



ISSUE #001  
APRIL 1, 2026

Peiros HaEshel Newsletter

PESACH EDITION  
14 NISSAN 5786

TORAH INSPIRED BY HARAV AHRON LOPIANSKY SHLITA

## WELCOME LETTER

Eshel Publications is excited to present the inaugural edition of Peiros HaEshel: the Eshel Publications Newsletter. Most of the available Torah of R' Ahron Lopiansky is available only in audio format and there has been much interest over the years to create a newsletter as well. Of course most of the efforts of Eshel Publications is in printing R' Ahron's seforim but a newsletter allows Eshel to share shorter and broader range of shiurim and ideas without the commitment of an entire sefer.

In addition to the Torah contained in this newsletter, Eshel also wants to provide some updates on upcoming projects. The past year we celebrated the release of two new seforim. *אשלי דעת*, a collection of R' Ahron's legendary chumash shiurim on the parsha were printed to wide acclaim, and the long awaited Golden Apples on Sefer Shemos was released. Golden Apples on the rest of chumash is already underway, and additional volumes of *אשלי דעת* are in the works, including volumes on *מועדים*.

Those who read Time Pieces, might be familiar with the commentary of the Malbim on Shir HaShirim. R' Ahron's article "A Song of Praise" (page 218) is a brief but powerful overview of the sefer, and now Eshel is proud to announce that a full adaptation of the Malbim's commentary is almost ready to print. Like Seeds of Redemption, where R' Ahron adapted the sefer Nachlos Yosef of Rus in English, the forthcoming "Yearning of the Soul" is an adaptation of the Malbim's masterpiece on Shir HaShirim. To quote R' Ahron in the introduction: "It is a truly incredible work, capturing and synthesizing the truth and beauty of Shir Hashirim, creating a brilliant flash of illumination."

Eshel is also in the final stages of an updated Eshel Publications app. The current app has made thousands of shiurim available and with our new app, we hope to continue on that path, providing a more dynamic user friendly experience. Enhanced search capabilities, mark favorites, and allow users to set shiurim to listen later features will all be built in.

Eshel looks forward to bringing these important works to life as it IY"H continues its mission of spreading the Torah and shiurim of R' Ahron. We acknowledge that without generous and passionate partners none of this would be possible.

We invite you to reach out and get involved with the new opportunities that are available for Eshel projects. Eshel has only come this far with your help, and is looking to continue expanding its mission to greater and greater heights. You can email us at [office@eshelpublications.com](mailto:office@eshelpublications.com) for more information on how to get involved.

**HAVE A CHAG KOSHER VISAMEACH!**

לע"נ חיה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

OUR LEGACY PASSED ALONG:

A PASSOVER LETTER TO MY CHILD

**M**y dear child,

It is now a quiet moment late at night. After an exhausting day of Passover cleaning, you have sunk into the sweetest of sleeps, and I am sitting here with a



pile of Haggadahs, preparing for Seder night. Somehow the words never come out the way I want them to, and the Seder evening is always unpredictable. But so many thoughts and feelings are welling up in my mind, and I want to share them with you. These are the words I mean to say at the Seder.

When you will see me at the Seder dressed in a kittel, the same plain white garment worn on Yom Kippur, your first question will be "Why are you dressed like this?"

Because it is Yom Kippur, a day of reckoning. You see, each one of us has a double role. First and foremost, we are human beings, creatures in the image of G-d, and on Yom Kippur we are examined if indeed we are worthy of that title. But we are also components of Klal Yisrael, the Jewish people, links in a chain that started over three thousand years ago and will make it to the finish line of the end of times. It is a relay race where a torch is passed on through all the ages, and it is our charge to take it from the one before and pass it on to the one after. Tonight we are being judged as to how well we have received our tradition and how well we are passing it on.

It is now 3,300 years since we received our freedom in Egypt. If we imagine the average age of having a child to be about twenty-five years of age, there are four generations in each century. ➔





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That means there is a total of 132 people stretching from our forefathers in Egypt to us today. One hundred and thirty-two people had to pass on this heritage flawlessly, with a devotion and single mindedness that could not falter.

One was in the Nazi death camps; one was whipped unconscious by Cossacks. One had children stolen by the czar, and one was the laughingstock of his "enlightened" brethren. One lived in a basement in Warsaw with many days passing with no food crossing his lips; the other ran an enormous estate in France. One was burned at the stake for refusing to believe in the Divinity of a flesh-and-blood mortal, and one was frozen to death in Siberia for continuing to believe in the Divinity of the eternal G-d.

One had been hounded by a mob for living in Europe rather than Palestine, and one was blown up by Palestinians for not living in Europe. One was a genius who could not enter medical school because he was not a Christian, and one was fed to the lions by the Romans...

## ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO FATHERS

each with his own story. Each with his own test of faith. And each with one overriding and burning desire: that this legacy be passed unscathed to me. And each with one request of me: that I pass this on to you, my sweet child.

What is this treasure that they have given their lives for? What is in this precious packet that 132 generations have given up everything for?

It is a great secret: that man is capable of being a lot more than an intelligent primate. That the truth of an Almighty G-d does not depend on public approval, and no matter how many people jeer at you, truth never changes. That the quality of life is not measured by goods, but by the good. That one can be powerfully hungry, and yet one can forgo eating if it is not kosher. That a penny that is not mine is not mine, no matter the temptation or rationalization.

That family bonding is a lot more than birthday parties; it is a commitment of loyalty that does not buckle in a moment of craving or lust. And so much more. This is our precious secret, and it is our charge to live it and to become a shining display of

**"THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE WITH G-D."**

One hundred and thirty-two people have sat Seder night after Seder night, year after year, and with every fiber of their heart and soul have made sure that this treasure would become mine and yours. Doubters have risen who are busy sifting the sands of the Sinai Desert trying to find some dried-out bones as residues of my great-great-grandfather. They are looking in the wrong place. The residue is in the soul of every one of these 132 grandfathers whose entirety of life was wrapped up in the preservation of this memory and treasure. It is unthinkable that a message borne with such fervor and intensity, against such challenges and odds, is the result of a vague legend or the fantasy of an idle mind.

I am the 133rd person in this holy chain. At times I doubt if I am passing it on well enough. I try hard, but it is difficult not to quiver when you are on the shoulders of 132 people, begging you not to disappoint them by toppling everyone with you swaying in the wind.

## My dear child,

may G-d grant us many long and happy years together. But one day, in the distant future, I'll be dressed in a kittel again as they prepare me for my burial. Try to remember that this is the treasure that I have passed on to you. And then it will be your turn, you will be the 134th with the sacred duty to pass on our legacy to number 135.





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## THE SEDER

לע"נ חיה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

### A PRACTICAL GUIDE

(Adapted from Pesach5773 - A Practical Approach to The Seder)

**As the Pesach seder approaches, it is important to keep some points in mind.**

**The most important thing** we can do for our seder is to prepare. The seder is a most important event and lays the foundation for an entire year. And just like when it comes to simchas yom tov, we always look for new recipes and ways to enhance the chag, so too we always need to expand our understanding of the chag and learn new seforim and ideas. Below are a few practical points that one can keep in mind while preparing to lead a seder.

**One should not aim to discuss Yetzias Mitzrayim with your children the entire night.** The Haggadah relates the remarkable story of Rabi Akiva and the chachamim, who discussed Yetzias Mitzrayim until the morning, but it is not a good idea for those of us who are not on Rabi Akiva's level. The seder should be kept at a length to engage the average person present. No one should dread sitting through the seder. The Hagaddah finishes the story that the chachamim were discussing Yetzias Mitzrayim until their students came in and told them that it was time for Krias Shemah. The Maharal says that the reason the Hagaddah included this epilogue is because one could wonder how the chachamim could stay up all night – wouldn't that take away from Oneg Yom Tov. To that the Hagaddah tells us that they were experiencing such joy that night that they did not ever realize that it was time for Shemah. And so for most of us, especially young children, where a prolonged seder would not invoke the same joy, we should be careful to not extend the seder beyond what they could handle.

**Ha lachma anya should not take half an hour!** Some parts of the Haggadah are more important or inspirational than others. The seder should be mapped out in advance to ensure that we spend our time wisely. Spend time preparing, understanding which parts of the Hagaddah are its essence and which are supplements. With our limited time, we should make sure to take full advantage and focus on the things that will leave an impact.

**One should focus on sharing thoughts that inspire,** leave an impression, and contribute to the general message. There is an endless amount of p'shetlach and gematrios, but if they are not engaging, the seder is not the place for them. We must have in mind the people at the table. This will require real preparation but will make a real difference.

**It is important to speak about ideas** that talk to your own heart. A child easily discerns which vertlach the father lives by and what he merely says. At the seder we impart our essence to our children. It is of course best to speak the children's language, but even if they don't fully understand what you are telling them, their father's words enter their soul. If we share ideas that sound exciting but we ourselves do not connect with, then it not likely that our children will connect with them either.

**Everyone present should participate.** Children should periodically be asked to say a few words. This gives them attention and makes them feel complimented. Questions should be asked to involve those at the table. The mitzvah of sippur is one of question and answer and a great focus is placed on the experience of the participants.





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# DIVREI TORAH

לע"נ היה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך

(Adapted from Bo 5780 – Hashem Is Always with Us)

**Why** is it that the obligation to remember to wipe out Amalek is satisfied by reading about mechiyas Amalek once a year, while the obligation to remember that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim must be fulfilled every night and every day? Shouldn't reading the account of Yetzias Mitzrayim in all its detail on Pesach night be enough to ensure that the memory of Yetzias Mitzrayim stays with us the whole year?

The answer lies in what the Chofetz Chaim writes at the end of Ma'amar Torah Ohr. He writes that Yetzias Mitzrayim demonstrated far more than just Hashem's might.

When Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, He showed His willingness and desire to reach out to us when we are at our lowest. He wished to lift us up so high that we would become worthy of meeting Him. At the pinnacle of our greatness, when we all heard the words of Hashem at Har Sinai, He said to us: **"I am Hashem ... Who took you out of Mitzrayim."** He wanted us to realize that just as much as He was with us at Har Sinai when we reached the peak of spirituality, He was equally with us at our lowest point in the depths of the tumah of Mitzrayim.

Perhaps this is why we must remember Yetzias Mitzrayim every day and every night. It is not simply a reminder of the facts. For that, once a year would be enough, as it is with the remembrance of Amalek. Remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim is a chizuk, a deeply emotional reminder: No matter where we are on the ladder of greatness, we need to know that Hashem is always with us. There is no day in our lives too bright, and no night so dark, on which Hashem has ever abandoned us.



רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבודה הזאת לכם. לכם - ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל כפר בעקר

(Adapted from Bo 5766 – From Avdus to Avodah, Understanding Divine Service)

**The wicked son's** questioning of the Pesach mitzvos, specifically the Korban Pesach, seems to be that which designates him as a rasha. But why does that make him a rasha, rather than a curious person seeking to learn? Isn't the desire to understand the taamei hamitzvos an important part of Torah, as we see from the Sefer Hachinuch?

The answer lies in the rasha's use of the word 'avodah.' The Ramban writes (ויקרא כג, ז) that avodah is work that we do for somebody else; it is labor and drudgery. Melachah is work we undertake for ourselves; we appreciate something and we want to grow and achieve more. This is actually precisely what we were sent to Mitzrayim to learn - how to be משעבד, to act as an extension of something greater than ourselves. When Hashem took Klal Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, He did not remove from them the capacity for עבדות, rather, He switched it.

**INSTEAD OF BEING עבדים לפרעה במצרים, WE WERE NOW עבדי ה' אשר הוצאתי אותם מארץ מצרים (ויקרא כה, נה).**

we became devoted avadim to Hashem. This capacity for עבדות enables us to serve Hashem and connects us to the Divine, which is far greater than ourselves.

It is this idea that the רשע does not understand. He asks, מנה העבודה הזאת לכם, what do you get out of avodah? How do you benefit from this? Implicit in his question is that one should only do what benefits themselves in the most immediate of senses. This is why the הגדה refers to the רשע as being מן עצמו את הוציא הכלל. The רשע is somebody who is incapable and unwilling to connect to something greater than himself. The הגדה tells us הקהה את שניו, which literally means to knock out his teeth. We tell the רשע, "If that's the self-centered approach you're going to take, this conversation is over,"

for he will not be able to connect to Hashem with that attitude.

בעבור זה לא אמרתי, אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך

(Adapted from Mattos 5761 – Zeh and Koh, Etzem and Hishpatus)

**The Ibn Ezra** writes that the passuk of בעבור זה does not mean that because Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, we eat Matzah. It is just the opposite: It means that because Hashem wanted us to eat Matzah, He took us out of Mitzrayim! This actually is the literal translation of the words of the passuk, בעבור זה, it is because of this. The Ibn Ezra writes that the Torah explains this about Matzah because it was the first of the mitzvos, but this reason is true about all of the mitzvos.



DIVREI TORAH

לע"נ היה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

בְּעֹבֹר זֶה לֹא אָמַרְתִּי, אֲלֵא בְּשָׁעָה שִׁישׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר מִנְחִים  
לְפָנֶיךָ

(Adapted from Mattos 5761 – Zeh and Koh, Etzem and Hishpatus)

Let us explore this point. The mitzvah of Matzah marked the transition of Bnei Yisrael into a nation that would be defined by Torah and mitzvos. There are several approaches to Torah and mitzvos that one might take. The lowest level is a person who thinks of their life in this world as being about making money, having a family, and enjoying life. He sees Torah and mitzvos as being imposed upon the life that he is living; since Hashem is in charge, he has no choice but to obey. A more refined understanding of Torah and mitzvos is that they enhance our lives. Hilchos niddah enhances family life, hilchos tzedakah enhances the functioning of society, the mitzvos infuse our lives with meaning, and so on. While it is certainly true that Torah and mitzvos bring out the best in society and each individual, that is still far from the ideal approach to Torah and mitzvos. The Ibn Ezra is stressing to us that the Torah is the *זה*, the very focal point of creation.

The most essential point of Torah and mitzvos is not to enhance our lives; the most essential point of our lives is to connect with Hashem through Torah and mitzvos.



וְאָקַח אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם אֶת־אֲבִרְהֶם מֵעֶבֶר הַנְּהַר וְאוֹלַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־  
אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, וְאֲרָבָה אֶת־זֶרְעוֹ וְאָתְוּ־לוֹ אֶת־יִצְחָק. וְאָתּוֹ לִיִּצְחָק  
אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת־עֵשׂוֹ, וְאָתּוֹ לְעֵשׂוֹ אֶת־הַר שְׁעִיר לְרִשְׁתׁ אוֹתוֹ,  
וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרַיִם

(Adapted from Shemos 5784 – The Sprouting of Geulah, Actualizing Our True Potential)

**Sefer Shemos** is where the Torah tells us about the galus and *geulah* that Bnei Yisrael experienced in Mitzrayim. If so, why does it begin by listing the names of the Shevatim? What does this have to do with Geulas Mitzrayim?

The answer is alluded to in the Ramban's introduction to Shemos. The Ramban cryptically writes that הלכות איננו נשלם עד יום שובם אל, מקומם ואל מעלת אבותם, "The exile was not finished until Bnei Yisrael returned to their own place, and to the stature of their forefathers."

This gives a new understanding of what *geulah* means.

GEULAH IS NOT SIMPLY BEING RESCUED FROM OPPRESSION.

We celebrate not just our freedom from the forced labor we experience under cruel conditions of slavery in Mitzrayim, but we rejoice over our regaining the ability to be Hashem's chosen people. *Geulah* means an actualization of our potential, a return to being all that we can be.

This explains why Sefer Shemos begins by listing the names of the Shevatim. Each shevet has its own unique potential, planted by the Avos. The Geulas Mitzrayim was not complete until that latent potential was finally realized with the acceptance of the Torah and the building of the Mishkan.

Perhaps this also explains why we begin מגיד by recounting that Hashem chose the Avos and their

intense mutual devotion to Hashem. The rest of the story we are about to relive through reading the Haggadah is not just about escape from the slavery of Mitzrayim; it is the story of our return to the path leading to greatness, by being the continuation of what the Avos began.

דַּע תִּדַע כִּי־גַר יִהְיֶה זֶרְעֶךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא־  
לָהֶם, וְעַבְדִּים וְעֲנוּ אֹתָם

(Adapted from Lech Lecha 5762)

When Hashem revealed to Avraham

that the children he would have would be as numerous as the stars, Avraham unquestionably accepted what he was told. Yet when Hashem then told Avraham that his children would inherit Eretz Yisrael, Avraham asked Hashem בְּמָה אֲדַע כִּי בְמָה אֲדַע כִּי, "With what can I know that I will inherit it?" As a result of his seemingly questioning Hashem, Avraham was told that his children would have to go into galus. What was there specifically about receiving Eretz Yisrael that Avraham found difficult to believe?

When Hashem spoke of Eretz Yisrael to Avraham, the Land was referred to as הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרַאֶךָ, "The land that I will show you." To Avraham, Eretz Yisrael was continuously unfolding; it symbolized the eternal potential to become something more. It was a "land" that kept unfolding more and more; it was divine in its nature. This aspect of Eretz Yisrael parallels Avraham's own middah:



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ידע תדע כִּי־גַר יִהְיֶה זֶרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וְעֲבָדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם  
(Adapted from Lech Lecha 5762)

Avraham broke away from his father and everything that came before him, and blazed a new path using the middah of התחדשות. He found Hashem all by himself, without anybody to guide him or serve as a role model. Avraham Avinu forged a new path which was the unfolding of a whole new sense of existence.

Avraham wanted to acquire this middah for his children. Avraham requested from Hashem that his children should become worthy in their own right, the same way that Avraham did, by progressing and constantly growing. Thus, When Hashem promised Avraham that his children would inherit Eretz Yisrael, the land of endless possibilities, He was acceding to this request.

But Avraham was puzzled about how this could be. How could the middah of התחדשות be given as a ירושה? By definition, anything passed from generation to generation becomes older, not newer.

**A SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRE CAN HAVE HIS CHILDREN BECOME ANYTHING, EXCEPT FOR BEING SELF-MADE.**

To whatever extent children are shaped by their father's money, they are not self-made; and to whatever extent they are self-made, that cannot have come from their father. How, wondered Avraham, can my children be both?

Galus, we can now understand, was not a tit-for-tat punishment for Avraham questioning Hashem; rather, it was the answer to Avraham's question. Throughout history, whenever Bnei Yisrael became stagnant and frozen, they began to deteriorate spiritually. We were then sent into galus. There, we could not simply coast along on what came before us. Since every generation faces their own darkness, every generation needs to find a new light within themselves that will keep them going. Even our decision to hold on to all that our forefathers have taught us, in galus, is our own decision that we have to make.

The travail of galus is what will bring us to התחדשות, by forcing us to continuously reinvent ourselves, just as Avraham did.



וְעֲבָדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה

(Adapted from Vayechi 5764 – The Emes of Yaakov, When the Present Contains the Future)

## The Vilna Gaon (שה"ש ב, ט, אופן א)

points out that Hashem told Avraham two different קצין, end times for the Galus. One is measured in years: The ארבע mentioned in טו, בראשית טו. Yet two pesukim later, a second קץ is given which is measured not in years, but in generations: ודור רביעי ישובו הנה, "And the fourth generation will return here."

What this means is that "time" and "generations" are two ways to measure the longevity of a people and how faithful they remain to their ideals. Galus Mitzrayim was the כור הברדל, the test of whether Bnei Yisrael would be able to remain who they were even when everything about their circumstances was pulling them away.

It is worth noting that both the measurement of years and the measurement of generations for the end of Galus Mitzrayim are measured in "four" – either four hundred years, or four enations. On the passuk of אם תשקור לי ולניני ולנכדי (בראשית כא, כג), Rashi comments that the mercy of a father lasts for three generations. For three generations, there is a natural sense of connection; it would therefore

not be telling if Bnei Yisrael followed in the way of the Avos for three generations.

When the fourth generation of Bnei Yisrael were still a faithful continuation of what the Avos established, even in the Galus Mitzrayim, that was the sign that they had what it takes to remain Hashem's chosen people throughout all of history.

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DIVREI TORAH

לע"נ היה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

ואַחַר־יָכוֹן יָצְאוּ בְרַכְשׁ גְּדוֹל

(Adapted from Bo 5781 – Last Three Makos, Havdalah of Daas)

Why was Bnei Yisroel

leaving Mitzrayim with a great treasure such an integral part of Yetzias Mitzrayim that it was part of the promise to Avraham?

The answer is that this shows us what our attitude should be about our time spent in galus. The treasure is proof that the 210 years of slavery were not in vain. It is not that we spent time as slaves in Mitzrayim and then Hashem took us out. At the end, we saw that we had really been working for our own gain the entire time – even materially, and all the more so spiritually. All of the efforts that we put in produced fruit, and made us who we became. This is the "treasure" we left with: We became a spiritually ripe nation, one worthy of Kabbalas HaTorah.

This is comfort for us in every galus and time of darkness, be it national or personal. We tend to think that even if we make it through to the end of our difficulties, unfortunately, the time we spent struggling in the mire of galus has gone to waste. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The effort that we put in when times are tough is what forges the treasure of who we become.



לָבוֹן בְּקֶשׁ לַעֲקוֹר אֶת־הַכֵּל  
(Adapted from Naso 5763)

**The first step** in accomplishing any goal is to clarify exactly what the goal is. In order to become great, one must first have a clear ideal that one strives to live up to and know what it is that one wants to become.

This explains why לבן הארמי is described as בקש לעקור את הכל, the one who sought to destroy everything.

THE AVOS ARE THE VERY ROOTS OF BNEI YISROEL;

so long as we hold on to the example that they set and ask ourselves, מתי גיענו מעשי למעשי אבותי, there is hope. Any attempt to get Bnei Yisrael not to live up to their values may break the tree trunk; but so long as we continue to look up to the Avos, the roots remain, and rebirth is possible.

Lavan, who epitomized רמאות, sought to uproot everything. Lavan claimed וְהַבְנִים בְּנֵי הַצֹּאֵן צֹאֲנֵי וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה (ברשאית לא, מג) "The children are my children, the sheep are my sheep, everything that you see is all mine." He attempted to use trickery to uproot the example that Yaakov set, and instead put himself up on a pedestal as the source of this magnificent family, and what his grandchildren should aspire to be. If he would have succeeded in getting us to stop aspiring to be like our Avos, all, הכל, would have been lost.

וְיֵהִי שֵׁם לְגוֹי. מִלְמַד שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצַיְנִים שֵׁם  
(Adapted from Va'eira 5772 – Galus & The Struggle for Jewish Identity)

The Passuk refers

to the process of redemption as the removal of גוי מקרב גוי, the removal of "a nation from within a nation" which Chazal<sup>[1]</sup> tellingly compare to the birthing process. When a fetus is within the mother's womb, the two are inseparable; they share one system that delivers nutrients and oxygen. Bnei Yisroel wasn't merely located in Egypt;

they had become a part of Egypt. The test of the galus was to see if we could maintain our own internal identity when almost every external aspect of it had been stripped away from us.

It is well-known<sup>[2]</sup> that if Bnei Yisrael had sunk to the fiftieth of the תומאה, they would not have been redeemed. The Maharal<sup>[3]</sup> explains that ostensibly, this would have meant Bnei Yisrael's complete transformation into Egyptians. Geulah would not have been possible, because there would have been nothing left to save.

There is an extraordinary Meshech Chochmah<sup>[4]</sup> that deals at length with this issue.

[1] מכילתא בשלח ד"ב.  
[2] הובא בשם הארי"ל דל כמנה מקומות. מל צמאחי פנים, וע' בתי הלוי שמות יב:מ.  
[3] גבורות ה' פ, מ.  
[4] ואחם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בוקר (שמות יב, כב): הנה המתבונן יראה כי במצרים נשתכח מהם גופי תורה, שהיו גוי מקרב גוי, הללו עובדי ע"ז כו', וכן הפור ברית מילה [לוקוס], אמנם הסייגים והגדרים שמרו ביתרון גדול, כמו שאמר במכילתא שלא שנו לשונם, שלא גלו מסתורין יע"ש. לא כן בבלות בבל, היו שומרים גופי תורה אמנם הסייגים והגדרים עברו, שבניהם היו מדברים אשודית ושינו שמם והתחתנו עם גויי הארצות כמו שנאמר בעזרא.

וזנה בימי היות ישראל בגולה, העיקר הוא הסייגים והגדרים שלא תערבו בין העמים, ולכך אמרו עד יבבור עמך עד יעבור עם זו קניית כו', ראויים היו ישראל לעשות להם כג בנימי עזרא כדרך שנינו כי אלא שגרים הוטא. פירוש, שעברו הגדרים והסייגים, ולכך אמרו במ"ר חות סוף פרשה ד': מתיכיו היו ישראל מספנין במדבר, ממח שהיו תגר ע"ז מוכרין ועודין לא נאסר יין העמון, ולכן אמר ויחוקאל בנסים ממפקה ישראל שלא יהי כמו שהי' במדבר מין העמון דו"ק. הלא הנסכים היו במדבר מין ע"ז, ואח"י נזרו על יין ושכרן ופתן לעשות סניג ונדר בין ישראל לע"ז שלא יאבדו קיומן וצורתן הלאומית. ולכן אמרו על י"ח דבר שאף אליהו אינו יכול לבטלן, פירוש שבחיבת הסייגים מוכרחין לאומה עד כי אף אם יבוא המבשר על משה ל"כ לא יבטלן, אם לא כשיבוא משיח ואז כו"ע עבדים לישראל (עירובין מג) ועשה הש"ת מה שיהיה ברצונן. דוגמא ההלכה פסוקה דר"י שבנות ישראל החמירו על עצמן וכו' ובזמן המקדש ע"כ שיבטל דאל"ה לא תדע האשה מתי להביא קרבן זיבה.





TORAH INSPIRED BY HARAV AHRON LOPIANSKY SHLITA

# DIVREI TORAH

לע"נ היה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

וְיִהְיֶה שָׁם לְגוֹי. מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהֵיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצִינִים שָׁם

(Adapted from Va'eira 5772 – Galus & The Struggle for Jewish Identity)

The Meshech Chochmah raises an intriguing point: Bnei Yisrael merited redemption for maintaining their language and names – practices that are not even formal mitzvos – while during the second Beis Hamikdash, despite greater mitzvah observance, they did not merit open miracles. The Meshech Chochmah explains that when Klal Yisrael are in Eretz Yisrael, the most critical measure of their worthiness is to what extent they adhere to the Torah and its mitzvos. However, when Klal Yisrael is in galus, the primary struggle is to maintain a Jewish identity.

**THIS IS THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF GEULAH: IF OUR JEWISH IDENTITY WOULD EVER MELT AWAY, THERE WOULD BE NOTHING LEFT TO REDEEM.**

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כְּמָה שְׁנֹאמַר:  
וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרֶךְ

(Adapted from Shemos 5780 – Menucha, Working Towards a Goal)

## The Gemara (סוטה יא)

tells us that הוּ מַחְלִיפִין מְלֹאכֶת פֶּרֶךְ refers to the fact that מחלפין מלאכת נשים לאנשים ומלאכת אנשים לנשים, "They would switch the men's work to women and the women's work to men's work." Of all of the many facets of slavery, why is it that this seemingly trivial trouble is what Chazal pick to define עבודת פרך?

The answer is that this goes to the heart of what it truly means to be a slave. A slave is a person who works, but his work has no *tachlis*. All that a slave does, he does for his master, not for himself – to the slave, everything he does is purposeless. A slave cannot own anything, and his own children are not even considered to truly be his. He works, but has no accomplishments for himself.

This explains why having the men do women's work and vice versa went to the heart of the slavery that Bnei Yisrael experienced. If a person is working hard, but doing something that he sees value in, he still gets a sense of accomplishment. It is when a person is working to do something that they feel no fulfillment in that they are truly experiencing slavery. Men and women naturally find different types of work fulfilling; when the men and women's work was switched, any sense of accomplishment that Bnei Yisrael could have had in the work was lost.

Torah and mitzvos are the exact opposite. The Chasam Sofer asks an intriguing question: Why is the concept of שכר ועונש, that there is a reward for mitzvos and a punishment for aveiros, one of the עיקרי אמונה? Yes, it certainly is a true statement, but so is the fact that Moshe's wife was Tziphora. Would that be considered one of the principles of our faith? The Chasam Sofer leaves the question unanswered. However, we can suggest that it is because the reward for doing mitzvos that we are talking about is not merely an incentive. As the Nefesh Hachaim explains, the reward is that we have a part in building the world that Hashem had in mind. When a person does what is right, he molds himself and the world around him; that changed reality is its own reward. Hashem put us in a situation where we would experience the pointless labor of *avdus*, an *avdus* to a Pharaoh, so that we would develop a yearning for a life of *tachlis*, self-realization, through working for Hashem.



וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ

(Adapted from Shemos 5778 – VaYeilech Ish, The Power of Humility)

## There were two ways

in which Moshe was the pillar of Bnei Yisrael: He was the *goel rishon*, the first redeemer who brought us out of

Mitzrayim; and he was also the one who brought the Torah to Bnei Yisrael. At first glance, these seem like two disparate roles, with little in common. It seems that even perhaps two different types of personalities would be appropriate for each role.

However, the truth is that both of these roles have one common requirement: selflessness. When we read from the Torah, we do not attribute it to Moshe – it is Hashem's Torah that Moshe brought to us. Moshe's central attribute of *anavah* is what meant he could be entrusted with the awesome task of bringing Hashem's Torah to us.

The same is true of Moshe's role as *goel rishon*. Since Moshe was the one who led us out of Mitzrayim, how could we say וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ? The answer is that Moshe was able to channel Hashem's actions into this world, without taking away from them being attributed to Hashem. Moshe acted as only the agent of Hashem, without any sense of self being involved; to ask, "Was it Moshe or Hashem that took us out of Mitzrayim?" makes as much sense as asking, "Was it me or my hand that turned the page?"



**DIVREI TORAH**

לע"נ תיה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

**צפרדע**

(Adapted from Va'eira 5762 – Tzefardeia, Dibbur Without Daas)

**Unlike the wild animals** of ערב or even the lice of כינים, frogs cause no physical harm or discomfort to a person. The plague aspect of צפרדע was simply the overwhelming number of frogs; there were so many frogs that everything was covered with them, and Mitzrayim simply couldn't function. Wherever they tried to sit had frogs on it, whatever they tried to eat had frogs in it, and whenever they tried to sleep the croaking kept them awake.

The Zohar (ו:ארא כה) writes that the galus of Mitzrayim was a galus of dibbur. If a person is wise, every word of theirs carries wisdom. But if a person is empty, their words are meaningless prattle. Such a person is a sad caricature of Adam as the "medaber." When the words of a person become separated from their intellect, the dibbur can be described as being "in galus." Prattle that is devoid of meaningful content snuffs out any ability for deeper contemplation, just as the empty croaking of the frogs stopped the functioning of life in Mitzrayim.



**ברד**

(Adapted from Va'eira 5763 – Unity of Heaven and Earth, Makkos Barad)

**The חזקוני points out** (שמות ט, כח) that makkas barad is one of the only places in the Torah where the names ה' אלקים are used together: וְאַתָּה וְעַבְדֶּיךָ יָדַעְתִּי כִּי טָרָם תִּירָאוּן: "As for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear Hashem, Elokim." Why is it that specifically here, these two names of Hashem being used in tandem?

The answer lies in one of the unique characteristics of barad. The Torah tells us that within the hail, there was fire. The Midrash Rabbah (יב, ד) calls this a נס בתוך נס, a miracle within a miracle, and writes:

משל למה הדב'ר דומה? לשני לגיונות קשין שהיו נלחמין זה עם זה, ל'מים הגיע זמן מלחמתו של מלך ועשה המלך שלום ביניהם ועשו שליחות המלך ביחד. כך אש וברד צהבין זה לזה, כיון שהגיע זמן מלחמתה של מצרים עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא שלום ביניהם והכו במצרים, הווי: ויהי ברד ואש מתלקחת

"To what may the matter be compared? To two mighty gladiators that were waging war against one another. When the time came for the king's battle, the king made peace between them, and together they carried out the king's mission. So too, fire and hail are enemies of one another; yet, when the time came for war against Mitzrayim, Hashem made peace between them and they struck Egypt together. Then you have: 'And there was hail, and fire burning within the hail.'"

Let us think about what Chazal are conveying to us here. Until this point, Hashem had brought makkos that proved that He exists and that He can exert His will on this world. Now, Hashem was taking this a step further; He was letting us know that אין כמוני בכל הארץ, there is no force in this world other than Hashem.

By taking two elements that usually extinguish one another and using them in tandem, Hashem was proving He is not just the strongest force in creation; He is the only force in creation. When two gladiators fight one another, it seems that they are enemies. However, when the king orders them to work together, this shows that they have no independent agenda; they do only what the king says. By using fire and ice together, Hashem was showing that all of nature operates only as Hashem commands it.

This is why it is specifically by barad that the Torah uses the phrase ה' אלקים. ה' אלקים is name of Hashem used to denote Hashem working within the laws of nature; Hashem is the name used to denote Hashem working beyond the scope of nature. Barad, however, showed that they were and the same – the laws of nature themselves are nothing but the will of Hashem, to be changed as He pleases.

DIVREI TORAH

לע"נ חיה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

ע"ש

(Adapted from Va'eira 5775, Havdala & The Middle Three Makkos)

**The Torah emphasizes** that the middle three makkos served to separate Bnei Yisrael from Mitzrayim. By ערב, the Torah writes והפליתי ביום ההוא את־ארץ גשן אשר עמו עמד עליה (שמות ח, יח) "And I will set aside on that day the land of Goshen, that my nation dwells upon, that there not be there the mixture of wild animals." By דבר, the Torah continues: והפלה ה' בין מקנה ישראל ובין מקנה מצרים ולא ימות מכל־לבני ישראל דבר (שמות ט, ד) "And Hashem will separate between the cattle of Yisrael and the cattle of Mitzrayim, and nothing will perish from that of Bnei Yisrael." In שחין, this idea is not spelled out only because there was no warning from Moshe to Pharaoh in which the makkah was explained.

(Although Chazal make it clear that all of the Makkos affected only the Egyptians, the Meforshim explain that this was not obviously miraculous by the previous set of Makkos. The Nile turning to blood was a localized event, which could plausibly not have affected another province. The same is true of frogs and lice; infestations of these small creatures tend to happen in very specific areas. When it came to large wild animals, however, their nature is to wander from place to place; similarly, diseases such as those that would naturally cause דבר and שחין would naturally spread.)

**TO SEPARATE BNEI YISRAEL FROM MITZRAYIM MEANS FAR MORE THAN TO REMOVE BNEI YISRAEL FROM MITZRAYIM.**

Imagine a child who has been kidnapped as a baby, and raised his whole life by his kidnapers. If the parents find out where their child is, they have to do far more than just get him out of the house of his kidnapers. They need to convince the child, slowly but surely, who he really is. The same was true when it came time for Hashem to take us out of Mitzrayim, He had to show us that we are not part of Mitzrayim; we belong with Hashem.



נתן לנו את־השבת

(Adapted from Shemos 5780 – Menucha, Working Towards a Goal)

**The Torah tells us** that Shabbos is זכר ליציאת מצרים, to remember that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim: וזכרתָ כִּי־עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצִיאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה עַל־כֵּן צִוְּךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת – (דברים ה, טו) – "Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt, and Hashem your G-d took you of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore, Hashem your G-d has commanded you to keep the Shabbos." However, this seems quite puzzling – Shabbos commemorates that Hashem created the world, and existed before we left Mitzrayim. In what way can Shabbos said to be זכר ליציאת מצרים?

The Ramban and other Rishonim explain that the miracles we saw in Mitzrayim prove that Hashem created and controls the world. Nobody was around to witness when Hashem created the world; yet, we saw miracles in Mitzrayim that prove that Hashem can override nature at will.

However, we can give another answer. The *Maharal* explains in several places that "menuchah" is synonymous with reaching a goal. One moves to get towards their goal; when that purpose is realized, motion stops. Shabbos is therefore synonymous with purpose. During the six days of creation, the world was in a state of movement; at Shabbos, since its purpose had been attained, it rested. Shabbos is referred to as תְּכֵלִית שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, the purpose of heaven and earth; it is when we see the result of all of our efforts. Shabbos reveals that all of our labors were not in vain; they are what enabled us to reach our destination.

This is the exact opposite of the slavery of Mitzrayim. All that a slave does, he does for his master, not for himself – to the slave, everything he does is purposeless. A slave cannot own anything, and his own children are not even considered to truly be his. He works, but has nothing to show for it. Shabbos is זכר ליציאת מצרים, because we it is a reminder that we can now work to accomplish.



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TORAH INSPIRED BY HARAV AHRON LOPIANSKY SHLITA

## DIVREI TORAH

לע"נ היה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר

אילו קרבנו לפני הר סיני, ולא נתן לנו את התורה, דיינו  
(Adapted from Yisro 5781 "Yira vs Busha, Standing Before Hashem)

### The Torah refers to Maamad Har Sinai

as *Maamad Har Sinai*, "The day that you stood before Hashem at Chorev." This does not refer to physically standing in front of Hashem – that is our constant state of being. Rather, what it refers to is that we were made wholly aware of the fact that we are in Hashem's Presence – דע לפני מי אתה עומד.

We can now come a new understanding of what the Torah means to tell us when it writes

וכל העם רואים את הקולות, "All of the nation saw the sounds." For what purpose did Hashem make a miracle for us to be able to experience the profound sounds of Torah through the sense of sight? The answer is that when we hear something, we experience it from a distance. Even colloquially, when we say that we've heard something, we usually mean to indicate that we have not experienced firsthand, but rather heard testimony to that effect. However, when we "saw the sounds", we were able to "see" the Torah as a profound reality right in front of us.

We sometimes tend to think of Har Sinai as merely the place where Torah was given. But the experience of Har Sinai was deeper than of just receiving the Torah. Har Sinai was where we sensed the imminence of Hashem. Perhaps this is why the Haggadah uses the word קרבנו in the context of Har Sinai, since it was there that we were able to feel the closeness and immediacy of Hashem. This is what enabled us to treat the Torah as not just as a bunch of nice theories, but as an intense reality that we live in – the reality that we stand in the immediate presence of Hashem.



ולא יכלו להתמהמה, וגם צדה לא עשו להם  
(Adapted from Bo 5776 – Chipazon Good & Bad)

### The Torah instructs us to remember

that we left Mitzrayim בחפזון, in haste. But why is that praiseworthy? Didn't Yaakov chide Reuven for being פחז כמים, quick to act like water? To add to the difficulty, we find that the opposite is true of our preparation for Matan Torah. While the Korban Pesach was to be eaten in haste, three days of preparation were required before Matan Torah; indeed, we spend the fifty days of Sefiras Haomer preparing for Torah. When is haste good, and when is it bad?

Rav Tzaddok HaCohen of Lublin gives a fascinating answer.

When two things are stuck together, a quick and sharp movement is needed to separate them. If one has a bandage, for example, it is not a good idea to try to take it off slowly; the process of separation must be sudden if it is to be successful. It was only after we made our sharp break from Mitzrayim that we were ready to start building ourselves up and preparing to accept the Torah.

The same is true whenever we begin something new.

### ANY BEGINNING THAT STARTS SLOWLY AND METHODICALLY IS NOT A NEW START;

it is a continuation of what was. To start fresh always requires a sharp and sudden moment of separation from what was; only then can we begin building for the future.

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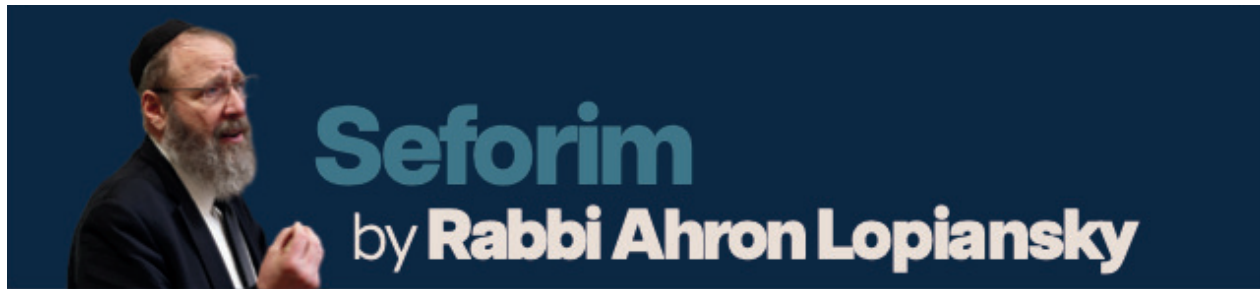
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TORAH INSPIRED BY HARAV AHRON LOPIANSKY SHLITA

לע"נ היה פייגה בת ר' אליעזר



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