



EST. 1916

שמע קולנו

SHEMA KOLEINU: PESACH 5781

DIVREI TORAH FROM OUR REBBEIM, FACULTY, TALMIDIM, AND ALUMNI



OUR SHEMA KOLEINU IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF
RABBI HY ARBESFELD '49 הרב חיים בן אברהם
IN HONOR OF HIS FIRST YAHRZEIT.

Introduction

To Know And To Thank: The Essence Of The *Pesach* Seder Experience

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The evening of the *Pesach Seder* is certainly one of the busiest and most exciting evenings of the year. Many, many hours of advance preparation – whether cleaning, shopping, cooking, setting the table, packing, organizing, and whatever else – go into making the *Seder* the special experience that it is, and when the time to begin finally arrives, the family gathers at the table with much anticipation. We are, of course, well aware that there are many active *mitzvos* to be performed on this evening – eating *matzah* and *maror*, drinking the *arba kosos*, *heseibah* (reclining), retelling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, eating a sumptuous *yom tov* meal, reciting *Hallel*, and more. But while there may perhaps be some challenges inherent in properly fulfilling some of these *mitzvos*, we more than likely are able to discharge our obligations with relative ease if we put our minds – and mouths – to it.

It is worthwhile, however, to consider as well what inner feelings we should try to have on this exalted evening, what mental state we should try to achieve, what emotions we should try to create, and hence what thoughts we should try to walk away from the *Seder* with. The *mishnah* in *Pesachim* (116b), in a passage that is actually incorporated into the *Haggadah* towards the end of the *Maggid* section, gives us some guidance in this regard, teaching that in every generation, one is obligated to view oneself as if he personally came out of Egypt. The Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 7:6) rules accordingly. What we must each do, then, is somehow imagine that we too were slaves and have now been redeemed. That is the mental and emotional feeling we should try to produce at the *Seder*, perhaps by means of, but certainly in addition to, performing the evening's various ritual *mitzvos*.

But this, to be sure, is no easy task. I've never been to Egypt; how can I view myself as having just left there? I've never been enslaved; how can I imagine what it feels like to be set free? If anything, the requirement presented in this *mishnah* makes the attainment of the desired mental and emotional state of mind even more difficult. By comparison, even consuming the requisite amounts of *matzoh*, *maror*, and wine seems easy!

Perhaps we can develop an approach based upon a famous idea shared by the Ramban in his commentary at the very end of *Parshas Bo* (*Shemos* 13:16). In an important discussion of the role of miracles and the reason why we have so many *mitzvos*, aside from those related to *Pesach*, which serve to remind us of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Ramban states emphatically that what *Hashem* truly wants of every human being is simply that he should know that *Hashem* exists and is always present, and that he should thank Him for what He has given him. Applying this to the newly redeemed slave, we may suggest that his experience enabled him both to see *Hashem* during his dark moments, as He suddenly appeared in order to lead him from anguish to joy, and to thank Him once the salvation was complete. And maybe it is precisely these two mindsets that we are therefore supposed to strive to attain ourselves on *Pesach* night – the awareness of *Hashem's* presence in our lives and the sense of gratitude towards him for whatever we have.

While it is true that we have never been slaves in Egypt, we have all experienced dark moments in our lives, times when we feel that everything has gone wrong and that nobody is on our side. For many of us, perhaps during this past year, with its quarantines, its deprivation of many things that we enjoy, and its gen-

eral disruption of the life to which we had grown accustomed, there were times when we felt like we were slaves, if not in the sense of engaging in back-breaking labor on behalf of someone else, in the sense of having absolutely no control over what we could and could not do. At the *Pesach Seder*, it is imperative that we recall that even at these times, *Hashem* is still with us, even if He is sometimes hard to perceive.

Towards the beginning of *Maggid*, we praise Hashem by saying “*Baruch HaMakom...*” *HaMakom*, translated as “the Omnipresent,” is of course a description of *Hashem*; the question is why we use this particular description at this particular juncture. HaRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *zt'l*, once noted that this description is used when we wish to highlight the fact that *Hashem* is indeed present specifically when one might think that He is not, that He has abandoned him. When we comfort a mourner, who surely often feels abandoned and alone after having lost a loved one, we say “*HaMakom yenachem eschem...*” When we *daven* after *Krias HaTorah* on Mondays and Thursdays on behalf of our Jewish brethren who are suffering, who may feel neglected by *Hashem*, we say “*HaMakom yerachem aleihem...*” When we begin to *daven* on *Yom Kippur*, a time we all feel distant from *Hashem* because of our sins (see the words of the Rambam, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:6-7), we say “*al da’as HaMakom...*” In each of these cases, we remind ourselves and others of the omnipresence of *Hashem* when it is difficult to sense Him. And so too at the *Seder*, when we get ready to describe the slavery of our ancestors in Egypt, we say “*Baruch HaMakom...*,” declaring that despite His apparent absence, *Hashem* was, is, and always will be present, and that such is the case in our own lives as well.

At the same time, we are also obligated to express our enduring appreciation of *Hashem*. The *pesukim* that form the basis of the main part of *Maggid*, which are broken down and analyzed phrase by phrase in the *Haggadah*, beginning with the words “*Arami oved avi...*,” come, as indicated by the aforementioned *mishnah* in *Pesachim* (*ibid.*), from the text which the *Torah* commands is to be recited by the Jewish farmer who brings his *bikkurim*, his first fruits, to the *Beis Hamikdash* as an expression of thanks (*Devarim* 26:5-8). Why cite this particular text? Perhaps because the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* is one which expresses the notion of *hakaras hatov*, acknowledging and appreciating the good which *Hashem*, in this case, has provided. And it is *hakaras hatov* that is a centerpiece of the *Seder* experience as well. So important is this idea of being grateful for what *Hashem* has given us that the *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 1:4) states that it is for the sake of the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* (among other things) that the world was created! Presumably, the message is not that this *mitzvah* is itself so important (as compared to others), but that what it represents – *hakaras hatov* – is.

Despite the challenges and the bumps in the road that we all often face, we all certainly have much to be thankful for as well. On *Pesach* night, in addition to acknowledging the presence of *Hashem* in our lives even when things are not going as well as we might want, we must also look for those things in our lives which are going well, which are good, over which we can rejoice, and for which we can thank *Hashem*. There are times when we take many of His gifts to us for granted, and we sometimes even demonstrate an air of entitlement; this is inappropriate, as displaying proper gratitude, as we have demonstrated, is such a basic requirement. Knowing that *Hashem* is present in our lives and cultivating feelings of gratitude towards Him for what He does for us, the two values which the Ramban says are what *Hashem* wants us to demonstrate, are likewise central to the *Pesach Seder* experience.

As we sit at the *Seder* this year, let us try to reflect upon acknowledging the presence of *Hashem* in our lives at all times, and upon the many things in our lives for which we ought to thank him – and in this way come to the mindset with which we can fulfill the obligation to consider ourselves as though we have personally been redeemed

Chag Kasher Visameiach to all.

A Dynamic Dialogue

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Stories have a powerful role in the narrative of a nation. They shape us and our national identity. During *Pesach*, particularly at the *Seder*, we relive and recount our Egypt experience, feeling both the slavery and then the freedom that we experienced in *Mitzrayim*. At the centerpiece of this narrative is a series of *pesukim* from the *Torah* that we use to retell this journey. If we were writing the *Haggadah* and wanted to choose *pesukim* that would capture the story of our slavery and subsequent redemption, we would likely focus on *Sefer Shemos*. And yet, the *pesukim* that are used to tell the story are a series of *pesukim* known as *Arami Oved Avi*. These *pesukim*, from *Sefer Devarim*, are recited by the Jewish farmer when he brings his *bikkurim* to the *Beis Hamidkash*. He would ceremoniously proclaim these *pesukim*, tersely recounting Jewish history, recalling our slavery in *Mitzrayim*, followed by our redemption, culminating in the construction of the *Beis Hamidkash*. This very brief series of *pesukim* are cryptic and rely on extensive *derashos* of Chazal to make them comprehensible to us. These *derashos* serve as the accompanying text of *Maggid*. When setting up the *Haggadah*, why was this cryptic, more difficult text chosen, rather than the comprehensive, detail laden version of *Sefer Shemos* that would be much easier for us to understand?

Rav Soloveitchik *zt"l* answered that perhaps the section of *Arami Oved Avi* is chosen precisely because of its difference from the easier to understand narrative of *Sefer Shemos*. Had we used *Sefer Shemos*, each person would have been able to open the *Haggadah* and read through it by himself. The *Torah Shebichsav* storyline is easy to understand even by ourselves. However, in order to grasp the *pesukim* of *Arami Oved Avi*, we rely on the accompanying *Torah Sheba'al Peh*, demonstrating that understanding *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* requires a vibrant multigenerational dialogue, which is integral to learning *Torah Sheba'al Peh*. The *Seder* is not just about reliving Jewish history; rather, it is about the transmission of our heritage, giving over our system of *emunah* and passing down our *mesorah* to our children. The *Seder* is an active, engaging dialogue that requires us to understand the complexities of *emunah* and our national and personal history. The cryptic *pesukim* of *Arami Oved Avi* are therefore the perfect point of departure for this conversation.

With this idea in mind, our Shema Koleinu is especially important, because it reflects an effort by the *Rebbeim* and *talmidim* of the Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy/Yeshiva University High School for Boys to engage the broader community in a dialogue of *Talmud Torah* and the transmission of our deep and profound *mesorah*. This *kuntres* is the result of the efforts of many individuals. Thank you to Rabbi Dov Emerson who created the vision for this project and nurtured it throughout the process. Thank you to Rabbi Shimon Schenker and Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson for their ongoing efforts for Shema Koleinu. Thank you to our Editors-in-Chief, Shimi Kaufman ('21) and Yisroel Hochman ('21), for leading this project.

It is our deep honor to dedicate this volume in memory of Rabbi Hy Arbesfeld ('49), הרב היים בן אברהם *zt"l*, in honor of his first *yahrzeit*. Rabbi Arbesfeld had a profound impact on our *yeshiva*. His enthusiasm and commitment to *Torah* learning and ensuring that every *talmid* could afford an MTA education was remarkable. The excitement with which he described his high school experience was inspirational! May the *Divrei Torah* that were so central to his life be an ongoing *zechus* for Rabbi Arbesfeld *zt"l* and *ybd"l* his family.

Best wishes for a *Chag Kasher Visameiach*.

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Mechiras Chametz

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Mechiras chametz sometimes gets a bad rap. The widespread practice of observant Jews selling their *chametz* to a non-Jew prior to *Pesach*, and thus avoiding the prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* and *bal yimatzei* while preserving the *chametz* for repossession after *Pesach*, is sometimes seen as a way of not having one's cake and eating it too; an evasion that perhaps fulfills the technical imperative of the *Torah* directive (and perhaps not), yet seems to be artificial and contrived in nature. The ambivalence toward this practice (as well as other "sale" approaches, which are subject to varying degrees of controversy) is reflected in the joke that is told about a rabbinic ban on smoking: the orthodox Jews aren't worried, as they will simply sell their lungs to a non-Jew.

This conflicted attitude is played out in the *halachic* literature. True, the *Tosefta* (*Pesachim* 2:6-7) does speak of a situation in which a Jew, finding himself stuck at sea as *Pesach* approaches, transfers ownership of his *chametz* to a non-Jewish fellow traveler, and reclaims it after the holiday. However, the impression is one of an unplanned, non-ideal, and isolated incident; the current reality, where entire communities plan in advance to preserve their stocks of *chametz* through annually scheduled arrangements with their local rabbi, appears to be a significant expansion of the depicted scenario.

A more commonly heard complaint is that the sale seems like a joke: the *chametz* does not leave the original owner's residence (something some *poskim* insisted should happen (See *Terumas HaDeshen* 119 and Bach, OC 448, *d"h kasav.*); the purchaser does not appear interested in actually taking possession of the *chametz*; (See *Machatzis HaShekel*, O.C. 448:4; *Responsa Chasam Sofer*, YD 310; *Responsa Lihoros Natan*, II, 27); rarely, if ever, does the seller have to open his doors and cabinets to the new owner of his food; and the *chametz* invariably reverts to its original ownership immediately after *Pesach*.

Rabbeinu Yerucham (*Netiv V*, part V, 46a), commenting on the *Tosefta's* ruling, asserts that one who utilizes this option should not engage in *ha'aramah* (evasion of the *halachah*). The *Beis Yosef* (*Orach Chayim* 448:5) questions this requirement: the entire plan appears to be a *ha'aramah*, and yet, it is permitted!

Persistent Controversy

Controversy over the sale has persisted over the generations, despite its increasing usage, and while some of the objections focused on the more problem-fraught method of a rabbi purchasing his congregants' *chametz* in order to sell it to a non-Jew (See, for example, R. Uri Shraga Feivush Toubish, *Reponsa Uri Vi-Yish'i*, 121), it is clear that some great rabbinic authorities (See, for example, *Responsa Shoel U'Meishiv*, II, 2:77) objected even to the more prevalent current practice, where the rabbi does not purchase the *chametz*, but rather acts as an agent to sell it to the purchaser. (On this distinction, see also R. Ya'akov Ariel, *Resp. Bi'ohalah Shel Torah*, I, 59)

The *Bechor Shor* (*Pesachim* 21a) asserts that *mechiras chametz* is indeed a *ha'aramah*, and for that reason is ineffective against a biblical prohibition of owning *chametz*. He assumes, however, that the *chametz* at hand is only subject to a rabbinical prohibition, because, as the Talmud (*Pesachim* 10a) states in the context of *bedikas chametz*, the *bitul* of *chametz* is effective to negate the *Torah* prohibition. (Others who accepted this premise include *Kezros Hachoshen*, 194:4; R. Meshulam Igra, *Responsa* 39:1, and R. Natan Note Kahane, *Resp. Divrei Rinanah*, 30 and see the extensive references in the footnotes, # 11, by R. Yitzchak Hershkowitz). See

also *R. Yitzchak Shmuel Shechter, Responsa Yashiv Yitzchak X, O.C. 9.*

However, many *achronim* (*Mekor Chaim* 448:9; *Responsa Minchas Yitzchak*, VIII:41) challenged that premise, noting that the *chametz* that is negated is not the same *chametz* as that which is sold, and thus a biblical prohibition would still attach; as such, one who would utilize *mechiras chametz* must be comfortable saying that it is effective on a *Torah* level. (The Kogalover Rav offers a creative explanation of the *Bechor Shor*'s view in his *Responsa Eretz Tzvi*, I, 84.)

Indeed, there are many who have adopted a policy not to sell *chametz gamur*, presumably reflecting a lack of confidence in the sale's efficacy together with the assumption that the *chametz* in question is not *batel*. (See R. Asher Weiss, *Haggadas Minchas Asher* p. 280) Nonetheless, the acceptance of *mechiras chametz* in all forms is widespread, with Jews purchasing *chametz* knowing in advance it will be sold, and some *poskim* even considering the question of whether it should be an obligation to sell one's *chametz* as part of the appropriate safeguards for *Pesach* (See *Responsa Lihoros Natan* VI, 25).

In Defense of Mechiras Chametz

Perhaps an explanation can be offered for the embrace by so much of observant Jewry of the embattled *mechiras chametz*. It would begin by considering the prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* and *bal yimatzei* that the sale is meant to address. The Ran (*Pesachim* 1a, *d"h umah*) asserts that these prohibitions serve as a kind of "*siyag min haTorah*" (See *R. Yosef Engel, Lekach Tov, 8:1*): in essence, the *Torah* is really primarily concerned that we should not eat *chametz*. However, if *chametz* is kept in one's possession, there is a great risk that in a distracted moment, or in the course of a semi-awake midnight snack, one might prepare himself a meal of the normally-permitted *chametz*. To avoid this eventuality, all *chametz* must be removed from one's possession.

By embracing *mechiras chametz*, *Klal Yisrael* is declaring that there are two things that can prevent them from eating *chametz*: not having any, and the transgression of *gezel*. If the *chametz* is in one's house, but is off-limits because of the prohibition of stealing, that is enough to keep the Jews away from its consumption. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether or not the *chametz* will ever be picked up by its purchaser, or whether or not the sale will be reversed after *Pesach*. All that does matter is that during *Pesach*, the *chametz* legally belongs to another; that is enough to make sure it will be untouched. In other words, *Klal Yisrael* is willing to stake its "*kareis*" on its commitment to avoiding theft.

In this context, it is worth noting the words of the *Semag* (*Mitzvos Asei* #73), who states that the exile has gone on too long because of deficiencies in honesty and integrity in dealing with the nations of the world. When that problem is present, redemption can not take place; it would be a *chilul Hashem* for God to redeem a nation that is perceived as immoral. As such, perhaps the practice of *mechiras chametz* is a conscious decision, at a time when we focus on *geulah*, to enter into a monetary relationship with a non-Jewish person, and to honor the integrity of that relationship with one's spiritual life. Such an attitude, taken with proper seriousness, might just bring the *geulah*, one step at a time.

Biyur Chametz

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Rabbi Soloveitchik On the Destruction Of Chametz

The *mishnah* (*Temurah* 33b) divides *issurei hana'ah*, objects from which benefit is prohibited and thus must be disposed of, into two categories: *nikbarin*, those which are to be buried, and *nisrafin*, those which are to be burned. *Nikbarin* includes any such prohibited object that the *Torah* does not require us to eliminate through burning. The *Mishnah* then states that the method of disposal of these two kinds of objects may not be reversed: one may neither bury *nisrafin* nor burn *nikbarin*. According to the Rabbis (*Pesachim* 21a), *biyur chametz*, the elimination of *chametz*, may be done in any fashion. *Chametz* would thus seem to belong to the category of *nikbarin*. How then, asks *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chayim* 445:1), is it permissible to burn *chametz*?

The *Gra* (*Orach Chayim* 445:1) maintains that even the Rabbis are of the view that ideally one should burn the *chametz*. In fact, this is implied by the language in the *mishnah*, which states that one may even ("af") eliminate the *chametz* through other means, implying that it is a secondary option; furthermore, there is frequent mention at the beginning of *Pesachim* of the rules regarding the burning of the *chametz* without any indication that the majority opinion does not specifically require burning at all. Evidently, then, *chametz* is different from other *nikbarin* in that it is preferable to burn it, even though secondary options certainly exist. *Chametz*, therefore, not only may be burned, but should be burned.

We can utilize this idea to explain another *halachah* as well. The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 21b) states that *chametz* that is singed before it becomes prohibited on *Erev Pesach* is permitted on *Pesach*. Some of the *Rishonim* (*Tosfos*, *Pesachim* 21b, *d"h chorcho kodem zmano*) are of the view that the statement of the *Gemara* deals with the case where the *chametz* has been rendered inedible; only then is it permitted to eat this *chametz* on *Pesach*; others (*Rashi*, *Pesachim* 21b, *d"h lo tzericha*) require the *chametz* to have been transformed to the point that it no longer appears or tastes like *chametz*. Rambam, however, does not specify any of these requirements. He might very well believe that since it is preferable for one to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu*, eliminating the *chametz*, by burning the *chametz*, as opposed to other methods of destruction, it becomes permitted after it has been burned sufficiently, even if it is still edible and recognizable. This is due to the principle of *na'aseis mitzvaso*: once one performs the specific *mitzvah* that is applicable to a particular prohibited item (if there is one), the prohibition is no longer in effect. It would be for this reason that Rambam records this *halachah* in his discussion of the details of the *mitzvah* of *biyur chametz* (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 3:11) and not while discussing the *halachos* of inedible and ruined *chametz* (*ibid.* 4:8-12).

There is, however, one caveat that must be added. It is explicit in the same *Gemara* that according to the *Chachamim*, this burning is effective in permitting the *chametz* to be eaten only if it is done before the onset of the prohibition of *chametz* on *Erev Pesach*; if it is done afterward, the *chametz* remains prohibited. According to Rabbi Yehudah, however, it becomes permitted if burned at any time. Now, if the *Chachamim* indeed apply the principle of *na'aseis mitzvaso*, and allow the burned *chametz* to be eaten because they agree that ideally, one must burn the *chametz*, then they should allow the *chametz* – no matter when it was burned. We must, therefore, conclude that according to Rambam (see *Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 2:1), since the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu*, destroying one's *chametz*, is in effect only before the

chametz becomes prohibited, only then is there a preference to eliminate it specifically through burning. After it becomes prohibited, one is required to dispose of the *chametz* simply so as not to violate *bal yira'eh* (the prohibition of possessing *chametz* on *Pesach*) – but there is no longer a requirement to specifically burn the *chametz*, because there is no *kiyum asef* of *tashbisu*, to destroy the *chametz*. Since there is no preference to destroy the *chametz* by burning, no permissibility to consume the *chametz* is created by *na'aseis mitzvaso*. Rabbi Yehudah, however, derives the obligation to burn *chametz* from the *mitzvah* of burning *nosar* (sacrificial meat that was not eaten during its allotted time), and therefore, the *mitzvah* applies specifically after the prohibition sets in; he thus maintains that when one burns the *chametz*, even at that point it becomes permitted.

Rama (*Orach Chayim* 445:1) writes that the custom is specifically to burn the *chametz* and not use other means of destruction. The Gra comments that the reason why this is only a custom is that even Rabbi Yehudah actually requires burning only after the time that *chametz* is prohibited (except according to Rashi), and since our practice is to eliminate the *chametz* earlier, there is no real obligation to burn it according to any opinion in the *Gemara*. Yet the Gra himself maintains, as noted above, that before the *chametz* becomes prohibited, everyone agrees that at least ideally one must burn it! We must perforce conclude that even though one indeed fulfills a *mitzvah* by specifically burning the *chametz* on *Erev Pesach* while it is still permitted, and that is why one may derive benefit from the burnt *chametz* even on *Pesach*, it is still not in any sense obligatory to do so. Therefore, it is only a custom to burn the *chametz*.

Destroying *chametz* on *Shabbos*

On the fourteenth of *Nissan*, *Erev Pesach*, there is a *mitzvah* to destroy all *chametz* found in one's domain. When the fourteenth of *Nisan* occurs on a *Shabbos*, Rabbi Meir (*Pesachim* 49a) states, all *chametz* must be destroyed before *Shabbos* (on the thirteenth of *Nisan*), except for *chametz* that will be needed for two *Shabbos* meals. Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 3:3) and the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 444) follow Rabbi Meir's opinion. With respect to *chametz* that is leftover on *Shabbos*, Rambam and *Shulchan Aruch* state that one must nullify the remaining *chametz* and cover it until after the first days of *yom tov*, at which time one is to destroy any leftover *chametz*. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, in his glosses to the *Shulchan Aruch*, wonders why one must wait until after *yom tov* to burn the *chametz* instead of discarding the remaining *chametz* on *Shabbos* itself, prior to the time that the prohibition against *chametz* goes into effect. Rabbi Akiva Eiger suggests that there may be a prohibition of handling *chametz* that must be destroyed, and states that the matter requires additional investigation.

The question posed by Rabbi Akiva Eiger can be resolved as follows. According to Rambam, Rabbi Meir, in requiring that *chametz* must be destroyed on the thirteenth of *Nissan* prior to *Shabbos*, is of the view that one is not permitted to perform the *mitzvah* of destroying the *chametz* on *Shabbos*. One may set aside the amount of bread that will be needed for the two *Shabbos* meals. One may not, however, destroy the leftover bread on *Shabbos* because that would violate a rabbinic prohibition of destroying *chametz* on *Shabbos*.

The concept that the destruction of *chametz* on *Shabbos* violates a prohibition is analogous to the destruction of *challah* that has become impure. The *mishnah* (*Beitzah* 27b) states that *challah* that has become impure may not be moved during a *yom tov*. Rashi states that although feeding one's animal on a *yom tov* is permitted, and ordinarily, one may feed impure *challah* to his animals, one may not feed impure *challah* to his animals on a *yom tov*, because there is a prohibition against the destruction on a *yom tov* of *kodshim* (consecrated items) that have become impure. Rashi explains that the fact that the *Torah* requires one to destroy impure *kodshim* indicates that the destruction of such items is considered a *melachah* (work), and performing a *melachah* on a *yom tov* is not permitted. Rashi's rationale may similarly apply to the destruction of *chametz*. The fact that the *Torah* requires us to destroy *chametz* before *Pesach* indicates that such

destruction is rabbinically equivalent to a *melachah*. Consequently, we are not permitted to destroy *chametz* on *Shabbos*.

Is There a *Mitzvah* of *Tashbisu*?

The punishment of lashes is not imposed for violation of a prohibition that is *nitak la'asei*, that is, associated with and mitigated by fulfilling a positive commandment. The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 95a) states that a person who did not remove his *chametz* from his possession before *Pesach* is not liable for lashes, because the negative prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* – “*lo yira'eh lecha se'or*, no leaven shall be found in all your territory” (*Shemos* 13:7) and *bal yimatzei* – “*se'or lo yimatzei bebateichem*, no leaven shall be found in your houses” (*Shemos* 12:19) are each considered *nitak* to the positive commandment of “*tashbisu se'or mibateichem*, eliminate leavening from your property” (*Shemos* 12:15). The ruling of Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 1:3), that a person who purchases *chametz* on *Pesach* is punished with lashes, seems to be inconsistent with the *Gemara*. To resolve this inconsistency, Rav Chaim of Brisk explained that in this case, the positive commandment actually acts as an implied prohibition. Although the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* is phrased in the active form, it does not, according to Rav Chaim, constitute a *ma'aseh mitzvah*. Rather, the verse implies an injunction against owning *chametz*, with the requirement to destroy it is merely a preventive measure (*issur aseil*). Consequently, the aforementioned prohibitions are not considered *nitak la'asei*, because the positive commandment of *tashbisu* is not an ordinary *aseil*.

The *mishnah* (*Pesachim* 2:1) records a dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and the *Chachamim* as to the correct method of eliminating *chametz* from one's possession. Rabbi Yehudah states that the only acceptable method for destroying *chametz* is with fire. The *Chachamim* are of the opinion that any method may be employed, including grinding the *chametz* and casting it to the wind. According to Rabbi Yehudah, burning *chametz* is more than just a means to ensure that one will not violate the prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* and *bal yimatzei*, for if that were the case, he should agree that any method of destruction would suffice. Rather, burning *chametz*, according to Rabbi Yehudah, must be considered a *kiyum mitzvah*, and as such, mitigates the prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* and *bal yimatzei*, and lashes would not be administered for their violation. According to the *Chachamim*, however, the desired result is the elimination of the *chametz*. The purpose of destroying the *chametz* is to preclude one from being in violation of the negative prohibitions and not to facilitate a *kiyum mitzvah*; the method of destruction is thus immaterial. As such, according to the *Chachamim*, there is no positive commandment to offset the negative commandments, and a violator would thus be liable for lashes. The ruling of the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 95a) that one does not receive lashes for either of these prohibitions is based upon the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah, while Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 3:11), who states that one is liable for lashes if he commits these transgressions, accepts the ruling of the Rabbis.

If, however, according to Rav Chaim, *tashbisu* is only an implied prohibition, one may ask why it is that on *Erev Pesach* we recite a blessing on *bedikas chametz*, the act which is a prelude to destroying the *chametz*, as this would appear to violate the principle that one does not recite a blessing on a *mitzvah* that is designed to avoid a prohibition.

The answer lies in the important distinction between the nature of the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* before midday of the fourteenth of *Nissan*, when *chametz* is still permitted to be in one's possession, and after that time. Ramban (beginning of *Pesachim*) explains that just as we learn from the word “*ach-however*” (*Shemos* 12:15) that we are to split the day in terms of the prohibition of owning *chametz*, meaning that it is permissible to own *chametz* until midday and only forbidden after that time, so, too, we learn that we are obligated to remove *chametz* from our possession before midday. Therefore, until

midday, *tashbisu* is a *kiyum asei*, representing a fulfillment of the *mitzvah*, and hence, it is appropriate to recite a blessing on this *kiyum*, because the *bedikah* and *biyur* are done before midday. However, the prohibitions of *balyira'eh* and *bal yimatzei*, and hence the possibility of considering them *nitak la'asei*, came into force only on *Pesach*, and at that point, the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* has already been transformed into an *issur asei*, a prohibition derived from a positive commandment.

Alternatively, even if we were to assume that the prohibitions of *balyira'eh* and *bal yimatzei* are *nitak la'asei*, it is possible to suggest another reason why one would receive lashes for owning *chametz*, despite the fact that this prohibited act can be mitigated by a positive commandment. Rambam (*Hilchos Temurah* 1:1) writes that one receives lashes for violating the prohibition of *temurah*, transferring the *kedushah* from an animal designated as a *korban* to another animal. He explains that one gets lashes even though *temurah* can be rectified by fulfillment of the positive commandment that the sanctity devolves on both animals (*Vayikra* 27:10), because *temurah* actually constitutes two negative commandments, "*lo yachlifenu*, you shall not change it" (*Vayikra*. 27:10) and "*vilo yamir oso*, you shall not replace it" (*Vayikra* 27:10). The positive commandment can rectify only one negative commandment; thus one receives lashes for violating the second negative commandment. Owning *chametz* also entails two negative commandments, *lo yira'eh* and *lo yimatzei*. Since the positive commandment of *tashbisu* can mitigate only one prohibition, one receives lashes for purchasing *chametz*. This approach is still difficult, because the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 95a) clearly states that one is not liable for lashes for either prohibition, as they are associated with a positive commandment. Rabbenu Chananel presents an alternative text for this *Gemara*. His text reads, "*One does not receive lashes for owning chametz on Pesach, because this violation does not involve an activity.*" This undoubtedly was the text that Rambam had as well. This text implies that a person who does take an active role in the violation of the prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* and *bal yimatzei*, such as by purchasing *chametz* on *Pesach*, would indeed be liable to receive lashes.

Yaakov Weinstock ('22)

It's that time of year again. One can feel the excitement *Biyur Chametz* creates as the time for *Pesach* to begin draws closer. Due to all the commotion that surrounds *Erev Pesach*, one can lose sight of the lessons certain parts of *Erev Pesach* are supposed to convey to us. One of those activities is *Biyur Chametz*, burning, the destruction of our *chametz*. Everyone knows the grave *issur* of owning *chametz* on *Pesach* and eating *chametz*, but why does there have to be such a spectacle made of destroying this *chametz* on *Erev Pesach*? What is the essence of *Biyur Chametz*? I believe the answer to this question can give us a new outlook on *Biyur Chametz*, and give new meaning to *Pesach* as a whole.

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (5a) quotes a *beraisa* from *Bei Rabbi Yishmael* which says "in the merit of three "rishons" we are rewarded three things: the first to cut off the descendants of Eisav, to build the *Beis HaMikdash*, and for the name of *Moshiach*" Rashi explains that the three *rishons* that the *beraisa* refers to are the *yamim tovim* of *Pesach* and *Sukkos*, and the *mitzvah* of *lulav*. However, what does *Pesach* have to do with any of the three rewards mentioned in this *beraisa*?

The Maharsha in his *Chiddushei Aggados* (5a) explains that *Pesach* has a large connection to not only *Geulas Mitzrayim*, but also the future *Geulah*. Through observing *Pesach* properly, we will merit our future redemption. However, the Maharsha goes a step further and says that *Pesach's* association with *geulah* helps explain the *mitzvah* of eliminating *chametz*. The rising *chametz* represents the strength of the *yetzer hara* and Eisav, which we attempt to eliminate by destroying our *chametz*. Thus, this links *Pesach* directly to the reward that the descendants of Eisav will be destroyed. This Maharsha demonstrates that our destruction of the *chametz* is in some way representative of our attempts to destroy the *yetzer hara*. However, the Maharsha makes an extremely profound statement that requires further analysis. What does it mean that *chametz* is the *yetzer hara*? What is the comparison?

The answer lies in a *Gemara* in *Sukkah* (52a), which states that in the beginnings of one's life the *yetzer hara* begins as a small string, but continues to grow as one keeps falling into its traps to be like a thick rope. The growth of *yetzer hara* can be compared to rising dough. As one gives the dough yeast, the dough will rise and become *chametz*. Therefore, one can say that the comparison between these two is that both *chametz* and one's *yetzer hara* continually grow through time. Based on this Maharsha, we might be able to understand the idea of burning the *chametz* on a deeper level. As the *Gemara* in *Sukkah* tells us, it is the nature of the *yetzer hara* that it continually grows as the person falls in its traps. When one does *biyur chametz*, it is a statement that even if one made mistakes, he wants to try to start again, and destroy the *yetzer hara* even though it has already grown so large. The *chametz* is burned to symbolize this renewal process we are trying to undergo, but what does renewal have to do with *Pesach*? Why is this the time that we focus on conquering the *yetzer hara*?

The essence of *Pesach* is a commemoration of the beginning of the formation of a group of families into a new nation. The entire *Pesach* story is the creation of the new entity of *Klal Yisroel*. Those that were just families became new people, part of a bigger cause of being a member of *Bnei Yisroel* The Jews underwent a renewal process of their own to become one nation, and essentially had to change themselves to become that cohesive unit which stood by *Har Sinai* to accept the *Torah* "k'ish echad b'lev echad" - as one nation, with one heart. To reach this level required effort and self-improvement. We try to replicate this self-improvement the Jews had to go through as they had just left *Mitzrayim* to become *Hashem's* chosen nation through the *Biyur Chametz*, where we try to eliminate our weak points and im-

prove ourselves in any way we can. Therefore, as we destroy our *chametz*, may we internalize this lesson to improve ourselves in any way possible.

Heseibah

Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson
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The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 462:5) rules that a *talmid* who is eating the *Seder* at the table of his *rebbe* may not perform *heseibah* (leaning) while eating on the night of *Pesach*, unless he gets explicit permission from his *rebbe*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (462:15, *Sha'arei Tzion* 462:20) explains that the *mitzvah* to fear one's *rebbe* is learned from an explicit *posuk* in the *Torah* of "es Hashem Elokecha tira" (you shall fear Hashem your God), with the word "es" including *talmidei chachamim*. Since the *mitzvah* to fear a *talmid chacham* is a *dioraisa* obligation, while the *mitzvah* to lean at the *Seder* is only a *dirabanan*, one does not lean in the presence of his *rebbe*. However, when the *talmid* receives explicit permission, this is the equivalent of the *rebbe* forgoing the fear due to him, and as such, the *talmid* becomes required to perform *heseibah* like anyone else. However, the *Aruch Hashulchan* (462:6) rules that if the *rebbe* gives the *talmid* permission to lean, he is still not obligated to lean, as he can still say that he feels uncomfortable leaning in front of his *rebbe*. Thus, if the *rebbe* grants permission, the *talmid* has a choice of whether or not to lean. Why does the *Mishnah Berurah* rule that a *talmid* who is given permission by his *rebbe* to lean must do so, while the *Aruch Hashulchan* frames it as a choice?

In addition, the opinion of the *Aruch Hashulchan* appears strange at first glance. Why should the *talmid* have any right to say he is uncomfortable leaning before his *rebbe*? Since there is a *mitzvah midirabanan* to do so, why does it matter if he feels uncomfortable? It would make sense if leaning was something which is optional at the *Seder*, but since it is a requirement, once the *talmid* is given permission to perform *heseibah*, why should he not be obligated to do so?

We can draw a distinction which can help to clarify the *machlokes*. There are two possibilities as to how the fear of one's *rebbe* pushes away their *chiyuv* to lean. It could be that the fear of one's *rebbe* supercedes the *chiyuv heseibah*, but the *chiyuv heseibah* remains in place, just with another more pressing *chiyuv* of *kavod harav* overriding it. Thus, when the *rebbe* foregoes their *kavod*, the already existing *chiyuv* of *heseibah* simply goes back into effect. Or, it could be that the existence of the requirement of *kavod harav* completely nullifies the *chiyuv heseibah*, such that even when the *rebbe* gives permission for the *talmid* to sit, there is no longer any requirement for the *talmid* to lean. It would appear that the *Mishnah Berurah* holds according to the first possibility developed here, that the *chiyuv heseibah* is not cancelled out, but merely overridden by the fear of one's *rebbe*, such that when the *rebbe* does not enforce his honor, the *chiyuv heseibah* returns. The *Aruch Hashulchan*, in contrast, would understand that the *kavod harav* completely uproots the *chiyuv heseibah*, such that when the *rebbe* foregoes his honor, the decision of whether or not to lean is entirely up to the *talmid*, as the requirement has already been removed.

However, this in and of itself is strange: according to the *Aruch Hashulchan*, why should the *kavod harav* completely cancel the *chiyuv heseibah*, even after the *rebbe* foregoes his *kavod*? Perhaps we can suggest that the *Aruch Hashulchan* follows the opinion of the Ravyah (as brought in Rama *Orach Chayim* 492:4) that nowadays, there is no *chiyuv heseibah* at all, since the whole purpose of *heseibah* is to demonstrate *cheirus*, freedom, and since nowadays we are not accustomed to leaning, there is no show of freedom involved in leaning. (The Rama rules that women rely on this Ravyah so as not to have a *chiyuv*

heseibah.) It may be that the *Aruch Hashulchan* would understand, in a similar fashion, that a *talmid* sitting in front of his *rebbe* would be so uncomfortable leaning that there would be no show of *cheirus* in doing so. Thus, even after the *rebbe* is *mochel* on his *kavod*, there would be no strict *chiyuv* to lean.

However, upon further *iyun*, this would appear to be impossible, as the *Aruch Hashulchan* elsewhere (ibid. 6) rules that women are exempt from *heseibah* at the *Seder* because it is unnatural for them to lean to the side, reflecting the opinion of the Rif and the *She'iltos*, in contrast to the aforementioned Rama, who explains women are *patur* because of the Ravyah's opinion. In fact, the *Aruch Hashulchan* actually asks a *kashya* on this *shittah* of the Rama, since if the reason women do not lean is because leaning is not a show of freedom nowadays, then even men should be *patur*. Thus, we see that the *Aruch Hashulchan* cannot hold like the Ravyah, and our question returns: why would the *Aruch Hashulchan* not maintain that there is a *chiyuv* for a *talmid* to do *heseibah* once he gets permission from his *rebbe*? Additionally, the *Mishnah Berurah* implies that he agrees with the Rama's opinion based on the Ravyah, as he quotes none of the authorities who argue. If this is so, why would the *Mishnah Berurah* not *pasken* that whether or not to lean is the choice of the *talmid*, if he agrees that leaning does not necessarily show *cheirus* nowadays?

Perhaps we can explain these two opinions in the *poskim* as follows: The *shittah* of the Ravyah would appear to be based on two fundamental assumptions. First, it assumes that the primary purpose of *heseibah* at the *Seder* is to demonstrate *cheirus*, and second, it assumes that since we are not accustomed to lean nowadays, our leaning is not called "*derech cheirus*", and as such, we are not obligated to lean nowadays. Thus, there are two ways to understand why most other *rishonim* disagree with the Ravyah - they either disagree with the first assumption, or the second. According to the *Aruch Hashulchan*, all of the *Rishonim* agree with the first point in the Ravyah, but disagree with the second. In other words, they agree that *heseibah* is intended for *cheirus*, but they argue that since nowadays, there are still some people who lean from time to time, leaning is still considered *derech cheirus*, and as such remains an obligation. Thus, if a *talmid* feels uncomfortable leaning before his *rebbe*, the *Aruch Hashulchan* holds that he is *patur*, since even according to those *rishonim* who argue on the Ravyah, the purpose of leaning is to show freedom, and if the *talmid* feels uncomfortable, this is no show of freedom! In fact, this is similar to the reason which the Rif and *She'iltos* give for why women are *patur*; since they are not accustomed to leaning at all, this is not deemed to be *derech cheirus* for them. Similarly, since a *talmid* is not accustomed to leaning at all before his *rebbe*, even if his *rebbe* gives him permission to lean, he still may choose whether or not he wishes to do so.

For the *Mishnah Berurah*, however, another explanation is required. *Tosfos to Maseches Megillah* (4a) asks why the *Gemara* (*Psachim* 43b) uses a special *derashah* to learn that women are required to eat *matzah*, from the fact that everyone who is included in the *issur* to eat *chametz* is obligated to eat *matzah*. *Tosfos* wonders why the *Gemara* did not say women are obligated to eat *matzah* based on the principle of *af hein hayu bi'oso haneis*, that women were involved in the miracle of *Pesach*, just like this principle obligates them to hear *megillah* on *Purim*! Rav Moshe Soloveitchik *zt"l* famously explained that the principle of *af hein hayu bi'oso haneis* only works to obligate women in *mitzvos* which are based on *pirsumei nissah*, publicizing the miracle, but not to obligate them in *mitzvos* which are simply intended to remember a miracle. Thus, since *matzah* is not a *mitzvah* based on *pirsumei nissah*, women would not be obligated based on the rule of *af hein hayu bi'oso haneis*, and a separate *possuk* is necessary. We can add that the reason why women are obligated in *mitzvos* of *pirsumei nissah* is because these *mitzvos* are performed out of *hakaras hatov* for the miracle which was done, and as such, women are also required to show gratitude for miracles they were involved in. However, for *mitzvos* which are simply about recalling a miracle, there is no aspect of gratitude for the miracle, and these *mitzvos* are therefore considered like any other time-bound positive *mitzvah*, from which women are exempt.

Based on this, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik zt"l (the Rav) explained that the Ravyah is of the opinion that *heseibah* is fundamentally about *pirsumei nissah*, but since nowadays there is no show of freedom in leaning, this *chiyuv* disappears. However, the other *rishonim* maintain that there is also an aspect of remembering the miracle involved in leaning, and as such, the *chiyuv* remains nowadays, since although the *pirsumei nissah* no longer applies, the *zecher lineis* does. This is why the Rama ruled that only women are *patur* from *heseibah* nowadays, since according to the *rishonim* who argue on the Ravyah, the only obligation nowadays comes from *zecher lineis*, which only women are exempt from. In regards to *pirsum haneis*, all agree with the Ravyah that no obligation exists.

Using this distinction, we can explain the reasoning of the *Mishnah Berurah*. Although the *Mishnah Berurah* agrees that women are *patur* from *heseibah* based on the Ravyah, this is only because women are only obligated in the *pirsumei nissah*, which no longer applies nowadays. However, the *Mishnah Berurah* would maintain that there is still an aspect of *zecher lineis*, which causes the *mitzvah* of *heseibah* to remain in effect even nowadays. Thus, even though the *talmid* may be exempt from the *pirsumei nissah* based on his awe of his *rebbe*, the requirement of *zecher lineis* remains in full force. As a result, the *Mishnah Berurah* rules that if the *rebbe* foregoes his *kavod*, the *talmid* is obligated to lean, based on the requirement of *zecher lineis*.

However, since the *Aruch Hashulchan* maintains that according to all *rishonim*, the only obligation of *heseibah* comes from the feeling of *cheirus* (as we explained above), once the *talmid* no longer feels free by leaning, he is *patur* from doing so even if his *rebbe* allows him to.

Kadeish

Aryeh Klein ('22)

ברוך אתה ה', אלקינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנו מכל עם ורוממנו מכל לשון וקדשנו במצותיו. נתת לנו ה' אלקינו באתה (לשבת: שבתות למנוחה ו) מועדים לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון, (לשבת: את יום השבת הזה ו) את יום חג המצות הזה זמן חרותנו, (לשבת: באתה) מקרא קדש זכר ליציאת מצרים. כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים, (לשבת: וישבת) ומועדי קדשך (לשבת: באתה וברצון) בשמחה ובששון הנשלטנו. ברוך אתה ה', מקדש (לשבת: השבת ו) ישראל והזמנים.

"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has chosen us from all peoples and has raised us above all tongues and has sanctified us with His commandments. And You have given us, Lord our God, [Sabbaths for rest], appointed times for happiness, holidays and special times for joy, [this Sabbath day, and] this Festival of Matzos, our season of freedom [in love] a holy convocation in memory of the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and sanctified us above all peoples. In Your gracious love, You granted us Your [holy Sabbath, and] special times for happiness and joy. Blessed are You, O Lord, who sanctifies [the Sabbath,] Israel, and the appointed times."

In the text of the *kiddush* for the night of *Pesach*, we find that the word *bi'ahavah* - with love - is already a part of the blessing. However, when *Pesach* falls out on *Shabbos*, we add an additional instance of this word. What is the reason for this addition?

Nechama Lebowitz, in her *Haggadah*, explains based on the *Gemara* in *Maseches Shabbos* (10b) which states that God gave *Shabbos* as a gift to the Jewish People. The *Gemara* says that *Hashem* said the following: *matanah tovah yesh li bibei ginosai, ushmo Shabbos* - I have a wonderful gift in my storehouse, and its name is *Shabbos*. Of course, *Hashem* gave this gift to the *am hanivchar, Bnei Yisroel*. The *Gemara* also mentions after this that one who gives a gift to his friend must tell them. Based on this, a question emerges - why are we told to give *tzedakah* anonymously, if we are also supposed to inform recipients of who gave them their gift? *Tosfos* on this *Gemara* explains that it is only when a gift is given out of love that the giver is required to inform the recipient. Nechama Leibowitz explains, based on this *Tosfos*, the extra word of *bi'ahavah*. Since God gave the Jewish people *Shabbos* as a gift out of love, this needs to be proclaimed. And lest anyone think that *Hashem* gave us the *Shabbos* as a charitable donation, we declare that it was given *bi'ahavah* - as a gift to the Jewish people, based on His incredible love for us. The word of *bi'ahavah* sets the tone and perspective for the entire rest of the *Seder*, as we spend the night focusing on and thanking *Hashem* for his tremendous love for His nation.

Urchatz

Akiva Kra ('21)

During *Urchatz*, we wash our hands in preparation for the *karpas*. This idea is originally found in *Maseches Pesachim* (115a), where the *Gemara* says that food which was dipped into liquid required hand washing. Since the *karpas* consists of a vegetable dipped in saltwater, we wash our hands now. It is brought down in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 158:4) that no *berachah* is recited over this hand washing. However, it might be worth wondering why we wash our hands before eating a vegetable dipped in liquid during the *Seder*, even though we do not do it the rest of the year.

One answer to this question comes from the *Pele Yoetz*. He suggests that we perform this act because we are extra stringent on the night of the *Seder*. We are stringent for the most minor technicalities, just as we are meticulous about the smallest piece of *chametz*.

A different answer is provided by the *Chiddushei HaRim* and the *Avnei Nezer*. Perhaps the question is not “why do we wash before eating a vegetable”, but “why do we wash after *Kadeish*”. To answer this, they point out that *Urchatz* represents purification from evil, an aspect of *sur mei'ra* (turn away from evil). *Kadeish*, on the other hand, represents holiness and sanctification, an action of *asei tov* (do good). Traditionally, when one wants to grow, they first remove the bad from themselves, and then work on the good. After all, if one wants to purify themselves in a *mikvah*, they cannot do so while still holding onto something *tamei*. However, we wash after *Kadeish* to demonstrate something special about the *Seder*. On *Pesach* night, anyone can grow! We wash after *kiddush* to show that, during the *Seder*, turning away from evil (represented by *Urchatz*) does not need to come before doing good (represented by *Kadeish*). Anyone who sits at the *Seder* table could improve in at least one aspect of their lives. What the *Chiddushei HaRim* and *Avnei Nezer* teach is that at the *Seder*, anybody can change.

Perhaps, this answer is no different from that of the *Pele Yoetz* who says we are extra meticulous at the *Seder*. This can be suggested when we consider a question on the *Pele Yoetz's* explanation of *Urchatz*. If the purpose of washing before *Karpas* is to be extra meticulous on *Pesach*, just as we are for *chametz*, then why do we only keep this one, relatively minor stringency of washing before eating wet vegetables? Why would we not keep many more *chumros* and extra details of *halachah* to a greater degree?

Maybe the answer is based on that of the *Chiddushei HaRim* and *Avnei Nezer*, that we can do good without focusing on the bad. Many Jews are not meticulous in fulfilling every *halachah* and stringency. It would almost be laughable if someone suggested that the Jewish nation, including those barely fulfilling any *mitzvos*, perform one of the least kept stringencies, namely, washing before vegetables. However, this could be the exact reason we do it, to prove that everyone can be anything at the *Seder* night. The answer to the question about why we are not stringent the whole *Pesach* is because only at the *Seder* can one do good if they have not yet turned away from bad. Additionally, we are not stringent regarding other stringencies because this is as stringent as it gets. We are using one example to prove a point! You can do it! You can grow tremendously at the *Seder*.

The potential for growth on the night of the *Seder* is unfathomable. May we all be able to take advantage of this and gain from our experience *Pesach* night.

Meir Morell ('22)

Executive Editor, Shema Koleinu

Rav Herschel Schachter explains the background of *Urchatz* in the *Seder*, and why or why not it is incorporated in daily life as well:

“As a result of a *gezeirah dirabanan*, *stam yadayim* (unrinsed hands) carry *tumah* as a *sheini litumah* (second-degree impurity). There is a further *gezeirah dirabanan* that any *tumah* that renders *terumah* unfit - namely, a *sheini litumah* - renders liquids a *rishon litumah* (first-degree impurity) upon contact (*Mishnah* Parah 8:7), and that liquid can then transfer *tumah* to food on contact (*Shabbos* 14a-14b). The *Chachamim* enacted a *takanah* requiring *netilas yadayim* before handling a *davar shetibulo bimashkeh* (a food dipped in liquid) to prevent transfer of *tumah* from the hands to the food through the medium of the liquid.

Although *Tosfos* (*Pesachim* 115a, *d”h kol*) holds that this *takanah* does not apply nowadays, when we are not careful to avoid eating *tamei* food, most *Rishonim* maintain that the *Chachamim* instituted washing before dipping food into a liquid in the same manner as they did for bread. Therefore, in the case of *davar shetibulo bimashkeh*, we act *lichumrah* in both directions: We wash *netilas yadayim* to satisfy the majority opinion, but we do not recite *berachah*, since, according to *Tosfos*, such a *berachah* would be *livatalah* (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 158:4).

In fact, the Taz (473:6) criticizes those who are not careful to wash before eating a food that has been dipped into liquid or before eating fruits or vegetables that are still wet after being washed. He writes that we should wash *netilas yadayim* all year round, just as we do on the *Seder* night during *Urchatz*. The Netziv (*Imrei Shefer, Pesichah*), however, defends the common practice not to wash for a *davar shetibulo bimashkeh*, following the opinion of *Tosfos*. He writes that we wash our hands on *Seder* night before dipping the *Karpas* into salt-water because of a different reason - as a *zecher liMikdash* (a remembrance of the *Beis Hamikdash*). We conduct ourselves during the *Seder* the same way that the people did at the time that the *Korban Pesach* was eaten, and at that time, *netilas yadayim* was necessary to avoid the state of *tumah* described above. This is the reason that some have the practice that only the father of the household performs *Urchatz*, although the common practice is that everyone washes without a *berachah* before *karpas*.”

In the notes of my grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Morell, he quotes from one of his favorite *seforim* for *Pesach* by Rabbi Yosef Tabori titled “*Pesach Doros*”. There, Rabbi Tabori explains a practical reason for the *minhag* quoted by the Netziv “that some have the practice that only the father of the household performs *Urchatz*”. He states that this can be explained by looking at what we see as a custom of only German Jews today, that really was a custom in all of European Jewry. People would first wash their hands, then make *kiddush*, then they would make *hamotzi*. My grandfather explains that this idea could be traced back to Rabbeinu Yoel in the 13th century. Rabbeinu Yoel gives a few reasons for this practice, but Rabbi Tabori chooses one to discuss here in order to prove a point. Rabbi Tabori brings the explanation that when Chazal introduced the *minhag* of getting up after *kiddush* to wash, they were sitting at small, moveable tables, and a waiter would bring water to wash with at your seat. But at the time of Rabbeinu Yoel in Europe, they sat by big tables which were not movable, and they didn’t have waiters bringing them water. So, they instituted the *minhag* of washing before *kiddush*, because *kiddush* was a part of the meal, so it wouldn’t be a significant *hefsek* between the washing and the bread.

However, there is an issue by the *Seder*, because there is a significant *hefsek* between *kiddush* and the

meal. So in those communities, they would have the leader of the *Seder* wash his hands after *kiddush* but before *karpas* with a waiter as *derech cheirus*, because it was easy for a waiter to reach the head of the table. However, everyone else would wash before *kiddush*. Rabbi Tabori concludes that over time, a *minhag* had developed that in many places only the leader of the *Seder* would wash the first washing.

My grandfather finishes off the piece by explaining that most people have returned to the old *minhag* of everyone washing at the allotted time of *Urchatz*, and that it is also the *minhag* of our family.

Karpas

Eitan Rochwarger ('23)

The *Karpas*, which comes after *kiddush* and washing our hands, seems to be the first out of the ordinary part of the *Seder*. It is so strange that it is included as one of the four questions asked during the *Mah Nishtanah*. So, why is it that we dip a vegetable in saltwater and eat it? The Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 7:7) writes “when a person feasts on this night, he must eat and drink while he is reclining in the manner of free men”. Everything we eat at the *Seder* is meant to represent our slavery and freedom, so we eat saltwater to remind us of the bitterness of oppression before we were freed. There are also some opinions who say that the only purpose of the *Karpas* is to give another thing for the children to ask about during the *Mah Nishtanah*. However, there is a brilliant explanation from historian Solomon Zeitlin, who said that the *Karpas* was intended as a reminder of the dipping of the blood which was performed as part of the ritual of the *Korban Pesach*. This explains why we dip, but why do we specifically dip a vegetable?

The only place in Tanach where the word “*karpas*” is used is in *Megilas Esther*, where the *possuk* says “*chur karpas utecheiles*” - white cotton and blue wool (*Esther* 1:6). This *possuk* in *Megilas Esther* is brought up in *Maseches Megillah* (12a) when trying to understand what the word “*chur*” means. The *Gemara* quotes the opinion of Rabbi Yosi ben Chananiah that *karpas* are cushions of velvet. This use of the word is mirrored in the story of the sale of Yosef, where Rashi understands that Yosef’s special coat, his *kesones pasim*, comes from the same root as this word *karpas* in *Megillas Esther*. So, what is the connection between the *karpas* which translates to fancy pieces of fabric and clothing, and the vegetables we eat at the *Seder*?

Rav Shlomo Kluger gives a brilliant answer to this question. He believes that the origin of this term is from the Persian word *karaf*, which means a fine piece of fabric, but can also mean parsley or some other leafy vegetable. He writes that the *kesones pasim* was the catalyst for the entire *galus* in *Mitzrayim* - if Yaakov would not have prioritized one son over all his others, the Egyptian slavery would never have happened. When the Rabbis saw that the coat was made with this *karpas* fabric, they decided to add a practice with a green vegetable, as the two words are related.

What emerges is an amazing understanding not only of the meaning of *Karpas*, but of its place in the *Seder*. As we are beginning the process of telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we begin with the very beginning of the exile, the sale of Yosef due to his brother’s jealousy of his *kesones pasim*. This teaches us a brilliant lesson which can carry us through the rest of the *Seder*: the most insignificant actions, such as Yaakov giving a coat to his son, can have far-reaching effects which we never could have imagined. Reminding ourselves of Yosef’s coat right at the outset of the *Seder* reminds us that the entire story was in *Hashem*’s hands from the first moment, as only He could have orchestrated events to play out as they did. This is a lesson which we should keep in mind as we tell the rest of the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Yachatz

Aaron Sisser ('23)

In *shiur* this year, we are learning *Maseches Pesachim*. We have been learning many laws about what to do in the days leading up to *Pesach*, and also how to act on the holiday itself. In *Maseches Pesachim*, on *Daf* 114a, we learn an interesting rule about the *Seder*. The *mishnah* states three words that arouse questions of *Rishonim*. These words are, "*heivihu lifanav matzah*", which translates to "and they brought before him *matzah*", with the "him" here being the leader of the *Seder*. Thus, the *mishnah* teaches that after *Karpas*, they should bring *matzah* before the *ba'al habayis*.

Tosfos asks a question on this *mishnah*: how can the *mishnah* be telling us that the *matzah* should be brought before the leader of the *Seder*, if the *matzah* has been in front of him for the entire *Seder* up until now? The *mishnah* implies that there has been no *matzah* at the table until now, but we know this is not true!

Tosfos answers as follows. One of the main *mitzvos* that we are obligated to accomplish on the *Seder* night is the *mitzvah* of "*vihigadita libincha*". This *mitzvah* relates to us that parents at a *Seder* should teach to their children about all the amazing, wondrous miracles that *Hashem* performed on behalf of *Am Yisroel*. We perform this *mitzvah* throughout the *Seder* in many different ways. Many times throughout the *Seder*, we do things not in the way that we normally do throughout the year. One of the main reasons we do this is so that "the children will ask". Then, once the children ask their parents why we are doing these unusual things, their parents will be able to fulfil their obligation to teach their children the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This concept is famously highlighted in the "*Mah Nishtanah*", the four questions which children are meant to ask their parents about various anomalies on the *Seder* night. All of these questions are in the *Haggadah* so that the children will ask their parents. Then, after the *Mah Nishtanah* has been said, the children are answered with the next words in the *Haggadah*: *Avadim Hayinu LiPharoh BiMitzrayim* - we were slaves to *Pharoh* in *Mitzrayim*. This example illustrates one of the key concepts at the *Seder* - parents educating their children on why we celebrate *Pesach*.

Now, let us look back at our *sugya* in *Maseches Pesachim*. We are faced with the dilemma of how *matzah* can be brought out to the leader of the *Seder* if it was already there to begin with? *Tosfos* beautifully answers this question using the concept that we have just learned of *vihigadita libincha*. *Tosfos* says that the "*shulchan*" - table - of the leader of the *Seder* is removed right after *Karpas*. (In olden times, each person at the *Seder* - and at other meals - used to have their own small table.) *Tosfos* says that this relates back to our aforementioned concept of getting the children to ask; the reason why we remove the table of the *ba'al habayis* is so that the children will ask why we are doing this, and then the parents will be able to answer the children. The parents can answer that we will bring it back for the second dipping. Then in an action which adds onto this *mitzvah*, the children will ask the parents a follow-up question: why are we doing two dippings? These questions from the child will give the parents an opportunity to be *yoztai* their *mitzvah* of *vihigadita libincha* in a spectacular way! *Tosfos'* answer fantastically shows the great lengths that we go to in order to better be *mikayem* the *mitzvah* of *vihigadita libincha*.

Furthermore, *Tosfos* adds on an amazing *pshat* which makes the whole scenario that much more beautiful. We know *matzah* is known as *lechem oni*, which means poor man's bread. However, the Hebrew

shoresh (root) of the word *oni* can also be used to mean a response or answer to a question. *Tosfos* notes that in this light, we can understand that *matzah* is the bread which provokes an answer or response. This shows us that when the children ask a question, the *matzah* should be on the table. This *pshat* makes the scenario that much more incredible. When the children ask these questions, the *matzah* should be on the table in order to instigate the response of the parents, so that they will be able to be *mikayem* their obligation with the “bread of answers” on the table.

One last *inyan* which we learn from this *sugya* is about our original meaning of *Lechem Oni* - poor man's bread. We know that a poor man would not eat his whole ration of *matzah* at once. He spreads his food out over as long a time as he is able to, so that it can last him as long as possible. This is one reason why we break the middle *matzah* at *Yachatz*, to symbolize how poor men would ration out their supply of food over longer periods of time, and not just eat it all at once. We put away some of the *matzah* for later, just as a poor man would do with his bread.

This *sugya* teaches us the tremendous depth contained in every action we do at the *Seder*, as even as simple an act as bringing out the *matzah* after *Karpas* can have levels and levels of meaning. This year, on *Seder* night, we should look carefully at all of the things that we do and see how we can learn from them! Thank you to my amazing *rebbe*, Rabbi Kerner, for teaching me this *sugya* in such a spectacular fashion! Wishing everyone a happy *Seder* night, and a *chag sameach*!

Ha Lachma Anya

Avraham Friedenberg ('22)

The passage of *Ha Lachma Anya* can seem quite perplexing at first glance, but after taking a deeper look, we can find many levels of meaning hidden within this passage. Many *meforshim* and *rabbonim* touch upon different ideas and understandings of *Ha Lachma Anya*.

Rav Yosef Dov Haleivi Soloveitchik (“The Rav”):

Rav Yosef Dov Haleivi Soloveitchik asked a few underlining questions on *Ha Lachma Anya*. Firstly, how come we are inviting people to our *Pesach Seder* after it has already begun? We have already drunk the first of four cups of wine (that being *kiddush*), and the *Seder* is already well underway, so why are we only now inviting people to join us? Furthermore, if we are truly interested in inviting people, why are we making this declaration in front of the already invited guests? If we are looking to invite those who may not have a *Seder* to attend, or those in need, why don't we leave our houses and offer a sincere invitation to those in need, outside? What is the meaning of this passage?

The Rav explains that this invitation is a symbolic manifestation of our new-found freedom. A slave does not have the ability to engage in the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*, inviting guests, because he simply does not own any possessions. Everything a slave owns becomes the property of his master. Furthermore, anything that a slave manages to acquire and hide from his master, is kept to himself, since he worries that if he shares it with others, he will be compromising his own existence.

In this section of *Ha Lachma Anya*, we make two profound statements: I am free, and I have the inner strength to share with and care for others. I am no longer a slave who is solely focused on survival; I am free and can look out for the needs of others. All who are in need - I can help - I am free.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks:

At the start of *Ha Lachma Anya*, we explain that this bread (the *matzah*) is the bread of oppression which our fathers ate in *Mitzrayim*, and continue to say that all who are hungry should come in and eat. Rabbi Sacks brings up the following question: What type of hospitality is offering the hungry the taste of suffering? If *matzah* is the bread of the poor man, why would we offer it to those who are already downtrodden?

Matzah represents two things: it is the food of slaves, and it is the bread which was eaten by the *Bnei Yisroel* as they left *Mitzrayim* into freedom. What transforms the bread of oppression into the bread of freedom, is the willingness to share it with others. Sharing food is the first act through which slaves become free men. One who fears tomorrow does not offer his bread to others. However, one who is willing to divide his food with a stranger has shown himself to be capable of fellowship and faith, the two things from which hope is born.

This is why, explains Rabbi Sacks, we begin the *Seder* by inviting others to join us. Bread shared is no longer the bread of oppression. Reaching out to others, giving help to the needy and other similar acts of kindness, brings freedom into the world.

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig:

At the beginning of *Ha Lachma Anya*, we invite whoever is hungry to come and eat, and whoever is in need for a place to eat the *Korban Pesach* to join. This invitation, however, appears to be presented at the wrong time, as *kiddush* has already been made, and in the wrong place, as we are sitting in the privacy of our homes. In addition, our invitation to take part of the *Korban Pesach* is moot, as anyone whom we did not have in mind while the *korban* was slaughtered earlier in the day cannot fulfil their obligation with our sacrifice. As such, what purpose do these invitations serve?

Rabbi Zweig explains that the *Pesach Seder* is a celebration of our redemption, and we are all guests of honor. To prevent the guests from feeling beholden to the host, which would inhibit their participation in the *Seder*, we begin by allowing guests to invite others. The *Gemara* says “*ein oreyach machnis oreyach*”- “a guest is not permitted to invite other guests” (*Bava Basra* 98b). However, a guest of honor has the right to invite whomever he chooses. The message we are relaying to the participants of the *Seder* is they are not all guests beholden to the host, but rather, they are all guests of honor, celebrating their own *cheirus*. It is necessary for the guests to feel comfortable, for they too have the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, telling the story of the redemption from Egypt, which requires speaking freely and engaging in discussions on *Seder* night. Likewise, the *Tosfos Yom Tov* had a custom to spill wine on the clean tablecloth to help the guests feel at ease. The purpose of the invitation is not for the guests who are absent, but rather for the guests already at our tables.

Shimi Kaufman ('21)

Editor-In-Chief, Shema Koleinu

The passage of *Ha Lachma Anya* appears to be constructed of three unrelated sentences. We begin by declaring that the *matzah* is the bread of affliction, which our forefathers ate while they were in *Mitzrayim*. We then shift to inviting anyone who needs to come eat and make their *Pesach Seder*. Finally, we conclude by saying that while this year we are slaves and in *galus*, next year we will be free in *Eretz Yisroel*. What is the connection between these three ideas? Additionally, why do we refer to ourselves as slaves on the night of the *Seder*, which is all about celebrating our freedom from the oppression of *Mitzrayim*?

The *Medrash (Shemos Rabbah 16:2)* says that the goal of the *Korban Pesach* was to draw the Jewish people away from *avodah zarah*. How was the *Korban Pesach* meant to draw the people away from serving idols?

Many *meforshim* explain that the sin of *avodah zarah* is the sin of serving oneself before *Hashem*. The *avodah zarah* which the Jews worshipped in the *midbar*, and again in the time of Eliyahu Hanavi, was called *Ba'al*, meaning "master". *Ba'al* was worshipped in a grotesque manner; worshippers would pay homage by urinating and defecating on a statue of the deity. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explained that the sin of worshipping *Ba'al* is when we become our own master, trying to impose our own will onto the god as opposed to the other way around. This is why *Ba'al* is worshipped in such a disgusting manner; its defining characteristic is that the worshippers dictate what service is best for it.

Pesach is a holiday defined by times. *Hashem* gave *beis din* the power to declare the months of the year whenever we choose, and all the *yamim tovim* are placed based on *beis din's* decision. However, the one condition is that *Pesach* must always fall out in the springtime. The *yom tov* of *Pesach* is the only time in which the *Torah* explicitly dictates that a *yom tov* must fall out in a certain season, and our entire calendar is based around fulfilling this condition. The laws of the holiday itself are also even more time-related than usual; we must bake *matzah* before eighteen minutes, stop eating *chametz* at the fourth hour, burn it at the sixth, start the *Seder* right after *tzeis hakochavim*, and so on. The *yom tov* of *Pesach* is about submitting ourselves to *Hashem's* will and following what he wants, not vice-versa.

This is why the *Korban Pesach* was designed to take the Jews away from *avodah zarah*. The service of *Pesach*, with all its time-oriented restrictions, is meant to remind us that our time is not our own. Each of us has a job to do, and it is up to us to utilize all of our strengths to do what *Hashem* wants of us, not the other way around. Perhaps this is why, when rebuking *Bnei Yisroel* for worshipping *Ba'al*, Eliyahu Hanavi said עַד־יָמֵי אַתֶּם כֹּסְחִים עַל־שִׁתֵּי הַסַּעֲפִיר - Until when will you dance between two ideas? Eliyahu was asking how long the Jews would continue to ignore this idea of *Pesach* and insist their time was their own. [Incidentally, the Rebbe Reb Bunim once said that this *possuk* was meant to ask how long the Jews would neglect the two *se'ifim*, chapters, in *Shulchan Aruch*, which talk about all of our intentions being for the sake of Heaven].

Many *meforshim* ask why it is that we invite our guests during *Ha Lachma Anya*, once we have already practically begun the *Pesach Seder*. The commonly given answer is that we are truly inviting ourselves, before we begin *mMggid*, to seize the opportunities of *Pesach* and to grow from the experience.

With these ideas, we can answer our original questions. We begin *Ha Lachma Anya* with a declaration

about the *matzah*, which must be made hastily, stating that it is “the bread of our affliction”. In truth, it is hard to submit ourselves fully to *Hashem* and we often feel as though the *mitzvos* are a burden on us, *chas vishalom*. We thus extend the opportunity to ourselves; come see how satisfying and fulfilling a life of *Pesach*, of using our time to serve *Hashem*, can truly be. We then conclude that we are now slaves, but we will soon be free. A slave is not a master of his own time. He is forced to do his master’s bidding whenever the master wants, and he therefore resents his master. We, at the time of the *Seder*, are slaves to *Ba’al*, thinking that we should be able to dictate our own lives and fed up with constantly serving *Hashem*. However, when we eat the *Korban Pesach* and draw ourselves away from the mindset of *Ba’al*, of being our own master, we begin to see that in truth, we are more free than if we were merely slaves to our own desires.

Benny Cohen ("23")

We are all very familiar with the text of *Ha Lachma Anya*, which concludes by saying "this year we are here, and next year we should be in *Eretz Yisroel*, this year we are slaves and next year we should be free". Many *meforshim* ask why the *Ba'al Haggadah* repeated himself, as these two statements are seemingly redundant. The *Chanukas Hatorah* (Rav Yehoshua Heschel) gives an ingenious explanation, that we are actually expressing two distinct hopes for the coming year. Rav Heschel explains that there is a well known *machlokes* in *Maseches Rosh Hashanah* about when the *Moshiach* will come. Rabi Yehoshua maintains that *Moshiach* will come in the month of *Nissan*, and Rabi Eliezer holds that it will come in *Tishrei*. Rav Heschel also points out that the slavery in *Mitzrayim* ended six months before the final redemption took place. Based on this, we can now explain the seemingly redundant phrases in *Ha Lachma Anya*. According to Rabi Yehoshua, the *Moshiach* will come in *Nissan*, and we therefore pray that at this time next year (*Nissan*), we should be in *Eretz Yisroel*. However, according to Rabi Eliezer, *Moshiach* is destined to come in *Tishrei*, so to fulfil this opinion, we pray that this time next year, we should be free from oppression, as a preparation for the Redemption which will come six months later in *Tishrei*. Since we are currently sitting at the *Seder* and the foreign oppression has not yet ended, we are confident that, at least in Rabi Eliezer's view, *Moshiach* will likely not arrive the next *Tishrei*. Thus, we pray that if Rabi Eliezer is correct, we should merit to be free from oppression by the time of the next *Seder*, such that we will be prepared to greet the *Moshiach* when it arrives in *Tishrei*. This year, let us all focus with extra concentration during this part of *Ha Lachma Anya*, so we may merit to have our *Seder* next year in *Yerushalayim, bimheirah biyameinu!*

Mah Nishtanah

Dovid Tanner ('18)

We often call *Mah Nishtanah* “The Four Questions.” Indeed, many *haggados* translate the opening phrase as “Why is this night different from all other nights?” However, were that to be the intended meaning, the text should have read not “mah”, but “*lamah*.” *Mah* does not mean “why,” but “what” or “how.” The *Aruch Hashulchan* (*Orach Chayim* 473:22) therefore explains that in this context, *mah* is an expression of wonder, such as “*mah rabu ma’asecha Hashem*” - How great are your works *Hashem*! The correct translation, then, is not “why is this night different...” but “how different this night is from all other nights!” The text continues by noting some of the differences present on the night of *Pesach*. Implicitly, the same question is being asked—*why* is this night so different—but it lies in the background, provoked by the amazed observation, “How different this night is!” This should lead us to wonder: what is the answer to the child’s implicit question? Why indeed is the *Seder* night so very different?

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, in *Sifsei Chayim*, explains the symbolism of *chametz* and *matzah*. He explains that *chametz* forms as a result of a natural process. It symbolizes the natural order, whose predictability and orderliness sometimes hides *Hashem’s* involvement. *Matzah*, on the other hand, in which leavening is not given time to occur, embodies quickness, almost suddenness—something seemingly beyond time, miraculous, reminding us of the haste in which we left *Mitzrayim* (*Devarim* 16:3). It symbolizes the direct involvement of *Hashem* beyond natural processes, and reminds us that *Hashem’s* interaction with His universe always lies behind the veil of the natural order.

Based on this explanation of Rabbi Friedlander, Rabbi Tanchum Cohen addressed a glaring question about the symbolism of *chametz*. The *Gemara* in *Berachos* (17a) refers to the *yetzer hara* as “*se’or she’b’isah*, the *chametz* in the dough.” Rabbi Friedlander also quotes the *Zohar* as associating *chametz* with the *yetzer hara*. But if *chametz* symbolizes the *yetzer hara*, why is it only forbidden on *Pesach*? Why are we comfortable with the symbol of the evil inclination the rest of the year?! Perhaps with the *Sifsei Chaim’s* explanation, we can understand: *chametz* symbolizes the natural order. While the hiddenness of God in nature can unfortunately lead one to forget *Hashem*, it need not. With the right perspective, appreciation of the beautiful world we live in can enhance our *Avodas Hashem* (cf. Rambam *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 2:2). But *Chazal* portray *chametz* as the *yetzer hara* because all too often, the natural order of things hides our perception of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, and enables our *yetzer hara* to entice us into sinning by forgetting that “*ayin ro’eh vi’ozen shama’as*” - an eye [always] watches and an ear [always] hears (*Avos* 2:1).”

In describing the incredible nature of *Kriyas Yam Suf*, *Chazal* comment that “a maidservant saw at [the splitting of] the sea what Yechezkel and all the other *nevi'im* never saw [in their prophetic visions] (*Mechilta Shemos* 15:2).” The *Mechilta* goes on to give a *meshal* of a king visiting a province, with an accompaniment of warriors to his right and left and legions of soldiers in front of and behind him. All the people coming to see the king ask each other, “Where is the king?” Since he is flesh-and-blood, like them, they cannot immediately make out who the king is. But when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* was revealed to *Bnei Yisroel* at the sea, no one asked “Where is the king?” They all recognized Him and unanimously said “*zeh Keili v’anveihu*”, this is my God and I will glorify Him” (*ibid.*). Why does the *Mechilta* specify that *Bnei Yis-*

roel at the *Yam Suf* saw what *Yechezkel* did not? Why not just say “what no *navi* saw” (as it in fact does after mentioning *Yechezkel*)?

Yechezkel's vision of the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* is one of the most esoteric parts of Tanach, to the extent that the *mishnah* in *Chagigah* (13a) says it may not be fully explained even to an individual student. However, the classical *meforshim* such as Rashi and Radak do not skip it in their commentaries on *Yechezkel*, suggesting that it is permissible to learn it on a basic *peshat* level. What one notices upon a cursory examination of the *pesukim* (immediately after noticing that one understands almost nothing) is how it appears to be describing a process. In describing the angels known as the *Chayos*, *Yechezkel* says

... אל אשר יהיה שמה הרוח ללכת ילכו לא יסבו בלכתן...ובלכת החיות ילכו האופנים אצלם ובהנשא החיות מעל הארץ ינשאו האופנים...בלכתם ילכו ובעמדם יעמדו ובהנשאם מעל הארץ ינשאו האופנים לעמתם כי רוח החיה באופנים:

“...Wherever the spirit was minded to go, they went; they turned not when they went....And when the *Chayos* moved, the *Ofanim* went by them: and when the *Chayos* were lifted up from the earth, the *Ofanim* were lifted up....When [the *Chayos*] moved, [the *Ofanim*] moved; and when those stood still, these stood still; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the *Ofanim* were lifted up along with them: for the spirit of the *Chayos* was in the *Ofanim*...” (*Yechezkel* 1:12, 19, 21)

The Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim* interprets *Ma'aseh Merkavah* as detailing the metaphysical functioning of the world including astronomical and elemental entities, while most others understand it as referring to deep Kabbalistic concepts. Either way, the theme of *process* is clear. There is movement and ceasing of movement, remaining on the ground and being lifted up. It is an intricate and involved process. Perhaps this is why the *Mechilta* mentioned *Yechezkel* by name: even the *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, one of the most detailed and esoteric depictions of how *Hashem* interacts with the world, was not as great as *Kriyas Yam Suf*. Because while *Ma'aseh Merkavah* may have been more detailed, it could only explain the *Yad Hashem* as part of a process. During *Kriyas Yam Suf*, however, there was no need for process. There was a singular moment of unparalleled clarity, when *Hashem* allowed the veil of nature to fall and His omnipotence to be revealed, in which even the *shifchah* could say, with full confidence, “*zeh Keili v'anveihu*.”

Maybe this is the answer to the child's wondrous proclamation of “*mah nishtanah!*” The rest of the *Haggadah* recounts the story of our subjugation and redemption from *Mitzrayim*, culminating in the declaration “And *Hashem* brought us forth from Egypt, not by means of an angel, nor by means of a *seraph*, nor by means of a messenger: but the most Holy, blessed be He, Himself, in His glory.”

The miracles of the *makkos* and *Kriyas Yam Suf* were examples of complete suspension of the natural order of the universe, occasions where *Hashem* revealed himself not through nature but beyond and above nature. Our mission is to take those moments of absolute clarity and use them to see *Hashem* the rest of the time, when He allows nature to potentially conceal His involvement. As we say *Mah Nishtanah* at the *Seder*, understanding the direct divine intervention exhibited on this night transforms *Mah Nishtanah* from a question to an affirmation: “How different this night is!”

Avadim Hayinu

Chaim Davidowitz ('21)

Everybody knows how we start off the beginning of *Maggid* with the paragraph of *Avadim Hayinu*. In this short passage, we relay the parallel of how we were once slaves to Pharoh in *Mitzrayim*, and now we are free men. While it is true *that Hashem* took us out from *Mitzrayim* and the rule of Pharoh, it is worth considering if we are really free men today. In today's day and age, we are as much slaves as we have ever been. We are slaves to our phones, slaves to our desires, and most importantly, slaves to the *yetzer hara*. In *Sichos Haran 6*, Rav Nachman of Breslov explains how the *yetzer hara* is able to capture us so easily. He explains that the *yetzer hara* is compared to a man that walks between other men with his hand closed. This man goes to other people with a clenched fist and asks the men "what am I holding?" Rav Nachman explains that every person that is approached by this man believes that in his fist he has exactly what they have been desiring. Then the man with the clenched fist runs away, and since everyone thinks that he is holding their greatest desire, they chase after him. When he finally reveals what he was holding, the men discover that they have been fooled, and the man has been holding nothing after all. Rav Nachman equates this man to the *yetzer hara*. He says that the *yetzer hara* leads everyone to believe that he has the key to fulfill their greatest desire, so people chase after him. When they finally catch up to him, they realize that he has nothing all along. Rav Nachman recognizes this nothingness that is in the hand of the *yetzer hara* as the fact that a man's desires can never truly be fulfilled.

The *Zohar* on *Parshas Bo* says the reason *Mitzrayim* is called *Mitzrayim* is because in Hebrew, it has the same letters as the word *mitzarim*, meaning "from narrow straits", In Egypt, the Jews had limited freedom and were stuck under the rule of Pharoh, with no other options. In today's day and age, we are also still slaves in *Mitzrayim*. We are stuck in the narrow straits of the *yetzer hara's* control. We are led to believe, with a closed mind, that the *yetzer hara* can help us fulfill our desires, whatever they may be, and then end up discovering that the *yetzer hara* has nothing but an empty hand. So yes, while we may not be slaves to Pharoh in *Mitzrayim* anymore, we are in the narrowest of straits possible. We are the furthest thing from free men. Rav Nachman understands how difficult it is to defeat this strong force, but he gives a remedy in one of his famous stories from *Sipurei Maasos*. The *yetzer hara* is a force that thrives when a person is filled with depression and sadness, as unfulfillment leads us to chase after that which we feel we lack. But when a person fights back with *simchah* and *shirah*, joy and song, he can and will win the battle. This *Pesach*, with *Hashem's* help and with our own *hishtadlus* (effort), may we all have tremendous *simchas ha-chayim* and *simchas yom tov*, and merit to be true *bnei chorin*, free men, and escape from the *Mitzrayim* of today.

Avidan Loike ('22) & Max Korenman ('22)

The *Seder*, literally meaning order, follows an order of progression from slavery to freedom. A *dvar Torah* on *Avadim Hayinu* would be lacking if it didn't speak about the *Mah Nishtanah*, being that *Avadim Hayinu* is answering the questions posed in the *Mah Nishtanah*. The four questions posed have to do with anomalies in the *Seder* night: why do we eat *matzah* and not bread, why do we eat *marror* rather than other vegetables, why do we dip vegetables in various dips two times, and why do we lean while eating? These four questions are ultimately a lead up to *Avadim Hayinu* which embodies a father's obligation to teach his son the story of *Bnei Yisroel's* experience in Egypt. However, with *Avadim Hayinu* just being a story, one has to wonder how *Avadim Hayinu* actually answers the questions which were just posed? The entire paragraph seems to be completely unrelated to what we were just discussing!

The answer to this question lies within the essence of the *Haggadah*. The main purpose of the *Haggadah* is to act as a springboard for parents depicting the story of *Mitzrayim*, helping children understand the significance of the holiday. However, the *Haggadah* is not meant to be the only thing which is recited at the *Seder*. The best proof to this is the story which follows *Avadim Hayinu* in the *Haggadah*, the story of the five Rabbis who stayed up all night discussing and learning about the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This conveys the fact that the *Seder* these Rabbis had went further, both in physical time and in spiritual connection, than the strict text of the *Haggadah* would call for. The *Haggadah* acts as a point of reference for further discussion and expansion on the story of *Mitzrayim*, not as a textbook to blindly be followed through the night.

This is how *Avadim Hayinu* is a perfect transition point from the *Mah Nishtanah*, as it advocates for further discourse, as well as encouraging children to pursue additional questions. The lesson this answer conveys revolves around asking questions and never being satisfied with the bare minimum. Even though *Avadim Hayinu* loosely answers the question portrayed in the *Mah Nishtanah*, it encourages the continuation of pursuing those answers to the fullest understanding. So as we begin *Pesach*, we should realize the importance of trying to fully understand what's presented to you, and never be satisfied with minimal effort.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria

Dov Hochman ('23)

The *mishnah* of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria begins with him saying that he “was like seventy years old”. As is well known, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was only eighteen years old when he was appointed as a *rosh yeshiva*, and his wife advised him not to take the job, as nobody would respect him due to his young age. The next morning, he awoke to find he had grown a long beard, such that his colleagues would now differ to his authority. Thus, he declared “I am like seventy years old”. The *Siddur HaArizal* says that Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was a *gilgul* (reincarnation) of Shmuel Hanavi. Shmuel was 52 years old at the time of his death. At the time Rav Elazar Ben Azaria was becoming the head of the *yeshiva*, he was only eighteen years old, but adding the years of Shmuel Hanavi’s life gives us a total of seventy years old, which is considered a standard lifespan. Thus, when Rabi Elazar ben Azaria said “I am like seventy years old”, he was really saying that Shmuel had now lived out a full lifespan with his additional eighteen year. While this is an interesting story, why is it relevant to the theme of the *Seder* and the retelling of the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?

The *Haggadah* spends a large portion of *Maggid* explaining the various punishments that the Egyptians placed on the Jews. They forced them to work all day and night, they forced them to cut their own straw to make bricks, they tried to drive a wedge between husbands and wives, and so on. However, one punishment that was a result of the various Egyptian decrees was the loss of *Torah* learning and the Jewish way of life.

The *meforshim* tell us that at the time the plagues started, the Jewish people had descended to the 49th level of impurity, and that if they had gone down even one more level they would not have been worthy of redemption. One of the reasons they fell so far was the loss of publicly available *Torah* learning. When Yaakov and his family went down to *Mitzrayim*, Yehudah was sent ahead to establish a *yeshiva*. Yaakov knew that the best way to ensure his family’s continued safety outside of Israel was to have learning available. However, the requirements of slavery meant that only the tribe of Levi had time to learn, as they were considered priests by Pharaoh and were exempt from slavery. It wasn’t until Moshe came and saved the Jews that *Torah* once again became accessible to all, not just an elite few.

As such, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah is actually the perfect *tanna* to be quoted in the *Haggadah*. He was named head of the *yeshiva* when Rabban Gamliel was replaced for, among other things, limiting learning to the select few who were sincere in his eyes (*Berachos* 28a). The *Gemara* also tells us that as soon as Rabbi Elazar was appointed, he removed the door from the *beis medrash*, and he gave permission for all students who wanted to learn to come and learn. On that day, the *yeshiva* added as many as seven hundred benches to make space for all the new students. Because of all the new students, the *yeshiva* was able to answer every unanswered question that came before the students before that day, and they learnt the entire *Mishnayos Eduyos* as a *Gemara*, which had never been done. Because Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah made the *Torah Sheba’al Peh* more accessible to everybody, and by definition more accessible to us, he is the appropriate *tanna* to learn from on the day we celebrate our freedom to once again have *Torah* learning available to all, not just a select few.

Baruch HaMakom

Rabbi Etan Schnall ('99)

Maggid Shiur, SMBP/RIETS

Based On A Shiur Titled *Baruch Hamakom Baruch Hu: Why Does the Haggadah Not Use "Hashem"*

The *Haggadah* refers to *Hashem* consistently in a very unique way as "*HaMakom*," in contrast to how we refer to Him colloquially. This name is not strange or unfamiliar to us, just not used very commonly. An explanation behind the name (lit. "The Place") is: since *Hashem* is not only everywhere, but is the source of everything, every "location" in existence is not just inhabited by Him, but is an existential expression of Him directly. Therefore, He is truly the only real "place" where anything can exist. Why, though, does the *Haggadah* in particular use this interesting name in several times (eg. *Baruch HaMakom*, *Baruch Hu*, "Initially, our forefathers were idol worshippers, but the *Makom* has brought us closer to His service, etc.")? Furthermore, what is the reasoning behind why the *Haggadah* does *not* use *HaMakom* in other places, preferring *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* (such as in *Vehi She'omdah*, and later in *Maggid*, when we say "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* calculated the amount of time we were supposed to be in Egypt, and set us free at the end...")?

First, we need to examine the Four Questions. In reality, there used to be a fifth question in the *Haggada*, as well: Why, on the *Seder* night, is the meat eaten (originally the *Korban Pesach*) roasted? The Gra writes that, in truth, there are *still* five questions posed among the four popularly known ones - indeed, it comes in the introduction to the questions: *ma nashtana halayla hazeh mikol haleilos?* How is this night different from all other nights? While related to the following four questions, this too is a question in and of itself. The Gra explains that this question is really why the *mitzvos* of *Pesach* are done exclusively at night, while on other *yomim tovim*, the *mitzvos* are performed during the day only (such as *shofar* and *lulav*). What sets the *Pesach* night, *halaylah hazeh*, from the others?

One answer comes from the *Zohar* - the night of the *Seder* is referred to there as the "*laylah kayom yair*" - the night which shall shine like day. Despite the late hour of the *Seder*, that night still possesses the characteristics of the day. At the time of the tenth and most severe plague, *Hashem* brightened Egypt at the midnight hour as if it was high noon. *Hashem* did this in order to show the Egyptians that their deities were powerless - their most esteemed god, Ra, represented by the sun, was "taken out" at night by *Hashem* to show Who really holds dominion over nature and everything else. This idea is further reflected in the *possuk* itself - "*vihigadta libinchan bayom hahu*," - "and you shall tell your son on that day..." regarding the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, which takes place at night. In sum, the *mitzvos* of *Pesach*, which represent an enlightenment of *Klal Yisroel's* future following their *geulah* from Egypt, are done on a night which, in more ways than one, was bright as day.

To return to the original question - where else do we refer to *Hashem* as "*HaMakom*?" At the end of *kriyas haTorah*, in the *tefillah* of *acheinu kol beis yisroel*, in which we ask *Hashem* to free our Jewish brethren from their bondage. Clearly, a great common denominator exists between these two usages of *HaMakom* - both involve situations where a person or group of people daven for salvation from imprisonment and suffering. This stems from the Gemara that uses *HaMakom* in the context of both *bikkur cholim* and *nichum aveilim*. This segues into a point which Rav Soloveitchik *zt"l* made regarding the *Ge-*

mara in *Berachos* which explains how Yaakov Avinu, by davening at *Har Hamoriah*, established the *tefillah* of *ma'ariv*. The *possuk* describes Yaakov's action as "*vayifga bamakom hahu*" - "and he happened upon that place" (the *Gemara* relates the verb *lifgoa* (to meet) to davening). When did Yaakov daven there? Clearly, based on the *pesukim* and the *Gemara*, it was at nighttime, traditionally a time of distress and both figurative and literal darkness. Specifically, relative to Yaakov, it was at a time when he was in "exile" from his home, fleeing Eisav. Thus, in this third usage of *HaMakom*, we see once more that it involves a situation of peril and a feeling of distance from *Hashem*.

The *Chiddushei HaRim* also makes this connection to *Akeidas Yitzchak*. This was likely the most challenging moment in all of Avraham's life - as if everything else he accomplished led up to it. How does the *possuk* describe Avraham's approach to the mountain on which he would attempt to sacrifice his son? "*Vayar es hamakom hahu merachok*" - "and he saw the place from a distance." The *Chiddushei HaRim* suggests that this *possuk* can also be figuratively read as, "and he saw *HaMakom* (i.e. *Hashem*) from a distance (i.e. he felt distanced from *Hashem* in his time of distress)." We also use *HaMakom* when comforting mourners and visiting the sick, also in situations destined to be extremely challenging and, sometimes, spiritually disillusioning.

Based on all of this, Rav Soloveitchik explains that this is also the idea found in *kedushah* in *Kriyas Shema* and *Uva Litziyon*, where we say *baruch kevod Hashem mimkomo* - "blessed is the glory of *Hashem* from His Place." This *possuk* is from *Yechezkel*, whereas the first *possuk* in *kedushah*, "*kadosh kadosh kadosh, Hashem tzevakos, melo kol ha'aretz kevodo*" - "Holy, holy, holy is *Hashem*, the God of Hosts, the entire land is filled with His glory," is from *Yeshayahu*. What was the main difference between the two prophets? *Yeshayahu* lived in *Eretz Yisroel* when and where the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, whereas *Yechezkel* lived in *Bavel*, following the destruction of the first *Beis Hamikdash*. Thus, in the case of *Yechezkel*, who was physically and spiritually distant from the seat of *Hashem's* glory, the word *makom* is used, once again demonstrating that the word connotes distance.

Rav Soloveitchik continues by saying that this too is the idea conveyed at the *Seder*. The Jews felt extremely distant from *Hashem* during their enslavement - to them, He was *HaMakom*, He who is far away, "someplace" but not anywhere readily identifiable. At our lowest point described in the *Haggadah*, at the 49th most severe level of impurity and riddled with idolatrous tendencies and urges, *Hashem* was *HaMakom*. Yet, still, *Hashem* redeemed and returned us to Him by *Himself*, even when He seemed as far away from us as possible. On this night truly, as the *Zohar* describes, does the darkness shine as light. For at our lowest point, *Hashem* lifted us up and gave us the *Torah*, the tool through which we can rise above our base nature - He allowed us to appreciate just how far away from Him and that he promises to redeem us even from the depths. This is the full expression of *maschil bigenus umesayem bishvach* that underscores *Sippur Yetizas Mitzraim*.

Arba Banim

Avidan Loike ('22)

The *Haggadah* details four answers given to the questions of four types of children at the *Pesach Seder*: the *chacham* (wise son), the *rasha* (wicked son), the *tam* (simple son), and the *she'eino yodea lishol* (the son who does not know how to ask). Each one of the answers is tailored to the specific type of question asked, and is based on *pesukim* surrounding the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Interestingly, the answer to both the *rasha* and the *she'eino yodea lishol* contain the *possuk* "*ba'avor zeh asah Hashem li bitzaisi miMitzrayim*" - because of this, *Hashem* did this for me when I left *Mitzrayim*. Why is it that the *rasha* and the *she'eino yodea lishol* are given the same answer to their questions, even though they don't ask questions that even remotely resemble each other?

To answer this question, we must look at the context of the phrase as it is used for each son. The answer given to the *rasha* is that had he been in *Mitzrayim*, he would not have been taken out - "*asah Hashem li*" - that which *Hashem* did for me, and not you. The *she'eino yodea lishol* doesn't ask a question, but we tell him the same *possuk*, with the phrase "*ba'avor zeh*" (because of this) referring to the *Pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror* which we eat on the night of the *Seder*. One reason that the *she'eino yodea lishol* has the same answer as the *rasha* is because he too is a *rasha*. According to the *Kli Yakar*, the *she'eino yodea lishol* can be worse than the *rasha*, or, in the language of the *Kli Yakar*, a "*rasha ra*" (particularly evil *rasha*). The *Kli Yakar* explains that there are two types of *she'eino yodea lishol*: one who doesn't know how to ask, and one who is sitting at the table and purposefully being silent. This child has no *derech eretz*, as he wants to be so far removed from taking part in the *Seder* that he won't even disrespectfully ask any questions. This is also why he is called the *she'eino yodea lishol* (one who does not ask), and not the *she'eino yodea eich lishol* (one who does not know *how* to ask). This child is the worst child at the table. The *Kli Yakar* therefore says that the reason that the *rasha* and the *she'eino yodea lishol* have the same answer is that we do not know why it is that this child is not asking a question. If it is because he is a *rasha ra*, even worse than the normal *rasha*, then he will understand the hidden rebuke in the answer "*asah Hashem li*" - for me, and not for you. And, if the son is truly just ignorant, then the answer will suffice to teach him about the meaning of the night, without any of the negative implications, as he will not understand them.

Furthermore, the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, when explaining the *arba banim*, speaks about four sons: the *chacham*, *rasha*, *tipeish*, and *she'eino yodea lishol*. The *tam*, the simple son, is replaced with the *tipeish*, the foolish son. Why would the *tam* be called the foolish one, and not the *she'eino yodea lishol*, whom everyone can see is the most intellectually impaired one at the table? The reason is because the *Yerushalmi* doesn't see the *she'eino yodea lishol* from being foolish at all - rather, he is the farthest removed from the table in the sense that he isn't participating, not that he does not know how to ask.

Shimi Kaufman ('21)

Editor-In-Chief, Shema Koleinu

תקם מה הוא אומר? מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה יי אלהינו אתכם? ואף אתה אמר לו כהלכות הפסח: אין
מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן

The wise son, what does he say? What is this testament, these laws and ordinances which Hashem our God has commanded to us? And you shall tell him the laws of Pesach: one may not eat anything after the Pesach offering, represented by the Afikomen.

The scene of the four sons is easy enough to imagine. Our *Haggados* as children all had pictures representing the different characters, with the wise son with his *sefer*, the wicked son with his newspaper, the simple son with his yo-yo, and the *she'eino yodea lishol* with his pacifier. In this generalization, one is tempted to look at the wicked son as the opposite of the wise son. This parallel, however, seems flawed; one would expect the *Haggadah* to draw a contrast to the wicked son with a righteous son. Why does the *Haggadah* call him the wise son? This choice is especially strange, since the wise son's question is a basic *halachic* inquiry about the simplest laws of *Pesach* night. Why would the wise son not have a more intelligent question to ask? Additionally, why does the father answer his son by telling him that he may not eat anything after the *Afikomen*? Why not teach him about something else related to *Maggid* or the other *mitzvos* of the night?

The *Shemen Hatov*, Rav Shmelke of Nikolsburg, points out that the *Torah* introduces the questions of both the *chacham* and the *tam* with the words "And it will be when your son will ask you tomorrow..." However, the *Torah* does not use the word "tomorrow" when introducing the question of the *rasha*. Rav Shmelke explains that even though the *chacham* and the *tam* have questions, they are willing to put them aside and experience the night of *Pesach* as intended. They leave their questions for "tomorrow", opting to allow the *Seder* to operate without intruding with challenges. The *rasha*, on the other hand, takes every opportunity to prod and poke at the father and try to stump him. The *rasha* refuses to do something if he does not understand it immediately, while the *chacham* and *tam* are more inclined to allow the events of the night to unfold.

The *mishnah* (*Avos* 4:1) states: "Who is wise? He who learns from every man". The *chacham* is not necessarily a genius; he acknowledges that his understanding has serious flaws and is okay with allowing the events of the night to unfold as intended. This makes him the perfect foil to the *rasha*, who cannot stand to have anything happen which he does not immediately comprehend. This is why we tell the *rasha* that he would have been left in *Mitzrayim*; the whole redemption from *Mitzrayim* required the Jews to bring the *Korban Pesach*, one of the most illogical and convoluted laws in the *Torah*. The *rasha*, with his mindset, would have refused to participate, and thus would have been left behind.

This presents us with two questions. Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, The Lubavitcher Rebbe, asks (*Likutei Sichos* Vol. 1 pg. 247) why the four sons are arranged in the order that they are. They are not in order of piety, since the wicked son is second, and it is not the order in which they appear in the *Torah*, since there the *she'eino yodea lishol* is first. Rather, answers Rav Schneerson, the *Haggadah* arranges the four sons in order of their intellectual capabilities; first the wise son, then the wicked son, followed by the simple son and the one who lacks the ability to ask. However, according to the *Shemen Hatov*, it would seem that the *tam* should be placed before the *rasha*, as his question is viewed more positively. In truth, what is the difference between the *tam* and the *chacham*?

The answer to this question lies in the specificity of each one's question. The *tam* asks, "what is this?" He is a passive learner, and cannot be bothered to form a more detailed and pointed question. In truth, his willingness to leave his question until later is not out of respect, but out of laziness; at the end of the day, the *tam* does not care if he receives an answer to his question, and he will continue to go with the current of things no matter what happens. The *chacham* and *rasha*, on the other hand, both ask specific questions about the rituals and practices done; the difference is that the *rasha* asks to challenge, while the *chacham* asks to learn. Thus, the *rasha* does indeed ask a more *intelligent* question than the *tam*, but it is asked for the wrong reasons.

This is why we answer the *chacham* with the *halachah* not to eat anything after the *Afikomen*. We tell the wise son to continue with his current mindset and to take in the whole *Pesach* experience, from beginning to end, all the way until the *Afikomen*, the pinnacle of the night's absurdity and the thing the *rasha* could not handle. Once he does that, he can begin to analyze his experience in the proper manner. It is first important for him to see and observe how *Pesach* is meant to be done.

If we want to grow in our religious experience, we must be like the *chacham*. We cannot be satisfied with any aspect of Judaism at face value, like the *tam*, and must constantly prod and poke to find the deeper meaning behind everything. However, our questions cannot come from a place of haughtiness or a need to challenge, as the *rasha's* question does. We must be willing to take everything in its entirety; only then we can begin to ask our questions.

Yachol Meirosh Chodesh

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Growing up, I was privileged to travel with my family to Israel to celebrate *Pesach*. In our early days of flying to Israel as a large family, early check-in was a big deal. We used to religiously load up the car the night before a trek to someplace in Brooklyn to drop off our bags and collect our boarding passes some 24 hours or so before the flight. The goal was to make the night of our flight as simple as possible – we only needed to show up with our carryon luggage and head straight to the gate. It was worth the *schlep* the night before if it made the night of the actual flight a little bit easier.

It would seem that the *Ba'al Haggadah* is suggesting that early check in should, in theory, work for the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* – save time on the actual night of the *Seder* by telling the story in the days leading up to *Pesach*, then skip straight to the *matzah* and be on your way! The entire paragraph of *Yachol Meirosh Chodesh* is positing that all the *divrei Torah* that we're sharing at the *leil haSeder* could in theory be done earlier in the month, making our task on the night of the *Seder* that much simpler.

The logic makes sense if you see *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* as merely preparation for the other *mitzvos halaylah* – we want our *matzah* and *marror* to be meaningful, so we need to provide the context and background before eating them. If that is all that we are doing, by all means – start early and skip the lines. The conclusion that we reach flips everything on its head – our goal is not just to eat *matzah* and *marror*, but to use the *matzah* and *marror* to tell the story. We are not engaged in preparation for what is to come, but in the midst of the essence of then night. *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not simply “checking in”, but the main event itself.

Some texts of the *Haggadah* introduce the paragraph of *Yachol Meirosh Chodesh* with the words *vihigadeta libincha*, making it clear that the *Ba'al Haggadah* is choosing to be *doresh* the aforementioned *possuk* that was cited to the *she'eino yodea lishol*. In fact, Rashi and others understand the entire *derashah* in context of the *she'eino yodea lishol* – mainly, that the obligation to actively teach an uneducated child does not exist from *rosh chodesh*, nor would it apply earlier in the day. One is only obligated to teach the *she'eino yodea lishol* (and presumably the other sons as well) at the moment of *leil haSeder*, with the *matzah umarror* on full display.

Why is this case? If anything, we would expect that the *chiyuv* should start earlier than *leil haSeder*. If the child is in the pitiful state of *she'eino yodea lishol*, then there is much to teach him, and it does not seem to be effective to try to cram everything into one night. Rather, we should start teaching right after Purim, so that come *leil haSeder*, we should be able to build upon the previously transmitted knowledge. It seems almost irresponsible to wait until the night of the *Seder*!

Perhaps we can understand what is being suggested here in light of some of the *Rishonim's* understanding of the proposed earlier times for the *mitzvah* that are later rejected. Ritva and others suggest that one would have thought that the *chiyuv* starts at *rosh chodesh* because that is when the *mitzvos* associated with *Pesach* begin – we are *shoalin bihilchos haPesach* already and in the midst of taking the sheep to our homes. The *Machzor Vitri* suggests that one would have thought that the *chiyuv* starts while it is still daytime because that is when the *Korban Pesach* is being brought. In other words, if *mitzvos* are being done, it only makes sense that there is a parallel obligation to educate our children as to why we are doing them.

The conclusion is that it is only at *leil haSeder* that there is a *chiyuv* to fully delve into *Sippur Yetzias Mitz-*

rayim because of *ba'avor zeh* – that there are specific *mitzvos* that we are charged to perform. While the *braisa* itself only delineates *matzah umarror*, the Abudraham comments that there are really many more *mitzvos* that set the stage for *vihigadita libincha* - the word *zeh* has a *gematria* of twelve, representing the twelve *mitzvos* to be done tonight (Go ahead, try to list the 12...that's another *Dvar Torah* for another time). Only when we are fully surrounded by *mitzvos* like we are at *leil haSeder* can we effectively educate the *she'eino yodea lishol*. Only by placing him in an environment that is fully subsumed with structured *avodas Hashem* will we be successful in delivering to him the critical lessons that we so very much want him to learn. That makes the *leil haSeder* a truly special opportunity not to be missed.

Yishai Gross ('22)

The paragraph of *Yachol Meirosh Chodesh* discusses when the obligation begins to start discussing the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. After dismissing the possibility that the obligation applies from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, we find that the obligation can only be fulfilled at the night of the *Seder*. However, there is no explanation as to why the original assumption for when the obligation begins is *Rosh Chodesh*. Why not, for example, thirty days before *Pesach*, which is when we begin to learn about the *halachos* of the *chag*?

A popular answer to this question is that *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* is when *Bnei Yisroel* were first commanded to prepare to leave Egypt. In fact, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said that you should begin learning about a holiday fifteen days in advance because of this (*Pesachim* 6a). However, the paragraph of *Yachol Meirosh Chodesh* comes to teach us that even this opinion is incorrect, and that the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* must be told on the night of the *Seder* to fulfill the obligation.

Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim

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Based on a Shiur titled "Gratitude On The Seder Night"

What are we really supposed to gain from the *Seder*? What is the overarching theme of *Pesach* night, aside from *Yetzias Mitzrayim*? The Rambam, in *Sefer Hamitzvos* (*Mitzvas Asei* 157) writes that there is a *mitzvah* to tell over at length the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, which is what differentiates the relation of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on *Seder* night from the *chiyuv* to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* any night (as Rav Chaim Brisker famously comments). But, the Rambam ends with an interesting detail easily missed by a scanning eye - the phrase he includes in describing the praiseworthy nature of lengthening and enriching one's recounting of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is, "whoever tells the story at length and greatly expresses gratitude to Hashem....such is deserving of praise." Clearly, the Rambam places extreme emphasis on gratitude, but what is gratitude's role in the *Seder*?

One notable fragment of the *Seder* which features gratitude, according to one explanation, is the *arba kosos* (four cups of wine). The *Maharsha* comments regarding a *Gemara* in *Berachos* (54b) that the four cups at the *Seder* correspond metaphorically to the four types of people obligated to bring a *Korban Todah* (thanksgiving offering). This is because the *Bnei Yisroel* themselves satisfied all four obligatory factors in bringing the *korban*: they traveled by (or through) the sea, through the wilderness, were healed from their ailments (the enslavement was often life-threateningly exhausting), and were freed from prison.

The *Tur* also brings an interesting, but rather obscure, detail regarding the baking of the *matzah*. He quotes an opinion which holds that one should use exactly one *isaron* of flour to make each *matzah* - corresponding directly to the single *isaron* of flour used to make the *lachmei todah*, the loaves of bread brought along with the *Korban Todah*! Once again, a clear connection between the events of the *Seder* night and gratitude can be drawn. The *Mordechai* also adds that the reason we use three *matzos* at the *Seder* is to represent the three types of *lachmei todah* that were unleavened.

Clearly, *hoda'ah*, gratitude, is a central theme of the *Seder* night as well. Why exactly is this so? There are three potential explanations as to why this connection exists. First, when someone is openly able to thank *Hashem* and express gratitude to Him, they similarly confer upon themselves a greater willingness to serve Him. Of course, our ability to perform *avodas Hashem* is the sole reason that we are considered "free" beginning on the historic first *Pesach* night - free from the bondage of Egypt to serve *Hashem*, which is the innate true desire of every Jew. Thus, by cultivating one's ability to thank *Hashem*, one is doing the same for their ability and willingness to actually serve *Hashem* as well, which is the very reason why He redeemed us from Egypt in the first place. Part of being an *eved Hashem* (servant of *Hashem*) is enjoying His service as well as taking joy in it, which segues into the second goal of expressing gratitude at the *Seder* - thanking *Hashem* and realizing all the good which He has done for someone will bring him joy. Leading psychologists from around the nation have all consistently found that gratitude causes one to exhibit the most elevated mental state when compared to other acts of self-care/ attempts to lift one's mood. On a similar note, and also the third motivation for gratitude constituting a central theme of the *Seder*, is that gratitude and giving thanks similarly help one weather the storm of

life. A study conducted by UC San Diego researchers working for the Wall Street Journal found that, among hospital patients suffering from heart disease, those who were instructed to keep gratitude journals suffered from less inflammation, fewer sleep disturbances, and lower levels of clinical depression.

As a final addition to this idea, the *gematria* of *marror* (446) is the same as that of *chessed shebichessed*, the first of the *sefiros* combinations enumerated among the days of *sefiros haomer* - to show that, even in our bitterest of times, by thanking *Hashem* (as we do on the *Seder* night), we can come to understand that we are truly still enjoying the utmost kindnesses from *Hashem*.

Rabbi Baruch Simon ('81)
Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

Based on a Shiur titled "Kol Hamarbeh"

The *Emek Brachah*, a *sefer* written by a *talmid* of the Brisker Rov, quotes his *rebbe* regarding a difference between the *chiyuv* to mention *yetzias Mitzrayim* every day and the telling over of the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* on the *Seder* night. Rav Chaim Brisker asks why exactly there is any difference between the everyday-*chiyuv* and the "special" one generated on the night of the *Seder*.

Rav Chaim gives three distinctions: 1. The everyday *chiyuv* is of personal nature - every *individual* is obligated to remind *themselves* of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, whereas by *Seder* night, there is a *chiyuv* to be *maggid* (tell over) the events of *yetzias Mitzrayim* to one's household; 2. The everyday *chiyuv* only involves recounting the singular and generalized exodus from Egypt, whereas the *chiyuv* on *Seder* night involves telling over the plagues and miracles which *Hashem* wrought for the *Bnei Yisroel*; 3. The everyday *chiyuv* makes no mention of the specific *mitzvos* mentioned in the *Torah* concerning *Seder* night, such as *Korban Pesach*, consuming *matzah*, and consuming the *marror*, whereas the *chiyuv* of *Seder* night includes such themes as centralities.

For these three reasons, explains the *Emek Brachah*, we also include the *mishnah* in the first chapter of *Maseches Brachos* regarding Ben Zoma's extrapolation from a *possuk* that *yetzias Mitzrayim* must also be mentioned every night. For the very reason that this *mishnah* delineates the ordinary *chiyuv* of remembering *yetzias Mitzrayim* does the *Ba'al Haggadah* include it at the beginning, explains Rav Chaim, to set the stage for the upcoming differences between the ordinary *chiyuv* and that of *Seder* night (eventually discussed in the main body of the *Haggadah*). Rav Chaim then corresponds each of his three distinctions mentioned above to specific instances in the *Haggadah*. First, that the *chiyuv* of *Seder* night involves telling over the story to others - this is why the passage of the four sons is brought, to illustrate that the *Seder* involves a live conversation, a storyteller and listeners, unlike an ordinary night. Then, that the *chiyuv* of *Seder* night involves telling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* replete with the relevant history and miracles - this is alluded to by the main body of the *Haggadah*, retelling the struggles of our forefathers, the subsequent redemption, and exegetical arguments regarding the plagues. Finally, that the *chiyuv* of *Seder* night involves the three principle *mitzvos* of the *Seder* (*Korban Pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*) - this is why Rabban Gamliel's *braisa*, which *paskens* that anyone who doesn't mention those three vital concepts has not fulfilled his *chiyuv* of *Maggid*, is quoted.

The *Pri Eitz Chayim*, written by the Arizal, famously explains that the word "*Pesach*" can be broken down into two constituent parts: the words *peh* (mouth) and *sach* (speaks). This is clearly in agreement with the explanation of Rav Chaim and the *Emek Brachah*, that a critical concept involved in the special *chiyuv* of *Maggid* by the *Seder* involves telling over the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* to others. Additionally, the other two ideas which Rav Chaim brought are also included, albeit more subtly, in this *drush* of the Arizal (since they similarly involve thoroughly speaking out the history and details of the *Seder* procedure).

The Maharal, in *Gevuros Hashem*, asks: the *Gemara* in *Berachos* (33b) writes that once, someone who

davened for the *amud* in front of the *amora* Rav Chanina amended the first *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* significantly, adding numerous other lofty terms of praise for *Hashem* in addition to “*hagadol* (great), *hagibor* (mighty), *vihanora* (awesome).” Rav Chanina spoke to this individual following davening, and told him that even praising *Hashem* via the three terms used to this day is only permissible since Moshe *Rabbeinu* himself used them, as detailed in the *Chumash*. Only on his account could the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* institute their mention in davening. Thus, anything extra would constitute an improper and inappropriate form of praise for *Hashem*, since we, as limited humans, are so unable to properly capture the true glory of *Hashem* in our infinitely insufficient praises. Consequently, we limit our praises to a modest list, only said by he who was closest to perceiving such glory, and who used the terms he felt appropriate. If so, continues the Maharal with his question, why is it not only permissible but indeed praiseworthy (*kol hamarbeh, harei zeh meshubach* - he who [expounds the concepts of the *Seder*] greatly, such is praiseworthy) to lengthen one’s telling over of *yetzias Mitzrayim* at the *Seder*? Shouldn’t the same logic as in the aforementioned *Gemara* apply, that we lack the true ability to capture how great *Hashem*’s expression of dominance and control over the world is through *yetzias Mitzrayim*? We should therefore minimize our recalling of it, in order not to make it seem as if we are truly describing, in full glory, the nature of *Hashem* (which we, as humans, simply cannot do).

The Maharal answers by drawing a clear distinction between praising *Hashem* and telling over the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* at the *Seder*. When praising *Hashem*, the act of doing Him justice itself constitutes a simple impossibility for a human to accomplish. But, when telling over the events of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, our primary goal is not to praise *Hashem* necessarily, but more so to express our gratitude to Him for having performed great miracles for our sake. Thus, by minimizing the extent to which one recounts *yetzias Mitzrayim* at the *Seder*, he effectively expresses less gratitude to *Hashem* for having brought the *Bnei Yisroel* out of Egypt.

There is a related idea when it comes to the concepts of gratitude as a whole. In truth, there are two forms of “*hoda’ah*” - giving thanks, and admitting something (in the context of a court case, for example). Really, though, they are truly one in the same, since giving thanks is equivalent to admitting that you needed something from someone, much the same way one admits his guilt. But, in order to convey that intention when thanking someone, a certain very revealed sense of humility must be expressed by the one giving thanks, as he openly admits to the benefactor that he needed something from him that he could not attain on his own. This sort of humility, recognizing that one’s abilities are limited (save for *Hashem*’s), finds a place in the *Seder* through the *matzah*, which symbolizes, among other things, humility (due to being flat and reserved, unlike the “puffed-up” *chametz*). Thus, we see that, through eating the *matzah* and recognizing what it symbolizes, one is able to properly realize that he is dependent on others, and particularly *Hashem*, consequently giving him the key tool to giving *Hashem* proper thanks through the telling of *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

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Maggid Shiur, YUHSB

Pharoh, in the mind of Jews for generations, has been a paradigmatic villain. Rabbi Norman Lamm even says this was by design; claiming that we are never informed of Pharoh's real name so that we avoid giving him any human psychological backdrop to the development of his evil, focusing only on his wickedness. It would then naturally follow that commentaries and common folk alike would try and read the text of the *Chumash* with a punishing eye, finding only fault and no mercy for Pharoh. Surprisingly, however, this is consistently not always the case.

Moshe's most famous encounter with Pharoh is perhaps his statement of "Let my people go!" But, as with most catchphrases we remember from childhood, the real details are a little more nuanced. In *Shemos* 3:18, *Hashem* charges Moshe with the task of asking Pharoh to send *Bnei Yisroel*, not to leave for good, but on a *three day journey*. Moshe then puts forth this exact request to Pharoh (*Shemos* 5:3). This wording leads to an obvious question. Did *Hashem* really want us to just leave for three days? Was the goal not to have a *geulah shleimah*, a full and complete redemption?!

Rav Shmuel David Luzzato (Shadal), in his *peirush* on the *Chumash*, explains the request in logical terms. He says, "There is no doubt that this request was a trick. Of course, their intention was never to return to Egypt! After he [Pharoh] tricked and enslaved the people with no justice, one should not wonder about dealing falsely with a wicked one!" (Shadal, *Shemos* 3:18). Rav Luzzato's indifference to *Hashem*, and by extension Moshe, lying to Pharoh, is completely understandable. After all, would any of us judge someone for lying to the Nazis to escape persecution? Pharoh is undeserving of respect, reverence, and certainly honesty.

However, some of the classical commentaries completely avoid this *peshat* in the request to leave for three days. Rabbeinu Bachya says, "*Chas vishalom* that one should think this request was trickery." (*Shemos* 3:18:3) Rav Metlingberger in his *Haksav Vihakabbalah* says "This request was not a lie, because Moshe never explicitly said they would return after the journey. Words of falsehood did not emanate from Moshe's lips." (ibid.) But why? Why should we be so certain Moshe would not lie to a tyrant like Pharoh?

The same question can be raised regarding the Ramban's explanation about what it means that *Hashem* "hardened" Pharoh's heart (*Shemos* 14:4). The Ramban goes to lengths to explain that *Hashem* was in no way limiting Pharoh, but giving him opportunities for real *teshuvah* (*Shemos* 7:3). What would be so problematic about *Hashem* removing Pharoh's gift of free will (as suggested by Rambam in the sixth chapter of *Hilchos Teshuvah*)? Was he who was so cruel in his torment above having his own freedom taken away? What caused the Ramban to view this story as *Hashem* going out of His way to give Pharoh chance after chance at redemption?

Finally, the same issue arises, not with commentators, but with the *malachim*. The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (39b) provides an astonishing account of what was happening in *shamayim* as the Egyptians were being swallowed by the sea. The *malachim*, seeing the Egyptians drowning, began to sing in ecstasy! And of course, they should! The persecutors of *Bnei Yisroel* have now been defeated! The *Gemara* recounts that *Hashem* was perturbed by the scene the *malachim* were causing and said, "The work of my hands is drowning in the sea, and you will sing before Me?!" *Hashem* was upset at their display, but why? *Hashem* himself drowned them in the sea! Why should they not celebrate the downfall of such wicked people?

I believe there is a connected idea that can explain the commentaries and *Gemara*. Pharoh and the

Mitzri soldiers were certainly not deserving of mercy; they certainly did not deserve kindness or compassion. However, just because someone does not deserve mercy, it does not mean you should be turned into someone merciless. If compassion is clearly too high of a prize to give to someone, that does not mean you must act coldheartedly. In the opinion of the commentaries, it can be suggested, *Hashem* and Moshe were certainly willing to lie to Pharoh, to trick the tyrant, but they were not going to lose who they were in the process. In halachic terminology, their reluctance to lie to Pharoh was a concern of *bein adam le'atzmo*, and not *bein adam le'chaveiro*. They were not going to allow their character to be changed over someone like Pharoh. The same could be said for *Hashem* not wanting to mercilessly strip away Pharoh's chance at *teshuvah*, or to have the *malachim* callously cheer at the downfall of the *Mitzrim*. To give up one's own character and *middos* of those who are not deserving of such sacrifice, would be another victory for the enemy.

Eser Makkos

Yisrael - Dovid Rosenberg ('23)

The *mishnah* in *Maseches Sotah* (1:7) says “*bimiddah she’adam moded, bah modidin lo*” - with the measure that a person measures, with that he is measured. This describes how *Hashem* acts toward people. He treats them, in punishment or reward, the way that they have behaved. *Middah kineged middah*, measure for measure, is one way that we can very clearly see *Hashem* as He rules over the world. And naturally, this trait of *Hashem’s*, the trait of correspondence, is prevalent in the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* from its beginning to its end.

Before *Hashem* sends the *makkos* upon *Mitzrayim*, He explains in a general statement that the *makkos* would serve to have *Mitzrayim* recognize Him (*Shemos* 7:4). Similar statements are also found before several of the *makkos* individually. Regarding many of the *makkos*, *Hashem* tells Moshe to go to Pharaoh and to instruct him to release *Bnei Yisroel*, or suffer the plague. It is in this warning for *makkas arov* that Moshe is instructed to tell Pharaoh that “*ki im eincha meshalei’ach* (תִּשְׁלַח) *es ami hineni mashlich* (תִּשְׁלַח) *becha...es he’arav*”. The message to Pharaoh is that if he doesn’t send (תִּשְׁלַח) the people out, *Hashem* will likewise send (תִּשְׁלַח) wild animals upon him. We thus see that *Hashem’s* punishments to Pharaoh were exactly fitting for his crimes. (The Measure for Measure Haggadah pg. 124-125)

When Pharaoh was afraid of the growth of *Bnei Yisroel*, he ordered that the baby boys be thrown into the Nile River (*Shemos* 1:10-16). Though this was his public reason, Rashi (*Shemos* 1:16, 22) explains that Pharaoh was told by his astrologers that the savior of the Jewish people would soon be born, and water would be his downfall, so Pharaoh wanted every baby boy born in *Mitzrayim* to be thrown into the water to prevent this. For the act of murder done by drowning, the *Mitzrim* drowned in the sea at *Yam Suf*. (The Measure for Measure Haggadah pg. 357)

One understanding of the first *possuk* of *Shiras Hayam*, “*ashira laHashem ki ga’oh ga’ah sus verochevo ramah vayam*” (I will sing to *Hashem* for He is the most elevated, horse and rider He cast into the sea), is that because the *Mitzrim* arrogantly elevated themselves over *Bnei Yisroel*, *Hashem* raised them even higher in their minds, in order to make the fall that much greater. Thus, the *possuk* reads “I will sing to *Hashem* for He has made the arrogant (*ga’oh*) haughtier (*ga’ah*); horse and its elevated - physically and mentally high-and-mighty - rider are tumbling down into the sea” (*Kli Yakar* on *Shemos* 15:1). For elevating themselves, the *Mitzrim* were punished with a great plunge into the deep.

And finally, if it is not too bold to suggest, during *Makkas Arbeh*, the *possuk* describes what the locusts will do and says “*ve’achal es yeser hapeitah hanisheret lachem min habarad*”; when the locusts come, they will eat all that remains after *Makkas Barad*. The Ramban (*Shemos* 10:4) analyzes the *pesukim* and argues that very little time must have passed between the *barad* and the *arbeh*. The events of these two *makkos* as they unfold appear as follows: There is massive destruction of all *Mitzrayim’s* land and property as paradoxical burning hail rains down upon *Mitzrayim* (*Shemos* 9:24-25). When this stops, there is a short period of time with no *makkah*, just the rubble left after *barad*. This lasts only until the trees start to bloom and wheat and spelt crops start to bud. Perhaps there is hope for *Mitzrayim*; maybe they can rebuild? But this glimmer of hope is extinguished as a dark cloud comes from the east, casting a shadow over *Mitzrayim*. The locusts descend and devour every last bud - every last hope - for the restoration of *Mitzrayim* (*Shemos* 10:13, 15).

Why then was *Mitzrayim* deserving of such a terrible, crushing punishment? Looking earlier in the story, to a crime mentioned above, one might be able to glimpse an answer. The *Mitzrim* took the sons, the children, of *Bnei Yisroel*, and drowned them in the river. What is a child? A child is the future. They are the possibility of continuation. They are potential. *A child is hope*. So, perhaps, for murdering the children of *Bnei Yisroel*, for casting them into a darkness deep enough that a mother would set her son adrift in a basket on a river, *Mitzrayim* was punished *middah kineged middah*, with the destruction, before their eyes, of their own hope and their own future.

Avi Fried ('22)

As we all know, *Hashem* is in control of the whole universe, including the nature within, and for that reason, many of the ten *makkos* cannot be explained easily by natural means. However, the purpose of the *makkos* was also to show *Hashem's* complete mastery over the natural forces of the world, which is why many of the *makkos* could have been accomplished through the guise of natural phenomena. The first example is the *makkah* of *dam*, when the Nile turned red. There is a scientific theory for how *Hashem* did it. There have been many cases of a red algae that blooms in rivers around a dry climate. This algae spreads quickly but stays together to form a sort of sheet over the river, giving it a look of blood. This algae is also extremely harmful to any living thing that it comes into contact with, which is why the fish died.

The next plague for which we have a theory of how *Hashem* made it happen was *tzefardaiyah*, frogs. There are many cases of large amounts of smaller animals being relocated after hefty wind or rain storms, and one thing often found in the desert is wind storms. There are many cases of wild life being transported through storms, such as in Brazil, where spiders have often been rained down during intense storms.

Finally, in *Makkas Bechoros*, all the Egyptian firstborns died except for Pharaoh. The theory for how *Hashem* made this happen is that after all the animals from the previous plague died, they were buried or disposed of, and when a body decomposes, it releases carbon dioxide which can make people suffocate. Because CO₂ is denser than air, it stays on the bottom. In Egyptian culture, the oldest child would sleep on the floor, while the Jews had no such tradition so we slept on beds elevated from the ground. This was also true of the king, as it would not be respectful for a king to sleep on the floor. So, because the firstborns slept on the floor, they suffocated due to the carbon dioxide which had amassed. So, we thank *Hashem* that he orchestrated nature in such a way that he can truly show His infinite wisdom and power to strategically place the plagues to work perfectly for us.

Kriyas Yam Suf

Shnuer Agronin ('21)

Few among us today have felt what it means to be truly in peril. The source of danger, whatever it may be, encroaching from all sides, leaving no escape. Your skin drained of color as blood is drawn to more vital areas, the fight-or-flight instinctual response in full operation. And, among the faithful, a visceral cry for assistance and salvation issues forth from the deepest trench of the soul. Such experiences constitute anomalies in our time, thankfully, and our ability to envision ourselves in absolute mortal danger is often less than stellar. Yet, our forefathers faced nothing less than the impending ravages of total, immediate, and merciless slaughter by the Egyptians days after their exodus from the nation.

One can only imagine the raw emotions that the *Bnei Yisroel* felt standing between the visibly endless *Yam Suf* and the ever approaching Egyptian army. But, the *Torah* describes only their initial reaction in some depth in *Shemos* 14:10: "And Pharoh approached, the *Bnei Yisroel* lifted their eyes to see the Egyptians advancing after them. They were greatly afraid, and the *Bnei Yisroel* cried out to *Hashem*." Unfortunately, the nuance of Hebrew and the meaning which it can convey is lost in translation. A significantly invigorating approach as to how we should view our own struggles and, indeed, times of genuine danger, shines forth in the first phrase of the aforementioned *possuk* - *vihikriv Pharoh*. While the *possuk* literally means that Pharoh himself and his army grew closer to the *Bnei Yisroel*, this could have been conveyed with the phrase *vikorav Pharoh* or *vihiskareiv Pharoh*. The word "*hikriv*" implies, on some level, that not only did Pharoh make himself closer to the *Bnei Yisroel* intending to massacre them, but that he brought a separate entity closer to another.

Rabbi Lawrence Kelemen, *shli"ta*, explains that Pharoh did indeed cause two other beings distinct from himself to come close, and in a much different manner than he did himself to the Jews. He connects the end of the *possuk*, which describes the Jews calling out to *Hashem*, to the beginning; Pharoh brought the Jews closer to *Hashem*, by causing them to sincerely and fervently entreat Him for salvation. More interestingly, Rashi points out that the Jews' prayer was an act of following in the ways of their forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, who similarly entreated *Hashem* for help in desperate times.

But, indeed, those illustrious *tzaddikim*, both the *Avos* and the ones who stood at the fate-determining shore of the *Yam Suf*, are our forefathers too. When our individual "Pharoh's" - our troubles, perils, and seemingly hopeless predicaments - come upon us, it would be worth it to remember the lesson of this *possuk*, that these times of distress simultaneously serve to bring us closer to our Maker, by causing our lips to align with our hearts in sincere *tefillah*. This *Pesach*, may we merit the increasingly strengthened ability to recognize the beauty present in every situation we find ourselves in, both the good and the "Pharoh's," all of which constitute calls from *Hashem* to come closer.

Dayeinu

Noam Steinmetz ('21)

Distribution Manager, Shema Koleinu

In one of the many verses of *Dayeinu*, we declare that if *Hashem* had brought us to *Har Sinai* and didn't give us the *Torah*, it would have been enough. This begs the famous question, why would that have been enough? What would have been the point of coming to *Har Sinai* if not for the giving of the *Torah*? Rav Chaim Soloveitchik answers that, before *Matan Torah*, the Jews were equivalent to the rest of the nations of the world as *Bnei Noach*. Once we got to *Har Sinai*, we received the special status of *Bnei Yisroel*, and *Hashem* even gave us the rest of the 613 *mitzvos* listed in the *Torah*. However, this special status of being a separate nation would have been achieved even without the giving of the *Torah*. As such, we say that this would have been enough. Rav Chaim's son, the Brisker Rov, gives two more answers. The scene at *Har Sinai* was more than just the giving of the *Torah*. It was important in instilling within *Bnei Yisroel* a certain amount of *yiras Shamayim* that would have an effect for generations to come. This would have been enough for us, even without the giving of the *Torah*. Additionally, the Brisker Rav calls attention to the exact language of the song, which is "*Ianu*" - if He had not given us the *Torah*. The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (59a) says that a Non-Jew may not study the *Torah*, as it is the private property of *Bnei Yisroel*. Therefore, the Brisker Rov explained that what is meant is that even if *Hashem* had brought us to *Har Sinai* and given the *Torah*, but not specifically to us as a private possession, it would have been enough.

Rav Yaakov Ruderman provides an additional answer to this question. The *Avos* did not need a physical *Torah* in order to fulfill all of the *mitzvos* of the *Torah*. As a result of their incredible level of *kedushah*, they were able to derive the *mitzvos* on their own. When *Bnei Yisroel* arrived at *Har Sinai*, they reached the highest levels of spirituality ever achieved by humans. Even if *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* had not given the *Torah* explicitly, they were on a high enough level to figure out its contents for themselves. This being established, why was there even a need for a physical *Torah*? It seems that *Bnei Yisroel* could have figured out the *mitzvos* for themselves! Answers Rav Ruderman, that it takes more than being aware of what is right, and what is wrong. People need to have clearly laid out rules and commands in order to follow them. An example of this can be found in the days leading up to the giving of the *Torah*. *Bnei Yisroel* were warned not to approach *Har Sinai* while the *Shechinah* was there. The warning was repeated a second time when the prohibition was about to go into effect. After this, an additional warning of severe punishment was given. This demonstrates the necessity of not only knowing what is wrong, but fully understanding what the repercussions of our actions are. Rav Yisrael Salanter once said that sins are like stars. We realize that they exist, but when we look at the stars, they look like small specks in the sky. In reality, these same stars are many times the size of Earth. We do not truly comprehend the true nature of sins. For this reason, we need the *Torah* to list them in detail. As such, we thank *Hashem* for not only allowing us to intuit the laws of the *Torah*, but for writing them explicitly as well.

Rav Avrohom Pam presents yet another answer to this question. The *Medrash Tanchuma* on *Parshas Ki Sisa* states that during the forty days which Moshe was in *Shamayim*, he would learn *Torah*, and then forget it. In frustration, he said "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, I have spent forty days and I know nothing." *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* told him that when the forty days were up, he would give the *Torah* to Moshe as a gift. This is the meaning of the *possuk* which says (*Shemos* 31:18), "When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moshe the two *Luchos Habris*, stone tablets inscribed with the finger of God." How do we understand this *Medrash*? The *Alshich Hakadosh* explains that in order to receive the *Torah*

directly from *Hashem*, Moshe needed to raise his already incredible level of *kedushah*. This could only be accomplished by studying *Torah* for forty days. Even though he forgot his learning, this was still enough to raise his *kedushah* to this level. This, says Rav Pam, is an incredible lesson to us all. Someone could spend a large amount of time and effort involved in learning *Torah*, yet he may not necessarily be able to retain all the information that he learns. Sometimes, it could be easy for such a person to question why he is putting so much effort in, when the effort put in seems to far outweigh the amount gained from it. But in truth, there is much to be gained from learning *Torah*, even if one will eventually forget it. This is why we say that it would have been enough if *Hashem* did not give us the *Torah* - even if *Hashem* would not have allowed us to remember the *Torah*, but only to have the spiritual purification which comes from its study, it would have been enough! When *kedushah* is gained through learning *Torah*, the impact is incredible. Even the *Torah* which one forgets holds the immense power to purify his soul, and uplift him in ways that could lead to incredible advancement in one's ability to learn *Torah*.

Amar Rabban Gamliel

Mr. Murray Sragow
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The *Pesach Seder* is the night of questions and answers, and the first question the *Haggadah* asks (the first of the *Mah Nishtanah's* four questions) is why we eat *matzah* on *Pesach*. All year long we eat both *chametz* and *matzah*, but tonight we eat only *matzah*. Why?

That question is asked at the very beginning of *Maggid*, but if you wait around until the very end of *Maggid*, the *Haggadah* provides the answer. We quote a *mishnah* from *Pesachim* (10:5,) in which Rabban Gamliel asks this question, and answers "because our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt." How does that answer the question? We elaborate and explain that on the way out of Egypt we were in a rush, and therefore there was insufficient time for the dough to rise before *Hashem* redeemed us. The *possuk* tells us that the Jews had prepared dough (and had planned to prepare other foods) to bake into fresh bread before they left Egypt, but in the rush there was neither time for the dough to rise nor time to assemble any other provisions.

So according to Rabban Gamliel, we eat *matzah* because it reminds us of the shock of redemption. Even though the Jews had a ringside seat to watch the heavyweight match in which *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* knocked out Pharaoh, they still couldn't wrap their heads around the idea that they were truly going to be free. So when the call came to get up and go, they weren't ready, their dough hadn't risen, and they had to bake *matzah*, not bread. And to remember that *yeshuas Hashem kihereyayin*, that *Hashem's* salvation comes in a blink of an eye, we eat the *matzah*.

Ramban says this is impossible. Are you telling me, he says, that our fathers intended to have bread and instead, by accident (or *Hashem's* plan), they ended up with *matzah*? It can't be. There's no way that our fathers would have intended to bake bread. They intended all along to bake *matzah*, as it was the first day of *Pesach*, and as everyone knows, it is forbidden to eat or even own *chametz* on *Pesach*! But what about the *possuk* that Rabban Gamliel cites? Doesn't it say that the reason they baked *matzah* is because they were in a rush? No, says Ramban. They baked on the road, as opposed to in their *kosher-for-Pesach* ovens in Egypt, because they were rushed. But they always intended the dough to be *matzah*.

This adds a whole layer of drama to the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Imagine the anxiety experienced by the Jewish mothers who had been cleaning their homes, and more importantly their ovens, for two weeks before *Pesach* (the *mitzvos* of *Pesach* were given on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*), only to be told by Moshe Rabbeinu on *Pesach* morning that they were packing up and heading out into the desert. Even more so, imagine the relief they felt when they reached their first rest stop in *Sukkos*, and upon looking into their bags they discovered that they had experienced the miracle of "*kefitzas derachim*," that they had traveled all the way from Goshen in less than 18 minutes, and therefore their dough had not risen. Therefore, as the *possuk* says, they were able to bake the dough as (*kosher for Pesach*) *matzah*, rather than as useless (and *assur* to own) *chametz*.

If so, returning to *Mah Nishtanah*, why do we eat *matzah* on *Pesach*? What would the Ramban say? Because *Hashem* said so. Because there's a *possuk* that says *shivayamim matzos tocheilu* - seven days you shall eat *matzos*. And if we were to suggest a reason for the *mitzvah*, it would not make sense to say that the *mitzvah*, given to the Jews two weeks before the redemption, should be because of an event

that did not happen until after the redemption. Rather, the simple answer would be to quote the *Haggadah* just before the *Mah Nishtanah* - *ha lachma anya diacalna avhasana bi'ara diMitzrayim*. *Matzah* is to remind us of the poor bread we ate in Egypt, where we had only the most basic of nutrition necessary to continue the backbreaking labor forced upon us.

The Ramban is so compelling that it makes it hard to understand Rabban Gamliel's version of the story. First, why were the Jews trying to bake bread if they knew that you may neither eat nor own *chametz* on *Pesach*? Second, if indeed the Exodus story is the reason for the *mitzvah* of *matzah*, then how could the *mitzvah* have been given before any of that story happened?

In order to explain Rabban Gamliel, one has to begin by realizing that *Pesach* was not observed that first year the same way it has been observed in all future years. Chazal refer to this difference as "*Pesach Mitzrayim*" and "*Pesach Doros*," and its details are defined in the *mishnah* in *Pesachim* (9:5). The *mishnah* lists four *halachos* that apply only to one or the other. The first three, that apply only to "*Pesach Mitzrayim*" are: 1) it was prepared five days in advance, 2) its blood was sprinkled on the doorpost, and 3) it was eaten in a rush. The fourth, which applies only to "*Pesach Doros*," is that it lasts seven days.

What does this mean? It means two things. First, it means that there were special *halachos* which were part of the Exodus process, and therefore relevant only that first year. It was not necessary, for example, to sprinkle blood on the doorpost in future years, because firstborn sons were not afterward in danger. *Makkas Bechoros*, which was coincident with the first *Seder*, was a one-time event. Second, it means that the character of *Pesach* changed after that first year and therefore was extended to seven days. And this change was anticipated in the formulation of the original presentation of *Pesach*, in *Perek 12 of Shemos*. There, in the first thirteen *pesukim*, the details of "*Pesach Mitzrayim*" are described. But then, in *possuk 14*, the *Torah* introduces "*Pesach Doros*" by name, and then proceeds to define its character. Its primary characteristics, twice emphasized in the *pesukim* and picked up by the *mishnah*, are the obligation to eat *matzah* and to avoid *chametz*. In fact, the very *possuk* that Ramban cites as his proof that the Jews were concerned about the prohibition of *chametz* is 12:15, just after the *possuk* about *Pesach Doros*.

So Rabban Gamliel is saved. He will say that in fact, there was no *mitzvah* of *matzah* or prohibition of eating *chametz* in "*Pesach Mitzrayim*" other than at the *Seder* itself (or perhaps for the whole first day of *Pesach*), that the Jews absolutely intended their dough to be *chametz*, for consumption either that day or the next, and then events as they transpired caused *matzah* to assume a new character, leading to the *halachah* we now observe. And so, indeed, the reason why we eat *matzah* on *Pesach* is because of the story.

And to the question of how could the *mitzvah* of *matzah* precede the events that it memorializes, that shouldn't bother us so much. After all, *Hashem* certainly knows the future and therefore plans for it in advance. In fact, the Abarbanel points out that this is exactly what happened regarding the *Korban Pesach*. The word "*pesach*" itself refers to the fact that *Hashem* "passed over" the houses of the Jewish firstborn and only attacked the Egyptians. But that too had not yet happened when the *mitzvah* of *Korban Pesach* was given, the same day as the *mitzvah* of *matzah*! So, we see that *Hashem* is okay with anticipatory *mitzvos*.

Now, back to the Ramban. Doesn't he know the *mishnah*? How could the Ramban base his whole version of the events on a *halachah* that the *mishnah* says was inapplicable at the time? The answer is that the *mishnah* is only one version of the story. In the *Tosefta* in *Pesachim* (8:8), we discover that the *mishnah* is actually a "*da'as yachid*," a sole opinion held by Rabbi Yosi HaGelili, whereas the *Chachamim* disagree and believe that the *mitzvah* of *matzah* (and therefore presumably the prohibition of *chametz*) applied to the whole of *Pesach* even the first year.

This leaves us with an interesting situation. Normally, when there is some doubt as to how events transpired in the *Torah*, the *halachah* will reflect that doubt. Here, we have the reverse. Depending on how you understand the *halachah*, that will lead you to a different version of how events transpired. This is not just a historical curiosity, however. This goes to the essence of our obligation at the *Seder*, namely *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. We are obligated to tell the story, so we need to get our story straight. Or, if we cannot, we should at least present to our children these possible versions of the story and put the question to them – why might *Hashem* have wanted the story to come out one way or the other?

Yisroel Hochman ('21)

Editor-In-Chief, Shema Koleinu

One of the most famous and well known lines of the *Pesach Seder* is that of Rabban Gamliel, who says that one's *chiyuv* is not fulfilled until they speak about "*Pesach, matzah, and marror*". The reason Rabban Gamliel singles out these *mitzvos* and expounds on them to such a degree is because he held that a person needs to understand these *mitzvos* in order to fulfil their *chiyuv* (*Berachos* 13a). But according to Rabban Gamliel, these *mitzvos* carry an additional level of status. These three *mitzvos* specifically require both internal *kavanah*, and an external declaration of intent and purpose before their completion (*Baruch She'amar* on the *Haggadah*). It is for this reason that Rabban Gamliel continues that one who does not explain these terms has not fulfilled his obligation.

There is a famous question asked on this statement in regards to the order of the *mitzvos* here. If *matzah* is meant to remind us of the freedom that the Jewish people got once they left Egypt in haste, and the *marror* is meant to represent the bitterness of slavery, why do we have the *matzah*, which came afterwards, before we have the *marror*? The *Ephod Bad* answers with the idea that if a person remembers tragedy before salvation on what should be a happy day, the focus on the tragedy without the preempting of looking at that salvation will cause people to become very upset on what should be a very happy and positive day. Therefore, we mention the *matzah* first, a reminder of the God's kindness and love and our gaining freedom, before we mention *marror*, which represents the painfulness of slavery. The *Haggadah* should be a story about triumph and rejoicing, and not just a story about oppression. When we opt to tell the story of *Mitzrayim* through use of symbols, we are not just retelling the story that happened long ago with no relevance to us now, but rather, we are giving ourselves the chance to relive what our ancestors went through and aspire to grow to the same levels of *kedushah* that our ancestors achieved. The *Kos Shel Eliyahu* points out that these three *mitzvos* represent the essence of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and through these, we get the chance to understand and fulfill the *mitzvos* of telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Naftali Seva Ratzon addresses the same question by utilizing a *yesod* developed by the Shach on the *mishnah* which says "In every generation, one should see himself as if he personally went forth from Egypt". The Shach there says that this means more than just imagining oneself in *Mitzrayim*, but also seeing the redemption from *Mitzrayim* in the light of the future redemption of the Jewish people. The order of Rabban Gamliel's statement is a fundamental part of bringing this redemption. The *matzah* coming before the *marror* teaches that only through the freedom of *matzah*, freedom from sin, can we avoid the *marror*, the bitterness of the *galus*. We begin with *matzah* because we are supposed to see ourselves among those who went out of Egypt and are free. We then receive a warning: if our actions are not proper, we will experience bitterness and *marror*. If we keep this in mind and remain free from sin, then we will merit yet another redemption with the coming of *Moshiach, Bimheirah Biyameinu*.

Korban Pesach

Shua Feigin ('21)

On the tenth day of the first month, *Nissan*, the Jewish people are commanded to take possession of one lamb per household. They are to watch over it until the fourteenth, slaughter it at midnight, eat its roasted meat, and smear its blood along their doorposts and lintels. The reason for this is so that *Hashem* knows to pass over the Jewish households, so that He delivers the plague of *Makkas Bechoros* to only the Egyptians. Thus, in smearing the lamb's blood, the Jewish people are committing an act of faith in both the seemingly abstract rulings of God with regards to the specifics of the *korban*, as well as the fact that he will keep his promise to pass over their houses and spare them from death. Twice, the *Torah* stresses that this is a communal celebration by using the word "*kol adas Yisroel*" - the entire assembly of *Yisroel* (*Shemos* 12:6, 12:47). This episode, a communal demonstration of faith in *Hashem*, is the first instance of the *Korban Pesach*. *Hashem* then commands that these rituals be observed *lidoro-seichem*, for all generations (*Shemos* 12:14). However, throughout Tanach, there are other instances where the *Korban Pesach* is specifically mentioned. Why is this so, if it is known that this is a *mitzvah* that lasts forever? A deeper analysis can reveal what is special about emphasizing specific instances of the offering of the *Korban Pesach*.

The next mention of the *Korban Pesach*, which takes place during the subsequent year in the desert, is recorded in *Sefer Bamidbar*. However, this particular mention of the *Pesach* is not so difficult to understand, because it contains some new rules with regards to the procedures - namely *Pesach Sheni*. In the event that someone is impure on the 14th of *Nissan*, they can offer it the following month. However, if they don't offer it at all, they are committing a grave sin (*Bamidbar* 9:3). Thus, the importance of this offering is stressed, so much so that the *halachah* is that even women, children, and slaves are obligated to eat from the *korban*. This mention of the *Korban Pesach* is therefore understandable, as it teaches the severity of not participating in the *mitzvah*, as well as alternative methods to do so if one is impure.

So far, the *Torah* has established the communal aspect, the faith aspect, and the importance of this *mitzvah*. Additionally, we already know that this *mitzvah* must be performed every year. Thus, why mention a *Pesach* offered in Gilgal during the times of Yehoshua (*Yehoshua* 5:10)? Why bother telling us this story; didn't they offer the *korban* every year? The mystery thickens when *Divrei Hayamim* tells us that Chizkiyahu wrote letters to the people telling them to bring the *Korban Pesach* (*Divrei Hayamim* II 30:1). Similarly, it is written that Yoshiyahu offered a *Pesach*, which had not been done with the same quality as his offering since even the times of the Judges (*Melachim* II 23:23-25). The fact that this *mitzvah* was not properly observed can begin to answer the question. However, that answer only works for this specific mentioning. Also, during the days of Ezra, it is again written that a *Pesach* was offered (*Ezra* 6:19).

Understanding the contexts of these mentions of the *Korban Pesach* can help answer the question of their necessity. (While the full *pesukim* are too long to quote, deeper insight can be gained by learning the *pesukim* quoted in the context of the *Sefer*). During the days of Yehoshua, the nation was just entering the land of Israel. The nation, fresh out of the desert and having just received the *Torah*, was suddenly tasked with conquering their promised land. Times were a bit uncertain. Similarly, the kings Chizkiyahu and Yoshiyahu, while being just and valuing *Hashem*, ruled during a time of political and religious turmoil. Hundreds of years of schism between the kingdoms of Yehudah and Yisroel, various dynasties who came into and out of power by coup or divine punishment of evil, monarchically supported worship of *avodah zarah* even in the *Beis Hamikdash* itself, prophecies of exile and destruction, and

the overarching threat of invasion by foreign powers had weakened the stability of the Jewish nation. Chizkiyahu and Yoshiyahu tried to reverse these trends by destroying idolatry and restoring faith and service of *Hashem*. Ezra also lived during a period of uncertainty, as he led a movement of exiled individuals back to Israel, where he spread *Torah* once more and worked on rebuilding the *Beis Hamikdash*.

The *Chumash* already established the importance of the *Korban Pesach*, that all must participate, and how it is a communal act whose basis was rooted in faith in *Hashem* during *Makkas Bechoros*. When the *Torah* recounts an offering of the *Korban Pesach*, it is during times of distress, when a strong leader is attempting to rally the people. The instances where it is mentioned can be seen as continuations of the themes of the *Korban Pesach* that are developed upon its first instance. Thus, as the *Korban Pesach* is mentioned many times throughout trying narratives, it develops into a symbol of a restoration and affirmation of communal faith in God. Understanding this idea behind the *Korban Pesach* should therefore serve as a lesson to us. During these trying times, eating the *afikomen*, which is a reminder of the *Korban Pesach*, should inspire us to come together as a community, united by our faith in *Hashem* and his ultimate plan.

Lifikach

Shua Pariser ('20)

We have reached the end of *Maggid*. We are about to wash for *matzah* and then eat *marror*, have the *seduah*, and finish the *Seder*. But first, we have a few more paragraphs to say; "*lefikach*," part of *Hallel*, and a *berachah*. What is the paragraph beginning with *lefikach*, and why is it said at this point?

The Rashbam considers this paragraph to be a transitional step. Having just declared our recognition of the fact that we consider it as if we ourselves have actually left *Mitzrayim*, we proclaim that it is our duty to sing *shirah* to *Hashem* just as our ancestors did, and we proceed to recite *Hallel*.

The *Kol Bo* quotes an opinion that considers this paragraph as being in place of the *berachah* normally said before *Hallel*. He rejects this idea, however, because we find no other blessing which resembles this paragraph. In order to be considered a "*berachah*," a prayer must state the praises of *Hashem*, not just say it is our duty to praise Him.

Why is *Hallel* at this part of the *Seder*? Rabbi Taubes once gave a *shiur* in the MTA/Zysman *Beis Medrash*, in which he said that the *Hallel* of the *Seder* is recited because we were freed, so when something good happens to you, you break into *shirah*. But why isn't the whole *Hallel* recited here? Why is it split?

The Abudraham says that the purpose of this *Hallel* is to embellish the second cup of wine with some words of praise. The rest of the recitation of *Maggid* would be merely "storytelling" if not for the inclusion of at least part of *Hallel*.

The Maharal suggests that the division of *Hallel* was originally intended to precede and follow the eating of the *Korban Pesach* with *Hallel*, to make it clear that *Hallel* was being said in honor of the *korban*. If all of *Hallel* were said before or after the meal, this point would not have been sufficiently highlighted. Today this practice is continued, because the *matzah* we eat as *afikoman* takes the place of the *Korban Pesach*. May we be *zocheh* that this year, we will recite the *Hallel* around the *korban*, and we shouldn't have to see ourselves *as if* we are free, but rather as truly free.

Motzi Matzah

Rabbi Hershel Schachter ('58)
Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

The *Torah* mentions several times that the purpose of all the miracles connected with *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was to demonstrate the existence of God, his power, and all the principles of our faith to the Jewish people. *Pesach* was designated as the *yom tov* of *emunah*, and the *matzah* is called, "the food of *emunah*" by the *Zohar*. *Shavuos* is the *yom tov* of receiving the *Torah*.

The *Kedushas Levi* points out the contrast between the two *yomim tovim*: one, on *Pesach* we may not even possess any *chametz*, as opposed to *Shavuos* which is the one and only time in the year that a *korban* is brought from *chametz*. The *Talmud* considers the "*shteihalechem*" brought on *Shavuos* as a more elegant *korban* because of the fact that it consists of *chametz*. Two, the "*minchas ha'omer*" brought on *Pesach* is most unusual, as it consists of barley grain, as opposed to almost all other *menachos*, including the "*shteihalechem*", which all come from wheat. Barley is usually used to feed the animals, as opposed to wheat, which is traditionally used for human consumption.

It may well be that these contrasts are due to the differences between the themes of the two *yomim tovim*. *Pesach* represents *emunah*, and regarding our understanding of God we must all have the attitude that, "if I really understood Him, I would be Him" (*Kuzari*). None of us can really understand any aspect of *Elokus*. Our understanding is compared to that of the animals (see *Tehillim* 73:22, and 42:2; *Tanya* Chapter 18). The "*omer*" *korban* on *Pesach* must consist of *ma'achal beheimah* to emphasize this idea. No *chametz* is permitted at all, since *matzah* represents elementary simplicity, while *chametz* represents sophistication. On *Shavuos*, when we celebrate *Torah* learning, the "*shteihalechem*" *korban* should be *ma'achal adam*, representing the idea that we were commanded to use our human intelligence to the best of our ability to delve into the study of the *Torah*. That *korban* must be made into *chametz*, representing the sophistication one should attain in *Torah* learning.

But, sophistication is not necessarily a trait that we want to develop in regards to *emunah*. The *Chasid Yavetz* (who was among the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492) wrote that he noticed the percentage of Jews who converted to Christianity to save their lives was much higher among those who were philosophers than among the *peshutei ha'am*, the simplefolk, who adhered to an *emunah peshutah*, a simple faith.

If one delves deeply into *Torah* learning, his faith will neither remain simplistic nor primitive. Our tradition teaches us that the *Torah* is a description of *Elokus*. (This is the meaning of the concept of "*mashal hakadmoni*"; see *Rashi* on *Shemos* 21:13.) Moshe Rabbeinu was the only prophet to whom the *Torah* was revealed, and this is referred to by the *Torah* as his, "having had a glimpse of the image of God." (*Bamidbar* 12:8). The best way to develop a love of God is by learning His *Torah*. (See *Rashi* on *Devarim* 6:6). By gaining *Torah* knowledge and developing a sophisticated approach to *Torah*, which is a description of *Elokus*, we come to understand Him better, and our *emunah* becomes enhanced.

Shulchan Oreich

Natan Horowitz ('23)

We all have very fond memories of the *Pesach Seder*, from the *Karpas* to looking for the *Afikoman*, but there is one thing that appears to be out of place: the egg. Why, of all things, do we have an egg at the *Seder* table, and why do we eat it? There isn't really even any importance given to this egg, except for a seat on our *Seder* plates. So why?

There are two parts to this answer, the first being why we have it, and the second being why we eat it.

Why do we have this egg, this *beitzah* at our *Seder* table? Why do we need it? In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, in addition to the *Korban Pesach*, there was a *korban* called the *Korban Chagigah*. The *Korban Chagigah* was brought on each of the *Shalosh Regalim*, because it wouldn't be right to come to the *Beis Hamikdash* for the *chag* empty-handed, so we would bring a special *korban* just to be enjoyed during the *chag*. For *Pesach*, the *Korban Chagigah* was customarily given along with the *Korban Pesach* on the 14th of *Nissan*. The *Chachamim* thus decided that there should be not one, but two cooked foods at the *Seder*, because there were two *korbanos* given. Other opinions say that these two cooked foods actually correspond to the two messengers that *Hashem* sent to take the Jews out of *Mitzrayim*, Moshe and Aharon.

So, we now understand why we have two cooked foods at the *Seder* table. We know that one is the chicken bone, but why is the other an egg? Some opinions explain that it is simply because eggs, *beitzim*, are easy to cook, but there are other opinions that provide a deeper explanation. The *Talmud Yerushalmi* explains that one customarily uses a *zero'a* (shankbone) to represent the *Korban Pesach*, because of the *possuk* that states: "I (*Hashem*) will redeem you (*Bnei Yisroel*) with an outstretched arm". The other food, representing the *Korban Chagigah*, should be an egg, because in Aramaic, the word for egg is *bei'ah*, which can also mean "pray" or "please". By choosing to use an egg and a shankbone, the foods will be "praying" to *Hashem* that: "May it please the Merciful *Hashem* to redeem us with an outstretched arm". Another explanation is that the egg, which is a food of mourning for its round shape which represents the "Circle of Life", shows our mourning of the loss of the *Beis Hamikdash* and that we cannot bring these *korbanos*. Another explanation is that it shows our freedom from the idol worship of the *Mitzrim*. The *Mitzrim* had beliefs that would not let them eat meat, fish, and eggs, so to proudly express our freedom from *Mitzrayim*, we eat eggs at the *Seder*. One more explanation is that when we use an egg that has no opening, we are remembering that many years ago "the mouths of our enemies became sealed shut", much like an egg is closed, with no opening. It was then, when the world was witnessing the many great and amazing *nissim* that *Hashem* was performing for us, *Bnei Yisroel*, that it became clear to them all, that we were His chosen nation and that He would protect us from all harm.

We have yet to answer, though, why we eat the egg at the *Seder*. After all, we don't eat the shankbone, the other food that represents one of the *korbanos* that were brought around *Pesach*. Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Rema) explained that eating the egg at the *Seder* is a way of mourning the tremendous loss of the *Beis Hamikdash* and not being able to bring the *Korban Pesach*. Rabbi Isserles also makes note of a unique connection that the *Seder* has to the actual destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, as they will always fall out on the same day of the week. Others have the explanation that we eat the egg because Avraham Avinu was *niftar* on the first night of *Pesach*, and the egg is a sign of mourning for him. There is a

more happy and optimistic explanation than these, and that is that the egg is actually a symbol of hope for our future. When an egg is laid by a chicken, it looks like a completed object, but in truth it is only the beginning of the formation of a baby chick. So too, the redemption by *Pesach*, while it may look like it is the end, is only the beginning and preparation for the greater redemption that will come with *Moshiach*.

It is amazing how something that seems as small as an egg can be the roots for mass amounts of *Divrei Torah*. Have a wonderful *Pesach* and a *Chag Sameach*!

Kos Shel Eliyahu

Rabbi Shimon Schenker
Associate Principal, YUHSB

Every year at the *Seder*, my father would look down into the Cup of Eliyahu and say, “see, look - it is lower, Eliyahu Hanavi did come and drink it!” I think many of us grew up with that same joke. However, I think many of us still have a view of the cup in a simplistic and childish perspective that robs us of appreciating this beautiful and meaningful *minhag* of pouring a fifth cup.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (480:10) writes that this fifth cup is to show that we believe that just like *Hashem* redeemed us from *Mitzrayim*, so too he will redeem us from this long bitter exile, and he will send us Eliyahu Hanavi to herald the coming of the *Moshaich* and the ultimate redemption. While that is a truly beautiful and inspirational idea, where in *halachah* is the cup rooted, and what are its origins?

The *Gemara* (Pesachim 118a) writes: On the fourth cup we say the whole *Hallel*, these are the words of Rabbi Tarfon. This is the text of Rashi, *Tosfos*, and the Rashbam there. However Rav Tzvi Rimon points out in his *Haggadah* that *Seder* Rav Amram Gaon has the text of, one who drinks the fifth cup, completes the *Hallel* (the Maharam Chalava and Maharam also have this text). *Shulchan Aruch* (481:1) *paskens* that we can't add a fifth cup; however, the Rama adds from the Mordechai that one can add a fifth cup as long as he says full *Hallel* on it. Rav Rimon explains that this is why the cup is called *Kos Shel Eliyahu*, because it is based on the *possuk* of *viheiveisi* (“and he will bring us”, the fifth language of redemption, see Rashi *Pesachim* 99b), in that Eliyahu Hanavi will herald the ultimate redemption.

The common custom is to pour the cup but not to drink it. However, Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 8:10) writes that one should pour the fifth cup and say full *Hallel*; however, one shouldn't drink it, as it is forbidden to drink after the fourth cup. The Raavad in his commentary to the *Ba'al Hama'or* (*Pesachim* *ibid.*) takes this one step further, that even though the *mishnah* (*Pesachim* 99b) tells us we cannot have less than four cups, one can certainly add a fifth, and this is praiseworthy.

As noted earlier, Rav Rimon writes that it is called the cup of Eliyahu because of the fifth *possuk* that *Hashem* will bring the Jews into Israel, *viheiveisi*. Due to this cup's importance and what it represents, the *Mishnah Berurah* (480:10) notes that the leader of the *Seder* himself should pour the cup. However, the Vilna Gaon in *Kol Eliyahu* (page 5) writes that since it is a dispute in the *Gemara* whether or not we need a fifth cup, we await the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi and *Moshaich* to resolve the dispute of how many cups are required.

Hashem should bless us all to see the coming of *Moshaich* and Eliyahu Hanavi, so that we will no longer have to sing “*lishanah haba biYerushalayim*”, and to for once and for all, resolve how many cups we should actually have at the *Seder*.

Shefoch Chamaschah

Dovid Wartelsky ('20)

Shefoch Chamascha is placed after *bentching* in the *Bareich* step of the *Seder*. There is a common misconception that when we open the door for *Shefoch Chamascha*, we open the door for Eliyahu Hanavi. This is incorrect; the reason we open the door is to show we aren't afraid of danger, since *Hashem* will protect us. So, if the myth of opening the door for Eliyahu Hanavi is wrong, what exactly is *Shefoch Chamascha* about?

First, a bit of Jewish history. In 17th century Europe, priests would go into their respective churches and give fiery, anti-semitic sermons against the non-believers, or the Jews. After being inspired and riled up by their priests, Churchgoers would burst out of the Church and chase after any Jews they could find, most of the time killing many of them. This wasn't an abnormal occurrence either; it usually happened every week, particularly with the infamous Blood Libels around *Pesach* time, where the priests would kidnap a Christian child, kill him, put his blood in containers, and then put his body along with the blood in a Jew's basement. The priests would then go back to their Churches and inform the Churchgoers about the horrible act that the Jews committed in order to put the blood in their *Pesach matzah*, after which they would go on a killing spree.

Now, back to *Shefoch Chamascha*. If we look at the wording, the first phrase reads: "Pour out your wrath unto the nations of the world that don't know you, and on the kingdoms that don't proclaim your name, for they have devoured Yaakov and laid his name to waste". We are asking *Hashem* to smite all the nations of the world! How is this any different than what the Christian priests did in 17th century Europe?

The answer to this question is very simple. While the Christians took the action themselves, in our case, we are praying to the Supreme God of the universe. If people do something, it is not necessarily a just thing to do; the Christians took their law into their own hands and killed Jews unjustly. On the other hand, the supreme deity, God, is just in everything He does; the Jews daven to *Hashem* to smite the non-believers, and if (and when) He does, we will know it is just, by definition.

The next phrase reads, "pour out your anger and overtake them". Again, this varies from the Christian approach. Whereas the Christians poured out their anger on the Jews on their own accord, *Bnei Yisroel* consult with *Hashem* first.

This concept of asking *Hashem* before going to war isn't new. In the times of the Tanach, before *Bnei Yisroel* went to war, they had a ceremony led by the *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah*, the Priest who was designated for war. As part of that ceremony, the *Kohen* reassured the nation that *Hashem* was on their side and that they shouldn't be afraid, "because *Hashem* your God, that walks with you to fight for you against your enemies, will save you" (*Devarim* 20:4). In other words, in Jewish wars, the people aren't fighting, but rather *Hashem* is. That is why the Jewish army fasts on the day it goes to war (*Shmuel I* 14:24), to show that their physical strength would not affect the outcome of the battle.

The final phrase of *Shefoch Chamascha* reads "chase them with anger and destroy the people that are beneath the heavens of God". Once again, we find another difference between the Jewish War Ethic and that of the nations of the world. The Jewish army doesn't choose to go to war on their own, instead de-

ciding purely based on *Hashem's* decision. If *Hashem* wanted the Jews to pursue the desired target, He would give the word and *Bnei Yisroel* would immediately spring into action. The non-Jews, on the other hand, attacked those who their clergy determined to be "non-believers"; there was no Divine input, and therefore no restraint.

The lesson that can be learned is that Judaism is a religion of action sparked by faith, not faith sparked by action. As can be seen by the paragraph of *Shefoch Chamascha* and the essence of Jewish war, we are a religion that bases our agenda on God, instead of God being placed in convenient circumstances to fit our agenda.

Hallel

Isaac Cohen ('23)

When you think of a memorable part of the *Seder*, what comes to mind? Perhaps *Maggid*, *Yachatz*, or maybe even *Shulchan Orech* all emerge as highlights of the night. However, out of all the various parts of the *Seder*, I find the recitation of *Hallel* to be out of place. The *Seder* is a time to tell the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, and *Hallel* is there to give praise to *Hashem*. However, I find it strange that *Hallel* is placed towards the end of the *Seder*, the part we all *shlep* through before heading to bed. What is the reason for this placement of *Hallel* as almost an afterthought?

The recitation of *Hallel* is broken into two parts. The first two chapters are recited before the meal, and the rest after *Birkas Hamazon*. It may seem strange that we split it up, but understanding the different parts of *Hallel* answers this question. Before *Birkas Hamazon*, we are focused on the story of our slavery and redemption from Egypt. As such, it is at this point that we recite the first two chapters of *Hallel*, which deal with the story of this *geulah*. The second chapter (Tehillim 114) is an obvious representation of the Exodus, as it starts with “when Israel went forth from Egypt”.

After *Birkas Hamazon*, we move on to the redemption from our current exile. In the second half of *Hallel*, it is clear it relates to the ultimate Redemption, as evidenced by the references to the future: “not for our sake, O Lord, not for our sake, but for your Name’s sake give glory”; “*Hashem* who has remembered us will bless - He will bless the house of Israel”; “I love Him for *Hashem* hears my voice, my supplications”; and so on.

In the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Megillah* 2:1) these distinctions are made clear. The *Yerushalmi* says that the passage beginning with “when Israel went forth from Egypt” refers to the past; the one beginning “I have loved *Hashem* for He hears the voice of my supplications” refers to the time during *Moshiach*; the passage “bind the festival offering with cords” refers to the days of Gog and Magog; and the one beginning “You are my God, and I shall thank you” refers to the days ahead of us in the future.

We therefore understand why the second part of *Hallel* is placed after the bulk of the *Seder* has concluded. After we have finished telling the story of our past redemption from slavery, we recite *Hallel* and ask *Hashem* to save us from our current exile.

Nirtzah

Rabbi Shimon Kerner ('77)
Maggid Shiur, YUHSB

The beauty and depth of the *Zman Cheiruseinu* is multi-faceted. The *Seder* concludes with *lishanah haba biYerushalayim* - next year in Yerushalayim. Why is this hope expressed specifically at *Yom Kippur* at the end of *Neilah*, and *Pesach* at the end of *Seder*? Furthermore, why is it said as a statement with confidence, rather than a prayer? Why not say *yehi ratzon milfanecha... shetivianu lishanah haba biYerushalayim* - may it be Your Will that we be brought next year to Yerushalayim? Rav Soloveitchik zt"l explained that these are the two times of the year that we most miss the *Beis Hamikdash*. On other *yamim tovim*, although we certainly miss bringing the appropriate *korbanos*, we retain the main flavor of the *chag*. We still shake the *lulav* and sit in the *sukkah* on *Sukkos*, and blow the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah*. But *Yom Kippur* without the *avodah* is like a professional team playing in a playground instead of a stadium. It's a joke! True, we reenact the *avodah* in *Mussaf*, and we pretend to transport ourselves to the *Beis Hamikdash*, but when it's over and we wake up from our dream, we say *meirav avoneinu* - because of our sins we don't have it anymore. Similarly, *Pesach* without the *Korban Pesach* is missing the centerpiece. Kindergartens and nursing homes often conduct mock *Sedarim* to get children and residents ready for the holiday, but we all realize it's not the real thing. In fact, our *real Seder* is a mock *Seder*!

When we speak of *geulah*, what comes to mind? For some, Pharoh in pajamas in the middle of the night; for others, triumphantly leaving the next day with dough on our shoulders; for others, the splitting of the sea- indeed *shirah chadashah shivchu geulim*; while others will say the ultimate goal was to march on to *Sinai* and receive the *Torah*. All of these are correct. But Ramban famously explains in his introduction to *Sefer Shemos* that the book Exodus is called "*Sefer Hageulah*", because although all those were important and necessary steps, the construction of the *Mishkan* with *hashra'as hashechinah* is the real culmination of *geulah*.

When reflecting over the beauty and depth of the *Seder*, we should realize that the *Ba'al Haggadah* was very much cognizant and keenly aware of this definition of *geulah*. In fact, if we look carefully, much of the *Haggadah* is focused on the theme of the *Mikdash*. To list but a few examples:

- a) Ashkenazim wear a *kittel* according to Netziv because when they ate *kodshim* and the *Korban Pesach* they did so in royal fashion
- b) The "Hillel sandwich" is a *zecher liMikdash*, a reminder of the *Beis Hamikdash*
- c) The eating of the *afikoman* is a reminder of the *Korban Pesach*, which was eaten at the end of the meal
- d) The song of *Dayeinu*, with its fifteen aspects of *hakaras hatov*, ends with *banei lanu es beis habechirah* - build for us the *Beis Hamikdash*
- e) The *Hallel* of the *Seder* is not only for the Exodus, as Gra explains that the different phrases of *Hallel* refer to different stages in Jewish history, culminating with the *binyan Beis Hamikdash*
- g) The words *zeh Keili vi'avneihu* said at the *Yam Suf* are rendered by Onkelos as "*zeh Keili vi'avneh lo bayis*" - this is my God, and I will build for Him a house.
- h) At the end of the *Seder*, we sing "*adir Hu, bnei beiso bikarov*" - he is exalted, build His house speedily

j) Some have the minhag of eating an egg (a food of mourners) at the beginning of *Shulchan Orech* - Rama explains that the first day of *Pesach* is the same day of the week as *Tisha B'av*. We simply can't sit at the *Seder* oblivious to the *Churban*.

k) In the *berachah* of *asher ga'alanu*, Rabbi Akiva adds the phrase "*visasim bi'avodasecha*" - and we will rejoice in Your service.

We recently completed the book of *Shemos*. Rav Yissocher Frand quoted Rav Isaac Bernstein, who related a beautiful homiletic interpretation on the last *possuk*. The *possuk* states that the cloud of *Hashem* was on the *Mishkan* by day and fire on it at night, "*li'eini kol Bnei Yisroel bikol maseihem*" - before the eyes of *Bnei Yisroel* in all their travels. This is imprecise, because when they traveled the cloud was not on the *Mishkan*. The cloud rested only when they camped. Rashi answers that *makom chaniyasan afhu karei masa* - when they camped that was part of their travels. They knew they would move on from there. Even when they were stationary, it was considered their travels! R. Bernstein says: Judaism is unfortunately replete with a mindset (and we are as guilty as any other generation) that wherever we are, this is "our place". Jews were in Poland for a thousand years. They would quip that *Polin* meant *po lin* - here we shall sleep. Jewish history is a testament that wherever we are, be it Poland, Spain, Germany, or other lands, and no matter how comfortable we get, we're not home! America is no exception. This country is the greatest *malchus shel chesed* and the most hospitable place we've ever been in our long exile, but we have certainly not come *el hamenuchah vi'el hanachalah*. Even when we are comfortably camped - it is *bikol maseihem*. We need to have our eyes on living a normal life with the *Shechinah* in its proper place- the *Beis Hamikdash*.

We conclude with a story from Rav Yechiel Spero about what it means to take the *Seder* and really internalize the message of longing for the *Beis Hamikdash* and a "real" *Seder*.

Rav Spero arrived home from *yeshiva* on one of the days leading up to *Pesach*, tired from all the cleaning and teaching. He looked forward to a quiet lunch when the doorbell rang. It was a *meshulach* from *Eretz Yisroel* collecting for *Machon Rus*, an institution for the physically handicapped. He wrote him a check, and the man began saying a *vort* on the *Haggadah*. He finished, but before he turned to leave he said "*im yirtzeh Hashem*, I'll see you soon in Yerushalayim". Rav Spero nodded and said he hoped to see him as well. The *meshulach* persisted. "You know, *Moshiach* is coming very soon." Again Rav Spero nodded. Then the elderly Jew took hold of Rav Spero's hand with firm grip, stared into his eyes and said, "You know last week I went down to a farm in Komemiyus and I bought a sheep for the *Korban Pesach*". Rav Spero thought he was joking, and asked him if he really had a sheep walking around in his backyard. He promised that he did. Rav Spero thought to himself, "this guy is the real deal!" He asked him if he could participate with his family in his *chaburah* for the *Korban Pesach*. The man looked down and began to count on his fingers as if he were calculating whether he could in fact accommodate Rav Spero's family. Then he said, I can only accommodate this many adults who will eat a full *kezayis*, but the children who are only obligated because of *chinuch* will have to eat less. With that, Rav Spero walked the *meshulach* to the door.

This is what it means to say "Next year in Yerushalayim" as a statement of confidence, not merely a *yehi ratzon*. It's the beauty and depth of the *Seder* and *Zman Cheiruseinu*! This is the *geulah* that we pine for. This is the *geulah* we will merit if only we can be as sincere as that *meshulach*!

Sugyos in Maseches Pesachim

This year, the Yeshiva has been learning Maseches Pesachim as the formal Iyun limmud. To celebrate a year of growth in learning, we asked talmidim of the Yeshiva to write out sugyos in the masechta, which they studied in Shiur or on their own, to give a glimpse into the Torah we learn every day at MTA. We hope that these sugyos will enhance your understanding and enjoyment of Pesach!

-The Shema Koleinu Staff

Bedikas Chametz of a Rented House (*Pesachim* 4a)

Yitzchak Hagler ('22)

Executive Editor, Shema Koleinu

Our *sugya* begins in the first *mishnah* in *Pesachim*, which reads: On the night of the fourteenth [of Nissan] we check for *chametz* [and destroy any *chametz* which we find]. Rashi explains that the purpose of this *bedikah* is “*shelo ya'avor alav bebal yira'eh ubebal yimatzei*” so that he will not transgress the prohibitions of *bal yira'eh* and *bal yimatzei*. What is this transgression of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*? Rashi helps us out once again with this question. He explains (*Pesachim* 6b, *d"h vedaito aleih*) that if one were to find *chametz* on *Pesach*, and hesitate regarding what to do with it for even one moment, they would be in violation of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*. To use the language of the Ramban (4a *be"d elah*), *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is being *rotzeh bikiyumo*, wanting the *chametz* to continue to exist.

The first question we have to tackle is what does that first Rashi mean? How does *bedikah* prevent *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*? The *Bartenura* (1:1) comments that some explain that the purpose of *bedikah* is because we're concerned that you will find *chametz* on *Pesach*, think of it as valuable, and thereby violate *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*. My *rebbe*, Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson, explained that we can be certain that this 'some explain' refers to Rashi (See *Tosfos Yom Tov* (1:1) and Rashi (4a, *d"h chovas hadar*). This interpretation of the *Bartenura* assumes that the *mishnah*, when it talks about the obligation to do *bedikah*, is talking about someone who already did *bittul*. In other words, the *mishnah* is saying that even after one has dealt with any *dioraisa* concerns by doing *bittul*, they still have the obligation to do *bedikah*, because the *Rabanan* were worried that one might find *chametz* and give it value. The Ran (1a *bidapei haRif, d"h ela*), on the other hand, explains that *bedikah* is a *dioraisa* command to search out and destroy *chametz* for the sake of precluding oneself from transgressing *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*. He holds that our *mishnah* is not written under the assumption that its subject already did *bittul*, or will in the future do *bittul*. Rather, it is teaching that *bedikah* by itself is enough to make one avoid the transgressions of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*. The Ran finishes his piece by commenting that this is his view on the matter, and it is “along the lines” of Rashi.

The *Tosfos* understand *bedikah* differently than Rashi. They explain that our *mishnah* is saying that even after a person does *bittul*, and in doing so avoids any *dioraisa* concerns, they are still required to do *bedikah*. Why? Because the *tana'im* were concerned that even after doing *bittul*, a person might find the *chametz* in their house and eat it. With these three opinions- Rashi as explained by *Bartenura* (that the decree of *bedikah* was created because of the concern that you'll up coming across *chametz* on *Pesach*, revaluing it, and thereby violating *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*), Ran “along the lines” of Rashi (that *bedikah* is one way, on a *dioraisa* level, to avoid *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*), and the *Tosfos* (that the decree of *bedikah* was created because of the concern that you'll end up eating the *chametz*) in mind, we can now attempt to unravel the *Gemara* on 4a which serves as the subject of this article.

The *Gemara* on 4a reads, on the most simple level, as follows:

They asked Rav Nachman Bar Yitzchak: one who rents out his house to his friend (on)/(for the sake of) the fourteenth [of Nissan], upon whom is the obligation to do *bedikah*- is it the landowner, because *chamira didei hu* (the *chametz* is his), or is it the tenant, because *issura bereshusei kai* (the prohibited item is in his domain)? Perhaps it is similar to *mezuzah*, where the *chiyuv* is upon the tenant to erect a *mezuzah*. But, Rav Meshrashya explains that this case is different, as *mezuzah* is a

chovas hadar, an obligation of whoever lives in the house. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak quotes a Tannaitic statement which says that if one rents their house to their friend, if the landlord gives the keys to the tenant during the fourteenth [of *Nissan*], the obligation to do *bedikah* falls on the landlord, but if the landlord gives the keys to the tenant before the fourteenth [of *Nissan*], the obligation to do *bedikah* falls on the tenant.

Rabbi Mendelson, in analyzing this *Gemara*, went a few steps deeper into this passage. The first step Rabbi Mendelson took in this was to determine how each of the three aforementioned *rishonim* would understand the *Gemara*. The simplest way to follow this discussion is through the use of a chart to determine how each of these three opinions would learn the *Gemara's* dilemma, as seen below:

Should the obligation to do <i>bedikah</i> be:	<i>Tosfos</i> (that <i>bedikah</i> protects you from coming to eat the <i>chametz</i>)	The Ran "along the lines" of Rashi (that <i>bedikah</i> avoids <i>bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei</i> on a <i>dioraisa</i> level)	The <i>Bartenura</i> explaining Rashi (that <i>bedikah</i> protects you from coming to find the <i>chametz</i> , revaluing it, and thereby violating <i>bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei</i>)
On the landlord, because the <i>chametz</i> is his	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
On the tenant, because the <i>chametz</i> is in his domain	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>

Let us start with *Tosfos'* approach. Rabbi Mendelson explained that according to *Tosfos*, we can understand **2** pretty easily. If the whole decree of *bedikah* is because of a concern of finding the *chametz* and eating it, it makes a lot of sense that this obligation would fall on the tenant, because, after all, the *chametz* is in his domain, meaning that he is the one who has access to it, and therefore might come to eat it. But, how, according to *Tosfos*, would we understand **1**? If the decree of *bedikah* is because of a concern of finding the *chametz* and eating it, why do I care who owns the *chametz*- shouldn't it all go based on access to the *chametz*? The *Tosfos* themselves deals with this question, and they quote the Ri, who answers that the reasoning behind **1** is that since at the beginning of the fourteenth of *Nissan*, when the obligation of *bedikah* first took effect, this obligation fell on the landlord, therefore the obligation doesn't leave him [even when he rented the house to the tenant].

Now, what about the Ran? The *Kovetz Shiurim* gives a beautiful explanation based on a comment from the *Biyur HaGra*. The *Biyur HaGra* on *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 443:2 *d"h vi'im lo machro*) writes that, at least according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, one can violate *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* even for *chametz* which is not theirs (as long as it belongs to another Jew). Therefore, reasons the *Kovetz Shiurim*, even though the Ran understands that *bedikah* is the prevention of the violation of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*, since *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is a concern for *any Jew* who would want this *chametz* to continue to exist, the two

sides of the *Gemara* play out as follows: do we say **3**, which is that the person who most wants the *chametz* to continue to exist is the owner of the *chametz*, and therefore in this case the obligation to do *bedikah* falls on the landlord (because he owns the *chametz*); or do we say **4**, which is that the person who most wants the *chametz* to continue to exist is the one who has access to it, and therefore in this case the obligation to do *bedikah* falls on the tenant (because he has access to the *chametz*).

Lastly, and perhaps most difficult, what about the *Bartenura*? Rabbi Mendelson quoted from Rav Mayer Twersky, one of the RIETS *Roshei Yeshiva*, that based on the abovementioned *Biyur HaGra*, it seems that if one Jew were to come across *chametz* of another Jew and, even for one second, want it to continue to exist, this would be a violation of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*. Based on this, Rabbi Mendelson suggested that the reason why, according to box **5**, the obligation of *bedikah* is on the landlord is because it is his *chametz*, meaning that he is the one responsible to make sure no Jew comes across it and wants it to exist. In other words, just like the normal obligation of *bedikah* (which, according to the *Bartenura*, is to make sure *no one* comes across the *chametz* and wants it exist) falls on the owner, so too here- despite the fact that the owner doesn't need to worry that he himself will find this *chametz*- since he owns the *chametz*, he still has to worry about another Jew finding the *chametz*. On the other hand, in the world of box **6**, the obligation of *bedikah* is a "selfish" obligation, meaning that only someone who might come across the *chametz* himself needs to do the *bedikah*, and thus the obligation in this case would fall upon the tenant, as he is the one with access to the *chametz*. To summarize what we have so far:

Should the obligation to do <i>bedikah</i> be:	The <i>Tosfos</i> (that <i>bedikah</i> protects you from coming to eat the <i>chametz</i>)	The Ran "along the lines" of Rashi (that <i>bedikah</i> avoids <i>bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei</i> on a <i>dioraisa</i> level)	The <i>Bartenura</i> explaining Rashi (that <i>bedikah</i> protects you from coming to find the <i>chametz</i> , revaluing it, and thereby violating <i>bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei</i>)
On the landlord because the <i>chametz</i> is his	Remains landlord's obligation, because landlord had initial obligation	Obligation of <i>bedikah</i> falls on the landlord, since he owns the <i>chametz</i> , and he wants it to exist the most.	It is on the owner of the <i>chametz</i> to do <i>bedikah</i> so that no one finds his <i>chametz</i> , wants it to exist, and thereby violates <i>bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei</i> .
On the tenant because the <i>chametz</i> is in his domain	Tenant's obligation, because tenant has access to the <i>chametz</i> , and may come to eat it	Obligation of <i>bedikah</i> falls on the tenant, since he has access to the <i>chametz</i> , so he wants it to exist the most.	It is on the one who has access to the <i>chametz</i> to do <i>bedikah</i> so that he won't find his <i>chametz</i> , want it to exist, and thereby violate <i>bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei</i> .

Now comes the fun part. How do these different explanations of the two sides of the question of the *Gemara* understand the Tannaitic statement Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak quotes to answer the original question?

That statement talks about two cases. In case number one, the keys were given over to the tenant after the fourteenth began, and the obligation of *bedikah* falls on the landlord. In case number two, the keys were given over to the tenant before the fourteenth began, and the obligation of *bedikah* falls on the tenant.

Let's start, once again, with the *Tosfos*. The *Tosfos* (4a,d"ה im meshamasar hamaftei'ach) conclude that the

obligation to do *bedikah* in this case is determined based on who had that obligation at the *beginning* of the fourteenth, regardless of what happens after that point. In other words, they hold that 1 beats 2. Therefore, when the keys (and with them the access to the house and ability to do the *bedikah*) are given to the tenant before the fourteenth, the obligation is on the tenant, for he had the keys at the beginning of the fourteenth. And if the keys are given to the tenant after the fourteenth, the obligation is on the landlord, since *he* had the keys at the beginning of the fourteenth in this case. However, even though the obligation is, according to the *Tosfos*, almost completely based on ability to do the *bedikah*, there is one more factor which must be considered- connection to the house. What constitutes this connection to the house? According to the *Tosfos*, it is defined by the tenant not just gaining the keys of the house, but also having the intention to acquire the house. So, it comes out that according to the *Tosfos*, for the obligation of *bedikah* to be on the tenant, he must A] have the keys when the fourteenth of *Nissan* begins, and B] have intention to use those keys to acquire the house.

Now, what about the Ran? The Ran (1b *bidapei haRif d"h hamaschir bayis lechaveiro biyud daled*) explains that both cases of our Tannaitic statement are assuming that the tenant made a separate *kinyan* on the house (in addition to the giving over of the keys). He holds that for the tenant to have the obligation to do *bedikah*, he needs two factors, access and acquisition of the house. I believe, *li'aniyas da'ati*, that (assuming that the Ran understands the two sides of the *Gemara* as the *Kovetz Shiurim* explained it) the Ran here is concluding that the one who has access to the *chametz* most wants it to exist, and therefore the obligation of *bedikah* falls on him. Furthermore, I would assume, *li'aniyas da'ati*, that the Ran agrees with the *Tosfos* about the obligation of *bedikah* being completely based on who was obligated when the fourteenth began. Therefore, I think that the two cases would play out as follows: if the keys were given before the fourteenth, since- when the fourteenth began- the tenant had the keys (and through them access to the house) and the pre-assumed acquisition of the house, he is obligated to do the *bedikah*. But if the keys were given after the fourteenth had already begun, since- when the fourteenth began- the tenant did not have the keys (and therefore he didn't have the access to the house), the obligation is on the landowner (even though the tenant acquired the house before the fourteenth). This works well, but the question is: why does the Ran need to add in the whole *kinyan* discussion? Can't he hold completely like *Tosfos*, since after all, they both conclude that the obligation for *bedikah* is based on access? I would answer based on the *Chiddushei Basra*, that although the Ran and the *Tosfos* are very similar, they argue about one thing- what constitutes sufficient connection to the house. While the *Tosfos* seem to hold that it is enough for the tenant to simply intend to acquire the house, according to the Ran, it seems that the tenant needs to do the actual acquisition to be considered connected to the house enough that he is obligated in *bedikah*. Thus, the Ran did not completely agree with *Tosfos*.

Last but not least, how would the *Bartenura* understand the conclusion of this *Gemara*? The *Bartenura* does not explicitly address the end of this *Gemara* in his commentary. However, *li'aniyas da'ati*, we can speculate that the *Bartenura* would conclude that the obligation of *bedikah* is a "selfish" obligation which falls on the one who has access to the *chametz*, and it could be that he would agree with *Tosfos'* logic that this evaluation of who is obligated is based solely on access to the *chametz* when the fourteenth began. Therefore, he would explain the two cases very similarly to the reading's of the Ran and the *Tosfos* - if the landlord gave the tenant the keys before the fourteenth, the obligation is on the tenant, since he had the keys (and therefore the access) when the fourteenth began. But if the landlord gave the tenant the key on the fourteenth, since- at the beginning of the fourteenth- only the landlord had access, the obligation is on the landlord. As for the connection to the house, I don't see any way to figure out how much, if any, connection to the house he thinks is necessary.

In conclusion, this is my understanding (based on Rabbi Mendelson's *shiurim*) of the three opinions in re-

gards to *bedikah*, how they would read the question of the *Gemara*, and how they would read the Tanaitic statement the *Gemara* brings to answer its question.

Destruction of Chametz (Pesachim 4b)

Ezra Schechter ('22)

We have a *mitzvah* to destroy our *chametz* for *Pesach*, as learned from the *possuk* “*ach bayom harishon tashbisu se'or mibateichem*” - but on the first day you shall destroy the leaven from your houses (*Shemos* 12:15). The question is, how do we fulfil this *mitzvas asei* of destroying our *chametz*? Can this be fulfilled in a passive manner, or only as an active physical action?

The *Minchas Chinuch* discusses whether this *mitzvah* can be fulfilled passively, that is, whether or not you can fulfil the *mitzvah* by simply not owning *chametz* in the first place. For example, the *mitzvah* of resting on *Shabbos* (which comes from the same root as the word *tashbisu*, literally meaning “rest”) is fulfilled merely by abstaining from performing *melachah*, so it could be that *tashbisu* could be fulfilled by simply “resting” from owning *chametz*, whether or not there was any to destroy. Alternatively, the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* may be an active *mitzvah*, in which case one would need to buy *chametz* in order to destroy it to fulfil their *chiyuv*. This could be compared to the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*, which only exists if one wears a garment of four corners, but if one does not wear such a garment, they do not fulfil any *mitzvah*. Thus, *tashbisu* would also be a *mitzvah* to acquire and destroy *chametz*.

The *Minchas Chinuch* answers this question the following way. The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 4b) quotes Abaye as bringing two different *pesukim*: one, *shiva'as yamim se'or lo yamitzeh bibateichem* (seven days you shall not find leaven in your house), and two, the *possuk* we quoted earlier, that one must destroy their *chametz* on the first day. Based on these two *pesukim*, Abeye attempts to prove that *chametz* must be destroyed on the 14th of *Nissan*, the day before *Pesach*. Rashi points out that the proof from these *pesukim* is that they would appear to contradict one another - how can one not have *chametz* for seven days, if they are obligated to destroy it on the first day? Rashi explains that therefore, it must be that the second *possuk*, which says “the first day” must refer to *Erev Pesach*, the 14th of *Nissan*. The *Minchas Chinuch* uses this Rashi to answer the aforementioned dilemma as to whether *tashbisu* is passive or active. If *tashbisu* was truly passive, then there would be no contradiction, as indeed, the way to fulfil *tashbisu* on the first day would simply be to have no *chametz* at that point, which would be perfectly in line with the commandment not to have *chametz* for seven days. Since Rashi says there is a contradiction, we see that according to Abaye, the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* must be an active one.

Rashi holds that the main *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* is to make the *chametz* valueless in your heart, from the fact that the *possuk* does not say “*tiva'aru*”, meaning to destroy, but only *tashbisu*, meaning to remove. Rambam agrees with Rashi (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 2:2), and holds that the way to fulfil the *mitzvah* is by making the *chametz* worthless in your heart like dust. *Tosfos*, however, holds that to fulfil *tashbisu*, what is needed is a physical destruction such as burning. *Tosfos* also holds that *bittul chametz* (nullifying the *chametz* is needed, but not because of *tashbisu*, but because of concerns of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* (the prohibition to own *chametz* on *yom tov*).

The Ran holds that on a *dioraisa* level, there are two ways to fulfil the *mitzvah*, and you can do one or the other. One can either destroy the *chametz* physically, or mentally nullify it and deem it out of one's property. On a *dirabanan* level, to fulfil the *mitzvah* both forms of destruction are necessary. This is because people can not be trusted to truly be *mevatel* the *chametz* without any second thoughts, and even if he does, one could come to eat the *chametz* if it remains lying around. Thus, the *rabanan* required both *bittul bileiv* and physical destruction of the *chametz*.

Shitas HaRambam On Bittul And Bedikas Chametz (Pesachim 6b)

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I. The *Gemara* (Pesachim 6b) brings a discussion as to why it is necessary to do both *bedikas chametz* (searching for *chametz*) and *bittul chametz* (nullifying the *chametz* in one's heart) before *Pesach*. The *Gemara* says:

Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rav: one who does *bedikah* must also do *bittul*. Why is this so? If we will say it is because of crumbs which may not be found through *bedikah*, this cannot be, because crumbs are not significant enough to count as *chametz*.... Rava said: this is a *gezeirah*, lest one find a nice piece of *chametz* "and his mind is on it". But, why can he not simply do *bittul* at the moment when he finds the *chametz*? But, he may find it after the time when it is *assur*, at which point he can no longer do *bittul*, as Rabbi Eliazar taught: there are two things which are not in a person's *reshus* (legal ownership), but which the *Torah* considers to be in his *reshus* anyway. These are a pit in a public area (for which one is held accountable for damage caused even though he does not technically own it), and *chametz* on *Pesach* (which is removed from a person's legal ownership once the holiday starts, but which is still considered his in regards to the *aveirah* of owning *chametz*). Since the *chametz* is no longer in his legal possession once it becomes *assur*, he cannot do *bittul* when he finds the *chametz*, and thus must do *bittul* beforehand.

Most of the *Rishonim* understand the phrase "a piece of *chametz* which his mind is on it" (*gluska yafeh vida'ato ale'ah*) as meaning that the *ba'al habayis* needs to do *bittul* lest he find *chametz* in the middle of *Pesach* and have a desire to keep it around, causing him to violate the *issur* of *balyira'eh ubal yimatzei* (owning *chametz*). This is certainly the opinion of Rashi (ibid. *d"h vida'ato ale'ah*) who explains that the concern of the *Gemara* is that upon finding *chametz* which he missed in his original *bedikah*, the owner of the *chametz* will delay burning it for a moment, and thereby violate *balyira'eh ubal yimatzei* in that moment. However, the Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 3:8) has a rather unique way of reading this *Gemara*. He writes:

...therefore, if one did not do *bittul* before the sixth hour [on *Erev Pesach*], and he finds *chametz* **which his mind had been on previously, and which he forgot about during the time of burning**, he violates the prohibition of *balyira'eh ubal yimatzei*, since he did not destroy or nullify the *chametz*. And now, the *bittul* is ineffective, since the *chametz* is not really in his domain, but the *possuk* makes it as though it is in his domain to obligate him in *balyira'eh ubal yimatzei*. And he is obligated to destroy the *chametz* whenever he finds it. If he found it on *yom tov*, he should place a vessel atop it until evening (*chol hamoed*) and burn it then. However, if the *chametz* is *hekdes* (sanctified for the *Beis Hamikdash*), then this is unnecessary, as everyone naturally separates from it.

The Rambam's *psak* here includes a radical reading of the aforementioned *Gemara*, as he renders the phrase "*da'ato ale'ah*" as meaning that he knew about the *chametz*, and forgot about it when he was

burning his *chametz*. (The source for this explanation would appear to be rooted in the text of Rabbeinu Chananel, who renders the *Gemara* with the words “*gluska yafeh dida’atei alah*”, meaning a piece of bread which his mind was on in the past.) This is strange for several reasons. One, this implies that according to the Rambam, the only reason why *bittul* is necessary when *bedikah* was already done is because of this extremely specific case, as this is the case which the *Gemara* concluded was the reason why one who did *bedikah* must also do *bittul*. Why does the Rambam not require *bittul* for any other reason other than this? And two, why would the Rambam understand the *Gemara* in this far-out manner, when it would be perfectly feasible to understand in a similar vein to Rashi, that the concern is that you will desire a certain piece of *chametz* and violate *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei*?

Additionally, there is another question we can ask on this Rambam. The end of the Rambam brings the *halachah* that if one finds *chametz* on the first day of *Pesach*, they should cover it with a *kli* and wait for nightfall, at which point they should burn it. This ruling comes from a *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 6a), and the point is that since the *chametz* cannot be moved due to the *issur* of *muktzah*, it should be covered so that nobody will come to eat it. Rashi, commenting on this *Gemara*, explains that this is dealing with a case where the owner already did *bittul* and *bedikah*, such that there is no concern of *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei*. Rashi’s language implies that the reason this must be the case is because the thing which is preventing the movement of this *chametz* is the *issur* of *muktzah*, a *dirabanan*. If there were to be *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* in this case, this *dioraisa* concern would certainly override the *dirabanan* of *muktzah*. Thus, the case must be one where *bedikah* and *bittul* were performed, and the only concern with this *chametz* is that someone may eat it. However, the Rambam implies that the case in which one would cover the *chametz* with a *kli* is the same case mentioned earlier in the *halachah*, namely, where one did *bedikah* and not *bittul*. Thus, we are left with a question: if *bittul* was not done in this case, why would we stop at covering the *chametz* with a *kli*? At the very least, we should destroy the *chametz* to fulfil the *dioraisa* obligation of *tashbisu* (destroying *chametz*), which should override the *dirabanan* of *muktzah*? Why is the Rambam not forced, like Rashi, to establish the case of this *Gemara* as one without concerns of *tashbisu* and *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei*?

II. In regards to the first question, what emerges from the Rambam is that the Rambam has no concern that you will come to violate *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* upon finding *chametz*, as if he did maintain that this was a concern, then it would be sufficient to say that *bittul* is needed because one may find the *chametz* and violate *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei*. Since he does not understand the *Gemara* in this manner, it implies that he does not believe the reason for *bittul* is to prevent future *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* violations. Rather, we must say that the Rambam maintains that the reason why *bittul* is done is not to prevent future *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* violations, but for *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* on *chametz* which is hidden in your property. This is why the Rambam understands the *Gemara*’s phrase as speaking about *chametz* which the owner knew about and forgot about - since the Rambam holds that *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* is violated by being *mekayem biratzon*, purposefully keeping *chametz* in your property, the Rambam maintains that *bittul* must be done lest you violate *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* on *chametz* which you forgot about, but did know about at one point, making its existence a violation of *kiyum biratzon*.

However, this understanding presents another problem. The text of the *Gemara*, after stating that *bittul* is needed for *chametz* which is *da’ato ale’ah*, asks that if this was the case, then it would be sufficient to perform *bittul* upon finding the *chametz*. If we understand the *Gemara* like Rashi, this makes sense; the *Gemara* is asking why it would not be possible to do *bittul* upon finding the *chametz*, thereby making sure the owner will not have a moment in which he is *mekayem biratzon*. However, according to the Rambam, this presents a difficulty - if the reason *bittul* is needed is to avoid *bal yira’eh ubal yimatzei* on *chametz* which was forgotten about at the time of burning, then what help is it to do *bittul* upon finding the *chametz* - at

that point, you have already violated *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* for the entire time that you didn't know about the *chametz*! The *Gemara's* question would thus seem illogical according to the Rambam.

One potential way to answer this question would be to suggest that the *Gemara's* question was why one cannot do *bittul* upon finding the *chametz* in order to be *menatek* (rectify) the *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* which occurred while the *chametz* had yet to be found. This would be based on another *Gemara* (95a) which says that *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is a *lav hanitak le'aseih*, a *lav* which can be rectified by fulfilling an *aseih*, namely *tashbisu*. However, the Rambam does not bring down the rule that *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is a *lav hanitak le'aseih*! (This is likely based on an alternative text of the *Gemara* on 95a found in the Rabbeinu Chananel, which replaces the phrase "*lav hanitak le'aseih*" with "*lav she'ein bo ma'aseh*" - a *lav* which has no action involved). Thus, according to the Rambam, the question once again returns - what was the intention of the *Gemara* in asking this question, that one should just do *bittul* upon finding the *chametz*?

To answer this question, we must first look at why it is that the Rambam does not rule that *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is a *lav hanitak le'aseih*. Rav Eliyahu Baruch Shulman *shlit"a*, one of the RIETS *Roshei Yeshiva*, explained based on the Rambam (ibid. 2:2), which rules that the main *tashbisu* prescribed by the *Torah* is when you are *mevatel* the *chametz* in your heart, with the *bedikah* and physical destruction of the *chametz* only being necessary *midirabanan*. Since the *Gemara* says that *bittul* no longer takes effect after *chatzos* on *Erev Pesach*, it emerges that *tashbisu* cannot be fulfilled during the time when *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is in effect, since even if one was to physically burn the *chametz*, they would be lacking the *bittul bileiv* which is needed to fulfil the *mitzvah*. In other words, it is not that the Rambam holds *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is not *nitak le'aseih*, but rather, that the *aseih* cannot be accomplished which *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei* is in effect!

In this light, Rav Shulman brilliantly explained the *Gemara's* question and answer according to the Rambam. After the *Gemara* states that *bittul* is needed in case there is *chametz* which the owner knew about and forgot about, the *Gemara* asks why it is not sufficient to do *bittul* upon finding the *chametz*, in order to be *menatek* the *lav* through the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu*. In response, the *Gemara* responds that *bittul* cannot be done from *chatzos* of *Erev Pesach* and onwards - the exact reason why the Rambam maintains that *tashbisu* is not *menatek bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*. Thus, the *Gemara* reads perfectly according to the Rambam.

Based on this, we can also answer our second question. According to Rashi, *tashbisu* can be fulfilled before *yom tov* as well as during it. Thus, for the case where the *Gemara* mandates placing a *kli* atop the *chametz* to prevent it from being eaten, Rashi is forced to understand the case as one where *bittul* and *bedikah* were already done, such that there would be no reason to override the preexisting issue of *muktzah*. However, according to the Rambam, even if *bittul* was not done, there would still be no reason to permit *muktzah* to be overridden, as the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* can anyways not be fulfilled during *Pesach*! Thus, the Rambam rules that even in a case where *bittul* was not done, the only solution to finding *chametz* on *Pesach* is to cover it with a *kli*.

III. However, this understanding presents more difficulties based on another ruling of the Rambam. The Rambam (3:5-6) rules that if one did not perform *bedikah* before *yom tov*, they may do so on *yom tov*. Based on what we have explained in the Rambam, one would expect that the purpose of this *bedikah* is solely in order to remove future violations of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*, since the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* cannot be fulfilled on *yom tov* in any event. However, the Rambam also says that one would make a

berachah on this *bedikah*, whether or not it was done on *yom tov*. If the purpose of this *bedikah* was simply in order to remove *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*, then there would be no reason to make a *berachah*, as we do not make a *berachah* on simply removing *issurim* from our homes! (As the *Maggid Mishnah* points out, we do not make *berachah* on the *bedikah* done after *yom tov*, since the purpose of that is just to remove *chametz* which was kept on *Pesach*, which is forbidden.) It is implied therefore, that a *mitzvah* is accomplished with this *bedikah*. But if *tashbisu* cannot be fulfilled on *yom tov*, what *mitzvah* is there?

Lifi aniyas da'ati, perhaps the answer is based on the fact that for the Rambam, *tashbisu* still technically exists on *yom tov*, just that it is impossible to fulfil because of the fact that *bittul* cannot be done. However, in a hypothetical world in which *bittul* could be performed on *Pesach*, the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* would still be in full force on *yom tov*. The Rambam implies (ibid. 2:3) that *bedikah* and *biyur* is itself a *dirabanan* form of *tashbisu*. Thus, even if the *dioraisa* version of *tashbisu* cannot be performed on *yom tov* due to the fact that *bittul* cannot be done, there is no reason why this should bear on the *dirabanan* form of *tashbisu*. In other words, both the *dioraisa* and *dirabanan* versions of *tashbisu* exist on *yom tov*, just that the lack of *bittul* prevents us from doing the *dioraisa* one. It therefore makes sense why we make a *berachah* before the *bedikah* done on *yom tov*, since this still fulfills a *mitzvah* of *tashbisu*, albeit a *dirabanan* one. (This *dirabanan* version of *tashbisu* would presumably not be sufficient to be *menatek* the *dioraisa* of *bal yira'eh ubal yimatzei*).

However, all of this presents another question. If it is true that there is a *dirabanan* of *tashbisu* on *yom tov*, done through *bedikah*, then the Rambam should allow a person to destroy *chametz* which they found on *yom tov*, overriding the *muktzah* issue. Before, we assumed there was no *mitzvah* to be accomplished in destroying the *chametz*, so *muktzah* could not be overturned. But once we see that there is a *mitzvah* involved in destroying the *chametz* on *yom tov*, why do we only allow covering the *chametz* with a *klii*?

There are two potential answers to this question. We can suggest that because in the case of covering the *chametz* with a *kli*, *bedikah* was already done, and it is only *bittul* which is lacking, the *bedikah* done on *yom tov* is no longer considered a *mitzvah*, as the *mitzvah* of *bedikah* is based on whether the house had *bedikah* done, not on whether all the *chametz* was found. This can be proven by a logical sequence: if this was not the case, no *berachah* should ever be permitted on *bedikah*, as one runs the risk of a *berachah livatalah* if they miss one piece of *chametz*. Rather, the *mitzvah* must be to do a *bedikah* on the house as a whole. Thus, since *bedikah* was already done before *yom tov*, there is no additional *mitzvah* of *bedikah ubiyur* when the *chametz* is found on *yom tov*. Thus, all that is permitted is to cover the *chametz* with a *kli*, as there is no *dirabanan* of *tashbisu* to fulfil anymore. (This is also implied in the Rambam, who says that a *berachah* is made on *bedikah* during *yom tov* only if you did not do *bedikah* beforehand.)

Alternatively, my *chavrusa*, Yeshurin Sorscher, suggested that such a *bedikah* could be similar to a case of a *milah shelo bizmanah*. Normally, a *bris millah* on the eighth day would override *Shabbos*. However, if the *millah* is done after the eighth day, it no longer overrides *Shabbos*, since it could have been fulfilled earlier. Similarly, we can suggest that even though there is a *mitzvah* of *bedikah* on *Pesach*, since it could have been fulfilled before *Pesach*, it cannot override the *issur* of *muktzah*.

There is much more to this *sugya* to be discussed, and much more which has not been written here. I would invite any questions or comments to be sent to my email (skaufman@yuhsbstudents.org). *Chag Kasher Visameiach* to all!

Can You Be Yotzei With A Child's Matzah? (Pesachim 38a)

Akiva Kra ('21)

At the *Seder*, when *matzah* is distributed for *matzah*, *korech* and *tzafun*, everyone, including children at the *Seder*, are given *matzah* to fulfill their required amount. Often, a child will eat part of their *matzah*, and then decide they do not want all of it. When this happens, can the child's *matzah* be given to someone else to fulfill their required amount? In *Pesachim* (38a) it is taught that the *matzah* one uses to fulfill the *mitzvah* must belong to them (codified in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim* 454:4 and *Mishnah Berurah* ibid. 15). However, a problem arises from a *Gemara* in *Sukkah* (46b). There, the *Gemara* says that "a child is able to acquire possession, but not transfer it". If the child has acquired *matzah* at the *Seder* and no longer wants it, can someone else have it transferred to them?

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein brings down a related question in the *Chashukei Chemed*. A Jewish soldier had a brief break on *Pesach* night in 1948, and was able to quickly visit a *Seder*. There was no extra *matzah* available, but there was a piece of *matzah* that had been given to a child. Can the soldier fulfill his obligation if he's given the *matzah* from the child? Rav Zilberstein demonstrates the potential problem based on a *Beis Yosef* (*Orach Chayim* 454). In his time, people used to all bake their *matzos* in the same oven. In the rush before *Pesach*, people would sometimes end up with *matzah* that would not belong to them. The *Beis Yosef* quotes the *Rokeach* that to avoid any issues, everyone would declare that if someone else got their *matzah*, it can be kept as a gift. The *Magen Avraham* quotes this as *halachah*. Rav Zilberstein notes this leniency cannot be extended to a child, since there is no mechanism to transfer ownership from the child.

To answer our question about using leftover *matzah* from a child or the question about the soldier who crashed a *Seder*, one has to determine at what point one has acquired food at their meal. In other words, does the child truly own the *matzah* given to him? There are two different approaches that lead to differing halachic conclusions.

The first is that of the Rama (*Even Ha'ezer* 28:17), who rules that if a guest sits at the table of someone else, takes the portion which was served to him, and uses it to sanctify a marriage, the marriage is valid. According to this understanding, one has claimed the food when they take it. If this is the case, then presumably one may not use the leftover *matzah* of a child, as it is already part of the child's possession, and the child cannot give it to someone else.

However, a second approach can be found in the *Ba'er Heiteiv* on the same page as the opinion of Rama. He quotes (28:32) from the Maharit (Vol. 1, *siman* 150) that if one is a guest, the food only is considered their possession when it goes into their mouth. He even says that if a host puts food on the table in front of a guest and then sees someone he wants to marry, the host can take the food off the table and use it as a *kinyan* to marry the person! With this understanding that possession happens when the food enters one's mouth, any leftover *matzah* does not belong to the child. (However, our case is not exactly analogous to the case addressed by the *Ba'er Heiteiv*. If the child started consuming part of a piece of *matzah*, perhaps at that point, he acquires possession of the whole piece. If so, the leftover portion of his piece would be problematic for an adult to use according to all opinions.) Accordingly, an adult would be able to use the *matzah* to fulfill his obligation.

However, the *Rama* would presumably agree that the *ba'al habayis* can retain ownership if he verbalizes explicit intent that he will retain ownership until the *matzah* is consumed. Therefore, to avoid our question, when there are children at the *Seder*, perhaps the *ba'al habayis* should declare that any *matzah* given to a child does not enter the child's possession until the child consumes that portion of the *matzah*.

If the *ba'al habayis* did not make this declaration when the *matzah* is placed in front of the child, the child possibly acquires the *matzah* immediately. While it may be problematic for an adult to then use the leftover *matzah* for his *mitzvah*, this issue may not apply if another child takes the leftover *matzah*. Generally, a child must properly fulfill a *mitzvah* to fulfill the obligation of *chinuch*. Nonetheless, it is possible a child may not be required to own *matzah* in order to fulfill his *mitzvah*. We can derive this concept from a comment of the *Hagaos Ashri* (to the Rosh *Sukkah* 4:6) regarding the *mitzvah* of *chinuch* for *lulav*. The *Hagaos Ashri* quotes the *Or Zarua*, who says that *chinuch* is about showing a child the proper practice of *mitzvos* with objects that satisfy all the physical requirements for the *mitzvah*. However, one need not satisfy non-physical elements to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *chinuch*. Therefore, he maintains one may lend to a child a *lulav* that is *kosher*, since an adult must have ownership of a *lulav* to fulfill his obligation, but this requirement does not apply to a child. The child must experience shaking a *lulav* with all required physical attributes, but ownership of the *lulav* does not matter for *chinuch* according to the *Hagaos Ashri*. Similarly, it seems that a child should be able to fulfill his *mitzvah* of *matzah* even if another child had previously taken possession of that piece and is unable to transfer ownership.

May it be the will of *Hashem* that we will soon merit to fully fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matzah*, together with the *Korban Pesach*, when we are *zocheh* to be *oleh laregel*.

Tashbisu When Erev Pesach Falls On Shabbos (Pesachim 49a)

Yonatan Burns ('22)

This year is a unique year in which *Erev Pesach* falls out on *Shabbos*. This of course comes with many implications and complexities in regard to the realm of *chametz*. In addition to the commandments of not eating *chametz* and not possessing it during *Pesach*, there is a separate mitzvah of *biyur chametz*, to remove and destroy the *chametz*. This is evident in the *pesukim* of *Sefer Shemos*. In *Parshas Bo*, it is written “on the first day, you should remove leaven from your houses.” (*Shemos* 12:15) The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (5a) clarifies that “the first day” really means *Erev Pesach*, as opposed to the first day of *Pesach* itself, as to not conflict with the *melachah* of lighting a fire on *Yom Tov*.

In the *Gemara* elsewhere in *Pesachim* (21a), Rabbi Yehuda notes that “*ein biyur chametz ela sereifah*” - there is no *biyur chametz* except through burning. According to him, the only way to accomplish *biyur* is through burning the *chametz*. The *Chachamim* hold that *biyur* can also be accomplished via crumbling up any *chametz* to get blown by the wind or dispersed into the sea. This *machlokes* between Rabbi Yehuda and the *Chachamim* can be used to explain another *machlokes* later in the *masechta*. On *Daf* 49a, there is a disagreement between Rabbi Meir and the *Chachamim* regarding what to do with *chametz* when the 14th of *Nissan* falls out on a *Shabbos*. Rabbi Meir holds the position that one must burn all his *chametz* before *Shabbos* starts (Rashi clarifies that one may keep what they need for their *Shabbos* meal). On the other hand, the *Chachamim* believe that one should remove his *chametz* at the normal time, the morning of the 14th of *Nissan*.

These two *machloksim* are connected. Rabbi Meir clearly understands the mitzvah of *biyur chametz* like Rabbi Yehudah. Because he believes that *chametz* needs to be burned, and one may not light a fire on *Shabbos*, the only way one can burn the *chametz* when *Erev Pesach* falls on *Shabbos* is to burn the *chametz* beforehand. (The *Rashash* on *Daf* 21b even supports Rabbi Meir’s exclusion of *chametz* for *Seudas Shabbos*, as he points out that one can fulfill burning through eating. He says that body heat is like a fire, and that the *possuk* compares man to a forest, thus making eating equivalent to burning.) The *Chachamim* are consistent with their own argument. Since they believe that *biyur chametz* can include methods that are allowed on *Shabbos*, they hold that one should remove *chametz* at the normal time of *biyur*.

Rav Chaim Soleveichik, in his sefer *Chidushei Rabbeinu Chaim*, suggests that the *machlokes* between Rabbi Yehudah and the *Chachamim* is not only about the method of disposal, but about the inherent relationship between *chametz* and the mitzvah of *biyur*. According to Rabbi Yehudah, the mitzvah lies in the *chametz* itself, and therefore the *chametz* needs to be actively destroyed, thus one must burn it. The *Chachamim* believe that the mitzvah is simply to ensure that the person no longer has *chametz*, and therefore any method which removes the *chametz* from one’s *reshus* is valid.

The *Steipler Gaon* addresses this active versus passive distinction. He comments on the discussion pertaining to whether or not one needs to go out of their way to acquire *chametz* for the sake of the mitzvah, stating that *biyur* can be fulfilled passively. (*Kehilas Yaakov*) It is possible that we also can learn from the *Torah*’s wording “on the first day you should remove” (*Shemos* 12:15) that the mitzvah is passive, as the *Torah* saying that one should not have *chametz* by the time the first day comes. This seems

to support the *Chachamim* and the view that *chametz* does not need to be burned to count as the *mitzvah* of *biyur*.

Although we have established that *biyur* does not require burning the *chametz*, it is best to try to fulfil both *shittos* by taking the approach of Rabbi Meir when *Erev Yom Tov* falls out on *Shabbos*. Burning all *chametz* other than what's needed for *Seudas Shabbos* has become the custom over time, and is the approach taken by the *Shulchan Aruch* (444:1) and the Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 3:3). If one did not burn his *chametz* before *Pesach* or has much left over after his *Shabbos Seudah*, there are still multiple ways to still get rid of the *chametz* without violating *Shabbos*. One option is to eat the *chametz* (which the Rashash even likens to burning.) Another option is to follow the *Chachamim* and crumble up the *chametz*, and throw it to the wind or sea, or even to flush it down a toilet. If there is too large a quantity of *chametz* to be disposed of in this manner, one can pour chemicals or bleach to make the *chametz* inedible. Alternatively, if one lives within an *eiruv*, he can dispose of the *chametz* in a public garbage bin and announce that it is *hefker* (ownerless).

Spending Money For Daled Kosos (Pesachim 99b)

Elisha Price ('23)

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Pesachim* (99b) quotes a *mishnah* which states that even a poor person (*afilu ani biyisroel*) who is allowed to take from the soup-kitchens (the *tamchoi*) must obtain four glasses of wine for the *mitzvah* of *daled kosos*. The Rashbam (*d"h vi'afilu*) comments that an *ani* must spend every penny he has to get the wine, and if he doesn't have money to spend, he is obligated to rent himself out, borrow money, or sell the clothes off his back to obtain the means to purchase the proper amount of wine for the *daled kosos*.

However, this Rashbam seems incongruous with a *Gemara* in *Maseches Sukkah* (41b) which relates a story about Rabban Gamliel: Rabban Gamliel was on a ship and had no access to an *esrog*, so he bought one from a fellow passenger for one thousand *zuz* (a measure of currency). The *Gemara* asks how he was allowed to spend this much on a *mitzvah*? Shouldn't there be a cap, since *esrogim* never cost that much? The *Gemara* answers that Rabban Gamliel was especially rich, so he could spend that much on an *esrog*. This implies that one who isn't rich would not be required to do so. Furthermore, the *Gemara* praises this act as something uniquely special. If one was required to do what he did, this would have been perfectly ordinary. Clearly, something about this purchase was indeed extraordinary. Additionally, the *Gemara* in *Megillah* (27b) says that R' Zakkai's mother sold her head covering so that they would have money to purchase wine for *kiddush*. This would be a support for the Rashbam's opinion, except that the *Gemara* doesn't say this is required, but lists it as an attribute of R' Zakkai (and his mother) through which he merited a long life. In light of these *Gemaros*, why does the Rashbam frame it as an obligation to spend money beyond one's means to afford *daled kosos*, if this is seen only as something extraordinarily praiseworthy and not obligatory in other contexts?

Furthermore, it seems like we don't pasken like this Rashbam. The Rama comments on the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 656:1) that one is not permitted to spend more than one fifth of his total assets on a *mitzvas asei* (positive commandment).

However, the Rashbam is not without support. The *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* (29b) says that one is required to spend their last five *sela'im* to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *pidyon haben* (redemption of the firstborn son). This would imply that *mitzvos do* require you to empty your bank account to fulfill them. Therefore, the Rashbam is no longer under attack; he can rely on this *Gemara* for backing.

But now we have a *stirah* (contradiction) between *Gemaros*! The *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* states that a person needs to spend every penny to fulfil a *mitzvah* should it be needed. The *Gemara* in *Sukkah* and *Megillah* states that one does not have to spend everything; there is a limit to how much one is required to spend on a *mitzvah*. How can we resolve these two seemingly conflicting ideas?

The *Biyur Halacha* (O.C. 656:1) presents an answer to this seeming contradiction. He suggests two possibilities. His first answer is that there is a distinction between the two *Gemaros* in the form of pricing. In *Kiddushin*, the price of a *pidyon haben* is five *sela'im*, a set and fair price. Therefore, you would be required to spend your last five *sela'im* on it. However in a case of unfair pricing, you would be liable to pay only one fifth of your assets to attain the *mitzvah*. Therefore, in the story in *Maseches Sukkah*, Rabban Gamliel was buying a ridiculously overpriced *esrog*, and he was therefore not required to purchase

it; as a result, the *Gemara* views his action as one of self-sacrifice which was not strictly necessary. This explanation would support the Rashbam's view that an *ani* must sell his clothing to buy *daled kosos*, since it would fall within the category of "fairly priced items." For the most part, when an *ani* buys wine, they will buy the cheapest bottles they can find, which will therefore be fairly (or at least cheaply) priced.

The *Biyur Halacha* also records a second answer, namely, that one is only obligated to spend all of his assets when he has the ability to earn more money (i.e. he has a job). However, if one has no source of income and has only a certain amount of money, he is not required to spend more than one fifth of it on any given *mitzvah*. The simple reading of this *Biyur Halacha* seems to go against the Rashbam, because an *ani* who lives off the soup kitchen obviously does not have a job! But perhaps, this second opinion in the *Biyur Halacha* can fit according to the Rashbam too. The Rashbam says that if one doesn't have enough money to buy wine for the *daled kosos* he has to do one of three things: rent himself out, borrow, or sell their clothing. If he rents himself out, he now has a job, and is now obligated to empty his pockets to purchase the wine. If he borrows, which - while not ideal - is a source of income as well, he is also technically getting money. And lastly, if he sells his clothing, this is also a short-term form of income, and as such, he would also be obligated to spend his last cent on *daled kosos*.

The *Avnei Nezer* gives an alternate answer. Perhaps *daled kosos* would require you to sell your clothing or borrow money because it is a *kiyum of pirsumei nisa* (spreading God's miracles) and therefore, it is a completely different case from all other *mitzvos*. If you are unable to don *tefillin* because you cannot afford to purchase a pair, *Hashem* understands, and you aren't liable to sell the shirt off your back to buy a pair of *tefillin*. However, by *pirsumei nisa*, the whole *mitzvah* is to spread the *nissim* of Hashem to other people. So if (for example) you can't afford *Chanukah* candles, no one will know that you couldn't light them for monetary reasons; all they'll see is that there are no candles, and therefore no *pirsumei nisa*. *Hashem* is able to take our thoughts into account, but other people cannot; therefore, for *mitzvos of pirsumei nisa*, including *daled kosos*, you must spend everything you have and more, because you absolutely must do this *mitzvah*, since it is based on the perception of others. If we use this approach, then perhaps even the Rama (who says that for all positive commandments one isn't permitted to spend more than twenty percent of his assets) would agree that because of *pirsumei nisa*, an *ani* would have to sell his clothing to be able to acquire *daled kosos*.

For all of these reasons, it makes sense according to the Rashbam that you must sell your clothes or borrow or work to obtain the funds necessary to procure wine for *daled kosos*.

Shitas HaRambam On Eating Charoses (Pesachim 114a)

Yosef Weiner ('23)

The *mishnah* states (*Pesachim* 114a)

הביאו לפניו מצה וחזרת וחרוסת ושני תבשילין אע"פ שאין חרוסת מצוה ר"א (ב) צדוק אומר מצוה

They bring before him matzah, lettuce, charoses, and two dishes, even though charoses is not a mitzvah. Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok says that charoses is a mitzvah.

The Rambam in his *Peirush Hamishnayos* writes that according to Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok, one would be required to recite a *birchas hamitzvah* upon eating the *charoses*, and then states that the *halachah* does not follow this opinion. Two things emerge from the Rambam's statement: one, that he *psakens* like the *Chachomim*, and that Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok is of the opinion that *charoses* is a full *mitzvah*, just like *marror* and *matzah*.

However, the Rambam in his *Mishnah Torah* (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 7:11) writes that *charoses* is a *mitzvah dirabanan*, followed by instructions on how to make it, and then writes that we bring the *charoses* to the table on the nights of *Pesach*. Thus, the Rambam in the *Mishneh Torah* appears to rule like Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok, unlike his ruling in the *Peirush Hamishnayos*.

There is another contradiction that emerges between the Rambam's *Peirush Hamishnayos* and *Mishneh Torah*. In the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, the Rambam writes that according to Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok, *charoses* is a *mitzvah*, and thus one recites a *berachah* of *al achilas charoses*. However, in the *Mishneh Torah*, the Rambam writes that one only recites a *berachah* on *matzah* and *marror*, implying that *charoses* does not have its own *berachah*.

Rabeinu Manuach answers that the reason why the Rambam in his *Mishneh Torah* does not write that *charoses* has its own *berachah* is because it is never eaten alone, but rather is always secondary to something else. However, the question still remains as to why the Rambam did not say this in the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, and instead wrote that according to Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok one must recite a *berachah*.

Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik answers that the two contradictions are connected. According to the Rambam's understanding in the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, the *Chachamim* are of the opinion that the purpose of the *charoses* is to be used as a dip, whereas according to Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok, *charoses* is a *mitzvah* in and of itself, just like *matzah* and *marror*, and the main way to fulfill that *mitzvah* is by eating the *charoses*. Consequently, one recites a *berachah* upon eating it.

However, in the *Mishneh Torah*, it seems that the Rambam holds that the *mitzvah* of *charoses* is an independent *mitzvah*, as he states that *charoses* is a *mitzvah dirabanan*, as a remembrance of the mortar which the Jews worked with in Egypt. Looking at the text of the Rambam, he concludes by stating that we bring the *charoses* to the table on the night of *Pesach*. The question arises as to why the Rambam

specifies that we bring it to the table, as this seems superfluous. Furthermore, why doesn't the Rambam write that it is a *mitzvah* to eat the *charoses* on the night of Pesach, like he does when discussing the *halachos* of *karpas*, *matzah*, and *marror*? Here, where the main discussion of *charoses* is, the Rambam only says that *charoses* is a *mitzvah dirabanan*, not that there is any *mitzvah* to eat it. This problem is magnified when one compares the Rambam's wording by *charoses* to his wording by *marror*. Regarding *marror*, the Rambam writes that it is not a *mitzvah dioraisa* to eat it by itself, but rather it is a *mitzvah dirabanan* to eat it without the *Korban Pesach*. Notably, the Rambam does not say that it is a *mitzvah* to bring the *marror* to the table, but that it is a *mitzvah* to eat it. Accordingly, the Rambam's expression that the *mitzvah* is to bring the *charoses* to the table requires an explanation.

Rav Soloveitchik explained that according to the Rambam in the *Mishneh Torah*, Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok holds that there is not a *mitzvah* to eat the *charoses*, but rather that there is a *mitzvah* to bring the *charoses* to the table. Thus, it emerges that the *machlokes* is that according to the *Chachamim*, the reason for bringing the *charoses* on the table is to serve as a dip, while bringing it to the table is not a *mitzvah*, whereas Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok is of the opinion that it is a *mitzvas dirabanan* to bring it to the table, but there is no *mitzvah* in eating it at all. According to him, we only dip the *marror* and *matzah* into it, thereby attaching it to the other *mitzvos* of the night, in order to avoid bringing the *charoses* to the table for no practical application. However, the main *mitzvah* is simply to bring the *charoses* to the table.

In conclusion, it emerges that the *Mishneh Torah* and *Peirush Hamishnayos* contradict each other regarding whether according to Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok one would need to recite a *berachah* on the *charoses*, because in the *Peirush Hamishnayos* the Rambam thought that Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok was of the opinion the *mitzvah* of *charoses* is eating it, just like *matzah* and *marror*, and thus requires a *berachah*. However, the Rambam in the *Mishneh Torah* holds that the *mitzvah* of *charoses* is bringing it to the table. Therefore, he holds that no *berachah* is needed, as there is no reason to make a *berachah* upon eating it, as that is not a *mitzvah*, and the bringing of it to the table is not an action that would warrant a *berachah*. (This would not work according to the Rabbeinu Manoach quoted earlier, that the *berachah* is not recited on the *charoses* since it is eaten with other foods.)

Rav Soloveitchik explained that this distinction also explains the contradiction between the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, where the Rambam rules like the *Chachamim*, and the *Mishneh Torah*, where he rules like Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok. The reason why the Rambam ruled like the *Chachamim* in the *Peirush Hamishnayos* is that it is clear from the practice of the entire world that a *berachah* is not recited upon eating the *charoses*. Therefore, in the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, where the Rambam thinks that Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok's opinion is that there is a *mitzvah* to eat *charoses*, and thus a *berachah* must be recited, he is forced to rule like the *Chachamim*, as we find there is no *berachah* for *charoses* practically. However, in his *Mishneh Torah*, where the Rambam is of the opinion that the *mitzvah* of *charoses* according to Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok is bringing it and not eating it, the fact that there is no practical *berachah* is not relevant, as Rabbi Elazar ben Tzadok would agree that no *berachah* is recited upon bringing the *charoses*. Thus, the Rambam is free to *psaken* like Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok.

Therefore, it emerges that the two contradictions are in fact intertwined, and are predicated upon an evolution in the Rambam's understanding of Rabbi Elazer ben Tzadok's opinion.

(Based upon *Sefer Hararei Kedem*)



EST. 1916