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15

בּו
Bo

Overview

Parashat Bo contains the narrative of the final three plagues, culminating in the dramatic release of the Jewish people from their oppressive exile and the first leg of their momentous journey into the desert. In this *parashah*, we witness the mighty Egyptian empire brought to its knees, its idols crushed, and its arrogant Pharaoh reduced to begging for his life. It also includes the origin and details of the observances meant to commemorate the Exodus: the Passover sacrifice and holiday and the consecration of the firstborn.

As such, *parashat Bo* is the *parashah* of the Exodus—not just the background, buildup, or aftermath of the Exodus, but the Exodus itself. Even before the actual signal to leave is given, we feel the imminence of redemption: Pharaoh’s courtiers are urging him to stop his senseless refusal to let the people go and the people are collecting their long-overdue payment for their work from the Egyptian populace and preparing to leave.

It seems strange, then, that the *parashah* is named *Bo* (“Come”), after God’s instruction to Moses to “come to Pharaoh.” The fact that Moses must come to Pharaoh indicates that Pharaoh has the upper hand, that he is the dominant authority.

Furthermore, why are the ten plagues spread over two *parashiot*? It would seem more logical that the preceding *parashah* be devoted entirely to the theme of crushing the power of Egypt through the plagues, while this *parashah* with the preparations and details of the Exodus *per se*.

The *Zohar* notes¹ that God did not tell Moses to “go to Pharaoh” but to “come to Pharaoh,” meaning “come *with Me* to Pharaoh.” This was because beginning with the eighth plague, God set out to break Pharaoh himself, to destroy his power from its core.

In order to do so, it was necessary to confront Pharaoh in his power seat, the setting from which he drew and commanded his ominous influence. This meant not only going to Pharaoh’s throne room (where Moses had been before), but also meeting him spiritually in the depth of his evil. When God showed Moses the noxious spiritual fount of Pharaoh’s evil power, Moses was afraid to approach it. God therefore reassured him that He would accompany him and help him overcome Pharaoh.

Thus, the underlying thought behind the words “come to Pharaoh” is the confrontation with Pharaoh’s essence. It is here that he, and all the evil he represents, can be deci-

1. 2:34a.

sively broken. Breaking Pharaoh's power was the essential prerequisite for the Exodus; indeed, it was the *essence* of the Exodus. Egypt, with all its opulent wealth and imposing, awesome edifices, was the very embodiment of materialism—even its religion, its gods, and its distorted vision of the afterlife were materialistic. The Exodus was the release from this oppressive and constricting philosophy and lifestyle in order to live a life dedicated to God's transcendent reality. In order to be free, the chain had to be broken; Pharaoh had to be crushed—in the very height and seat of his power.

In this light, far from contradicting the tone of the rest of the *parashah*, the term *Bo* actually reveals its true message.

Since the Egyptian exile is the prototype of all exiles and the Exodus is the precursor of the final Redemption, the dynamic contained in the name of this *parashah* will be repeated at the end of the present exile, as well:

Before Pharaoh was crushed, God redeemed whatever good there was in Egypt. Non-Jews who wished to accompany the Jews were allowed to do so, and the Jews took with them an abundance of material wealth. Only when nothing of redeeming value remained in Egypt did God deal the crushing blow.

Similarly, the aim of all our Godly work during our present exile is to elevate whatever we can from the material world.² When this process is complete, whatever is too spiritually coarse to be adopted into holiness will be eliminated and the world will be free to pursue Divinity unhindered by opposing forces.

In our own personal lives, as we undergo our own individual redemptions—which will collectively lead to the ultimate, general redemption—we must also follow this dual process of elevation and elimination. This means that we must distinguish between those aspects of our lives that are in essence “neutral” and can be elevated into holiness and those that cannot. For example, someone who feels the pull of desire toward something the Torah forbids has to distinguish between the *power* of desire itself—which can and must be reoriented toward holiness—and the forbidden *object* of his desire—which he must eliminate from his life.

Moreover, we must take our cue here from how God told Moses to crush Pharaoh: to aim for the jugular vein and attack evil at its root. Everyone has his or her personal “Pharaoh,” the aspect of life where opposition to holiness is most acute. This is where our primary assault should be directed, and when this Pharaoh is vanquished, the other obstacles in life will follow suit.

Furthermore, we need not be afraid of this inner Pharaoh: just as God accompanied Moses into Pharaoh's chamber and did battle with him Himself, we can call upon God to accompany our inner Moses as it confronts our inner Pharaoh and to help us destroy it.

We are God's children, and just as loving parents seek to satisfy their children's desires, so does God “satisfy the needs of every living thing.”³ When we ask God to redeem us from the issues in our lives that constrict us or distract us from pursuing our Godly goals, He naturally hastens to assist us in doing so.

Finally, if God seeks to free us from our personal constrictions and distractions, He assuredly seeks to free us collectively from the constrictions and distractions of our collective exile. It is therefore our duty to entreat God to put an end to our existential exile and usher in the final, Messianic Redemption.⁴

2. *Tanya*, chapter 37. 3. Psalms 145:16. 4. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, volume 1, pp. 271-282. See *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5704, pp. 119, 127.

— ONKELOS —

10:1 וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ לְמֹשֶׁה עוֹל לֹת
פֶּרֶעַה אָרִי אָנֹכִי יִקְרִית יֵת לָבָה
וְיֵת לָבָה דְּעִבְדוּהִי בְדִיל לְשֹׂאָה
אֲתִי אֵלֶיךָ בְּיָהוֹן:

10:1 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פֶּרֶעַה כִּי־אֲנִי
הַכְּבֹדְתִי אֶת־לְבֹבוֹ וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שְׂתִי אֶת־תִּי
אֶלָּה בְּקֶרְבּוֹ:

— RASHI —

1 וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פֶּרֶעַה. וְהִתְרָה בּוֹ: שְׂתִי, שְׂמִי, שְׂאֲשִׁית אֲנִי:

INNER DIMENSIONS

Come to Pharaoh: As we have noted,⁶ the Torah does not explicitly mention the warnings for all the plagues. But whenever it does, it usually records both God's instruction to Moses to deliver the warning and Moses' actual delivery of the warning. Here, however, the Torah does not tell us that God told Moses to warn Pharaoh, only that Moses did so.

In fact, there are numerous instances where the Torah simply records that Moses said something in God's name and does not tell us that God ever told him to say it. The simple reason for this is that once it has been established that Moses always faithfully relayed God's words, it is no longer necessary to demonstrate how this pattern continued; we know that whatever Moses said in God's name is exactly what he heard from Him. This, however, does not explain why the Torah does record specific communications from God and not others.

To understand this, we have to look into the inner, spiritual dynamics behind the text. From this perspective, we are taught that when the Torah does record God's communication to Moses, it means that the Divine message was successfully received and absorbed by Moses' level of Divine consciousness, *chochmah* of *Atzilut*. When the Torah then records how Moses delivered God's message to its ultimate recipient, whether Pharaoh or the Israelites, this indicates that the message was then transmitted from *chochmah* of *Atzilut* through the lower worlds—i.e., via *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—into our material world.

When, however, the Torah omits any record of God's communication to Moses, it is because the full significance of this communication is too sublime to be articulated, that even the consciousness

of *chochmah* of *Atzilut* cannot fully articulate the import of the message. Moses understood what God was telling him, but there were aspects of this understanding that defied expression, that were ineffable. In such cases, the Torah cannot record God's message to Moses; it can only tell us that Moses conveyed whatever he could of this experience to his audience.

One example of this was the plague of locusts. Ancient Egypt was blessed with an abundance of material wealth deriving mainly from its successful agriculture; it was the world's breadbasket. But every Divine blessing entails responsibility, and if the nation or individual who receives the blessing squanders it, there will eventually be a reckoning. Egypt used its material abundance for idolatrous and other unholy purposes; the time had therefore come to rescind this blessing.

The locusts devoured the produce of the Egyptian fields and flew away with it, returning it heavenward, as it were, to its source. Thus, the tremendous Divine potential that God had invested in Egypt was divested of its unholy trappings and restored to the domain of holiness. This augmented the power of holiness beyond its intrinsic potency. This is alluded to in the name of the species of locust mentioned here, *arbeh* (אַרְבֶּה), which also means "I shall increase."

Although we can *describe* this process of wresting power from evil and harnessing it for holiness and *sense* how it can work, understanding *why* such a process can occur is elusive, leading us into an area of logical contradictions and paradoxes. The full description of God's instruction to Moses to deliver the warning for this plague is therefore ineffable, and is thus absent from the Torah's narrative.⁷

6. On 7:14, above. 7. *Torah Or* 50b, 50d; *Ma'amarei Admor HaZaken* 5565, vol. 1, p. 212; *Or HaTorah*, Bo, pp. 249-250.

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

10:1 On 15th of Tevet, 2448, God told Moses and Aaron to announce the eighth plague—locusts. On the last day of the warning period, **God said to Moses, “Come to Pharaoh** to warn him again to release the people. **For even though I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his courtiers**, and it would therefore seem that it is pointless to warn him,¹ it is **so that I may demonstrate these miraculous signs of Mine in his midst**,

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

1 Come to Pharaoh: As stated in the Overview, the Torah’s use of the expression “Come to Pharaoh” rather than “Go to Pharaoh” is striking. One way of explaining this is that the Exodus is predicated on approaching life as “coming” rather than “going.”

“Going” implies that the home base is where one already is presently located; one is simply *visiting* the place he is “going to.” “Coming,” on the other hand, implies that one is *moving* his home base, that he is going where he is going with his whole being.

So when we commune with God in Torah study or prayer, we should be sure to “come” into the words and ideas, rather than just “go” there for a visit. This way, our study and prayer can affect us and change us; it can take us out of our personal Egypt.

Going out of our personal Egypt hastens the collective redemption of the Jewish people and all humanity, as well.²

INNER DIMENSIONS

[1] Come to Pharaoh: As we have seen previously, evil is essentially a fallen manifestation of a sublime form of holiness; this fact is the source of its power. As such, the fact that Pharaoh personified such a profound and powerful form of evil meant that his origin in holiness was correspondingly sublime and powerful.

Specifically, it is generally a given that the intensity of the Divine revelation that normally informs any particular realm of creation is in accord with the capacity of that realm to assimilate it. More intense revelations of Divinity than this are generally destructive, similar to a vitamin overdose, “smother love,” or other such cases of too much of a good thing. The natural order that God arranged therefore ensures that the Divine revelations that reach any particular realm of creation be carefully tailored to the receptive capacity of that realm.

However, transcendent revelations are occasionally called for; when such is the case, an aspect of Divinity that overrides the natural order must be evoked. Pharaoh’s evil was the fallen manifestation

of this aspect of Divinity, which allows transcendent Divine revelations to occur.

In this sense, the word *Pharaoh* means both “expose” or “unfurl” (לפרוע) and “wild” (פרוע),³ alluding to this aspect of Divinity’s ability to reveal that which is normally hidden, and that this ability overrides the normal order of creation. When this capacity is corrupted by ego, it produces the Pharaoh of Egypt, drunk with his own delusions of grandeur and disregarding of any authority other than his own.

So, in addition to being afraid to face the evil Pharaoh,⁴ Moses was also afraid to face Pharaoh’s source in the realm of holiness. Moses was afraid to confront the aspect of Divinity that overrides the rules that temper Divine revelations in accordance with the recipient; he feared that such an experience might destroy him.

God therefore told Moses, “Come with Me to Pharaoh”; He promised to accompany him and protect him.⁵

1. See 9:13, above. 2. *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, vol. 1, pp. 843-845. 3. *Zohar* 1:210a. 4. See Overview. 5. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, volume 1, pp. 280-290.

— ONKELOS —

2 וּבְדִיל דְּתִשְׁמַעֵי קֳדָם בְּרַךְ וּבִר
בְּרַךְ יֵת נִסִּין דִּי עֲבָדִית בְּמִצְרַיִם
וְיֵת אֲתִיתִי דִּי שְׁוִיתִי בְּהוֹן וְתִדְעוֹן
אֲרִי אָנָּא יְיָ: 3 וְעַל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן
לֹות פִּרְעָה וְאָמְרוּ לֵה בְּדִין אָמַר יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵא דִּיהוּדָאֵי עַד אֵימַתִּי מִסְרָב
אֶת לֵאֲתַבְנָעָא מִן קֳדָמִי שְׁלַח עָמִי
וְיִפְלְחוּן קֳדָמִי: 4 אֲרִי אִם מִסְרָב
אֶת לֵשְׁלַחָא יֵת עָמִי הָא אָנָּא
מִיִּתִּי מִחַר גּוֹבָא בְּתַחוּמֵךְ: 5 וְיִחְפִּי
יֵת עֵין שְׁמִשָּׁא דְאַרְעָא וְלֹא
יָכוֹל לְמַחֲוִי יֵת אֲרַעָא וְיִיכּוֹל יֵת
שְׂאֵר שְׁוִיבְתָא דְאַשְׁתְּאַרֵת לְכוֹן
מִן בְּרָדָא וְיִיכּוֹל יֵת כָּל־אֵילָנָא
דְאַצְמַח לְכוֹן מִן חֻקְלָא: 6 וְיִתְמַלּוֹן
בְּתִיךְ וּבְתִי כָל־עֲבָדֶיךָ וּבְתִי כָל־
מִצְרָאֵי דִי לֹא חֲזוּ אֲבָהֶתְךָ וְאֲבָהֶת
אֲבָהֶתְךָ מִיּוֹם מְהִיָּהוֹן עַל אֲרַעָא
עַד יוֹמָא דְדִין וְאַתְפְּנִי וְנִפְקֵ מְלוֹת
פִּרְעָה: 7 וְאָמְרוּ עֲבָדֵי פִרְעָה לֵה
עַד אֵימַתִּי יְהִי דִין לָנָא לְתַקְלָא
שְׁלַח יֵת גְּבִרָא וְיִפְלְחוּן קֳדָם יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵהוֹן הַעֲד כַּעַן לֹא יִדְעַת אֲרִי
אֲבָדַת מִצְרַיִם: 8 וְאַתּוֹתֵב יֵת
מֹשֶׁה וְיֵת אַהֲרֹן לֹות פִּרְעָה וְאָמַר
לְהוֹן אָזִילוּ פְּלַחוּ קֳדָם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵכֹון
מִן וּמִן דְאַזְלִין: 9 וְאָמַר מֹשֶׁה
בְּעוֹלִימָנָא וּבְסִבְנָא נִיזִיל בְּבִנְנָא
וּבְבִתְנָא בְּעִנְנָא וּבְתוֹרְנָא נִיזִיל
אֲרִי חָגָא קֳדָם יְיָ לָנָא:

2 וּלְמַעַן תִּסְפֹּר בְּאֲזֵי בְנֶךָ וּבְנֵי־בְנֶךָ אֶת אֲשֶׁר
הִתְעַלְלָתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־אֲתִיתִי אֲשֶׁר־שִׁמְתִּי בָם
וְיִדְעֶתֶם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה: 3 וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־
פֶּרֶעַה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעֲבָרִים
עַד־מָתִי מֵאַנְתָּ לַעֲנֹת מִפְּנֵי שְׁלַח עָמִי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי:
4 כִּי אִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה לְשַׁלַּח אֶת־עָמִי הֲנִנִּי מִבֵּיא מִחַר
אֲרָבָה בְּגִבְלֶךָ: 5 וַכֹּסֶה אֶת־עֵין הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא יוֹכַל לִרְאוֹת
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאָכַל אֶת־יֵתֶר הַפִּלְטָה הַנִּשְׁאֶרֶת לָכֶם
מִן־הַבָּרָד וְאָכַל אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ הַצִּמָּח לָכֶם מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה:
6 וּמָלְאוּ בְּתִיךָ וּבְתִי כָל־עֲבָדֶיךָ וּבְתִי כָל־מִצְרַיִם
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־רָאוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְאֲבֹת אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִיּוֹם הַיּוֹתֵם
עַל־הָאֲדָמָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיִּפֶּן וַיֵּצֵא מֵעַם פֶּרֶעַה:
7 וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדֵי פֶרֶעַה אֵלָיו עַד־מָתִי יְהִיָּה זֶה לָנוּ
לְמוֹקֵשׁ שְׁלַח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
הַטֶּרֶם תִּדַּע כִּי אֲבָדָה מִצְרַיִם: 8 וַיּוֹשֶׁב אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶל־פֶּרֶעַה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם לָכוּ עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִי וּמִי הַחֹלְכִים: 9 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּנַעֲרֵינוּ
וּבְנִקְנֵינוּ נִלְךְ בְּבִנְיָנוּ וּבְבִנּוֹתֵנוּ בְּצִאֲנָנוּ וּבְבִקְרָנוּ נִלְךְ כִּי
חֲגִי־יְהוָה לָנוּ:

— RASHI —

וְשָׁפַל מִפְּנֵי: 5 אֶת־עֵין הָאָרֶץ. אֶת מַרְאֵה הָאָרֶץ: וְלֹא
יִוָּכַל וְגו'. הַרְוָאָה לִרְאוֹת אֶת הָאָרֶץ. וְלִשְׁוֹן קֶצֶרָה
דְּבַר: 7 הַטֶּרֶם תִּדַּע. הַעוֹד לֹא יִדְעַת כִּי אֲבָדָה מִצְרַיִם:
8 וַיּוֹשֶׁב. הוֹשִׁבוּ עַל יְדֵי שְׁלִיחָה, שְׁשֻׁלְחוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם
וְהַשִּׁיבוֹם אֶל פֶּרֶעַה:

2 וּלְמַעַן תִּסְפֹּר. לְהוֹדִיעַ לְדוֹרוֹת: הִתְעַלְלָתִּי. שְׁחַקְתִּי,
כְּמוֹ: "כִּי הִתְעַלְלָתָּ בִּי", "הֲלוֹא כֹאֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלָ בְּהֶם"
הָאָמֹר בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְאִינוּ לְשׁוֹן פּוֹעֵל וּמַעֲלִילִים, שְׂאֵם
כֵּן, הִיָּה לוֹ לִכְתֹּב "עוֹלְלָתִי", כְּמוֹ: "וְעוֹלָל לְמוֹ כֹאֲשֶׁר
עוֹלְלָתָ לִּי", "אֲשֶׁר עוֹלָל לִּי": 3 לַעֲנָת. כְּתִרְגוּמוֹ:
"לֵאֲתַבְנָעָא", וְהוּא מְגוֹרֵת "עֲנִי" — מֵאַנְתָּ לְהִיּוֹת עֲנִי

1. במדבר כב, כט. 2. שמואל א ו, 1. 3. איכה א, כב. 4. שם, יב.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Second, no matter how far another individual seems to be from Godliness and holiness, we must never despair of him. The door of return is always open; all we

have to do is find the right words, encouraging him to mend his ways for his own betterment, and with God's help he will come back to his true, inner self.¹¹

11. Likutei Sichot, vol. 6, pp. 64-68.

2 and so that you may recount to your children and grandchildren how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My miraculous signs among them. When you warn him, he and his courtiers will take this warning seriously, but he will still not be able to bring himself to let the people go. This will make the Egyptians look ridiculous and demonstrate how, despite their power, they are Mine to do with as I wish.⁸ **You will then realize that I am God.** Also, by warning him, you will intimate to him that despite the fact that I have hardened his heart, if he truly wishes to he can still repent.”⁹

3 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, “This is what God, God of the Hebrews, has said: ‘Until when will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go so they may serve Me!’”

4 For if you refuse to let My people leave, I will bring locusts into your territory tomorrow.

5 They will cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the ground. They will consume the surviving remnant that was left for you after the hail, and they will eat away all your trees that grow in the field.

6 Your houses and all your courtiers’ houses and the houses of all the Egyptians will be filled with them—something that your fathers and your fathers’ fathers have never seen from the day they appeared on earth until this day.’ ” And with that he turned and left the presence of Pharaoh.

7 As God had said, the Egyptians—for the first time—took Moses’ warning seriously:¹⁰ Pharaoh’s courtiers said to him, “How long will this person continue to be a snare for us? Let the men go, and let them serve God, their God! Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?”

8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh and he said to them, “Go and serve God, your God. Exactly who will be going?”

9 Moses replied, “We will go with our young people and with our elders. We will go with our sons and with our daughters, with our sheep and our cattle, for it is a festival of God for us.”

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

2 By warning him, you will intimate to him that despite the fact that I have hardened his heart, if he truly wishes to he can still repent: Despite God’s intention to make a mockery of Pharaoh, the fact that He warned him that he would be punished for not complying means that, on some level, the door to repentance was still open. By hardening Pharaoh’s heart, God had just made it difficult for him to repent—and since, as we have seen, this was a punishment for Pharaoh’s own obstinacy, it means that Pharaoh *himself* had made it difficult for himself to repent. But had Pharaoh nonetheless summoned the inner strength to listen to his conscience, he could indeed have obeyed God’s will, let the Jews go, and spared himself and his country the ensuing debacle.

Now, Pharaoh was the arch-embodiment of evil in his day, and he had already deadened himself to God’s call so thoroughly that God was punishing him by practically taking away his free choice entirely. Even so, it was still possible for him to repent, and God commanded Moses to remind him of this. How much more so, then, is the door to repentance always open to the Jew, who is rooted in holiness and goodness—even if it seems otherwise.

The lessons for us here, therefore, are as follows: First, we must never succumb to fatalistic thinking. No matter how estranged we may feel from God, even if it appears that God has shut the door on us, nothing can resist sincere repentance. The apparent difficulty exists in order to inspire us to summon deeper and more powerful resolve.

8. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 6, pp. 57-62. 9. As above, 7:3. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 6, pp. 64-65. 10. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 6, pp. 63-64.

— ONKELOS —

10 ואמר להון יהי כן מימרא דיי בסעודכון כד אשלח יתכון וית טפלכון חזו ארי בישא דאתון סבירין למעבד לקבל אפיכון לאסתחרא: 11 לא כן איזילו כען גבריא ופלחו קדם יי ארי יתה אתון בען ותריר יתהון מלות אפי פרעה: 12 ואמר יי למשה ארם ידך על ארעא דמצרים וייתי גובא ויסק על ארעא דמצרים ויכול ית כל עשבא דארעא ית כל די אשאר ברדא: 13 וארם משה ית חוטרך על ארעא דמצרים וי דבר רוח קדומא בארעא כל יומא והוא וכל ליליא צפרא הוה ורוח קדומא נטל ית גובא: 14 וסליק גובא על כל ארעא דמצרים ושאר בקל תחום מצרים תקיף לחדא קדמוהי לא הוה כן גובא דכותה ובתרוהי לא יהי כן: 15 וחפא ית עין שמשא דכל ארעא וחשוכת ארעא ואכל ית כל עשבא דארעא וית כל פירי אילנא די אשאר ברדא ולא אשתאר כל ירוקא באילנא ובעשבא דחקלא בכל ארעא דמצרים: 16 ואחי פרעה למקרי למשה ולאחרון ואמר חבית קדם יי אלהכון ולכון: 17 ובען שבוק בען חובי ברם זמנא הוה וצלו קדם יי אלהכון ויעדי מני לחוד ית מותא דדין: 18 ונפק מלות פרעה וצלי קדם יי:

10 ויאמר אלהם יהי כן יהוה עמכם כאשר אשלח אתכם ואת טפכם ראו כי רעה נגד פניכם: 11 לא כן לכונא הגברים ועבדו את יהוה כי אתה אתם מבקשים ויגרש אתם מאת פני פרעה: 12

שני 12 ויאמר יהוה אל משה נטה ידך על ארץ מצרים בארצה ויעל על ארץ מצרים ויאכל את כל עשב הארץ את כל אשר השאיר הברד: 13 ויש משה את מטהו על ארץ מצרים ויהוה נהג רוח קדים בארץ כל היום והוא וכל הלילה הפקר הוה ורוח הקדים נשא את הארבה: 14 ויעל הארבה על כל ארץ מצרים וינח בכל גבול מצרים כבד מאד לפניו לא היה כן ארבה כמותו ואחריו לא יהיה כן: 15 ויכס את עין כל הארץ ותחשך הארץ ויאכל את כל עשב הארץ ואת כל פרי העץ אשר הותיר הברד ולא נותר כל ירק בעץ ובעשב השדה בכל ארץ מצרים: 16 וימהר פרעה לקרא למשה ולאחרון ויאמר חטאתי ליהוה אלהיכם ולכם: 17 ועתה שאל נא חטאתי אך הפעם והעתירו ליהוה אלהיכם ויסל מעלי רק את המות הזה: 18 ויצא מעם פרעה ויעתר אליהוה:

— RASHI —

11 לא כן. כאשר אמרתם להוליך הסף עמכם, אלא "לכונא הגברים ועבדו את ה'": כי אתה אתם מבקשים. אותה בקשתם עד הנה — "נזכחה לאלהינו" — ואין דרך הסף לזבח: ויגרש אתם. הרי זה לשון קצר, ולא פרש מי המגרש: 12 בארבה. בשביל מכת הארבה: 13 ורוח הקדים. רוח מזרחית נשא את הארבה. לפי שבא כנגדו, שמצרים בדרומית מערבית היתה, כמו שמפרש במקום אחר: 14 ואחריו לא יהיה כן. ואותו שהיה בימי יואל, שנאמר: "כמותו לא נהיה מן העולם", למדנו, שהיה כבד משל משה, כי אותו של יואל היה על ידי מינין הרבה, שהיו יחד: ארבה, ילק, חסיל, גום. אבל של משה לא היה אלא של מין אחד, וכמותו לא היה ולא יהיה: 15 כל ירק. עלה ירוק. וירדורא בלעזי:

10 כאשר אשלח אתכם ואת טפכם. אף כי אשלח גם את הצאן ואת הבקר, כאשר אמרתם: ראו כי רעה נגד פניכם. בתרגומו. ומדרש אגדה שמעתי: כוכב אחד יש ששמו "רעה", אמר להם פרעה: ראה אני באיצטגנינות שלי, אותו כוכב עולה לקראתכם במדבר, והוא סימן דם והריגה. וכשחטאו ישראל בעגל ובקש הקדוש ברוך הוא להרגם, אמר משה בתפלתו: "למה יאמרו מצרים לאמר ברעה הוציאם" — זו היא שאמר להם: "ראו כי רעה נגד פניכם". מיד — "וינחם ה' על הרעה", והפך את הדם לדם מילה, שמל יהושע אותם. וזהו שנאמר: "היום גלותי את חרפת מצרים מעליכם", שהיו אומרים להם: דם אנו רואין עליכם במדבר:

5. ילקוט שמות סימן לב רמז שצב. 6. שמות לב, יב. 7. יהושע ה, ט. 8. עין רש"י במדבר לד, ג. 9. ויאל ב, 10. צמחנה ירקה.

10 Pharaoh **said to them** sarcastically, **“Yes, of course! May God be with you when I let you leave with your children, and your animals, as well!”** Angrily, he continued: “I have no intention of letting your children go, for you do not need them to perform your religious rites in the desert! The fact that you are asking to take them reveals your true intentions: You are not planning on going for a three-day holiday; you are planning to flee the country altogether! Therefore, **watch out! Your evil intent will backfire** and I will not let you go at all! Furthermore, I am warning you: **look**, a bad omen, the star *Ra’ah* [‘evil’], which foretells blood and slaughter, **is rising against you** in the desert. It will be perilous for you to journey now.

11 As I said, it is **not at all** as you say — that your children have to accompany you! **You menfolk go and serve God, for that is what you are asking for!** You are asking to sacrifice; children do not sacrifice!” **And** with that, Moses and Aaron **were expelled from Pharaoh’s presence.**

- ◆ *Second Reading* 12 So, on the 8th of Shevat, **God said to Moses, “Raise your arm over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they will come up over the land of Egypt. They will eat all the grass in the land, whatever the hail left behind.”**

13 **Moses raised his staff over the land of Egypt, and all that day and night God directed an east wind over the land. When morning came, the east wind had carried the locusts into the country.**

14 **The locusts came up over the whole land of Egypt and descended over all the territory of Egypt, very severely; never before had there been such a plague of locusts, and never again will there be anything like it—that such complete devastation be caused by only one species of locust.**

15 **They covered the entire surface of the land so that the land became dark. They ate all the grass of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left over; no greenery was left on the trees or among the grass of the field, throughout all the land of Egypt.**

16 **Pharaoh hastily summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against God, your God, and against you.**

17 So now, please forgive my offense just this once, and entreat God, your God, just to remove this death from me!”

18 Moses left Pharaoh’s presence and pleaded with God.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

11 **You menfolk go and serve God:** Pharaoh indeed thought that religious life and communion with God was the exclusive province of the adult male population. Judaism, however, insists that *all* sectors of the populace can and should participate in religious life and experience. As Moses put it,¹² “We will go with our young people and with our elders. We will go

with our sons and with our daughters,” and only thus will it be “a festival of God for us.” This egalitarian approach to the privileges and responsibilities of Divine consciousness is especially pertinent in our generation, inasmuch as we are on the threshold of the messianic redemption, when the knowledge of God will become truly universal.¹³

12. Above, v. 9. 13. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 26, p. 400.

— ONKELOS —

19 וְהָפֵךְ יְיָ רוּחַ מְעַרְבָא תְּקִיף לְחֻדָּא וְנָטַל יֵת גּוּבָא וּרְמָזֵי לְיָמָא דְסוּף לֹא אֲשַׁתָּאֵר גּוּבָא חוּד בְּכָל־תַּחוּם מְצָרִים: 20 וְתִקְיָף יְיָ יֵת לְבָא דְפָרְעָה וְלֹא שִׁלַּח יֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 21 וְאָמַר יְיָ לְמֹשֶׁה אָרַם יָדְךָ עַל צֵית שְׂמִיָּא וְיִהְיֶה חֲשׂוּבָא עַל אֲרַעָא דְמְצָרִים בְּתַר דִּיעָדִי קִבֵּל לִילְיָא: 22 וְאָרַם מֹשֶׁה יֵת יְדָה עַל צֵית שְׂמִיָּא וְהָיָה חֲשׂוּף קִבֵּל בְּכָל־אֲרַעָא דְמְצָרִים תִּלְתָּא יוֹמִין: 23 לֹא חֲזוּ גִבְרֵי יֵת אַחוּהִי וְלֹא קָמוּ אֲנָשׁ מִתַּחוּתֶיהָ תִּלְתָּא יוֹמִין וְלִכְלֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה נִדְחָא בְּמוֹתְבִיחוֹן:

19 וַיִּהְיֶה יְהוָה רֹחַם חֲזָק מְאֹד וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּתְקַעְהוּ יָמָה סוּף לֹא נִשְׂאָר אֲרֶבֶה אֶחָד בְּכָל גְּבוּל מְצָרִים: 20 וַיִּתְּזֶה יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פְּרָעָה וְלֹא שִׁלַּח אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: פ
21 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נִטֵּה יָדְךָ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיִהְיֶה חֹשֶׁךְ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּמַּשׁ חֹשֶׁךְ: 22 וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיִּהְיֶה חֹשֶׁךְ־אֲפֹלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים: 23 לֹא־רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו וְלֹא־קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחְתּוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְלִכְלֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֵתָם:

— RASHI —

אין הדבור מושב על הוי"ו של "וימש", לפי שהוא כתוב אחר "ויהי חשך". ומדרש אגדה¹⁵ פותרו, לשון "ממשש בצהררים"¹⁶, שהיה כפול ומכפל ועב, עד שהיה בו ממש: 22 ויהי חשך־אפלה... שלשת ימים וגו'. חשך של אפל, שלא ראו איש את אחיו אותן שלשת ימים, ועוד שלשת ימים אחרים, חשך מכפל על זה, שלא קמו איש מתחתיו — יושב אין יכול לעמוד, ועומד אין יכול לישב. ולמה הביא עליהם חשך? שהיו בישראל באותו הדור רשעים, ולא היו רוצים לצאת, ומתו בשלשת ימי אפלה, כדי שלא יראו מצרים במפלגתם, ויאמרו: אף הן לוקין כמונו. ועוד, שחפשו ישראל וראו את בליהם, וכשיצאו והיו שואלין מהן, והיו אומרים: אין בידינו כלום! אומר לו: אני ראיתיו בביתך, ובמקום פלוני הוא: שלשת ימים. שלש של ימים. טיריניא¹⁷ של בלעזי¹⁸, וכן "שבעת ימים" בכל־מקום, שייטיין¹⁹ א"ש של ימים:

19 רוּחַ יָם. רוּחַ מְעַרְבִי: יָמָה סוּף. אומר אני שים סוף היה מקצתו במערב, כנגד כל־רוח דרומית, וגם במזרח של ארץ ישראל, לפיכך, רוח ים תקעו לארבה בימה סוף, כנגדו. וכן מצינו לענין תחומין, שהוא פונה לצד מזרח, שנאמר: "מים־סוף ועד־ים פלשתים"¹¹ — ממזרח למערב, שים פלשתים במערב הים, שנאמר בפלשתים: "ישבי חבל הים גוי כרתים"¹²: לא נשאר ארבה אחר. אף המלוחים שמלחו מהם: 21 וימש חשך. ויחשיך עליהם חשך, יותר מחשכו של לילה, וחשך של לילה יאמיש ויחשיך עוד: וימש. כמו 'ויאמש'. יש לנו תבות הרבה חסרות אל"ף, לפי שאין הברת האל"ף נפרת כל־כך אין הכתוב מקפיד על חסרונה, כגון: "ולא־יהל שם ערבי"¹³, כמו 'לא־יהל' — לא יטה אהל. וכן 'ותורני חיל'¹⁴, כמו 'ותאורני'. ואנקלוס תרגם לשון הסדרה, כמו: "לא ימיש" — "בתר דיעדי קבל ליליא", כשיגיע סמוך לאור היום. אבל

11. שמות כב, לא. 12. צפניה ב, ה. 13. ישעיה יג, כ. 14. שמואלב כב, מ. 15. שמות רבה יד, א. 16. דברים כח, כט. 17. קבוצה של שלשה. 18. קבוצה של שבעה.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

He was bound to do so by any *natural* connection between Him and us, but rather *despite* it; His *essence* was *not* beholden to this natural connection. He thereby rooted us in His essence, deeper than we were rooted by virtue of the natural, parent-child connection.

Once we were rooted in God's essence, we became one with Him. From then on, it became impossible for us to really oppose our connection with God, since this connection has become part of our essence. Practically speaking, this is what made us into God's "slaves," so to speak, ultimately devoid of any desire or will other than to see *His* desires and will carried out.²²

Of course, we can go through the motions of opposing our essential connection to God, but this is only superficial. Sooner or later, our deep, inner essence will surface, and this will make us all indeed be worthy of being redeemed.²³

There was light for all the Israelites in their dwellings: The Egyptians, like many ancient peoples, assumed that the opposing forces of day and night, light and darkness, were the manifestation of two opposing deities. God therefore caused darkness and light to occur simultaneously, so they could see that nature is ruled by one, supreme power.²⁴

19 **God thereupon reversed the wind direction, causing a very strong west wind to blow, and it carried away the locusts and plunged them into the eastern arm of the Sea of Reeds, the Gulf of Aqaba. Not a single locust remained within all Egypt's borders—not even those the Egyptians had killed and salted.**

20 But once again **God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the Israelites leave.**

The Ninth plague: Darkness

21 On the 15th of Shevat, God told Moses to announce the ninth plague—darkness. On the 8th of Adar, after the warning period was over, **God said to Moses, "Raise your arm towards the sky so that there will be darkness upon the land of Egypt, and the darkness will be darker than night—so dark that it will be palpable."**

22 **So Moses raised his hand towards the sky.** This plague lasted for only six days rather than a full week.¹⁴ First, **there was an opaque darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days.**

23 **No Egyptian man could see his brother,** even by firelight, but the darkness did not obstruct the Israelites' vision. During these first three days,¹⁵ the Israelites who did not want to leave Egypt—four-fifths of the population—died.¹⁶ This happened specifically when the Egyptians could not see it so they should not be able to think that these Jews were dying of the same cause that the Egyptians died of during the plagues. **For the next three days,** the darkness became so palpable that **no Egyptian who was sitting when it started could rise from his place,** and no Egyptian who was standing when it started could sit down. The Israelites, however, canvassed the Egyptians' dwellings freely during these three days,¹⁷ taking note of the Egyptians' possessions and where they kept them. Furthermore, during these six days, **there was light for all the Israelites in their dwellings;** the darkness did not cover the district of Goshen.¹⁸

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

23 **The Israelites who did not want to leave...died:** In the Exodus from Egypt, God did not force those Jews that did not want to leave to do so. By choosing to remain in Egypt, these individuals denied the purpose of their existence; their lives lost their meaning and had to be ended. This process purified the Jewish people, much as wine becomes purified as the dregs and other impurities settle over time.¹⁹

In contrast, in the future redemption from the present and final exile, even those Jews who do not consciously want to be redeemed will be taken out of exile.²⁰

The Jews of the Exodus were able to choose not to be redeemed because the connection between God and the Jewish people at that time was the "natural" one between "parent" and "child"; in God's own words to

Pharaoh: "My firstborn son is Israel, and I am telling you to send forth My son."²¹ Parents and children are bound to each other naturally and inseparably. Nonetheless, a child can choose not to honor this connection and rebel against his parent. By exercising their free choice and opposing their natural connection to God, the Jews in Egypt succeeded in overriding it.

But when God gave the Torah, He established a connection with us that transcended the previous, natural connection. When we exercise our free will, we reveal our *essence*, which transcends our *nature*. This is evidenced by the fact that we can choose to do something that contravenes our natural predilections. Similarly, when God chose us of His own free will to be His people and gave us the Torah, He did so not because

14. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, p. 35, note 19. 15. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, p. 46, note 8. 16. Rashi on 13:18, below. 17. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, p. 46, note 8. 18. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, pp. 46-48. 19. *Ma'amarei Admor HaZaken HaKetzarim*, pp. 445-446. 20. See Rashi on Deuteronomy 30:3; Isaiah 27:13; *Tanya*, ch. 39, etc. 21. Above, 4:22-23. 22. Below, 20:2. 23. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 11, pp. 1-7. 24. *Or HaTorah*, Bo, p. 250; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5663, pp. 83-84.

— ONKELOS —

24 וקרא פרעה למשה ואמר איזילו פלחו קדם יי לחוד ענכון ותורכון שבוקו אף טפלכון ייזיל עמכון: 25 ואמר משה אף את תתן בידנא נכסת קדשין ועלון ונעביד קדם יי אלהנא: 26 ואף בעירנא ייזיל עמנא לא תשתאר מדעם ארי מנה אנחנא נסבין למפלח קדם יי אלהנא ואנחנא לית אנחנא ידעין מה נפלח קדם יי עד מיתנא לתמן: 27 ותסיף יי ית לבא דפרעה ולא אבא לשלחו ותהון: 28 ואמר לה פרעה איזיל מעלני אסתמר לך לא תוסיף למחוי אפי ארי ביומא דתחוי אפי תמות: 29 ואמר משה יאות מלילתא לא אוסיף עוד למחוי אפך: 11:1 ואמר יי למשה עוד מכתש חד איתי על פרעה ועל מצרים בתר כן ישלח יתכון מכא בשלחיתא גמירא תרכא יתרף יתכון מכא: 2 מליל כען קדם עמא וישאלון גבר מן חברה ואתתא מן חברה מנין דכסף ומנין דדבב: 3 ויהב יי ית עמא לרחמין בעיני מצרעי אף גברא משה רב לחדא בארעא דמצרים בעיני עבדי פרעה ובעיני עמא:

◆ **שלישי 24** ויקרא פרעה אל־משה ויאמר לכו עבדו את־יהוה רק צאנכם ובקרכם יצגו גם־טפכם ילך עמכם: 25 ויאמר משה גם־אתה תתן בידנו זבחים ועלת ועשינו ליהוה אלהינו: 26 וגם־מקננו ילך עמנו לא תשאול פרסה כי ממנו נקח לעבד את־יהוה אלהינו ואנחנו לא־נודע מה־נעבד את־יהוה עד־באנו שמה: 27 ויחזק יהוה את־לב פרעה ולא אבה לשלחם: 28 ויאמר־לו פרעה לך מעלי השמר לך אל־תסר ראות פני כי ביום ראיתך פני תמות: 29 ויאמר משה כן דברתי לא־אסף עוד ראות פניך: פ

11:1 ויאמר יהוה אל־משה עוד נגע אחד אביא על־פרעה ועל־מצרים אחרי־כן ישלח אתכם מזה בשלחו בלה גרש יגרש אתכם מזה: 2 דברנא באוני העם וישאלו איש | מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה בלי־כסף ובלי זרב: 3 ויתן יהוה את־חן העם בעיני מצרים גם | האיש משה גדול מאד בארץ מצרים בעיני עבדי־פרעה ובעיני העם: ס

— RASHI —

— אמת, שלא אוסיף עוד ראות פניך: 1 בלה. "גמירא". כליל, כלכם ישלח: 2 דברנא. אין "נא" אלא לשון בקשה — בבקשה ממך, הוזהרים על כך, שלא יאמר אותו צדיק — אברהם: "ועבדום וענו אותם" — קים בהם, "ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול" — לא קים בהם:

24 יצג. יהא מצג במקומו: 25 גם־אתה תתן. לא ידך שמקננו ילך עמנו, אלא גם משלך תתן: 26 פרסה. פרסת רגל, פלנט"א בלעזי: לא־נודע מה נעבד. כמה תכבד העבודה, שמא ישאל ממנו יותר ממה שיש בידו: 29 כן דברתי. יפה דברתי, ובזמנו דברתי

19. כף נגל.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[28-29] Pharaoh said, "The day you see my face you will die!" Moses replied, "You have spoken rightly": In the context of Pharaoh representing his source in holiness,²⁹ he was here warning Moses that no one can behold his inner source—God's transcendence—and live.³⁰ Moses agreed that this is so: no finite, created being can experience God's

infinity and continue existing as a finite being; he will perforce be absorbed into God's infinity. However, God is not bound by His own rules; he can override logic and grant an individual the ability to paradoxically "survive" this experience, as He did here with Moses, in order to allow him to break Pharaoh at the core of his being.³¹

29. See above, on 10:1. 30. See below, 33:20. 31. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, p. 283.

- ◆ **Third Reading 24** On the 13th of Adar, the last day of darkness, Pharaoh called for Moses and said, “Go, serve God—only your flocks and cattle shall remain behind to ensure your return. Even your children may go with you.”
- 25** Moses replied, “Not only will *our* flocks and cattle go with us, **you will even provide us with some of *your* animals for sacrifices and ascent-offerings so that we may offer them up to God, our God.**
- 26** Our livestock must also go along with us, not a hoof shall remain, for some of them we must take for the service of God, our God, and we will not know with what we will serve God until—i.e, how many sacrifices He will require—we arrive there. Maybe He will require more than just our own animals.”
- 27** Yet God toughened Pharaoh’s heart and he was not willing to let the people leave.
- 28** Pharaoh then said to Moses, “Leave my presence! Take care never to see my face again, for the day you see my face you will die!”
- 29** Moses replied, “You have spoken rightly only in that once I leave, I will never see your face again.”

The Tenth Plague: The Firstborn

11:1 Just at that moment, while Moses and Aaron were still standing in front of Pharaoh, God said to Moses, “One more plague I shall send upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt: I will kill every firstborn at exactly midnight of the 15th of Nisan. After that, he will send you forth from this place. And when he sends you forth, he will utterly drive all of you out of here.

2 Please speak to the people and let them request—each man from his friend and every woman from her friend—utensils of silver and gold. This way their forefather Abraham will not be able to accuse Me of only fulfilling My promise to enslave his descendants and not My promise to enrich them when they leave.”²⁵

3 Later, after Moses left Pharaoh’s court, he conveyed this instruction to the people, and they carried it out without delay.²⁶ Since they had inspected the Egyptians’ homes during the plague of darkness,²⁷ they knew where their utensils and valuables were kept. So if they asked for something and the Egyptians denied having it, they could reply that they know they have it and even where it is kept.²⁸ Despite this, **God made the people find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. Moreover, by this time, Moses himself was highly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both by Pharaoh’s courtiers and by the people.**

25. Above, 3:21-22; see Genesis 15:13-14. 26. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, p. 271, note 5. 27. Above, 10:22. 28. Rashi on 10:22, above.

— ONKELOS —

4 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה כִּדְּנֹן אָמַר יי
כְּפִלְגֹּת לַיְלָא אָנָּא מִתְּגַלִּי בְּגוֹ
מִצְרִים: 5 וַיְמֹת כָּל־בּוֹכְרָא
בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם מִבּוֹכְרָא
דְּפִרְעָה דְּעֵתִיד לְמַתֵּב עַל בּוֹרְסִי
מִלְּבוֹתָהּ עַד בּוֹכְרָא דְּאַמְתָּא דִּי
כְּתֵר רִיחֵיא וְכָל־בּוֹכְרָא דְּבַעֲרִיא:
6 וַתְּהִי צֹחָתָא רַבָּתָא בְּכָל־
אַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם דִּי כֹּתָה לֹא הוּת
וְדִכּוּתָהּ לֹא תוֹסִיף: 7 וְלִכְלָל בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִנְיִק כְּלָבָא בְּלִשְׁנָה
לְמַנְבַּח לְמַאֲנִשָּׁא וְעַד בְּעִירָא
בְּדִיל דִּי תִדְעוּן דִּי יִפְרִישׁ יי בֵּין
מִצְרָאֵי וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל:

◆ רביעי 4 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כְּחֻצַּת הַלַּיְלָה
אֲנִי יוֹצֵא בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם: 5 וּמֵת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכוֹר פְּרֹעֶה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־פֶּסְאוֹ עַד בְּכוֹר
הַשֹּׁפְחָה אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵהֶם וְכָל בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה:
6 וְהָיְתָה צִעֲקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר כָּמְהוּ
לֹא נִהְיְתָה וּכְמְהוּ לֹא תִסָּף: 7 וְלִכְלָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא
יַחֲרִץ־כָּלֵב לִשְׁנֹו לְמַאֲנִישׁ וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּן אֲשֶׁר
יַפְלֶה יְהוָה בֵּין מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל:

— RASHI —

על מצרים: מִבְּכוֹר פְּרֹעֶה... עַד בְּכוֹר הַשֹּׁפְחָה. כָּל־
הַפְּחוּתִים מִבְּכוֹר פְּרֹעֶה וְהַשּׁוֹבִים מִבְּכוֹר הַשֹּׁפְחָה,
הָיוּ בְּכָלֵל. וְלָמָּה לָקוּ בְּנֵי הַשֹּׁפְחוֹת? שָׂאָה הֵם הָיוּ
מִשְׁתַּעֲבָדִים בָּהֶם וּשְׂמִיחִים בְּצִרְתָּם: וְכָל בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה.
לְפִי שֶׁהָיוּ עוֹבְדִין לָהּ, וּכְשֶׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ־הוּא נִפְרַע מִן
הָאִמָּה נִפְרַע מֵאֲלֹהֶיהָ: 7 לֹא יַחֲרִץ־כָּלֵב לִשְׁנֹו. אָמַר
אֲנִי, שֶׁהוּא לְשׁוֹן "שְׁנוֹן" — לֹא יִשְׁנֶן, וְכֵן "לֹא־יַחֲרִץ לְבָנִי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאִישׁ אֶת־לִשְׁנֹו"²³ — לֹא שְׁנֶן. "אִזּוֹ תִּחְרֹץ"²⁴
— תִּשְׁתַּנֵּן. "לְמוֹרֵג חֲרוּץ"²⁵ — שְׁנוֹן. "מִחְשׁוֹת
חֲרוּץ"²⁶ — אֲדָם חֲרִיף וְשְׁנוֹן. "וַיִּד חֲרוּצִים תַּעֲשִׂיר"²⁷
— חֲרִיפִים, סוֹחֲרִים שְׁנוֹנִים: אֲשֶׁר יַפְלֶה. יַבְדִּיל:

4 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה כֹּה אָמַר ה'. בְּעֵמְדוֹ לִפְנֵי פְרֹעֶה נִאֲמָרָה
לֹא נְבוֹאָה זוֹ, שֶׁהָרִי מִשְׁיָצָא מִלִּפְנֵי לֹא הוֹסִיף רְאוֹת
פְּנֵיו: כְּחֻצַּת הַלַּיְלָה. כְּהַחֲלֵק הַלַּיְלָה. "כְּחֻצַּת" — כְּמוֹ:
"כְּעֻלּוֹת"²⁰, "בְּחֻרוֹת אָפֶם בְּנוֹ"²¹. זֶהוּ פְּשׁוּטוֹ לִישְׁבוֹ
עַל אֶפְנִיו, שְׂאִין "כְּחֻצַּת" שֶׁם דָּבָר שֶׁל חֲצִי. וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ
דְּרִשְׁוּהוּ:²² כְּמוֹ "בְּחֻצֵי הַלַּיְלָה". וְאָמְרוּ, שֶׁאָמַר מֹשֶׁה
"כְּחֻצַּת", דְּמִשְׁמַע סְמוּךְ לוֹ אוֹ לִפְנֵי אוֹ לְאַחֲרָיו. וְלֹא
אָמַר "בְּחֻצַּת", שֶׁמָּא יִטְעוּ אַצְטִגְנִינִי פְרֹעֶה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ:
מֹשֶׁה בְּדָא הוּא. אֲבָל הַקֵּב־הַ יוֹדֵעַ עֲתִיו וְרַגְעִיו, אָמַר
בְּחֻצַּת: 5 עַד בְּכוֹר הַשֹּׁבִי. לָמָּה לָקוּ הַשְּׁבוּיִים? כְּדִי
שֶׁלֹּא יֹאמְרוּ: יִרְאָתָם תִּבְעָה עָלֵינוּ, וְהִבִּיאָה פְּרֻעָנוֹת

20. יהושע ו, טו. 21. תהלים קכד, ג. 22. ברכות ד, א. 23. יהושע י, כא. 24. שמואלב ח, כד. 25. ישעיה מא, טו. 26. משלי כא, ה. 27. משלי י, ד.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Midnight, however, being the exact midpoint between the beginning and end of the night, is associated with neither attribute. In fact, midnight is just a theoretical construct rather than an actual span of time—for the moment immediately before midnight is part of the first half of the night and the moment immediately after it is part of the second half. Although midnight defines a specific time, it itself "takes up" no time, similar to how the corner where two walls intersect defines a location in space but itself takes up no space.

Midnight is thus beyond time, and it is by virtue of this transcendence that it can connect the two opposite halves of the night and negotiate the transition from the first to the second. Although we take for granted the "transition" from pre-midnight to post-midnight (as well as the "transition" from one direc-

tion to another), it in fact takes a time-transcending input to switch from one type of time to another (and a space-transcending input to change from one direction to another), since nature, by its own inertia, always tends to continue in the direction in which it is already going.

Hence the great significance of midnight: it is a "moment" when God's transcendence is revealed. The slaying of the firstborn therefore had to occur exactly at midnight, since it was the final stroke of the Exodus, and in order for the Exodus to occur God had to reveal His transcendence beyond the laws of nature. Naturally, the Exodus could never have occurred, since it was entirely "natural" for Egypt to be the world's superpower and enslave the Jews, etc. Nature had to be overruled, and this is the essence of midnight.⁴⁰

40. Torat Chaim 2:123a; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5678, pp. 241 ff; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5717, pp. 144 ff.

- ◆ **Fourth Reading 4** But before all this, while Moses and Aaron were still standing before Pharaoh, **Moses** turned and **said** to Pharaoh, **“This is what God has said:** ‘Whereas I smote you with the preceding nine plagues via emissaries, I am going to administer this final one Myself.³² The proof of this will be that it will occur **exactly at midnight**: it will not just *begin* at midnight, but it will take place entirely in the infinitesimal instance that marks the exact midpoint of the night. Only I can strike so precisely, and only I can administer a plague instantaneously.’” Alternatively, God told *Moses* that this plague was going to occur exactly at midnight, but Moses—afraid that Pharaoh’s astrologers would miscalculate when midnight was and thereby impute this inaccuracy to God—hesitated to announce that the plague would occur exactly at midnight. (He did not want to use a water clock or sandglass, since the astrologers could easily tamper with these.³³ And since this was at night, Moses could not use the sundial-type sign he had used to indicate the exact moment when the plague of hail would occur.³⁴) He therefore said, **“At about midnight** on the 15th of Nisan, the next month, **I will go forth in the midst of Egypt.**

5 Every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the maidservant behind the millstones, as well as every firstborn animal. The maidservants’ firstborn will die because they, too, mistreated the Israelites and enjoyed seeing them suffer. The firstborn of Egypt’s animals will die because the Egyptians worshipped them as gods.³⁵ The firstborn of Egypt’s prisoners, too, will die,³⁶ both because they, too, enjoyed seeing the Israelites suffer,³⁷ and also so they will not be able to claim that their gods are punishing the Egyptians for enslaving them.

6 There will be a great outcry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as never has been and never will be again.

7 As a result of this outcry, all the dogs in the vicinity of the Egyptians will get overexcited and start barking ferociously. This will exacerbate the Egyptians’ terror. **But among the Israelites,** they will only bark benignly as they do whenever the moon is out; **no dog will whet its tongue ferociously against any person or even any beast.** No animal will be frightened and run away, so *all* our cattle will leave with us, as I have said.³⁸ This is **in order that you may know that God is differentiating between the Egyptians and Israel.**³⁹

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

4 **Exactly at midnight:** Night is divided into two halves: from dusk until midnight, the sun sinks deeper below the horizon and the sky becomes progressively darker; from midnight until dawn, the sun begins its ascent to the opposite horizon and the sky becomes

progressively lighter. The first half of the night is therefore associated with God’s attribute of severity and judgment (*gevurah*), while the second half is associated with God’s attribute of kindness (*chesed*).

32. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 21, pp. 58-61. 33. *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, vol. 1, p. 832. 34. 9:18, above. 35. See 12:13, below. 36. 12:29, below. 37. Rashi on 12:29, below. 38. Above, 10:9, 26. 39. *Hitva’aduyot* 5744, vol. 2, pp. 822-823, 879-883.

ONKELOS

8 ויחדו כל-עבדיך אלי ויהי חנוכה לי לאמר צא אתה וכל-העם אשר-ברגליך ואחר-כן אצא ויצא מעם-פרעה בחרי-אף: 8
9 ויאמר יהוה אל-משה לא-ישמע אליכם פרעה למען רבות מופתי בארץ מצרים: 10 ומשה ואהרן עשו את-כל-המופתים האלה לפני פרעה ויחזק יהוה את-לב פרעה ולא-שלח את-בני-ישראל מארצו: 8
12:1 ויאמר יהוה אל-משה ואל-אהרן בארץ מצרים לאמר: 2 החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה:

RASHI

8 ויחדו כל-עבדיך. חלק כבוד למלכות, שהרי בסוף ירד פרעה בעצמו אליו בלילה — ויאמר קומו צאו מתוך עמי. ולא אמר לו משה מתחלה ויורדת אלי והשתחוית לי: אשר-ברגליך. ההולכים אחר עצתך והלויכך: ואחר-כן אצא. עם כל-העם מארצו: ויצא מעם-פרעה. כשגמר דבריו יצא מלפניו: בחרי-אף. על שאמר לו: "אל-תסוף ראות פני" 28: 9 למען רבות מופתי. "מופתי" — שנים. "רבות" — שלשה: מפת בכורות, וקריעת ים סוף, ולנער את מצרים: 10 ומשה ואהרן עשו וגו'. כבר כתב לנו זאת בכל-המופתים, ולא שנאה כאן אלא בשביל לסמכה לפרשה של אחריה: 1 ויאמר ה' אל-משה ואל-אהרן. בשביל שאהרן עשה וטרח במופתים כמשה, חלק לו כבוד זה במצוה ראשונה, שכללו עם משה בדבור: בארץ מצרים. חוץ לכך.

8 ויחדו כל-עבדיך. חלק כבוד למלכות, שהרי בסוף ירד פרעה בעצמו אליו בלילה — ויאמר קומו צאו מתוך עמי. ולא אמר לו משה מתחלה ויורדת אלי והשתחוית לי: אשר-ברגליך. ההולכים אחר עצתך והלויכך: ואחר-כן אצא. עם כל-העם מארצו: ויצא מעם-פרעה. כשגמר דבריו יצא מלפניו: בחרי-אף. על שאמר לו: "אל-תסוף ראות פני" 28: 9 למען רבות מופתי. "מופתי" — שנים. "רבות" — שלשה: מפת בכורות, וקריעת ים סוף, ולנער את מצרים: 10 ומשה ואהרן עשו וגו'. כבר כתב לנו זאת בכל-המופתים, ולא שנאה כאן אלא בשביל לסמכה לפרשה של אחריה: 1 ויאמר ה' אל-משה ואל-אהרן. בשביל שאהרן עשה וטרח במופתים כמשה, חלק לו כבוד זה במצוה ראשונה, שכללו עם משה בדבור: בארץ מצרים. חוץ לכך.

28. שמות י, כח. 29. שמות ו, כח. 30. ויקרא ז, לח. 31. במדבר טו, כג.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

a power that does not answer to the laws of nature. The survival of the Jews throughout history, despite all odds, further testifies to their defiance of natural law. But the most profound way in which the Jewish people transcends nature is by achieving, via the Torah, transcendent Divine consciousness—an awareness of God and connection to Him that is totally out of context in this finite, nature-oriented world.⁴⁵ Since the world was now forever changed, Nisan, the miracle-month (the word *Nisan* means "miracle")

became the primary month. True, nature still exists, and therefore the years are still counted from the first of Tishrei, which remains *Rosh HaShanah*, the day on which the world's material sustenance for the coming year is determined. But in terms of *purpose*, Nisan from now on assumes pride of place, for the purpose of creation is to infuse the natural order with God's transcendent presence through the Jewish people's dedication to the Torah and its commandments.⁴⁶

45. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5634, pp. 115-116. 46. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5639, vol. 1, pp. 105, 108 ff; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5677, pp. 134-135, 140-141; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5714-5716, pp. 90-97; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5717-5719, pp. 130-139, 645-651.

8 **All these courtiers of yours** [i.e., you—he spoke euphemistically out of respect for Pharaoh’s office—] **will then come and prostrate themselves before me and say, “Leave, you and all the people who follow your counsel!” After that I will leave Egypt with all my people.”** Having finished speaking, **he left Pharaoh’s presence indignantly** over Pharaoh’s warning never to see his face again.

9 **God then said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, in order that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.** Besides the slaying of the first-born, there are still more wonders that I will perform when you leave.”⁴¹

10 **Moses and Aaron had performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but God toughened Pharaoh’s heart and he did not let the Israelites leave his land.** In recognition of the part Aaron faithfully played in these events, God addressed the following passage—the first official commandment addressed to the Israelites as a people—to him as well as to Moses.

The Passover Offering

12:1 On the 1st of Nisan, at sunset—when the moon becomes visible—**God said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt**, outside the idol-filled city, after showing them the new moon:

2 **“This stage of the moon’s monthly renewal will signal the beginning of every new month.”** Moses was not sure how big the new moon must be in order to signal the beginning of a new month, so God told him to look at the moon as it was right then, and said, **“Like this.”** God continued, **“This month, Nisan, shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.**

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

1 **God said to Moses and Aaron:** This commandment, to declare a new month whenever the moon begins anew its cycle of growth and decline, is the first one God gave to the Jewish people as a collective whole.

As we have seen,⁴² Moses allegorically personified the “downward” revelation of the Torah from on high, while Aaron personified the “upward” striving of the soul toward Divinity. It was therefore appropriate that the first commandment be addressed to both of them, for the essence of the commandments is the connection between God and the people, the twin sides of which are Torah study and prayer.⁴³

2 **This month, Nisan, shall be for you the beginning of the months:** Until this point in history, Tishrei, the month of creation, was considered the first month of the year. Although the years continued to be counted from Tishrei, Nisan became the first month and Tishrei became the seventh.

This is because until the Exodus, the world was more or less entirely under the influence of the constant Divine forces God set in motion at the creation of the world and that we call “nature.” True, there were occasional miracles here and there, but these were the rare exception rather than the rule. It was therefore fitting to consider Tishrei the primary month, since the forces of nature that govern the world came into being in that month.⁴⁴

The Exodus, in contrast, heralded the birth of the Jewish people, who would not be subject to the limitations of nature. By virtue of their connection to God and His Torah, the people, both individually and collectively, would be living, walking miracles. The Exodus itself was the first, dramatic example of this freedom; the mass release of a whole population of slaves from the world’s preeminent superpower proved to an awestruck world that this people were connected to

41. This refers to the splitting of the sea and the drowning of the Egyptians in it. 42. Above, on 6:12-13. 43. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5626, p. 41; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5632, vol. 1, pp. 263, 270; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5716, pp. 459-465. 44. Although the world was actually created on the 25th of Elul, since Adam and Eve were created only six days later, on the 1st of Tishrei, Tishrei is the month in which humanity first beheld creation and creation achieved its purpose.

— ONKELOS —

3 מלילו עם כל־בנשחא דישראל
לממור בעסרא לרחא הדין ויסבין להון
גבר אמרא לבית אבא אמרא לביתא:

3 דְּבָרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בְּעֶשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה
וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ שֶׂה לְבֵית־אָבֹתָיִם שֶׂה לְבֵיתָ:

— RASHI —

לֵאמֹר בְּעֶשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ. דְּבָרוּ הַיּוֹם בְּרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ שִׁיקְחוּהוּ
בְּעֶשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ: הַזֶּה. פֶּסַח מִצְרַיִם מִקְחוּ בְּעֶשֶׂר, וְלֹא
פֶּסַח דּוֹרוֹת: שֶׂה לְבֵית־אָבֹת. לְמִשְׁפָּחָה אַחַת. הָרִי שְׁהִיו
מִרְבִּין, יָכוֹל שֶׁה אֶחָד לְכֹלָן? תִּלְמוֹד לֹמֵר: "שֶׂה לְבֵיתָ":

3 דְּבָרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתִּי. וְכִי אֶהְרֵן מְדַבֵּר? וְהֵלֵא כָּבֵר
נֶאֱמַר⁵²: "אֲמַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר"? אֵלֶּא, חוֹלְקִין כְּבוֹד זֶה לָזֶה,
וְאוֹמְרִים זֶה לָזֶה: לְמַדְנִי. וְהַדְּבוּר יוֹצֵא מִבֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם,
כָּאֵלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם מְדַבְּרִים: דְּבָרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל

32. שמות ז, ב.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Each man among them shall take for himself a lamb or kid: When the Torah will discuss the laws of sacrifices, we will see that in most cases, it will specify precisely what type of animal is to be used for which sacrifice. Even when it allows us to use several types of animals, each class of sacrifice is still predominantly associated with a particular type of animal. The Passover sacrifice, in contrast, is unique in that the Torah gives complete equivalence to both options, a sheep or a goat.

One of the differences between sheep and goats is that goats are usually black, while sheep are typically white. The dark goat therefore evokes the imagery of a life devoid of Divine light, i.e., the former life of a penitent sinner. And indeed, although the Torah allows sin-offerings of private individuals to be either sheep or goats,⁵⁵ the communal sin-offerings offered on festivals were specifically goats.⁵⁶

In contrast, the white, unassertive sheep evokes the imagery of a pure life unsullied by sin and undefiled by a skewed ego, i.e., the life of a righteous person. Such a person, rather than bringing a sin-offering, would be apt to bring an ascent-offering, expressing his or her desire to enhance the already-wholesome relationship with God he or she enjoys. And although the Torah allows ascent-offerings to be either sheep or goats, the communal ascent-offerings were specifically sheep.⁵⁷

The fact that the Torah gives total equivalence to sheep and goats for the Passover offering reflects the fact that this offering was required of every Jew, regardless of his or her spiritual status. Whether we are righteous or on the way to becoming righteous, we all have to internalize the message of the Exodus from Egypt and be redeemed from the limitations that prevent us from progressing in our relationship with God.⁵⁸

INNER DIMENSIONS

[3] On the tenth of this month: God instructed the people to begin preparations for the Passover sacrifice specifically on the tenth of the month. Since they, to varying extents, had been steeped in Egyptian culture, they had to first purify their inner, Divine selves of this negativity before undertaking to purify their animal natures. Inasmuch as the commandments purify the person performing them, this purification process began as soon as God gave the people their first commandment, to declare a new month when the moon begins its cycle anew. This occurred on the first day of Nisan, and on each of the ensuing nine days, another of

the ten faculties of the people's souls (i.e., the three faculties of the intellect and the seven emotions) was refined as another of the ten *sefirot* illumined the corresponding soul-faculty.

By the tenth day, all ten faculties of the Divine soul had been cleansed by the Divine energy emanating from this commandment, and the people were then ready to begin the task of purifying their human/animal souls. God therefore instructed them to take a lamb, a physical correlate of the animal soul, on this day, and begin to prepare it as the Passover sacrifice.⁵⁹

55. Leviticus 4:27-35. 56. Leviticus 16:5; Numbers 28:11-29:39. 57. Numbers 28:1-29:39. 58. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5629, pp. 105 ff, 120-121; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5729, pp. 153-158. 59. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5741, pp. 122-126; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5742, pp. 120-122; *Or HaTorah*, Bo, p. 282.

3 It will soon be time for Me to fulfill My promise to Abraham to redeem his progeny from slavery.⁴⁷ But since they have neglected fulfilling My commandments for so long,⁴⁸ they lack sufficient merits to warrant this. I will therefore now give them two general commandments to fulfill: the Passover offering, which embodies all the passive commandments, and circumcision, which embodies all the active commandments. **Speak together to the entire community of Israel** today, on the first of the month, **saying: ‘On the tenth of this month** each family must designate a lamb or a kid to be its Passover sacrifice, which they will slaughter on the fourteenth of the month. The obligation to designate the lamb or kid on the *tenth* of the month applies this time only; in subsequent years, there will be no such requirement. This is because the people have become addicted to idolatry, and the sheep is one of the deities of Egypt. By slaughtering the sheep, the Israelites will be denying the divinity of this deity, and by holding it for this purpose for four full days they will be weaning and cleansing themselves from their attachment to idol worship. Just as I made Abraham wait four days before almost sacrificing Isaac in order to ensure that he was fulfilling My command deliberately and not impulsively,⁴⁹ so should they spend four days preparing to slaughter the sheep in order to break their attachment to idolatry.⁵⁰ Since idolatry is the negation of the entire Torah, by foreswearing idolatry they will in effect be fulfilling all the *passive* commandments of the Torah. In order for them to acquire the merit of fulfilling *active* commandments, let all the males who have not yet done so⁵¹ be circumcised on the night of the fourteenth, before eating the Passover sacrifice.⁵² Since circumcision is the sign of the covenant between Abraham’s progeny and Me, this commandment in effect embodies all the Torah’s active commandments.⁵³ As to how many people will share each lamb or kid: **each man among them** who heads an extended family-unit **shall take for himself a lamb or kid for his extended family**, unless the extended family is so big that not everyone will be able to eat a *kezayit* (38 grams or 1 1/3 ounce) of the lamb or kid. In such a case, they should take **a lamb or kid for each nuclear family**.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

3 **But they have neglected fulfilling My commandments for so long, they lack sufficient merits to warrant this:** Just as God wanted the Jewish people to merit their redemption from Egypt, He wants us to merit our redemption from our present exile. And just as He wanted them to leave Egypt “with great wealth,” He wants us to leave our present exile laden with the spiritual and material wealth we have accrued from persevering and passing the tests of exile.

In order to hasten the redemption, it is therefore incumbent upon us to accrue as much spiritual merit as we can, and to try to reach every Jew possible in order to help him accrue the maximum spiritual merit, as well. Even if we only succeed in persuading him or her to do one additional good deed or fulfill one more of God’s commandments, this could well be the one, last act necessary to tip the scales of merit and usher in the final Redemption.⁵⁴

47. Genesis 15:13-16. 48. See above, 1:6. 49. Genesis 22:4. 50. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 16, pp. 118-119. 51. See above, 1:6. 52. See below, v. 48; Rashi on 24:6, below; *Keritot* 9a, from Joshua 5:5 and Ezekiel 16:6. 53. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 16, pp. 117-118. 54. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 16, pp. 120-121.

ONKELOS

4 וְאִם יִמְעַט הַבֵּית מִהוּיֹת מִשָּׁה וְלָקַח הוּא וּשְׁכֵנֹו
הַקָּרֵב אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ בְּמִכְסֵת נִפְשָׁת אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוּ תִכְסֹו
עַל-הַשָּׂה: 5 שָׁה תָמִים זָכָר בֶּן-שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם מִן-
הַכֹּבָשִׁים וּמִן-הָעִזִּים תִּקְחוּ: 6 וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת
עַד אַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וּשְׁחַטוּ אוֹתוֹ כָּל קָהֵל
עַד־תִּישָׂאֵל בֵּין הָעֲרֻבִים: 7 וְלָקַחוּ מִן-הַהֶדֶם וְנָתַנוּ עַל-
שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וְעַל-הַמִּשְׁקוֹף עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר-יֵאָכְלוּ
אוֹתוֹ בָּהֶם:

RASHI

4 — בשני דמים. ואומר: "גם-את בדם-בְּרִיתךָ שְׁלַחְתִּי
אֶסְרִיךָ מִבּוֹר אֵין מִים בּוֹ"³⁹. וְשָׁהוּ שְׁטוּפִים בְּעִבּוּדָה
זָרָה, אָמַר לָהֶם: "מִשְׁכּוֹ וְקָחוּ לָכֶם"⁴⁰ — מִשְׁכּוֹ יִדְכֶם
מִעִבּוּדָה זָרָה, וְקָחוּ לָכֶם צֶאֱן שֶׁל מִצּוּה: וּשְׁחַטוּ אוֹתוֹ
וְגו'. וְכִי בָלָן שׁוֹחֲטִין? אֵלָּא, מִכָּאֵן שֶׁשְׁלוּחוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם
כְּמוֹתוֹ: קָהֵל עַד־תִּישָׂאֵל. קָהֵל וְעַדָּה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. מִכָּאֵן
אָמְרוּ: פֶּסַחִי צָבוֹר נִשְׁחָטִין בְּשֹׁלֶשׁ כֶּתוֹת זֹו אַחֵר זֹו,
נִכְנָסָה כֶּת רִאשׁוֹנָה נִנְעָלוּ דְלָתוֹת הָעֶזְרָה וְכו'. כְּדֵאֵיתָא
בְּפֶסְחִים⁴¹: "בֵּין הָעֲרֻבִים. מִשְׁשׁ שְׁעוֹת וְלִמְעַלָּה קְרוּי "בֵּין
הָעֲרֻבִים", שֶׁהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ נוֹטֶה לְבֵית מְבֹאֵה לְעֶרֶב. וְלִשּׁוֹן
"בֵּין הָעֲרֻבִים" נִרְאֶה בְּעֵינֵי אוֹתָן שְׁעוֹת שְׁבִין עֲרַבֵת
הַיּוֹם לְעֶרְבֵת הַלֵּילָה, עֲרַבֵת הַיּוֹם בְּתַחֲלַת שְׁבַע שְׁעוֹת,
מִכִּי יִנְטוּ צִלְי עֶרֶב, וְעֲרַבֵת הַלֵּילָה בְּתַחֲלַת הַלֵּילָה.
"עֶרֶב" לִשּׁוֹן נֶשֶׁף וְחֹשֶׁךְ, כְּמוֹ: "עֶרְבָה כָּל-שְׁמֻחָה"⁴²:
7 וְלָקַחוּ מִן-הַהֶדֶם. זֹו קִבְּלַת הֶדֶם. יָכוֹל בִּידָה תִלְמוּד
לֹאמַר: "אֲשֶׁר בְּסֶף": הַמְּזוּזוֹת. הֵם הַזְּקוּפוֹת, אַחַת מִכָּאֵן
לְפָתַח וְאַחַת מִכָּאֵן: הַמִּשְׁקוֹף. הוּא הָעֵלְיוֹן שֶׁהִדְלַת
שׁוֹקֵף עָלָיו כְּשֶׁסּוֹגְרִין אוֹתוֹ, לִינִיטִי"ר בְּלַעֲזָה⁴³. וְלִשּׁוֹן
"שְׁקִיפָה" — חֲבָטָה, כְּמוֹ: "קוֹל עֹלָה נִדָּף"⁴⁴ — "טִרְפָּא
דְּשְׁקִיף". "חֲבֻרָה"⁴⁵ — "מִשְׁקוּפִי": עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר-
יֵאָכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ בָּהֶם. וְלֹא עַל מִשְׁקוֹף וּמְזוּזוֹת שֶׁבִּבֵּית
הַתֶּבֶן וּבִבֵּית הַבָּקָר, שָׁאִין דָּרִין בְּתוֹכָן:

33. מכילתא פרשה ג. 34. ויקרא כו, כג. 35. דברים יד, ד. 36. יחזקאל טו, ח. 37. שם, ז. 38. ו. 39. זכריה ט, יא. 40. שמות יב, כא. 41. סד, א. 42. ישעיה כד, יא. 43. משקוף. 44. ויקרא כו, לו. 45. שמות כא, כה.

60. Below, v. 22. 61. Rashi on v. 13, below. 62. Above, on v. 3. 63. See *Tanya*, chapter 6 (11a). 64. *Or HaTorah*, Bo, pp. 283-284; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5742, pp. 120-122.

4 On the other hand, **if the nuclear family is too small to require a lamb or kid, then the family-head and a neighbor who is close to his home shall take** one together, **according to the number of people**, for it is forbidden to leave any of the meat of the offering uneaten (or unburned) until morning. If, after forming a group to eat a specific lamb or kid together, someone wants to leave this group and join another, this may be done only before the animal is slaughtered. **You shall be counted for the lamb or kid according to what each individual eats.** Thus, the sick or elderly, who cannot eat a *kezayit*, are not counted.

5 **You shall use a flawless young male animal in its first year** for this offering; **you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.**

6 **You shall keep watch over it**, making sure it does not develop any blemish, **until the fourteenth day of this month**, i.e., for a minimum of four days. This obligation *does* apply to all future Passover offerings; it is only the obligation to *designate* a specific lamb or kid as the Passover offering on the tenth that applies this time only.⁶⁰ **The entire assembled community of Israel shall then slaughter** their sacrifices **in the afternoon** of the fourteenth, in three shifts. Although only one person will slaughter each lamb or kid on behalf of the group, since a person's designated substitute is his legal proxy, it will be as if they all slaughtered it.

7 When slaughtering the lamb or kid, they shall collect the blood in a basin.⁶⁰ **They shall take some of the blood that has been collected this way and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel inside⁶¹ the houses in which they will eat** the sacrifice. They do not need to put any of the blood on structures not used for dwelling.

✧ INNER DIMENSIONS ✧

[6] **You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month...The entire assembled community of Israel shall slaughter it in the afternoon:** Thus, the animal had to be watched for three full days plus an additional half day before being slaughtered.

This is because, as we pointed out,⁶² this sheep or goat was a physical correlate of the human/animal soul, which originates in the realm of neutrality (*kelipat nogah*) between holiness and evil. This aspect of our personality is oriented neither toward nor against holiness; it simply seeks its own preservation and comfort. Since it is not inherently antagonistic to Divine concerns, it can be elevated and co-opted into the Godly life.

But by the same token, it can also be co-opted into the service of evil, and this is what happens when materialism becomes intractable, as it did in Egypt. In such a case, the necessary and innocuous drive

for self-preservation becomes transformed into an unending quest for material satiation and stimulation that overtakes our lives and even makes us antagonistic to holiness.

Inasmuch as the Jews in Egypt had been immersed in Egyptian culture, their human/animal souls had to be purified of this defilement. Since there are three degrees of evil,⁶³ this was correspondingly a three-day process. On the fourth day, the human/animal soul was again its neutral self, and the animal personifying it could be slaughtered.

But the neutrality of the human/animal soul evinces equal propensities toward good and evil. It was therefore necessary to wait until half of the fourth day had passed, corresponding to the "evil half" of this soul, before finally slaughtering the animal and absorbing the human/animal soul into the life of Divine consciousness.⁶⁴

— ONKELOS —

8 ויכלון ית בסרא בליילא הדין
טוי נור ופטיר על מררין יכלונה:
9 לא תיכלון מנה כד חי ואף לא
בשלא מבשל במיא אלהין טוי
נור רישה על כרעוהי ועל גוה:
10 ולא תשארון מנה עד צפרא
ודישתאר מנה עד צפרא בנורא
תוקדון: 11 וברין תיכלון יתה
חרציכון יהון אסירין מסניכון
ברגליכון וחוטריכון בידכון
ותיכלון יתה בבחילו פסחא הוא
קדם יי:

8 ואכלו את־הבשר בלילה הזה צלי־אש ומצות על־
מררים יאכלהו: 9 אל־תאכלו ממנו נא ובשל מבשל
במים כי אם־צלי־אש ראשו על־פרעיו ועל־קרבו:
10 ולא־תותרו ממנו עד־בקר והנותר ממנו עד־בקר
באש תשרפו: 11 וככה תאכלו אתו מתניכם חגרים
נעליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידכם ואכלתם אתו
בחפזון פסח הוא ליהוה:

— RASHI —

בקר, שהבקר משמעו משעת הנץ החמה, ובא הכתוב
להקדים שאסור באכילה מעלות השחר. והו לפי
משמעו. ועוד מדרש אחר: למד שאינו נשרף ביום־
טוב אלא ממחרת, וכך תדרשנו: והנותר ממנו בבקר
ראשון עד בקר שני, תעמד ותשרפנו: 11 מתניכם
חגרים. מוֹמָנִים לדרך: בחפזון. לשון בזהל ומהירות,
כמו: "ויהי דוד נחפו ללכת",⁴⁹ "אשר־השליכו ארם
בחפזם":⁵⁰ פסח הוא לה. הקרבן קרוי "פסח", על
שם הדלוג והפסיחה שהקדוש ברוך־הוא היה מדלג
בתי ישראל מבין בתי מצרים, וקופץ ממצרי למצרי
וישראל אמצעי נמלט. ואתם עשו כלי־עבודותיו לשם
שמים. דבר אחר: דרך דלוג וקפיצה, וכן לשמו שקרוי
"פסח". וגם פשק"א⁵¹ לשון פסיעה:

8 את־הבשר. ולא גידים ועצמות: על־מררים. כל־
עשב מר נקרא "מרור", וצום לאכול מרור — וכן
ל'ומררו את־חיהם":⁴⁶ 9 אל־תאכלו ממנו נא. שאינו
צלי כל־צרכו, קוראו "נא" בלשון ערבי: ובשל מבשל.
כל־זה באזהרת "אל תאכלו": במים. מניין לשאר
משקין? תלמוד לומר: "ובשל מבשל" — מכל־מקום:
כי אם־צלי־אש. למעלה גור עליו במצות עשה, וכאן
הוסיף עליו לא תעשה: "אל תאכלו ממנו... כי אם
צלי אש": ראשו על פרעיו. צולחו כלו באחד — עם
ראשו ועם פרעיו ועם קרבו, ובני מעיו נותן לתוכו
אחר הדחתו. ולשון "על פרעיו ועל קרבו", בלשון "על
צבאותם" כמו "בצבאותם" — כמות שהן, אף זה כמות
שהוא, כל־בשרו משלם: 10 והנותר ממנו עד־בקר.
מה־תלמוד לומר "עד בקר" פעם שניה? לתן בקר על

46. שמות א, יד. 47. פסוק ח. 48. פסחים פג, נ. 49. שמואלא כג, כו. 50. מלכים ב, טו. 51. פסח.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

All three must be totally permeated by the "fire" of holiness, i.e., warmth and enthusiasm for the Creator.⁶⁹

From another perspective, the "head," "legs," and "internal organs" signify the intellect, the desire to control (i.e., to keep others trampled underfoot), and the pursuit of livelihood, respectively.

Just as the Passover sacrifice was intended to slaughter the idolatry of Egypt, so is it intended to warn us not to make idols out of these three aspects of our lives:

- ♦ We must not idolize our intellect, making it the measure of all things, but rather submit ourselves to God's will even when it seems to contravene the dictates of our limited, human intellect.
- ♦ We must not make an idol out of our hunger for power, mercilessly aggrandizing ourselves at others' expense.
- ♦ We must not make an idol out of the pursuit of our livelihood, justifying all means to achieving wealth, comfort, and prestige.⁷⁰

11 You shall eat it in haste: Although the Jews of the Exodus had cleansed themselves of their actual involvement in Egyptian culture, they still harbored a certain degree of infatuation for it. They had not yet totally uprooted the old values and ways of the thinking; this would come only later when they received the Torah and began to structure their lives around its commandments. In the meantime, the glamour of Egyptian materialism still beckoned them.

God therefore had to hurry them out of Egypt while they were still sufficiently impressed by the events of the past year to encourage them to leave the only home they knew—both physically and culturally—and venture into the double unknown of the inhospitable desert and a lifestyle of holiness.

The same is true whenever we go out of a personal "Egypt," when we leave behind the comfort of our previous way of living and rise to a new level of Divine consciousness and its accompanying lifestyle. In order to stay on the new path, it is crucial to sustain

69. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5747-5751, pp. 364-369. 70. Encyclical letter of Nisan 11, 5726 (*Torat Menachem—Igrot Melech*, vol. 2, pp. 54-58).

8 They shall eat the meat on that night, but they only need to eat the meat—not the sinews or bones. **They shall eat it roasted over fire, with matzah, and together with bitter herbs**, the latter to remind them of the bitterness of the exile from which I am redeeming them.

9 Tell them: ‘Do not eat any of it half-cooked or cooked in water or any other liquid, **but only roasted over fire whole, together with its head, its legs, and its internal organs**, after you have rinsed the latter.’ The instruction to eat it roasted is phrased both positively (in the previous verse) and negatively (in this verse) in order to make someone who eats it any other way liable for transgressing both an active and a passive commandment.

10 You shall not leave any of it over until morning. Any of it that is left over until morning, i.e., dawn, **you shall burn in fire**. However, you should not burn this leftover meat on the morning of the holiday itself; you should wait until the morning of the next day.

11 And this is how you shall eat it: with your waist belted, prepared to travel, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. This offering shall be known as **‘the Passover offering to God,’** because when I kill the firstborn of Egypt, I will *pass over* any Israelite firstborn that happens to be among the Egyptians, as will be explained presently. Furthermore, you are to perform the rites associated with this offering in an energetic, hasty manner, reminiscent of how I ‘jumped’ from house to house to rescue you.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

8 With matzah: The commandment to eat matzah was given *before* the people were hastily forced out of Egypt and their dough could not rise. In other words, there was an intrinsic reason to eat matzah quite apart from any incidental circumstances regarding the timing of the people’s departure.

In general, bread is associated with knowledge and awareness. According to one opinion, the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was wheat, and we are taught that “a baby cannot know how to call to its father and mother until it has tasted the taste of grain.”⁶⁵ Unleavened and leavened bread respectively signify immature and mature consciousness: childlike, innocent faith versus mature understanding.

Although God wants us to use our minds to understand as much as we can about Him, His providence, and His law, the foundation of our relationship with Him is simple, innocent faith. This faith is not blind; it is the result of the intrinsic connection and identity between God and the core-essence of our Jewish consciousness, the Divine soul. Whenever that connection is tapped, our basic faith in God is renewed.

The transcendent revelation the people were about to experience at midnight was going to bring them to an altogether new level of awareness, notwithstanding whatever connection they might have had with God before the Exodus. They were about to be virtually re-

born to a new childhood, a new innocence, and the appropriate way of initially accepting this revelation was simple faith. There would be time later for analysis, inquiry, and understanding; right now too much intellect would just get in the way of the experience. This is why they had to eat matzah, the “bread of faith.”

Moreover, leavened and unleavened bread respectively indicate ego and selflessness. The puffed up, risen bread evokes the image of a haughty, self-assertive individual, in contrast to the humble, lowly, flat, self-effacing matzah. Inasmuch as “there is no room for God in someone who is full of himself,”⁶⁶ the prerequisite for any new Godly revelation is a self-effacing attitude, in which we declare ourselves ready to give up our precious preconceptions and entrenched world-view in favor of the new insight we hope to receive from God.⁶⁷

This is another reason that the people had to eat matzah before the imminent midnight revelation.⁶⁸

9 Roasted over fire, together with its head, its legs, and its internal organs: Allegorically, the “head,” “legs,” and “internal organs” signify the three dimensions of Jewish religious observance. The “head” is the study of the Torah; the “legs”—limbs of action—are the active performance of the commandments; and the “internal organs” refer to prayer, the inner life of religious observance.

65. *Berachot* 40a. 66. *Par. Sotah* 5a. 67. The theme of matzah vs. leavened bread will be developed more fully in *Leviticus* 23.

68. *Likutei Torah* 2:13a-14b.

— ONKELOS —

12 וְאֶתְגָּלִי בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם
בְּלִילִיָּא דְּהִדִּין וְאַקְטוּל כָּל־בּוֹכְרָא
בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם מֵאֲנָשָׁא וְעַד
בְּעִירָא וּבְכָל־טַעוֹת מִצְרָאִי אֶעְבֹּד
דִּינִין אָנָּא יְיָ: 13 וַיְהִי דְּמָא לְכוּן
לְאֵת עַל בְּתִיָּא דִּי אֲתוֹן תַּמָּן וְאַחֲזִי
יֵת דְּמָא וְאַחֲזִי עֲלִיכוּן וְלֹא יְהִי
בְּכוּן מוֹתָא לְחַבְלָא בְּמִקְטְלִי
בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם:

12 וְעִבְרִיתִי בְּאַרְץ־מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה וְהִפִּיתִי כָל־
בְּכוֹר בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי
מִצְרַיִם אֲעִשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְהוָה: 13 וְהָיָה הָדָם לָכֶם
לְאֵת עַל הַבְּתִיִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שֵׁם וְרֵאִיתִי אֶת־הָדָם
וּפְסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם וְלֹא־יְהִיָּה בְּכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחִית בְּהַבְּתִי
בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם:

— RASHI —

לְרֵאוֹת שְׂאֵתָם עֲסוּקִים בְּמִצְוֹתַי, וּפּוֹסֵחַ אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם:
וּפְסַחְתִּי. וְחַמְלָתִי, וְדוֹמָה לֹא: "פֶּסַח וְהַמִּלִּט".⁵³ וְאֲנִי
אוֹמֵר: כֹּל "פְּסִיחָה" לְשׁוֹן דְּלוּג וּקְפִיצָה, "וּפְסַחְתִּי"
— מְדַלֵּג הָיָה מִבְּתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבְּתֵי מִצְרַיִם, שֶׁהָיוּ שְׂרִוּיִם
זֶה בְּתוֹךְ זֶה. וְכֵן "פְּסַחִים עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַסַּעֲפִים",⁵⁴ וְכֵן
כָּל־הַפְּסַחִים הוֹלְכִים כְּקוֹפְצִים. וְכֵן "פֶּסַח וְהַמִּלִּט"
— מְדַלֵּג וּמְמַלְטוֹ מִבֵּין הַמוֹמְתִּים: וְלֹא־יְהִיָּה בְּכֶם נֶגֶף.
אֲבָל הוּזָה הוּא בְּמִצְרַיִם. הֲרִי שֶׁהָיָה מִצְרִי בְּבֵיתוֹ שֶׁל
יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְכוֹל וּמַלְט? תִּלְמוּד לֹאֵר: "וְלֹא־יְהִיָּה בְּכֶם
נֶגֶף", אֲבָל הוּזָה בְּמִצְרִי שֶׁבְּבִתְיָכֶם. הֲרִי שֶׁהָיָה יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּבֵיתוֹ שֶׁל מִצְרִי שׁוֹמֵעַ אֲנִי יִלְקָה כְּמוֹתוֹ? תִּלְמוּד לֹאֵר:
"וְלֹא־יְהִיָּה בְּכֶם נֶגֶף":

12 וְעִבְרִיתִי. כְּמִלֵּךְ הַעוֹבֵר מִמָּקוֹם לְמָקוֹם, וּבְהַעֲבִירָה
אֶחָת וּבִרְגַע אֶחָד כֵּלָן לֹאֲקִין: כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם. אִף
בְּכוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים וְהֵם בְּמִצְרַיִם. וּמִנֵּין אִף בְּכוֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם
שֶׁבְּמִקְמוֹת אֲחֵרִים? תִּלְמוּד לֹאֵר: "לְמַכָּה מִצְרַיִם
בְּבְכוֹרֵיהֶם".⁵² מֵאָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה. מִי שֶׁהִתְחִיל בְּהַעֲבִירָה
— מִמָּוֶן מִתְחַלֵּת הַפְּרָעָנוֹת: וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם. שֶׁל עֵץ
נִרְקָבָת, וְשֶׁל מִתְּכַת נִמְסַת וְנִתְכַת לְאַרְץ: אֲעִשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים
אֲנִי ה'. אֲנִי בְּעֶצְמִי וְלֹא עַל יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ: 13 וְהָיָה הָדָם
לָכֶם לְאֵת. לָכֶם לְאוֹת וְלֹא לְאַחֲרִים לְאוֹת. מִכָּאן, שֶׁלֹּא
נִתְּנוּ הָדָם אֶלָּא מִבְּפָנִים: וְרֵאִיתִי אֶת־הָדָם. הַכֹּל גָּלוּי
לְפָנָיו, אֶלָּא אִמֵּר הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ־הוּא: נוֹתֵן אֲנִי אֶת עֵינִי
⁵² תַּחֲלִים קָלוּ, י. ⁵³ יִשְׁעִיה לֹא, ה. ⁵⁴ מַלְכִּים־א יח, כא.

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nature could not be vanquished by a force that was itself part of creation and subject to its laws. He had to reveal the aspect of Himself that transcends creation and its natural laws.⁸⁰

I and none other: Having already negated the option of sending any emissary whatsoever, this expression seems superfluous.

Whenever God reveals that aspect of Himself that transcends creation, He is also revealing that aspect of Himself that transcends the dichotomy between good and evil. After all, good and evil are arbitrary concepts that God invented and defined for use in the created world. Therefore, whenever this level of Divinity is operative *within creation*, evil can claim equal rights to legitimacy along with good. Precautions must therefore be taken to ensure that this does not happen.⁸¹

God therefore concluded His announcement of this imminent revelation with the promise that He will not allow forces not subordinate to His will to take advantage of it. In other words, the revelation of His transcendence will be accompanied by the revelation that despite the existential equivalency of good and evil at this level, He still prefers good to evil.⁸²

13 There were some Jews in Egyptian houses that

night: Evidently, the well-known Jewish inferiority complex has existed for a long time. The Jews had witnessed amazing miracles over the past year, demonstrating how God singled them out from all nations and was going to elevate them to the pinnacle of human achievement by giving them His Torah. Egyptian civilization lay crumbling at their feet. Yet, on the night of their redemption, when they should have felt unabashedly proud to be part of the chosen people, they were instead busy trying to ingratiate themselves with the Egyptians, trying to convince both themselves and the Egyptians that the Jews are really not special after all—and all this in violation of God's specific instruction to stay at home that night!

Without denigrating any non-Jewish nation or individual, God forbid, it is imperative that we provide ourselves and those around us once and for all with the education necessary to understand and appreciate the differences between Jews and non-Jews. It is neither an embarrassment to ourselves nor any disparagement of non-Jews for a Jew to be proud to be Jewish and to affirm the uniqueness of the Jewish people.⁸³

(Zohar Chadash, Yitro [beginning]). 80. Likutei Torah 2:12c; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5644, pp. 224 ff; Likutei Sichot, vol. 3, p. 855. 81. See also below, on 34:10. 82. Likutei Torah 2:12cd. 83. Sichot Kodesh 5636, vol. 1, pp. 409-413.

12 I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night in order to begin your redemption from exile, **and** the first act in this process is that **I will** instantaneously⁷¹ **strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, whether man or beast.** Since the men sinned first, they will be killed first; since the beasts were only *used* to oppress the people, they will be killed second. I will also kill all the firstborn of other non-Jewish nations that happen to be in Egypt—since these nations also relished the Jewish people’s suffering^{71a}—and all the Egyptian firstborn that happen not to be in Egypt at that time. **Upon all the gods of Egypt I will mete out chastisements:** wooden idols will rot; metal idols will melt. **I, God,** will mete out these chastisements Myself, and not through any emissary.

13 The blood will serve you as a sign on the houses in which you are: I will see that you did what I told you to do with the blood and in this merit I will mercifully pass over you, and there will be no destructive plague among you when I strike Egypt. But an Egyptian firstborn who happens to be in your home will nonetheless be killed.” It was necessary to “pass over” the Israelites for two reasons: because there were Egyptian houses in the Jewish region of Goshen,⁷² and because—despite God’s commandment not to leave their own homes until morning⁷³—there were some Jews in Egyptian houses that night.⁷⁴

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the momentum and take care not to slide back into previous habits.

In the coming messianic redemption, however, this caution will be unnecessary. Since this redemption will be absolute and encompass all reality, the exilic mentality of materialism will no longer exist. There will be no possibility of backsliding, so haste will not be necessary. As God tells us,⁷⁵ “You will not leave in haste, nor will you walk hurriedly.”⁷⁶

With your waist belted, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand: Allegorically, these three instructions for eating the Passover sacrifice are the three requirements for leaving any personal or collective “Egypt”:

Your waist belted: Just as the hips and waist support the rest of the body, so is our faith in God the foundation and basis of Judaism. “Girding the waist” means strengthening our faith so it can permeate all aspects of our lives.

Your shoes on your feet: Shoes are made of animal leather, which must be tanned and softened in order to be formed into the proper shape. They thus signify how we are to refine our animal nature and make it receptive to Divine purposes. But even this is not enough; we must put these shoes “on our feet,” which means that we must harness our animal nature for holy purposes, making it carry out our Divine soul’s will, just as the feet carry out the brain’s will to walk or run.

Your staff in your hand: Among other things, a staff serves to guide the animals accompanying a traveler, keeping them on the right path. Similarly, when our animal nature balks at the stringencies we may have adopted in our path toward holiness, we need to be able to prod it back in line.

Thus prepared, we can confidently leave our “Egypt.”⁷⁷

You are to perform the rites...in an energetic, hasty manner: The Passover sacrifice had to be prepared hastily because it expressed the manner in which the people were redeemed from Egypt. After generations of sinking progressively deeper into Egyptian degradation, the people completely turned their lives around and ascended to the pinnacle of holiness at Mount Sinai in the short span of forty-nine days. This “quantum leap” truly required a “jump” from one reality into another.⁷⁸

12 I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night: The Jewish people had sunk almost to the nadir of impurity in Egypt,⁷⁹ becoming almost fully absorbed into the mentality of Egyptian culture. As was mentioned previously, the basis of Egyptian civilization was the belief in the immutable supremacy of the laws of nature.

Therefore, in order to extricate the Jewish people from Egyptian materialism, God could not “send an emissary,” i.e., a finite, created being. The idolatry of

71. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 36, pp. 45-49. 71a. *Maskil LeDavid*; cf. above, 11:5. 72. See on 1:21, above. 73. v. 22, below. 74. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 36, p. 50. 75. Isaiah 52:12. 76. *Tanya*, chapter 31; *Or HaTorah*, Bo, pp. 291-2; *Torat Shmuel*, *VeKachah* (5637), chapters 1-4; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5737, pp. 191-199. 77. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5737, pp. 200-207. 78. Encyclical letter of Nisan 1, 5736 (*Torat Menachem*—*Igrot Melech*, vol. 2, pp. 129-135; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, pp. 161-162). 79. I.e., to the 49th of the fifty levels of impurity

ONKELOS 14 ויהא יומא הדין לכוון לדוכרנא ותחגון יתה חגא קדם יי לדריוון קים עלם תחגנה: 15 שבעת יומין פטירן תיכלון ברם ביומא קדמא תבטלון חמירא מבתיכון ארי כל-דייכול חמיע וישתיצי אנשא ההוא מישראל מיומא קדמא עד יומא שביעא: 16 וביומא קדמא מערע קדיש וביומא שביעא מערע קדיש יהי לכוון כל-עבידא לא יתעביד בהון ברם מה די מתאכל לכל-נפש הוא בלחודוהי יתעביד לכוון: 17 ותטרון ית פטירא ארי בכרן יומא הדין אפיקית ית חיליוון מארעא דמצרים ותטרון ית יומא הדין לדריוון קים עלם: 18 בניסן בארבעא עשרא יומא לירחא ברמשא תיכלון פטירא עד יומא חד ועשרין לירחא ברמשא: 19 שבעת יומין חמירא לא ישתכח בבתיכון ארי כל-דייכול מחמיע וישתיצי אנשא ההוא מבנשתא דישראל בגיורא ובציבא דארעא:

14 ויהי היום הזה לכם לזכרון וחתגתם אותו חג ליהוה לדרתיכם חקת עולם תחגגו: 15 שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו אך ביום הראשון תשביתו שאר מבתיכם כי כל-אכל חמין ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מישראל מיום הראשון עד-יום השביעי: 16 וביום הראשון מקרא-קדש וביום השביעי מקרא-קדש יהיה לכם כל-מלאכה לא-יעשה בהם אך אשר יאכל לכל-נפש הוא לבדו יעשה לכם: 17 ושמרתם את-המצות כי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את-עבאותיכם מארץ מצרים ושמרתם את-היום הזה לדרתיכם חקת עולם: 18 בראשון בארבעה עשר יום לחדש בערב תאכלו מצת עד יום האחד ועשרים לחדש בערב: 19 שבעת ימים שאר לא ימצא בבתיכם כי כל-אכל מחמצת ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מעדת ישראל בגר ובאזרח הארץ:

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כמו: "הראשון אדם תולד" 58 — הלפני אדם נולדת. או אינו אלא ראשון של שבעה? תלמוד לומר: "לא תשחט על חמץ" — לא תשחט הפסח ועדין חמץ קים: **הנפש ההוא**. כשהיא ננפשה ובדעתה, פרט לאנוס: **מישראל**. שומע אני תכרת מישראל ותלך לה לעם אחר, תלמוד לומר במקום אחר: "מלפני" 59 — בכל-מקום שהוא רשות: 16 **מקרא-קדש**. "מקרא" — שם דבר, קרא אותו קדש לאכילה ושתיה ונסות: **לא-יעשה בהם**. אפלו על ידי אחרים: **הוא לבדו**. "הוא" ולא מכשיריו, שאפשר לעשותו מערב יום טוב: **לכל-נפש**. אפלו לבהמה. יכול אף לנכרים? תלמוד לומר: "לכם" (נ"א: "אף"): 17 **ושמרתם את-המצות**. שלא יבואו לידי חמוץ, מכאן אמרו: תפח — תלטוש בצונו. רבי יאשיה אומר: אל תהי קורא "את-המצות" אלא "את-המצות" — בדרך שאין מחמיצין את המצה, כף אין מחמיצין את המצה, אלא אם באה לידך — עשה אותה מיד: **ושמרתם את-היום הזה**. ממלאכה: **לדרתיכם חקת עולם**. לפי שלא נאמר "דורות" ו"חקת עולם" על המלאכה, אלא על החגיגה, לכך חזר ושנאו כאן, שלא תאמר: אזהרת "כל-מלאכה

14 לזכרון. לדורות: וחתגתם אותו. יום שהוא לך לזכרון אתה חוגגו. ועדין לא שמענו אי זהו יום הזכרון, תלמוד לומר: "זכור את-היום הזה אשר יצאתם" 55, למדנו שיום הציאה הוא יום של זכרון. ואיזה יום יצאו? תלמוד לומר: "ממחרת הפסח יצאו" — הוי אומר יום ט"ו בניסן הוא של יום-טוב, שהרי ליל ט"ו אכלו את הפסח ולבקר יצאו: **לדרתיכם**. שומע אני מעוט דורות שנים, תלמוד לומר: "חקת עולם תחגגו": 15 **שבעת ימים**. שייטינא"א 56 של ימים: **שבעת ימים מצות תאכלו**. ובמקום אחר הוא אומר: "ששת ימים תאכל מצות" 57? למד על שביעי של פסח שאינו חובה לאכול מצה, ובלבד שלא יאכל חמץ. מניין אף ששה רשות? תלמוד לומר: "ששת ימים" — זו מדה בתורה: דבר שהיה בכלל ויצא מן הכלל ללמד, לא ללמד על עצמו בלבד יצא, אלא ללמד על הכלל כלו יצא — מה-שביעי רשות אף ששה רשות. יכול אף לילה הראשון רשות? תלמוד לומר: "בערב תאכלו מצות", הכתוב קבעו חובה: **אף ביום הראשון תשביתו שאר**. מערב יום טוב. וקרוי "ראשון", לפי שהוא לפני השבעה, ומצינו מקדם קרוי "ראשון",

55. שמות יג, ג. 56. קבוצה של שבעה. 57. דברים טז, ח. 58. איוב טו, ז. 59. ויקרא כב, ג. 60. שמות יג, ז.

14 **“This day, the 15th of Nisan, shall become a day of remembrance for you, and you shall celebrate it as a festival to God; once you enter the Promised Land⁸⁴ you shall celebrate it as an everlasting statute throughout all your generations, as follows:**

15 **For seven days, from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan, you shall eat matzos whenever you would like to eat bread, but on the previous day, the 14th of Nisan, you shall clear your houses of leavening agents, for the soul of anyone who eats leavened food intentionally from the first day until the seventh day will be cut off from Israel—he will die prematurely and childless.⁸⁵**

16 **The first day of these seven shall be designated a holy day and the seventh day shall be designated for you as a holy day, on which you should wear fine clothes and eat and drink special foods, and on which no work may be done, even by having others do it for you. The only exception to this is work that is required to be done to prepare any person or animal’s food—that alone may be done for you. But this exception does not include any type of food preparation that could just as effectively have been done before the holy day, nor any type of food preparation for non-Jews.**

17 **You shall be vigilant regarding the matzos, taking care when baking them that they do not rise. Similarly, you should be vigilant regarding all the commandments I will give you, performing each one at the earliest opportunity and not letting it figuratively become “stale.” For on this very day I will have brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt and I did not leave you in Egypt one moment longer than necessary. And you shall observe this day as a day of cessation from work not only this year but throughout all your generations as an everlasting statute.**

18 **As mentioned previously,⁸⁶ throughout the seven days of the holiday, eating matzos is optional (as long as you do not eat leaven). But in the first month, Nisan, in the evening following the fourteenth day of the month, it is obligatory: you shall eat matzos. The prohibition against eating leaven applies not only to the seven days but to the nights before them, as well—from the evening of the 15th until the evening of the 21st day of the month.**

19 **For seven days no leavening agents may be found in your homes, i.e., in any place under your authority, for—as will be seen in the next verse—the prohibition against eating leaven applies not only to leavened food but also to leavening agents: the soul of anyone who eats leavening agents will be cut off from the community of Israel—he will die prematurely and childless⁸⁷—whether he be a convert, whose ancestors did not participate in the miracle of the Exodus, or a native of the land, whose ancestors did.**

— RASHI —

“בְּכֹל-גְּבֻלָּה”⁸⁸. מה־תלמוד לומר “בְּבֵיתֵיכֶם” — מה־ בֵּיתְךָ בְּרִשְׁוֹתֶךָ, אִם גְּבֻלָּה שֶׁבְּרִשְׁוֹתֶךָ, יֵצֵא חֲמִצּוֹ שֶׁל נִכְרִי שֶׁהוּא אֵצֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא קִבֵּל עָלָיו אֲחִרְיוֹת: **כִּי כָל-אֹכֵל מִחֲמִצָּת. לַעֲנוֹשׁ כִּרְתַּת עַל הַשָּׂאוֹר. וְהִלָּא כֶּבֶד עָנֵשׁ עַל הַחֲמִץ? אֵלֶּא, שֶׁלֹּא תֹאמַר: חֲמִץ שֶׁרָאוֹי לְאַכְלָהּ**

לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה” לֹא לְדוֹרוֹת נִאֲמְרָה, אֵלֶּא לְאוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר: **18 עַד יוֹם הָאֶחָד וְעֶשְׂרִים.** לָמָּה נִאֲמַר? וְהִלָּא כֶּבֶד נִאֲמַר “שִׁבְעַת יָמִים”? לָפִי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר “יָמִים”, לִילּוֹת מִנִּין? תִּלְמוֹד לֹאֲמַר: “עַד יוֹם הָאֶחָד וְעֶשְׂרִים” וְגוֹ: **19 לֹא יֵצֵא בְּבֵיתֵיכֶם.** מִנִּין לְגְבוּלִין? תִּלְמוֹד לֹאֲמַר:

84. Below, 13:5-6. 85. Rashi on Leviticus 17:9, 20:20, 23:30. 86. v. 15. 87. As above, v. 15.

— ONKELOS —

20 כָּל־מַחְמַצֵּת לֹא תֹאכְלוּ בְּכָל־מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֹּת: פ
21 חֲמִישִׁי 21 וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁכּוֹ וַיִּקְחוּ לָבֶם צֹאן לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתֵיכֶם וּשְׁחָטוּ הַפֶּסֶח:
22 וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֲגֻדַּת אֲזוּב וּטְבַלְתֶּם בָּדָם אֲשֶׁר־בִּסְף וְהִנַּעְתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּשְׁקוֹף וְאֶל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת מִן־הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר בִּסְף וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח־בֵּיתוֹ עַד־בֹּקֶר:
23 וְעָבַר יְהוָה לִנְגַף אֶת־מִצְרַיִם וַרְאֵה אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּשְׁקוֹף וְעַל שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וּפֶסֶח יְהוָה עַל־הַפֶּתַח וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמִּשְׁחִית לָבֹא אֶל־בְּתִיכֶם לִנְגַף:

— RASHI —

אבות: 22 אֲזוּב. מִן יָרֵק שֵׁשׁ־לוֹ גִּבְעוּלִין: אֲגֻדַּת אֲזוּב. שְׁלֹשָׁה קֶלְחִין קְרוּיִין אֲגֻדָּה: אֲשֶׁר־בִּסְף. בְּכָלִי, כְּמוֹ: "סִפּוֹת בְּסָף"⁶¹. מִן־הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר בִּסְף. לָמַד חוֹר וּשְׁנָאוֹ? שֶׁלֹּא תֹאמְרוּ: טְבִילָה אַחַת לְשֹׁלֵשׁ הַמִּתְנָהוּת, לְכָךְ נֶאֱמַר עוֹד: "אֲשֶׁר בִּסְף", שֶׁתִּהְיֶה כָּל־נִתְיָנָה וְנִתְיָנָה: מִן הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר בִּסְף, עַל כָּל־הַגָּעָה טְבִילָה: וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ וְגו'. מְגִיד, מֵאַחַר שֶׁנִּתְּנָה רְשׁוּת לַמִּשְׁחִית לַחֲבֹל — אֵינוֹ מְבַחֵין בֵּין צָדִיק לְרָשָׁע. וְלִילָה רְשׁוּת לַמְּחַבְּלִים הוּא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "בּוֹ־תִרְמַשׁ כָּל־חַיּוֹתֵי־יָעַר"⁶². 23 וּפֶסֶח. וְחָמַל. וַיֵּשׁ לֹמֵר: וְדָלַג: וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמִּשְׁחִית. וְלֹא יִתֵּן לוֹ יְכַלֵּת לָבֹא, כְּמוֹ: "וְלֹא־נִתְּנוּ אֱלֹהִים לְהָרַע עֲמֻדֵי"⁶³.

עֲנֵשׁ עָלָיו, שְׁאוֹר שֶׁאֵינוֹ רָאוּי לְאֶכִילָה לֹא יַעֲנֵשׁ עָלָיו. וְאֵם עֲנֵשׁ עַל הַשְׁאוֹר וְלֹא עֲנֵשׁ עַל הַחֲמִץ, הֵייתִי אוֹמֵר: שְׁאוֹר שֶׁהוּא מִחֲמִץ אֲחֵרִים עֲנֵשׁ עָלָיו, חֲמִץ שֶׁאֵינוֹ מִחֲמִץ אֲחֵרִים לֹא יַעֲנֵשׁ עָלָיו, לְכָךְ נֶאֱמַר שְׁנִיָּהּ: בְּגֵר וּבְאֻרָּח הָאֶרֶץ. לְפִי שֶׁהִנֵּס נַעֲשֶׂה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, הִצְרָף לְרֵבּוֹת אֶת הַגֵּרִים: 20 מַחְמַצֵּת לֹא תֹאכְלוּ. אֲזוּרָה עַל אֲכִילַת שְׁאוֹר: כָּל־מַחְמַצֵּת. לְהִבִּיא אֶת תַּעֲרֻכְתּוֹ: בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֹּת. זֶה בֹּא לְלַמֵּד שֶׁתִּהְיֶה רְאוּיָה לִיֶּאֱכֹל בְּכָל־מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם, פֶּרֶט לְמַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנִי וְחִלּוֹת תּוֹדָה: 21 מִשְׁכּוֹ. מִי שֵׁשׁ לוֹ צֹאן, יִמְשֹׁף מִשְׁלוֹ: וַיִּקְחוּ מִי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ, יִקַּח מִן הַשּׁוֹק: לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתֵיכֶם. שֶׁהַ לְבִית

61. מלכיסב יב, יד. 62. תהלים קד, כ. 63. בראשית לא, ז.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[22] To the lintel and the two doorposts: The right doorpost alludes to *chesed*, the central *sefirah* of the right axis of *sefirot*; the left doorpost alludes to *gevurah*, the central *sefirah* of the left axis; the lintel alludes to *tiferet*, the central *sefirah* of the center axis; and the door itself alludes to *malchut*. In Kabbalistic terms, an imbalance in these coordinates of our Divine life produces a corresponding imbalance in the hierarchy of Divine attributes through which God's beneficence flows into reality.

It was therefore necessary to ensure that these axes were properly aligned and balanced in order for the revelation of the final plague to occur.⁹⁶

[23] God will pass: The first nine plagues were executed by the Name *Elokim*, which signifies God's attribute of severity and judgment. The respite that followed each plague was a manifestation of the Name *Havayah*, which signifies God's attribute of mercy. Inasmuch as Pharaoh and the Egyptians were already familiar with the Name *Elokim* and

96. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5632, vol. 1, pp. 129, 284-285; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5678, pp. 239, 244-245; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5706, pp. 69-70, 76.

20 You must not eat any leavening agent, even if it is mixed together with some other food. Regarding the matzos you must eat on the first night of Passover, **you shall eat matzos** that can be eaten **wherever you live**. This will exclude matzos that have been set aside as the second tithe⁸⁸ or matzos that are part of a thanksgiving offering,⁸⁹ which will only be permitted to eat in the city surrounding the Temple.’”

- ◆ **Fifth Reading 21** Although God had given Moses and Aaron instructions both regarding the Passover sacrifice and the observance of the Passover holiday that the people would observe in the future, Moses decided to first convey only the laws pertaining to the sacrifice, since it was a hectic time, and only these laws were immediately pertinent.⁹⁰ **Moses summoned the elders of Israel**. God had told Moses and Aaron to address the people together. Each of them deferred to the other, asking the other to begin the address until, miraculously, God’s message issued from the space between them, giving the impression they were both speaking simultaneously.⁹¹ In this way, Moses and Aaron **said to them** the details of the Passover sacrifice mentioned earlier, plus the following, which God had also told Moses: **“Draw yourselves away from idolatry and replace your addiction to it with the activity of fulfilling God’s commandments,**⁹² as follows: **Draw forth lambs or kids for your families** from your own flocks, if you have, **or acquire them for yourselves** in the market, **and slaughter the Passover offering.**

22 You shall then take a bundle of three stalks of hyssop **and dip it in the blood that is collected in the basin, and apply some of the blood in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts.** Dip the bundle in the blood before each application. Even though God has promised to spare you, **none of you**—even those who are not firstborn—**may go out of the entrance of his house until morning**, because at nighttime destructive angels have free reign and do not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, and if any of you perishes, the Egyptians will claim that God’s assurance that none of you will be harmed⁹³ was not fulfilled.⁹⁴

23 God will pass through Egypt to begin your redemption; the first part of this act will be for Him **to strike Egypt** by killing all their firstborn.⁹⁵ **He will see** that you have put **the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts**. In this merit, **God will mercifully pass over the entrance** to your houses, **and not allow the destructive plague to enter your houses.**

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

22-23 You shall then take a bundle of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts...God will pass over the entrance and not allow the destructive plague to enter your houses: God is omniscient, so He certainly did not need any sign to show Him which house was Egyptian and which was Jewish. Rather, the application of blood was the act the people had to perform in order to enable them to receive the revelation of God’s transcendence that was to occur at midnight.

The two doorposts and the lintel above them signified the three axes of our Divine calling: the study of the Torah (the lintel between the two posts), prayer (the left post) and holy deeds (the right post). Together, these three constitute a complete, balanced life that enables us to fulfill our Divine mission of making the world into God’s home. The absence, overemphasis, or underemphasis of any of the three creates an imbalance that prevents God’s presence from resting on our efforts. The door itself signified our readiness to obey God’s will (*kabalat ol*), since this commitment is

88. Deuteronomy 14:22-27. 89. Leviticus 7:11-12. 90. *Sichot Kodesh* 5741, vol. 2, pp. 462-463. 91. Rashi on v. 3, above. 92. Rashi on v. 6, above. 93. Above, 11:7. 94. Mizrahi. 95. Above, v. 12.

— ONKELOS —

24 ותטרונו ית פתגמא הדין לקים
לך ולבניך עד עלמא: 25 ויהי ארי
תיעלון לארעא די יתן יי לבון כמא
די מליל ותטרונו ית פלחנא הדין:
26 ויהי ארי יימרון לבון בניבון
מה פלחנא הדין לבון: 27 ותימרון
דבח חיס הוא קדם יי די חס על
בתי בני ישראל במצרים כד מחא
ית מצראי וית פתגא שיזיב וברע
עמא וסגידו: 28 ואולו ועבדו בני
ישראל כמא די פקיד יי ית משה
ואהרן בן עבדו:

24 ושמרתם את הדבר הזה לחקלך ולבניך עד-
עולם: 25 והיה כִּי־תבאו אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִתֶּן יְהוָה
לָכֶם כֹּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ושמרתם אֶת־הַעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת:
26 והיה כִּי־יאמרו אליכם בניכם מַה הַעֲבֹדָה
הַזֹּאת לָכֶם: 27 ואמרתם זִכַּר־פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה
אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל־בְּתִי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּנִגְפוֹ
אֶת־מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־בְּתִינוּ הִצִּיל וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ:
28 וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל כֹּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
וְאַהֲרֹן בֶּן עֲשֹׂו: ס

— RASHI —

והלא מראש חדש נאמר להם? אלא, מכיון שקבלו
עליהם, מעלה עליהם הכתוב כאלו עשו: וילכו ויעשו.
אף ההליכה מנה הכתוב, למן שכן להליכה ושכן
לעשיה: כֹּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן. להגיד שבחן
של ישראל, שלא הפילו דבר מכל־מצוות משה ואהרן.
ומהו "בן עשו"? אף משה ואהרן בן עשו:

25 והיה כִּי־תבאו אֶל־הָאָרֶץ. תלה הכתוב מצוה זו
בביאתם לארץ. ולא נתחייבו במדבר אלא פסח אחד
שעשו בשנה השנית על פי הדבור: כֹּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר. והיכן
דבר? — "והבאתי אתכם אל־הָאָרֶץ וגו'": 27 וַיִּקַּד
הָעָם. על בשורת הגאולה, וביאת הארץ ובשורת הבנים
שיהיו להם: 28 וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל. וכי כבר עשו?

64. שמות ו, ח. 65. שמות ט, טו.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] the purpose of the plagues was to make them also recognize the Name *Havayah*, it follows that the main part of each plague was not the devastation it caused but the respite that followed it.¹⁰³

In contrast, in the case of the tenth plague, the devastation also issued from the Name *Havayah*. In other words, this plague was not an act of severity followed by an act of mercy; it was entirely an act of mercy. It was the final stroke in the process of disengaging the Jewish people from the Egyptians. This was an act of mercy; the fact that it was manifest as an act of severity on the firstborn was because they personified the evil from which the Jewish people had to be freed.

Therefore, there was no respite after this plague. All the firstborn were slain in one instant, and even after Pharaoh relented, they were not restored to

life. It was not an act of the Name *Elokim* that could be counteracted by the Name *Havayah*; it itself was an act of the Name *Havayah*.

Inasmuch as the Jewish people are rooted in the Name *Havayah*, they had nothing to fear from the plagues issuing from the Name *Elokim*. But since the tenth plague issued from the Name *Havayah*, they were essentially vulnerable to this plague. The same revelation of the Name *Havayah* was occurring everywhere; the only factor that determined whom it would affect was the nature of the recipient, whether it was the good that had to be extracted from the evil or the evil from which the good had to be extracted.

Therefore, in this plague only, there had to be a sign distinguishing the Jewish people from the Egyptians.¹⁰⁴

103. Above, on 7:3-5. 104. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5646-5650, pp. 7-9; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5658, pp. 96-97; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5705, pp. 138-139; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5706, pp. 70-71; see also *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5678, p. 240; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5627, p. 221; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5631, vol. 1, p. 151.

24 You shall observe the practices and sacrifice of Passover **as a statute for you and your children forever**, once you have entered the Land of Israel.

25 You shall maintain this service only once you have come into the land that God will give you, as He has spoken.⁹⁷ As long as you will be in transit on the way to the Land of Israel, you are not required to observe this holiday unless God tells you to do so explicitly.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children ask you about the Passover offering, there might be among them rebellious children who phrase their question: **'What is this service of yours?'** They will refer to the service as *'yours'* to imply that they would rather not participate in it themselves.⁹⁸

27 You shall answer, 'It is the Passover offering to God, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He plagued the Egyptians, and spared our homes.' " When they heard what Moses told the elders, **the people bowed down and prostrated themselves** in thanksgiving for God's promise of redemption, His reiteration of His promise to give them the Land of Israel, and for blessing them with the promise of children.⁹⁹

28 The Israelites resolved immediately to fulfill these instructions at their proper time, and therefore God considered it as if they **went and did so** immediately. He credited them for their good intentions, their praiseworthy actions, and even for the efforts they made in preparing to fulfill His will. When the time came, the Israelites did everything **just as God had instructed Moses and Aaron**, not omitting a single detail. And Moses and Aaron **did so**, also.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

the entrance into our active partnership with God to rectify the world. The lowly hyssop used to apply the blood signified the self-abnegation (*bitul*) we must cultivate in order to be receptive to God's presence in our lives. The blood itself signified the vitality of our human/animal soul, which we applied with self-abnegation to the metaphysical construct of Torah, prayer, and good deeds, all performed out of recognition of our Divine duty.

As stated above, God revealed His transcendence when He killed the firstborn of Egypt, and there is no human effort that can invoke such a revelation. Nonetheless, the people had to prepare a "vessel" to receive the revelation, and this was the purpose of applying the blood to the doorway in the way prescribed here.¹⁰⁰

From another perspective, the application of the blood indeed served as a sign:

The purpose of the first nine plagues was to bring the Egyptians to a knowledge of God, as discussed above.¹⁰¹ The Jewish people already basically believed in God, so there was no concern that these plagues would strike them.

The purpose of the tenth plague, however, was to slay the firstborn, not to educate them. And since many Jews also deserved the death penalty for having served idols, there was an acute need to distinguish them from the Egyptians and, more to the point, counteract their culpability to the death penalty.

This was accomplished by the Passover sacrifice, since by slaughtering a lamb, the deity of Egypt, the Jews were putting their life in jeopardy. This willingness to suffer martyrdom for God expressed the people's essential, inviolate bond to Him, which transcends all logic.

The merit of this act neutralized any culpability they had for whatever they had done in the past.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Above, 6:8. ⁹⁸ Rashi on 13:5, below. ⁹⁹ Vv. 24-26, above. ¹⁰⁰ *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5632, vol. 1, pp. 129, 284-285; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5678, pp. 239, 244-245; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5706, pp. 69-70, 76. ¹⁰¹ On 7:3-5. ¹⁰² *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, pp. 864-866.

— ONKELOS —

29 והיה בפלגות ליליא וי קטל כל-בוכרא בארעא דמערין מבוכרא דפרעה דעתידי למתב על פורסי מלכותה עד בוכרא דשביא די בבית אסירי וכל בוכרא דבעירא: 30 וקם פרעה בליליא הוא וכל-עבדוהי וכל-מעראי והות צוחתא רבתא במערין ארי לית ביתא די לא היה תמן מיתא: 31 וקרא למשה ולאהרן בליליא ואמר קומו פוקו מגו עמי אף אתון אף בני ישראל ואזילו פלחו קדם יי כמא דהויתון אמרין: 32 אף ענכון אף תורכון דברו כמא די מלילתון ואזילו וצלו אף עלי: 33 ותקפו מעראי על עמא לאוהא לשלחותהון מן ארעא ארי אמרו כלנא מיתין: 34 ונטל עמא ית לישחון עד לא חמק מותר אצותהון צריר בלבושיחון על כתפיהון:

◆ **שישי 29 ויהי** | **בפחצי הלילה ויהיה הכה כל-בכור בארץ** **מצרים מבכור פרעה הישב על-פסאו עד בכור השבי** **אשר בבית הבור וכל בכור בהמה:** 30 **ויקם פרעה לילה הוא וכל-עבדיו וכל-מצרים ותהי צעקה גדלה** **במצרים כי-אין בית אשר אין-שם מת:** 31 **ויקרא למשה ולאהרן לילה ואמר קומו צאו מתוך עמי גם אתם גם-בני ישראל ולכו עבדו את-יהוה בדרבכם:** 32 **גם-צאנכם גם-בקרכם קחו באשר דברתם ולכו וברכתם גם-אתי:** 33 **ותחזק מצרים עליהם למחר לשלחם מן-הארץ כי אמרו כלנו מתים:** 34 **וישא העם את-בצקו טרם יחמץ משארתם צררת בשמלתם על-שכמם:**

— RASHI —

בכורות הרבה, פעמים חמשה לאשה אחת, כל-אחד בכור לאביו: 31 **ויקרא למשה ולאהרן לילה**. מגיד שהיה מחזר על פתחי העיר וצועק: היכן משה שרוי? היכן אהרן שרוי? **גם-אתם**. הגברים: **גם-בני ישראל**. השף: **ולכו עבדו את-ה' בדרבכם**. הכל כמו שאמרתם ולא כמו שאמרתני אני, בטל "לא אשלח"⁶⁷, בטל "מי ומי ההלכים"⁶⁸, בטל "רק צאנכם ובקרכם יצגו"⁶⁹: 32 **גם-צאנכם גם-בקרכם קחו**. ומהו "כאשר דברתם"? — "גם-אתה תתן בידינו זבחים ועלת"⁷⁰, "קחו כאשר דברתם": **וברכתם גם אותי**. התפללו עלי שלא אמות, שאני בכור: 33 **כלנו מתים**. אמרו: לא בגורת משה הוא, שהרי אמר: "ומת כל-בכור"⁷¹, וכאן אף הפשוטים מתים, חמשה או עשרה בבית אחד: 34 **טרם יחמץ**. המצריים לא הניחום לשהות כדי חמוץ: **משארתם**. שירי מצה ומרור: **על-שכמם**. אף-על-פי שבהמות הרבה הוליכו עמדם, מחבבים היו את המצוה:

29 **וה'**. כל-מקום שנאמר "וה'" — הוא ובית דינו, שהיו"ו לשון תוספת הוא, כמו: פלוני ופלוני: **הכה כל-בכור**. אף של אמה אחרת, והוא במצרים: **מבכור פרעה**. אף פרעה בכור היה, ונשתיר מן הבכורות, ועליו הוא אומר: "ואולם בעבור זאת העמדתיך, בעבור הראתך את-בחי"⁶⁵ — בים סוף: **עד בכור השבי**. שהיו שמחין לאידם של ישראל. ועוד, שלא יאמרו יראתנו הביאה פרענות זו. ובכור השפחה בכלל היה, שהרי מנה מן החשוב שבכלן עד הפחות, ובכור השפחה חשוב מבכור השבי: 30 **ויקם פרעה**. ממשותו: **לילה**. ולא כדרך המלכים בשלש שעות ביום: **הוא**. תחלה, ואחר כך עבדיו. מלמד, שהיה הוא מחזר על בתי עבדיו ומעמידן: **כי-אין בית אשר אין-שם מת**. יש שם בכור — מת, אין שם בכור — גדול שבבית קרוי "בכור", שנאמר: "אף-אני בכור אתנהו"⁶⁶. דבר אחר: מצריות מונות תחת בעליהן, ויולדות מרוקים פנויים, והיו להם

66. תחלים פט, כח. 67. שמות ה, ב. 68. שמות י, ח. 69. שם, כד. 70. שם, כה. 71. שמות יא, ח.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

33 **Some of the Jews had second thoughts about leaving:** God had to force these reluctant Jews out of Egypt by having the Egyptians urge them on.

Nowadays, there are also those among us who prefer to remain in exile rather than face what they imagine

to be the "oppression" of living in God's presence that will accompany the messianic redemption. Nonetheless, God will redeem these people, too, even against their will, for His mercy extends to all His creatures, and He always does what is best for them on all levels, even if they don't presently realize or appreciate it.¹¹⁴

10:24. 111. Below, 13:17, *Sichot Kodesh* 5725, vol. 1, p. 342. 112. Rashi on 14:5, below. 113. Above, v. 30. 114. *MiMa'ayanei HaChasidut*, vol. 2, p. 61, quoting *Sichot Kodesh* 5730.

The Tenth Plague: The Firstborn, continued

- ◆ **Sixth Reading 29** It was exactly at midnight of the 15th of Nisan that God, in concurrence with the heavenly court, **struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt**, even those who were not Egyptian,¹⁰⁵ **from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner in the dungeon, as well as every firstborn animal.**¹⁰⁶ The only exception to this was Pharaoh himself: although he was a firstborn, God spared him in order for him to witness the miracle of the splitting of the sea and drown then. This plague did not last a full week, as did the others; it took place in one single moment.¹⁰⁷

30 Pharaoh rose from his bed in the night: first he arose, and then he awoke all his courtiers in their homes. And all the Egyptians awoke, too, and there was a great outcry in Egypt, for there was no house where there was not someone dead. If there was a firstborn son in the house, he died; if not, the head of the household (who may figuratively be termed its “firstborn”) died. In addition, since the Egyptians were steeped in adultery, there were often many firstborn in the same household, each the firstborn of the housewife by another paramour.

31 Pharaoh searched all the entrances of the city and called out for Moses and Aaron in the night. When he found them, he said, “Get up and get out from among my people, you adults and the young children of Israel, too, and go and serve God as you said!

32 Take both your flocks and your cattle, just as you stipulated—and not as I did, first refusing to let you go altogether,¹⁰⁸ then stipulating that only your adults leave,¹⁰⁹ and finally demanding only that your flocks not leave¹¹⁰—**and go! And bless me too**, that I not die, for I am also a firstborn!” There were some Israelites who were reluctant to leave, because they were wary of venturing forth into the barren, unknown desert. They felt that now that the Egyptians had suffered so much from the plagues, they would be more inclined to treat the Israelites better. But these people had no chance to remain in Egypt, because Pharaoh was so distraught by the final plague that he forcibly drove every Israelite out of the country.¹¹¹ Still, Pharaoh sent some of his officers with the people to make sure they stayed away only for three days, as they had said.¹¹²

33 Some of the Jews had second thoughts about leaving, but the Egyptians urged the people on, hurrying them out of the land, for they said, “We are all dying! It is worse than Moses said it would be: not only the firstborn, but the rest of us—sometimes ten in the same household—are dying, too!” They did not realize that all those who were dying were technically firstborn.¹¹³

34 The people had eaten their matzah with the Passover offering as they had been commanded, in the first half of the night. Now, in the early morning, the people had started to bake bread for the new day. But the Egyptians hurried them on their way, so **the people took their dough before it had leavened**—so the bread they ate on this day was matzah, also—**with their leftover food** (the matzah and bitter herbs left from the previous night’s meal) **wrapped in their clothes on their shoulders.** They could have had their animals carry these leftovers, but they preferred to carry them themselves because they cherished them since they had used them to fulfill God’s commandment.

105. As above, v. 12. 106. See above, 11:5. 107. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, p. 35, note 19. 108. Above, 5:2. 109. Above, 10:8. 110. Above,

— ONKELOS —

35 ובני ישראל עשו כדבר משה וישאלו ממצרים בלי־כסף ובלי זָהָב ושמלת: 36 ויהיה נתן את־חן העם בעיני מצרים וישאלו וינצלו את־מצרים: פ
37 ויסעו בני־ישראל מרעמסס סב־תה בשש־מאות אלף רגלי הגברים לבד משה:

35 ובני־ישראל עשו כדבר משה וישאלו ממצרים בלי־כסף ובלי זָהָב ושמלת: 36 ויהיה נתן את־חן העם בעיני מצרים וישאלו וינצלו את־מצרים: פ
37 ויסעו בני־ישראל מרעמסס סב־תה בשש־מאות אלף רגלי הגברים לבד משה:

— RASHI —

אתה אומר אחד — טול שנים, ולך: וינצלו. "ורוקינו": 37 מרעמסס סב־תה. מאה ועשרים מיל היו, ובאו שם לפי שעה, שנאמר: "ואשא אתכם על־כנפי נשרים"⁷³: הגברים. מכן עשרים שנה ומעלה:

35 כדבר משה. שאמר להם במצרים: "וישאלו איש מאת רעהו"⁷²: ושמלת. אף הן היו חשובות להם מן הכסף ומן הזהב, והמאחר בפסוק חשוב: 36 וישאלו. אף מה־שלא היו שואלים מהם היו נותנים להם,

72. שם, ב. 73. שמות יט, ד.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

36 They thus drained Egypt: As mentioned previously,¹³² the "great wealth" the Jews took with them when they left Egypt was the power of holiness (Divine "sparks") that the Egyptians had misused and thereby had become embedded within depraved Egyptian civilization. The only Divine power that now remained in Egypt was the minimal, low-grade energy that was required to keep it in existence. This energy was the spiritual correlate to the minimal material means the Jews left the Egyptians with which to survive. Everything beyond this, physically and spiritually, left with the Jews.¹³³

This is why the Exodus from Egypt was final; no Jew remained in Egypt, and the Torah in fact later prohibits the Jewish people from ever again settling in Egypt.¹³⁴ Once the land was essentially emptied of all the sparks of holiness that had been embedded there, there was no longer any reason for Jewish people to live there. This was not true of the other historic redemptions. When we were liberated from these other exiles, we did not empty these lands of Divine sparks, and therefore we often had to return to them sooner or later to continue the task.¹³⁵

The messianic redemption, however, will be similar to the redemption from Egypt: all the sparks of holi-

ness will be finally and absolutely liberated from their present exile, and there will be no need to enter into any further exile to redeem them.¹³⁶

In light of this difference, no one has the right to sequester himself in the holy pursuits of Torah study and prayer and forego his obligation to refine the world. Every spark of Divinity is unique and each one needs to be redeemed by utilizing the gifts of this world for holy purposes.¹³⁷

The women brought along timbrels: As is often the case, the women demonstrated more faith and trust in God than did the men. The women of our generation, too, should not hesitate to demonstrate their certainty that the redemption is imminent. To be sure, until the moment of redemption arrives, we should all feel the bitterness of the exile and pray fervently to God that He bring it to its end. But at the same time, our unshakable confidence that God will fulfill His promise of redemption should fill us with overflowing joy. The women, on the strength of their innately more deep-seated faith, should already begin celebrating the Redemption—even with music and dancing—and this should inspire the men to follow suit.¹³⁸

115. Above, 11:2-3. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, p. 271, note 5. 115a. Above, 3:22. 116. Rashi on 13:13, below. 117. See above, 3:22. 118. Rashi on 15:20, below; *Sichot Kodesh* 5741, vol. 2, pp. 221-224, 231-232. 119. Genesis 50:25; below, 13:19, Rashi *ad loc.* 120. See on Genesis 50:26. 121. Genesis 49:22. 122. See above, 6:1. 123. Rashi on 32:4, below; *Midrash Tanchuma*, Tisa 19; Rashi on *Sanhedrin* 103b. 124. Genesis 43:9, 44:32. 125. See Deuteronomy 33:7. 126. Rashi on 14:19, below. 127. Rashi on 19:4, below. 128. Below, 13:21. 129. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 8, p. 3, note 13. 130. Rashi on Numbers 13:25. 131. Numbers 33:4. 132. On 3:22, above. 133. *Sichot Kodesh* 5741, vol. 3, pp. 361-363. 134. *Y. Sukah* 5:1. 135. *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, Re'eh; *Likutei Torah* (Arizal), Ki Teizei. 136. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5734-5735, pp. 349-350. 137. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, pp. 824-825. 138. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, pp. 303-307.

35 In addition to having asked the Egyptians for utensils and clothing before the plague of the firstborn,¹¹⁵ **the Israelites now did again as Moses had said, and requested silver and gold utensils and clothing**—which they valued the most, in light of their impending journey ^{115a}—**from the Egyptians**. Nonetheless, they did not carry these articles themselves, but rather loaded them on their donkeys.¹¹⁶

36 **God granted them favor in the eyes of the Egyptians so that they granted their request**, and even gave them more than they asked for, **and they thus drained Egypt** of its wealth.¹¹⁷ In addition, the women were confident that God would perform miracles for them and brought along enough timbrels for all of them to celebrate with.¹¹⁸

Joseph had directed the people to take his remains from Egypt together with those of his brothers when they would leave.¹¹⁹ Moses went now to fulfill this directive. Since Joseph's coffin was at the bottom of the Nile River,¹²⁰ Moses had to use supernatural means to retrieve it. He wrote a Divine Name and the words "Arise, ox! Arise, ox!" on a plate and threw it into the river. (These words were an alternate way of pronouncing the words for "upon the wall" in Jacob's blessing to Joseph.¹²¹) The coffin rose to the surface. While Moses was taking it out of the water, Micah¹²² secretly fetched the plate.¹²³

The bodies of all Jacob's sons were intact except for Judah's, whose bones rolled around inside the coffin as it was carried. This was because his vow to be excluded from the afterlife if he did not return Benjamin to his father¹²⁴ was never annulled.¹²⁵

From Raamses to Sukot

37 God sent an angel to show the people which way to go.¹²⁶ On the morning of the 15th of Nisan, they gathered together at Raamses from all over Goshen in a miraculously short time.¹²⁷

The Israelites then journeyed from Raamses to a place that would soon be named¹²⁸ Sukot, on the western shore of the western arm of the Sea of Reeds (i.e., the Gulf of Suez, see Figure 1). Moses counted them,¹²⁹ they numbered **about 600,000 men** aged 20 and older **on foot, besides** women and male **children** under twenty. Although it was 120 mil (240,000 cubits, about 115 kilometers or 72 miles—a three day journey¹³⁰) from Raamses to Sukot, the people miraculously made this journey in a short time. As they were leaving, the Egyptians were busy burying their firstborn dead.¹³¹

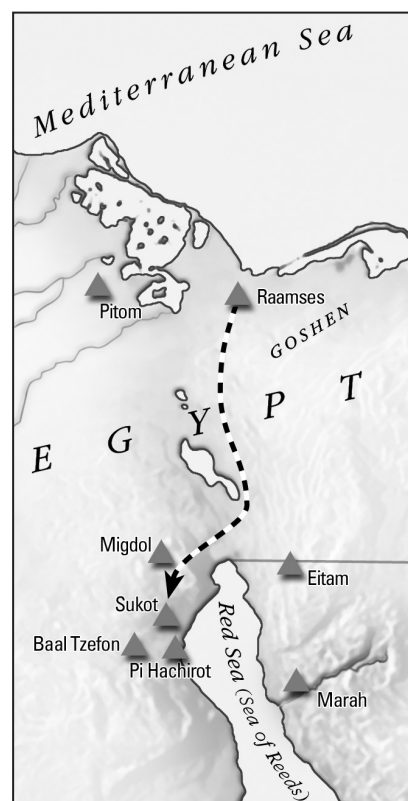


Figure 1: From Rameses to Sukot

ONKELOS
38 ואף נבכראין סגיאין סליקו
עמדהון ועאנא ותורי בעירא תקיף
סגי לחדא: 39 ואפו ית לישא די
אפיקו ממצרים גריצין פטירין ארי
לא חמע ארי אתרכו ממצרים ולא
יכילו לאתעכבא ואף וודין לא
עבדו להון: 40 ומותב בני ישראל
די יתיבו במצרים ארבע מאה
ותלתין שנין:

38 וְגַם־עַרְב רַב עָלָה אִתָּם וַיֵּצְאוּ וּבָקְר מִקְנֵה כְּבֵד
מֵאֵד: 39 וַיֵּאֲפוּ אֶת־הַבָּצֵק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם
עֲגַת מִצּוֹת כִּי לֹא חֲמִין בִּי־גִרְשׁוֹ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ
לְהַתְמַהֲמֶהּ וְגַם־צָדָה לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם: 40 וּמוֹתֵב בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְאַרְבַּע
מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה:

RASHI

הבאים עם יעקב היה, צא וחשוב כל־שנותיו וכל־
שנות עמך בנך ושמנים של משה, לא תמצאם כל־
כך, ועל כרחך הרבה שנים היו לקחת עד שלא ירד
למצרים, והרבה משנות עמך נבלעים בשנות קחת,
והרבה משמונים של משה נבלעים בשנות עמך, הרי
שלא תמצא ארבע מאות לביאת מצרים. והזקקת
לומר — על כרחך — שאף שאר הישיבות נקראו
גרות, אפלו בחברון, שנאמר: "אשר־גר־שם אברהם
ויצחק",⁷⁷ ואומר: "את ארץ מגריהם אשר־גרו בה"⁷⁸.
לפיכך אתה צריך לומר: "כי גר יהיה ורעה" — משהיה
לו ורע. וכשתמנה ארבע מאות שנה משנולד יצחק,
תמצא מביאתן למצרים עד יציאתן — מאתים ועשר
שנה. וזה אחד מן הדברים ששנו לתלמי המלך:

38 עַרְב רַב. תַּעֲרֹבוֹת אַמּוֹת שֶׁל גֵּרִים: 39 עֲגַת מִצּוֹת.
חֲרָה שֶׁל מִצָּה. בָּצֵק שֶׁלֹּא הִחְמִיץ קְרוֹי "מִצָּה": וְגַם־
צָדָה לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם. לְדַרְךְ. מַגִּיד שֶׁבָּחֻן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
שֶׁלֹּא אָמְרוּ: הֵיאֵךְ נֵצַא לְמִדְבָּר בְּלֹא צָדָה. אֲלֹא
הֶאֱמִינוּ וְהִלְכּוּ. הוּא שֶׁמֶפֶרֶשׁ בִּקְבֻלָּה: "וְכִרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד
נְעוּרֶיךָ אֲהַבֵּת בְּלוֹלִיתֶיךָ, לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרֵי בְּמִדְבָּר בְּאַרְץ
לֹא זְרוּעָה"⁷⁴. וּמִה־שָּׁכַר? — מִפֶּרֶשׁ אַחֲרָיו: "קִדְשׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל לָהּ" וְגו' ⁷⁵: 40 אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם. אַחֵר
שָׁאֵר הַיְּשִׁיבוֹת שֶׁיָּשְׁבוּ גֵרִים בְּאַרְץ לֹא לָהֶם: שְׁלֹשִׁים
שָׁנָה וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. בֵּין הַכֹּל, מִשְׁנֹלֵד יִצְחָק
עַד עֲכָשׁוּ הָיוּ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה — מִשְׁהִיָּה לוֹ וְרַע
לְאַבְרָהָם נִתְקַנָּם: "כִּי־גֵר יִהְיֶה וְרָעָה"⁷⁶, וְשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה
הָיוּ מִשְׁנִגְזָרָה גּוֹרֵת בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, עַד שֶׁנּוֹלֵד יִצְחָק.
וְאִי אֶפְשָׁר לֹאמַר בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם לְבָדָה, שֶׁהָיָה קָהָת מִן

74. ימימה ב, ב. 75. שם, ג. 76. בראשית טו, יג. 77. בראשית לה, כז. 78. שמות ו, ד.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

causes the dough to rise and puff up into an aggrandized version of itself, just as the ego aggrandizes our sense of self far beyond what is real. This mat-

zah did not rise even though there was no specific command to prevent it from rising—or even to eat matzah altogether. [continues...]

INNER DIMENSIONS

[38] A mixed multitude went up with them: As mentioned previously,¹⁴⁹ when the world of *Tohu* collapsed, 288 general Divine sparks "fell" into the world and needed to be released from exile. Of these 288 general sparks, 202 were embedded in Egypt; through the Exodus, these 202 general sparks were indeed redeemed, embodied in the mixed multitude that joined the Jewish people as

they left.¹⁵⁰ The remaining 86 general sparks were elevated during the ensuing history of the Jewish people, as they gradually refined the materiality of the world¹⁵¹ by using it for Divine purposes.¹⁵² Now that all these sparks have been elevated, all that remains to usher in the final redemption is for us to joyfully accept its arrival and declare our readiness to greet it.¹⁵³

149. On Genesis 1:2. 150. This is alluded to by the numerical value of the word for "multitude" (רב), which is 202. 151. This is alluded to by the numerical value of the word for "nature" (הטבע), which is 86. 152. *Torah Or* 60c; *Sefer HaMa'amaram* 5689, p. 205, etc. 153. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, p. 188; *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, p. 65, etc.

38 Moreover, a mixed multitude of people from other nations asked Moses if they could join the ranks of the Israelites. Moses did not consult with God, but accepted them on his own authority, reasoning that it would be good for them to be attached to God's presence.¹³⁹ This multitude **went up with them, as well as flocks and cattle—a great deal of livestock**. The people also cut down the acacia trees that Jacob had planted when he came to Egypt and that he had told his children to tell their progeny to take with them when they leave.¹⁴⁰

39 At Sukot, the Israelites **baked the dough that they had brought out of their homes in Egypt into cakes of matzah, since it had not leavened, for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any other provisions for themselves**. Even though they were traveling into the desert, they relied on God to provide for them. God accounted this to their enduring merit. Miraculously, the bread they now baked sufficed for 61 meals,¹⁴¹ and was as tasty as the manna they would eventually receive from God.¹⁴²

40 The total length of time that the Israelites had lived in Egypt and other places as foreigners since God's prophecy to Abraham "between the halves"¹⁴³ (Nisan 15, 2018) was exactly 430 years: 30 years from when God made the covenant until Isaac's birth,¹⁴⁴ 60 years from Isaac's birth until Jacob's birth,¹⁴⁵ 130 years from Jacob's birth until his arrival in Egypt,¹⁴⁶ and 210 years in Egypt.¹⁴⁷

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

38 A mixed multitude went up with them: These non-Jews were initially enthused about joining the ranks of God's chosen people, anxiously looking forward to doing God's will. Yet, as we will see, they eventually slid back to their old ways of thinking, causing untold suffering as the history of the Jewish people unfolded.

The reason why they fell was because they were not yet spiritually mature enough to accompany the Jewish people on their journey into the Torah's lifestyle. Therefore, accepting them into their ranks was a pedagogic error on Moses' part.

When a child is young, its parents must not grant it every wish; if the parents do so, the child will grow into an ingrate and eventually rebel against the parents. Rather, the parents should deny the child some of the things it wants, thereby teaching the child not to take everything for granted and to appreciate the parents. Once the child is older and has learned this concept, the parents no longer need to deny it what it asks for, since it has learned to make only reasonable and positive requests.

God knew that accepting the mixed multitude at this point would be detrimental; they were not yet mature

enough to appreciate the life of holiness and would eventually disdain it. Had they been initially rejected, they would have matured from the experience and would have been ready later to join the ranks of the Jewish people.

The Israelites, however, were already more spiritually mature at this point, and therefore the great attention God lavished upon them did not corrupt them, but by and large made them more humble and dedicated to God and His will.¹⁴⁸

39 Since it had not leavened: Even though the journey from Raamses to Sukot took a miraculously short time, when we consider the time it took for them to set up camp, kindle fires, and start baking the dough, there was more than enough time for the dough to start to rise. Nevertheless, it did not rise.

This was because the spiritual dimension of what was happening influenced the physical reality. Spiritually, the Jews "had been driven out of Egypt"—they were uplifted to such spiritual heights that they totally transcended all semblance of ego and their consciousness was filled with God's absolute, all-encompassing reality. In this context, the dough could not rise, for leavening reflects the haughtiness of ego. Leavening

139. Rashi on 32:7, below. 140. See on Genesis 46:6, below, 25:5. 141. Below, 16:2. 142. Rashi on 16:35, below. 143. Genesis 15. 144. *Seder Olam Rabbah* 1. 145. Genesis 25:26. 146. Genesis 47:9. 147. Rashi on Genesis 42:2. 148. *Ma'amarei Admor HaZaken, Parashiot*, vol. 1, pp. 247-248; *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, vol. 2, 10d ff; *Or HaTorah, Nach*, vol. 3, pp. 1247 ff.

— ONKELOS —

41 וְהָיוּ מִקֵּץ שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיְהִי בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יֵצְאוּ כָּל־עַבְדֵּי יְהוָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:
42 לֵיל שְׁמֵרִים הוּא לִיהוָה לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם הוּא־הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה לִיהוָה שְׁמֵרִים לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדֹרֹתָם: פ
43 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח כָּל־בֶּן־נָכָר לֹא־יֹאכַל בּוֹ: 44 וְכָל־עֶבֶד אִישׁ מִקְנֵת־כַּסְפָּךָ וּמִלֵּתָהּ אֹתוֹ אֹזֵי יֹאכַל בּוֹ: 45 תּוֹשֵׁב וְשֹׁכֵר לֹא־יֹאכַל בּוֹ: 46 בֵּית אֶחָד יֹאכֵל לֹא־תוֹצִיא מִן־הַבַּיִת מִן־הַבֶּשֶׂר חוּצָה וְעֶצֶם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ־בּוֹ:

41 וְהָיוּ מִקֵּץ שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיְהִי בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יֵצְאוּ כָּל־עַבְדֵּי יְהוָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:
42 לֵיל שְׁמֵרִים הוּא לִיהוָה לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם הוּא־הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה לִיהוָה שְׁמֵרִים לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדֹרֹתָם: פ
43 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח כָּל־בֶּן־נָכָר לֹא־יֹאכַל בּוֹ: 44 וְכָל־עֶבֶד אִישׁ מִקְנֵת־כַּסְפָּךָ וּמִלֵּתָהּ אֹתוֹ אֹזֵי יֹאכַל בּוֹ: 45 תּוֹשֵׁב וְשֹׁכֵר לֹא־יֹאכַל בּוֹ: 46 בֵּית אֶחָד יֹאכֵל לֹא־תוֹצִיא מִן־הַבַּיִת מִן־הַבֶּשֶׂר חוּצָה וְעֶצֶם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ־בּוֹ:

— RASHI —

אין מילת עבדיו מעבבתו מלאכל בפסח. אם כן, מה-
תלמוד לומר: "אז יאכל בו"? — העבד: 45 **תושב**. זה
גר תושב: **ושוכר**. זה הנכרי. ומה-תלמוד לומר? והלא
ערלים הם, ונאמר: "וכל-ערל לא יאכל בו"! אלא,
כגון: ערבי מהול, וגבעוני מהול, והוא תושב או שוכר:
46 **בבית אחר יאכל**. בחבורה אחת, שלא יעשו הנמנין
עליו שתי חבורות ויחלקוהו. אתה אומר בחבורה
אחת, או אינו אלא בבית אחד, כמשמעו? וללמד
שאם התחילו והיו אוכלים בחצר וירדו גשמים, שלא
יכנסו לבית. תלמוד לומר: "על הבתים אשר יאכלו
אותו בהם". מכאן, שהאוכל — אוכל בשני מקומות:
לא-תוציא מן-הבית. מן החבורה: **ועצם לא תשברו** —
בו. הראוי לאכילה, כגון שיש עליו כזית בשר — יש-
בו משום שבירת עצם, אין עליו כזית בשר — אין בו
משום שבירת עצם:

41 וְהָיוּ מִקֵּץ שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאוֹרְבַּע מֵאוֹת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. מִגִּיד, שְׁכִינָן שֶׁהִגִּיעַ הַקֵּץ — לֹא עָבְדָן הַמָּקוֹם, כְּהֶרֶף עֵינַי. בְּטִ"ו בְּנִיסָן בָּאוּ מִלֵּאכֵי הַשָּׂרֵת אֶצֶל אַבְרָהָם לְבִשְׁרוֹ, בְּטִ"ו בְּנִיסָן נוֹלָד יִצְחָק, וּבְטִ"ו בְּנִיסָן נִגְזְרָה גִזְרֵת בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים: 42 **לֵיל שְׁמֵרִים**. שְׁהִיָּה הַקְדוּשָׁה בְּרוּךְ־הוּא שׁוֹמֵר וּמִצְפֶּה לוֹ, לְקִים הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: הוּא־הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה לֵה'. הוּא הַלֵּילָה שְׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם: בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה אֲנִי גּוֹאֵל אֶת בְּנִי: **שְׁמֵרִים לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדֹרֹתָם**. מִשְׁמֵר וְכֹא מִן הַמִּזְיָקִין, כְּעִנְיָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמִּשְׁחִית וְגו'": 43 **זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח**. בִּי"ד בְּנִיסָן נֶאֱמְרָה לָהֶם פְּרִשָּׁה זוֹ: **כָּל־בֶּן־נָכָר**. שְׁתַּנְּכְרוּ מֵעֲשִׂי לֵאבִיו שְׁבִשְׁמִים. וְאַחַד נִכְרִי וְאַחַד יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשְׁמֵד, כְּמִשְׁמֵד: 44 **וּמִלֵּתָהּ אֹתוֹ אֹזֵי יֹאכַל בּוֹ**. רְבוּ. מִגִּיד, שְׁמִילַת עֲבָדָיו מֵעַבְבָּתוֹ מִלֵּאכֵל בַּפֶּסַח, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר:

79. שמות יב, כג.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[41] All the hosts of God left the land of Egypt: Allegorically, the "hosts of God" refers to the 202 Divine sparks that had been trapped in Egypt. As mentioned previously,¹⁵⁹ all these sparks were liberated at the Exodus.

This helps us understand why the exile and redemption from Egypt are considered the arche-

types for all ensuing exiles and redemptions, and why they alone are the focus of all our major national holidays and are given such prominence in our daily prayers. The recognition of spiritual bondage and the release from it are the basis of Jewish life. Further spiritual growth is not possible without first taking these basic steps.¹⁶⁰

159. On v. 38, above. 160. Torah Or 60c; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5743-5734, pp. 85-87.

41 And at the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of God left the land of Egypt. Once the appointed time came, God did not delay the Exodus even by an instant.

42 The night preceding this day **was a night of expectation for God**, to which He anxiously looked forward all these years, to fulfill His promise **to take them out of the land of Egypt.** This was the night that **God referred to** when He told Abraham, “On **this night** I will redeem your descendants.” This night remains an annual time of protection for all the Israelites against all forces of destruction throughout their generations.

The Passover Offering, continued

43 Earlier, in the morning of the 14th of Nisan, **God said to Moses and Aaron, “This is an additional part of the law of the Passover sacrifice: No person who, by his acts, has made himself a stranger to God may eat of it.** This includes a non-Jew who has not converted to Judaism and an apostate Jew.

44 If there be a non-Jewish bondman whom a Jewish man buys for money, you shall circumcise him, and then he may eat of it. Non-Jewish bondmen must be circumcised.¹⁵⁴ Failure to circumcise the bondman disqualifies him—or, according to another opinion, his master—from eating the Passover sacrifice.

45 It will be presently stated that no uncircumcised person may eat the Passover sacrifice. In addition, **neither a resident alien** (i.e., a non-Jew who has undertaken to observe the Noahide code of laws and is therefore allowed to reside in the Land of Israel) **nor a non-Jewish hired laborer may eat of it**, even if either of them happens to be circumcised.

46 As was stated previously,¹⁵⁵ **it shall be eaten by a single group.** Once this group is formed, you may not split it into two groups, divide the offering, and eat it in these two groups. Furthermore, **you shall not take any of the meat out of the group** to eat it separately, **nor break any of its bones** that have a *kezayit* (approximately 29 ml or 1 oz.) or more of flesh on them.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

The cause of this spiritual ascent was the revelation of God’s infinite transcendence that occurred at midnight of the 15th of Nisan. The matzah the people ate on the morning of the 15th of Nisan was part of this post-revelation reality, so it simply could not rise, and there was no need to take any precautions to prevent it from rising. In contrast, the matzah that the people were commanded to eat in the future when they would each year celebrate the festival of Passover had to be protected from leavening.¹⁵⁶

The matzah we eat each year at the Seder, however,

must be eaten *before* midnight, recalling the matzos we ate on the night of the Exodus before midnight. Inasmuch as this matzah was part of the pre-midnight reality, it must be carefully prevented from rising.¹⁵⁷

41 All the hosts of God left the land of Egypt: A “host” is an army, a body of people who are ready to sacrifice their lives for the safety and integrity of the country they defend. The Jews earned this title by staunchly defending their identity and resisting the temptation to totally assimilate into Egyptian culture during their 210 years of exile, as we have seen.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴. Genesis 17:12. ¹⁵⁵. Above, v. 3. ¹⁵⁶. Above, 12:17. ¹⁵⁷. *Likutei Torah* 2:13b; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5704, p. 171; *Sefer HaMa’amarim Melukat*, vol. 3, p. 113. ¹⁵⁸. Overview to *parashat Shemot*. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5701, pp. 81-82, 87.

ONKELOS

47 כל־בְּנֵשֶׁתָּא דִּישְׂרָאֵל יַעֲבֹדוּן
יְתָה: 48 וְאֵרִי יִתְגַּיֵּר עִמְכוּן גִּיּוֹרָא
וְיַעֲבִיד פְּסָחָא קֳדָם יְיָ מְגֹר לַה כָּל־
דִּכּוּרָא וּבְכֹן יִקְרַב לְמַעֲבָדָה וְיִהְיִי
בְּיַצִּיבָא דְאַרְעָא וְכָל־עֲרֵלָא לֹא
יִיכּוֹל בָּהּ: 49 אוֹרִיתָא קִדָּא תְּהִי
לְיַצִּיבָא וּלְגִיּוֹרָא דִּיתְגַּיֵּר בִּינִיכּוּן:
50 וְעַבְדוּ כָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמָא
דִּי פִקֵּיד יְיָ יְת מֹשֶׁה וְיֵת אֶהֱרֹן כֹּן
עַבְדוּ: 51 וְהָיָה בְּכֹרֶן יוֹמָא הַדִּין
אִפִּיק יְיָ יְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאַרְעָא
דְּמִצְרַיִם עַל חִילָהוֹן: 13:1 וּמִלֵּיל
יְיָ עִם מֹשֶׁה לְמִימְרֵי: 2 אֶקְדִּישׁ
קֳדָמִי כָל־בּוֹכְרָא פֶתַח כָּל־וֹלָדָא
בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַנְשָׁא וּבְבָעִירָא
דִּילִי הוּא:

47 כָּל־עֲבֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ: 48 וְכִי־יִגְוֹר אֶתְּךָ
יָר וַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח לַיהוָה הַמּוֹל לֹךְ כָּל־זָכָר וְאִן יִקְרַב
לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ וְהָיָה בְּאֶזְרַח הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־עֲרֵל לֹא־יֵאכֹל בּוֹ:
49 תּוֹרָה אַחַת יִהְיֶה לְאֶזְרַח וּלְגֹר הֹגֵר בְּתוֹכְכֶם:
50 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן בֶּן עֲשׂוֹ: ס

51 וַיְהִי בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־צִבְאָתָם: פ

שביעי 13:1 וידבר יהוה אל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 2 קִדְשִׁלִּי
כָּל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל־רִחֶם בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה
לִי הוּא:

RASHI

מִשְׁמַד לְעֵרְלוֹת, וְאִינוּ גִלְמָד מִ"בֶּן־זָכָר לֹא־יֵאכֹל בּוֹ":
49 תּוֹרָה אַחַת וְגו'. לְהַשְׁווֹת גֹּר לְאֶזְרַח אֵף לְשֹׁאֵר
מִצְוֹת שֶׁבְּתוֹרָה: 2 פֶּטֶר כָּל־רִחֶם. שֶׁפֶתַח אֶת הָרֶחֶם
תְּחַלֶּה, כְּמוֹ: "פֹּטֵר מִיָּם רִאשִׁית מְדוּן"⁸¹. וְכֵן "יִפְטִירוּ
בְּשֶׁפֶד"⁸² — יִפְתְּחוּ שְׁפֵתֵיהֶם: לִי הוּא. לְעַצְמִי קִנִּיתִים, עַל
יְדֵי שֶׁהִפְתִּי בְּכוֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם:

47 כָּל־עֲבֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ. לְמַד נֶאֱמַר? לְפִי שֶׁהוּא
אוֹמֵר בְּפֶסַח מִצְרַיִם: "שֶׁה לְבֵית־אֲבֹת"⁸⁰ — שֶׁנִּמְנָנוּ עָלָיו
לְמַשְׁפָּחוֹת, יְכוֹל אֵף פֶּסַח דּוֹרוֹת בֶּן? תִּלְמוּד לֹמַר: "כָּל־
עֲבֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ": 48 וַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח. יְכוֹל כָּל־
הַמִּתְגַּיֵּר יַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח מִיָּד? תִּלְמוּד לֹמַר: "וְהָיָה בְּאֶזְרַח
הָאָרֶץ" — מִדָּה אֶזְרַח בִּי"ד אֵף גֹּר בִּי"ד: וְכָל־עֲרֵל לֹא־
יֵאכֹל בּוֹ. לְהַבִּיא אֶת שְׁמִתּוֹ אֲדָחִיו מִחֻמַּת מִילָה, שֶׁאִינוּ

80. שְׁמוֹת יב, ג. 81. מְשַׁלִּי יז, יד. 82. תְּהִלִּים כב, ח.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

2 Consecrate to Me...every firstborn of man or beast: Allegorically, the term "firstborn" refers to the intellect, the first conscious faculty of the soul that emerges from the pre-conscious faculties. (The intellect is followed by the emotions and the faculties of expression.) The intellect is also termed "the firstborn" since

it distinguishes man from all other creatures and is the source of his preeminence over creation.¹⁶⁷

It is axiomatic in Judaism that human intellect cannot grasp God's essence; that is, we can never hope to understand the true nature or essence of God. In the words of the *Zohar*, "no thought can grasp Him at

INNER DIMENSIONS

[51] **God took the Israelites out of the land of Egypt with all their hosts:** Literally, this reads "...above all their hosts." As mentioned previously,¹⁶⁸ the "hosts" here are allegorically the sparks of Divine energy that were liberated at the Exodus. The Israelites are referred to as being "above" these hosts since the Divine soul of the Jew is of a

higher spiritual order than the Divine sparks that fell from the world of *Tohu* and became embedded in the materiality of the world. This, in fact, is what enables us to elevate these sparks out of their material context and restore them to their former spirituality.¹⁶⁹

167. See above, 4:23, for this use of the word "firstborn." 168. On v. 41, above. 169. *Torah Or* 60c; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5743-5734, pp. 85-87.

47 Although this time, I have required you to form *family*-groups to eat the Passover offering,¹⁶¹ I will not require the groups to be family-based in the future. Rather, anyone from **the entire community of Israel shall** be able to join any group he or she wishes, to **offer it** and eat it together.

48 **When a convert living among you offers the Passover sacrifice to God, all the males** in his household **shall first be circumcised and only then may he draw near to offer it** together with the rest of the community. He should not offer it immediately after he converts, but should wait until its proper time, **and** in this respect **he will be just like a native of the land**. Although there are people who are exempt from the requirement to be circumcised—as for example someone whose two older brothers died as a result of circumcision—nevertheless, **no uncircumcised man may eat of** the Passover offering, even such people.

49 A convert is subject to the same laws as a born Israelite not only with respect to the Passover offering; in *all* respects **there shall be one law for the native and for the convert who lives among you.**"

50 With regard to these laws, too,¹⁶² **all the Israelites** resolved immediately to fulfill these instructions at their proper time, and therefore God considered it as if they **did so** immediately. He credited them for their good intentions. When the time came, the Israelites did everything **just as God had instructed Moses and Aaron**, not omitting a single detail. And Moses and Aaron **did so**, also.

51 By this time, some Egyptians started to have second thoughts about letting the Jews go and tried to prevent them from leaving. Nonetheless, they did not succeed in stopping them,¹⁶³ and thus, **it was on that very same day** that the Egyptians tried to stop them **that God took the Israelites out of the land of Egypt with all their hosts**.

Consecrating the Firstborn

◆ *Seventh Reading* 13:1 At Sukot, God spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "Since I spared the firstborn of the Israelites in this most recent plague, they owe Me their lives. Therefore, **consecrate to Me, from among the Israelites, every firstborn of man or beast which is the first issue of every womb; it is Mine**. The firstborn men will become the priests, officiating at any private altars the people may set up to offer sacrifices. They will retain this function until the Tabernacle is constructed,¹⁶⁴ at which point private altars will become forbidden and the priesthood will pass to the Levites.¹⁶⁵ The firstborn from your herds and flocks will be given to the priests and sacrificed to Me, and your firstborn donkeys will be redeemed by giving the priests a lamb or kid in their stead."¹⁶⁶

161. Above, v. 3. 162. See above, v. 28. 163. Rashi on Deuteronomy 32:48; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 340, note 10. 164. See below, 25:1 ff. 165. Below, v. 13; see *Zevachim* 14:4 (112b). 166. Below, vv. 11-13.

— ONKELOS —

3 ואמר משה לעמא הוּו דכירין ית יומא הדין די נפקתון ממצרים מבית עבדותא ארי בתקוף יד אפיק יי תכון מכא ולא יתאכיל חמיע: 4 יומא הדין אתון נפקין בירחא דאביבא: 5 והי ארי יעלף יי לארע כנענאי וחתאי ואמוראי וחוסי ויבוסאי די קלם לאבהתך למתן לך ארע עבדא חלב ודבש ותפלח ית פלחנא דא בירחא הדין: 6 שבועא יומין תיכול פטירא וביומא שביעאה חגא קדם יי:

3 ויאמר משה אליהם זכור את־היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים מבית עבדים כי בתוך יד הוציא יהוה אתכם מזה ולא יאכל חמין: 4 היום אתם יצאים בחדש האביב: 5 והיה כִּי־ביאך יהוה אל־ארץ הפנעני והחתי והאמרי והחוי והיבוסי אשר נשבע לאבתך לתת לך ארץ זבת חלב ודבש ועבדת את־העבדה הזאת בחדש הזה: 6 שבועת ימים תאכל מצות וביום השביעי חג ליהוה:

— RASHI —

אומר: "גור בארץ הזאת וגו'".⁸⁵ וביעקב הוא אומר: "הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה וגו'":⁸⁶ זבת חלב ודבש. חלב זב מן העזים, והדבש זב מן התמרים ומן התאנים: את־העבדה הזאת. של פסח. והלא כבר נאמר למעלה: "והיה כִּי־תבאו אל־הארץ וגו'":⁸⁷ ולמה חזר ושנאה? בשביל דבר שנתחדש בה — בפרישה ראשונה נאמר: "והיה כִּי־יאמרו אליכם בניכם, מה העבדה הזאת לכם?"⁸⁸ בבן רשע הכתוב מדבר, שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל. וכאן: "והגדת לבנך", בבן שאינו יודע לשאול. והכתוב מלמדך, שתפתח לו אתה בדברי אגדה המושקין את הלב:

3 זכור את־היום הזה. למד, שמזכירין יציאת מצרים בכל־יום: 4 בחדש האביב. וכי לא היינו יודעים באיזה חודש יצאו? אלא, כך אמר להם: ראו חסד שגמלכם, שהוציא אתכם בחדש שהוא כשר לצאת, לא חמה ולא צנה ולא גשמים. וכן הוא אומר: "מוציא אסירים בבשרות"⁸⁹ — חודש שהוא כשר לצאת: 5 אל־ארץ הפנעני וגו'. אף־על־פי שלא מנה אלא חמשה עממין, כל־שבועה גוים במשמע, שכלן בכלל כנעני הם. ואחת ממשפחות כנען היתה, שלא נקרא לה שם אלא "כנעני": נשבע לאבתך וגו'. באברהם הוא אומר: "ביום ההוא ברא ה' את־אברהם"⁹⁰ וגו'. וביצחק הוא

83. תהלים סח, ז. 84. בראשית טו, יח. 85. בראשית כו, ג. 86. בראשית כח, יג. 87. שמות יב, כה. 88. שם, כו.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

4 **This day, on which you are going out, is in the month of the beginning of ripening:** As we have seen, Egyptian culture and religion revolved around nature, its laws, and its power. Nature is at the height of its power and beauty in the spring, when the world

is blooming with new life and renewed energy. God therefore chose this season to redeem the Jewish people, in order to demonstrate that nature is but a tool in His hand and has no power to resist His decree.¹⁸⁰

INNER DIMENSIONS

[5-6] **When God will bring you to the land...for seven days you shall eat matzos:** In Egypt, the people were required to eat matzah and refrain from leavened bread only for one night. (The fact that they also ate matzah on the subsequent days was only because they left Egypt hurriedly and did not have time to let the dough rise. Technically, however, there was no injunction to eat matzah nor any prohibition against eating leavened bread after the night of the 15th of Nisan.¹⁸¹) Only once they entered the Land of Israel were the Jews re-

quired both to eat matzah and refrain from leavened bread for a whole week.

The reason for this is because eating matzah on the night of the 15th of Nisan elicits a new revelation of *chochmah*. *Chochmah* is the flash of insight that illumines the mind with a new, higher awareness of God that it has never before experienced. This immediately takes us out of "Egypt," the limitations of our previous world-view.

But this flash of insight remains abstract until it affects us profoundly enough to elicit an emotional

180. Encyclical Letter of Nisan 11, 5725 (*Torat Menachem—Igrot Melech*, vol. 2, pp. 48-53). 181. *Pesachim* 96b.

The Festival of Passover

3 Now that the people were camped at Sukot and were no longer in such a rush, Moses felt it was time to deliver the communications from God that he had not yet had time to deliver. Thus, before conveying the laws God had just told him (regarding consecrating the firstborn), he conveyed the laws God had told him previously (about observing the holiday of Passover in the future¹⁷⁰), together with the following details.¹⁷¹ **Moses said to the people: “Remember this day on which you went out of Egypt, the house of bondage, for with a mighty hand God brought you out of here.** You must mention the Exodus every day. **No leavened food may be eaten** on Passover, the holiday that will commemorate the Exodus, as will be detailed presently.

4 See how kind God is to you: **this day, on which you are going out, is in the month of the beginning of the grain-ripening.**¹⁷² He is taking you out in the spring, when the weather is perfect for traveling.

5 **When God will bring you to the land of the Canaanite peoples, including the Canaanites themselves, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, and the Perizites, which He swore to your forefathers to give to you,**¹⁷³ **a land flowing with goats’ milk and date- and fig-honey, then you shall perform this service,** that of offering the Passover sacrifice, every year **on the 14th day of this month.”** Moses did not mention the Perizites explicitly since they can be construed to be included in the general term “Canaanites.” He did not mention the Girgashites because their territory was not distinguished as “flowing with milk and honey.”¹⁷⁴

6 He continued: **“For seven days—from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan—you shall eat matzos** whenever you would like to eat bread,¹⁷⁵ **and on the seventh day there shall be a festival to God.**¹⁷⁶

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

all.”¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, we can still “grasp” God’s essence non-intellectually, through the inner yearnings of the heart.¹⁷⁸ In order to bare these yearnings, however, we have to temporarily suspend our intellect; only then can we rise to a level of consciousness where the inner dimension of the heart reigns.

Therefore, in order to accomplish the complete liberation from Egypt—that is, from all boundaries that keep us from relating directly to God—it was necessary to “slay the Egyptian firstborn,” which allegorically means to temporarily “neutralize” our limited, human intellect.

Besides our human intellect, however, we also possess a Divine intellect, that of the Divine soul within us. In order to “grasp” God with the inner yearnings of the heart this intellect, too, has to be transcended, but it

does not have to be “killed.” Its perspective, unlike the material perspective of the intellect of our human/animal soul, is *a priori* Divine. Although it cannot grasp God (since God cannot be grasped by *any* form of intellect), it can lead us far above the material world, to the point beyond which only the inner yearnings of the heart can tread. Therefore, this “firstborn” needs only to be “consecrated,” not “slaughtered.” In order to maximize the use of our Divine intellect, we must devote it to delving as far as it can into the nature of God.

Consecrating the intellect to this end is a necessary ingredient of all our lives, both for those of us who are more “man” than “beast,” i.e., more naturally predisposed toward the spiritual life, and for those of us who are more “beast” than “man,” i.e., who naturally tend to approach life materialistically.¹⁷⁹

170. Above, 12:14-20. 171. *Sichot Kodesh* 5741, vol. 2, pp. 462-463. 172. Rashi on 23:15, below. 173. Genesis 15:18, 26:3, 28:13. 174. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 21, p. 225, note 22. 175. Above, 12:15. 176. Above, 12:16. 177. Introduction to *Tikunei Zohar* (17a). 178. See *Zohar* 3:289b (in the *Idra Zuta*). 179. *Ma’amarei Admor HaZaken HaKetzarin*, pp. 33-34.

— ONKELOS —
 7 פטירא יתאביל ית שבעת יומין
 ולא יתחזי לך חמיע ולא יתחזי
 לך חמיר בכל תחומך: 8 ותחזי
 לברך ביומא ההוא למימר בדיל
 דא עבד יי לי במפקי ממצרים:
 9 ויהי לך לאת על ידך ולדכנא
 בין עיניך בדיל דתהי אורייתא דיי
 בפך ארי ביד תקיפא אפך יי
 ממצרים:

7 מצות יאכל את שבעת הימים ולא ירצה לך חמין
 ולא ירצה לך שאר בכל גבלך: 8 והגדת לבנך
 ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה יהוה לי בצאתי
 ממצרים: 9 והיה לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך
 למען תהיה תורת יהוה בפך בי ביד חזקה הוצאתך
 יהוה ממצרים:

— RASHI —
 לך לאות: על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך. שתכתב פרשיות
 הללו ותקשרם בראש ובזרוע: על ירך. יד שמאל,
 לפיכך "ידכה" מלא בפרשה שניה¹⁹², לדרש בה: יד
 שהיא כהה: 8 בעבור זה. בעבור שאקים מצותיו, כגון: פסח מצה
 ומרור, הללו: עשה ה' לי. רמז תשובה לבן רשע,
 לומר: עשה ה' לי ולא לך, שאלו היית שם לא היית
 כדאי לגאל: 9 והיה לך לאות. יציאת מצרים תהיה

89. לחול פסוק טו.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] response. Until our new experience of God translates into more profound love and of Him, awe of Him, and so on, it has not fulfilled its purpose. It is therefore necessary to apply this new insight to all the seven emotions.

At the time of the Exodus, this process was accomplished by the Clouds of Glory that surrounded the Jews on their trek from Egypt.¹⁹² There were seven of these clouds, correlating to the seven emotions. Since all seven clouds surrounded the people at all times, it was enough to eat matzah once, on the night of the 15th of Nisan. The seven clouds then "distributed" the new *chochmah* to the seven emotions they embodied.

Usually, we are only able to work on refining one emotion at a time, because the process of refining an emotion entails working out the concrete details of how the new insight impacts on it. The presence of the surrounding clouds, however, indicated that the people's emotions during this period were more abstract (*makif*) than concrete (*penimi*). In a sense, the Israelites lived their religious life entirely in the abstract until they entered the Land of Israel, at which point they started applying the lessons learned in the desert to real life.¹⁹³ When we are living in the abstract, it is much easier to do several things at once.

When the people were about to enter the Land of

Israel, however, God removed the Clouds of Glory. At that point, we passed from the abstract religious life to the concrete. From then on, it became necessary to eat matzah for seven days so the insight of *chochmah* could be integrated into one emotion at a time, until it had reached all seven.¹⁹⁴ [7] **During the seven days matzos shall be eaten:** The way this phrase is couched in the text, it can be read: "[through] matzos, the seven days shall be eaten." Allegorically, this implies that the seven emotions must be refined ("eaten") by matzah.

The flat matzah signifies self-abnegation and selflessness (*bitul*), as opposed to risen bread, which signifies ego, self-awareness, and self-orientation (*yeshut*). Self-abnegation is the inner experience of *chochmah*, the flash of new insight, for when we experience a new insight we are temporarily transported outside ourselves, lost in awe and wonder.

This sense of selflessness that accompanies new insight must be transferred to our seven emotions along with the implications the insight itself carries for our lives. Otherwise, our prior sense of self will oppose any changes in how we think, feel, and act. Selflessness is the key to spiritual growth.

Thus, the (inner experience of the) matzah (i.e., selflessness) "eats" (i.e., consumes the self-orientation of) the seven "days" (i.e., emotions).¹⁹⁵

192. Below, 13:21. 193. This dynamic will play an important role later, in understanding the incident of the spies (Numbers 13-14). 194. *Siddur im Dach* 296c-298c; *Likutei Torah* 11c-12b. 195. *Or HaTorah*, Bo, p. 343; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5627, p. 242.

7 During the seven days matzos shall be eaten instead of leavened bread. **Nothing leavened of yours nor any leavening agent of yours may be seen**—i.e., found—**throughout your domain**, i.e., in any place under your control.¹⁸²

8 And if at some point in the future any of you should have a child who does not yet know how to ask about the observance of Passover, **you shall tell your child** about the Exodus on your own **on** the anniversary of **that day** by recounting the miraculous story and thereby sparking his interest.¹⁸³ On the other hand, if you have a rebellious child,¹⁸⁴ you should answer him by pointing to the Passover offering, the matzos, and the bitter herbs, and **saying, 'It is for the sake of fulfilling His commandments, like these, that God acted on my behalf when I came out of Egypt.'** Say 'on my behalf' and 'when I came out' rather than 'on our behalf' and 'when we came out.' Although he indeed would have been redeemed (together with the rest of the rebellious people—for only those who refused to leave perished beforehand¹⁸⁵), he would not have been worthy of it.¹⁸⁶ This hint may influence him to mend his ways.

9 As an additional daily reminder of the Exodus, write these two passages of the Torah—this one and the following one, both of which describe the Exodus¹⁸⁷—twice: once on two separate parchments, and once together on the same parchment. Place them in specially made leather boxes (*tefilin*): the single parchment with both passages into a box with one compartment, and the two separate parchments into a box made with compartments for each passage.¹⁸⁸ Attach leather straps to the boxes. The Exodus **shall then be a sign for you** when you wear the single-compartment *tefilin* **on your left arm, and a reminder** when you wear the multiple-compartment *tefilin* on your forehead above the point exactly **between your eyes,**¹⁸⁹ **so that the Torah of God will be on your lips, for with a mighty hand God brought you out of Egypt.**

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

8 And you shall tell your child on that day: Interestingly, the commandment to recount the story of the Exodus, which is the source for the annual Passover *Seder*, is given in the context of describing “the child who does not know how to ask,” the most immature of all the four types of children to which we must tailor our expositions of the Exodus story. This indicates that our duty to recount the Exodus applies *mainly* to this uninitiated child, that we must find the words to inspire even him or her with gratitude to God for liberating us from Egypt of old and from all past, present, future, personal, and collective Egypts.

This phenomenon derives from the fact that the Exodus from Egypt was absolute, as we have mentioned: not one Jew remained in Egypt, nor any Jewish possessions, nor even any redeemable spark of Divine energy. Since the Exodus was so all-encompassing, the transmission of its message must also encompass each

and every individual that can possibly understand it, even if this takes extraordinary effort.

By ensuring that even “the child who does not know how to ask” understands the meaning of the Exodus, we ensure that the other children will understand it as well, much as lifting up the bottom of any structure automatically raises the rest of the structure, as well.¹⁹⁰

God acted on my behalf when I came out of Egypt: In the Exodus from Egypt, the wicked Israelites were redeemed even though they were not worthy. In the future redemption, however, everyone will be worthy of redemption. God will inspire everyone to repent, and everyone will, at least on some level. We will all therefore be deemed worthy of redemption.¹⁹¹

9 So that the Torah of God will be on your lips, for with a mighty hand God brought you out of Egypt:

182. Above, 12:19-20. 183. Rashi on v. 5, above. 184. Above, 12:26. 185. Above, 10:22. 186. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 187, note 35. 187. Exodus 13:1-10 and 11-16. The other two passages (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21) were added to the *tefilin* in the 40th year after the Exodus. 188. See below, v. 16. 189. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, p. 51, note 18. 190. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5734-5735, pp. 347-353. 191. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 11, p. 2.

— ONKELOS —

10 ותשר ית קמא הדין בזמנה
מזמן לזמן: 11 ויהי ארי יעלג
י לארע כנענאי כמא די קים לך
ולאבהתך ויתננה לך: 12 ותעבר
כל פתח ולדא קדם יי וכל פתח
ולד בעירא די יהון לך דכרין
תקדיש קדם יי: 13 וכל פתח
בוכרא דחמרא תפרק באמרא
ואם לא תפרק ותנקה וכל
בוכרא דאנשא בבניך תפרק:

10 וְשִׁמְרֶת אֶת־הַתְּקָה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֵדָה מִיָּמִים
יְמִימָה: פ

11 וְהָיָה כִּי־יֵבֹאֲךָ יְהוָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי בְּאִשֶּׁר
נִשְׁבַּע לְךָ וּלְאַבְתֶּיךָ וַנִּתְּנָה לְךָ: 12 וְהִעֲבַרְתָּ כָּל־פֶּטֶר־
רַחֵם לַיהוָה וְכָל־פֶּטֶר | שֹׁגֵר בְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ
הַזֹּכְרִים לַיהוָה: 13 וְכָל־פֶּטֶר חֵמֶל תִּפְרֹק בְּשֵׁה וְאִם־
לֹא תִפְרֹק וְעִרְפָּתוֹ וְכָל בְּכוֹר אָדָם בְּבָנֶיךָ תִּפְרֹק:

— RASHI —

כתיב "כל־פֶּטֶר־רַחֵם". ואם תאמר: אף בכור בהמה
טמאה במשמע, בא ופרש במקום אחר: "בבִּקְרָךְ
ובצאנך".⁹⁴ לשון אחר יש לפרש: "והעֲבַרְתָּ כָּל־פֶּטֶר־
רַחֵם" — בבכור אדם הכתוב מדבר: 13 פֶּטֶר־חֵמֶל.
ולא פֶּטֶר שֶׁאֵר בַּהֲמָה טמאה. וגזרת הכתוב היא, לפי
שנמשלו בכורי מצרים לחמורים, ועוד, שסיעו את
ישראל ביציאתן ממצרים, טעונים מכספם ומזהבם
של מצרים: תִּפְרֹק בְּשֵׁה. נותן שזה לבנה, ופֶּטֶר חֵמֶל
מתר בהנאה, והשזה חלין ביד כהן: וְעִרְפָּתוֹ. עורפו
בקופיץ מאחוריו והורגו. הוא הפסיד ממונו של כהן,
לפיכך יפסיד ממונו: וְכָל־בְּכוֹר אָדָם בְּבָנֶיךָ תִּפְרֹק.
חמש סלעים, פדיונו קצוב במקום אחר:

10 מִיָּמִים יְמִימָה. משנה לשנה: 11 וְהָיָה כִּי־יֵבֹאֲךָ. יש
מרבתינו שלמדו⁹⁵ מכאן, שלא קדשו בכורות הנולדים
במדבר. והאומר שקדשו, מפרש ביאה זו לומר: אם
תקיימוהו במדבר — תוכו לכנס לארץ ותקיימוהו שם:
נִשְׁבַּע לְךָ. והיכן נשבע לך? — "והבאתי אתכם אל־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי וגו'":⁹⁶ וַנִּתְּנָה לְךָ. תהא בעיניך
באלו נתנה לך בו ביום, ואל תהי בעיניך כירוש
אבות: 12 וְהִעֲבַרְתָּ אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְבֵיתוֹ⁹⁷: שֹׁגֵר
יְכֵן הוא אומר: "והעֲבַרְתָּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְבֵיתוֹ"⁹⁸: שֹׁגֵר
בְּהֵמָה. נפל ששגרתו אמו ושלחתו בלא עתו. ולמדך
הכתוב, שהוא קדוש בבכורה לפטר את הבא אחריו,
ואף שאינו נפל קרוי "שֹׁגֵר", כמו: "שֹׁגֵר־אֶלְפִיר"⁹⁹.
אבל זה לא בא אלא ללמד על הנפל, שהרי בכר

90. בכורות ד, ב. 91. שמות ו, ח. 92. במדבר כז, ח. 93. דברים ז, יג. 94. דברים טו, יט.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

nation in the world.

God did this, of course, out of His love for the Jewish people. We see that even the most refined, gentle parent will turn violent if someone dares to threaten the life of his or her only child. Similarly, the horrors God visited upon the Egyptians demonstrated the intensity of His love for His people; this love was so profound that it caused God, as it were, to act entirely out of character.

When we consider this and realize the extent of God's love for us, we will be inspired to respond in kind and devote ourselves lovingly to learning His Torah and performing His commandments.²⁰⁴

It shall be a sign for you on your arm, and a reminder between your eyes: In the hand-*tefilin*, the specific passages from the Torah are written on a single piece of parchment that is inserted into one compartment; in the head-*tefilin*, they are written on separate pieces of parchment and inserted into separate compartments.

This is because in general, the proper way to set about understanding something is to first understand it in a general way, only then returning to focus on its details. The same applies to our understanding of the Exodus and its theological implications, this being the message of the *tefilin*. The hand-*tefilin* are put on first; they embody the general understanding of the Exodus, where all the details are part of one whole. The head-*tefilin* are put on second; they embody the detailed understanding, wherein each aspect of the subject is focused on separately.²⁰⁵

10 From year to year: This expression alludes to the idea that the original Exodus (which occurred in the first year) must illuminate our annual remembrance of the Exodus (in all subsequent years). We should strive to relive and re-experience the sublime Divine revelations that accompanied the first, prototypical Exodus, each of us on our own level and in a way relevant to our personal lives.²⁰⁶

204. *Torah Or* 60d; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5632, vol. 1, pp. 126, 130. 205. *Or HaTorah*, Bo, p. 345. 206. *Or Torah* 86.

10 Finally, **you shall observe this ordinance**—the Passover sacrifice and holiday—at its appointed time from year to year.”

Consecrating the Firstborn, continued

11 Moses then related the instructions regarding the firstborn to the people: “The following commandment will apply only **when God brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore that He would to you and your ancestors, and gives it to you**—and, of course, on any specific occasion God commands you to observe it before this¹⁹⁶In the merit of observing this commandment, you will enter the land;¹⁹⁷ so whenever you perform it, thank God for giving you the land just as if He gave it to you that very day.

12 **You shall set apart for God every first issue of the womb.** This applies even if the first issue of the womb is a miscarriage: **every male firstling miscarriage that your cattle and flocks¹⁹⁸ shall issue shall be God’s.**

13 “This commandment applies only to kosher animals, with the following exception: **You shall redeem every firstling donkey by giving a lamb or kid** to a priest in its stead. The donkey then becomes yours; both your donkey and the priest’s lamb or kid are then non-sacrificial animals, and may be used as their owners wish. Donkeys are included in this practice because they bring to mind the Exodus from Egypt: they remind us both how steeped the Egyptians were in sexual depravity¹⁹⁹ and how we used many donkeys to carry loads of Egyptian silver and gold when we left Egypt.²⁰⁰ **If you do not redeem the donkey you must kill it in a particularly cruel manner: you must break its neck-bone from behind with a hatchet.** You gain nothing by not redeeming the donkey (since it is forbidden for you to make any use of it until you redeem it—and in fact, you stand to gain by redeeming it with a lamb or kid, since they are worth less than it is). If you nonetheless refuse to redeem it, you have committed an act of pure, unmitigated cruelty toward the priest, depriving him of what is rightfully his for no reason other than spite. Therefore, you must kill your donkey cruelly: since animals’ owners feel for them, you will feel the animal’s pain and experience the cruelty of your own behavior.²⁰¹

“**You shall also, once you enter the Land of Israel and set up the Temple, redeem every firstborn child among your sons,**²⁰² by giving five shekels of silver to a priest when the baby is a month old, as ‘payment’ for functioning in his stead.²⁰³

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

In other words, because God brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, we should keep the Torah of God on our lips.

God is normally good and merciful to all His creatures, constantly feeding them, clothing them, and providing for all their needs. It takes some special reason for

Him to go against His primary mode of behavior and punish His creatures. Yet, this is exactly what He did in the Exodus from Egypt. God brought indescribable suffering upon the Egyptian people, decimating them, destroying their land, crippling their economy, and taking away their prestige as the most powerful

196. As He did here and as He will at the inauguration of the Tabernacle a year later (Numbers 3:40 ff). 197. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, p. 67, note 47. 198. Deuteronomy 15:19. 199. Ezekiel 23:19-20, Rashi and *Metzudat David ad loc.* 200. Above, 12:35. 201. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 36, pp. 59-64. 202. Above, v. 2. 203. Numbers 18:16.

— ONKELOS —

14 ויהי ארי ישאלך בנה מחר למימר מא דא ותימר לה בתקוף ידא אפקנא יי ממצרים מבית עבדו: 15 והנה כד אקשי פרעה לשלחותנא וקטל יי כל-בוכרא בארעא דמצרים מבוכרא דאנשא ועד בוכרא דבעירא על כן אנא דבח קדם יי כל-פתח ולד דכריא וכל-בוכרא דבני אפרק: 16 ויהי לאת על ידך ולתפלן בין עיניך ארי בתקוף יד אפקנא יי ממצרים:

◆ מפטיר 14 והיה ארי ישאלך בנה מחר לאמר מה-זאת ואמרת אליו בתוך יד הוציאנו יהוה ממצרים מבית עבדים: 15 והי כיהקשה פרעה לשלחנו ויהרג יהוה כל-בכור בארץ מצרים מבכר אדם ועד-בכור בהמה על-כך אני זבח ליהוה כל-פטר רחם הזכרים וכל-בכור בני אפרה: 16 והיה לאות על-ידך ולטוטפת בין עיניך כי בתוך יד הוציאנו יהוה ממצרים:

ק"ה פסוקים. ימנ"ה סימן.

— RASHI —

16 ולטוטפת. תפלן. ועל שם שהם ארבעה בתים קרוין "טוטפת" — "טט" בכתפי שתיים, "פת" באפריקי שתיים. ומנחם חברו עם: "ההשף אל-דרום"⁹⁷, "אל-תטפו"⁹⁸ — לשון דבור, כמו: "ולזכרון בין עיניך" האמורה בפרשה ראשונה, שהרואה אותם קשורים בין העינים, יזכר הנס וידבר-בו: חסלת פרשת בא

14 כיהי ארי ישאלך בנה מחר. יש "מחר" שהוא עכשו, ויש "מחר" שהוא לאחר זמן, כגון זה וכגון: "מחר יאמרו בניכם לבנינו"⁹⁵, דבני גד ובני ראובן: מה-זאת. זה תינוק טפש, שאינו יודע להעמיק שאלתו וסותם ושואל: "מה-זאת". ובמקום אחר הוא אומר: "מה העלת והחקים והמשפטים וגו'"⁹⁶, הרי זאת שאלת בן חכם. דברה תורה כנגד ארבעה בנים: רשע, ושאנו יודע לשאול, והשואל דרך סתומה, והשואל דרך חכמה:

95. יהושע כב, כד. 96. דברים ו, כ. 97. יחזקאל כא, ב. 98. מיכה ב, ו. 99. שמות יג, ט.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

14 After the passing of the generation of the Exodus: Parents tend to relate only to those of their children who share their values and have chosen to perpetuate their lifestyle. They share a common language with these children; they live in the same universe of discourse as these children and they feel confident they can respond to their questions and issues.

However, if the parents have other children, who identify with more "modern" values and have turned their backs on the old ways, they may feel discon-

nected from these children and despair of being able to relate to them. They may feel they have no answers for these children's questions and doubts.

The Torah's message here to us is that as parents, we must not give up on these children. We must find a way to relate to them, to re-open the paths of communication, to let these children know that the Torah has the answers to their questions, and to welcome them back into the Torah's value system.²¹⁶

216. Likutei Sichot, vol. 6, p. 268.

The Festival of Passover, continued

- ◆ **Maftir 14** “It was previously pointed out that you must make efforts to educate your children about the Passover holiday, even if they are rebellious or too uneducated to know how to ask. The truth is that you must explain *all* of God’s commandments to *all* your children.²⁰⁷ Thus, **if, in time to come**, after the passing of the generation of the Exodus,²⁰⁸ you have a simple child, who does not delve deeply into things, and **your simple child asks you** about redeeming the firstborn by simply **saying, ‘What is this? Why do we have to do all these things with first-born men and animals?’ you shall say to him, ‘God brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, with a mighty hand.**

15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us leave, God slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, the firstborn of both man and beast. I therefore sacrifice to God every male animal that is the first issue of the womb, and redeem every firstborn among my sons.’

16 This paragraph, too,²⁰⁹ **shall be included in the *tefilin* you will wear as a sign on your arm and as a reminder**—centered on your forehead above the point exactly **between your eyes—that God brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.** Whoever sees the *tefilin* will thus be reminded of the miracles of the Exodus and speak about them. Even though I am only telling you now to write two passages, make the head-*tefilin* with four compartments, for in the future I will tell you to place another two parchments in them.²¹⁰ The hand-*tefilin* should consist of only one compartment, since you are to place all the specified passages in it on one parchment.

“If, on the other hand, your child is intelligent and asks you specific questions about the details of the commandments by saying, ‘What are the testimonies, statutes, and laws that God has commanded us?’²¹¹ you must answer his questions with due consideration. Thus, you must tailor your explanations of God’s commandments to your children’s disposition and mental capacities—whether they be wicked,²¹² too young to know how to ask,²¹³ simple,²¹⁴ or intelligent.”²¹⁵

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Bo* may be found on p. 307.



²⁰⁷ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 185, 187. ²⁰⁸ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 31, pp. 61-67. ²⁰⁹ Above, v. 9. ²¹⁰ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, p. 50, note 12. ²¹¹ Deuteronomy 6:20. ²¹² Above, 12:26 and 13:8. ²¹³ Above, v. 8. ²¹⁴ Above, v. 14. ²¹⁵ Deuteronomy 6:20; Rashi on v. 14, above.

