

(1) רמ"א או"ח קצ"ד (2) הובא במשנה ברורה תעב"כא (3) לדעת הבית יוסף תע"ב (4) עיני פסקי הגמור אלישיב זצ"ל (5) הובא בבאור הלכה תע"ב (6) שם (7) רבינו דוד פסחים קט.

water finally split. Imagine, says **Rabbi Shlomo Price Shlit’a**, if Nachshon hadn’t taken the plunge. Imagine what would have happened if he had not had the faith to jump into the water, causing it to split allowing the nation to walk through on dry land. *Klal Yisroel* wouldn’t exist anymore! The nation would have died a gruesome death!

Look how one little jump changed the world.

This applies to each and every one of us. Our lives can change with one little jump. We must have the courage to make a decision - to learn a little more *Torah*, to perform a few more *mitzvos*, to be careful what we see, what we say and what we hear. We must take the plunge and become more vigilant in how we deal with others - *Bein Adam L’chaveiro* - how we can give a little more *Tzedaka*, pray on behalf of others.

We are here for a purpose; not to get caught up in the “*Chametz*” - the darkness. We have a *nesham*a that was sent down with a mission to save the world, to change the world. Why else would we be here? We need to have the courage to make that jump and to have the *Emunah* that we can do it. Indeed, **R’ Tzadok Hakohen ZT”L** writes that just like we have to believe in *Hashem*, we also have to believe in ourselves with the same level of *Emunah*.

A miserly host was entertaining a guest for a *Shabbos* meal. The guest helped himself to slice after slice of *challah*, dipping the delectable bread in his bowl of soup, his cup of wine, the salads on the table, before devouring each piece with great gusto. The host watched his guest with increasing annoyance until he could not stand it any longer.

Flabbergasted by his guest’s rude behavior, the host facetiously posed a question: “Can you explain something to me?” he asked his munching guest. “Why did *Hashem* need to perform the miracle of splitting the Red Sea; why didn’t He just provide the people with enough *challah*, and they would have dried out the sea by dipping their *challah* in it?”

Pausing to relish yet another bite of the delicious rolls, the guest carefully considered the question at hand before replying with all due seriousness: “*Challah is chametz*. Since it was still *Pesach*, the *challah* was forbidden!”

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

(הגדה של פסח)

Boruch Hashem, Pesach has arrived! Yes, all the hard work has paid off and now it is time to enjoy the fruits of our labor! And make sure to enjoy every minute of it - because it will likely “Pass-Over” very quickly! This is a special holiday with an emphasis on the children. We spend these eight days literally passing down our rich and beautiful heritage to future generations. Our children take center stage at the *Seder*, not because of what they say, but because of what they see and hear! All of *Hashem’s* children are welcome and each one can be reached. This is a concept that is so important that the *Baal Haggadah* actually puts the words in our mouths, teaching us what to say to each type of child when he or she asks a question.

The child that is most perplexing is definitely the “רשע”. The rebellious son sits by the *Seder* and asks questions about the Exodus out of scorn. So what do we do? We knock out his teeth! I don’t know about you but if I was that child, I would never ask another question about Judaism again and I would probably would never attend another *Seder* - or *seudah* - again. So what kind of advice is this?

Reb Yitzchok Guttman (my son!) told me a beautiful explanation that goes to the crux of how to reach out and touch the heart of another Jew. *Chazal* tells us that the word “הקהה” - which means to “knock out” - is a form of the word “מבהיק” - to emphasize or highlight something and cause it to stand out. Now, the word “רשע” is comprised of three letters. The outer two letters spell out

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל כפר בעיקר ואף אתה הקהה את שיניו (הגדה של פסח)

the word “evil.” The middle letter is “v” - which represents the Name of *Hashem* (v-ד-ט) The *Baal Haggadah* is teaching us how to handle a *rasha*; we must “ש” in his title, his G-d-liness and his connection to *Hashem*. Indeed, no matter how low a person, even a *rasha*, has sunk, there is still a spark of G-dliness hidden inside of him, albeit surrounded and covered by his “רע” - the evil and negative actions, the inappropriate dress, the foul language and crude behavior. But deep down, his insides are pure and holy.

The two “ש” that are found on the boxes of *Tefillin*, are different. One contains three lines and one contains four. This is to symbolize our roots. We, *Bnei Yisroel*, are all the children of the three fathers (אבות) and four mothers (אמהות) who gave us our genes which bring us close to *Hashem*.

Emphasize his “SHINS.” Look at where he is coming from and not where he is right now. He has the potential for greatness if you can look past his outer shell.

Every person’s potential for greatness lies in the ability to PASS-OVER another’s faults and mistakes. We all mess up from time to time. We must pass-over our own mistakes and move forward! Maybe this idea is the reason why we also “passed through” the Red Sea on the last day of *Pesach*. So that we can have “bookends” for both the first and last days.

May we be able to see the good in all of our children in all situations, so that we can truly be free to serve *Hashem* with love and joy. CHAG KOSHER V’SAMEACH!

טובה, מכל מקום יתכן שלאדם הגון השווה במחיצתם הוא הזיק גדול, וכעין שמואל בחז”ל (סנהדרין כג.) שנקי הדעת שבירושלים לא היו נכנסים לאכול בסעודה, אלא אם כן ידעו קודם מי מיסב עמם על השולחן, וזאת כדי שלא תהא להם קידרה עם אנשים דלא מעלו, ויהיה להם הזיק לנפשם ולנשמתם.

כי כוח החבר כמו שהוא מועיל לקרב להשי”ת, כך הוא להיפך אם אינו הגון הוא, ולכן המשיך הכתוב ואמר: ‘זאם ימעט הבית מהיות משה, והוא רמו לאדם שעדיין אין לו חבורה כראוי להתחזק בעבודת השי”ת, ומוטל עליו עדיין לתור אחר חברים נוספים, או ‘ולקח הוא ושכניו הקרוב אליו’ היינו שיראה להתחבר לאנשים כאלו שהם בחינת שכן קרוב, שיהיה חבריו קרובים לדיעותיו ולהשקפתו. כי רק אז יפיק מהם התועלת הרצויה, אך אם יהיו אלו אנשים הרחוקים מדעות ישרות, אז לא די שלא יפיק מהם מאומא, אלא עוד יטה עצמו לדעתם, ועלול להתדרדר מחמתם ח”ו.

ובדרך אפשר יש לומר שענין זה נרמז במאמר הכתוב (ויקרא יט, יח) ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה, שבאה התורה להורות לנו, שכל תכלית ‘אהבת חברים’ צריכה להיות למען נגיע להכרה כי ‘אני ה’, ונקיים את מצוות התורה כדת וכראוי. ולא ח”ו להיפך. יעזור השי”ת שנזכה להתאחד עם חבורה של יראים ושלמים, ונזכה על ידי זה להיות קשורים ודבוקים בהשי”ת ובתורתו, עד שנזכה שוב לאכול מן חובצי ומן הפסחים במהרה בימינו אמן.

**מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט”א
מגיד מישרים בק”ק בית שמש**

מאוצרותיו של המגיד

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והנה בכונת דברי הגמרא הנ”ל ‘דניכול מצה טפי לאורתא’, כתב בשו”ת ‘אבני נזר’ (או”ח תמ”ח אות ז), “בתשובות שאגת אריה סימן ק”ג, האריך להביא ראיה, לגבי מי שתקע כבר בראש השנה, שמתור לו לתקוע עוד אחד כך אף שלא לצורך, (כיון דחשיב מצוה מה שתוקע בשופר כל היום, וא”כ יש להתיד לעשות כן, ואף שיש בתקיעתו משום איסור ‘השמעת קול שיר’) וכו’. אך יש להביא ראיה (לכך), מהא דפרק ערבי פסחים ‘רבא הוה שתי חמרא כולי מעלי יומי דפסחא, כי היכי דניגרדיה לליביה דניכול מצה טפי לאורתא’, ואף **דיצאין בכזית אחד, והשיב מצוה מה שאוכל אחד כך**, והכי נמי חשיב מצוה אם תוקע כל היום, ועל כן הותרה התקיעה לשם זה, כמו נטילת לולב לאנשי ירושלים (וכדאיאת בגמרא [סוכה מ”א:] ‘תניא, רבי אלעזר בר צדוק אומר, כך היה מנהגן של אנשי ירושלים, אדם יוצא מביתו ולולבו בידו, והלך לבית הכנסת לולבו בידו, קורא קריאת שמע ומתפלל לולבו בידו וכו’, והלך לבקר חולים ולנחם לולבו בידו וכו’, והיינו, דחשיב מצוה מה שנטלים והלוב בידיהם כל היום, ולכן יש להתיד לעשות כן ביום טוב, ואף שיש בנטילתו משום איסור טלטול מוקצה), וזה ברור”.

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אותו חסיד, הנה לפניכם שהרבי תפס במחשבתו את כל הענין, אך ראו והביטו כמה באמת גדול כוחם של חברים.

ואם כבר בכוחם של חברים עסקינן, ראוי להוכיד מה שמואל בספח”ק והיה ידוע בחצרות הקודש, שחסידים ביניהם היו מברכים ומשפיעים ישועות זה לזה. והיו חסידים מספרים, מעשה בחסיד שנסע לקראת ראש השנה לשהות בצל קדשו של מרן **הרה”ק החוזה מלובלין זי”ע**, וכשבא לקבל ברכת שלום מה’חוזה, צויה עליו באין אומר ודברים, לשוב מיד לביתו, עוד קודם ראש השנה. כשבא לעירו וסיפר לחבריו מה שארע לו, הסבו יחד לשתיית ‘לחים’ וברכוהו שיזכה לאריכות ימים ושנים. ושם שוב פעמיז לרבו מלובלין, כשבא שוב לקבל את ברכת שלומו, קיבלו חרבי בסבר פנים יפות, והסבירו לו כי מעיקרא ראה עליו שימיו ספורים רחמנא לצילן, ולכן רצה שיארע הדבר בחברת רעיו ובני ביתו. אבל עתה אחרי שחבריו פעלו לו ישועה גדולה בברכתם, בוודאי יקבל אותו בסבר פנים יפות. ויש כאן מוסר גדול כמה גדול כוחם של חברים טובים!

אך גם זאת צריך לדעת כי על אף שדבר זה היא העצה להתחזק בימינו, מכל מקום מוטל על האדם ההפך להיות נמנה בין חברים מקשיבים, מקודם לבדוק אם אכן חבורה זו שהוא חפץ להימנות עמם היא אכן עבודה, ואם אלו הנמנים עליה אכן יסייעו בידו לעבודת השי”ת, או ח”ו להיפך, כי לפעמים אינשי דלא מעלו שבאים להיטפל עם בני חבורה, ואף שיתכן שלאילו הפחותים היא

לקחי חיים ודברי התעוררות

נסדרו עפ”י פרשיות השבוע

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יום ליבשה נהפכו מצולים שירה חדשה שבחו גאולים

אשירה לה' כי נאה נאה סוס ורוכבו רמה בים וגו' (שמות כו-א. שירת הים)

In the late eighteenth-century, the city of Nikolsburg, capital of Moravia (a province of Austria-Hungary), consisted of a large and influential Jewish community. For generation after generation, this city served as the seat of famous *Rabbanim*, including the **Mahara’l**, the **Tosfos Yom Tov**, as well as other outstanding and distinguished *Torah* scholars. Thus, when the need arose to choose a new chief rabbi for Nikolsburg, a rabbi who would simultaneously serve as the chief rabbi for all of Moravia, the community leaders naturally looked for an exceptionally brilliant and saintly man, a leading rabbinical figure and scholar of the generation. After weeks of intense deliberation, **R’ (Shmuel) Shmelka Horowitz ZT”L**, was offered the esteemed position and he accepted the invitation. He was welcomed to the city amidst much honor and fanfare, and the people of Nikolsburg prepared a royal reception with a banquet fit for a king.

In the midst of the gala reception, the *Tzaddik* excused himself for a moment, citing the need for a bit of privacy for a few minutes. The surprised hosts of the party were eager to assist the new *Rav* and directed him to a private salon. Once there, R’ Shmelke closeted himself inside the room, locked the door, and remained there for a short while.

One man was very curious to know what the new *Rav* was doing in the room, so he stood behind the door and listened carefully. What he heard was shocking. *“Shalom Aleichem, Rebbe!”* he clearly heard R’ Shmelka say to no one but himself. “Welcome to our city, esteemed *Rav* of Nikolsburg!” The man thought his hearing was mistaken but when R’ Shmelka repeated his words a second time, he understood that something was afoot.

After a few minutes, the door opened. When R’ Shmelka left the room, the man could not contain his curiosity and hurried over to the *Rav’s* side. “Forgive me,” he said, “but I could not help overhearing how the *Rav* was talking to himself, welcoming himself to the city. Please, *Rebbe* I do not understand.”

R’ Shmelka was silent for a few moments before he answered. “The *mishna* in *Pirkei Avos* states: **’הי כבוד חברך חביב** (ב-יג) When I saw the large crowd of people who had come to honor me,” he explained with a smile, “I was afraid I might become proud, a *Baal Ga’avah*. I, therefore, tried to afford myself the same honor that the people were showering upon me, and I realized just how utterly ridiculous these expressions of honor are for a man as unworthy as myself. Now, when the people greet me in this manner, I will already be accustomed to hearing such foolish praises and I will not grow haughty.”

R’ Shmelka smiled once more and concluded, “It is a good lesson for life. *‘The honor afforded you by your friend should be in your eyes like the honor you give yourself.*’ Just as you feel ridiculous when you honor yourself, in the same manner, you should feel that it is ridiculous for others to honor you.”

ויאמר ה' אל משה מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו (שמות יד-כו. קריאה לשביעי' של פסח)

The seventh day of *Pesach* is the day when *Hashem* split the *Yam Suf*, the Red Sea, and completed the second half of *Geulas Mitzrayim*, the glorious and miraculous Redemption from Egypt. The *posuk* tells us that at the *Yam*, when the situation became intense and the Jewish people were surrounded on all sides, *Moshe Rabbeinu* began praying on behalf of the people, and they began crying out to *Hashem* to rescue them from both the Egyptians who were in pursuit behind them, and the tumultuous sea that was looming up in front of them. In response to this, *Hashem* spoke to Moshe and said, “Why do you cry unto me? Tell the Nation to keep moving forward!”

The great **Chacham Rabbeinu Chayim ben Attar ZT”L**, wonders about this. To whom then should the Jewish people cry out to in a time of trouble and despair, if not to *Hashem*? In *Tehillim* (קית) it states: **’מן המיצר קראתי י-ה**” - *“From the straits did I call upon Hashem.*” What else were they supposed to do? Move forward and fall into the sea?

The *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh* answers with an important lesson that teaches us how to properly serve *Hashem*. *Chazal* tell us that at the time of *Krias Yam Suf*, there was a tremendous קיטרוג (prosecution) from the *Middas Hadin* - Attribute of Strict Judgment. “These people (Egyptians) worship idols and these people (Jews) worship idols as well,” was the refrain. “The Jews are no different than the Egyptians so why should they be saved?”

Hakadosh Boruch Hu responded, “Indeed, it is my desire to rescue the Jewish people but the *Middas Hachessed* - Attribute of Mercy, is not strong enough to save them due to their sins. The only way for them to be rescued is by strengthening their *Emunah*, their faith in My salvation, which will allow the *Middas Hachessed* to overpower the *Din*. The Nation must believe with all their heart and soul that I will rescue them by jumping into the water, trusting that I will perform a miracle for them. I will not split it for them - they will create the miracle and it will split on account of their faith.”

Nachshon ben Avinadav, from the tribe of Yehuda, jumped into the water until it reached his throat - and then the

משובח; כיון שגם בה קיים המצווה בצורתה הנכונה).

אלא דיקשה על דברי השדי חמד; ממה שכתבו התוספות במסכת קידושין (לח. ד”ה אקרוב וכו’), אקרוב עומר (כדי להתיר את התבואה מאיסור חרש) והדר אכול-בירושלמי מקשה, למה לא אכלו מצה מחדש. ויבוא עשה ד’בערב תאכלו מצות’ וידחה לא תעשה ד’חדש’ וכו’, אי נמי יש לומר, ה**גידה כוית ראשון אטו כוית שני’** (שאין בו משום מצות ‘בערב תאכלו מצות’), ולפי דבריו, הלא גם כוית שני הוי בכלל המצוות, וא”כ גם לגביו נימא ד’עשה דוחה לא תעשה”.

וכל המרבה לספר

the world could never be removed. Good and bad had been set apart permanently, and from that point on, anyone who wished - and continues to wish till this very day - to choose “*Tov*” can do so without restraint.

It is clear, therefore, that the “*cheirus*” of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is indeed an everlasting one, and our daily *avodas Hashem* is rooted in that penultimate event, the exodus from Egypt. *B’ezeras Hashem*, very soon, we will achieve an even greater “*cheirus*,” one in which the “*Tov*” will overpower and dominate the “*Rah*” of the world permanently, which will then assure us an even closer relationship with *Hashem* and the arrival of the ultimate redemption, *Moshich Tzidkeinu*.

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל ... (סדר מגיד)

What is the significance of the word “*HaMakom*” that the *Baal Haggadah* deems necessary to write it in the paragraph dealing with the four sons? As we know, the term “*Hamakom*” refers to *Hashem*, Who is “Omnipresent” and fills the four corners of the world. And yet, we find that this same term is used primarily in tragic situations. When we comfort a mourner, we say, “ה**מקום ירחם אתכם**,” - “*HaMakom should console you.*” When one loses an important object, we tell him, “ה**מקום ימלא חסרוכם**,” - “*HaMakom should refill your loss,*” and when we daven for the release of a captive, we say, “ה**מקום ירחם עליהם ויוציאם מצרה לרוחה**,” - “*HaMakom should have mercy on them and release them from distress to relief.*” Why is the word “*HaMakom*” used specifically in these situations? Because it is specifically in these tragic situations when people tend to ask, “Why are these terrible things happening? Where is *Hashem* when I need Him? How can He allow such a thing to happen?” To them we answer, “*HaMakom ...*” Where is *Hashem*? He is omnipresent. He is omnipotent. He is everywhere! He is even here in this tragic situation. He knows what He is doing and He is taking care of everything - even if you don’t understand it.

So, back to our original question: what does this unique title for the Almighty have to do with the four sons?

R’ Shimon Schwab ZT”L gives a remarkable answer.

On this holy night of *Pesach*, as we sit around the *Seder*

ויישב ב**מצעדים חמנים’** (הלק ג’, סי’ רנ”ב), דאף אי נימא דיש בו משום קיום

מצוות ‘בערב תאכלו מצות; מ”מ ס”ל לתוס’, דכיון דאין בו משום חיוב המצוה לא אמרינן לגביו ד’עשה דוחה לא תעשה’, דרק עשה ד’חיוב מצוה’ דוחה ל”ת.

ואי נימא שיש בו משום קיום מצות, וא”כ יש לפרש בכונת הנגרא כ’י היכי דניגרידה לליביה, דניכול מצה טפ’י, דהיא אל אכילת מצה יותר משיעור כוית מכוח הרעבון, יש לפרש בכונת כ’ל דכפין יתי’ וייכול’ על דרך מה שביאר רש”י, דהיא אל אכילת מצה יותר משיעור כוית מכוח הרעבון.

... תרי זה משובח

ומן חירותינו מקרא קודש זכר ליציאת מצרים (קידוש לחג המצות)

The *Yom Tov of Pesach* is known as “ומן חירותינו” - the time when we were granted freedom. On the most basic level, this is a reference to the physical redemption *Klal Yisroel* experienced by leaving *Mitzrayim* and becoming liberated from their slavery. However, there is a well-known difficulty that arises when approaching this concept of “חירות”. True, we were freed from bondage, but years later we continue to find ourselves in exile, subservient to others. Are we indeed free? In fact, in *Shemona Esrai*, we pray three times a day: *Hashem*, - “תקע בשופר גדול לחירותנו” - *Hashem*, blow the great *shofar* and lead us to our freedom. Apparently, then, we haven’t yet achieved “חירות”, so what exactly is the significance of the “*cheirus*” of *Mitzrayim*?

R’ Dovid Goldberg Shlit’a (Rosh Yeshivah of Telshe) quotes the **Ramchal** who writes that prior to *Yetzias Mitzrayim* the world was an inseparable mixture of good and bad, “*Tov*” and “*Rah.*” This combination was everywhere and it was near impossible to differentiate between the two. Even our ancestors, the children of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov, although they had great merits and unique qualities, had not yet attained an individual and exclusive status, as their very essence was a combination of these two opposing elements. In order to be crowned with purity and holiness so as to ultimately receive the *Torah*, these people, the nation to become *Klal Yisroel*, required purification and elevation. This came about through the long and bitter years of affliction in *Mitzrayim*, when the prosecutor, the “*Rah*” of the world, became softened and appeased, as if to say it was given its chance and no longer was it able to restrain the surging power of “*Tov.*” This ultimately allowed *Bnei Yisroel* to ascend to new heights, to reach an unprecedented level, to acquire true “חירות” - the epitome of freedom. And in fact, at *Har Sinai*, the nation of *Klal Yisroel* reached this zenith, to the point that our Sages tell us, - “פסקא זוהמתן”, - even their impurities ceased to exist.

Unfortunately, due to the sin of the Golden Calf, this was short-lived and the nation regressed. However, the unprecedented level of “*cheirus*” achieved through *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was a force that once introduced into

However, on this night, the night of *Chag HaPesach*, when one has no time for *Torah* study for he must occupy himself all night with the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*, therefore, he must not eat any *chametz* on this night so as to distance himself from the power of the *Yetzer Hara*.

How far does the obligation of "סיפור" go? Well, the *Haggadah* does not say that the Sages' students told them, "*The time has come to pray*," but rather, "*The time has come to recite Krias Shema*." Why? Because the disciples knew that their teachers would only stop their "story-telling" to recite *Shema* at the earliest possible time, since *Shema* also mentions the Exodus. However, with regard to *Tefillah*, they knew that their mentors would not begin to pray until the latest possible hour so that they could continue to fulfill the *mitzvah* that "has no limit" - *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* - as long as possible.

וידו חושך אפלה בכל ארץ מצרים שלשת ימים ... (שמות י-כא)
 The *Torah* tells us that during the first three days of *מַכַּת*, the darkness was so black, deep and permeating, that no person could see anything at all, while the last three days brought a thick murkiness that prevented people from even moving their bodies. The great commentator, **Rabbeinu Avraham Ibn Ezra ZT"l**, writes that he knows exactly how the Egyptians felt during that time, as he personally experienced such a thick darkness while traveling on the Atlantic Ocean (ים אוקיינוס). He recalls how a heavy black fog descended on his ship, with the vapor so thick and sticky that not only was he unable to see an inch in front of his face, the moisture literally clung to his body making it difficult for him to move his arms. This fog could last for up to five days at a time and it was impossible to distinguish between night and day - just like the Egyptians who had no idea how many days had passed in that state of complete and utter darkness.

Even more astonishing is what is found in the *Haggadah* of **R' Tzvi Hirsch Farber ZT"l (Kerem Tzvi)**: "When I was in Manchester, England, in the autumn of 5672 (1912), I saw a fogginess so deep and thick like the fog the Ibn Ezra wrote about. In fact, community elders showed me a certain street (in Manchester) that was called "Ibn Ezra Place" and they have a tradition that the great commentator once resided on this street for a period of time, and his description of the terrible fogginess actually came from what he saw there. I, too, witnessed a thick, heavy blackness in London that lasted for three days straight, like the biblical darkness in Egypt - and it prevented people from moving about. Even the wagons and railroad cars were forced to shut down due to the deep fog, and most business dealings were cancelled. Over five thousand people lost their lives over the course of this event, as people could not function properly and life could not go on because of the pitch darkness."

- "והגדת לבנך" the *mitzvah* of table and attempt to fulfill the *mitzvah* of "You shall tell it over to your children," we are reminded that unfortunately, there are people who are not blessed with children; or people that have children that are not following in their ways, the way of the *Torah*. These individuals are unable to properly fulfill this important *mitzvah* on this important evening. They feel like giving into despair; they feel as if life has dealt them a raw deal. It is to these people that the *Baal Haggadah* is addressing when he says the word "*HaMakom*" by the four sons. "Don't give in to despair," he tells us. "Don't think *Hashem* has left you alone in your situation - ברוך המקום - Blessed is *HaMakom*, He is blessed." The word "ברוך" - "Blessed" is mentioned four times in this paragraph - one for each of the four children.

The lesson is: Never give up on your situation and certainly never give up on any Jewish child. No matter if he is good, bad, simple, or incapable. Every child is a blessing. Every child is a gem, a veritable diamond. Even if we are sad or disappointed with our kids and we don't like the way they turn out, we say "*HaMakom*" - *Hashem* is here and we mustn't lose hope ... for every child is a blessing.

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח ... (סדר מגיד)
R' Avraham ben HaGra ZT"l (son of the **Vilna Gaon ZT"l**) writes: "The *mitzvah* of 'סיפור יציאת מצרים' - relating the story of the Exodus, is virtually unique in that it has no limit. It goes on all night. In contrast, most *mitzvos* are subject to the prohibition of 'בל תוסיף' - '*You shall not add*,' whereas this *mitzvah* does not."

R' Avraham continues. "The story mentioned in the *Haggadah* about Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah and his colleagues who stayed up all night speaking about the Exodus until their students came and told them that the hour had arrived to recite *Krias Shema*, is meant to answer the first of the four questions: ממה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל - "Why, on all other nights, may we eat *chametz* and *matza*, while on this night, only *matza*?"

How so? The **Zohar** says that the purpose of the *mitzvah* to study *Torah* day and night - "והגית בו יומם ולילה" - "*You shall contemplate it day and night*" is to destroy the "שעיר שבעיסה" - the "*chametz*" within each person. *Chametz* is a metaphor for the *Yetzer Hara*, and *Hashem* gives each person the ability to combat this nemesis: "בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי תורה תבלין" - "*I created the Yetzer Hara and I created the Torah as an antidote*."

Thus, we answer the first question in the *Mah Nishtana*. On all other nights, when a person has time to study *Torah* and is commanded to do so, he may eat *chametz*, for the *Torah* he studies will combat and hopefully destroy the "*chametz*" - the evil inclination that brews within him.

Jew. It is a simple transaction made to benefit Jews but little do we realize the effect it can have on the gentiles on the receiving end of the *chametz*. Who knows? One man's *chametz* might just be another man's salvation.

רבן נמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו. ואלו הן: פסח מצה ומרור (סדר מגיד)

glass to the man and said, "Here. Now drink up and be quiet. Let us go back to sleep!"
 The parched traveler gratefully thanked his benefactor, and quickly gulped down his drink, while the other members of the compartment settled themselves back down into bed, hoping to catch a little more sleep before the day broke. But alas, the quiet was not to last long, for not more than a few moments had passed before the voice of the nudnik traveler began to be heard, this time repeating in shrill tones his new refrain: "Boy, was I thirsty!"

נמשל: The commentators ask why *Rabban Gamliel* insists on mentioning the *Matza* before the *Maror*, when chronologically, the bitterness of the *Maror* occurred before the advent of the *Matzos*. Explains **Rabbi Yitzchok Sender Shlit'a**, perhaps the message of the *Baal Haggadah* is that *Matza*, the well-known symbol of freedom, representing the celebration of all the blessings and opportunities that *Hashem* provides for us, takes precedence over the *Maror*, which reminds us of all the bitter and harsh times that we have experienced. One must always look for the good in life. If one always puts the "*Maror*" first, he will miss out on so many positive and happy aspects of life.

מאוצרותיו של המגיד

לקחי חיים ודברי התעוררות
 נסדרו עפ"י פרשיות השבוע

אז ישר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת לה' ויאמרו לאמר אשירה לה' כי נאה נאה טום ורכבו רמה בים. עץ ויזמרת י-ה וידו לי לישועה זה א-לי ואנוהו וגו' (שמות מז-א. שירת הים) - שייכות אמירת 'זה א-לי ואנוהו' ל'שירת הים' כחוננת המילים 'זה א-לי ואנוהו' תידגם אונקלוס 'זאבני ליה מקדשא' (והיינו, שפידש מילת 'זאנוהו' מלשון נה-דירה, כמו שנאמר 'נוה שאנן' [ישעיה ל"ג כ]-ל'נוה צאן' [שם ס"ה י]) וכן פירש רש"י.
 והנה 'שירת הים' נאמרה על הגאולה מעבודת מצרים לחרות, וכדאיתא בגמרא (מגילה י"ד), "ומה מעבודת לחירות אמרינן שירה וכו', ופירש רש"י, "מעבודת לחירות-ביציאת מצרים אמרו שירה על הים", והיינו, ש'שירת הים' נאמרה על הגאולה מעבודת מצרים לחרות. וא"כ יש להבין, הכיצד אמירת 'זה א-לי ואנוהו-ואבני ליה מקדשא', שייכת לשירה זו?

ויש ליישב, בהקדקו דברי **הדמ"כ** בתחילת 'חומש שמות', "השלים הכתוב ספר בראשית, שהוא ספר היצירה בחידוש העולם ויצירת כל נוצר, ובמקרי האבות כולם שהם כעץ יצירה לזרעם. מפני שכל מקריהם ציורי דברים לרמוז ולחודיע על כל העתיד לבוא להם, ואחרי שהשלים היצירה התחיל ספר אחר בעניין המעשה הבא מן הרמוזים ההם, ונתייחד ספר 'זאלה שמות' בעניין הגלות הראשון הנגזר בפירוש בכתוב 'ידוע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם, ועבדום ועינו אותם ארבע מאות שנה, ובגאולה ממנו, ולכן חזר והתחיל בהזכרת שמות יורדי מצרים ומספרם, אף על פי שכבר נכתב זה בספר בראשית, בעבור כי ידידתם שם הוא ראשית הגלות, כי מאז הוחל.

והנה הגלות איננו נשלם עד יום שובם אל מקומם ואל מעלת אבותיהם שובו, וכשיצאו ממצרים אף על פי שיצאו מבית עבדים עדיין יחשבו גולים, כי

R' Elyashiv smiled and happily obliged.
נמשל: The practice of "*Mechiras chametz*," before *Pesach* is brought down in *halacha* and has been accepted in all circles as standard operating procedure for a G-d-fearing

A "sleeper" (overnight) train car is, in essence, a moving house of lodging. A night in transit can replace a hotel stay at one's destination. Even where sleepers are more expensive than high-speed day trains or other modes of transport, the extra cost may be less than that of a night at a hotel. A basic type of sleeping car is one which is divided into compartments for four or six people, with bench configuration seating during the day and "privacy-less" double or triple-level bunk-beds at night.

In one such sleeper car, one of the passengers awoke in the middle of the night, and started to complain in a very loud voice that he was thirsty. His continuous and vociferous complaints woke the other passengers in his car, and soon they were all forced to suffer through the man's endless refrain of - "Oh, I am so thirsty!"

The others hissed at him and warned him to be quiet, but he simply ignored their attempts at silencing him. Finally, one of the passengers had heard more than he could tolerate, and instead of facing the recalcitrant complainer, he rose from his bunk and left the compartment, returning a minute later with a glass of water triumphantly held aloft in his hand. He handed the

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

בארץ לא להם נבוכים במדבר, וכשבאו אל הר סיני ועשו המשכן ושם הקדוש ברוך הוא והשרה שכנינו ביניהם, אז שבו אל מעלת אבותיהם, שהיה סוד אלו-ה-עלי אוהליהם, והם הם המרכבה, ואז נחשבו גאולים, ולכן נשלם הספר הזה בהשלימו עניין המשכן, ובהיות כבוד ה' מלא אותו תמיד". והיינו, שהגאולה מעבודת מצרים לחירות לא נשלמה עד שהשכינה שרתה בין בני ישראל לפחות באופן ארעי במשכן שבמדבר שעבר ממקום למקום. ויש להוסיף, שהתכלית לא התקיימה עד ששרתה ביניהם באופן קבוע במקדש שבהר הבית.

ועל פי זה מתבאר מה שההודאה על הגאולה מעבודת מצרים לחירות - 'כמה מעלה טובות למקום עלינו. אילו הוציאנו ממצרים וכו' (הגדה של פסח), מסתיימת רק עם הזכרת בניית בית המקדש בהר הבית-זבנה לנו בית הבחירה וכו' (שם), כיון שתכלית הגאולה התקיימה רק על ידי זה, וכנתבאר, (ומקור הודאה זו היא הודאת המביא ביכורים המבוארת בתחילת פרשת 'כי תבוא', המתחילה עם הודאה על הגאולה מעבודת מצרים לחירות-זיוציאנו וגו', ומסיימת עם הודאה על בניית בית המקדש בהר הבית-זיביאנו אל המקום הזה-זה בית המקדש' [רש"י], וכ"כ **הרשב"ץ**).

ולפי' מתבארת השייכות של אמירת 'זה א-לי ואנוהו-ואבני ליה מקדשא' בהר הבית שבו תשכון השכינה בין בני ישראל באופן קבוע. לשירת הים' הנאמרת על הגאולה מעבודת מצרים לחירות שתכליתה התקיימה רק על ידי זה.

הלילה הזה מטיב ללין שתי פְעֻמִּים ... (סדר מה נשתנה)

During our *Pesach Seder*, we talk at great length about the evils of Pharaoh, the hardships forced upon us by the Egyptians, and our glorious redemption. And although we do make a quick review of the pre-Egypt history of the *Avos*, we never seem to address the fundamental cause of our enslavement. Why did *Hashem* punish us with slavery in Egypt? What was the point of it all? The answer, says **R' Shlomo Kluger ZT"l**, is because the children of Yaakov sold their brother Yosef into slavery, to the merchants of Midyan. We cannot honestly discuss our redemption from the bitterness of that period without reminding ourselves how it all began and how we must take responsibility for our actions. On this very night, we must instill within ourselves a crucial lesson; that our problems often begin not with the external enemy but rather the internal enemy.

This message is enforced with the universal custom of *Karpas*. **Rabbeinu Manoach ZT"l** in his commentary to the **Rambam** (הל' חמץ ומצה ח-ב) writes that we dip the *Karpas* vegetable into saltwater to remind us of when the brothers dipped the "כתנות פסים" - Yosef's coat of many colors, into blood to cover up the treacherous sale of their younger brother ("ויטבילו את הכתנות בדם"). Indeed, this is how we begin our *Seder*. Immediately after *Kiddush*, we transport ourselves back in time, to the very beginning of our exile, when our forefathers, the sons of *Yaakov Avinu*, sold their brother into slavery and then dipped the coat they removed from him into the blood of a goat to make it appear as if their brother was torn apart by a wild animal. Rashi in *Parshas Vayeshev* (לז-ג) comments on the source of the word "פסים" and states that etymologically, it is derived from "כרפס" which is actually an expression of fine wool (from *Megillas Esther*, "חור כרפס ותכלת", which was the material from which Yosef's coat was made. Thus, the *Karpas* we dip and then eat, carries the weight of recalling how the exile and subsequent exodus all began.

The **Ben Ish Chai, Chacham Rabbeinu Yosef Chayim of Baghdad ZT"l**, expands on this idea and writes that in addition to the first dipping of *Karpas* in saltwater, representing the start of our *golus*, the second dipping of the night, the *Maror* in *Charoses*, is actually representative of the beginning of the *geula*. The saltwater of the first dipping, alludes to the bitter tears that we shed for the terrible sin of "שנאת אחים" when the hatred between the brothers led to Yosef's induction into slavery and the start of *Golus Mitzrayim*. However, the second dipping is done with the *Maror* into the sweet-tasting *Charoses*, which has the ability to sweeten even the most bitter *golus* experience. This dipping corresponds to the *posuk*: "ולקחתם אגודת אוזב וטבתלם בדם אשר בסף" (שמות יב-כב) -

"*You shall take a bundle of hyssop and dip it into the blood that is in the basin.*" The offering of the *Korban Pesach* was to be done specifically with an "אגודת אוזב" - a complete bundle of hyssop, to hint to us that the pre-cursor to *geula* is only through joining together as an "Agudah" - an intertwined unit that remains bound one to the other.

Based on this, **R' Matisyahu Salomon Shlit'a** points out a poignant and moving idea. The **RM'A** in *Hilchos Pesach* writes regarding the custom to eat a boiled egg dipped in saltwater, in the middle of the *Seder*. Common thought is that this is in commemoration of the *Korban Chagiga*. The **RM'A** adds that this is also a sign of mourning, because the same night of the week on which the first night of *Pesach* falls is the same night of the week in which *Tisha B'av*, our universal day of mourning, falls out. What precisely is the connection between *Pesach* and *Tisha B'av*, and how is this commemorated with an egg? R' Matisyahu explains that if in five months from now, *Moshiach* still hasn't come and we find ourselves fasting on yet another *Tisha B'av*, it is because we have not learned the lessons of this *Pesach*. We did not absorb the idea of the two "dippings" and we have not fully comprehended the reason why we went down into *golus* in the first place. We quite obviously missed the cause of the destruction of the second Temple - *Sinas Chinam* - and the exile in which we still suffer today.

I had a *machshava* to add to this. One of the four sons mentioned in the *Haggadah* is called, "שאינו יודע לשאול" - the child who doesn't know how to ask. For such a child, we must begin talking to him - "את פתח לו" - and draw him into the *Pesach* conversation. Allegorically, we may look at this a bit differently. A child who doesn't know how to ask is one who has nothing to ask for. He is given everything in his life on a silver platter and he believes that his wish, is the world's command. In today's day and age, there are many such children and educators today try hard to figure out how to get through to them. Well, perhaps for a child who doesn't know what to ask for, we must reach out and explain to him that "את" - the first day of *Pesach* (א) corresponds to the night of *Tisha B'av* (ת) and the reason why we mourn on the latter is because we haven't rectified the sin of the former. If he has nothing else to "ask for" let him at least ask for *Hashem* to bring an end to our *golus*; let him "ask" all those who he comes in contact with to change the way they treat one another, to do away with the hatred and embrace the love that brothers must have for one another.

Yehi Ratzon may it be His will that this message is realized and the Jewish people will come to a clear understanding that this is the only way we can achieve our ultimate goal and fervent refrain of "לשנה הבאה בירושלים" - Next year we will all be together *B'Yerushalayim H'bnuya*.

penance to ease his pained soul. R' Yosef Shaul was quite disturbed by the man's story and could not think of any practical form of *Teshuvah* mentioned by the halachic authorities for this sort of unintentional sin. Upon further reflection, he told the man, "If there is anyone who will know what to do, it will be the *heilige Belzer Rebbe*. Go talk to him."

R' Yehoshua Rokeach ZT"l (Ohel Yehoshua) was the second *Rebbe* of the Belz Chasidic dynasty and after his death in 1894 (5654), he was often referred to as the "*Mitteler Rebbe*" (Middle Rabbi) for bridging the gap between his father, the saintly **Sar Shalom** and founder of the *chassidus*, and his son and heir, **R' Yissachar Dov ZT"l**, who guided Belz to unprecedented heights of scholarship and piety. R' Yeshie'le, as he was affectionately called, combined *Torah* scholarship with practical common sense to guide thousands of *chassidim* who came to him for his sensible and practical advice, and to fight the *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) movement that was making inroads in Poland in those days.

The man immediately set out for Belz to discuss his issue with the *Rebbe*. It was *Chol Hamoed* and the courtyard of the magnificent *Belzer Beis Medrash* was filled to overflow with thousands of *chassidim* who came to spend *Yom Tov* with their leader and mentor. Pulling a few strings thanks to his numerous business connections, the Jew managed to arrange a short private audience with the *Belzer Rebbe* in which he tearfully recounted what had happened and how he had forgotten it was *Pesach*. He had violated the precepts of the *Chag* and drank beer together with a gentile acquaintance of his. He felt horrible and wished to do *Teshuvah* for his unfortunate mishap.

R' Yeshie'le sat in his inner chamber and stroked his beard in deep contemplation. The Jew's heart sank lower and lower as it appeared that even the sagacious *Belzer Rebbe* did not know what to tell him. Finally, the *Rebbe* looked at him and said, "*Fuhr kayn Eretz Yisruel.*" ("*Go to the Land of Israel.*") The man waited in eager anticipation for further direction but the *Rebbe* had already turned away and he was hustled out of the *Rebbe's* room.

He quickly traveled back to Lvov and informed R' Yosef Shaul of the *Belzer Rebbe's* missive. The chief rabbi listened and nodded but he had no inkling as to why the *Rebbe* ordered this man to move to Israel. He discussed it with a number of his disciples but they also could not determine what was the *Rebbe's* intent. One disciple took it upon himself to find out and he contacted a friend who was close to the court of *Belz* to find out.

Well, somehow, R' Yeshie'le was told that the "*Shoel U'maishiv*" wished to understand why he said what he said. He sent a messenger back to Lvov with the following words: "The *posuk* in *Megillas Eicha* states, 'גלתה יהודה מעוני' - 'Yehudah (Jewish people) has gone into exile due to his affliction.' The *Medrash* there tells us that the word 'מעוני' is a reference to 'לחם עוני' - poor man's bread, in other words, *Matza*. It means to tell us that the Jewish people were forced into exile because they transgressed this *mitzvah* and instead of eating *matza* on *Pesach*, they ate *chametz*. It is clear then, that the punishment for eating *chametz* on *Pesach* is *golus*, and as a result, this man who drank beer on *Pesach* and violated the prohibition of consuming *chametz* should go into *golus* as a penance for his sin. However, unlike 'Yehudah' - the Jews who lived in *Eretz Yisroel* and went into *golus* by leaving the holy land, this man who now lives in *chutz la'aretz* (the diaspora) has the opportunity to go into *golus* by leaving this country and entering *Eretz Yisroel*!"

Upon hearing these words, R' Yosef Shaul marveled at the wisdom of the *Belzer Rebbe*. He even added a proof to this idea. "When the *Torah* commands us not to eat *chametz* on *Pesach*, it says: 'כי כל אכל חמץ ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל' - 'For whoever eats leavened bread, his soul shall be cut off from Israel.' The *Taam* (special tune) on the word 'ונכרתה' is a 'גרשיים' which translates to 'driven away' or exile. Thus, one who commits this sin is required to go into *golus*."

משל למת הדבר דומה

ידע תדע כי גר יהיה ודעך בארץ לא להם ועבדים ועני אתם (בראשית מו-יג. סדר הגדה של פסח)

משל: R' Yitzchok Zilberstein Shlit'a, tells over the following incredible anecdote about his father-in-law: One year, on *Erev Pesach*, an ordinary looking *avreich* came with his little boy to **R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ZT"l**, to receive a blessing for the upcoming holiday. The man and his son watched from a side room as R' Elyashiv was totally immersed in his *Gemara* and were hesitant to walk inside and disturb the *Rav*. Finally, a grandson of R' Elyashiv took him by the arm and led him inside.

The *Rav* raised his head from his *Gemara* as soon as they walked in.

"*Zaidy*, do you recognize this person?" asked the grandson, with obvious excitement in his voice.

R' Elyashiv looked at the man and shook his head. No, he didn't recognize him.

"*Zaidy*," the grandson said excitedly, "this father and son are *geirei tzedek* (righteous converts). Five years ago, this man came to you before *Pesach* as a gentile to buy the *chametz*. After meeting you, he was so impressed that he became interested in *Yiddishkeit*. One thing led to another, and today he is a full-fledged, kosher Jew. He's come here today to ask you for a *beracha*."

the holidays is considered to have kept the *Shabbos* and conversely, one who violates the holidays is considered to have violated the *Shabbos*. The parallel influence of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (Exodus) and *Maaseh Beraishis* (Creation of the world) is fundamentally a comparison of *Chag HaPesach* and the holy day of *Shabbos*. Just as the entire week revolves around *Shabbos*, the entire cycle of festivals takes its cue from the month of *Nisan* and the *Pesach* holiday, the time of past and future redemption. The night of *Pesach* is known as "ליל שימורים" - a night when the Jewish people are Divinely protected from anyone and anything that might cause them harm, while our Sages have taught that, “*One who keeps Shabbos will be protected and distanced from sin.*” (*Mechilta*)

In response to a sharp increase in the frequency of rocket attacks into Israel prior to December 19, 2008, the Israeli Air Force launched “Operation Cast Lead” consisting initially of airstrikes against Hamas installations, personnel, and other facilities in the Gaza Strip, followed a week later by ground operations. Hostilities between Israeli forces and Hamas fighters continued through January 18, 2009, with Israel meeting most of their objectives. The conflict ended on January 18, when Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire, with a complete withdrawal of forces on January 21.

On *Erev Shabbos*, January 2, the seventh day of “Operation Cast Lead,” the telephone rang in the home of **R’ Aharon Leib Shteinman Shlit’a**. On the line was a representative of the IDF, the Israel Defense Forces, who urgently asked to speak with the *Rav*. When the *gabbai* explained that all messages must go through him, the caller explained that the army was poised to launch a ground offensive the very next day and General Gabi Ashkenazi, the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, had ordered him to call in advance to receive the *Rav’s* blessing. Immediately, the *gabbai* entered R’ Aharon Leib’s room and informed him about the call. R’ Aharon Leib was quiet for a moment and then asked why they were initiating the battle on *Shabbos*. The *gabbai* went back to the phone and asked the man on the line the *Rav’s* question. The answer he gave was that for strategic reasons - most of which were highly classified and confidential - it was imperative to begin the assault during the day and could not wait until *Shabbos* was over.

R’ Aharon Leib shook his head when he was told this answer. He refused to accept it, and declined to give his blessing. The attendant suggested to the *Rav* that since the army was planning on following their military directives regardless, perhaps he should give them a blessing anyway. But R’ Aharon Leib again shook his head and replied, “*Shabbos* is the ‘מקור הברכה’ (source of all blessing) - how can I give a *beracha* for *chilul Shabbos*?”

The *gabbai* told the IDF representative what the *Rav* had said and the caller hung up.

The following night, literally minutes after *Shabbos* was over, the telephone rang again in R’ Shteinman’s home. It was the same army representative who said, “Please tell the *Rav* that we listened to his words and deferred the operation. We are going in right now and we need his *beracha*!”

This time, R’ Aharon Leib took the phone. His voice rose as tears began streaming from his eyes. With the warmth and sensitivity of a *Gadol B’Yisroel*, he responded with a generous *beracha* for the success of the mission and the safety of the Jewish soldiers. He then handed the phone back to his attendant and requested a *Tehillim*. He proceeded to recite *Tehillim* late into the night and much of the next day - accompanied by sobbing cries and heartfelt tears.

Twenty-four hours later, the phone once again rang in R’ Shteinman’s home. This time, it was General Ashkenazi himself on the line, asking to speak directly to the *Rav*. R’ Aharon Leib took the phone in his hands and listened as the general sincerely thanked him for his blessing; with the help of *Hashem*, the army had achieved all of its objectives in the first 24 hours of battle. Furthermore, he related, the IDF had anticipated that the cost of the first day’s operation would be close to fifty casualties among Israeli troops. In reality, however, there was only one fatality (ל"ו) and no doubt the *Rav’s beracha* had contributed crucially to the supernatural success of the operation. Later, when asked to confirm the report, the IDF commander stated humbly, “I asked R’ Elyashiv and R’ Shteinman to daven for us and they did.”

A story is told of a certain Jew whose business dealings brought him in contact with the local gentile population. As part of his daily routine, he was required to enter non-Jewish establishments and it wasn’t uncommon to find him at a tavern sharing a drink with a potential customer. It happened once that on *Chol Hamoed Pesach*, this man met a gentile buddy of his who offered him a drink of beer from the local tavern. Incredibly, the man forgot that it was during the *Pesach* festival when beer is absolutely forbidden, and he sat down and enjoyed a tall glass of ale with his friend.

Upon leaving the tavern, the Jew suddenly realized what he had done and he was heartbroken. He had never so much as violated an iota of the holiday in his entire life and here, he had sat down and drank an entire glass of beer! His mind and heart knew no solace, and he ran as swiftly as possible to **R’ Yosef Shaul Nathanson ZT”L**, chief rabbi of Lvov, and author of the renowned halachic work “**Shoel U’maishiv.**” He broke down before the rabbi asking for any form of

The commandment to eat *Matza* on the holiday of *Pesach* is prefaced with the words: "ושמרתם את המצות" - “*And you shall guard the Matzos.*” Jewish tradition calls for keeping watch over the *Matza* from the time the wheat is taken to the mill to be ground into flour, and it is kept under careful supervision to ensure that it does not come into contact with water or any other moisture. The grinding, packing, and transporting of the wheat from the mill to the bakery is done under the strictest supervision, to ensure that it does not come into contact with water, and all of the utensils used for processing the wheat must be clean and dry. Many Jews have carried this practice several steps further, guarding the grain in the fields before the wheat is harvested to ensure they are not overripe or wet from rainfall. That can be a challenging task in areas where rain falls on a regular basis and historically, Jews were always in search of areas where rain is least likely to fall right before the wheat matures.

One of the leaders of the ancient Jewish community of Baghdad, Iraq, was **Chacham Tzadkah Hutzin ZT”L**, who was born in 1876 (5636). He was a star disciple of the **Ben Ish Chai**, and was also considered a “*Mohel Mumchah*” - an expert *mohel*, who circumcised thousands of children without payment. He collected funds for the poor and needy and he would scour the community to determine who was lacking in order to offer them financial assistance and support. In the weeks before *Pesach*, he would accompany a group of men out to the fields to pick the wheat and ensure that no moisture came in contact with what was to be baked into the Baghdad community’s *matzos*. He spent days out under the blazing sun and would not allow anyone to do any extra work for him. He insisted on picking the grains, carrying the piles and tying the bundles himself, which he then loaded onto the waiting donkeys for transport back to the city.

On one occasion, after all the back-breaking work was accomplished and the group was making their way back from the fields, someone noticed ominous rainclouds looming up ahead. “Look,” he shouted, “It looks like a storm is coming!” Indeed, the dark, cumulus puffs were quite uncharacteristic for that time of year, portending a rare, but violent, downpour of huge proportion. Everyone began to worry out loud about the packs of wheat they were transporting and how they might best protect them from the approaching storm. In deference to his stature, they turned to the *chacham*, R’ Tzadkah, and asked him what they should do.

Unhesitatingly, the *Rav* jumped down from the donkey he was riding on and lifted his head up to the heavens. Everyone followed his gaze but Chacham Tzadkah was not looking at the clouds; instead he raised his voice and called out: “May it be Your will, *Hashem* our G-d and the G-d of our fathers if it has been decreed in heaven that rain will fall, let it pour down in mighty gusts. Let the force of the showers and the wind fall with such force and penetration that even the saddles atop the donkeys should become soaked and saturated fully with rainwater!”

The people around him were stunned. What was the *Tzaddik* saying? Not only did he not pray that the clouds should hold off and not produce rain, he specifically requested that it should pour with tremendous force so that there was no chance to salvage any of the wheat they had worked so hard to till and collect for the upcoming holiday.

“Why?” they cried out in protest. “Why is the *Chacham* asking for rain and not for sun?”

As the clouds drew nearer and the winds began to pick up, R’ Tzadkah looked at the people around him and explained. “My friends, please listen to what I have to say. We worked hard to ensure that the grain is ‘guarded’ - protected and perfectly dry. Of course, nobody here wants the time we spent to go to waste. As such, if it rains for a short time, or even if it drizzles lightly, we will do whatever we can to try to cover and protect our bundles from any moisture. However, deep down, we all know that it will be almost impossible to fully protect all of it and then we will begin searching for ‘קולות’ - leniencies, excuses why we believe the wheat is still usable for the *Pesach* season.”

R’ Tzadkah continued his impassioned plea. “My friends, we don’t want leniencies nor do we wish to make use of excuses. This is not what we spent the past few days working for. Therefore, I prayed to the Almighty that He should remove us from any doubt. If there is a decree that rain must fall, well then, let it fall in droves! Let it pour in such strong volume that everything, down to the donkey’s saddles, become soaked - and then we will know that this wheat cannot be used. Does this mean we will have to work hard again? Perhaps. But isn’t it worth it knowing that we did not lower our standards and base ourselves on excuses to fulfill a *mitzvah*?”

As the *Tzaddik* was talking, no one seemed to realize that the sky had begun to brighten. By the time he finished his words, the ominous rainclouds were no more. The sun was shining brightly and the wheat bundles remained as dry as ever!

On the second day of *Pesach* we read from *Parshas Emor*, regarding the laws of the holidays, and specifically those surrounding *Chag HaPesach*. These are preceded by the command to keep *Shabbos*. *Chazal* teach us that one who keeps