

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita*

Pesach



גליון באר הפרשה

להערות והארות,
וכן לכל עניין אחר
ניתן לפנות:
לטלפון 718.484.8136

או לאימיל:
Mail@BeerHaparsha.com

מדי שבוע בשבוע בדוא"ל בחינם

הירשמו היום!

לשון הקודש

באר הפרשה
mail@beerhaparsha.com

אידיש

דער פרשה קוואל
mail@derparshakval.com

אנגלית

Torah Wellsprings
mail@torahwellsprings.com

ספרדית

Manantiales de la Torá
info@manantialesdelatorah.com

צרפתית

Au Puits de La Paracha
info@aupuitsdelaparacha.com

איטלקית

Le Sorgenti della Torah
info@lesorgentidellatorah.com

רוסית

Колодец Торы
info@kolodetztory.com



מכון **ארה"ב:**
Mechon Beer Emunah
1630 50th St, Brooklyn NY 11204
718.484.8136

בארה"ק:
מכון באר האמונה
רח' דובב מישרים 4/2
עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
025 688 040

יו"ל ע"י מכון באר אמונה
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Torah Wellsprings - Pesach

Bashert!

Chazal tell us that the four cups of wine that we drink at the seder are to commemorate the four expressions of geulah that are written in the Torah (Shemos 6:6-7): וְהוֹצֵאתִי, וְהַצַּלְתִּי, וְנִצַּחְתִּי, וְנִקְּחָתִי. Rashi (Pesachim 108a) quotes from the Yerushalmi that another reason for the four cups we drink at the seder is to commemorate the three cups of wine that are written in the Torah. As it states (Bereishis 40:11) וְכֹס פְּרֹעָה בְּיַדִּי וְנִקְּחָה אֶת הָעֲנָבִים וְאִשְׁחַט אֹתָם אֵל פֶּה וְכֹס פְּרֹעָה בְּיַדִּי וְנִקְּחָה אֶת הָעֲנָבִים וְאִשְׁחַט אֹתָם אֵל פֶּה פְּרֹעָה, "Pharaoh's cup was in my hand and I took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I placed the cup on Pharaoh's palm."

This is the source for three of the cups of wine we drink on this night. The fourth cup is for *birkas hamazon*.

Why are the cups of the Sar HaMashkim significant, that we mention them at the Seder and drink wine in their memory? And how are they related to the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*?

The sefer *ליל הסדר* (p145) answers that the cups of wine of the Sar HaMashkim are significant, because "a cup of wine for Pharaoh" (וְכֹס פְּרֹעָה) was one of the early factors that caused galus in Mitzrayim. Many think

the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* began when Yaakov and his children came to Mitzrayim, but we can take the story further back. Yosef was sold to Mitzrayim, and he was in prison with the Sar HaMashkim, who had a dream. Yosef deciphered it correctly, and two years later, when Pharaoh had a dream, the Sar HaMashkim told Pharaoh about Yosef. This is how Yosef was taken out of prison, and after Pharaoh, he was the highest ruler of Mitzrayim. When the years of hunger came, Yosef's family travelled to Mitzrayim so that Yosef could support them. So, in retrospect, we understand that one of the early stages of the story of Klal Yisrael in galus in Mitzrayim was with the cup of wine that the Sar HaMashkim gave Pharaoh.

It is more than just one of the early episodes of galus Mitzrayim, which resulted in *yetzias Mitzrayim*. It is a lesson for us that Hashem is behind everything that occurs, whether they seem insignificant or coincidental.

It is for this reason that we drink the four cups in memory of the Sar HaMashkim. It reminds us that all matters, even a fly falling into a drink, are from Hashem, and part of the greater picture of Hashem's salvation of Bnei Yisrael.¹

1. People wonder why leaning on the left side, called *הסיבה*, is a sign of freedom. Isn't it easier and more comfortable to eat sitting up straight? Is it a sign of freedom to have to carefully balance the wine on its way to your mouth, trying to minimize the amount that ends up on your white kittel?

To answer this question, we begin with a primary foundation of *emunah*, which is the belief that *parnassah* is provided by Hashem. We are obligated to make *hishtadlus*, but if it weren't for this obligation, a person would be able to recline comfortably at home, and his *parnassah* would come to him. As the *sefarim* say, even if a person runs away from his *parnassah*, his *parnassah* would run even faster and catch up to him. This is because *parnassah* is *bashert*, and nothing can prevent it from reaching its intended recipient. When a person realizes this, he is calm and worry-free and feels genuine freedom. Reclining, *הסיבה*, demonstrates our belief that even if we were to sit back and recline, we would still receive our *parnassah*. This *emunah* frees us from all worries and facilitates genuine freedom.

The *kaarah* (the seder plate), according to the teachings of the Arizal, is formed as two סגל. (As we know, a *segal* is like the following *nikud* under the alef: א - two dots on top and one in between and beneath them.) This is made twice on the *kaarah*. There is the זרוע to the right, the ביצה to the left, and in between them, slightly below, is the

Emunah at the Seder

(Shemos 5:2) מִי ה' אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלוֹ, "Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice...?"

The Bnei Yissaschar (Nisan 4:4) explains that the impurity of Mitzrayim was their *kefirah*, their disbelief in Hashem, as Pharaoh said

The entire nation of Mitzrayim didn't believe in Hashem, but rather in the force of

maror. These represent Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The *maror* represents Yaakov.

Then there is another סגל, on the second half of the kaarah: *charoses* to the right, *karpes* to the left, and חזרת below, in between them. These represent Moshe, Aharon, and the חזרת represents Yosef.

We see an association between Yaakov and Yosef, because both are represented by the lower dot of a סגל.

Furthermore, they are also both represented by the bitter herbs (חזרת is also maror, used for korach).

The two types of *maror* that are on the *kaarah* represent the *tzaros* that Yaakov and Yosef endured in their lives.

But were the *yesurim* of Yaakov and Yosef similar? There seems to be a major difference between them.

Yaakov didn't bring the suffering to himself, they were sent to him. He didn't do anything to arouse Lavan's anger, and the same is true of all the suffering he endured. It was bashert that he should suffer in these areas. Whereas, it seems that Yosef brought his *tzaros* upon himself. He spoke lashon hara about his brothers and repeated to them his dreams, arousing their jealousy and anger. It seems that Yosef wouldn't be sold to Mitzrayim, and he wouldn't suffer from Potiphar's wife, or imprisonment, etc., if he hadn't aroused his brother's anger and jealousy.

So, the troubles of Yaakov and Yosef seem quite different. Yaakov suffered, but it wasn't his fault, while Yosef brought *tzaros* onto himself.

Yet, both Yaakov and Yosef are represented at the bottom of a סגל, with the maror and the chazeres, to teach us that they are very much the same. This is because everything that happened to Yosef was bashert, from Heaven. Even if he caused his *tzaros*, it was destined to be so. It wouldn't have occurred if it weren't Hashem's plan. So, Yaakov and Yosef were very much the same. They both endured *yesurim* that were destined for them.

I heard the following from a wise person:

In the piyut הַד גְּרִיָּא שׁוֹנֵיָא, the cat, didn't act properly. Why did it eat the goat? For this, the dog acted correctly and bit the cat to punish her. The stick that hit the dog wasn't correct, because the dog did nothing wrong. Therefore, a fire came and burned the stick... When one goes on and on with this approach, it ends up that the מלאך המוות acted correctly when it slaughtered the שׁוֹחֵט, so we wonder why הקב"ה came in the end and slaughtered the מלאך המוות! Why does *malach hamaves* deserve punishment?

But the answer is that we didn't read the story correctly from the beginning. We thought that the cat was wrong when it ate the goat, but it isn't so. The cat acted correctly. This is because when the father bought the goat for two zuzim (as it states הַדּוּבִין אֵבֶּא בְּתֵרֵי זוּזֵי, he thought that he bought the goat with the strength of his hand. He thought it was his money, his doing, and his accomplishment. He didn't realize that Hashem gave him the money, the idea, and the opportunity to buy the goat. Since he lacked this awareness, and he thought he bought the goat on his own, he deserved to lose the goat. When the cat ate the goat, the cat was doing a *shlichus* from heaven to punish the father for his lack of emunah in Hashem. Now, when we go through the steps, we reach another conclusion. The cat acted correctly when it ate the goat, so the dog that bit the cat was wrong. The stick that hit the dog was correct because the dog deserved punishment, and the fire that burned the stick was wrong. Using this calculation, we see that the *malach hamaves* was wrong for killing the *shochet*, and therefore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu slaughtered the *malach hamaves*.

The lesson to remember is that a person doesn't acquire anything on his own. Everything he has and owns is from Hashem.

nature and in the zodiac. They thought that the order of the stars determined their fate. This is the reason they worshiped the *טלה*, the sheep, which is the first of the *mazalos*, constellations, and represents the power of nature.

At *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the rules of nature ceased to exist. Hashem led the world beyond nature, and then the Mitzrim discovered Hashem's power.

The *korban Pesach* was a *טלה*, a sheep, and its blood was placed on the *mizbeiach*. This, too, was to reveal that Hashem leads the world, and nature is subjugated to Hashem's will. The *טלה*, which resembles nature, is sacrificed and subjugated to Hashem.

Bnei Yissaschar (4:1, דרך הרמז) says that this also explains the reason for the *mitzvah* to eat *matzah* and the prohibition to eat *chametz*. *Matzah* doesn't rise; the way it

goes into the oven is the way it comes out. *Chametz* rises and grows, and this represents the error that people have when they think things happen on their own, by the rules of nature. We eat *matzah* to tell us that Hashem alone leads the world. What he does, that is what occurs, and nothing happens by itself.

The date of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the 15th of Nisan, is also to establish that Hashem alone rules the world, and not the constellations. This is because the *טלה* is at its highest peak on the 15th of Nisan. Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim* on that day to show that even when nature is at its strongest point, it has no strength, and it can't do anything against Hashem's will. "Therefore, a person must rely entirely on Hashem and accept His decrees. He knows what is good for man. Request and pray to Him for every matter, because everything is from Him."¹²

2. The *minhag* of the holy nation, Bnei Yisrael, is to wear a *kittel* at the *seder*. We can explain this *minhag* in the following manner: When a person is young, he has many plans and hopes regarding what he will accomplish during his lifetime. But as he gets older, he begins to realize that his dreams and hopes will never materialize. This is because, although he hoped and strived for something, Hashem also has a plan, and Hashem's plan isn't always the same as ours. Hashem's plan will always prevail. As it states (Mishlei 19:21) *רבות מַחְשְׁבוֹת בְּלֵב אִישׁ וְנִצְטָת ה' הֵיא תְקוּם*, "Many thoughts are in a man's heart, but the counsel of Hashem, only it will prevail."

Gradually, as the person gets older, he surrenders and accepts Hashem's plan. This can be compared to when a country is at war, and when they realize there is hope for them to win the war, they put out a white flag as a sign of surrender. This is what happens to people when they get older. They discover that they aren't fully in charge of their life. Their hopes and goals aren't happening. When this realization sets in, people surrender themselves to Hashem's will.

This is why people turn white as they age. Every few weeks, another white hair appears. It is like he puts out a white flag. It expresses his surrender to Hashem. It expresses his realization that Hashem is in charge, and that he can't do anything that Hashem doesn't want.

At the *seder*, our *emunah* increases, we recognize that Hashem leads the world, and we put on a white *kittel*. This is how we express our surrender to Hashem. We recognize that Hashem is in charge, we are His servants, and Hashem's plan will prevail.

Unlike the hair on one's head that turns white gradually, when it comes to the *seder*, the *kittel* is put on, entirely white, at once. This is because on this night, there is a complete recognition that only Hashem is in charge. Throughout the year, we *gradually* realize that Hashem is in charge, but we still hold on to the notion that we, at a minimum, are also in charge of the destiny. This is indicated by the mixture of white and black (or brown, etc.) hair that's on a person's head. He believes that Hashem is in charge, but he still holds onto the notion that he is in charge, too. He hasn't surrendered himself to Hashem's plan entirely. But at the *seder*, the *emunah* is swift and complete, and we submit entirely to Hashem's will.

The Mitzvos Bring Emunah

It states (Tehillim 119:86) **כָּל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֱמוּנָה**, "All mitzvos are emunah." Every mitzvah fills our hearts with emunah. In particular, the mitzvos on the night of the seder help us attain emunah.

We perform the mitzvos of **יציאת ספור** as it states (Shemos 13:8) **וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא**, "You shall tell your son on that day..." You should tell your children the miracles Hashem performed for us at yetzias Mitzrayim.

And it states (Shemos 10:2) **וְלִמְעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בִנְךָ** **וּבֶן בִּנְךָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלֵתָּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֵת אֹתוֹתֵי אֲשֶׁר שְׁמַתִּי בָם** **וְיִרְעָתָם כִּי אֲנִי ה'**, "So that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt, and my signs that I placed among them - that you may know that I am Hashem."

Discussing Hashem's wonders at yetzias Mitzrayim, and especially speaking about it with children, will fill our hearts, and the children's hearts, with emunah in Hashem.

Also, the mitzvah of eating matzah fills our hearts with emunah. Therefore, the Zohar (vol.2, p.183b) calls matzah **דמיה מנותת**, food of emunah.

The Mishnah (Pesachim 116a) states, **רְבֵן גַּמְלִיאֵל** **הָיָה אוֹמֵר, כָּל שְׂלֵא אָמַר שְׁלֵשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בְּפֶסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבְתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן, פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמְרוֹר. פֶּסַח, עַל שׁוֹם שְׁפָסַח הַמָּקוֹם**

עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם. מַצָּה, עַל שׁוֹם שְׁנִגְּאֵלוֹ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם. מְרוֹר, עַל שׁוֹם שְׁמֵרוֹ הַמִּצְרַיִם אֵת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם," Raban Gamliel said, Whoever doesn't say the following three things on Pesach [and he doesn't explain the reason we perform them], hasn't completed his obligation. They are Pesach, Matzah, and Maror. Why do we eat the korban Pesach? Hashem had compassion on us and He jumped over the homes of the Yidden in Mitzrayim [and went to the homes of the goyim to perform *makas Bechoros*]. Why do we eat matzah? It is because we were redeemed from Mitzrayim. [We were rushed out, and we didn't have time to allow the dough to rise into chametz]. Why do we eat *maror*? It is because the Mitzrim made bitter the lives of our fathers in Mitzrayim."

Rabbeinu Manoach (Hilchos Chametz and Matzah 7:5-6) writes, "This means we have to say 'Pesach, Matzah and Maror', and explain the reason we perform these mitzvos. Every mitzvah has its reason, and knowing the reason is a major part of performing them... It is especially important to know the reasons for the mitzvos on Pesach. This is because talking about these matters will arouse one's emunah in Hashem. Because when Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, it became known for Yisrael and for all nations of the world that Hashem alone rules in heaven and on earth."³

3. I heard the following mashal: People who require emotional or psychological help go to two types of doctors: a psychologist and a psychiatrist. The difference between these doctors is that the psychologist speaks with the patient and trains the patient to think rationally. Sometimes the patient needs counseling or chizuk, and through conversation, the doctor helps and heals him.

A psychiatrist, on the other hand, prescribes medication that helps regulate the person's thinking patterns. He doesn't speak too much to the patient, because he doesn't heal with words. His job is to find the right medication that will help the patient.

We use this *nimshal* (*l'havdil* endless time) to help us understand the types of *mitzvos* we have at the Seder, which, as we wrote, help us attain emunah. This night, we have several mitzvos of speaking, such as to repeat the story of yetzias Mitzrayim, to make kiddush, praise Hashem with Hallel, and so on. We also perform mitzvos of eating, such as to eat matzos, *maror*, the four cups, etc. Throughout the year, the person is ill. He doesn't know how to think properly, he doesn't have complete emunah in Hashem. With these holy mitzvos, with eating and with speaking, he attains complete emunah in Hashem. The mitzvos of speech resemble, *l'havdil*, the doctor who straightens out people's minds with words. The mitzvos of eating

Yesurim for our Good

The Sfas Emes (5654) writes:

"I think that we can explain.... the reason it is called "Seder" is hinting to us that everything that happens in galus, is all with a seder, an order. It wasn't by chance that Pharaoh ruled over Bnei Yisrael; it was planned and arranged. Hashem said to Avraham at the *Bris ben HaBesarim* that this slavery would occur. This applies to every detail [of galus], every *tzarah*, *yesurim*, and hard work. Everything was planned exactly how it should be. When we perform the mitzvah of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* (to tell the miracles of *yetzias Mitzrayim*), part of the mitzvah is to attain emunah that everything that occurs is with *hashgachah pratis* and for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael. We must praise Hashem for the galus, just as we praise Hashem for the geulah. There are generations where the correct *seder* and order is for the Yidden to be in galus, and there are generations where the correct *seder* and order is for them to be free and redeemed. Everything is planned by Hashem Who knows the secrets of how it should be. This is as Chazal (Brachos 54a) say, 'Whichever manner Hakadosh Baruch Hu treats you, you should praise Him immensely.' As it states [in the מאמינים that we say on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur] הנוהג בחסדו כל דור, 'Hashem leads each generation with kindness'. I heard directly from the mouth of my grandfather (the Chidushei HaRim zt"l) an explanation on the Haggadah, וְרָעוּ אֲתָנוּ... כמו שנאמר... 'They did bad to us, as it says [in the Torah]... We shouted out to Hashem, as it says [in the Torah]...

כמו שנאמר means "As Hashem commanded it", and it means "As it is written in the Torah." This implies that everything that occurred in Mitzrayim wasn't by chance, rather it was שנאמר, "as Hashem commanded and said it should be". The Sfas

Emes adds, ודברי פי חכם חן, "The words of the wise have *chen*." He is referring to the wise lesson of his grandfather, the Chidushei HaRim, and his beautiful explanation that reminds us that nothing happens by chance. Everything is כמו שנאמר, as Hashem commands things to be. The Sfas Emes concludes, "The [Chidushei HaRim's] explanation is the same as what I am writing now. Everything was with a special order, and everything is so we should tell... Hashem's praises."

This is what every person should say, with the tzaros and the hardships that Hashem handpicked for him. He should say that it didn't happen by accident or by chance, rather, כמו שנאמר, everything is as Hashem commanded it. There is a "seder", order, how things have to be, and it is all for our good. Therefore, we can praise Hashem for the good and for the hard times, because Hashem sent them, so they are certainly for our benefit.

It states (Tehillim 82:5) לֹא יָדְעוּ וְלֹא יָבִינּוּ בְחֹשֶׁכַּהּ, "They do not know nor do they understand, they walk in darkness"

The Minchas Elazar (Divrei Torah vol.9, 32) explains these words with a mashal of people who came into a dark place. They couldn't see where they were going, and they were repeatedly bumping into the furniture. Everyone was angry and decided that whoever built the building intended to punish the people who entered. Why else did he place obstacles all over the place? But then the light turned on, and they discovered that they were in a beautiful palace, and everything was in its right place.

Reb Tzvi Hirsh Meizlish zt"l (rav of Veitzin, דברי צבי ליל הסדר) explains that on the night of the seder, we attain emunah that all those matters that we thought were obstacles and problems were all for our good. This is the reason this night is called Seder. Seder means

resemble, l'havdil, the doctor who straightens out people's minds with medications.

In other words, at the Seder, we straighten out the head that is confused throughout the year.

order, and we attain emunah and awareness that everything is for the good and everything is in the right order.⁴

Explaining How Everything Was for the Good

We have expressed that even the tzaros in Mitzrayim ended up being for our benefit. It is always that way. Hashem loves us, and even the tzaros we must endure end up being for our good.

At the seder, we don't only discuss the ten makos, the miracles that occurred, and the freedom from slavery. We also discuss the *tzaros*, the hard labor, and our prayers to

Hashem, our וּנְצַעַק, shouting out to Hashem. Why do we go back to discuss the *tzaros*? Shouldn't the seder be a time when we discuss only the ten makos and the geulah? It doesn't seem to be the right time to discuss the galus.

The Sfas Emes answers that we should praise Hashem for the *tzaros*, too, because the *tzaros* prepared us for the miracles that occurred in the end. This explains why we have matzah and maror at the seder. The matzos remind us of the redemption, and the maror reminds us of the *tzaros*. We discuss both this night, and we praise Hashem for both, because even the *tzaros* were part of the redemption. They prepared

4. The korban Pesach was eaten while wearing shoes, as it states (Shemos 12:11) נַעֲלִימָם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם. It is noteworthy that from all the clothes a person wears, only shoes must fit perfectly. One can put on a shirt that is larger than his size, and the same is with all clothing. But if his shoes don't fit, it is impossible to walk in them. This is a *mashal* of how Hashem leads each person. נַעֲלִימָם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם, just like shoes must fit exactly, this is how Hashem gives each person exactly what he needs. One shouldn't ask, "Why does that person have more?" Or "Why do I lack this or that?" Each person receives exactly what they need.

A Yid from Eretz Yisrael spent a month in America, going from place to place, suffering humiliation and discomfort, to raise money to marry off one of his children. He was finally returning home, and he rejoiced that this unpleasant - though necessary - expedition was finally coming to an end. He looked forward to the grand welcome his family would surely give him when he arrived. He would be treated with honor, and a grand meal would be prepared for him. After all, that is what he deserved, after sacrificing so much for the family's sake.

But when he got home, tired and hungry from the trip, no one was there to greet him. He went into the kitchen to find his meal, but nothing was there. He said to himself, "Is that how I am treated, after all I went through for the family? After weeks of embarrassment... my family entirely forgot about me. Don't they understand that after a long-distance trip, I will be hungry, thirsty, and tired. It is terrible that they treat me like this!" He kept thinking these thoughts until he got to the dining room. (Generally, they only eat there on Shabbos and yom tov.) There he found a set table, with a large meal prepared for him. They wanted to honor him, so they prepared the meal in the dining room, to express that this meal means a lot to them. There was a letter on the table, welcoming him, and explaining why they weren't able to be home to greet him.

Now, the man was embarrassed with himself for carrying such negative thoughts against his family. They had remembered him, after all, and they had prepared a wonderful meal for him.

We also go around in Hashem's world, filled with complaints. "Did Hashem forget me? Why don't I have this and that? Why must I suffer?" When we recognize Hashem's immense kindness and acknowledge that even when something is missing, it is all because Hashem loves us, we become ashamed of ourselves. How could we have complained before Hashem? He loves us so much, and everything is planned for our good.

We can explain that this is the reason we wear a *kittel* at the seder. The color white represents shame. As Chazal say, אֲזוּל סוּמְקָא וְאַתָּה חַיּוּרָא, when a person is embarrassed, his reddish complexion leaves his face, and his face turns white. This is the embarrassment that we feel at the seder, when we suddenly realize that we were living with complaints, feeling abandoned, and then, on this night, we gain the emunah that Hashem truly cares for us all the time.

us and helped us leave Mitzrayim, so we should praise Hashem for them. Furthermore, the tzaros in Mitzrayim help us in every generation. Good is showered upon us because of what we went through, and therefore, we should praise Hashem for the tzaros, as well.⁵

The Sfas Emes (ד"ה אלו 5640) explains והיא is referring to the galus in Mitzrayim and the geulah. All of this prepared us for the generations to follow. Therefore, we are happy with the galus in Mitzrayim, too, and we eat maror, to remember that all of this slavery was for our good."

It states (Bereishis 45:23) וְלֹאבֵיו שָׁלַח כְּזֹאת עֲשָׂרָה הָמָרִים נְשֹׂאִים מִטּוֹב מִצְרָיִם, "To his father, he sent the following: ten donkeys laden with the best of Mitzrayim..."

In one explanation, Rashi writes that מִטּוֹב מִצְרָיִם, "the best of Mitzrayim" means גְּרִיסֵין שֶׁל פּוֹל, a type of bean, ground into powder. Why did Yosef send specifically this to his father, and why is it called מִטּוֹב מִצְרָיִם, the best of Mitzrayim?

The Maharal (Gur Aryeh, *ibid.*, and Gevuras Hashem 10) answers that Yaakov was afraid to go to Mitzrayim because he knew that his going down to Mitzrayim was the beginning of the

5. Year (5704) in Bergen Belson, the Bluzhever Rebbe zt'l conducted a seder in some forlorn corner. There was no meal for "Shulchan Aruch"; they didn't do הַסִּיבָה on comfortable chairs because they sat on the floor. Children sat around the rebbe, as he led the Seder, telling them the story of yetzias Mitzrayim. Adults placed down some matzos, a potato, and the head of a beet. These were placed into a broken dish, which was their *kaarah* for this night. They didn't have a זֵרֶעַ, or an egg, nor choreses. *Maror* was the only item they had in abundance. Their entire existence was a large *shiur* of maror, as it sates (Eichah 3:15) הַשְּׂבִיעֵנִי בְּמָרוֹרִים, "He filled me with bitterness..."

One of the children asked the four questions. All the adults cried when they heard the child's pure voice, asking the ancient questions of the Mah Nishtanah, the questions that Yidden around the world have asked for thousands of years.

After the child asked the questions, the Bluzhever Rebbe repeated them and elaborated on them in a wonderful manner. He said:

"Why is this night different than all other nights." The Bluzhever Rebbe explained that night represents *galus*. Why is this *galus* worse than all other *galuyos*?

"All nights we eat chametz or matzah, and this night we eat solely matzah." The matzah is low, chametz grows high. The matzah represents when Klal Yisrael are in a lowly state, and they are poor, disgraced, and persecuted by the goyim. שְׂבֻכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת, all other nights, which means in all other *galuyos*, we eat chametz or matzah. This means that there are better times and harder times. There are times when we are treated with disgrace, and there are times when we are treated with honor. But הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, in this *galus*, כּוֹלוֹ מַצָּה, we have solely humiliation. We don't have any honor at all, and we ask why this *galus* is so painful and difficult, like nothing ever before?

Also, why on this night, כּוֹלוֹ מָרוֹר, do we suffer constantly?

Also, כּוֹלוֹנוּ מְסוּבִים, "We all recline." The question is why we are so humiliated, to the extent that we can't even pick ourselves up and straighten our backs?

Then the rebbe raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Know children, every night, the darkest part of the night is the moments before daybreak. Also, in *galus*, the hardest *galus* is moments before the *geulah sheleimah*, the final redemption. We are at that stage now, and that is why it is so dark. This is this is concealed in the answer of the Hagadah, עֲבָדִים הֵינּוּ, because the letters of עֲבָדִים are roshei teivos דוּד בֵּן יֵשׁי עֲבָדִךָ מִשִּׁיחַ. This hints that we are in the final period before the coming of Moshiach. We are moments before the glorious daybreak, and therefore, the darkness of this *galus* is darker than ever before. (from the sefer לעד בני ישראל p.66).

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) explains שחוק to mean that Hakadosh Baruch Hu laughed at the Mitzrim.

Our forefathers in Mitzrayim could have had many questions about why Hashem was doing this to them. Weren't they the nation of Hashem, lovingly referred to as בני בכורי ישראל, Hashem's firstborn son? Why were they suffering the painful slavery in Mitzrayim?" Mitzrayim was a place where they could have been enslaved forever!

The question burned stronger since Pharaoh and his nation were descendants of חם, the son of Noach. Cham and his son Canaan were cursed, as it states (Bereishis 9:25-26), וַיֹּאמֶר אֱרֹר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאֶחָיו, וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ ה' "Cursed is Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers, and he said Blessed is Hashem, the Gd of Shem; and Let Canaan be a slave to them."

How did this curse turn on its head, enslaving the descendants of Shem?

Also, how did this cursed nation have so much money? It didn't seem to be proper that the ones who were meant to be slaves were wealthy, while the Jewish nation lived in poverty!

However, when Yisrael left Mitzrayim, it was revealed that Hashem was playing a joke on the Mitzrim. They thought that they were storing all the money for themselves, but really, it was for Bnei Yisrael, as it states (Berishis 15:14) וַאֲחֵרֵי כֵן יֵצְאוּ בְרִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל "Afterwards they will leave with great wealth". In retrospect, it was understood that the reason Yisrael were enslaved in Mitzrayim was so that they would leave with all this wealth.

This is the reason we have the mitzvah of Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim. We have to know שחיקתי, that Hashem played a prank on Mitzrayim. The hunger years, the slavery, it was all for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael. Therefore, we have a mitzvah to tell the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim. The pure emunah must be in our hearts that everything is for our good. Even when there are hard times, we must believe that the good will come

soon. Everything that happens to us is Hashem's kindness.

The Chasam Sofer teaches that after we have witnessed *yetzias Mitzrayim*, there is a great complaint about us if we don't believe that everything is for our good. We have seen how Hashem turns everything around for our benefit, and therefore, we must believe that it is always so, and we must not complain.

However, he explains, the Yidden who left Mitzrayim weren't guilty for complaining. They didn't see yet that everything Hashem does for Klal Yisrael is really good.

The Chasam Sofer writes that this is the meaning of the pasuk (Tehillim 106:6-7) הָטָאנוּ עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הָעֲוִינוּ הִרְשָׁעְנוּ, אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ וּנְפָלוּתֵיךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הָעֲוִינוּ הִרְשָׁעְנוּ, לֹא זָכְרוּ אֶת רַב חֲסִדֶיךָ וַיִּמְרוּ עַל יָם בְּנִים סוּף "We have sinned like our fathers, we have committed iniquity and wickedness. Our fathers in Mitzrayim did not contemplate Your wonders, they were not mindful of Your abundant kindness, and they rebelled by the sea, at the Yam Suf."

A חטא is an aveirah performed by accident, and עוון is a sin committed intentionally (see Yomah 36b). Our forefathers in Mitzrayim complained about their hard times. But for them, this was all חטאנו, aveiros by accident, because they didn't realize that it was a preparation for the good. But for us, if we lack emunah when we go through hard times (*hester panim*), it will be considered עוון, as we sinned purposely.

The Chasam Sofer explains that this is the meaning of the words חטאנו עם אבותינו. The aveiros of our forefathers are called חטא, sins committed by accident. But we did worse, because העוינו הרשענו, which means that our aveiros are on purpose. This is because אבותינו במצרים לא השכילו ונפלותיך, our forefathers in Mitzrayim didn't know Hashem's ways, how everything was for the good. They didn't yet see the depths of Hashem's ways, and that they would leave ברכוש גדול, with immense wealth. Therefore, וימרו על ים בנים סוף, "They rebelled by the sea..." and this is a sin

by accident. But the generations afterwards, who saw the miracles that Hakadosh Baruch performed to their forefathers in Mitzrayim, they should know that all hardships are only a preparation for the great good that will come to them, so they mustn't complain.

Shabbos HaGadol

Chazal (Yoma 39a) say, "A person sanctifies himself a drop from below, and heaven sanctifies him a lot from above." The Shelah HaKadosh (Vayechi) states that this refers to preparing for the mitzvos. "According to the extent a person prepares himself, that is how much spirituality he will attain..."

The Tiferes Shlomo (Vayigash ו"ה ויגידו) writes, "For all mitzvos, and for Torah and tefillah, one must prepare himself, what he will bring to the King..."

One of the ways we prepare for Pesach is through this Shabbos, Shabbos HaGadol.

The Tur (430) writes, "The Shabbos before Pesach is called Shabbos HaGadol because a great miracle (*nes gadol*) happened on this day..." The Tur explains that the Yidden tied sheep to their bedposts for the korban Pesach. "The Mitzrim asked them, 'Why are you doing this?' The Yidden answered that Hashem commanded them to slaughter the sheep as a korban Pesach. The Mitzrim were very upset that the Jewish nation was about to slaughter their gods, but they didn't have permission to say anything. In remembrance of this miracle, we call this Shabbos 'Shabbos HaGadol.'"

Tosfos (Shabbos 87:) states another miracle we celebrate on Shabbos HaGadol. The *bechorim* (firstborns) of the Mitzrim asked the Yidden why they tie a sheep to their bedposts. The Yidden told them that Hashem was going to slay every firstborn Mitzri, and that they would celebrate this miracle with a korban Pesach.

The firstborns of the Egyptians rushed to Pharaoh and to their parents, demanding that the Jewish nation be freed. They realized

that if the Jewish nation wasn't permitted to go free, all the firstborn Mitzrim would die.

Pharaoh and their parents didn't heed their shouts. They didn't believe it would occur.

The firstborns declared war on Mitzrayim, as it states (*Tehillim* 136:10), למכה מצרים בכוריהם, "Who smote Egypt through their firstborns." Many Egyptians died in this war. According to Tosfos, this is the miracle we celebrate on Shabbos HaGadol.

There are many segulos for Shabbos HaGadol.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* teaches that Shabbos HaGadol is a day of atonement, like Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is on the 10th of Tishrei, and the miracles of Shabbos HaGadol happened on the 10th of Nisan. Yom Kippur is called *Yoma Rabba*, "the great day" (see Rosh Hashanah, 21.), and this Shabbos is called "the great Shabbos" (Shabbos HaGadol). Chidushei HaRim explains that when Pesach arrives, we have no *aveiros* because we burned and got rid of the chametz, which symbolizes *aveiros*.

The Levush says it is called Shabbos HaGadol because it is a preparation for (Malachi 3:24) יום ה' הגדול והנורא, "Hashem's great and awesome day" – the day when Moshiach will come.

The Ohev Yisrael *zt'l* (*Likutei Na'ch, Shabbos HaGadol*) writes, "The origin and foundation of all Shabbosos of the year is Shabbos HaGadol and Shabbos Teshuvah. They are the heads of all Shabbosos of the year." It is therefore wise and recommended to make this Shabbos special. They influence all Shabbosos of the year.

Erev Pesach

In a letter, Reb Akiva Eiger *zt'l* writes, "When the Jewish people lived in their land, erev Pesach was a joyous holiday because everyone sacrificed the korban Pesach and said Hallel, etc. Even today, erev Pesach should be in that spirit... We should be busy

with mitzvos all day, burning the chametz, preparing for the Seder..."⁷

The Bas Ayin (*Drush lePesach, Metzora*) writes, "Erev Pesach, when a person does *teshuvah sheleimah* before Hashem and eradicates all the chametz and evil from his heart, it is the greatest *eis ratzon* of the year!"

The Ateres Yehoshua of Dzikov *zt'l* would recite the tefillah of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk *zt'l* (printed at the beginning of many *machzorim* and *siddurim*) when he burned his chametz.

Tzaddikim taught that the war of Gog and Magog, which heralds the coming of Moshiach, will take place on *erev Pesach* during the three hours when people are burning their chametz.

This can be the meaning of the verse in *Hoshanos*, הוֹשַׁעֵנָא שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁעוֹת, "Save us three hours." We pray to be saved from the war of Gog and Magog, which will take place during those three hours.⁸

7. Reb Yeruchem, the mashgiach of Mir *zt'l*, said, "If we came to this world just to perform the mitzvah of biur chametz, דינו, it would already be worthwhile. This mitzvah imbues us with kedushah and taharah."

Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov once asked his sister, "Do you remember our father's bedikas chametz? It took all night and was performed with tears and hisorerus."

Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* rarely cried, but he did cry when he burned the chametz and while saying the קריבן (the tefillah added to chazaras hashatz of the Shacharis Shemonah Esrei) on Purim.

As a bachur studying in Yeshivas Chevron, Yerushalayim, Reb Shimshon Pinkus performed the mitzvah of bedikas chametz with mesirus nefesh, and he recounts the high levels he attained from this mitzvah. He shared an apartment in Yerushalayim with some other bachurim from yeshiva, but for Pesach, his friends all returned to their homes in America or to wherever their families lived. Since Reb Shimshon was the only person who remained in Yerushalayim, the obligation of bedikas chametz was his responsibility that year.

He studied the halachos thoroughly and conducted a meticulous bedikah that lasted several hours. Then he remembered that he should make bedikas chametz on the roof as well. All residents of the apartment building used the roof, but Reb Shimshon Pinkus knew that people tend to rely on others, and if he didn't check the roof, likely no one would.

He found the roof cluttered. The residents used the roof for storage, and many items were tossed up there. To do an effective bedikas chametz, he would have to tidy up first. He knew that this would take a long time (and this was after performing bedikas chametz for several hours in his apartment), but he was prepared to perform the mitzvah of bedikas chametz with mesirus nefesh. To encourage himself, he kept reminding himself, "I'm doing the mitzvah of bedikas chametz!" That thought gave him the strength to continue. He completed bedikas chametz just before daybreak.

He thought he would be tired at the Seder, but it was the opposite. He never had such a good Seder. He enjoyed each word of the Haggadah. When the Seder was over, he couldn't sleep - he felt so inspired. He remained awake all night, learning about yetzias Mitzrayim until the morning.

The inspiration remained with him for the entire yom tov. After Pesach passed, he continued to grow higher and higher. Reb Shimshon Pinkus said, "If I have any good qualities today, it is from that mitzvah d'rabbanan of bedikas chametz, which I did with mesirus nefesh."

Reb Shimshon Pinkus considered that special night of bedikas chametz to be the day he was born, because it was then that he became a new person. Chazal say that tzaddikim are niftar on the day they were born. Indeed, Reb Shimshon Pinkus passed away on Wednesday, and he was buried on Thursday evening, on the 13th of Nisan, the night of bedikas chametz (that year, Pesach began on Motzei Shabbos).

8. The Russian government issued a harsh decree on the Jewish community. A Jewish activist discovered that, for a price, it was possible to bribe one of the ministers, who had the power to annul the decree. The

Every Part of the Seder is Special

The Maharil writes, "Even if aspects of

the Seder seem insignificant to you, be wise to perform them because there is nothing extra."⁹

price was high, and he spoke with many rabbanim, urging them to influence their followers to donate money for the cause. Rebbe Aharon of Chornobyl *zt'l* ignored the activist's request.

The activist spoke to Rebbe Yitzchok of Skver *zt'l* (Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler's brother) and asked him to encourage his brother to participate in this fundraising effort. The Skverer Rebbe spoke with Reb Aharon and explained why raising money for this cause was important; however, Reb Aharon still refused to get involved.

On *Erev Pesach*, when Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler went outside to burn his *chametz*, he said, "Some say we can annul harsh decrees with money, but that isn't correct. When we burn the *chametz* on *erev Pesach*, we annul all harsh decrees."

Reb Shimshon Ostropole *zt'l* wrote a letter and encouraged people to read it at least once a year, ideally, on *erev Pesach*. He said that whoever reads and studies this letter will experience salvations.

He writes at the beginning of this letter the following:

"Our master, the holy [Arizal], wrote the following wondrous ideas in a concealed manner, and no one knows how to decipher them. Many *gedolim* asked me to explain what the Arizal was saying, and I didn't tell them. But because of my love for you, I will reveal the secret of this matter according to how it was revealed to me in a dream at night." Reb Shimshon explains the concealed lesson of the Arizal wondrously and concludes, "After these matters were revealed to me, heaven told me that whoever studies this awesome secret as I wrote it here, even just once a year, primarily when he studies it on *erev Pesach*, he will certainly be guarded the entire year from all troubles, unnatural deaths, and tragedies. His enemies won't rule over him; they will fall before him, and wherever he turns, he will enjoy success.

9. Rebbe Yechiel Meir of Gustenin *zt'l* was unable to fall asleep after the seder. He said, "I feel like a person who has just won the lottery. He can't fall asleep, he is so excited, and I too cannot sleep now."

There are fifteen *simanim* at the seder, and holy *sefarim* teach that we should say each *siman* before performing that part of the seder. Saying the name of the *siman* purifies us (see *Yesod v'Shores HaAvodah*).

Chassidim once heard Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* silently repeat to himself the *simanim* of the Seder (קדש ורחץ כרפס יחין etc.). He recited all of them before he began the Seder. Chassidim explain that he was reminding himself of all the wonderful steps of the Seder so that he could perform each step properly.

Sometimes, when a person reaches *נרצה* he regrets that he didn't take more advantage of the holy Seder with all its *mitzvos*, *segulos*, holiness, and bounty. Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* wanted to make sure that he took advantage of all the *mitzvos* of this holy night, so at the beginning of the Seder, he reviewed what to anticipate so that he could perform the *mitzvos* properly.

The order of the Seder, קדש ורחץ, etc., are called *simanim*. When someone claims a lost object, he must present evidence of ownership (*simanim*), to retrieve it. Throughout the year, due to sins, a person loses his holiness. When he performs the *simanim* of the Seder, he regains his *kedushah*. What was lost is returned to him.

Rebbe Shalom of Shotz *zt'l* told the following parable to explain the specialness of the Seder.

Someone tied a donkey to a mill and had the donkey walk around the mill several times. Each time the donkey walked around, the mill churned and milled the kernels that were in the mill. The donkey, however, didn't understand why it had to walk around in circles. If it could speak, it would say, "This person is doing *tzaar baalei chaim*! If he wants me to go somewhere, it's my duty to bring him there. But to walk around endlessly for no purpose is just cruel." The donkey doesn't know that as it walks around, it is turning the millstone and grinding wheat into flour.

The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* writes, "It is amazing the many great things... that occur in the upper worlds when the Jewish nation makes the Seder on this night, with the matzos, the *maror*, the *sipur yetzias Mitzrayim*..." Mordechai and Esther decreed a three-day fast. One of the fast days was on the Seder night! That year, the Yidden didn't eat matzah and *maror*, etc., as it states *ויעבר מרדכי*, which means that Mordechai transgressed the first night of Pesach by declaring a fast on that day (see Gemara *Megillah* 15.).

Why did Mordechai choose to create a fast day on this night? Haman's decree was to be carried out twelve months later, on the fourteenth of Adar. Why did Mordechai decree a three-day fast now, which resulted in the absence of the mitzvos of matzah and maror at the Seder?

The Tiferes Shlomo explains that Mordechai wanted to show Heaven what the world would look like if Haman's scheme succeeded, and there would be no Jewish nation to celebrate the Seder. The Tiferes Shlomo writes, "A great commotion arose in heaven when no one made a Seder that night. The *malachim* were asking, "What is happening? ... This showed Heaven that if Haman's plan were to succeed, *chalilah*, the entire world would cease to exist."

Reb Eliyahu Gutmacher *zt'l* offers another explanation for why Mordechai and Esther established a fast day specifically on the night of the Seder. He explains that the night of the Seder is the greatest *eis ratzon* of the year. Mordechai and Esther wanted to use the potential of this special time to daven and to annul Haman's decrees. Their *tefillos* were immediately answered, and Haman was hanged on the second day of Pesach.¹⁰

Rebbe Shalom of Shotz *zt'l* explained that each part of the Seder contains great kabbalistic secrets. On the *קערה*, there's an egg in one corner, karpas in another corner, maror in the middle, and so on. Each item represents one of Hashem's attributes: chesed, gevurah, tiferes, and so on, and many other secrets and profound ideas are playing out at the Seder. We don't fully understand the significance of the Seder plate and all the other mitzvos of the Seder, but we go through the motions of the Seder happily, knowing that this process accomplishes great things and brings us incredible blessings.

10. Reb Gutmacher said a mashal to describe the uniqueness of this night:

A person who is imprisoned, with four tall fortified walls surrounding him, has no hope for escape. However, if he can find even just a tiny breach in one of the walls, he can hammer away at that opening, and the opening will widen until he can escape. The Seder night provides us with that tiny crack. Everyone has "fortified walls" surrounding them. For some, it's the lack of *parnassah*; for others, it's health issues or other forms of *tzaros*, *rachmana litzlan*. People feel trapped, unable to escape. They don't know how to leave their *tzaros*. On Pesach, at the Seder, they find a crack in the walls. If they pound on this crack (with *tefillah* and the mitzvos of the night), the crack will widen, and everything can change. Even one's *mazal* can change for the better on this night.

Rebbe Simchah Bunim of Peshischa *zy'a* told the following mashal:

A wealthy person purchased a rare, expensive, and beautiful horse. He put it in his stable, near his home. However, he was afraid his rare horse would be stolen, so he built a fence around the stable. Still, he feared thieves might find a way to get through the fence, so he hired someone to stand guard all night. He told the guard, "I want you to think about something interesting, such as an intriguing question, something that will occupy your mind and keep you awake throughout the night."

The owner of the horse went to bed, but sleep eluded him. He thought, "I have a gate, I have a guard, but the guard might fall asleep!" So, he went outside to see what was going on. He saw his horse resting peacefully in the stable, and the watchman was awake. That was good.

"What are you thinking about now?" he asked the guard.

The Chasam Sofer zy'a discusses the holiness in our homes on this special night. He bases his lesson on the halachah (Shulchan Aruch 472:2), which states, *יסדר שולחנו בגלים נאים לפי כוהו*, "One should set the table with beautiful utensils according to his abilities." The beautiful utensils express the freedom that we attained on this night.

Magen Avraham (472:2) writes that the Maharil would even place on the table the vessels that he received from goyim. (The Maharil would lend money to goyim, and they gave him their silver utensils, as collateral for the loans.) Throughout the year, the Maharil didn't use those vessels since they didn't belong to him. But at the seder, he would take them out and use them because it is customary to adorn the Seder table with valuable vessels.

The Magen Avraham asks why at the seder it wasn't considered theft. The Magen

Avraham answers, "Since the Maharil used them one day a year, the goyim weren't makpid." ¹¹

However, the Chasam Sofer zt'l raises another question (Drashos Shabbos HaGadol, vol. 2, p. 255). It is forbidden to eat food from utensils that weren't immersed in a mikvah. How did the Maharil use the non-Jewish vessels? As the Chasam Sofer writes, *יש בו סכנה וטומאה, עצומה של לחמם טמא*, "There is a danger, and a powerful tumah" when one eats on gentile utensils. So why wasn't the Maharil concerned about this impurity?

The Chasam Sofer replies that there is a lot of kedushah on this night. Therefore, all the tumah of the non-Jewish utensils disappears and becomes negated in the great kedushah of the night.

"I am trying to figure out where the wood goes when a peg is knocked into a wooden plank. There was wood there before; where did it go?"

The wealthy man patted him on his shoulders, "Very good," he said. "Keep thinking about such weighty matters, and you won't fall asleep."

The wealthy man returned home, satisfied that everything was under control, and fell asleep. But an hour later, he awoke, frightened once again. "What if the guard fell asleep?"

So he went back outside to check on his horse. The watchman was still standing there, guarding the horse, while the horse rested in the barn.

"I am so glad you are still awake," the man told the guard. "What are you thinking about now?"

The guard replied, "I'm thinking about bakers." They bake bagels and donuts with holes in the middle. There used to be dough there. Where did the dough go?"

"Wonderful question," the wealthy man replied. "Keep thinking along these lines, and you won't fall asleep."

The wealthy man managed to sleep for another hour, but then he woke up again, feeling an urge to check on his horse again. He asked the guard, "What are you thinking about now?"

"I was just wondering," he said, "A wealthy person buys a prize horse, constructs a fence to protect it, hires someone to stand guard, and wakes up every hour to make sure everything is okay." So, I'm wondering, if he took such good care, where did the horse go? How did the horse disappear?"

What's the lesson of this story? It's a reminder that we must grab the opportunities of this night so we aren't left empty-handed. Otherwise, one will ask, "I bought matzah, maror, and all the Seder products; I cooked and prepared for Pesach, so where did the Seder go?" How did it slip out of my hands?"

11. Others (*Chok Yaakov* and *Mishnah Berurah*) answer that the Maharil put those utensils on a sideboard in his dining room to decorate the room, and didn't actually use them.

This doesn't only happen at the seder. It happened to the Jewish nation in Mitzrayim, too. Because when the Jewish nation left Mitzrayim (Shemos 12:35), וישאלו ממצרים כלי כסף וכלי זהב, "they borrowed from the Egyptians silver and gold utensils..." The Jewish nation used these utensils, and they weren't concerned about the great tumah that was on the non-Jewish items.

Rashi (Shemos 12:37) writes, "The Egyptians gave more than the Yidden asked for. [The Egyptians said], 'You are asking for one? Take two and leave.'" The Chasam Sofer explains that the Egyptians wanted to give their utensils to Yidden because they understood that their food vessels would contaminate the Jewish nation.

The Jewish nation was hesitant. They didn't want to borrow anything (see Brachos 9).

The Gemara tells that Moshe had to plead with Bnei Yisrael to take the wealth from Mitzrayim, as Hashem said (Shemos 11:2) דַּבֵּר נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וְיִשְׁאַלּוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רֵעוּתָהּ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב, "Please speak in the ears of the people: Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her fellow silver vessels and gold vessels." The Gemara explains that נָא is an expression of pleading. Moshe should plead with Bnei Yisrael to take from the Egyptians, so Avraham Avinu shouldn't come to Hashem with a complaint, (Bereishis 15:13) וְעַבְדוּם וְעָנוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה, "They will serve them, and they will oppress them four hundred years", this part You did to the Jewish nation. But the other half (ibid. 15:14) וְאַחֲרָיִךְ יָבוֹ יֵצְאוּ בְרִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל, "Afterwards they will leave with great wealth," this You didn't give to them.

Moshe spoke with the Jewish nation, but they didn't want to take anything. The Gemara says that the Jewish nation replied, ולואי שנצא בעצמנו, "Halavay we should go free, ourselves." The Gemara says: It is compared

to someone in jail, and people tell him, "Tomorrow, people will take you out of prison, and they will give you a lot of money." He will reply, "I prefer that you take me out of prison today. I don't ask for anything."

The Chasam Sofer explains that they were concerned about the tumah. They feared that borrowing the *goyishe keilim* would contaminate them. This tumah couldn't be removed by immersing the utensils in a mikvah because the utensils were borrowed and not acquired. Moshe Rabbeinu had to convince them to borrow the utensils.

But the Yidden had nothing to fear. As the Chasam Sofer explains, "Because of the immense kedushah that Hashem bestowed on the Jewish nation on that night...the tumah became annulled...in the kedushah."¹²

The Chasam Sofer adds that this immense kedushah recurs in every generation. "Therefore, every Seder night, it is permitted to use the utensils taken as collateral from goyim [as the Maharil would do]. Due to the hislahavus we have when we tell the story of yetzias Mitzrayim, the tumah of the keilim won't harm us, even if the utensils weren't toiveled." The house becomes very holy when we sit there and tell the story of yetzias Mitzrayim.

The Chasam Sofer zt'l (drashos Shabbos HaGadol (תקס"ב ד"ה כי תבאו) teaches that wherever there is kedushah, there is abundance and there is plenty of room. This answers several questions:

1) At the Seder, we say כל דכפין ייתי ויכול, "Whoever is hungry, come and eat." What would happen if some poor people took us up on our offer and came to our home? Where would we put them, and how would we have enough food for everyone?

¹² The Chasam Sofer explains that the Jewish nation didn't deserve this high level of *kedushah*, but Hashem wanted to keep His promise to Avraham Avinu that the Jewish nation would leave with immense wealth. Therefore, Hashem told them to borrow the utensils, which He purified with the great holiness of the night.

2) Chazal (Avos 5:5) say that one of the ten miracles of the Beis HaMikdash was that "No one ever said he doesn't have a place to sleep in Yerushalayim." There was always room for everyone in Yerushalayim. How did this happen?

3) Another miracle was עומדים צפופים ומשתחווים רווחים, that although it was very crowded in the Beis HaMikdash, when people bowed down, there was plenty of room for everyone. How did this miracle happen?¹³

4) Similarly, Chazal say that although the kohanim received just a tiny morsel from the להם הפנים, it was sufficient. They ate the morsel and felt satisfied and full. What is the explanation of all these miracles?

The Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that this is because where there's holiness, there is always enough. There was plenty of room in the Beis HaMikdash, and in Yerushalayim, and a drop of food was enough. This is the reason we invite people to our homes on the night of the Seder.

The Chasam Sofer writes, "With these ideas, I explain, כהא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא, 'This is the bread of poverty our forefathers ate in Mitzrayim with hunger and suffering.' [We are still poor] and we are still eating poor man's bread... Nevertheless, כל דכפין ייתי, 'Whoever is hungry, come and eat with us.' Don't worry. There

will be enough. As Chazal say, 'The entire nation can eat the same korban Pesach.' Our homes will become spacious, and there will be room for all the guests, because when we tell Hashem's wonders and miracles, our houses are a miniature Eretz Yisrael.

"Chazal (Megillah 29.) say, 'In the future, the batei midrashim and the batei knesiyos will move to Eretz Yisrael.' Our houses will also move to Eretz Yisrael. This is the meaning of the words השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דיישראל, 'We are here now. Next year, this house will be in Eretz Yisrael. There is an atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael at the Seder, so there is space and enough food for everyone.'"

The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l said to his grandson, Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l, "Eliyahu HaNavi comes to everyone's Seder and there are great tzaddikim who see him. However, a greater level is achieved when one doesn't see Eliyahu but believes that Eliyahu is present.

After saying שפך המתך, the Noda b'Yehudah would escort Eliyahu HaNavi z'l out of his house. He would walk down the stairs and into the street to accompany Eliyahu HaNavi as he left his home. The Chidushei HaRim praised this deed immensely and said, "The Noda b'Yehudah didn't actually see Eliyahu HaNavi, but he believed he was there. And believing is a higher level than seeing."

13. The Chasam Sofer zt'l explains that the miracle that the Mishnah refers to isn't that there was enough room to bow down because that would be expected due to the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash. Wherever there is kedushah, there is abundant space. The miracle was עומדים צפופים, that when they stood straight, it was crowded. The purpose of this miracle was to increase their reward, as Chazal (Brachos 4.) tell us, the reward for attending a drashah comes from the discomfort of being crowded (אגרא דכלא דווקא).

Shu't Tashbatz writes that in his time, there was a beis medrash in Yerushalayim that everyone attended on Shavuos. It was very full, yet miraculously, there was plenty of room for everyone.

The Chasam Sofer (Teshuvos, Yorah Deiah 234, in a letter to Reb Efraim Margulies, the Beis Efraim zt'l) quotes this Tashbatz and the Chasam Sofer adds, "Hashem knows that my eyes also saw such a miracle in chutz l'aretz, only I can't write the details because of the mockers of our nation." The Chasam Sofer's grandson (Chut HaMeshulash) writes that the Chasam Sofer was referring to his yeshiva in Pressburg. The physical dimensions of the yeshiva weren't large enough to accommodate the many students who learned there. Miraculously, there was room for everyone.

When the Mishna in Pesachim teaches us the order of the Seder, the word לפניו, "before him," is used. For example, the Mishnah states, הביאו לפניו מטבל בחזרת... הביאו לפניו מצה וחזרת, "They bring before him [the karpas]... They bring before him matzah and marrur..." However, by the cup for kiddush, it states (Pesachim 10:2), מזוגו לו כוס ראשון, "They pour for him the first cup of wine [to say Kiddush...]" Here it doesn't state לפניו.

The Tiferes Shlomo zt'l explains that לפניו should be translated as "before Hashem." When we make the seder, we are seated before Hashem. However, when we are about to say kiddush, the seder hasn't yet begun. Therefore, referring to the first cup of wine, it states מזוגו לו כוס ראשון, "They pour him the first cup of wine." The wine is poured for the person conducting the seder. However, when the seder begins, we are seated before Hashem.

We also say in the Haggadah, ונאמר לפניו, שירה חדשה, "We will say before Him a new song." The entire Seder takes place before Hashem.

It states in the Haggadah, ובמורא גדול זה גילוי, שכינה, that Hashem's presence became revealed in Mitzrayim, and this saved the Jewish nation. This occurs yearly at the Seder. The Shechinah is present.

Reb Shimon Shkop zt'l would have a *taanis dibur* at the Seder. He explained that Hashem is at the Seder, as it says (Shemos 12:12), ועברתי בארץ מצרים - אני ולא מלאך, "I shall go through the land of Mitzrayim - I, and not an angel." And when one is before a king, he is silent.

The Shelah HaKadosh states that we shouldn't read magid while reclining on our left side (הסיבה). We can explain that this is because the Shechinah is present, and it isn't proper to lean when seated before Hashem.

The Gemara (Shabbos 12:) teaches that we shouldn't daven in Aramaic because the malachim don't understand this language and won't be able to elevate the tefillos. However, the Gemara says that when one is

visiting the ill, he may daven in Aramaic. This is because the Shechinah is with the sick person, as it states (Tehillim 41:4), ה' יסעדנו על ערש דוי, "Hashem will preserve him on his ill-bed." Hashem is present, and the malachim aren't called to elevate the tefillos. He can speak directly to Hashem, without needing malachim. Therefore, he can daven in Aramaic.

The Arugas HaBosem zt'l explains that the same occurs at the Seder. We begin the Seder with הוא לחמא עניא, in Aramaic since Hashem is present at the Seder.

The Seder ends with חד גדיא, also in Aramaic. This hints that Hashem is present from the beginning of the Seder until the end. This is one of the reasons tefillah is so powerful at the Seder since it is a tefillah directly before Hashem.

Levels we can Attain

The Gemara (Pesachim 116.) says about the Seder, מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, "We begin with the disgrace, and we conclude with the praise." The Yismach Yisrael zt'l says that this hints at the growth a person can attain at the Seder. Even if one is at a low level at the beginning of the Seder (a place of disgrace), when he concludes the Seder, he is in a high place (a place of praise).

According to Shmuel in the Gemara, the disgrace was that we were slaves (עבדים היינו), and the praise is that we were saved. According to Rav, the disgrace was that our forefathers (the father of Avraham Avinu) worshipped avodah zarah (מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה היה אבותינו), and the praise is our spiritual salvation, that we now serve Hashem. The Chasam Sofer learns from this that just as we show and imagine ourselves as slaves who were freed, we should also imagine and perceive the spiritual greatness that we attained on this night.

This yom tov is called פסח, which means to jump because, on this night, we jump to levels we couldn't reach the entire year.

Reb Yehoshua of Kroli zt'l discussed the greatness of the seder and the levels that one can attain. According to one version, he said that if a person doesn't attain ruach hakodesh at the Seder, he isn't a human being. Another version is that Reb Yehoshua of Kroli said that if one doesn't have giluy Eliyahu at the Seder and on Yom Kippur, it's a sign his forefathers weren't at Har Sinai.

We say in Shacharis, וכולם פותחים את פיהם בקדושה ובטהרה, "The [malachim] all open their mouths with kedushah and taharah." Kedushah is mentioned first, followed by taharah. This is also alluded to in the words קדש ורהץ. First comes kedushah and then comes taharah. This is a level of the malachim, but for human beings, it is generally first taharah (clean from aveiros), and then he can attain kedushah. The order of קדש ורהץ indicates that on this night, we reach the level of malachim.¹⁴

Matzah

The mitzvah of matzah should be performed properly.

The Chasam Sofer (*Choshen Mishpat* 196) writes, "The mitzvah of eating matzah on the Seder night is the only mitzvah of 'eating' that has remained with us in exile. We don't have the mitzvah of eating the *korban Pesach* or any other *korbanos*. We can't eat *terumah* or *maasar*

sheini in our days either. Matzah is the only mitzvah of eating, and we can only perform this mitzvah once a year. If this mitzvah is not performed correctly, will Hashem be happy with that?"

In a letter, Reb Akiva Eiger zt'l warns us to eat the right amount. He writes, "You must be careful to eat *more* than the minimal amount of matzah and *maror*, for if you eat less than the minimum amount, you lose the mitzvah. If one has wisdom, how could he not be cautious to keep these mitzvos properly? We cannot perform these mitzvos throughout the year, and who can guarantee that he will be alive to keep them next year? Isn't it enough that we don't keep the mitzvos of tefillin and *birchas hamazon* properly throughout the year? Why should these mitzvos also be lacking?"

At the Seder one year, before eating the matzah, the Kedushas Levi zy'a exclaimed with *hislahavus*, "Ribono shel Olam!" Either you come into me, or I will go into you."

The Tiferes Shlomo writes that matzah is a spiritual medicine that removes the bad within us and unites us with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Rebbe Mendel of Rimanov zt'l says that eating *afikoman* annuls bad *taavos*. The Yismach Yisrael zt'l (*Haggadah Shel Pesach* 56) writes that this is alluded to in the word אפיקומן. *Chazal* say that אפיקומן stands for מתיקה, take out sweet foods. The Yismach

14. The Satmar Rebbe zt'l repeated this thought from Reb Yehoshua of Kroli when the managers of the Satmar institutions sought to discuss financial matters with the Rebbe before Pesach. He pushed them off to after yom tov. Now, he needed to prepare for the holy seder.

Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmastivka zy'a taught: קדש ורהץ. If a person wants to sanctify and purify himself, the path is ברפס, which is roshei teivos for כגור פה סגור. The first rule is to keep the mouth shut. יחזן מגיד means that when you do speak, say only half of what you planned to say.

As a child, the Imrei Emes zy'a asked his father, the Sfas Emes zt'l, "Why do we wear a *kittel* at the Seder?"

The Sfas Emes answered, "On *Yom Tov*, we wear nicer clothing than usual, and we don't want them to get stained. So, we put on a *kittel* to protect the clothing."

When the Imrei Emes got older, he still remembered his father's explanation for the *kittel*. He was certain that his father wasn't just joking. There had to be an explanation. He thought about it and understood that his father was hinting that on Pesach, at the Seder, we reach great heights and become like new. And we must be vigilant to retain this cleanliness and not tarnish our souls again.

Yisrael explains *that אפיקו מיני מתיקה* means this mitzvah will ward off your temptations to the sweet pleasures of this world.¹⁵

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* ate very little. His Rebbetzin would say, "I made good food for you, why don't you eat it?"

He would answer, "דאס אדז'עט מיר", meaning, "I am disgusted by food." His sole desire was *ruchniyus*.

But at the Seder, the Beis Avraham would eat the matzah with relish. His Rebbetzin asked him, "Did you become a *baal taavah'nik*? Why did you suddenly become so interested in food?"

He said, "The entire year, I am not interested in food, yet you encourage me to eat. Once a year, when I finally am interested in food, you say that I am a *baal taavah*." The truth is, this is the pattern: When one holds back from *taavos* the entire year, he will eat the matzah with immense *taavah*.¹⁶

The Yerushalmi states, "Someone who eats matzah on *erev Pesach* is similar to someone who takes his fiancée before the *chasunah*."

We understand from this that eating matzah on Pesach is like a *chasunah*. The Maharil writes that this is why we say seven *brachos* before eating the matzah. It is similar to the *sheva brachos* we recite at a *chasunah*.¹⁷

After Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, it states (Bereishis 3:24) ויגרש את האדם, "[Hashem] banished Adam..." The Midrash says that ויגרש means to divorce. Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *kiveyachol*, divorced Adam (*geirushin*). When Adam did teshuvah, the marriage, *kiveyachol*, the union between Adam Harishon and Hashem was re-established. As we explained, eating matzah is compared to a *chasunah*. So, if someone became distant from Hashem due to aveiros, the union is reestablished when he eats matzah.¹⁸

15. Some people always carry a piece of the *afikoman* with them. My grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zt'l*, would distribute pieces from his *afikoman* on *motzei Shevi'i shel Pesach*.

16. The Nesivos Shalom *zy'a* once saw a *bachur* of his yeshiva eating falafel with great relish. The Nesivos Shalom gently rebuked him, saying, "The way you eat reminds me of how the Beis Avraham ate the matzah on Pesach."

17. There are different opinions among the meforshim on how to count the seven *brachos* that we say from the beginning of the seder until one eats matzah.

18. Once, at Reb Shimon Sofer's Seder, his grandson asked him, "Why is there a custom that children steal the *afikomen* at the Seder? Is it proper to educate children to steal?"

Reb Shimon Sofer didn't answer. He continued with the Seder. During the meal, he answered the question. He said to his grandson, "You asked a good question. Why do children steal the *afikomen*, and why is it encouraged? The Gemara mentions this custom, as it states (*Pesachim* 109), חוטפין מצה בלילי פסחים בשביל התינוקות שלא ישנו. The Gemara states that it is customary to keep young children awake so they can hear the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. However, we can still wonder why it is performed in a manner of stealing. There are other ways to keep the children awake. I never thought about this question before, and I never heard an explanation. But as soon as you asked the question, I had an answer. I didn't tell you my answer immediately because I wanted to teach you that a Yid must keep *minhagim* even when he doesn't understand them. And now, I will answer your question:

"Chazal (*Pesachim* 113) advise that one should live in a city where there are dogs because dogs protect the residents from theft. On the night of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, no dogs barked, as it states (*Shemos* 11:7), ולכל בני ישראל, לא יחרץ כלב לשונו. 'To all of Bnei Yisrael, no dog will bark...' Since the dogs were silent on this night, it was easier to steal. The custom of stealing the *afikoman* is to commemorate and remember the miracle that no dogs barked on this night. We remember this with the custom of stealing the *afikomen*.

The *roshei teivos* of מצ"ה spell מיכל צרה היצילני, "Save me from all troubles." This means we attain all kinds of salvations through this mitzvah.

The *Zohar* calls matzah, מיכליה דאסותא, healing bread, and the Yismach Yisrael *zt'l* (*Haggadah Shel Pesach* 78) writes, "Also non-Jewish doctors agree that matzah cures the head. They don't realize that they are prophesying because by eating matzah, one merits *emunah*, and *emunah* is a cure for the brain to think correctly."¹⁹

Maror

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz *zt'l* said, "I don't understand why it's called *maror* (bitter)! It's so sweet!"

מרור has the same *gematriya* as מות, implying that by eating *maror*, one annuls death and all other hardships and troubles.

So, although *maror* is bitter at first, it has the power to make everything sweet.

There was a time when the only *maror* available was horseradish, and eating a *kezayis* of horseradish was difficult. Reb Akiva Eiger *zt'l* writes, "Even when it comes to *maror*, one should eat the proper amount. Every day we say, בכל נפשך, that it's a mitzvah to serve Hashem with *mesirus nefesh*, so why shouldn't we endure this little bit of hardship [of eating horseradish]? I promise, when one eats *maror* with *simchah*, he will almost not feel the sharpness of it."

Eating a *kezayis maror* is *mesugal* for *parnassah*. A hint is found in the Chazal (*Eiruv* 18, Rashi *Bereishis* 8:11), which states, "יהיו מזונותי מרורין כזית." This phrase can also be read as, יהא מזונותי, my *parnassah* comes מזונותי כזית from the *kezayis maror* that I eat at the Seder.

There is a debate among the *poskim* regarding whether to recline while eating

19. Reb Tzvi Kintzlicher *zt'l*, the Rav of Seban, Romania (later, he moved to Yerushalayim in 5709), suffered from severe stomach pains. The doctors in Klausenberg recommended an urgent surgery. The Rav of Seban told the doctors that he wished to be home for Pesach and would return immediately after Pesach for the operation.

The doctors agreed to let him wait until then, but they warned him to avoid eating anything difficult to digest. He certainly wasn't permitted to eat matzah. He could only eat light foods, such as fruits and milk.

Reb Tzvi planned to follow instructions, but at the Seder, he changed his mind and decided to eat matzah soaked in milk.

As he was eating the matzah, he felt something positive happening in his stomach. He ate matzah on the second night of Pesach, too, and by the time he finished eating the *kezayis*, he had no more stomach pains.

On Shabbos after Pesach, he told his congregation that he was leaving for a serious operation. "Pray for me because I don't know what will be."

When the doctors in Klausenberg tested him, they asked, "Which doctor did you see?" How did this happen? The disease is gone!"

He told them that he was cured through the mitzvah of eating matzah, which Chazal call מיכליה דאסותא, food that heals.

One of the doctors said, "I have seen several times that everything we doctors know means nothing when Hashem desires differently."

מצ"ה has three letters: מ צ ה. When spelled out in full, it looks like this: מ"ם צדי"ק ה"א. The letters added are ק, די"ק and א. The Sar Shalom of Belz *zt'l* says that these letters spell אקדי"ם, "I will come first..." The Sar Shalom noted that this hints that some tefillos aren't answered immediately, but the tefillos on Pesach אקדי"ם, are answered immediately.

korach, and the accepted opinion is that one should recline.

But why should we recline if the korach contains *maror*?

The Tiferes Shlomo answers that the *maror* is wrapped in matzah, the food of *emunah* (מיכלא דמיהמנותא). When we have *emunah* that even the bitterness of *galus* is good, we understand that everything is good, and therefore we recline.²⁰

Magid

One of the special mitzvos of this night is *sipur yetzias Mitzrayim*, to tell the story of yetzias Mitzrayim. What a privilege this is!

The Zohar states:

"Every person who tells the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*... Hakadosh Baruch Hu gathers all the *malachim* in heaven and says, 'Come and listen to My praises that My children are saying! They are happy with My redemption!' The *malachim* listen, and they see that the Yidden are happy with the

redemption... The *malachim* praise Hakadosh Baruch Hu for the miracles and for His holy nation that He has on earth, who are happy with His redemption... Just as a king's power increases when his subjects praise him and express their gratitude to him, Bnei Yisrael give strength to their Master [when they praise Hashem for *yetzias Mitzrayim*]. Therefore, we must praise Hashem and tell this story... His words go up to heaven, and all the *malachim* gather and praise Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This brings honor to Hashem above and below."²¹

Yesod Yosef (85) writes, "Whoever says the... Haggadah with happiness, without any anger and without laziness, and without feeling that it's a burden, *chas veshalom*... the *Shechinah* spreads out its wings on him to save him in all places and all travels, and he merits miracles..."

The Ohev Yisrael writes, "The truth is that even if a child asks his father about *yetzias Mitzrayim* during the year, the father must also answer him."²² Nevertheless, the

20. In אז ישר we say, אמר אויב ארדוף אשיג..., "The enemy (Pharaoh) said I will chase and catch them..." Why are these words in the *shirah*? Is that something to sing about? The answer is that after we witness the miracles, we can also sing about the difficult moments. We become aware that everything was for the good.

21. At the Seder, the father wears a *kittel*, which resembles *tachrichim*, shrouds. The Chasan Sofer *zt'l* explains that we want the father of the house to remember that he won't live forever. There will be a time when he will be dressed in *tachrichim* and buried in the ground, and then he will no longer be able to tell his family about *yetzias Mitzrayim*. This realization will inspire him to take advantage of the night, to tell his children about *yetzias Mitzrayim*, and to implant in them *emunah* in Hashem.

One year after the seder, when the Beis Yisrael of Gur's *zy'a* removed his *kittel*, he said, "Earlier tonight, we put on the *kittel*, and now we're taking it off. But there will come a time when we will put on a *kittel* and never take it off.

Reb Shimon Shwab *zt'l* said that when a father speaks to his children moments before his *petirah*, they listen carefully and try their best to fulfill his final wishes. At the Seder, the father puts on a *kittel* because he wants his children to listen to what he tells them at the Seder with the same awe and earnestness that they would have during his final moments of life.

Rebbe Shmelke of Nickelsburg *zt'l* said that the *kittel* helps the father imagine that he has already passed away. In honor of Seder night, heaven allowed him to return to earth to conduct the Seder so that he could teach *emunah* to his children. With this thought in mind, he will undoubtedly perform the mitzvah of *sipur yetzias Mitzrayim* properly.

22. Some *meforshim* say that the mitzvah of telling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim isn't only at the Seder. Whenever a child asks his father a question related to *yetzias Mitzrayim*, any day of the year, the father has the mitzvah of *v'higadita l'vincha*, to teach his son about *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

holy Torah teaches us that throughout the year, even if you tell your son the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the words won't settle in the child's heart... The Haggadah teaches, לֵאמֹר, 'the time to speak about *yetzias Mitzrayim* is when you have matzah and *maror* in front of you.' This is because, on the night of Pesach, the mind is open for comprehending...and the light of wisdom is revealed, and *emunah* and *bitachon* hover over all Jewish people. At this time, when you tell your son the entire story, your words will certainly enter his ears, and he will truly believe in *yetzias Mitzrayim*. The rest of the year, when darkness prevails in the world, the son is unable to receive his father's words properly and thus cannot believe."

The Mishnah (*Pesachim* 10:4) says, "If the child isn't wise enough to ask questions on his own, his father should teach him to ask questions." We want the child to ask questions so that we can teach him about *emunah* and *yetzias Mitzrayim* at this ideal time of the Seder. It is a time when the children can internalize the lessons.

A *segulah* (in contrast to a *refuah*) is something that brings about results, although the process can't be explained with logic or according to the rules of nature. The Yesod HaAvodah *zt'l* says that the mitzvah of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* is *mesugal* for *emunah*. He means that this mitzvah increases *emunah* in the realm of a *segulah*, on a level beyond logical comprehension. (Obviously, it is logical that when one speaks about *emunah*, it will increase *emunah*, but it isn't only logical. It is also a *segulah*. The mitzvah of telling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* is *mesugal* for attaining *emunah*.)

The Gemara (*Brachos* 6., 7.) tells us that Hakadosh Baruch Hu keeps all the mitzvos of the Torah. Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* said that this means Hashem also performs the mitzvah of וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ. On the

night of the Seder, Hashem tells His children that He took us out of *Mitzrayim*, and He tells us about the miracles that occurred. We are Hashem's children, so Hashem speaks to us, too. Our *neshamos* hear Hashem's words, and we are deeply influenced. When Hashem teaches us *emunah*, we can be sure that His lessons are firmly implanted in our hearts.

The Apter Rav *zy'a* writes, "When one says אֲשֶׁר גָּאֵלנוּ וְגָאֵל אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, and he believes that Hashem is also redeeming us, he will be saved from all kinds of trouble."

When the Yidden were at the shore of the Yam Suf, the *malachim* prosecuted against Bnei Yisrael and said that the Yidden also worshiped *avodah zarah*. They asked, "Why should we save these and kill those?"

If so, it is indeed a question: Why was the Jewish nation saved? The Meor Einayim (*Tzav*) answers, "When the Yidden were in *Mitzrayim*, they conducted the entire Seder exactly as we do today. They told the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* because they trusted that Hashem would certainly take them out. These matters drew down Hashem's kindness, and they were redeemed..."

The Meor Einayim adds, "There is *galus* for the nation, and there is *galus* for the individual. The individual's *galus* is his *yesurim* that he suffers. With the *chesed* we draw down in Nisan, we will be redeemed from those hardships."

On the words וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, Onkelus writes, ותחוי לבנך, "Show your children." The simple translation of וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ is to tell your children about *yetzias Mitzrayim*. But there is also a concept of showing them. What does this mean?

There is a concept of concealing one's good deeds from others. No one, except Hashem, needs to know all the good things he does.²³ But like every rule, there are

23. A repairman once came to the home of the Husiatyner Rebbe *zt'l* to repair a couch. But he didn't patch the back side of the couch. When the Rebbe showed him that he had missed a hole in the back of the couch, the handyman replied, "Rebbe! No one looks there."

exceptions. Rebbe Meir of Dzikov *zy'a* (*Imrei No'am*) says that parents shouldn't conceal their good deeds from their children so that their children know their parents' good deeds and emulate their ways.

This is indicated in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 31:20), אשר צפנת, מזה רב טובך, most of your good deeds, ליראיך, you should conceal. פועלת לחוסים בך, but for those who rely on you - your children, נגד בני אדם, perform your good deeds in front of them so that they can learn from you.

When the head of the family breaks the middle matzah for *yachatz*, the larger half is wrapped and concealed, and the smaller half is left on the table. This hints that people should conceal most of their good deeds.

But then the children search for the *afikoman*. They find the larger half that was

concealed. On the Seder night, we want the children to see the hidden good deeds and learn from their parents.²⁴

Chazal tell us that we were redeemed from Mitzrayim in Nisan, and we will be redeemed from the present galus in Nisan. Another Chazal (*Yalkut Shimoni, Hosheia* 915) states that we were redeemed from Mitzrayim in the merit of emunah, and we will be redeemed from the present *galus* in the merit of emunah. Rebbe Menachem Nochum of Boyan-Tchernovitz *zt'l* (*Tiferes Menachem* 5695 ד"ה ניסן) explains that both Chazals teach the same lesson. This is because, due to the mitzvos we perform in Nisan, such as matzah (which is called *מזיכא דמיהמנותא*, the food of belief) and the mitzvah of Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim, etc., our emunah becomes stronger. In the merit of emunah, we were redeemed, and we will be redeemed from this galus.²⁵

The Husiatyner replied, "We were taught that the places where no one looks need to be the best."

The best deeds are those that are concealed because when no one is aware of them, they are easier to perform *l'shem shamayim*, and not to attain honor.

There was a scholar who wanted to study Torah in concealment so that he could learn entirely *l'shem Shamayim*, but my grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zt'l*, advised him against it. Rebbe Moshe Mordechai explained, "When tax auditors come to appraise someone's assets, he will conceal his expensive items from the authorities. He doesn't want them to suspect that he is earning a lot of money. But he won't hide his bread and butter because these are staples every home needs. Similarly, it's ideal to hide your good deeds, but Torah study is a staple. It is something that one cannot be without. And therefore, there is no reason to conceal it."

24. We put aside the larger half of the matzah for later. The Sfas Emes *zt'l* (5652) teaches that this is a sign that the inspiration and growth of this night will remain with us for the rest of the year.

25. Every year, at the Seder, Reb Yaakov Yosef Weiss *z'l* from Manchester would tell his family the miracle that happened to him, which saved him during the Holocaust:

"I was in the camps with a friend. I repeatedly spoke to him about *emunah* and *bitachon*, encouraging him to believe that one day we would be free. My friend was pessimistic, always expecting the worst. It was hard for him to listen to my optimistic predictions.

"Then came the dreaded day when the Germans ordered us to the showers. We all knew what that meant. We were headed for the gas chambers. My friend said to me, 'What do you say now?'

"I told him, 'Even now, I trust in Hashem. Hashem can save us in a moment.'

"We were pushed into the gas chamber, but the door couldn't shut. I was heavier than others, so a Nazi guard *y"sh* pulled me out of the gas chamber so that he could close the door. That's how I was saved."

Each year, at the Seder, Reb Yaakov Yosef would repeat this story of how he was saved, in the merit of his emunah and bitachon. Then he would add, "At my father's Seder, he spoke a lot about *emunah* and *bitachon*, and his words were firmly implanted in my heart. That gave me strength during the dark moments of the Holocaust and helped me keep my emunah in Hashem."

Tefillos at the Seder

The Rebbe of Alexander (*Akeidas Yitzchak*) *Zt'l* said that by *Mah Nishtanah*, one can pray for children and for good children, as it states, כִּאֵן הִבֵּן שׂוֹאֵל.²⁶

The Veyaged Moshe writes (in the name of kabbalah *sefarim*) that asking *Mah Nishtanah* is *mesugal* to have a heart open to understanding Torah. "Therefore, I made it the custom in my house that whoever comes for the Seder should say *Mah Nishtanah*, and I daven for them that they should have a heart open for Torah. And after everyone says *Mah Nishtanah*, I also say the *Mah Nishtanah*."²⁷

One of the times that are auspicious for tefillah is when we say in the Haggadah (Devarim 26:7) וַנִּשְׁעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קוֹלֵנוּ "We shouted to Hashem the G-d of our fathers, and Hashem heard our voice..." This pasuk tells us that Hashem heard our tefillos when we were in Mitzrayim. Hashem will also listen to our tefillos today, when we daven to Him, and it is a special *eis ratzon* to daven at this place in the Haggadah.

We share the following renowned story:

An innkeeper fell behind on his rent payments. The *poritz* warned him that if he didn't pay up soon, he and his family would

26. I know of a youngster who was childless for many years. One of today's tzaddikim advised him to study the Haggadah shel Pesach, and he did so. He learned it with the rishonim, and soon afterward, he came to inform the rebbe that Hashem performed a miracle for him. The rebbe was also surprised that the segulah worked so quickly.

It states (Shemos 13:8), וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ. The Or HaChaim HaKadosh teaches that the mitzvah to tell the story of yetzias Mitzrayim is *mesugal* that one day you will be able to tell the story to your own children.

There was a *dayan* who didn't have children for four years after his wedding. During Elul, he was giving his weekly shiur on *Or HaChaim Hakadosh* and was looking for this *vort* from the Or HaChaim on the topic of having children. He thought it would be in *parashas כי תבוא*, by the discussion of אֲרֻמֵי אוֹבֵד אֲבִי, which is read at the Seder. When he didn't find it there, he remembered that it was in *parashas Bo* on the words וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ. So he read the Or Hachaim in *parashas Bo* at his shiur.

Ten months later, he had his first child.

27. Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* asked some children after the Seder, "Did you ask *Mah Nishtanah*?"

"Yes."

"What answer did you get?"

"עבדים היינו."

"Did you ask the *Mah Nishnatah* last year?"

"We did."

"And what answer did you get last year?"

"It was the same answer, עבדים היינו."

"If you received this answer last year, why did you ask the same questions again this year?"

The children tried to explain in various ways.

Reb Shlomo Zalman commented, "When I was eight years old, I was walking home from the Kosel with my father, and we met Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *zt'l*. He asked me the same question I had just asked you: 'If you asked *Mah Nishtanah* last year and received an answer, why did you ask it again this year?' But when Reb Yosef Chaim asked me this question, I cried, and when I asked you this question, you tried answering me in different ways..."

be thrown into a dungeon. The worried innkeeper went to the Apter Rav *zy'a* for Shabbos HaGadol to receive a *brachah*. He desperately needed a *yeshuah*. On *Erev Shabbos*, the *gabbai* told him that the Rebbe couldn't see him.

The innkeeper hoped to speak to the Rebbe on *motzei Shabbos*, but as it turned out, he had already received his answer and counsel on Shabbos afternoon at the Apter Rav's Shabbos HaGadol *drashah*. The Apter Rav began the *drashah* with a deep halachic discussion, which this simple Yid couldn't follow. Then the Rebbe turned to discuss the *Haggadah*, and he said, "When we get to וַיִּצְעַק אֱלֹהִים it's an extraordinary moment for *tefillah*. If one needs *parnassah*, *refuah*, or if a Yid rents an inn from a *poritz* and doesn't have money to pay the rent, and the *poritz* threatens to throw him and his family into a dungeon, he should shout out to Hashem at this point and beg for salvation, and Hashem will save him."

The innkeeper was certain the Rebbe was talking to him. He understood that his salvation would come when he shouts out to Hashem at וַיִּצְעַק in the *Haggadah*.

When Shabbos was over, he didn't wait to speak to the Rebbe. He had already received the advice he needed. He came home, and his wife asked him what the Rebbe said. He told her that she would soon find out.

At the Seder, when they reached וַיִּצְעַק, the innkeeper shouted and prayed, and his wife shouted and prayed along with him.

Shortly after they finished davening in this manner, there was a knock on their door. It was a goy whom they knew. He told them that he had killed his wife and needed to escape before the police arrested him. "I must store my money somewhere, so I'm bringing it to you. I know I can trust you because you are Yidden."

The goy rolled in two barrels filled with gold coins. He said, "You can keep one barrel for yourself. Eventually, I will settle down in another country, and then I will send you a letter with my address so you can send me the other barrel."

After saying this, he left in a hurry.

The Yid and his family continued the Seder with joy. Hashem had answered their *tefillos* and sent them the money they needed. They would be able to pay the *poritz*... and there would be much more money left for them.

The goy never sent a letter requesting the other barrel, so both barrels, filled with gold coins, became theirs.

After Pesach, they traveled to the city to buy new clothes. They no longer needed to dress in rags. Then, they traveled to the Apter Rav to thank him for the miracle he had performed. He told them, "It wasn't my miracle. You don't have to thank me. You drew down the miracle on your own through your וַיִּצְעַק."²⁸

Rebbe Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch *zy'a* said that people think that all they lack is the arrival of Moshiach. But in Mitzrayim,

28. Many people had their *yeshuos* when they prayed to Hashem on this holy night. Some of them shouted to Hashem during the *eis ratzon* of וַיִּצְעַק, and others davened at other times on this sacred night, and they received their *yeshuah*.

I know the following story firsthand:

A family of Gerer chassidim had a hard time finding *shidduchim* for their three older sons, ages twenty-five, twenty-seven, and thirty. They all had fully grown beards, and they weren't engaged yet.

The custom in the Gerer yeshiva was that before *yom tov*, the *bachurim* would *gezegen* [take leave] from the Rebbe, the Lev Simchah *zy'a*, before going home. The Rebbe would call them *kasha fregers* ("question askers") because they were returning home to ask the Four Questions from their fathers. When these three older

they understood that waiting for salvation isn't sufficient. They had to daven, as well. The *geulah* came when there was a וַיִּצְעַק. We should do the same, and we will merit the coming of Moshiach.

Shevi'i Shel Pesach and Emunah

Rebbe Mendel Riminover *zt'l* writes, "I heard a student of Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk *zt'l* say in the name of their great rebbe that the best time to attain *emunah sheleimah* is the night of *Shevi'i Shel Pesach*. It is also an ideal time to strengthen the connection and *emunah* in holy *tzaddikim*. As it states about

this day (*Shemos* 14:31), וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בִּה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ, "They believed in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant."

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* (p.93:) writes, "The six days of Pesach are a preparation for the seventh day, the primary day of Pesach. It is the perfect day, the day they sang *shirah* (*Oz Yashir*).... The *shirah* has everything in it, the past and the future. All redemptions and all concepts can be found in the *shirah*. If a person says it with all his heart, with *mesirus nefesh*, according to his level, everything will be corrected, for his body and for his soul."²⁹

bachurim came to the Rebbe, he told them, "This year, ask your father why you aren't engaged yet."

They understood that he intended that they should ask their Father in heaven for a shidduch at the Seder, but one son took the Rebbe's counsel literally. At the Seder, he asked his father, "Why am I not yet engaged?"

The father began to cry, and his three older sons joined in.

The mother stopped them. She said, "It's *yom tov*. It isn't proper to cry now."

They stopped crying and celebrated the rest of the Seder in the proper *yom tov* spirit.

After the Seder, the father announced, "Let's say *Tehillim*, from chapter 90 until the end, and we will daven that our sons get engaged."

Chodesh Iyar, one of them got engaged. *Sivan*, the second son was engaged, and by *Tamuz*, the third son was engaged.

Here's another story. It happened to a very special Yerushalmi couple who were childless for eleven years. For Pesach, they usually went to either his or her parents, but one year, he told his wife, "This time, we're staying home."

In the privacy of their home, they made a וַיִּצְעַק. They shouted to a Hashem for salvation. A year later, they had a child.

A person had trouble with his legs; he was often in excruciating pain. From time to time, he would go to the hospital or a clinic for a shot to stabilize the condition somewhat. This went on for years. One Pesach, he was celebrating the Seder at his brother's house. When they got to וַיִּצְעַק he left the room and poured his heart out to Hashem. *Motzei Yom Tov*, he received a shot in his leg, and he never needed another one. He was cured.

We also know stories of people who could not shout at the seder in a literal sense, so they shouted silently in their hearts and merited salvation.

29. A song has high notes and low notes. This reminds us to sing along with the ups and downs of life because even the hardships are for the good.

It states in the *shirah*, צָלְלוּ כַּעֲפֹרַת בַּיָּם אֲדִירִים, "They sank like lead in mighty waters." ... נִשְׁתִּית יְמִינְךָ תִּבְלַעְמוּ אֶרֶץ. "You turned Your hand, the earth swallowed them up." In between these two *pasukim*, it states מִי כַּמוֹךָ בְּאֵלִים ה', "Who compares to You among the mighty, Hashem?" This *pasuk* seems out of place because the *pasuk* before and the *pasuk* after discuss the details of *kriyas Yam Suf*, how the Mitzrim drowned in the sea, while this *pasuk* praises Hashem. This *pasuk* of praise should be written either before or after these two *pasukim*, not in between.

The Tzemach Tzedek *zt'l* said: "Shevi'i shel Pesach is Rosh Hashanah for *mesirus nefesh*." Also, the Reishis Chachmah (*Shaar Ahavah* 8:6) writes that Shevi'i shel Pesach is to serve Hashem with *mesirus nefesh*, and as a result, miracles will occur.

The Midrash states that Nachshon ben Aminadav was the first to jump into the Yam Suf. He was *moser nefesh*, and when the water reached his nose, he shouted הושיעני כי באו מים עד נפש, "Save me because the water is smothering my soul," and that is when the sea split.

It is written, הים ראה וינס, "The Sea saw and fled." The Midrash asks, "What did the Yam Suf see? It saw the *aron* of Yosef." Yosef HaTzaddik ran away from aveiros with *mesirus nefesh*. When the sea saw Yosef's bones, it split.

Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev *zy'a* teaches:

When a person serves Hashem beyond his natural limits, Hashem will act with him beyond the rules of nature and perform miracles for him.

When the Yidden were at the Yam Suf, there were malachim in heaven who were complaining and protesting, saying, "Why should the Yidden be saved and the goyim killed? The Yidden also worshipped avodah zarah in Mitzrayim!" Klal Yisrael needed merit to be saved. (The meforshim give various ideas of what merit they had, for which they were saved.) The Avnei Nezer asks, the Jewish nation also needed a merit in Mitzrayim to be redeemed. This is the reason Hashem instructed the nation to perform a *bris milah* and to bring a *korban Pesach*. These two merits made them worthy of yetzias Mitzrayim. So, why didn't Hashem do the same by kriyas Yam Suf? Hashem could have given the Jewish nation mitzvos to perform, and this would have rendered them worthy of kriyas Yam Suf, and it would have silenced the accusations of the malachim.

Avnei Nezer answers that they had *mesirus nefesh*, and therefore, no other merit was needed. The merit of their *mesirus nefesh* saved them and silenced the prosecuting angels.³⁰

The Shinover Rav *zt'l* answers that as the Jewish people sang the *shirah*, their hearts became full of love and yearning for Hashem, and they couldn't contain their emotions, and they shouted out מי כמוך באלים ה', "Who compares to You among the mighty, Hashem?" The location of this pasuk demonstrates the immense love and gratitude the Jewish nation had for Hashem at that time.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* sent one of his students to a certain town in Poland, instructing him to give his regards to a Yid, whose name was Reb Berel. The student went there, but everyone told him there was no one in their town with that name. He continued searching until he was directed to a cheder rebbe called Dov Ber (later renowned as the Magid of Mezritz *zt'l*). He heard Reb Dov Ber tell his students that when Dovid HaMelech lists the wonders of creation in *Tehillim* (103) in the middle of this conversation, Dovid shouts out, מַה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה', "How great are Your deeds, Hashem..." (*Tehillim* 103:24). This *pasuk* seems out of place because it should be written either before or after all the wonders of creation are listed. Why is it written in the middle? The answer is that as King Dovid was enumerating Hashem's wonders of creation, his heart became filled with joy. He couldn't contain his excitement and shouted מַה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה', "How great are Your deeds, Hashem..."

At *kriyas Yam Suf*, a similar thing occurred, and they all shouted out מי כמוך באלים ה'.

30. Years ago, a Moroccan king, lying on his deathbed, overheard two ministers say to one another, "The king's enemies are glad that the king is about to die because as soon as he dies, they will take over the kingdom." The Moroccan king suddenly regained his strength and sat up in his bed. He recovered and lived for another three years.

Tzaddikim retold this story to demonstrate the power of *ratzon*, desire. It can bring a dying person back to life. If a person truly desires something, he can go against the rules of nature to attain it.

The sea also split in the merit of bitachon.

The Or HaChaim Hakadosh (*Shemos* 14:14) writes, "Hashem said to Moshe, מַה תַּצַּעֲק אֵלַי, 'Why are you praying to Me?'" Hashem was telling Moshe that tefillah wouldn't save the nation because the prosecuting malachim were saying that they didn't deserve to be saved. The only way to be saved was for them to go into the sea even before it split. The merit of bitachon made them worthy of the miracle.

The sea also split in the merit of Torah. The Or HaChaim (14:27) teaches: "Hashem made a condition with all creation that they must be subjugated to those who study Torah and do whatever they decree onto them. Therefore, we find that there were tzaddikim who ruled over the heavens, the earth, the stars, the sun, and the moon. Certainly, many Yidden who study Torah have that power. This is the rule that Hashem established for them when He created the world..."

"When the Yidden left Mitzrayim, they hadn't yet received the Torah... This is why the sea wouldn't part for them. The sea said to Moshe, 'You were created [later than me] on the sixth day of creation, while I was created on the third day of creation.' The sea was implying that Moshe didn't yet possess the merit of Torah. If Moshe had the merit of Torah, the sea would surely split before him, because the Torah was created before the entire world.

"Hashem wisely went to Moshe's right side. This was to show the sea that Moshe has the merit of Torah, which is related to the right, as it states (*Devarim* 33:2) מִיְמֵינוּ אֵשׁ דָּת, 'From Hashem's right hand, He presented the fiery Torah.' When the sea saw this, it immediately split, for that was the condition that was made with the sea..."

It states (*Shemos* 14:27) וַיָּשָׁב הַיָּם לִפְנוֹת בֹּקֶר לְאִיתָנוּ, "The sea went back in the morning to its strength." The letters לְאִיתָנוּ spell לְתַנּוּ, to the *tnay*, the condition that Hashem made with creation. The Or HaChaim writes, הַתְּנָה ה' עַל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה בְרָאשִׁית לְהוֹיֹת כְּפֹפִים לְתוֹרָה וְעִמְלִיָּה וְלַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִגְזֹרוּ עֲלֵיהֶם, "Hashem made a condition with all creation that they must be submitted to Torah and to those who toil over it, to do whatever they decree upon them." This is the reason the sea split before Bnei Yisrael.

Annual Kriyas Yam Suf

Rebbe Shalom Ber of Lubavitch *zt'l* (the Rebbe Rasha'b) asked his son, Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak (the Maharyatz) *zt'l*, "If *kriyas Yam Suf* were happening a few miles away from here, would you go to watch it?"

Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak said that he would.

"And if it happened just outside the city, would you go there to see it?"

"Of course, I would."

"Well, you should know that every year, on *Shevi'i shel Pesach*, the sea splits again, literally..."

The Sfas Emes taught, "A person doesn't do good, and a person doesn't do bad. Even thoughts of *teshuvah* come from Hashem... Don't ask, if so, what do people do? People have *ratzon* and *yegiah*, desire and toil. And when one desires to do good, he can achieve anything."

The Sefas Emes (*Pesach* 5632) teaches:

Chazal tell us, "Even a maidservant at the Yam Suf saw more than Navi Yechezkel ben Buzi." This shows us the specialness of a Yid who serves Hashem with *mesirus nefesh*. In a moment, he is elevated from the lowest level to the highest.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov *zt'l* taught that even a person born with a low *neshamah* can reach the highest levels. It all depends on how much he desires and how hard he tries.

Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak replied, "But what shall we do if people's eyes are blind and don't see it?"

His father, Rebbe Shalom Ber, replied, "That's exactly the point: The miracles happen each year, and if we don't see them, the fault lies with us. If a person purifies himself, he will see the miracles."

One difference between the first splitting of the sea and the subsequent splitting that happens yearly is that the first time (when the Jewish nation walked through the Yam Suf), the sea was originally one body, and it split into two. In the years following, the sea already had a nature of being split into parts. Now, *kriyas Yam Suf* is like reopening the split that already exists.

This explains why the Torah refers to the splitting of the sea as *ויבקעו המים*, while we refer to it as *קריעת ים סוף*. The word *בקיעה* is used when one breaks something whole. For example, it states *בוקע עצים*, chopping wood (*Koheles 10:9*). The wood was one, and the person broke it into two. But *קריעה* means to tear. It's an expression used to describe ripping a garment made from multiple threads sewn together. It wasn't one to begin with because it was made from many threads sewn together, and when you rip it, it returns to its original state. We now understand why the first time the sea split, it was *ויבקעו המים*. The sea was one, and it split into two. But from then on, the sea is like different parts patched together. Each year, when the sea splits again, it's called *קריעת ים סוף*, "ripping the sea" since it's reopening the seam, returning the sea to its state of two. And since it was split once before, it is easier to happen again.

The Midrash (*Shemos Rabba 21:6*) states, "The Torah doesn't write *ויבקעו הים*, that the sea split. It states *ויבקעו המים*, that the water split [in the plural form], to teach us that all wells,

reservoirs, and every other gathering of water throughout the world, split."

Every miracle serves a purpose. The Sar Shalom of Belz *zt'l* asks, what was the purpose of *ויבקעו המים*, that all waters of the world split?

He answers that *מים* represents troubles, as it states (*Tehillim 69:2*) *הושיעני אלוקים כי באו מים עד נפש*, "Save me Hashem because water (troubles) is covering over my soul." When the Torah tells us that "water" split, it means we are saved from all troubles.

Throughout all generations, *kriyas Yam Suf* occur again, and each year we merit new salvations. In particular, a person can have a *yeshuah* for *parnassah* and *shidduchim*, because Chazal compare the hardships of *parnassah* and *shidduchim* to *kriyas Yam Suf*.

The Ateres Tzvi writes, "When the sea split, it opened salvations for all generations - for the individual and the community. Even if the gates of *parnassah* or the gates of *shidduchim* are *chas veshalom* closed, one should pray at this special *eis ratzon* by *kriyas Yam Suf*... and Hashem will save Bnei Yisrael when they shout out to Him."

Regarding *Shevi'i shel Pesach*, it states (*Shemos 12:16*) *אך אשר יאכל לכל נפש הוא לבדו יעשה לכם*. "But what is eaten by any soul that alone may be performed for you..." From this pasuk, we learn that one is permitted to cook food on *yom tov*. The Torah discusses *Shevi'i shel Pesach*, but the rule applies to every *yom tov*. Bnei Yissaschar (*Chodesh Nisan 13:2*) states, "I heard from my holy *mechutan*, Rebbe Hershel of Ziditchov *zt'l*, that the Torah specifically writes this regarding *Shevi'i shel Pesach* to teach us that on this day it's easier... to bestow *parnassah* on the Jewish people, even if they don't have sufficient merits, *chas veshalom*."³¹

The name of the month *ניסן* (from the word *נס*) implies that it's a month when miracles

31. The Beis Avraham *zt'l* advised those who needed *shidduchim*, *parnassah*, or *refuos* to complete the entire *Tehillim* on *Shevi'i shel Pesach* because it is a day of salvations.

occur. The Rebbe of Ruzhin added that נִסִּין, with a ך at the end, means that miracles are ongoing and continuous this month. A ך at the end of a word represents something that happens often.³²

May we merit a true יָמֵן חֲרוּתֵנוּ, a kosher and *freilich* yom tov with all its *brachos* and *yeshuos*, and may we merit celebrating the *yom tov* Pesach in the Beis HaMikdash, speedily in our days, amen.

32. For example, many occupations have a ך at the end of the word. For instance, רַעֵן is a shoemaker, קַבֵּל is a contractor, and so on. The extra ך implies that this is their occupation, something they always do. Chazal (Bava Metzia 33.) also teach this lesson on the following pasuk (Shemos 23:5) כִּי תִרְאֶה חֲמוֹר שֹׁעָנֶךָ רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מִשְׁאָלוֹ וְהִדְלִיתָ מֵעִזּוֹ לֹא עֵיבֹד תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ, "If you see your enemy's donkey crouched under its burden would you refrain from helping him? You shall surely help along with him." The Gemara notes that it states רֹבֵץ, "crouched," and doesn't state רֹבֵצֵן. The latter, רֹבֵצֵן, would imply that it crouches and sits down very often. If that is the animal's nature, you aren't obligated to help the animal get up. We see from this Gemara that a ך at the end of the word means something that happens often. Likewise, נִסִּין means that miracles are constantly occurring in this month.