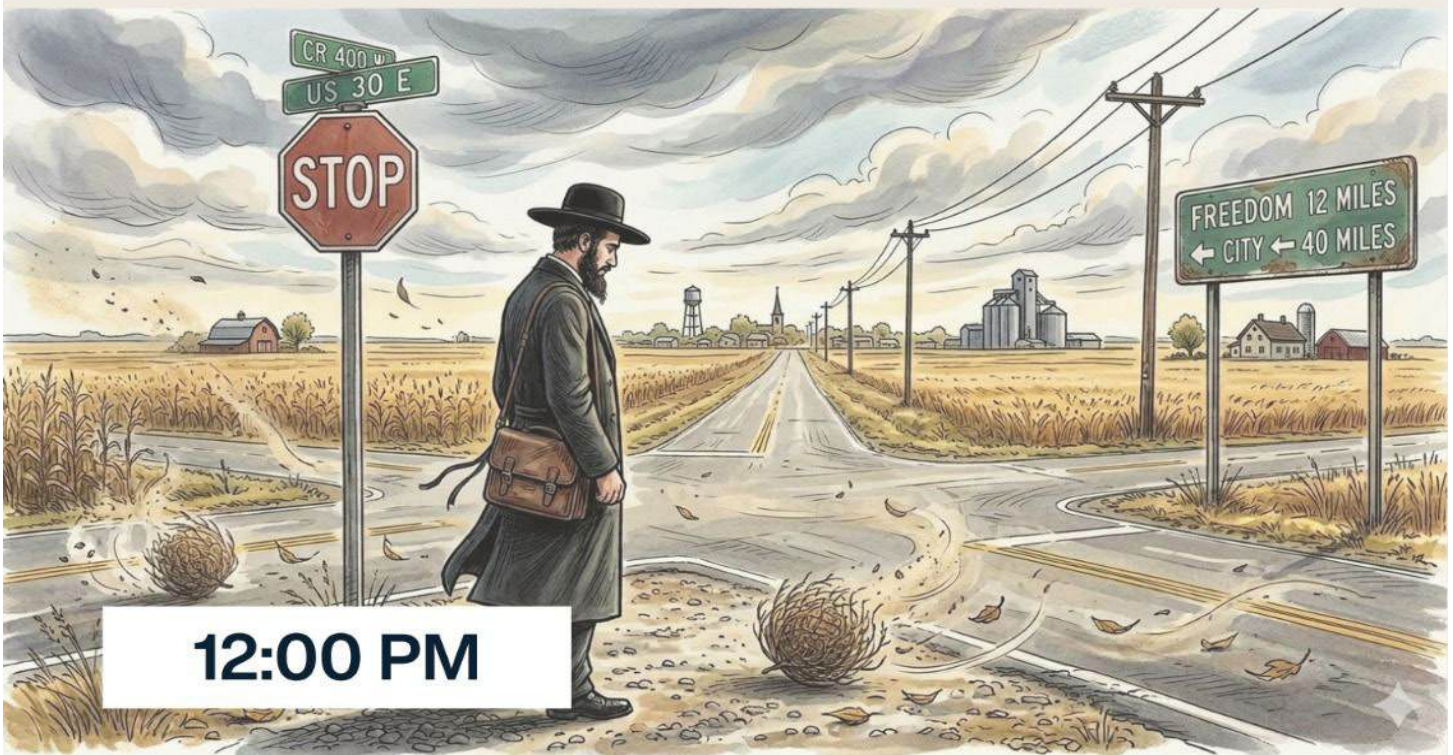
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Rav Matisyahu Yehuda שליט"א Weldon

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חירות אמיתי



12:00 PM

יום א' י"א ניסן - SUNDAY, MARCH 29

18 MAIN BAIS MEDRASH