

לעילוי נשמת
מרת נקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



ענין השבוע

AL E I D E S H E

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit" a of Gur

Untying the Knot

This Shabbos is known as *Shabbos Hagadol*, the Great Shabbos. The Tur explains¹ that on this Shabbos a great miracle took place. Hashem had commanded Bnei Yisrael to set aside a lamb for the Korban Pesach on the

They might be forced the whole day to violate Yom Kippur. But what happens when the ropes are severed; what happens when they are freed? Immediately, they run straight for the beis midrash.

tenth of Nissan, which was Shabbos.² The Egyptians saw each and every Jew tying a lamb—the Egyptian god—to a bedpost, and demanded an explanation. The explanation was that Hashem had commanded to slaughter the lamb as

a *korban*. As horrified as the Egyptians were that their gods were being taken for slaughter, a *nes* occurred and they were unable to intervene.

Generally, we commemorate events on the calendar date when they occurred. Since this *nes* occurred on the tenth of Nissan, we should commemorate this *nes* every year on the tenth. Why is it linked instead to the day of the week, as Shabbos Hagadol?

The *Prishah* explains that this *nes* was, in fact, brought about by Shabbos. The Midrash³ tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu established a day of rest for the enslaved Jews in Mitzrayim. The Egyptians knew that Bnei Yisrael kept Shabbos, and they wondered: how were the Jews tying lambs to their beds on Shabbos? Isn't tying one of the thirty-nine *melachos*? The Yidden were forced to answer that this knot was only temporary. They were only tying the sheep for four days—after which they would slaughter them as *korbanos*.

We can explain this dialogue between the Egyptians and the Jews on a deeper level as well. Klal Yisrael is compared to sheep.⁴ The Yidden were

Untiring Dedication

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אומֵר. מָה הָעֶבֶדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם,
לָכֶם, וְלֹא לִי.

The rasha—what does he say? “What is this avodah for you?” For you, and not for him (Haggadah Shel Pesach).

One of the highlights of Maggid is the narrative of the four sons. The *pesukim* speak of four different sons, and Chazal understood that we must relate the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim differently to each one. וְהָיָה כִּי יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מָה הָעֶבֶדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם – *It shall be when your children say to you, “What is this service to you?” (Shemos 12:26)*—Chazal understood this pasuk as referring to the question of the wicked son. As the Haggadah explains, Chazal saw this in the word לָכֶם – *to you*. The *rasha* is conveying to his father that he has no part in this service—it is your service, not mine. In the Yerushalmi's version of the four sons (Pesachim 10:4), the *rasha's* statement is explained: “מה הטורח שאתם מטריחין עלינו” – *What is this burden that you are imposing on us each and every year?*” The Yerushalmi understands that when the son asks about הָעֶבֶדָה – *this service*, he does not refer to the holy *avodah* of Pesach; he meansto say that Pesach is an unwelcome burden. This is how we know that the pasuk is speaking of the *rasha*. cont. on page 2

1 O.C. 430.

2 Seder Olam.

3 Shemos Rabbah 1:28.

4 Vayikra Rabbah 4:6.

Untying the Knot

cont. from page 1

tied up in Mitzrayim, not only physically, but spiritually as well. *Sefarim hakedoshim* explain that they had reached the forty-ninth level of *tumah*, and were at the doorstep of the fiftieth. The Egyptians considered Bnei Yisrael to be tied to them permanently. But they were very much mistaken. Klal Yisrael is tied permanently to Hashem. The tie to Mitzrayim is only temporary. They are able to slaughter the gods of the Egyptians and leave their servitude for freedom. They are able to free themselves both physically and spiritually.

What is significant about this *nes* that occurred on Shabbos Hagadol? Of the many great *nissim* that Klal Yisrael experienced throughout the saga of Yetzias Mitzrayim, why is this *nes* given its own distinction?

It deserves distinction because it signifies an integral point in the *geulah*. This *nes* signified that Yidden have the ability to untie the temporary bonds that connect them to the Egyptians. They would be able to sever their bonds with Mitzrayim and strengthen their ties with Hashem.

It is noteworthy that several of the mitzvos established in commemoration

of Yetzias Mitzrayim involve knots. The mitzvah of *tzitzis* is written in the *parshah* of Yetzias Mitzrayim (Bamidbar 15:37). *Tzitzis* involve many knots, and Chazal tell us (Menachos 39a) that the top knot, or *kesher elyon*, is *d'Oraisa*. The “top knot” alludes to our ties Above. We are tied to Hashem Who gave us the Torah. The *parshios* of *tefillin* (Shemos 13:1, 13:11) discuss Yetzias Mitzrayim as well. Again, we find knots as an integral part of the mitzvah. The mitzvah of *tefillin* is intended to bind and submit all our senses to serving Hashem.

My father, the Pnei Menachem, often told the following story:

In the Soviet Union under Communist rule, many Jews were forced to work on Shabbos, Yom Tov, and even Yom Kippur. One particular Yom Kippur, after the workday had ended, the Yidden had gathered in the main shul in Moscow for *Neilah*. The *rav*, R' Yaakov Kelm, ascended the *bimah*, as usual, to arouse the people to *teshuvah*. In those times government informants would come to the *derashos*, and R' Yaakov had to tread carefully; he was forced to disguise his message.

He began: “Two people came before me to resolve a dispute over a chicken, each one claiming the chicken belonged to him. I ruled that the only way to determine who the chicken belongs to is to cut the rope binding the chicken’s legs. When the rope is cut and we see to whom the chicken runs, we will know the true owner.” When the assembled heard this, they burst into tears. They understood very well the meaning of this *mashal*. They might be forced the whole day to work and violate Yom Kippur. But what happens when the ropes are severed; what happens when they are freed? Immediately, they run straight for the *beis midrash*—they run to where they are bound permanently.

The *nes* of Shabbos Hagadol underscores this point. Klal Yisrael was able to tell the Egyptians that their bonds in Egypt were temporary; their true bond is with Hashem. This is the time we are able to throw off the shackles of the *yetzer hara*. We can break off the weak, temporary connection we have with the *yetzer* and the emptiness of this world, and strengthen our ties with Hashem. With this we will come prepared to the Yom Tov of *cheirus*.

(שבת הגדול תשע"ה – עברא דדשא פסח עמ' טו-יט)

Untiring Dedication

cont. from page 1

The *Shulchan Aruch Harav*⁵ considers this Yerushalmi as practical *halachah*. He writes that it is forbidden to say that Pesach is a burden, because these are the sentiments of the *rasha*. The *Chok Yaakov* writes⁶ that people are not necessarily

careful about this, and he works to find justification for that.

וְלֹא אֲתִי קָרָאתִי יַעֲקֹב כִּי יִגְעֶתָּ בִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל – *But you did not call out to Me, Yaakov, for you grew weary of Me, Yisrael* (Yeshayah 43:22).

The Dubner Maggid explained with the following parable:

There was a man who was to receive a package of diamonds and precious stones. He watched anxiously for his package to arrive. When he saw someone

5 O.C. 469:5.

6 Ibid. 3.

cont. on page 3

Untiring Dedication

cont. from page 2

approaching, carrying a package, he knew even from a distance that this could not be his package. Why? Because the messenger was struggling under the burden and sweating profusely. The man knew that his package was easy to carry and could not possibly cause such strain.

So too, the *navi* tells Klal Yisrael: If you feel strain when serving Hashem—כִּי יִגְעַתְּ בִּי, this is a clear sign that אַל תִּקְרָאתָ — you are not calling Me. You have the wrong address; you are not serving Hashem properly. If we would serve Hashem *me'ahavah*, we would not feel even the slightest strain. When we come to the realization that it is Hashem commanding us, and we yearn to do His will, it becomes easy to serve Him. This is comparable to a person who discovers a diamond mine. He will dig with untiring energy, because he knows the tremendous value of his effort.

We can suggest that the Yerushalmi's statement only applies during the times of the Beis Hamikdash. In those days, *ahavas Hashem* was palpable, and it was easy to fulfill the *mitzvos*. If someone were to complain about Pesach, he must be a *rasha*. Yet in our times it is difficult to see the truth. We are very much absorbed in the emptiness of this world, and too removed from *ahavas Hashem*. In times of confusion, one who sees the *mitzvos* as a burden cannot be considered evil.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 11a) tells us that Klal Yisrael was redeemed from Mitzrayim in Nissan, and that the *avodah* (imposed labor) was lifted the previous Rosh Hashanah—six months earlier. The Mishnah (Eduyos 2:10) tells us that the

makkos covered a span of twelve months. What occurred halfway through the *makkos* that caused the decree of slave labor to be lifted?

On a deeper level, we can suggest that the Gemara is referring to *avodas Hashem*. The burden of *avodas Hashem* was lifted on Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah is the day that we coronate Hashem as our King. On that day we realize that Hashem is our King and we are in this world for one purpose—to serve Him. When we reach that realization, all hardships in *avodas Hashem* melt away. We begin to serve Hashem with enthusiasm and love.

אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עֲבָדִים – *I am Hashem your G-d, Who has taken you out of the land of Mitzrayim, from the house of slavery* (Shemos 20:2). The pasuk alludes to the mindset of slavery, the feeling that serving Hashem is a burden. Hashem lifted us out of מִבְּיַת עֲבָדִים, out of that mentality. This was a central part of Yetzias Mitzrayim.

Seven days before Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol would seclude himself in a special chamber to prepare himself for the *avodah* he was to perform on Yom Kippur. The Gemara (Yoma 2b) debates the possibility that the *avodah* of the Yom Tov of Pesach would require the separation of the Kohen. The pasuk that teaches the requirement of separation is ambiguous. How do we know the pasuk is requiring separation before Yom Kippur—might it refer to a different time? The Gemara continues by stating that it can't refer to the *shalosh regalim*, because if so, it would remain ambiguous; how are we to know which of the *shalosh regalim* it refers to?

The Gemara suggests that the pasuk could, actually, be referring specifically to Pesach, because whenever the Torah speaks about the *regalim*, it speaks about Pesach first: כְּתוּב בּוֹ הַכְּתוּב תַּחִּילָה. Since Pesach has the distinction of being first, this special *halachah* of separation could refer specifically to Pesach.

Why, in fact, does the Torah always mention Pesach first? If there is an underlying quality that Pesach has which would cause the Torah to mention it first, shouldn't the Gemara state that reason? Why does it mention the result of the virtue, instead of the virtue itself?

It seems that the Gemara is alluding to the actual virtue that Pesach contains. מִצְוֹת שֶׁבַח בּוֹ הַכְּתוּב תַּחִּילָה means that we should open ourselves up to doing mitzvos. Mitzvos should be done with *zerizus* and *hishtokekus*, as is the way of a true *ohev Hashem*.

The *Tur* writes⁷ that the Yamim Tovim correspond to the three Avos, with Pesach corresponding to Avraham Avinu. Avraham represents serving Hashem *me'ahavah*: the pasuk (Yeshayah 41:8) refers to him as אֲבִרָהֶם אֹהֲבֵי – *Avraham who loves Me*. The *avodah* of these days is to reawaken our *ahavas Hashem*, and the *segulah* of Pesach will come to our aid. The more we recognize the glory of Hashem's Kingship, and the more we reawaken our love for Him, the more we become free from the *beis avadim*. We can serve Hashem with *zerizus* and *simchah*, and we will no longer feel that His *avodah* is burdensome.

⁷זו"ט א' דפסח תשפ"ב מאמר א

⁷ O.C. 417.

Laws of Pesach

אך ביום הראשון תשביתו שאר מצותיכם.

But on the previous day, you shall nullify the leaven from your homes (Shemos 12:15).

The pasuk commands us to destroy all *chametz* that is in our possession on Erev Pesach. The *Minchas Chinuch*⁸ discusses the nature of this mitzvah. Is the Torah commanding us to take action to destroy our *chametz*, or is the commandment simply to not own *chametz*? It would make a difference where one does not own any *chametz* to begin with. If the entire mitzvah is merely to not have *chametz*, he could fulfill the mitzvah just as well by not owning *chametz* in the first place; but if the mitzvah is to perform an act of destroying *chametz*, he would not have fulfilled the mitzvah. The *Minchas Chinuch* notes that if we are required to actually destroy *chametz*, people who do not have any *chametz* in their possession would be obligated to purchase some in order to fulfill the commandment.

How do we understand an obligation to buy *chametz* in order to burn it? The intention of the Torah is that we should not retain any *chametz* in our possession. It would seem unusual for the Torah to command us to purchase *chametz* in order to rid ourselves of it!

The *sefarim hakedoshim* tell us that *chametz* alludes to the *yetzer hara*. Even the Gemara (Brachos 17a see Rashi) refers to the *yetzer hara* as “the sour-dough in the bread.” *Biur chametz* symbolizes the requirement to eradicate the *yetzer hara* within us.

The Radvaz writes that this allusion to the *yetzer hara* even has practical ramifications. The reason the Torah forbids even a miniscule amount of *chametz* (which we do not find with other prohibitions) is because *chametz* represents the *yetzer hara*.

Even one who does not own *chametz* must burn the *chametz*. Although the object is that we should not own *chametz*, it is nevertheless important to perform the action of burning it. We must not make the mistake of assuming that we have no *yetzer hara* and it is enough to be passive. We must constantly examine our hearts and root out every last bit of *chametz*. We must keep up the struggle against the *yetzer hara* until our last breath.

(פסח תשס"ג-ט"ד עברא דדשא עמי לט-מא)



On Pesach night we recite the *brachah* of *ha'adamah* on the *karpas* and we intend that the *brachah* should cover the *maror* as well. One who does not have *karpas* eats the *maror* in place of the *karpas*, and at that time he recites both *brachos* of *ha'adamah* and *al achilas maror*. The *nosei keilim* ask⁹: The proper *brachah* on ground horseradish is *shehakol*. First, it is ground, and any ground vegetable is *shehakol*. Second, the *brachah* of *ha'adamah* is only recited on a vegetable in its ideal state. Since normally horseradish is not eaten raw, the proper *brachah* is *shehakol*. If the *maror* is eaten in place of the *karpas*, how can we recite the *brachah* of *ha'adamah*?

Furthermore, if one does have *karpas*, and he recites a *ha'adamah* on the *karpas*,

how can that *brachah* cover the *maror*? If *maror* is *shehakol*, a *brachah* of *shehakol* must be recited separately over the *maror*.

The Chavos Daas writes in his Haggadah¹⁰ that we must take *maror* that has not been ground. This would eliminate part of the question. However, many others disagree and write that the *maror* must be ground.

Rabi Akiva Eiger writes that *bedieved* the *brachah* of *ha'adamah* does work for *maror*. A vegetable that is ground, or not in its ideal state, is still a vegetable. *Ha'adamah* is a more specific *brachah* than *shehakol*. It is only necessary to make this specific *brachah* on a whole vegetable in its ideal state; otherwise, *shehakol*, a more general *brachah*, is recited. When the *brachah* of *ha'adamah* is not necessary, but still applicable, it works *bedieved*.

The *Mishnah Berurah* suggests that since Hashem commanded that *maror* be eaten on Pesach night, the mitzvah lends this food special distinction, and therefore the specific *brachah* of *ha'adamah* is recited.

Why did Hashem command that we take for *maror* a vegetable that is *shehakol*? Because we must always remember *shehakol nihyeh bidvaro* – all comes from the *Eibershter*. Every *maror*—every bitter situation—is from Hashem. To us, it may seem out of line with our plans and not to our benefit; yet we must realize that it is all perfectly in line according to His plan. We take *maror* and purposely grind it to show that all the *maror* is *nihyeh bidvaro*. It is all because of Him.

(נעילת ההג שביעי של פסח תשפ"ג מאמר ד)

8 Mitzvah 9.

9 475:2, see Magen Avraham 10.

10 Haggadah Maaseh Nissim.