

מאת מו"ה ברוך הירשפלד שליט"א
ראש כולל עטרת חיים ברוך קליבלנד הייטס

Hallel should also apply to the *Hallel* he will say at the *Seder*. **Making the Shehechivanu.** When one says the *beracha* of *Shehechivanu* during *Kiddush* on the first two nights of *Pesach* he should have in mind that not only is it meant for the *Yom Tov* itself, but it should also be applied to the following *mitzvos* (4):

- 1) *Bedikas Chametz* on the night before *Pesach*.
- 2) *Biur* (burning) *Chametz* during the morning of *Erev Pesach*.
- 3) The other *mitzvos* of the night. These include; eating *matzah*, reciting the *Haggadah*, drinking four cups of wine, eating *Maror*, making the *Korech* sandwich, and singing *Hallel*.
- 4) One can also have this in mind for the *mitzvos* that we do at the *Seder* to arouse the curiosity of the children (כדי שישאלו like the dippings (*Maror* in *Charoses*, *Karpas* in salt water, etc.), and leaning (הסיכה) to show freedom.

The Haggadah all Yom Tov. Most people, after they finish the second *Seder*, only use their *Haggados* for *bentching* at the *seudos* of *Yom Tov*. This is a mistake. It can be shown that the *mitzvah* is to talk about *Haggadh* topics the whole *Yom Tov*. The first two nights are considered a “crash course” - in other words, a summary of the entire topic of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Chag HaPesach*, whereas the rest of *Yom Tov* is the time to study and probe this topic further. Therefore, on the remaining days of *Pesach*, the *Haggadah* and the *Pesach*-night *mitzvos* should be revisited to keep learning more about them, as well as from them. This is learned from the *posuk* (5) “*For seven days eat matzos*” (לחם עמי) The *Gemara* (6) says that “לחם עוני” - apart from meaning “Bread of Affliction” also means bread that brings to asking and answering, and it says, “Seven days” so the implication is clear that we do this for the full seven (8) days.

הוא היה אומר

(1) של"ה במס' פסחים (2) עיני בראשית מט-כב ומפרשים שם (3) א"ח סימן ר"ג, עיני מפרשי הש"ע שם (4) עיני כף הא"ח תענו (5) דברים ט"ז (6) פסחים קט"ו

A SERIES IN HALACHA LIVING A "TORAH" DAY למעשה הלכת

Forgotten and Little Known Halachos and Customs (20)
We have been discussing the various ways a person can increase his concentration and appreciation of davening and *berachos*. With the upcoming *Yom Tov* of *Pesach* so close, it is appropriate to mention a number of different *mitzvos* that a person could and should have during the *Pesach* period - some in the area of *halacha* and some in the area of *avodah*.

Cleaning. When cleaning for *Pesach*, and working to maintain a “*chametz*-free” household, one should have in mind:

- 1) That he must use the same care and vigilance in keeping his *neschama* clean (1). This, of course, means guarding and self-disciplining one’s eyes, ears and mouth to the negativity around him. On *Pesach*, one should focus on the fact that the power of our forefathers’ survival in the filth and muck of *Mitzrayim*, was “pumped in” to them with the purity of *Yosef HaTzaddik* who guarded his eyes from all impropriety the whole time he was a ruler in Egypt (2).
- 2) The act and physical toil of cleaning for *Pesach*, is in itself a *mitzvah* - atonement and purification, for anything undesirable in the past (3).

Burning of Chametz. When one burns his *chametz* on *Erev Pesach*, he should have in mind to try to rid himself of at least one undesirable flaw in his conduct. It might be anger, conceit, lack of concentration, etc. I once heard in the name of one of the *Litvishe Roshei Yeshiva* in *Eretz Yisroel*, a *segula*, that one should write on a piece of paper one negative aspect of his conduct and throw it into the fire together with his *chametz*.

Hallel. If one maintains the custom to say *Hallel* in *shul* on *Pesach* night, he should have in mind that the *beracha* on this

R’ Chaim Stein ZT”L (Rosh HaYeshivah of Telz, Cleveland) would say:

“The occurrence of *Geulas Mitzrayim* in *Chodesh Nisan* was no coincidence. *Chazal* tell us that in addition to the *geulah* of *Mitzrayim*, the ultimate redemption will take place in *Chodesh Nisan*, thus *Nisan* takes on an identity as the month of *geulah*. However, the concept of *geulah*, refers not only to attaining a physical freedom but also to a *Yid’s* spiritual *geulah*, and the ability to free himself from the grasp of the *yetzer hara*. As *Nisan* is the first month of a new year, it gives one the opportunity to strengthen and renew his relationship with *Hashem* and the *Torah*.”

R’ Avraham Gurwicz Shlit’a, R”Y of Gateshead (V’anfeha Arze El) would say:

“At the end of *Maggid*, we say a *beracha* in which we ask *Hashem* to allow us to celebrate future holidays, ‘*that are coming towards us in peace*.’ What does this mean? **Rabbeinu Yehudah ben Yikar** explains that the future *geulah* of *Moshiach* can come ‘בעיתה אחישנה’ - in its proper time (בעיתה), or earlier than its time (אחישנה). Our prayer to *Hashem* is that He should allow us to celebrate the coming of *Moshiach* earlier than its scheduled time for as the *Vilna Gaon* says, if *Moshiach* comes early, then we will not even feel the pains of *Moshiach*.”

R’ Tzvi Elimelech Spira ZT”L of Bluzhev (Tzvi L’Tzaddik) would say:

“*Yachatz* is a *segulah* for good life. Since מצה equals 135 but cannot be split equally, one gets טובים - which is 68 and 67!”

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הגה"צ רבי גמליאל הכהן רביצ'ץ שליט"א
ראש ישיבת שער השמים בירושלים ע"ה

טיב התבלין

רעינות ופירושים לעורך את האדם לעבודת
הש"ת והתחנכות באמונה ובטחון מאת

למען תדע כי אני ה' בקרב הארץ וגו' (שמות ז-ה) - בחג הנאולה ב"ה אנו מתקבלים אל החג הקדוש הבא לקראתנו חג הפסח שבו הוציא הקב"ה את עם ישראל ממצרים וגאלם לחרות עולם והנה עיקר הכלית ומטרת גאולתם הלא היא כתרובת בספר, כמו שאמר הש"ת למשה רבינו ע"ה (שמות ג' י"ב) בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלוקים על הדר הזה, והכוונה בזה שיציאת מצרים לא היתה אלא תחלת דרכם של ישראל, שע"כ יוכלו לקבל אחד כך את התורה הרושה. ואכן אחרי הכנה דרבה של חמשים יום אשר בהם נטהרו ישראל מכל זוהמתם, וכו' לצאת ממ"ט שערי טומאה ונכנסו למ"ט שערי קדושה, או אז הוכשרו לעמוד על הר סיני לשמוע את קול ד' המדבר אליהם מתוך האש.

והנה הדיבור הראשון שיצא מפי הגבורה הוא: "אנכי ה' אלוהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים", לחרות כי האמונה היא היסוד העיקרי לחיי התורה, ומבלעדיה אין שום מציאות לחיות כיהודי. וכאשר נתבונן בלשון הכתוב אנו רואים שהש"ת יחס את עיקר ציווי האמונה עם יציאת מצרים, אף שלפי הנראה היה מתאים יותר לומר אנכי ד' אלוהיך אשר בראתי שמים וארץ, שהרי יציאת מצרים לכאורה הינו רק פרט אחד מנפלאותיו, לא כן בראתי שמים וארץ אשר כולל כל הנהגת הבריאה שחש"ת מחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית, והדרת הוה צריך תלמוד, כי בודאי יש כאן איזה הוראה בענין האמונה אשר קשור לסיפור יציאת מצרים.

אכן פשט הדבר הוא כי מאחד שבריאת העולם התגדל בצורה טבעית, על כן יש מקום לבעל דין לטעות ח"ו ולהעלות במחשבתו מחשבת פיגול שכאלו נעשה הכל מאליו, לזה בא הכתוב ואמר: "אנכי ד' אלוהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים", משום שבבני ישראל מצרים שם שבר הש"ת את כל מערכות הטבע, ועל ידי כן הראה בחוש שהוא לבדו עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים, וכי הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים. ואף כל כוחות הטבע מסורים בידו, ובאות ראו כל עמי הארץ עין בעין כי שם ד' נקרא עלינו, כי הוא אמר ויהי הוא ציוה ויעמוד, כי בציוד ד' נעשה חושך במצרים אשר לא ראו איש את אחיו ולא קמו איש מתחתיו, וברצונו יתברך נתמלאו כל רחובות מצרים בחיות טורפות וידעו להבדיל בין ישראל לעמים.

ומכל אלו המופתים הוכח בעליל שאין שום כח טבעי בעולם, וכי כל הנהגת העולם בכללות ובפרטות הוא כח אלוהי עלינו, וכמו שהרגיש הכותב "למען תדע כי אני ד' בקרב הארץ", וכל זה כדי לשבר את קליפת פרעה הקשה שצוהק ואומר לא ידעת את ד', ולזה בא התשובה במכות הללו למען תדע כי אני ד'.

וכשם שבציאת מצרים ראו הכל עין בעין שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא לבדו עשה את כל הנסים האלו, מבלי להוודק חלילה לעודה מצד חוקי הטבע, כך עלינו להאמין בלבנו תמיד שהבורא ית"ש מנהיג את העולם תמיד, ואין שום דבר נפעל

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spend this momentous night with the *Tzaddik*, or go home and be with his family. R’ Yerucham said that he should go home instead; better to hear the story of the Exodus from his own father, then from someone else - even the holy

מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

The *Gemara* states that all *matzah* used on *Pesach* must be baked exclusively with water that “rested” overnight, called “*Mayim Shelanu*.” (פסחים מב.) The custom is to draw water from a spring, well, or river during the twilight hour and leave it in a cool place for at least one full night. The water should not be drawn or stored in a metal vessel, since metal conducts heat and causes the water to become warm. This encourages rapid fermentation of the dough that is mixed with the water, and cannot be used for baking *matzos*. The water is thus “שמור” (guarded) - it requires an extra measure of exertion and vigilance, a pre-*Pesach* labor of love that demonstrates that we are now slaves of *Hashem*, not slaves of Pharaoh.

One year, as the **Bobover Rebbe, R’ Bentzion Halberstam ZT”L HY”D (Kedushas Tzion)** was walking with a group of his *chassidim* to the river edge to fulfill the custom of drawing “*Mayim Shelanu*” for the *Pesach matzos*, it suddenly got very dark outside, with ominous thunderclouds overspreading the area, portending rain showers and stormy weather. One of the *chassidim* motioned to his friend and urged him to run back to home and, “*Breng du ahehr, der parasol far dem Rebbe.*” (“Bring here an umbrella for the *Rebbe*.”)

When the *Rebbe* heard these words, he stopped walking. He looked up at the darkening sky and then with a half-smile, he shook his head and remarked tongue-in-cheek, “Look here. We are on our way to do a *mitzvah* in commemoration of how the Master of the World had mercy on His children in Egypt and removed ‘פרעה׳ס עול’ (the yoke of Pharaoh) from our heads. And now, you want to go and bring a ‘Parasol’ to cover our heads?”

The Nazi occupation of Salonika, Greece began in 1941, and with it, the persecution of Jews, as it had in other parts of Europe. In 1943 the Jews of Thessaloniki were forced into a ghetto near the rail lines, and soon after, the Nazis began deporting them to concentration and labor camps, resulting in the near-extinction of Greek Jewry.

Yakob Masito was among the tens of thousands of Greek deportees to Auschwitz. Together with his entire family, he found himself herded into a cattle car and shipped away to a distant location in the spring of 1943. Fortunately, he was part of the small percentage of Greek Jews who were spared immediate death.

The prisoners who greeted them upon their arrival in Auschwitz seemed dispirited and despondent. As far as they were concerned, all hope was lost. They had seen too much death and destruction in the camps to believe that there was any hope for the future. The new arrivals from Greece, however, had an unusual advantage over the others, which kept them in good stead; due to their unfamiliarity with *Yiddish*, Jews from Greece kept to themselves. As a result, the pervasive feeling of death and despondency that overtook the prisoners from Europe who had already experienced the worst humankind had to offer, was not in place. For the newly arriving Jews of Greece, the taste of freedom was still tantalizingly fresh. For Yakob Masito and his friends who were sent to the right - to life in the concentration camp - their sense of hopefulness was prevalent, and the new arrivals refused to give in to despair.

Upon arrival, every inmate received two utensils - a bowl and a spoon. These two utensils were vital for survival. No utensils, no food. As it was, it was nearly impossible to complete the inhuman tasks their captors demanded of them on their meager daily ration. If a prisoner had no utensils to eat with, he was finished.

So, Yakob Masito accepted the bowl and spoon he was given and guarded it well. But in truth, Yakob was less worried about what he would eat that very day or the next - or the next after that. What he was most worried about was the upcoming holiday, and specifically, how and where would he and his friends obtain *matzos* for *Pesach*?

Although the other Greek Jews may not have been as concerned, Yakob was obsessed with this problem. He schemed and pondered, but a solution eluded him. Until an incident occurred and the problem was solved.

Yakob and several of his friends were assigned to work on the railroad line. It was arduous, back-breaking labor. Occasionally, though, Yakob and his friends were able to make contact with the local populace. It was during one of these rare times that he got lucky. After describing to a Polish farmer what he needed, the Pole understood and agreed to procure two *matzos* for him - but for a price. “Where are we going to get the money?” Yakob’s friends questioned.

Yakob was silent for a long time as the group of men returned to their work. His mind continued to mull over the possibilities. They were so close to having *matzos*; surely there was a way.

And then, as if touched by a Divine light of inspiration, he had a brainstorm. “I have it!” he shouted.

As the group watched, curious to see what plan he would come up with, Yakob extracted his spoon from his pouch

Chofetz Chaim! Because when it comes to instilling *Emunah* - belief in the Almighty, in a person, there is nothing at all that compares to hearing these words of inspiration from one’s father.

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did on behalf of the Egyptian people, so too, in our youth we have to think about the imminent famine of old age. We have to learn not to waste even one moment of our precious youth so that when we get older we won’t regret, in retrospect, all the days of our precious youth.

The wisest of all men, *Shlomo HaMelech* already warns us about this: “*So remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and those years will arrive of which you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’*” (קהלת יב-א) However, this is the paradox of life. Youth has strength and energy, but not the wisdom to realize what it has. When one gets older and has the wisdom and understanding, by then his strength has already left him.

משכו וקחו לכם צאן למשפחתכם ושחמו הפסח (שמות יב-כא)

On *Shabbos HaGadol*, the Jewish people in Egypt were commanded to tie up the sheep they had acquired to use for the first *Korban Pesach*. This occurred just four days before the sacrifice was actually brought. The **Mechilta** asks why the Jews needed to take the sheep four days before bringing the *Korban*; wouldn’t taking it right before it was needed suffice? The Mechilta answers that the Jews in Egypt were themselves steeped in idol- worship, the largest denial of G-d’s providence. In order to provide them with time to extricate themselves from the grips of idol-worship, they were presented with a commandment to take the main object of worship of the Egyptians, and set it aside as a sacrifice. This way, they were removing themselves from the idol-worship they had gotten used to, and setting themselves aside for the service of *Hashem*.

In Jerusalem, there is a custom on *Erev Pesach* to recite the *posukim* related to the *Korban Pesach* at the site of the *Kosel Hama’aravi* (Western Wall). This custom has been practiced for thousands of years, as Jews wish to feel close to the place where the sacrifices were actually brought in the times of the *Bais Hamikdash*. Approximately 100 years ago, and just a few short years before he passed away, **R’ Avraham Simcha Horowitz ZT”L of Baranov** (grandson of **R’ Eliezer Horowitz ZT”L of Dzhikov**), was walking with an attendant through *Shaar Shechem* (Gate of Shechem) on his way to the *Kosel*, on *Erev Pesach*. As they passed through the entranceway, a number of Arab shepherds were leading their flocks of sheep down the dusty road, to the *shuk* - the main market-place. The sheep were bleating unusually loud - so loud that a person could barely hear himself think!

The attendant remarked that he never heard such a loud din from flocks of sheep before, and suddenly R’ Avraham Simcha looked pensive. After a moment, he replied, “You heard sheep bleating loudly. I heard something different. The sheep were crying out and saying, ‘Woe unto us! Had

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we been worthy, we would now be in the *Bais Hamikdash*, being offered up on the altar, as a sacrifice to the Almighty, on this, the day when the *Korban Pesach* was brought. Unfortunately now, we are not worthy and have fallen into the hands of these impure Arabs”

ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא אשר פסח על בתי בני” (הגדה של פסח)
According to the **Ariza’l**, when the Jewish people were physically enslaved in Egypt, the power of speech was also in a state of exile. Hence the name “*Mitzrayim*” (Egypt) alludes to the “מצר הגרון” - “*Constriction of the Throat*,” that can interfere with the process by which intellect is expressed in words. That is why Moshe was “כבד פה” - “*Heavy of Speech*” (שמות ד-ט) - since he was the collective soul of *Bnei Yisroel*, his speech was also enslaved.

After describing the oppression of the Jewish people in Egypt, the *Torah* writes: “*The King of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed because of the bondage. They called out, and their cries rose up to Hashem.*” (שמות ב-כג) At first glance, this is hard to understand. When Pharaoh died, their situation should have become easier, and therefore they should have cried out less. Why does the *Torah* only mention that they cried after Pharaoh died?

R’ Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlit’a answers that when Pharaoh was in full control, and the exile was at its worst, the Jewish people were unable to cry out at all. They could not even open their mouths to pray to *Hashem*. Only after Pharaoh died were they able to pray, and then the process of redemption could begin. Since speech was in exile in Egypt, the Exodus from Egypt was a liberation of the power of speech. According to the **Arizal**, the very word “פסח” is a conjunction of “פה שח” - “*mouth speaks*.” For when the Jewish people were liberated from Egypt, their speech was also released from exile, and they were able to speak words of holiness, to pray, and to study *Torah*. That is why we celebrate *Pesach* by reading the *Haggadah*. At the *Seder*, we are obligated to speak about the story and the more we say about it, the better.

והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר (שמות יג-ח)

The requirement to “*tell over to your son on that day ... how we went out of Egypt*,” is a Biblical injunction that promotes the communication of faith in *Hashem* from one generation to the next. Although it is not an actual commandment to “*tell your son*,” for if your son is not present, one may tell it to another family member, however, from the son’s point of view, there is certainly an advantage to hearing the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* from his own father.

A boy in the *Mirrer Yeshivah* in Europe once had an opportunity to go to the **Chofetz Chaim ZT”L** in Radin, for the *Pesach Seder*. He asked his *mashgiach*, **R’ Yerucham Levovitz ZT”L**, if he should grab this unique opportunity to

the night of *Pesach*. We are specifically involved in physical work because that is how our spirituality is tested. We are not commanded to say the entire *Tehillim* in preparation for *Pesach*, or daven a few extra times a day. No. We are actually put in real-life situations, i.e. your sister threw out your prized stamp collection or your brother spilled bleach on your new suit! Tough, annoying and disturbing situations that can cause people’s interpersonal relations between one and another to break down. However, through the actual physical labor and interaction with others, we are thereby able to work on and perfect our *middos*.

So what is it that we are really aiming to achieve with the million-and-one things that need to be taken care of for *Pesach*? The real goal is to experience *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, to refine our character and work to truly “Passover” all the minor and major aggravations and difficulties that arise in our lives. If we do so, we become fitting vessels into which *Hashem* will shower His gifts, blessings and miracles.

If on the *Leil HaSeder*, after the wine, *matzah*, *Sipur* - recounting the open miracles of *Hashem* and singing His praises - one does not feel truly uplifted and elevated to a new level in *avodas Hashem*, then he might as well start all over again because he missed the whole point. Now, in *Chutz L’Aretz* (the Diaspora) at least they have a second chance - a second *Seder* night! But here in *Eretz Yisroel*, we have to get it right the first - and only - time!

Leil HaSeder is a shot in the arm. It is an injection of belief and trust in *Hashem*. YOU must feel as if YOU were there, and YOU came out of *Mitzrayim*. YOU saw amazing miracles, Divine Retribution, how *Hashem* runs this world measure for measure. YOU learned about reward and punishment and the great love that *Hashem* has for His people. YOU felt the great belief the Jewish people have in *Hashem* and YOU saw the beauty and depth and awesome power of the One and only G-d - and YOU are a changed person.

והגדת לבנך ביום הזה לאמר

זה קרבן אהרן ובניו...מחציתה בבקר ומחציתה בערב (צו ו-ג)

A Jew must endeavor to serve *Hashem* in the morning as well as in the evening, in youth as well as in old age. In youth, the body is healthy and strong and man is in full possession of his vigor and energy. However, his mental faculties are still not fully matured. In old age, his mental faculties are fully matured, but his physical strength has declined. Accordingly, says the **Reisha Rav R’ Aharon Levine ZT”L (Hadrash V’Heiyun)** the morning sacrifice should remind man to accept the Sovereignty of Heaven when the sun of his own life in on the rise, and to not allow himself to be led astray. The sacrifice which man is required to offer at dusk should teach him that even when the sun of his life is about to set, he must not grow lax in his

A story is told about **R’ Yisroel Salanter ZT”L**, who stayed at an inn for *Shabbos* and was horrified to see the innkeeper smoking on *Shabbos*. R’ Yisroel questioned him about it and the innkeeper replied, “If there was really a G-d, He would kill me on the spot! The fact that I am still here proves that there is no G-d, and I can do whatever I want!”

R’ Yisroel looked around and asked the innkeeper, “Tell me, what are all these certificates on the wall?”

The innkeeper proudly replied, “My daughter is an outstanding dancer. These certificates are all hers.”

R’ Yisroel seemed interested and asked if he could speak with the girl. When she arrived, R’ Yisroel asked her, “How do I know that you are really a dancer? All these certificates could be fake. Prove it to me - show me how you can dance?”

The girl looked at this Rabbi incredulously and sneered, “I should dance for you? I don’t have to prove myself to you! My certificates are my testimony. If you don’t believe them, well, that is YOUR problem!”

R’ Yisroel then turned to the innkeeper and smiled. “*Hashem* doesn’t have to bring a thunderbolt to strike down every nudnik who says he doesn’t believe. You want to see *Hashem*’s ‘certificate’? That is *Yetzias Mitzrayim*!”

The exodus from Egypt was indeed an earth-shattering event in a geographical location. It was an urgent, fast-paced turn of events that brought the Jewish people from being slaves in Egypt to being free men with a higher purpose and goal. The **Sefer Likutei Yehuda** on *Parshas Bo* explains that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was a *koach* that was placed into every one of us to be able to pull ourselves out of darkness and despair, decadence and difficulty. It is the power in every Jew to turn his life around in a split second and jump right into the loving outstretched arms of the *Ribbono shel Olam* Himself, who is always waiting and expecting His Beloved Son, *Yisroel*, to emerge from his personal “*Mitzrayim*” and live a life of *dveikus* with *Hashem*.

endeavors, but must gather new strength by serving *Hashem*.

The job of a *Yid* is to fill himself with knowledge of *Torah*, and to acquire fear of Heaven, and to work on his characteristic traits to perfect his soul which will eventually return to *Hashem* Who created it. **R’ Sholom Schwadron ZT”L** explains that when one is young he is very energetic and has a lot of strength to accomplish. Also his *middos* are still soft and it is easy to straighten them out. However, when one is old, he loses both advantages. He doesn't have as much energy or strength. And his *middos* are already hardened by years of habit and are much harder to change.

Just like in the days of plenty you need wisdom to visualize the upcoming famine not to waste the surplus but to put it away for the imminent famine, as *Yosef HaTzaddik*



and held it up for everyone to see.

“A spoon?” the others laughed, “The Pole is not going to trade *matzah* for a little spoon!”

“No, no,” said Jakob, smiling, “just watch.”

The men stared as Jakob placed his precious spoon, his life’s support, on the railroad tracks next to him. Then, he waited. It wasn’t long before a train roared by, flattening the spoon into a long pointy tool.

“And now,” Jakob announced with a wide grin, “we use this to pry out our gold teeth!” Jakob held the elongated utensil as it glinted in the sun. Slowly, painfully, Jakob pried and prodded until he had extracted all of his gold teeth. His friends quickly followed suit. When they put together a considerable amount of gold, they offered this unusual currency to the Pole, and he happily accepted their payment for the two round *matzos*. That year, on the night of *Pesach*, Jakob and his friends made *kiddush* and fulfilled the *mitzvah* that they came to with such resolute determination.

Many years later, at Jakob Masito’s eighty-first birthday party, he told over this story. All the guests sat in openmouthed wonder at the devotion and sacrifice of Jakob and his friends. “We didn’t have enough *matzah* for everyone to have the correct amount,” Jakob said, harking back to that dark period of time, “but at least we all had a little taste of freedom.”

There are those who “break their teeth” on a minimal amount of *matzah* each year, complaining about the difficulty in eating the bread of freedom. Yet Jakob Masito literally “broke his teeth” just to eat a small piece of *matzah* on *Pesach*.

אלו עשר מצות שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצריים במצרים (הנהגה של פסח)

The great *Rebbe* of Berditchev, **R’ Levi Yitzchok (Roskov) ZT”L**, was renowned for his tremendous erudition in *Torah*, his love for every single Jew, and his advocacy before the Heavenly court on behalf of the Jewish people. R’ Levi Yitzchok was known as the “defense attorney” for the Jewish people, because it was believed that he could intercede on their behalf before *Hashem*. He was, therefore, one of the most beloved leaders of Eastern European Jewry and he made the name of the little village of Berditchev everlastingly famous.

The story of how R’ Levi Yitzchok came to Berditchev is no less wondrous than the man himself. R’ Levi Yitzchok had been appointed to lead a number of towns before he arrived in Berditchev, including Ritchvol, Zelichov and Pinsk. While still in Zelichov, he had constant run-ins with the local population who did not appreciate his brand of *Chassidic* thought. For the length of time that he and his family lived in Zelichov, they did not know from tranquility.

One year, on the night of *Pesach*, a prominent member of the Zelichov community was hosting his relatives at the *Pesach seder*, who had come to him from the distant city of Berditchev. The guest was a wealthy man who had clout and importance in his city and he was curious to meet this young rabbi, who had not long ago been chosen as the Rabbi in Zelichov. When their *Seder* had concluded, relatively early in the night, he asked his host if he could take him to the *Rav*’s home, so he can get to meet him. The host was not a fan of R’ Levi Yitzchok and refused to go along with his guest, however, he did show him where the young rabbi’s house was and told him he can go by himself if he pleased.

The guest from Berditchev did just that and when he reached the rabbi’s home, he stealthily stood by an open window and listened in to R’ Levi Yitchok’s *Seder*. He heard the young rabbi discussing the story of the exodus and answering the questions that his children posed to him.

All seemed normal and routine until the rabbi got up to the part about the ten plagues that were inflicted on Egypt. As he listened from the window, he heard R’ Levi Yitzchok reciting the plagues loud and clear, but each one with an addition.

“*Dam* (blood) - the Russian Czar; *Tzefardea* (frogs) - the emperor of Austro-Hungary; *Kinim* (lice) - the German Kaiser; *Arov* (wild animals) *Dever* (pestilence) *Shechin* (boils) - the King of Saxony; *Barad ... Arbeh ... Choshech ... Makas Bechoros*.” With each plague recited, R’ Levi Yitzchok mentioned a different head of state, or country. The man at the window was amused and shook his head as if to say, he understood why his host and the other townspeople had a problem with this rabbi. After that, he left the window and went back to his lodging.

As mentioned, this man was quite a wealthy businessman and his business interests took him to various parts of the European continent, and beyond. Within a few short weeks after *Pesach*, an interesting thing happened: wherever he traveled, he learned that the ruler of that province had come down with a mysterious and secret ailment. Whether it was a rare blood disorder of the Czar of Russia, or an infestation of lice at the palace of the German Kaiser, strange and unusual things were happening all over the world. Countries were being overrun by hordes of wild animals, frogs or locust, hailstorms that seemed to pop-up out of nowhere, and even a solar eclipse that brought darkness to one region of the world. It was when he found himself in Saxony, and he learned that the constitutional ruler of Saxony came down with a rare case of leprosy, that produced boils and a skin infections all over his body, that he realized that the young rabbi he had seen and heard in Zelichov most definitely had something to do with these phenomena. The man was no ordinary *Torah* scholar.