

עֵלֵי דֶשֶׁה

**Alei Deshe - Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on
the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur**

Erev Pesach and the Eigel Hazahav

The pasuk (Shemos 32:1) states, וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי בִשְׁשׁ מִשָּׁה לָרְדֹת מֶן הַהָר, *The people saw that Moshe had delayed in descending the mountain.* Rashi explains that when Moshe ascended *Har Sinai*, he told Bnei Yisrael that he would descend forty days later, within the first six hours of the day. Now that six hours had passed and Moshe had still not descended, the people created the *Eigel*. The Ropshitzer Rebbe explains¹ that it was in order to rectify the sin of the *Eigel*, which occurred between the sixth and seventh hours, that Chazal forbade eating *chametz* from the sixth hour of *Erev Pesach*.

The connection runs deeper. The *Cheit Ha'Eigel* resulted from the interference of the Satan, who created a chaotic atmosphere in the world, and displayed an illusion of darkness. Parallel to this, Chazal forbade *chametz* after the sixth hour as a protective measure in case of a cloudy day, when the time of day may be unclear.²

Chazal were very stringent with this prohibition. The Gemara (Pesachim 7a) states that if one is *mekadesh* a woman with kernels of wheat on *Erev Pesach* after the sixth hour, the marriage is invalid. Rashi notes an anomaly: the prohibition is only Rabbinical, so how can it undo an act of *kiddushin* which is binding *min haTorah*? Rashi answers that since anyone who does *kiddushin*, does so in accordance with the wishes of the *chachamim*, the *chachamim* can undo a *kiddushin* which runs contrary to their wishes. The *chachamim* took this step of emphasizing their authority regarding the prohibition of *chametz* after the sixth hour, to repair the damage to

Bnei Yisrael's level of (Shemos 14:31) וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בַּה' וּבַמֹּשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ - *and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant, that was wrought by the Cheit Ha'Eigel*

“

**“You wanted to annul the
decree with money;
I annulled it with
biur chametz.”**

It is told that the government once issued a harsh decree against the Yidden. The *tzaddikim* of the generation convened to discuss a plan of action. It was decided that pertinent officials would be bribed, hopefully leading to the decree's dissolution. R. Aharon of Chernobyl arose, and requested that the plan's implementation be put on hold until the time of *biur chametz*. Sure enough, when the time of *biur chametz* arrived, the decree was rescinded. In explanation, R. Aharon said, “You wanted to annul

the decree with money; I annulled it with *biur chametz*.” This power is expressed the *Yotzros* of Shabbos HaGadol: ולמה אכילת חמץ לשש שעות, *וזכר לחפזון שכינה להעביר גזרות רעות* - *Why [the prohibition against] eating chametz at the sixth hour? In commemoration of the haste of the Shechinah to remove harsh decrees.*”

According to the Ropshitzer, the potency of the sixth hour of *Erev Pesach* against harsh decrees can be understood clearer. Chazal say that every misfortune which occurs to Yidden contains an element of punishment for the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*. Since at the sixth hour we affect a rectification of the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*, it is a potent time for harsh decrees against Yidden to be annulled.

(פרשת צו - שבת ערב פסח תשפ"א, ליל ש"ק)

1 Zera Kodesh, Likutim s.v. Issur

2 See Pesachim 12b

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

Taking The First Step

The first Yom Tov of the year is Pesach, and the first mitzvah that Klal Yisrael fulfilled in unison was *Korban Pesach*. Although it is technically a *korban yachid* (*korban* of an individual), it has the significance of a *korban tzibbur* since it is performed with a large gathering of Yidden.³ *Korban Pesach* has a unique severity, that one who neglects to fulfill it is punished with *kareis*, unlike other positive mitzvos.⁴ This demonstrates that the very vitality of Bnei Yisrael is dependent on it.

There is, however, a leniency regarding *Korban Pesach*, that one is only punished for neglecting it if he was near Yerushalayim on *Erev Pesach*; if he was not, he is exempt. However, the Gemara (Pesachim 94a) limits this dispensation: if one is near Yerushalayim, but he and his family are sitting in their wagons in traffic, he must disembark and walk to Yerushalayim to bring the *Korban Pesach*. The Gemara cites a pasuk as proof that this scenario is not considered an *oness* (out of one's control), and does not have the exemption of being distant from Yerushalayim.

The Sfas Emes⁵ wonders about this: why is a pasuk needed to teach that being stuck in traffic does not qualify as being at a distant location? Since the person is able to be in Yerushalayim in time for the *Korban Pesach*, certainly he must do so.

To understand this, we must first understand why it is that *Korban Pesach* has an exemption for one who is distant from Yerushalayim. Why doesn't the Torah mandate that all Yidden prepare beforehand, by taking the time to travel to Yerushalayim? The answer is that since at the time of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, Bnei Yisrael were very distant from Torah and *kedushah*, and only through an *isarus dil'eila* (arousal from Heaven) were they able to fulfill the *Korban Pesach* – therefore, this mitzvah maintains that quality for all time. It is only at the very time of *Korban Pesach* that an outpouring of *kedushah* descends and arouses Yidden to fulfill their mitzvah.⁶

There is a well-known statement of Chazal,⁷ that if a person makes an opening even the size of the tip of a needle, Hashem assists him and creates a much larger opening. The words of Chazal are: ואני פותח לכם פתחים שיהיו: עגלות וקרונות נכנסות בו - *and I will open for you openings that wagons and carriages can enter through*. Why did Chazal use this example of a large opening? One could describe it in any number of ways.

It is because wagons and carriages represent the physical obligations one tends to in this world, which leave one wearied and hardly capable of

growing close to Hashem. Indeed, we all live in this world, and we all have such obligations; some are tied down in their efforts to earn a livelihood, and some in their familial duties. Others may *chalilah* be bogged down pursuing this-worldly desires. Each person in his own way is hindered by 'wagons and carriages.' Hashem's message to us is: If you yourself will create only the tiniest opening, I will extend it to fit all your wagons and carriages. You will be able to be uplifted and grow close to Me, notwithstanding your physical obligations.

A unique interpretation was given by R. Baruch of Mezhibuzh to the pasuk (Shemos 12:23), – על הפתח ה' וקָטַח ה' and *Hashem will pass over the entrance*. On Pesach, we need not even make the initial needle-sized opening; Hashem *passes over the entrance*, and creates the entire opening for us Himself.⁸

We may now understand why the Gemara entertained that one stuck in traffic near Yerushalayim would be exempt from *Korban Pesach*. Since on Pesach one does not need to create any opening at all, perhaps he does not even need to take the effort of disembarking and walking to Yerushalayim. The pasuk therefore teaches that one in fact does need to make that effort. Why? Because true, on *Erev Pesach* one is very far from being spiritually capable of fulfilling the mitzvah, and Hashem will draw him close, showering on him *kedushah*. And yes, one does not even need to make any opening of his own at all. However, there is one thing one must do – let go of anything that binds him to this world and prevents him from coming close to Hashem.

In fact, this explanation is hinted to in Rashi's beautiful phraseology. Rashi explains why a traffic jam near Yerushalayim is not considered an *oness*: "Because he must get away and walk alone." Why does Rashi need to say that he must "get away"; he could have sufficed with, "he must walk alone." Rashi is alluding to the inner reason why this is not considered out of one's control: he must "get away" from everything that hinders him from attaining *kedushah*. This much is incumbent on us, even on *Erev Pesach*: we must be a *ba l'taheir*, abandoning our previous spiritual standing. Hashem will then pour down on us an *isarus dil'eila*, allowing us to attain *kedushah*.

(בנאות דשא – יו"ט פסח ושביעי של פסח תשפ"ב)

3 See Yoma 51a

4 The only other positive mitzvah that has this stringency is *milah*; however, whereas *milah* can be performed throughout one's whole lifetime, *Korban Pesach* is punishable with *kareis* each year anew.

5 Pesachim, ibid

6 See *Derashos Chasam Sofer*, Shabbos HaGadol 5592

7 Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:3

8 See *Sfas Emes*, Shabbos HaGadol 5661

Finding Our Own Wheat

A newly married *chassan* was once at his father-in-law's table for the Pesach *Seder*. As he poured his first cup of wine, he was shocked to notice a kernel of wheat floating in it. Immediately, he spilled out the wine. His wife's family was deeply humiliated that such a terrible blunder had occurred on the new *chassan's* very first visit. Some time later the soup was served, and once again, the *chassan* spotted a kernel of wheat floating in it. He could not contain himself, and shouted, "Did you not check the house for *chametz*? What's going on here?!" Everyone hurriedly emptied their bowls, and the main course was promptly served. Everyone's shock was compounded when yet again, some kernels of wheat showed up in the *chassan's* serving. Everyone quickly disposed of their portions.

Terror-stricken, the *chassan* jumped out of his seat as if bitten by a snake. He began to holler, "Chametz on Pesach? How can this be? What kind of family have I married into?!" His wife's family members – terribly frightened themselves – could not calm him down, nor could they provide a plausible explanation for what had occurred. Ablaze, the *chassan* yelled, "I want to divorce my wife. One cannot live together with a snake; one can certainly not live with people who eat *chametz* on Pesach."

Hearing the commotion, a wise neighbor told the *chassan*, "Listen, in any case you cannot give your wife a *get* right now; all the *batei din* are closed. So please calm yourself for now, and come with me to the *gaon*, R. Shmuel Salant, the elderly Rav of Yerushalayim. Certainly, he can advise you what you should do."

Arriving at the Rav's home, the *chassan* began, "Kevod *harav*, I came to my father-in-law's house as a guest for the *Seder*, and in my cup, I found a kernel of wheat! Then again in my soup, and again in all my food! The horror! I would never have believed that these Yidden eat *chametz* on

Pesach, punishable by *kareis*! Who knows if they aren't giving me to eat *neveilos* and *tereifos* too!"

R. Shmuel Salant beheld the enraged, red-faced *chassan*, and said, "Come, let us go out to the courtyard." Outside, R. Shmuel removed the *chassan's shtreimel*, and, with a swift brush,

standing! You yourself did not fulfill the mitzvah of searching for *chametz* in places where *chametz* is found, as the *chachamim* instituted!"



The Rosh⁹ maintains that one who has another

Since people tend to not see their own faults, only those of others; the Torah warns, וְלֹא יִרְאֶה לְךָ הַמִּץ, one must take care to destroy his own chametz, his own yetzer hara

many kernels of wheat flew out. It was now clear what had occurred: at the *chassan's oifruf*, the people had pelted him with wheat kernels, and many had become lodged in the fur of his *shtreimel*. Now, as he had bent down over each course, kernels had fallen out and into his food.

R. Shmuel Salant's great wisdom had saved the day; everyone's nerves were calmed, and the muddled *chassan* apologized to his in-laws. Everything returned to normal.



Whoever hears this story is amazed at R. Shmuel Salant's keen insight. However, there is no inherent message relevant to us, nothing we can apply to our *avodas Hashem*. There is, however, what to be learned from the end of the story, which is omitted from most printed versions:

Although R. Shmuel Salant was a very mild-mannered person who never showed anger, this time was different. With an irate face, he turned to the *chassan* and said, "Why did you yell at other people? You need to take stock of your own

Yid's *chametz* in his possession (and is responsible for it) violates *bal yera'eh*. This poses a difficulty. The Gemara (Pesachim 5b) states that שֶׁלךְ אִי אֶתְּךָ רֹואֵה אֲבָל אֶתְּךָ שֶׁל אֲחֵרִים, *One may not see his own chametz [i.e., he transgresses bal yera'eh by it], but he may see the chametz of others.*

According to the Rosh, one may also not 'see' the *chametz* of another Yid, so the Gemara should have said, *One may not see the chametz of a Jew, but he may see the chametz of a non-Jew. Only on a non-Jew's chametz does one not violate bal yera'eh.*

*Toldos Yaakov Yosef*¹⁰ discusses the pasuk (Shemos 13:7) וְלֹא יִרְאֶה לְךָ הַמִּץ וְלֹא יִרְאֶה לְךָ שְׂאֵר - *no chametz may be seen in your possession, nor may leaven be seen in your possession in all your borders.* Why does the Torah state this command in the second person, addressing

⁹ Pesachim, chapter 1 no. 5

¹⁰ Bo, 14

“you”? After all, one can help his friend by destroying his friend’s *chametz*, too.¹¹

Toldos Yaakov Yosef explains that the Torah is addressing the nature of man. Since people tend to fall in line with *אתה רואה אבל אתה של אחרים*, not seeing their own faults, only those of others; the Torah warns, *ולא יראך לך חמץ*, one must take care to destroy his *own chametz*, his *own yetzer hara*, before he concerns himself with other peoples’ faults.

We may now understand that although, as the Rosh maintains, one may not possess a fellow Yid’s *chametz* on Pesach, nonetheless, the Gemara couldn’t state, “One may not see the *chametz* of a Jew, but he may see the *chametz* of a non-Jew,” since that may imply that a Yid must busy himself ridding others of their ‘*chametz*,’ their *yetzer hara*. In truth, one must focus on himself, combing the depths of his heart for *chametz*, as the pasuk says, *ולא יראך לך חמץ*.

Not only is it not one’s job to search for other peoples’ *chametz*; but if one does so, he may overlook his own *chametz*, as did that *chassan*, neglecting his own kernels of wheat and blaming them on his in-laws.

This contains a lesson for all of us. We seek all manner of outward *chumros* and *hiddurim*, impressive to the observer. But we often forget the main thing: taking a close look inside of ourselves, destroying the *chametz*, the *yetzer hara* within us, which is often hidden deep inside the cracks and crevices of our hearts. This is why we clean our homes very well before the time of *bedikas chametz*; so that at that time, we can scour deep within ourselves for *chametz*, as the pasuk (Yirmiyah 17:9) states, *עקב הלב מכל, ואגבש הוא מי ידענו* - *The heart is the most deceitful of all, and it is fragile – who can know it?*



The *Zohar hakadosh*¹² notes the language of Hashem’s command to Moshe (Shemos 10:1), *בא אל פרהע* - *come to Pharaoh*; why doesn’t the

pasuk say, *לך אל פרהע*, *go to Pharaoh*? Early *chassidim* answered lightly, that if the pasuk had been written that way, the abbreviation of *שובבי"ם* wouldn’t work, since the first *beis* would be missing. This is not simply a joke; even the light-minded sayings that have been passed down from early *chassidim* have great depth.

Let us suggest what these *chassidim* may have meant. Had the Torah said, “Go to Pharaoh,” it may have been understood to imply that it is our job to go and seek out evil in order to combat it. People would be ready and waiting, holding big clubs, eager to wage war with wickedness. Therefore, Hashem said, “Come to Pharaoh.” You don’t need to go anywhere to look for evil; come, take a good look right here inside your heart, and you’ll find it. Had this vital lesson of the *beis* of *בא* been absent, there would have been no *Shovavim*.

There is a little Pharaoh who proclaims (Shemos 5:2) *מי ה' אֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁמֵּעַ בְּקוֹלוֹ* - *Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice?* right here inside our hearts. Since a sin must be rectified in its place, our *teshuvah* must be in the depths of our hearts. Every Yid has the ability to reach into his heart and arouse himself to *teshuvah*. The pasuk (Shemos 15:26) states, *כָּל הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַחְתִּי לָא בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא אֲשִׁים עֲלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' רֹפְאֶךָ* - *any of the diseases that I placed in Egypt, I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem, your Healer*. *Sefarim* write that the opinions in the *Haggadah* as to how many plagues struck the Egyptians in Mitzrayim and at the Yam Suf, each giving greater numbers, are intended to multiply the ‘diseases’ that Hashem will not bring upon Bnei Yisrael. What was the greatest plague that struck the Egyptians? The stubbornness and hardness of heart that Hashem brought upon them. Certainly, about this plague Hashem says *לֹא אֲשִׁים עֲלֶיךָ*, I will not bring it upon you.¹³ Every Yid can – and must – open his heart and do *teshuvah*.

(בנאות דשא - יו"ט פסח ושבועי של פסח תשפ"ב)

11 See Bava Kamma 98b; *Tzlach*, Pesachim 29a
12 Bo 34a
13 See *Chasam Sofer*, Beshalach s.v. *Ki ani Hashem*

The Master Plan

Why is it that after all the great *avodah* of *Seder* night, we conclude with *Chad Gadya*? By way of comparison, the holy *avodos* of Elul and the *yamim nora'im* climax with *ne'ilah*, when we coronate Hashem with *Shema Yisrael*, and cry out seven times *Hashem Hu Ha'Elokim*. What is the significance of *Chad Gadya*, that it serves as the finale of the *leil haSeder*? Although many explanations have been given for the actual meaning of *Chad Gadya*, its relevance to the conclusion of the *Seder* remains unexplained. We will offer an explanation of *peshat*, and we must continuously reiterate its lesson to ourselves. As *Mesilas Yesharim* writes in his introduction, even the simplest concepts must be constantly restated.

If somebody were to see a cat biting a goat, or an ox slaughtered, or a *shochet* die, he would most likely point to the natural causes that led to this occurrence. Perhaps the *shochet* died because he was not careful with his health, and so on. This is the way of people.

Chad Gadya teaches that this is not the way. With each new step in the story, the reader is brought back to the very beginning – a goat purchased for two *zuzim*. Why? To demonstrate that all occurrences happen within a greater scheme, each detail masterfully planned by Hashem with the ultimate precision in fairness and justice.

Thus, the *Seder night*, whose objective is to instill within us pure *emunah*, climaxes with *Chad Gadya*’s lesson in Hashem’s *hashgachah* over the world – that every

happening falls into a greater context, down to the tiniest detail. As Shlomo HaMelech said (Koheles 5:7), אַם עֶשְׂק רָשׁ, וְגִזְל מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדִּיק תִּרְאֶה בְּמִדְיָנָה אֶל תִּתְמָה עַל הַחֶכֶץ כִּי גְבַהַּ מֵעַל גְּבַהַּ שְׁמֵר וְגְבַהִים - *If you see oppression of the poor, and the suppression of justice and right in the State, do not be astonished at the fact, for there is One higher than high Who watches and there are high ones above them.*

There are various opinions in the *Rishonim* regarding *hashgachah pratis*, but the practical *halachah* follows that of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples. A Yid's feeling and approach to life must be that Hashem's *hashgachah* is all-pervasive – not only over people, but over all of Creation, both the living and the inanimate. When a person scoops up a handful of sand, and some grains falls between his fingers – each one of them was predetermined by Hashem to fall. Nothing occurs in this world without a Divine will directing it.¹⁴

Each part of *Chad Gadya* is not a new incident; each one is a link in a chain formulated by Hashem. Every Yid – infused with a G-dly *neshamah* – is sustained his whole life by Hashem. Although one must take the actions required of him, Hashem's master plan is all-inclusive.

This is the pinnacle of *emunah* that we reach as we conclude *Seder* night; this is the sum total of all the *kezaysim* and all the mitzvos of the night. After all, all the mitzvos are intended to arouse a Yid's heart to *emunah*.

(פרשת צו – שבת ערב פסח תשפ"א, ליל ש"ק)

14 See *Pri Ha'aretz*, Bo

Splitting Our Sea

Chazal say¹⁵ that at the time of *Kriyas Yam Suf*, all the waters of the world split: the waters in pits, caves, jugs, cups, barrels, and bottles; the upper waters in the heavens and the lower waters in the depths of the earth. In another place,¹⁶ Chazal put it this way: “When Hashem instructed Moshe, וְאַתָּה הֵרָם אֶת מַטְּךָ - *And you – lift up your staff* (Shemos 14:16), all the springs of the world's depths split; even the water in jugs and presses and bottles divided at that time.”

The wording of this statement seems difficult. Why do Chazal stress that *even* the water contained in personal items (jugs, presses, bottles) divided, implying that that is greater than the splitting of “all the springs of the world's depths”? Anyone can divide the water in a jug by simply placing a piece of wood through it, but it is far less simple to split a river.

The objective of miracles is to spread the glory of Hashem's Kingship throughout the world, and to make clear that Hashem rules over nature. Thus, when bringing the *makkos* upon Mitzrayim, Hashem said (Shemos 8:18), לְמַעַן תֵּדַע כִּי אֲנִי ה' בְּקִרְבְּךָ הָאָרֶץ - *so that you will*

Suf; this message would be heard around the world.¹⁷

This, then, is Chazal's intention. One might have thought that a person's household vessels – hardly tools for widespread publicity – would not be worthy of their waters splitting. The truth, however, is to the contrary: the miracle specifically included the private items of one's home, in order to make clear that Hashem's dominion extends over every single thing, with no exception.

We may take another approach. The greatness of water is its ability to purify the impure. But water contained in a vessel does not have this quality and can even be made impure itself. This is why Chazal stressed that *even* contained water split. The *nes* of *Kriyas Yam Suf* occurred even where there was a lack of purity, revealing Hashem's reign over that realm as well. This contains a lesson for us: wherever a Yid stands, even on the lowest rung, the sea can split for him.

We may explain on a deeper, practical level as well. Typically, when a person witnesses a miracle, he becomes amazed at the way Hashem altered nature in this unusual fashion.

Wherever a Yid stands, even on the lowest rung, the sea can split for him

know that I am Hashem in the midst of the land. This was why Hashem caused all the waters of the world to split together with the *Yam*

15 Mechilta, Beshalach 4; Shemos Rabbah 21:6

16 Midrash Tehillim, 18:16

Perhaps he will ponder a bit more, and reach the recognition that Hashem is all-powerful. But no practical lesson is gleaned; his life does not change in any lasting way. In a similar vein, R. Bunim of Peshischa once said that he

17 See *Gevuros Hashem*, 42

could make a raft float upstream, but it would not produce a single *ba'al teshuvah*. Although everybody would be astonished by the phenomenon, the excitement would be short-lived. Miracles are seen as 'just a *mofes*,' and do not arouse people from their this-wordly slumber.

But the actual purpose of miracles is to change a person's essence, to shake him to the depths of his heart and awaken him to serve Hashem above the confines of his nature. The pasuk (Tehillim 60:6) states, *נָתַתָּה לִירְאֵיךָ נֵס לְהַתְנַסֵּס* - *You gave a banner* ((נס) *to be raised high, to those who*

fear You. The Sfas Emes¹⁸ explains that Hashem performs *nissim* in order to lift us high, above the limits of our nature. When we see that Hashem altered nature for us, we must be inspired to alter our own nature for Him. In fact, this occurred at *Kriyas Yam Suf*; Bnei Yisrael deduced by *kal v'chomer* that since Hashem annulled nature for them, they must certainly annul nature for Him.¹⁹

This is Chazal's intention that *even* the water in jugs and cups split. The objective of *Kriyas Yam*

18 Chanukah 5636, first night; Pesach 5646; and other places

19 See Sfas Emes, Pesach 5637

Suf was to impress upon every member of Klal Yisrael that Hashem rules over every aspect of Creation, including a person's own little world. To this end, the miracle extended even to one's personal vessels, which he brings into his home. The message was clear: one needs to be influenced by the miracle, changing his ways even in his private domain, where nature normally runs its course. There, too, one must 'split the waters,' rising above and overcoming his nature in a lasting manner.

(בבאות דשא – שביעי של פסח תשפ"א)

By His Name

Every *kapittel* in *Hallel* mentions the *Shem Havayah* (the four-letter Name of Hashem), and every *kapittel* in all of *Tehillim* mentions at least one of the Names of Hashem. The singular exception is the *kapittel* of *B'tzeis Yisrael m'Mitzrayim* (114). Specifically where David HaMelech discusses the wonders of *yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Kriyas Yam Suf*, the Name of Hashem is not mentioned.²⁰ How can we understand this?

The Gemara (Sotah 36b) states that Yehudah's entire name is made up of the Name of Hashem, because he sanctified Hashem's Name publicly, when Nachshon ben Aminadav, of *Shevet Yehudah*, jumped into the *Yam Suf* first. The Gemara then explains the connection between two pesukim in the above *kapittel* (2-3), *הִיטָה יְהוּדָה לְקִדְשׁוֹ*, *יְשַׁרְאֵל מִמְשָׁלוֹתָיו, הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס* - *Yehudah became his sanctuary, Yisrael his (Yehudah's) dominions. The sea saw and fled. Why was Yehudah sanctified and given dominion over Yisrael? Because "The sea saw and fled" – the Yam Suf saw Shevet Yehudah jump in, and split.*

Since *Shevet Yehudah* as a whole was uplifted over the rest of Bnei Yisrael, it seems that it was not only Nachshon ben Aminadav that jumped in first; the whole *Shevet Yehudah* followed him. This was an act of actual *mesirus nefesh*, because they did not know that the sea would split.²¹ Since all of *Shevet Yehudah* were *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* publicly, they all merited bearing Hashem's Name in the name of their *shevet*.

20 Although the *kapittel* does mention *יַעֲקֹב יַעֲקֹב* - *The G-d of Yaakov* (pasuk 7), it only refers to Hashem's dominion over Yaakov as an individual, not to his Kingship over all of Creation.

21 Once the sea did split, the path was paved for more such miracles.

This, then, is the answer to our question. The *kapittel* of *B'tzeis Yisrael* does, in fact, include Hashem's Name, in the form of *הִיטָה יְהוּדָה לְקִדְשׁוֹ* – Yehudah, who sanctified Hashem's Name, carries Hashem's Name in his own.

The pasuk (Bereishis 49:8) states, *יְהוּדָה אֶתְּךָ יוֹדוּךָ אֶחָיִךְ* - *Yehudah – you, your brothers shall acknowledge*. Chazal²² explain: "All of your brothers will be called by your name; one will not say, 'I am a Reuveini' or 'I am a Shimoni,' rather, 'I am a Yehudi.'" Since all Yidden bear the name of Yehudah, they in fact all bear the Name of Hashem.

Indeed, each individual Yid was worthy of *Kriyas Yam Suf*. The pasuk (Tehillim 136:13) states, *לְגֹר יָם סוּף לְגִזְרִים* - *To Him, Who divided the Yam Suf into parts*. Chazal²³ explain that the *Yam Suf* was divided into twelve parts; one pathway for each *shevet*. The Sfas Emes²⁴ questions this. What was the point of providing each *shevet* its own path? He explains that it contained a message: each *shevet* was worthy of *Kriyas Yam Suf* all its own. And in truth, each individual member of Klal Yisrael was worthy of this, as the pasuk (Tehillim 74:13) says, *אֶתְּךָ יָם פִּוּרְרָתְךָ בְּעֶזֶךָ יָם* - *You shattered the sea with Your might*. The expression *פִּוּרְרָתְךָ* implies that the sea was made into *פִּירוּרִים*, crumbs. Each Yid had a part, a crumb, of *Kriyas Yam Suf*. And just as at that time, the sea was split for every Yid, so it is for all time; the miracles renew themselves in the *neshamah* of every Yid each *Shevi'i Shel Pesach*.

22 Bereishis Rabbah 98:6

23 See Mechilta, Beshalach 14:16; see also Rashi, Tehillim ad loc.

24 End of 5664

But this is conditional. In order for each Yid to be prominent all his own, he must value his strengths and individual significance; otherwise he is negated, just like a crumb is nullified due to lack of importance.²⁵ One who does value his significance is fit to carry the Name of Hashem, as we say in *tefillah*, ושמך הגדול והקדוש עלינו קראת, *Your great and holy Name, Your called upon us.*²⁶

We may now have a deeper understanding in the words of the *piyut U'vchen Va'yivasha*, וירא ישראל את, תתה למו שם ויד, *Those saved from the short of hand – You gave them a name and a hand, Yisrael saw the Hand.* Simply, this means that Hashem saved Bnei Yisrael from the Egyptians, who had become 'short of hand,' i.e., weak and helpless, and Hashem

25 Pesachim 6b

26 Similarly, in the *leshem yichud* for the mitzvah of *lulav*, we say, לידע איך שמך נקרא עלי, *to know how Your Name is called upon me.*

gave Bnei Yisrael a name of prominence and great strength, as the pasuk (Shemos 14:31) says, וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּד - *And Yisrael saw the Hand.* However, we may explain that the 'name' that Hashem gave Klal Yisrael was, in fact, the title *Yehudim*, which is the ability to be *moser nefesh* for the will of Hashem. Through this, we sanctify the glory of His Name, by which we are called.

(בנאות דשא - שביעי של פסח תשפ"א)

For each Yid to be prominent all his own, he must value his strengths and individual significance

Matzos: Theft and Ownership

*Shulchan Aruch*²⁷ rules that one does not fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah if it is stolen. He elaborates further in *Beis Yosef*, that it is good practice to declare one's matzah a gift to whoever will have it – in order that it not be considered stolen – as the Gemara (Sukkah 24b) says regarding *lulav*. *Magen Avraham*²⁸ writes that one should preferably say this when grinding the grain for the matzos, because one person's flour may accidentally become exchanged with another's, resulting in stolen matzos.

The *Acharonim* challenge *Magen Avraham's* statement: If two peoples' flour become exchanged, each person will halachically acquire the matzos that he bakes, since he made a *shinui* (alteration) to the stolen flour.

27 O.C. 454:4

28 No. 5

*Pri Megadim*²⁹ and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*³⁰ explain that one should make the above declaration when grinding the grain, since even if one acquires his flour by *shinui*,³¹ he will not be permitted to make a *berachah* on it, as the pasuk (Tehillim 10:3) says, וּבִצֵּעַ ה' בֵּרֵךְ גֹּאֲץ ה' - *the robber who blesses blasphemes Hashem.*³²

This opinion is novel for two reasons. Firstly, it means that even if one did not intend to steal – the flours became accidentally exchanged – nonetheless, the halachah of וּבִצֵּעַ גֵּרֵךְ applies.

And secondly, it implies that if the original owner would gift the flour to the accidental

29 *Eishel Avraham* 5

30 No. 13

31 See *Shulchan Aruch*, 11:1 and 649:5. The source for this is *Tosafos*, Bava Kamma 67a s.v. *Amar Ulla*.

32 See *Shulchan Aruch*, 649:5

stealer after it had been altered by baking, the halachah of וּבִצֵּעַ גֵּרֵךְ would not be reversed, since it was originally obtained through stealing. Although such a gift may exempt the stealer from paying for the flour, it would not affect the status of the flour itself.

This is not so simple. The Gemara (Kiddushin 69a) states that one may advise a *mamzer* how to purify his progeny: he can steal, and, not having what to repay with, he will be sold as a Jewish slave. As a slave, he can marry a non-Jewish maidservant, and thus, his children will not be *mamzerim*. Rashi wonder about this: How can one advise another to steal? In answer, *Tosafos HaRosh* suggests that the *mamzer* can steal from somebody who will forgive the misdeed; what matters is only that he will be sold as a slave.

Clearly, *Tosafos HaRosh* does not mean that the theft would be forgiven before the act, since that would not be considered theft, and

the 'thief' presumably would not be sold as a slave. Rather, after *beis din* would sell the thief as a slave, the original owner would forgive him, since he stole only to purify his lineage. *Tosafos HaRosh's* opinion is clear, then, that forgiveness of theft rectifies the act retroactively to the point where it is not seen as a misdeed.

Accordingly, the same should hold true in our discussion; even if the flour's original owner gifts it to the stealer after it is baked, the theft should be retroactively undone, and the halachah of וְבִצֵּעַ בְּרֵךְ should not apply. However, this opinion of *Tosafos HaRosh* needs clarification; we find no such concept elsewhere, that a theft can be undone to the extent that it would be permissible *l'chatchilah*.³³



As mentioned above, the *Acharonim* dispute *Magen Avraham's* opinion that one should declare his matzah a gift at the time of grinding, since in any case, the flour will be altered by baking, and the one who has it will acquire it then.

*Mekor Chaim*³⁴ and *Imrei Binah*³⁵ answer that one only acquires by *shinui* when the theft was intentional; since in this case the flour was accidentally exchanged, it would not be acquired by *shinui* when it is baked.

This can be understood following the opinion of *Nesivos HaMishpat* (by the author of *Mekor Chaim*). *Nesivos HaMishpat* writes³⁶ that a thief only acquires by *shinui* where he becomes responsible for the item in instance of *oness* (occurrence out of his control).

33 See *Zecher L'Tov*, no. 6 s.v. *V'hu*

34 454:2; this follows his opinion in *Nesivos HaMishpat*, 341:7

35 Pesach, beginning of 24

36 351 no. 1

He also writes³⁷ that one who accidentally takes an item, not intending to steal it, does not acquire it to the point of responsibility for *oness*. This is also the opinion of *Ketzos HaChoshen*.³⁸ Accordingly, since the flour was not stolen intentionally, the stealer is not responsible for it in instance of *oness*, so he does not acquire it by *shinui*.

We may explain the answer of *Mekor Chaim* and *Imrei Binah* in a different way as well. The Gemara (*Yevamos* 52b) states that one who works the field of a *ger* who died without inheri- tors – leav-

This can be substantiated by a statement of *Rabbeinu Tam*,⁴⁰ that if a dyer is instructed to dye fabric red but dyes it black, he does not acquire the fabric by *shinui*, since he did not have intention to acquire it. Clearly, one does not acquire by *shinui* unless he has intention to take possession of the object.

Yet, as mentioned, *Pri Megadim* and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* maintain that the flour in fact would be acquired by *shinui* when it is baked. How would they explain this statement of *Rabbeinu Tam*?

Perhaps they would draw a distinction between the case of the dyer and that of the matzah bakers. Granted, the one taking his neighbor's flour for matzah does not intend to steal it; but ultimately, he is taking it for himself, if only because he believes it is his.

But the dyer isn't even keeping the fabric for himself; he is returning it to its owner.

Thus, *Rabbeinu Tam's* statement that one does not acquire by *shinui* without intent to possess the item, may only apply to a case like that of the dyer, where one does not maintain possession of the item at all. In the case of the matzos, however, the flour would be acquired by *shinui*, since the stealer maintains possession over it.

(בגאות דשא - יו"ט פסח ושביעי של פסח תשכ"ב)

פסח נשך ושמה

ing all his possessions *hefker* – but does so because he believes that it was his field, does not acquire the field with his working. It would seem that similarly, if one steals in a way that he does not intend on taking possession of the object, he does not acquire it by *shinui*. Since the stealer in question did not intend to take possession of the flour, because he thought it was his, he would not acquire it when he bakes it.³⁹

37 Ibid, end of no. 1

38 Ibid, no. 1

39 However, it is difficult to give this explanation for *Mekor Chaim*, since he

writes in *Nesivos HaMishpat* (351:1) that just as a thief has no choice about becoming responsible for instance of *oness*, he has no choice about acquiring the object by *shinui*. Clearly, in *Nesivos HaMishpat's* opinion, a thief's intention whether to take possession of the item plays no role. This cannot be compared to where one unknowingly works a deceased *ger's* field, since in that case, the question is about a lawful acquisition; where one steals, however, the Torah places the item in his possession even against his will.

40 *Tosafos*, *Bava Kamma* 95b s.v. *b'sh'vach*

