

מאת מנ"ה ברוך הירשפלד שליט"א
רב דקלה אהבת ישראל, קליבלנד הייטס

and sustenance for all-year round (3).
Eating Matza. The Bnei Yissaschar (4) says that eating *Matza* on *Pesach* can bring a person good *parnassa*. *Hashem* judges the world for grain on *Pesach* (5) and when we do this *mitzvah* with the grain of the earth, it brings blessing into the grain.
Being Careful to Avoid Chametz on Pesach. In another place (6), the Bnei Yissaschar also writes that being extra careful not to eat any *chametz* on *Pesach* is a merit for *parnassa* for the entire year. Others (7) explain that the rising of the *chametz* represents haughtiness and the self-centeredness of a human being. On the other hand, *matzos* which are flat and rather thin, symbolize humility and the act of nullifying one's personal self - his *עצמות* - to do for *Hashem* and His people. *Anavah* - Humility, is a special merit for good *parnassa*, whereas *Gaavah* - Haughtiness brings poverty, as it is mentioned in a number of places (8).

The Seventh Day of Pesach. Many *seforim* say that the day of *Krias Yum Suf* is a very opportune day, a day when *Tefillah* and good davening can shower a person with *parnassa*. It was on this day, that *Bnei Yisroel* became exceedingly wealthy from the spoils of the sea, which they collected at the *Yum Suf* after the Egyptians drowned, which was even more than what took out with them from *Mitzrayim*.

NOTE: It is important to stress again that whenever we say that a certain *mitzvah* brings *parnassa*, it is not an absolute guarantee. Divine calculations can supersede - for the person's own good. Also, a person should not do a *mitzvah* simply for the reward. Rather, one should do it primarily to serve *Hashem*, knowing that as a side benefit, this reward might come his way.

הלכה למעשה

A SERIES IN HALACHA
LIVING A "TORAH" DAY

Laws and Customs that Merit a Good Parnassa (5)
Concepts Relating to Pesach. Here is a list of *Pesach* activities that can be sources of merit for a good *parnassa*.
Maos Chitim. The RMA in the beginning of *Hilchos Pesach* writes that one should donate to funds that help poor people have their needs for *Pesach* (קמחא ד'פיסחא). Doing so causes *Hashem* to help the donor have all his needs, as Rashi says in *Devorim* (טז-יא). This also applies to those who fulfill, literally, what it says in the *Hagaddah*, "כל דכפין ייתי ויכור" by inviting the needy and poor to his *Sedarim* and *Yom Tov* meals (1).
The Special Night. Long before *Bnei Yisroel* left *Mitzrayim*, this night of *Pesach* was a special night. *Chazal* write that *Yitzchok Avinu* wanted to give the *berachos* of the first-born to Esav on this very night in *Nisan*, because the שער הטל (Gates of Dew) that help *parnassa* are open on this night (2). Similarly the requests for *parnassa* that are said on *Pesach* night in *bentching* - "ואל יחסר לע מון לעולם ועד ... ונא אל תצריכנו ... - can accomplish quite a bit when these Heavenly gates are open.
Leaving Mitzrayim Without food. The *Torah* (שמות יב-ל) praise *Bnei Yisroel* for leaving Egypt quickly, right when they were told to leave, even though they did not have enough time to prepare food that would be necessary for traveling into a desert. Their trust in *Hashem* that He would provide for them, which of course occurred with the falling of the *Mann*, is one of the main points of *Bitachon* that we learn from on the *Seder* night. This *Bitachon*, this amazing faith on the night of *Pesach*, a belief that *Hashem* takes care of our needs and *parnassa*, is what also brings down *parnassa*

הוא היה אומר ...

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev ZT"L (Kedushas Levi) would say:

"Before *Pesach*, holy *yidden* work with great diligence to prepare their homes for the upcoming holiday. They shlep their heavy furniture aside to allow them to scrub and clean in every corner, they wash and rinse every utensil and every article of clothing until it is perfectly clean. In this merit, I offer to the *Aibershter*, the following prayer:
May it be Your will, that these celestial angels that are created through **קשר"ק** (scrubbing - קירצוף, washing - שטיפה, rinsing - רחיצה, shall rise up before Your heavenly throne and advocate good merit on our behalf."

R' Menachem Mendel of Vorka ZT"L would say:

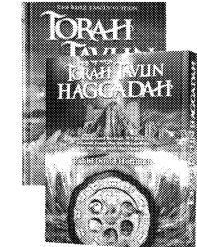
"What is a *Chasid*? A *Chasid* is a person who knows how to fast (צום) while he is eating; who can remain in solitude (התבודדות) while in the presence of others; who can perform in snow as if rolling oneself in snow as if lying comfortably in his bed! That is a true *Chasid*!"

A Wise Man would say:

"Time is the most valuable coin in your life. You and you alone will determine how that coin will be spent. Be careful that you do not let other people spend it for you."

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זמן קריאת שמע/מ"א - 9:00
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סוף זמן תפילה / הגר"א - 10:43
שקיעת החמה ליום השבת - 7:37
מוצש"ק צאצ"כ/ מעריב - 8:27
צאצ"כ/לשית רבינו תם-8:49

* פלג המנחה - 6:14

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Shabbos Parshas Achrei Mos - Shabbos HaGadol - Chag HaPesach
י"ב, ט"ו-י"ח ניסן תשע"א - April 16, 19-22, 2011

מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט"א
מגיד מישורים בק"ק בית שמש

מאוצרותיו של המגיד

לקחי חיים ודברי התעוררות
נסדרו עפי' פרשיות השבוע

ושמרתם את חקותי ואת משפטי, אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם וגו' (יה-ה)
בעניין חשיבותו הנצחית של קיום המצוות - שייך לשבת הגדול

ועל פי דבריו יש לפרש את תוספת מילת "האדם", שכוונת הכתוב לומר: אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם, והיינו, שע"י קיום כל מצוות ה', יחיו כל איברי וגידיו נפש האדם. (וע' בספרי הח"ח הנ"ל, ובפס"א אחרי מות תרכ"ז-ה' והנה כתיב אשר וכו', ותרט"א-ו' וכתבי אשר יעשה וכו').

והנה, אל יטעה האדם לחשוב שאם תחסר לו מצוה כלשהי, הרי שלעתיד תחסר לו חיות רק מאותו אבר שכנגד אותה מצוה, אלא פגם זה גורם לחסרון בחיות של כל אבריו, וכמו שכתב האוה"ח הק' על הפסוק 'כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוך היום תשמרון לעשות וגו' (דברים ח' א'), שמיישב את קושיית המפרשים, "דהוי ליה למכתב 'כל המצוות', לא 'כל המצוה', שעל מצוה אחת לא יתכן לומר 'כל'. וכתב ז"ל ולפי פשוטו היינו צריכין לפרש, כל מצוה ומצוה שנצטוו, וזה לא יתכן, דהוי ליה למכתב 'כל מצוה' בלא ה"א, ד'המצוה' בה"א משמע מצוה מיוחדת, ולא דקאי על כל מצוה ומצוה. ואין לומר דלכך כתב 'המצוה', דקאי על כל התורה כולה שנקראת 'המצוה', מפני שכולה מצוות השם יתברך, ולפיכך תמצא שנאמר 'ושמרת את המצוה וגו' (דברים ז' י"א), והיינו דקרא לכל התורה כולה בלשון 'מצוה' יחידית, וכך הוא לפי הפשט. מכל מקום לא שייך לומר 'כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוך היום', דלא נצטוו באותו יום בכל התורה, וא"כ צריך להבין כוונת 'כל המצוה'."

ורש"י מסביר בשם המדרש אגדה, "אם התחלת במצוה, גמור אותה", והיינו שבא ללמד שעל האדם המתחיל במצוה להשתדל לגומרה.

אבל האוה"ח הק' מיישב, "אכן הן האיש משה השכיל בלבבות בני אדם, כי רוח אחד יתעם כקטן כגדול, והוא סולם להמעט בעבודת ה' ולצאת מדרך החיים, והוא כי בעשות האדם ממצות ה', ב' או ג' מאשר תבואנה, ומה גם אם יחזיקו באחת מכל מצות ה' בתמידות ובזריזות, יוולד בהם הולדה רעה להתעצל בשאר המצוות הבאים לידם... ומה מקור פשה נגע זה, ובפרט בלב ההולכים בתורת ה', להבאות המצוות הקלות, בראותם שהם לומדי תורה ומקיימים רוב המצוות וכו'.

ואשר לזה בא נביא ה' בתוכחותיו, ואמר 'כל המצוה' יחס לכללות התורה למצוה אחת, והיינו כמו שמבאר בהמשך דבריו, 'למען תחזין וגו', וכוונתו על דרך אומרים ז"ל (זוה"ק ח"א קע), כי באדם יש רמ"ח אברים ושש"ה גידים, וכנגדם בא דבר ה' לשמור שש"ה מצות לא תעשה ורמ"ח מצות עשה, והנה ישער האדם, בבוא על אבר או גיד אחד איזה מחוש

או מכאוב ויצעק לבו באוי ואבוי ממכאוב, האם יקבל מענה לצעקתו, באמור לו הלא לך רמ"ח אברים ומהם רמ"ז שלמים, ואם חלק מרמ"ח אין ראוי לקבל על זה, כן הוא לגבי שמירת המצות, שהם מיוחדים כנגד האברים והגידים, וכשהאדם עובר ומבטל אחת מהנה, יפעיל הכאב בשכנגדו באברים ובגידים, שכשם שאין תשובת בריאות רמ"ז מועלת להעביר הרגש כאב האבר תשלוּם רמ"ח, כמו כן לא ישלימו רמ"ז מצות עשה לחסרון האחד תשלוּם רמ"ח, וכמו כן לא ישלים שמירת שס"ד מצות לא תעשה לביטול אחד תשלוּם שס"ה וכו', שהרי גם מצוות התורה לאחת יחשבו, והגם שהם רבים במניין, יסוד אחד ובנין אחד להם וכו'". והיינו, מחדש לנו האור החיים הקדוש, שמכיון

ואף אתה אמר לו כהלכות הפסח: אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן (הגדה של פסח)

הקשר המיוחד בין יחץ לאפיקומן – מאת הרב מרדכי יוסף פרידלנד שליט"א, פתח תקוה

"אפיקומן", והוא אפיקו את מן - כלומר הוציאו את המן. והיינו, שהקב"ה כידוע הוריד את המן במדבר כאשר נגמרו לבני ישראל את המצות שלקחו איתם כשיצאו ממצרים. הנה התורה מספרת שעם תחילת ליקוטי המן, ויאמרו איש אל אחיו מן הוא כי לא ידעו מה הוא" - ששאלו איש לרעהו "מאן הוא?" מה זה - או - איזה הוא? (רשב"ם) התורה מציינת לנו כי אחת מתכונות המן היתה כי כל האוכל ממנו טעם את טעם המאכל שברצונו היה לטעום, ויש להניח שבנ"י בהכירם את לחם העוני - אותו אכלו במצרים - ציפו לטעום טעם המצות, הלחם עוני, אלא שבמציאות טעמו היה שונה, וע"כ שאלו איש לאחיו מאן הוא? איזה טעם זה? ומסבירה לנו התורה כי טעמו היה כצפיחית בדבש, מרוח בדבש - רמז לארץ ישראל - ארץ זבת חלב ודבש. כמו מצת החרות שאכלו מיד כשיצאו ממצרים.

ולפי"ז אפשר להסביר את חציית המצה לב' חלקים שהם זכר לשני סוגי הלחם שבנ"י אכלו, וכן זמני אכילת חצאי המצות בליל הסדר ומשמעות השם "אפיקומן" ועיתוי אכילתו.

וכל המרבה לספר הרי זה משובח

וכל אדם לא יהיה באהל מועד בבאו לכפר בקדש (טז-יז)

When the *Kohen Gadol* would enter the *Kodesh Hakadoshim* on *Yom Kippur*, his entire being was in a state of extreme ritual purity. Of paramount importance, of course, were the thoughts in his mind. How crucial it was for him to properly perform his *avodah* with the purest of intentions, without ulterior motives or boastful feelings of haughtiness that he was chosen for this special task.

On the *posuk*: “*And no man shall be in the Tent of Assembly (אהל מועד) when he (the high priest) goes into the holy of holies,*” **R’ Moshe Chaim Ephraim ZT”L of Sedlikov (Degel Machaneh Ephraim)** understands a new meaning: The High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) should imagine that no other person exists - there is no one else in the world - so as not to be concerned with impressing others with his sacred mission!

Very often, when we are trying to impress other people or become overly concerned about their opinion, in reality they are not even thinking about us, or worse, they’re not even interested! **R’ Yissochar Frand Shlit’a** points out that

doing his job! If so, why did *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* kill the Angel of Death? Was he not merely defending justice!”

R’ Eizel put his arm on the resentful man and concluded, “The answer is that we send a message to the Angel of Death: Do us all a favor. Don’t go out looking to do justice! Just stay out of our lives!”

משל למא הדבר דומה

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים כל דיכפן ייתי ויכול כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח (הגדה של פסח)

משל: One of the richest men in Turkey was a religious Jew named Abu Hayim (father of Chaim). His one and only son Chaim was his pride and joy and he lavished his entire estate and everything he owned on this one child. Chaim, to his credit, was a good-hearted lad, who often used the money his father gave him to assist others. His father, Abu Hayim, was nothing like his son. He was a miser of the highest degree. Not one single penny of his vast wealth was given to charity and even the beggars and collectors who would go from house to house didn’t bother; there was no reason to even attempt to get money out of the rich man.

One beggar, though, came up with a plan. On the night of *Pesach*, he made his way to the front door of Abu Hayim’s mansion. He listened and waited.

The family was sprawled out on magnificent cushions, their *Seder* table bedecked in the finest tableware, cutlery and silver goblets. Each member sat in his or her place - to say they looked like princes and princesses would not be a stretch of the imagination; an air of royalty was certainly in the air.

“*Ha Lachma Anya* - this is the poor man’s bread,” called out Abu Hayim, as he began to recite the *Hagaddah*. At that exact moment, the beggar began knocking on the door - after

יודעים את התורה וכו' (הגדה של פסח)

משל: Years ago, the Russian authorities prohibited Jews from entering the city of Moscow without a special permit. A Talmudic scholar from Odessa, applied and was finally granted permission to visit Moscow during the *Pesach* holiday. He boarded the train and found an empty seat.

At the next stop, a young man got on and sat next to him. The scholar looked at the young man and he thought: This fellow doesn’t look like a peasant, so if he is no peasant he probably comes from this district. If he comes from this district, then he must be Jewish because this is, after all, a Jewish district. But on the other hand, since he is a Jew, where could he be going? I’m the only Jew in our district who has permission to travel to Moscow.

Ahh, wait! Just outside of Moscow is a village called Samvet, and Jews don’t need permission to go there. But why would he travel to Samvet? He is surely going to visit one of the two Jewish families there; the Bernsteins or the Steinbergs. Wait! The Bernsteins are not for him, so a nice looking fellow like this must be visiting the Steinbergs.

But why is he going to the Steinbergs in Samvet? The

all, he was poor man and they were talking about his bread!

“*Kol Dichfin Yataiy V’Yaichol* - whoever is hungry come and eat,” Abu Hayim said. The knocking became louder, more incessant, and this time good-natured Chaim stood up and began walking to the door to let the beggar in.

“Sit down! Where do you think you’re going?” asked Abu Hayim, as he watched his son stop in his tracks.

“Why, father, I was going to let the poor man in. You just said whoever is hungry should come inside and eat with us.”

Abu Hayim calmed down a bit and responded, “This is the result of youthful impetuosity. Had you waited a few more minutes, you would have heard me say, ‘*Avadim Hayinu L’Pharaoh B’Mitzrayim*’ - we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. And it is from Pharaoh himself, that I learned how to deceive with my words. You see, Chaim, it was Pharaoh who said, ‘I will send the Jews out’ early on but he never did; so, too, I invited the poor to eat with me ... but I never will!” **גמשל**: The **Rambam** writes (הל' י"ט ר-יח): “*On Yom Tov, one who locks his doors and eats his fill without giving to the poor and hungry, is not fulfilling* *joy of the holiday* *(joy of his stomach)!*” Don’t be like Abu Hayim - and definitely don’t act like Pharaoh!

ואפילו כלנו חכמים כלנו נבונים כלנו

Steinbergs only have two daughters; why, he must be their son-in-law. Okay, but which daughter did he marry? Sarah Steinberg married a nice lawyer from Budapest, and Esther married a grocer from Zhitomer, so it must be Sarah’s husband. His name is Alexander Cohen, if I’m not mistaken.

If he came from Budapest, though, with all the anti-semitism they have there, he must have changed his name. The Hungarian equivalent of Cohen is Kovacs. But since they allowed him to change his name, he must have special status to change it. What could it be? Most likely a doctorate from the University. Nothing less would do.

At this point, the scholar turned to the young man and said, “Excuse me, Dr. Kovacs. Can you please open the window?”

“Sure,” answered the startled passenger. “But how is it that you know my name?”

“Ahhh,” replied the Talmudic scholar, “It was obvious.”

גמשל: At the *Seder*, each and every one of us is clever, wise and sagacious. We tell over the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* to our children and we look intelligent and smart. But some of us are just smarter than others!

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

והתודה עליו את עונות בני ישראל ... ושלח ביד איש עתי המדברה וגו' (שז-כא)

One of the great visionaries of the previous generation, was the **Lubliner Rav, R' Meir Shapiro ZT"l**, who conceived of the idea of building a grand *yeshivah* that was befitting the stature of a student who filled his days learning the holy *Torah*. Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin brought a new conception, a new image, into the world of the *yeshivah*, the world of *Torah* study. No more shall the *Torah* be debased or made to reside in abject poverty.

Inevitably, R' Meir experienced the fate of every creative human being with the gift and the initiative to set a visionary project in motion. The whole Jewish world seemed to be filled with deep interest and warm encouragement for the planned *yeshivah*, but when it came to the practical, realistic aspects, by and large people kept their distance and proffered no help. There was only one thing for him to do: to employ the age-old Jewish tactic of asking for funds - appealing for help. He would cry out to awaken the Jewish conscience and arouse Jewish awareness.

His travels on behalf of the proposed *yeshivah* brought him far from his hometown - to the shores of the United States. At first, it took some time for the American Jewish public to accept this rabbi from a backroads town in Poland. But when they eventually did, American Jewry embraced him wholeheartedly, both financially and with untold amounts of respect and admiration. His days were filled with speeches - it was reported that during his stay in America, R' Meir spoke 242 times - and Jews from all walks of life came to listen to his words, to gain from his advice and drink in his wisdom.

It happened once that a group of visitors came to R' Meir's lodging. Among them, was a correspondent from an American Jewish newspaper. Not an overly religious man himself, this man was curious to hear what the Polish rabbi thought about organized Orthodox Jewry in America, the population whose label meant that they were the ones who observed *Torah* and *mitzvos* correctly. The journalist, however, was looking for a “scoop” and made a strong effort to dredge up all kinds of sin and wrongdoing that (as he saw it) Orthodox Jewry in America was guilty of perpetrating.

For R' Meir it was highly unpleasant to listen to this. What was the point of it? Was there anything he could do to improve matters in whole or even in part? America was a different world, about which he knew little. The **Chofetz Chaim ZT"l** would probably label the harangue as *lashon hara*, so he finally cut the newspaperman short.

“Can anyone tell me,” he asked loudly to the people in the room, “where a journalist or correspondent is mentioned in the *Torah*?” The answer he received was pure silence; no one there knew what to say. “Then I'll tell you,” he continued. “It is in connection with the 'שעיר לעזאזל' (the goat that was sent off into the wilderness on *Yom Kippur*, taking with it all the sins of the Jewish people. It was hurled down a precipice to bring atonement for the people.) The *Torah* states that the goat in question is led off 'ביד איש עתי' - by the hand of a time-appointed man, someone appointed for that action at that time. In fact,” said R' Meir with a smile, “the term, 'איש עתי' really refers to a journalist.”

The people around the table nodded wondrously for they had never heard such a thing. But then they began looking at each other wondering where this rabbi had come up with this unusual notion. As far as they were aware, there were no newspapers or journalists in the olden days! (Editors Note: The word “Journalist” contains the root “Jour” which means “Day” in French. A journalist, therefore, carries a sense of time, he brings the news of the day. Indeed, newspapers all around the world are often called The Times, The Journal, or the Daily.)

“Now,” continued the *Rav* as he took great pleasure in their puzzlement. “Why is it that a journalist is charged with carrying out this task on *Yom Kippur*? Of all the people to choose, why him? Why not a *kohen*?” R' Meir looked pensive in thought. “Before the goat was sent off to the mountainside, the *Torah* tells us that the *Kohen Gadol* was required to place his hands on the goat's head and confess the sins of the people. Of course, in *halacha* we learn that in every confession of wrongdoing, the sin must be specified (*Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah 1:1*). So, on *Yom Kippur*, the transgressions of the entire body of the Jewish people had to be listed in the confession over the goat before it was sent off. If any sin or wrongdoing was not enunciated in the confession, it would not be atoned.”

“Where could one find a person who would be able to list, for the benefit of the *Kohen Gadol*, all the sins of our people, omitting not even the slightest misdemeanor?” R' Meir turned and looked directly at the journalist. “As I understand the *Torah* now, they sent a correspondent -an 'איש עתי' -and probably a real crackerjack from an American newspaper!”

אדמי אבד אבי וידד מצרימה – אנוס על פי הדיבור (הגדה של פסח)

On *Erev Pesach*, April 19, 1943, Nazi SS auxiliary forces entered the Warsaw Ghetto planning to complete an Aktion of deportation and extermination of the remaining Jews in the ghetto. But the Jews were ready for them and began a resistance that lasted for ten days. The ghetto fighters (numbering some 400 to 1,000) were armed primarily with pistols

against the sinful and idol-worshiping Egyptians in order to disprove their theory that the sun and other celestial bodies ruled the universe besides *Hashem*, ח.ו. Therefore, during these *makkos*, *Hashem* concealed the sun and the constellations) during the rain of hailstones and the onslaught of the locust. And of course, there was no sun during חושך - the plague of darkness - while *makas bechoros* occurred in the middle of the night.

It is interesting to note that in *halacha*, when something occurs three time it creates a חזקה - a strong probability that it will occur again. For instance, if an ox gores three times, it becomes a מועד and the owner must pay a greater fee the fourth time it gores. Or if one finds three insects in a bag of flour, he must check the entire bag for infestation.

Therefore, the reason that the *makkos* are grouped in threes, is to demonstrate each aspect of proving *Hashem's* sovereignty three times so that it would make a lasting impression on the Jews and the Egyptians.

מגיד, רחצה, מוציא מצה (סימנים לליל הסדר)

What is the difference between “ורחץ” and “רחצה”? Both are expressions of washing that are spelled differently.

The Tunisian *Chacham, Rabbeinu Yosef Gez ZT"l* writes that our Sages tell us that it was in the merit of the

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

The night of *Pesach* is a holy night. It is a spiritual night. It is a time of immense closeness with the One Above. On this special night, the Jewish people are told to follow a special *seder* – an order – through which we can attain these great heights of holiness. There are fourteen steps in this epic journey, beginning with “*Kadesh*” and concluding with “*Nirtzah*”; steps that are, in fact, instructions for attaining these incredible levels in our *Avodas Hashem*.

Kadesh: Our purpose on this world is to make ourselves holy by separating ourselves from anything impure.

Urchatz: Wash away and remove any additional lingering impurities that may have stuck to us.

Karpas: *Chazal* tell us that *Karpas* alludes to the "פרך" - the heavy slave labor of the Jewish people in Egypt. We, too, must work very hard to separate ourselves from sin, negative *middos* and the *yetzer hara*. Thus, we do ...

Yachatz: We break the *yetzer hara* in order to destroy him.

Maggid: With the *yetzer hara* broken, we can now tell over the miracles that *Hashem* does for us and infuse ourselves with *yiras shamayim* (fear of Heaven).

Rachtza: Once again we wash ourselves – this time on a new level – with a blessing of thankfulness to *Hashem*!

righteous women (נשים צדיקניות) that *Bnei Yisroel* were redeemed from Egypt. It was their strength of character in the face of great hardship that encouraged and strengthened their husbands to withstand the torturous labor, the beatings and backbreaking work. They cared for their wounds, washed away the blood and bruises, and infused the men with courage and faith in the Almighty that their salvation was near. As a result of their actions and their *emunah*, *Hashem* sliced the original decree of slavery almost in half: from 400 years to 210 years, as the *gemara* (אשה טובה מתנה טובה לבעלה מספר ימים (יבמות סג): states: “*A good wife is a fine gift to her husband for it doubles the days of his life.*” By assisting their husbands and caring for them, they caused the actual amount of years in slavery to be recognized as double. Thus, in their merit, the exodus took place in half the time it normally would.

The word “רחצה” is a feminine term, and it is the part of the *Seder* that immediately precedes “מוציא מצה” - eating of the *matza*. The symbolism is quite clear and not coincidental. It was the righteous women amongst the Jewish people, the ones who washed away (רחצה) their husbands’ pain and anguish, who brought about the redemption and exodus (מוציא) in half the time, just like the unleavened bread (מצה) which didn’t have time to bake!

Motzei Matza: We eat the *matza* and thereby digest *Eemunah*. After all, that is what *matza* is!

Maror: Now comes a real test of our faith in *Hashem*. All the bitterness in our lives, all the hardship and negativity - how will we deal with it? There is a way

Korech: We bind our *emunah* around our bitter lot (the *matza* and *marror* sandwich) and this keeps us from slipping down the slope into a life of anger and bitterness! We focus on the positive, on *Hashem's* goodness, and we celebrate with

Shulchan Orech: We eat both a material and spiritual feast with our hearts full of happiness and celebration.

Tzafon: We now are ready to uncover the hidden goodness of *Hashem*. It is all there; we just have to find it!

Barech: We bless and thank *Hashem* for all of His kindness; both the revealed and the hidden.

Hallel: We praise the Almighty and express our love for our beloved Creator.

Nirtzah: After accomplishing the previous thirteen steps, we are at the stage where we are filled with *ratzon* and *simcha* to fulfill the *ratzon* of *Hashem* with every fiber of our being! And that’s what the *Seder* is all about!!!

The *gemara* (פסחים ה:) states as much: “*Even after searching the house for chametz, one must nullify his chametz.*” This is done by reciting the words that Chazal instituted: “כל חמירא וחמיעא דאיכא ברשותי”.

The **Brisker Rav, R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik ZT"l** once asked a student of his, "Can you tell me exactly what is the meaning of the words 'חמירה' and 'חמיעה' that we say in the nullification of *chametz*?"

The student replied that “*chamira*” generally means *chametz* and “*chamiya*” means leaven.

However, the Brisker Rav sharply disagreed with him. “In fact, it is the opposite,” he said. “*Targum Onkelos* translates *chametz* as חֲמֵצָה and leaven as חֲמִירָה.”

Then he added that this is a very serious mistake, and people must be aware of it, for if a person does not know the meaning of the words of the nullification formula, his nullification may not be effective! True, even thinking without speaking is sufficient to nullify *chametz*, and, after all, he certainly had the right thoughts - he knew he was nullifying those two things, leaven and *chametz*. However, now that he is actually doing the nullification verbally, the nullification works through the words he is saying, and therefore he must know what those words mean!

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא ... כנגד ארבעה בנים (הגדה של פסח)

The introduction to the part of the *Hagaddah* dealing with the four sons, begins with the statement "ברוך המקום" (lit. blessed is the Place). *Hashem* is referred to as "*Makom*" (Place). The traditional names of *Hashem* are not used here. We then praise *Hashem* for giving us the *Torah*. Why is this praise here and not at the beginning of the *Hagaddah* before we begin the *Seder*? Also, why is this praise the introduction to the Four Sons; the wise, the wicked, the simple and the one who doesn't know how to ask?

R' Simcha Bunim Berger Shlit'a quotes the **Maharal M'Prague ZT"l** who explains that the secret in the diversity of the four sons lies in the fact that people process information differently. Indeed there are four ways a person can process information: Some are innovative; when given information, they create and develop new ideas. In contrast, there are people who actually diminish information they receive due to a lack of retention. The third manner of processing information is one who will not diminish it, yet he cannot advance it. Finally, there is the one who can process and advance information - yet he chooses to do so negatively. These are the four sons.

The wise son advances or adds to what was taught in a positive and complimentary manner. The wicked son also adds to the knowledge, yet he does so destructively. The *Tam*, the simple son, doesn't advance nor diminish the

knowledge; rather, what he hears he knows, no more and no less. The last son, the one who does not know how to ask, does not know how to process any information let alone advance it and thereby he diminishes it.

In general, when the *Torah* presents a commandment it is done universally; the law applies to everyone. For instance the prohibition against stealing is universal, regardless of one's financial situation, thus it is presented to all equally. The same is true with all the commandments; people are expected to adapt to the laws of the *Torah* without regard to the diverse capacity of those receiving it. Yet, there is one exception to this rule, and that is "והגדת לבנך" - relating the story of *Pesach* to our children. It is only in this *mitzvah* that we find the *Torah* relates to the recipients in four varied ways. The *Torah* accommodates the diverse and different types of audiences. It is through this *mitzvah* that we recognize to what extent the *Torah* tries to accommodate every individual Jew on his own personal level.

The same law is written four different ways; for the wise, the wicked, the simple and the one who has a hard time processing. This is why we praise *Hashem* for giving us the *Torah*. It is also for this reason that we refer to *Hashem* as “*Makom*” which literally means place. We realize from this *mitzvah* that *Hashem* has a place for all of his children. He is the “*Makom*” of the Jewish people. This is the introduction to the four sons. *Hashem*, through His *Torah*, gives us a feeling of belonging. He is our “*Makom*.” And we are His.

רבי יהודה היה נותן בהם סימנים: דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב (שם)

We are all familiar with Rabbi Yehuda's grouping of the *makos* into three categories: דצ"ך עד"ש בא"ב. **R' Shlomo Ephraim Luntzitz ZT"l (Kli Yakar)** explains how these three groups represent the three different areas of the Almighty's mastery over nature - the very nature that Pharaoh, in his wickedness, denied.

The Egyptians worshiped the Nile River, thus, the first two plagues - **דם, צפרדע** (*blood, frogs*) - targeted their god. Since the Egyptians claimed that these plagues were caused by sorcery, the third *makka* - **כנים** (*lice*) - affected the sorcerers as well. This is the group known as **צדף**.

The next three *makkos* - ערוב, דבר, שחץ (*wild beasts, pestilence, boils*) - were aimed at attesting to Hashem's Divine providence and complete authority over the entire world. This was proven by the fact that ערוב and דבר did not affect the Jews in Goshen. And the uniqueness of the boils was that it first smote the sorcerers and then spread to the rest of the population, unlike the previous *makkos* that afflicted the entire Egyptian nation at once. This is עד"ש.

The last set of *makkos* - **ברד, ארבה, חושך, מכת בכורות** (*hail, grasshoppers, darkness, first-born*) - were administered

and revolvers; they had little ammunition, and relied on improvised explosive devices and incendiary bottles. German troops suffered losses as they were repeatedly ambushed by Jewish fighters, who threw Molotov cocktails and hand grenades at them from alleyways, sewers and windows. After initial setbacks, the Germans regrouped and systematically burned or blew up the ghetto buildings, block by block, rounding up or murdering anybody they could capture. By April 29, 1943, most of the fighters were killed or had escaped the ghetto and this marked the end of the organized resistance.

For the religious Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto hoping to celebrate the Festival of Freedom, they were in a quandary. With great difficulty and under the ever-vigilant watch of the SS police and auxiliary troops, they managed to bake a small amount of *matzos*, and they gathered whatever food they could to prepare for the *Seder* night. All this, while mindful that at any moment, the Nazis were coming to liquidate the ghetto.

One of the most respected educators of the Bais Yaakov movement, Rebbetzin Pesya Sharashevsky A”H, relates that on that fateful day, there was a knock at her door. **R’ Eliezer Gershon Friedenson ZT”L HY”D**, the eminent *Agudah* activist and leader/educator of Bais Yaakov was standing there with a nervous look on his face. “I’ve come to inform you,” he said quietly, “people are saying that tonight the Nazis are planning to liquidate the ghetto.....”

Rebbetzin Pesya was so overcome with panic that she immediately blurted out, “The Nazis are planning to liquidate the Jews!” Hysteria was threatening to overtake the women who had been cooking and preparing for the *Pesach Seder*.

Suddenly, R' Eliezer Gershon rose up to his full height and like a lioness protecting her cubs, his face took on a look of valiant courage. "How can you say such a thing? Liquidating the Jews? Destroying our people? Never! It will never happen! The Jewish people can never be destroyed - there will always be Jews left to carry on the word of *Hashem*!"

The Rebbetzin lowered her eyes in shame. She knew she had misspoke and wished she could take her words back. R' Eliezer Gershon felt her shame and realized that she had not meant what she said. Wishing to avoid embarrassing her any further, he quickly spoke up. "If it is alright with you, I would like to join you tonight for the *Pesach Seder*."

Of course the honor of having such a prominent person at their *Seder* was gratifying, and the girls of Bais Yaakov prepared an extra seat of honor in their underground bunker.

The Rebbetzin recalls that the *Seder* was as festive as could be imagined under such trying circumstances, but one thing stood out in her memory. During the recital of the *Hagaddah*, R' Eliezer Gershon suddenly cried out in anguish, “אָנוס על פי הדיבור - We Jews are hiding in bunkers, underground - we are אָנוסים - forcible prisoners!”

He began to weep in a manner that was so heartbreaking to watch and to hear. It was as if his heart could not handle the strain of seeing the Jewish people suffer under such bitter conditions and impending doom.

After a moment, he composed himself and said to her, “You know, I truly envy the Jews in *Eretz Yisroel* who are able to properly perform the mandate of ‘כל דצריך ייתי ויכול ... כל דיכפץ ייתי ויכול’ - ‘Whoever is hungry can come and eat (with us).... whoever is in need can come and partake of our Korbon Pesach.’” With that, he excused himself and walked out.

Two days later, on the first day of *Chol Hamoed*, R' Eliezer Gershon's house was razed to the ground. ה' ינקום דמיו.

ואתא הקדוש ברוך הוא ושחט למלאך המות חד גדיא חד גדיא (הגדה של פסח)

In the city of Slonim, there lived a grouchy old man who was always picking fights with other people. No matter where he went or to whom he spoke, he always seemed to get into an argument. People would avoid him like the plague and crossed the street when they saw him coming.

One day, as he was walking down the street, **R' Eizel Charif ZT"l** was accosted by this irritating man, who found fault in just about everything R' Eizel - and his associates - did, and let his feelings be known in no uncertain terms.

Finally, R' Eizel had had enough. "Sir, please tell me, why are you always looking for *machlokes* - for arguments and disagreements?" he asked him.

“G-d forbid!” replied the man self-righteously. “My intentions are purely *L’shem shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven. I feel it is my duty to see that justice is instituted and a wrong is righted!”

R' Eizel smiled at the man. "You know what you remind me of?" he asked. The man shook his head, unsure what the *Rav* was getting at. "Take a look at the words of '*Chad Gadya*' that we recite in the *Pesach Hagaddah*. We find that a perfectly innocent kid (goat) is eaten by a cat. Along comes a dog, who gobbles up the cat. The dog is innocent; he was justified in killing the cat because the cat had murdered an innocent goat. Then comes the stick which beats the dog; but the stick, too, is wrong, because the dog had done nothing wrong. If we follow this line of thought throughout the song, we see that the Angel of Death was also innocent. What did he do? He slaughtered the *shochet*, who was really just