



“And HKB”H Delivers Us from Their Hand” The Wonders of Divine Supervision

In honor of the auspiciously approaching Chag HaPesach, we will focus in this essay on a passage in the Haggadah that has become a popular modern-day song. In this passage, we express our gratitude and praise of Hashem for His salvation from all the wicked foes who have tried to exterminate us throughout the generations:

"והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לכלותנו, אלא שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותנו והקב"ה מצילנו מידם. צא ולמד מה ביקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו, שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים ולבן ביקש לעקור את הכל, שנאמר ארמי אובד אבי וירד מצרימה."

And it is this (promise) which stood by our fathers and by us, for not just one has risen up against us to destroy us, but in every single generation, they rise up against us to destroy us, and HKB”H delivers us from their hand. Go and learn what Lavan HaArami sought to do to Yaakov Avinu (our forefather): Pharaoh only issued a decree (to kill) all the male children, but Lavan sought to uproot everything, as it states (Devarim 26, 5): “An Arami sought my father’s downfall, and he went down to Mitzrayim.”

Simply understood, we can understand the words "צא ולמד" as it is interpreted by most of the Rishonim—such as Rashi, the Rokeiach, the Ritva, and others. They explain this passage as a reference to the promise that HKB”H made to Avraham Avinu at the Bris bein HaBesarim—the Covenant of the Parts—that He would take Yisrael out of galus and would rescue us from our enemies in every generation. Thus, the words "צא ולמד" instruct us to learn this truth from the interactions of Yaakov Avinu with Lavan HaArami,

his duplicitous father-in-law. Lavan planned to uproot everything but due to His promise, HKB”H thwarted Lavan’s plans and insured the future of our people.

Our Wicked Foes Actually Contribute to Our Kedushah

Let us embellish this profound idea by analyzing the juxtaposition of the two statements in this passage of the Haggadah—“והיא שעמדה” and “צא ולמד”. We will begin by focusing on the last line of the first of these statements: **“And HKB”H delivers us from their hand.”** The author of the Haggadah is teaching us something counterintuitive. Not only does HKB”H deliver us from our enemies, but He uses them to build the body of kedushah characteristic and emblematic of the people of Yisrael. Not only do they fail to destroy us, but they themselves are instrumental in our future survival and enduring nature.

This is the lesson of "צא ולמד". He presents the case of Lavan HaArami as a prime example. Lavan and his cohorts represented a formidable force of tumah. They pursued Yaakov and his entire household in an attempt to abolish their potential kedushah and not leave any trace or remnants of it.

Yet the wonders of divine supervision were revealed in their full splendor and glory. HKB”H, the Grand Orchestrator, arranged for Lavan HaArami, a source of evil, to help build the house of kedushah that he sought so strenuously to uproot and destroy. First, he fathered the two holy Imahot—Rachel and Leah—the founding matriarchs of the future

house of Yisrael. Then he took Yaakov Avinu, the source of kedushah, into his home, and gave him his two daughters as wives; through them he fathered the twelve shevatim upon whom the house of Yisrael is built. This is implied by that which is written (Tehillim 103, 19): "ומלכותו בכל משלה"—**and His kingship has dominion over all.** They expounded on this passuk in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 69). Among the wonders of the Creator, is how He hatches the beginnings of kedushah specifically from within the nest of the klipah—the forces of evil. This is precisely what transpired in the home of Lavan; the dynasty of kedushah of the people of Yisrael began there. In his home, the heads of G-d's shevatim were born; the potential of the Avos became a reality. Thus, when we express our gratitude to Hashem by singing: "והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם"—we acknowledge that He arranges for our enemies to build the house of kedushah with **"their own hands"**—"מידם".

Why Yaakov Avinu Established a Covenant with Lavan HaArami

Let us continue this sacred journey exploring the significance of the declaration: **"And HKB"H delivers us from their hand."** Consider the final encounter depicted in the Torah between Yaakov Avinu and his malicious, duplicitous father-in-law. Yaakov had fled with the Imahot, the shevatim, and his herds of sheep and cattle. Lavan rallied his cohorts and allies to pursue them for seven days with the goal of annihilating them. The author of the Haggadah attests to this by saying: "ולבן ביקש לעקור את הכל". Of course, HKB"H intervened and admonished Lavan in a nocturnal dream (Bereishis 31, 24): "השמר לך פן תדבר עם יעקב מטוב עד רע"—**beware lest you speak with Yaakov either good or bad.**

Yet, instead of merely parting from Yaakov or even exchanging pleasantries, Lavan insisted that they enter into a covenant (ibid. 31, 33): "ועתה לכה נכרתה ברית אני ואתה והיה לעד ביני ובינך"—**so, now, come, let us enter into a covenant, I and you, and He shall be a witness between me and you.** Yaakov agreed immediately to his request (ibid. 45): "ויקה יעקב אבן וירימה מצבה"—**Yaakov took a stone and raised it up as a monument.** He did not stop there, however; he

proceeded to instruct his children to collect stones and erect a mound to complete the covenant (ibid. 46): "ויאמר יעקב לאחיו לקטו אבנים ויקחו אבנים ויעשו גל ויאכלו שם על הגל, ויקרא לו לבן יגור". **And Yaakov said to his brethren (Rashi: referring to his children), "Gather stones!" So, they took stones and made a mound, and they ate there on the mound. Lavan called it Yigar Sahadsa, but Yaakov called it Galeid.**

It is easy to comprehend why Lavan HaArami was so intent on establishing a covenant with Yaakov Avinu. He had witnessed firsthand the divine protection HKB"H extended Yaakov and the incredible power this imparted to Yaakov. Lavan was even admonished in a nighttime dream. Hence, he wanted to ensure that Yaakov and his descendants would not harm him or his descendants. What is truly surprising, however, is that Yaakov Avinu agreed to enter into a covenant with this rasha. After all, Lavan could not harm him on account of HKB"H's admonition. So, what did Yaakov stand to gain from this covenant?

The Explanation of the Galya Raza

We will begin to shed some light on the matter by endeavoring to explain Yaakov Avinu's profound intent. He not only agreed to enter into a covenant with Lavan HaArami, but he even took an active part in the transaction. We find a tremendous chiddush in the wonderful sefer Lev Aryeh (Shemos 1) brought down in the name of one of the great kabbalists, the Galya Raza. To solidify their covenant, they erected a mound of stones; Yaakov called it **Galeid**, whereas Lavan called it **Yigar Sahadsa**, an Aramaic name. So, in a sense, Yaakov Avinu caused Aramaic to be introduced in the Torah. As a consequence, Yisrael went into galus in Mitzrayim.

Based on this premise, the Galya Raza interprets the following passuk in parshas Vayeishev (ibid. 37, 25): "וישאו עיניהם ויראו והנה אורחת ישמעאלים באה מגלעד וגמליהם נושאים נכוואות וצרי ולוט הולכים להוריד מצרימה". **They raised their eyes and, behold, they saw a caravan of Yishmaelim coming from Gilad; their camels were carrying spices, balsam and**

bithwort, on their way to take them down to Mitzrayim.

According to his interpretation, this passuk alludes to the fact that the reason this caravan came to take Yosef down to Mitzrayim was "מגלעד"—as a consequence of Yaakov naming the mound of stones **Galeid**, Lavan was prompted to give it the Aramaic name **Yigar Sahadsa**. This necessitated Yosef's descent to Mitzrayim.

In this same vein, the Lev Aryeh presents an interpretation of the following passuk in the name of another esteemed scholar: "ארמי אוכד אבי וירד מצרימה"—**an Arami would have destroyed my father, and he descended to Mitzrayim**. In other words, because of the Aramaic words he introduced into the Torah, Yaakov Avinu was forced to go down to Mitzrayim. The Lev Aryeh adds the following: **I will follow in his footsteps and complete his remarks. When the author of the Haggadah says: "He descended to Mitzrayim," it teaches us that he was compelled specifically by the "dibbur." He wishes to teach us that because Yaakov Avinu spoke Aramaic with Lavan, hence he was compelled to descend to Mitzrayim.**

In this manner, the Lev Aryeh explains the significance of the passuk (Shemos 1, 1): "ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את: יעקב איש וביתו באו"—**and these are the names of the sons of Yisrael who came to Mitzrayim; with Yaakov, each man and his household came**. Now, the word "שמו" is an acronym for "ש'נים מ'קרא ו'אחד ת'רגום"—the practice to read the text of each passuk twice along with the associated Targum once. Thus, we can interpret the passuk as follows: Because Yaakov introduced the language of the Targum, Aramaic, into the Torah, Bnei Yisrael descended to Mitzrayim with Yaakov.

Notwithstanding, the actual premise of the Galya Raza is somewhat preposterous. It is inconceivable that Yaakov Avinu introduced this flaw, so to speak, into the Torah. He didn't give the mound the Aramaic name **Yigar Sahadsa**; Lavan HaArami did. Yaakov Avinu named it **Galeid** in "lashon hakodesh." HKB"H, the Giver of the Torah, determined that this dialogue should be included in the text of the Torah: **"Lavan called it Yigar Sahadsa, but Yaakov called it**

Galeid." So, why is Yaakov to blame for introducing Aramaic into the Torah? And furthermore, why did this cause his descent to Mitzrayim?

This is even more surprising and difficult to comprehend in light of the following Midrash Yalkut Shimoni (Yirmiyah, Chapter 10, Remez 286): "אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני, אל תהי לשון ארמית קלה בעיניך, שמצינו כתוב בתורה בנביאים ובכתובים, שהקב"ה חולק לו כבוד, בתורה יגר שהדותא, בנביאים כדנה תאמרון להום, בכתובים וידברו. **Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said: Do not view the Aramaic language lightly; for, we find it written in the Torah, in the Neviim and in the Ketuvim, indicating that HKB"H treats it with respect. In the Torah, it says "Yigar Sahadsa." In Neviim, it says (Yirmiyah 10, 11): "Tell them this (these words appear in Aramaic)." In Ketuvim, it says (Daniel 2, 4): "The Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic."** Thus, it states explicitly that HKB"H mentioned the name **Yigar Sahadsa** in the Torah to honor the Aramaic language. So, how is it possible to claim that Yaakov was punished and forced to descend into galus in Mitzrayim on this account?

Lavan HaArami Established a Covenant with Yaakov Avinu on Account of Onkelos the Convert

I thought of a wonderful solution to this enigma that I wish to present to our esteemed audience. I would like to refer to a fascinating chiddush in the incredible teachings of our great mentor, the Arizal, in Sefer HaLikutim (Vayeitzei 31). Lavan named the mound of the covenant **Yigar Sahadsa** to inform Yaakov Avinu that he was not a total heretic and nonbeliever. On the contrary, he wished to demonstrate that he, too, possessed concealed sparks of kedushah.

For instance, one of the intriguing allusions presented by the Arizal relates to the word **Yigar**. If we spell יג"ר fully as follows: יו"ד גימ"ל רי"ש—the gematria equals 613, "**taryag**." Thus, Lavan was attesting to the fact that he did not deny the existence or power of the Supreme G-d, and that he did not prevent Yaakov from observing the "**taryag mitzvos**." Additionally, with the name **Yigar Sahadsa**, Lavan hinted to

Yaakov that the holy spark (“nitzotz”) of Onkelos the Convert was concealed within him. It was Onkelos who translated the entire Torah into Aramaic and thereby provided a tikun for all of the holy sparks concealed in the Aramaic language, which is the klipah of “nogah.” Thus, Lavan was attesting to his own loyalty to the Almighty. This is consistent with what the Megaleh Amukos writes (Vayeitzei): **When Lavan said the name Yigar Sahadsa to Yaakov . . . he was alluding to Onkelos the Convert, who was destined to descend from Lavan HaArami; he would rectify it (the klipah of “nogah”) with his Targum.**

[Translator’s Note: There are four major klipos. The first three are totally impure and cannot be reformed. The fourth, however, called “nogah,” can be illuminated, as indicated by its name, and it can be reformed. Similarly, the Aramaic language has impure origins but can be reformed into an entity of kedushah.]

Thus, we learn from the Arizal and the Megaleh Amukos that after HKB”H appeared to Lavan in the nighttime dream, admonishing him not to harm Yaakov, he had a temporary change of heart for the better. He wished to demonstrate to Yaakov that he was loyal and believed in Yaakov’s G-d. Therefore, he intentionally gave Yaakov’s mound of stones an Aramaic name—**Yigar Sahadsa**. In this manner, he alluded to Yaakov that a great luminary of kedushah was destined to descend from him—namely, Onkelos HaGer, who would translate the entire Torah into Aramaic.

Lavan Pursued Yaakov to Deliver the Nitzotz of Targum Onkelos to Him

Clearly, the Arizal has provided us with a novel interpretation of Lavan’s pursuit of Yaakov. Since HKB”H forbade him to harm Yaakov or his household in any way, what did Lavan aim to accomplish by pursuing Yaakov and overtaking him? The answer is quite clear according to the Arizal. Indeed, with his kedushah, Yaakov Avinu had already removed the holy Imahot and the neshamos of the shevatim from Lavan’s home in Charan. Nevertheless, the incredible

light of Torah she’b’al peh—the Talmud Yerushalmi, Talmud Bavli and Targum Onkelos, which were formulated in Aramaic—still remained there.

Therefore, even though he had been warned emphatically not to harm Yaakov, Lavan finally understood the true purpose of his pursuit. HKB”H wanted him to deliver the incredible light of Torah she’b’al peh that still remained with him to Yaakov. Therefore, for that brief moment, Lavan had an inspiration of kedushah and requested that Yaakov enter into a covenant with him, so that he could hand over to Yaakov the Aramaic components of Torah she’b’al peh, including Targum Onkelos, alluded to by **Yigar Sahadsa**.

Understood in this light, Lavan’s words were prophetic, in keeping with the notion of (Shabbas 119b): **”מלאך רע עונה—”the bad malach is compelled to answer Amen.** Lavan said to Yaakov: **”Let us enter into a covenant, I and you.”** Now, we have learned in the Gemara (Gittin 60b): **”לא כרת הקב”ה ברית עם ישראל אלא בשביל דברים שבעל פה, ”שנאמר כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתי אתך ברית ואת ישראל—HKB”H only entered into a covenant with Yisrael on account of the Oral Law, as it states (Shemos 34, 27): “For on account of these words have I entered a covenant with you and with Yisrael.”**

We can now begin to appreciate why Yaakov Avinu acquiesced to this covenant with the wicked Lavan HaArami. He perceived via “ruach hakodesh” that the time had arrived to extract the holy sparks of Targum Onkelos that were concealed with Lavan. This then is the deeper significance of Yaakov’s directive to his sons: **“Gather stones.”** In Sefer Yetzirah (4, 12), we learn that the letters of the Torah are **“stones.”** The words of the Torah are structures or buildings constructed with them. Therefore, Yaakov instructs his sons to gather stones to extract from Lavan HaArami the letters of Targum Onkelos: **“So, they took stones and made a mound, and they ate there on the mound. Lavan called it Yigar Sahadsa.”** In other words, in a moment of inspiration and goodwill, Lavan delivered the neshamah of Onkelos HaGer to Yaakov.

Galus Mitzrayim Was Designed to Extract Torah She'b'al Peh

Continuing along this sublime path, we will now elaborate on the sacred words of the Galya Raza. He asserts that Yisrael descended into galus in Mitzrayim, because Yaakov Avinu introduced the Aramaic language into the Torah with the words **Yigar Sahadsa**. We will begin by introducing an intriguing passage in the Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 27a): "וימררו את חייהם בעבודה קשה, בקושיא, בחומר, דא ברייתא, בקל וחומר, ובלבנים, בלבון הלכתא, ובכל עבודה בשדה, דא ברייתא, דא משנה." The Zohar associates the various ways in which the Egyptians **"embittered the lives"** of Bnei Yisrael with various aspects of Torah-study—such as difficult questions, "kal-vachomer," clarification of halachos, Baraisa and Mishnah. We will endeavor to explain this enigmatic association. [Note the play on words: **"avodah kashah"** becomes **"kushya"**; **"chomer"** becomes **"kal-vachomer"**; **"leveinim"** becomes **"libun."**] At first glance, these associations are incomprehensible. What possible connection is there between these components of Torah-study and the backbreaking labor and servitude Yisrael were subjected to in galus Mitzrayim?

Now, we know that the purpose of galus Mitzrayim was to purify and refine Yisrael in a sort of iron crucible to prepare them for receiving the Torah. The passuk states (Devarim 4, 20): "ואתכם לקח ה' ויוציא אתכם מכור הברזל ממצרים להיות לו לעם נחלה: **"but Hashem has taken you and withdrawn you from the iron crucible, from Mitzrayim, to be a nation of heritage for Him, as this very day.**" Rashi explains that an **"iron crucible"** ("כור הברזל") is a vessel in which they refine gold. In other words, just like the impurities adherent to the gold need to be removed by means of melting in an iron crucible, so, too, it was necessary to purify and refine the neshamos of Yisrael from their adherent impurities by means of the suffering and hard labor in Mitzrayim. This was the preparation necessary for them to receive the Torah: **"To be a nation of heritage for Him, as this very day."**

This then is the implication of the passuk (Shemos 3, 11): "ויאמר משה אל האלקים מי אנכי כי אלך אל פרעה וכי אוציא את בני ישראל"

"ממצרים—Moshe responded to Elokim, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim?" Rashi explains that Moshe was asking: **On what grounds does Yisrael deserve that a miracle be performed on their behalf and that I should take them out of Mitzrayim?** To which HKB"H replied (ibid. 12): **"בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלקים על ההר הזה—when you take the people out of Mitzrayim, you will worship Elokim on this mountain."** Here Rashi explains: **They are destined to receive the Torah on this mountain three months after their departure from Mitzrayim.**

Now, the Sefas Emes (Pesach 5639) teaches us an important fact. The purpose of "yetzias Mitzrayim" was for Yisrael to receive Torah she'b'al peh. Hence, we have a mitzvah on the night of Pesach to recount the events of "yetzias Mitzrayim" orally. This is also taught by the Bnei Yissaschar (Nissan 1, 5) who presents the following remez from the Arizal (Sha'ar HaKavanos, Pesach, Drush 3): **בס"ח** can be interpreted as **"פה סח"**, meaning "the mouth speaks"; he explains that this is an allusion to Torah she'b'al peh. In this vein, he goes on to interpret the words of the Haggadah in the passage of Avadim Hayinu: **ואפילו כולנו חכמים כולנו נבונים וכולנו זקנים כולנו יודעים את התורה מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים, וכל And even if we were all sages, all intelligent, all elders, all knowledgeable about the Torah (she'b'chsav), it is still a mitzvah to recount (orally) the events related to "yetzias Mitzrayim"; the more one recounts the events of "yetzias Mitzrayim," the more commendable it is.**

Extracting the Letters מצרי"ם from the Klipah מצרי"ם

We find that this concurs magnificently with an insight from the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy"a, in Zera Kodesh (Bo). He provides us with a marvelous remez related to the klipah of מצרי"ם. For, the first Mishnah of Torah she'b'al peh begins with the open letter **"mem"** (Berachos 1, 1): **"מאימתי קורין"** את שמע בערבית; and the last Mishnah of Torah she'b'al peh concludes with a closed (final) **"mem"** (Oktzim 3, 12): **"ה' עוז"** לעמו יתן ה' יברך את עמו בשלום.

In reality, the klipah of **Mitzrayim** opposes the study of Torah she'b'al peh by Yisrael. As such, the name מצרי"ם begins with an open "mem" and concludes with a closed "mem"; the three letters in between form the word יצ"ר. In other words, the yetzer hara intervenes and employs all of its power and bag of tricks to prevent a Jew from completing the study of Torah she'b'al peh from beginning to end. This concurs with the premise that the klipah of Mitzrayim opposes the study of Torah she'b'al peh.

With this insight, let us interpret the passage in the Zohar hakadosh presented above: "וימררו את חייהם בעבודה" קשה, בקושיא, בחומר, בקל וחומר, ובלבנים, בלבון הלכתא, ובכל עבודה, "It associates the various elements of the bitter, hard labor in Mitzrayim with elements of Torah she'b'al peh (for example, "chomer" meaning mortar is associated with "kal va'chomer"). This teaches us that the purpose of the difficult enslavement in galus Mitzrayim with mortar and bricks was designed to refine and purify Yisrael in the iron crucible to prepare them for the study of Torah she'b'al peh.

Now, according to the Galya Raza, Yaakov and his family went down to Mitzrayim, because Yaakov was responsible for introducing the Aramaic name **Yigar Sahadsa** into the Torah. We explained above that Yaakov did this to extract the nitzotz of Onkelos HaGer, who translated the Torah into

Aramaic, from Lavan HaArami. Similarly, we can suggest that Yaakov and his family did not go down to Mitzrayim as a form of punishment; on the contrary, they went down to Mitzrayim to extract other parts and elements of Torah she'b'al peh that were trapped and concealed there.

With immense joy, we have achieved a better understanding of the author of the Haggadah's profound intent of juxtaposing the two statements in the passage of "והיא שעמדה". The first part concludes with the statement: "מירדם" — "והקב"ה מצילנו מידם" — "from their hand"—that HKB"H arranges for our wicked foes to contribute to the building of kedushah with their own hands. The author of the Haggadah proceeds to prove this point with the statement of "צא ולמד". He cites the example of Lavan HaArami who sought to uproot and destroy everything that Yaakov represented and was building. Yet, by telling Yaakov that he was naming the mound of stones **Yigar Sahadsa** in Aramaic, he released the neshamah of Onkelos HaGer, whose targum of the entire Torah in Aramaic expanded the scope of Torah she'b'al peh. Thus, we see the wondrous ways of divine supervision: "והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם"—the reshaim themselves help build the edifice of kedushah; for "**His kingship has dominion over all**"—even over the powers that oppose the realm of kedushah, who are compelled to fulfill the will and divine plan of HKB"H.

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