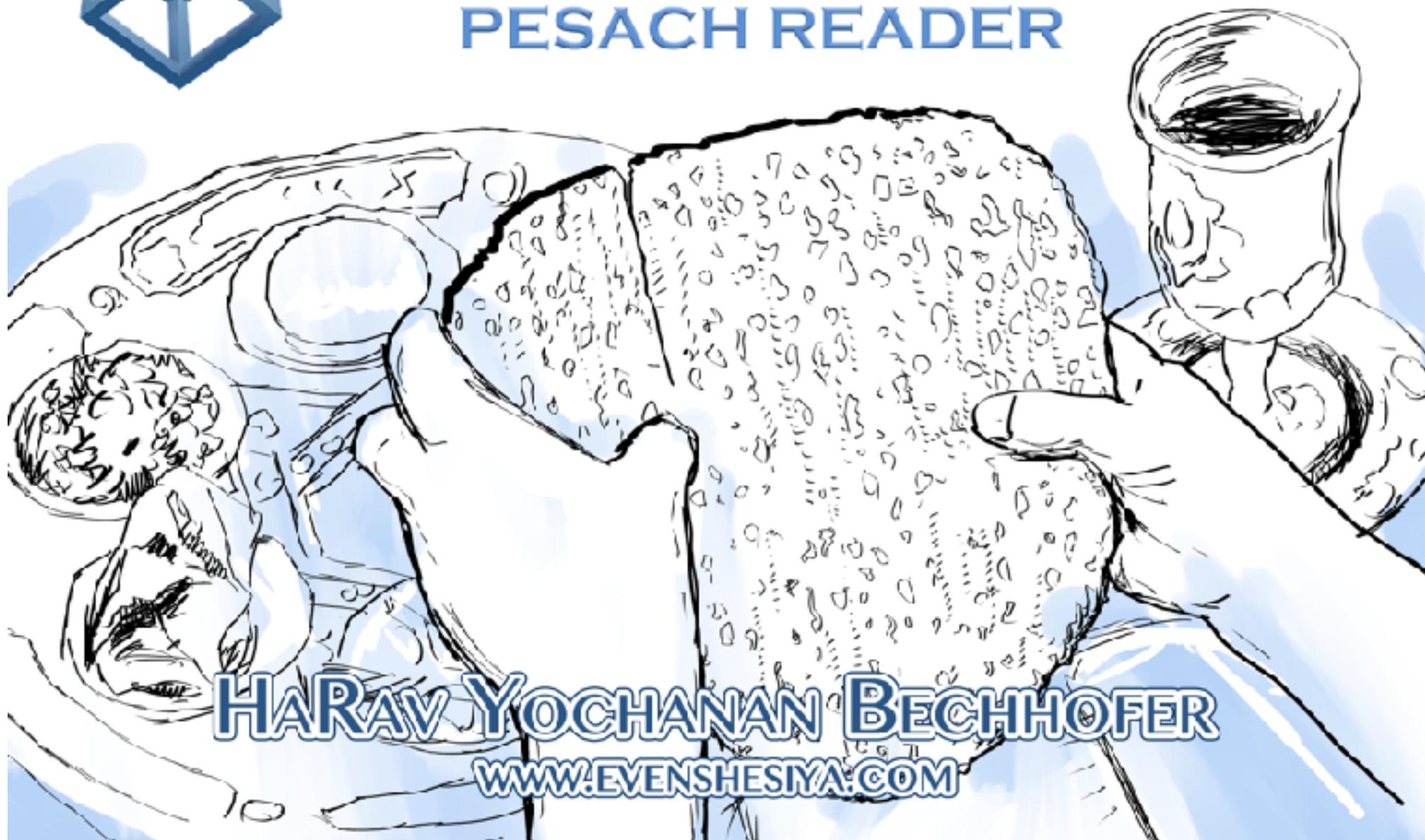




EVEN SHESIYA

PESACH READER



HARAV YOCHANAN BECHHOFFER

WWW.EVENSHESIYA.COM

Author's Introduction

As I am writing this, I cannot help but draw a parallel between our situation today and the very first night of Pesach in our history. Like the Jews back then who had to stay confined within their homes to avoid the “*mashchis*” unleashed on Egypt, protected by the Mitzvah of the blood of the *Korban Pesach* on the two doorposts and on top of the doorway, so also in our situation with the Coronavirus running amok, we are confined to our homes with our families. But we can draw additional confidence in the fact we have advanced from the two *mitzvos* that were given in Egypt. We have since received all the Mitzvos of the Torah and more importantly, the learning of Torah which both protect and save (see Sotah 21a).

I am confident that anyone who taking time to read this book is truly glad to have it for the sake of the *Divrei Torah* in it and for the sake of enhancing his or her experience of the month of *Nissan* and *Chag HaPesach*. I don't believe anyone reading this book is asking: why now? To put out a book in such a time of crisis? Nonetheless, I cannot help but remember the moving words of introduction of the Elder Rosh Yeshiva, Maran HaGaon HaRav Yaakov Yitchok Ruderman ZT”L in his monumental book on Kodshim, the “*Avodas Levi*”. I had the distinct honor and privilege to uphold גדול שמושה יותר מלמודה and serve him in the literal sense of the word in the final months of his life. So he writes, in his introduction to this monumental ‘*sefer*’ that he put out as a young man and earned him the lavish praise of the leaders of his generation:

“... I will not ask myself those questions that many authors are accustomed to ask at the opening of their books, such as, “is this really the proper time to put out new books?” I will not ask myself as such. Chazal tell us that Hashem enjoys our “pilpul” in Torah, many tens of thousands of Jews are engaged in Halacha of the Torah and this is what sustains our nation whose mouths never ceased from learning even in the worst times. All our immense spiritual property was born and formed in the times that we

were oppressed and downtrodden. “Hide for a minute until the anger passes...” (Yeshayahu 26:20) was not said on creations of the spirit! We never hid for a second. And we never ceased to produce even for a small amount of time and this is all of our joy, our glory, that we “adorn the Torah with buds and flowers”, even at the time where there were terrible spiritual slumps upon us. The living fountain never stopped to flow. Every generation and generation and their scribes, every scribe and his talents never desisted from revealing the fruits of his spirits to make his contribution in the huge edifice.....”

There is nothing to add to these words of great spirit and self-evident truth.

I have endeavored to divide up all the ideas in this book into chapters and distinctly labeled paragraphs with cross-references to other places in the book that can further shed light on the ideas. But if the reader can find the time and patience to read the book in order from beginning to end, it will be very helpful as the later chapters are based on the earlier chapters.

I will end off with the prayer that we are all praying, that not only will may we emerge from the current predicament safely in sound body, spirit, and resources, but may we finally emerge from the root of the problem, which is the *Golus*, like at this time, all those years ago as in the opinion of Rebbe Yehoshua (Rosh HaShana 11b) “in *Nissan* they were redeemed and in *Nissan* they are destined to be redeemed” and we will see a fulfillment of “כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות I will show them wonders” (Micha7:15).

Chag Kosher VeSameach.

Yochanan Meir Bechhofer

Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5780.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter one.....	Setting the Calender our First Mitzvah as a Nation
Chapter two.....	Nissan Month of Actualization
Chapter Three.....	Shabbos HaGadol & Pesach
Chapter four.....	What's so "Big" about Shabbos HaGadol
Chapter five.....	introduction to ליל הסדר
Chapter six.....	מצות סיפור יציאת מצרים
Chapter seven.....	מה נשתנה
Chapter eight.....	עבדים היינו
Chapter nine.....	Relive & Renew
Chapter ten.....	ברוך המקום
Chapter eleven.....	ארבעה בנים
Chapter twelve.....	ארמי אובד אבי
Chapter thirteen.....	עשר מכות
Chapter fourteen.....	דיינו
Chapter fifteen.....	נרצה
Chapter sixteen.....	אחד מי יודע
Chapter seventeen.....	חד גדיא
Chapter eighteen.....	שביעי של פסח

CHAPTER 1

Setting the Calendar – Our First Mitzva as a Nation

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשׁ חֹדְשֵׁי רֵאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לַחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה

Kiddush HaChodesh – making emends for the moon

On the Shabbos prior to Rosh Chodesh Nissan we have the supplementary reading of Parshas HaChodesh. It is the Mitzvah to 'sanctify the new moon'; which means to declare the months and form the Jewish calendar. **This is the first Mitzvah we were given as a people and marks the dawn of our freedom.** Why is this the very first Mitzvah, even before the Mitzvah of Korban Pesach? What does this Mitzvah represent? The Gemara in Chullin (60b) points out that in the sacrificial order of the Musaf of Rosh Chodesh, we are to bring a 'קַרְבַּן חֹדֶשׁ' which can be read literally as "a sin offering for Hashem". The Gemara says that it is to be read that way: Hashem says "bring a **"Kaparrah"** (atonement) for me for having mitigated the moon (and having made it smaller than the sun, which is the reason why it's dark at night)". What does this mean? How can Hashem need atonement, since whatever He does is true, just, and good?

"Kaparrah" vs "Selicha" & "Mechila"

The Hebrew word for atonement – "Kaparrah" - literally means to wash away (Rashi, Bereishis 32:21). There is a fundamental difference between Kapara - atonement versus forgiveness which in Hebrew is "Selicha" or "Mechila". Forgiveness is that the crime is done, and on record, but I forgive you for it. "Kapara" (atonement) is much greater, it is to 'wash away' the wrongdoing. **"Kaparrah" is about actually 'putting things right' and repairing what is wrong.**

Repairing the Moon

The mitigation of the moon was no crime. The moon complained: "two kings cannot share one crown" and Hashem justly shrank the moon to

resolve that problem. However, it's still a 'dirtied' reality, and that 'dirt' needs to be washed away. Where is that 'dirt'? Light represents good and darkness represents evil. **The moon not fully illuminating the darkness represents evil not being fully dispelled.** Even when the moon is full, as it is at the time of the Jewish holidays that bring 'light' into the world, the darkness still reigns. **In the future, when "the moon will shine like the sun" (Yeshayahu 30:26), is when there will be no more evil in the world, only the good.** What's 'wrong' and 'dirty' about the world is that there's evil in the world, and it has a very firm foothold that takes up half of reality, just like darkness takes up half of time! The light of the moon represents the good that conquers the evil. The 'smallness' of the moon is the inability to totally 'wash away' evil, and that is what needs 'cleaning'.

The Jewish People – Cosmic Candles

The mission of the Jewish people is to participate in removing this 'darkness' by bringing 'light' into the world. What do we do at night when moonlight is insufficient? We use candles! **"For a candle is a Mitzvah and Torah is light" (Mishlei 6:23). The Mitzvos of the Jewish people bring new 'light' into the world.** This new light is for where the regular (old) natural light of the sun doesn't shine – to light up the 'night'- to dispel evil! This is the purpose of all Mitzvos, and that's why this is the first Mitzvah we got, because it 'sets the tone' as to what all Mitzvos do. The Mitzvos, like candles, supplement the moon's light, to rid the world of the darkness, which is evil itself.

The NEW Moon

Koheles (1:9) says: "there's nothing new under the sun". Sunlight is the natural goodness that Hashem gave the world at the time creation and represents the 50% good on the battlefield between good and evil. **The "new light" is the light that 'chips away' at the 50% darkness in reality. The light of the moon, like candles, is the 'new light' that artificially dispels 'natural darkness' and all that it represents.** This is why the Jewish/lunar month is called חֹדֶשׁ. The root of the word is חדש – **New!** What is new, that wasn't already there by creation? The 'darkness' that's converted to 'light', which represents the evil that is turned to good. This is the **innovation** the Jewish people bring to the world with their Mitzvos.

Hidden Light, Candle Light, Moon Light

“Hashem saw that the light was good” (Bereishis 1:4), refers to the ‘hidden light’ (Rashi). It was too good to be shared with the evil doers and it had to be ‘hidden’. That means that this light is behind darkness. **When we do our mitzvos, we “light a candle”. The “candle” (Mitzvos) is actually a revelation of that hidden light. We rid the world of the evil who should not use the ‘hidden light’ and by doing so we make room for this ‘hidden light’ to shine. This room for the ‘hidden light’ to shine is the room for the moon to grow and shine away all evil.** This is the goodness we create and are rewarded for! At the end of creation it says: “And Hashem saw all that he made and behold it was very good” (Bereishis 1:31). The Midrash says: “good” is the good - **“very good” is the bad**. “Good” is life – **“very good” is death.....etc.** The message is: **“good” was already granted by Hashem, “very good” is what we (The Jewish People) create when we convert the evil into good.** The word for **“Very”** is מאד which is the same letters אדם – **man**. This is the secret that man’s soul is called “The candle of Hashem” (Mishlei 20:27). The Jewish souls (candles) with their Mitzvos (candles) make the innovation(חדש) of converting the ‘darkness’ into ‘light’ and thus make a “Good” world - “Very Good”! This chipping away at the darkness makes room for the moon to grow and ultimately shine like the sun, ridding the world of all evil forever!

Progressively New

Yetzias Mitzrayim was a triumph of good over evil. We started the process of washing away the ‘dirt’ from the mitigation of the moon. This was not supposed to be a one-time event. This was the initiation of a process that will continue until the end of time when the moon will shine like the sun. This is the secret behind the saying of Chazal “in every generation a man should view himself as if he himself left Egypt” (Pesachim 116b). The initial Exodus was good for that generation, but come the following year, it has to reach a higher level and then a higher level. Yetzias Mitzrayim is a process of moving towards complete liberation from evil. That’s the secret behind why we commence reading Sefer Vayikra come Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The Midrash Rabba in Bereishis says Sefer Vayikra is parallel to “the light was good” referring to the ‘hidden light’ that is gradually being revealed, and when the process is complete the moon will swell to be as bright as the Sun. The Musaf of

Rosh Chodesh is called a “Kaparah” for Hashem as it’s washing away the ‘blemish’ in creation, gradually moving creation to perfection. The Torah shared that power with the individual by granting us the power of “Kaparah” with the Korbonos in Sefer Vayikra. We tap into the same cosmic power to wash away all our ‘blemishes’ and to convert our failures into merits. Since Teshuva comes from cosmic power, Teshuvah not only converts man’s failures into merits, it converts the whole world. As the Gemara in Yoma (86a-b) says: “great is Teshuva that it brings redemption to the world”.... “Great is Teshuva that it brings healing to the world” etc. The power of “Kaparah” in Sefer Vayikra is the power to wash away ‘blemishes’ of individuals and the cosmos. The ultimate power of the Beis HaMikdash is that it ‘atones’ – meaning to say it accelerates the conversion process of “Darkness” to “Light” which is the secret as to why Baba ben Butta referred to it as **“the light of the world”**. **This is the secret that in the second year when we had to ‘raise’ the “Exodus Process” to another level, we erected the Mishkan in Nissan.** Sefer Vayikra and Parshas HaChodesh represent that Yetzias Mitzrayim is **permanent** and always progressing to **NEW levels** until the ultimate all-encompassing Tikun of the “moon will shine like the sun”.

CHAPTER 2

Nissan – Month of Actualization

Understanding Nissan

Parshas Hachodesh is the mitzvah to set the Jewish calendar with Nissan as the first of months. It is the first mitzvah given to us as a nation. The Rambam understands that the Halacha of the leap year to ensure that the month of Nissan will always remain in the spring is part and parcel of this mitzvah. This is the month that marks a new year of reign of a Jewish king (Rosh Hashana 1a). There are many questions that immediately pop up that demand explanation: Why would the first mitzvah that we get as a newly born people be to set a calendar? Why must we keep Nissan in the spring? **If keeping Nissan in the spring is important, then why didn't Hashem just give us a solar calendar?** We count the years by Rosh Hashanah which is in Tishrei and there is the theme of coronating Hashem as our King on that holiday. **Wouldn't it be more befitting to mark off the years of our Jewish kings when we mark off the years anyway, and when we also declare Hashem as our king?** In the Haggadah we say, "you may think that the obligation to tell the story of 'Yetzias Mitzrayim' starts on Rosh Chodesh [Nissan] - the Torah teaches us 'on that day' (of Pesach)". **Why would we think that the obligation to recount the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim would start from Rosh Chodesh Nissan?**

Potential vs Actual

There is a famous question in Jewish philosophy: **Why is the world only 5779 years old? If there was potential for the world, why didn't it come into being earlier?** The Ramchal in his sefer "Daas Tevunos" answers that prior to creation there was no potential for the world. There was nothing except Hashem and **no other concept existed.** However, upon Hashem's decision to create the world **He first created the potential for the world and after that made the world go from potential to actual.** The Ramchal is laying down two ideas: Firstly, potential is in itself a creation. The Ramchal goes on to make another point: When Hashem created the world, He took on a structural style of **everything first**

existing in potential and only then in actuality. He explains that there is a tremendous benefit in that: **All**

shortcomings are rooted in the potential state, in FULL actuality there is only perfection. By the creation of reality itself, it says: בראשית בראשית - Hashem created "**the** heavens and **the** earth" obviously it's not to heaven and earth in actuality which were created on the second and third days of creation. **It means the potential! אַתְּ - the heavens includes everything that fills the heavens and וְאֶת - and the earth includes everything that fills the earth. Potential was created with that first utterance and the next nine utterances are to bring the potential into actual.** In the potential state "the earth was shapeless and formless with darkness over the over the depths" and there was water everywhere. As reality moved from potential to actual it attained greater refinement and escaped the state of deficiencies. **If there any deficiencies in reality, it's because reality hasn't been fully actualized yet. In the future when everything has been actualized there will no longer be any shortcomings in reality. The essence of the course of destiny it is the quest to move the cosmos into full actuality which culminates with the world 'Morphing' into Olam Haba.**

Segments of Destiny

With this we could understand what Chazal mean when they divide world history and destiny into three eras: 2000 years of "tohu"-shapelessness, 2000 years of Torah, and 2000 years of Moshiach (Sanhedrin 97). The obvious question is why are the first 2000 years called "shapelessness"? Great civilizations arose and there were amazing technological advances! What was "shapeless" about the first 2000 of history? **During the first 2000 years of history the world was not moving to any higher state of actuality, it was just going in circles.** Even though there was technological advancement, the human race and the living creatures were not getting any more refined. They were still in the same physical state as at the end of the 6 days of creation. **The Cosmos was 'shapeless' in the sense that it was not attaining a higher, more refined, shape.**

Promises made – Promises Kept

That changed in the second era with the emergence of Avraham Avinu and the Avos. They started preaching the truth, and for that change Hashem reciprocated and gave them Bris Milah which is for a person to change himself from the way he's born to a greater state of refinement. However, the Avos just ushered in potential for that second era of Torah and 'Midah Kneged Midah' Hashem gave them promises that He did not fulfill in their lifetime. **The promises were made, and the potential was built up - paralleling how the Avos were building the potential for a great nation that would change the world. The 2000 years of Torah reached full actuality 210 years later with the birth of the Jewish people coming out of Mitzrayim!** The word "Mitzrayim" means constraints. When something is in a potential state it is 'under wraps' and not allowed to expand to full actuality. **Coming out of "Mitzrayim" is like coming out of the Womb that used to engulf and envelop the baby. Once those constraints were broken the Jewish people were born.** That's when the 2000 years of Torah are in full actuality and Hashem delivers in full actuality the promises made to the Avos.

Eternal Spring

This is the secret behind the Halacha that the month of Nissan which is the month of **Yetzias Mitzrayim** must always be in the spring. Spring is the time of bloom where things unfold into actuality. **During the winter potential is built up with all the rain that falls and is absorbed in the earth. Spring is when it goes from potential to actual. Yetzias Mitzrayim was and is the blooming of reality. This process continues in every Generation until the end of the 6000 years when enough potential has been actualized to make the great metamorphosis to convert this world into the perfect world of Olam Haba.** This is the secret that "in every generation and generations a man must see himself as if he himself left Mitzrayim" (Pesachim 116b) because every generation is part of **Yetzias Mitzrayim** – the process of actualizing more and more of the potential that is still locked away and waiting to be revealed.

Destiny in the Individual

The life of the Jewish individual mirrors the course of destiny. At the time of conception and for the first 40 days the Gemara tells us that the fetus is "just water" - **like the world was on the first day of creation!**

Even though during the nine month (or seven months as we will explain) the fetus develops, all that development is potential relative to the actuality of afterbirth! During those nine (or seven) months it's taught the whole Torah to prepare it for its mission, **but at the time of birth all that Torah is forgotten, a breakdown like "tohu" va'vohu", leaving all those levels achieved as nothing more than potential that needs to be actualized.** The child is born and seeks to actualize regaining all that Torah and all those levels, and **to move away from his original state of being "just water" to being fully formed to the point of perfection both physically and spiritually.** If the person is successful, then the metamorphosis is completed after death and resurrection because the full actuality cannot be attained in this world because of the sin of Adam. The Jew actualizes to the furthest extent that he can and then Hashem finishes it off. This is parallel to how the generations combined actualize the potential of this world but at the time when it will need to metamorphosis into Olam Haba it will shut down for 1000 years before it reemerges as Olam Haba. **It is the mission of the individual to actualize his spiritual potential and it is the mission of the Jewish people as a nation to actualize the potential of all of reality.**

The Lunar Cycle

All this is also alluded to in the moon. The moon at its first instant was created as big as the sun and then it was shrunk. It was as big as the sun is to give it the potential to get back there, but then there was the 'meltdown' that potential states are subject to, like the fetus that forgets his Torah, and the moon was mitigated. The moon is striving to get back to that greatness that it originally had and then "the moon will shine as brightly as the sun". The fact that **the moon shrinks after it grows and grows again is like in the Jewish woman's monthly cycles of impurity after purity,** reminding us to further strive for even greater perfection. **All those 'growth spurts' of the moon will come back when the moon swells to the size of the sun - the moon shrinks purely for the purpose of a reminder that it has to grow again - just like the Jewish woman goes through cycles to remind us that further improvement is still necessary.**

National Birth & Bris

This is what happened to the Jewish people as a nation. Upon **Yetzias Mitzrayim** we're born. Just like a Jewish woman after birth is impure for seven days and only **after seven** days could be reunited with her husband so also we have the seven weeks of the omer for purification and then we are reunited with Hashem **after seven** weeks on the 50th day which ushers in the eighth week parallel to **Bris Milah** and we attain a higher level of purity that allows us to reunite with Hashem on the higher level of **Matan Torah**.

Tishrei vs Nissan

With this we can understand the difference between Tishri and Nissan. The Gemara (Rosh Hashana 10b-11a) tells us that there's a Machlokes Rabi Eliezer and Rabi Yehoshua whether the world was created in Tishrei or Nissan. Rabbeinu Tam (Rosh Hashana 27a כמאן תוד"ה כמאן) says that they are both correct: **in Tishrei Hashem contemplated the creation of the world but the world was created in actuality in Nissan**. That's why we say on Rosh Hashana עולם הרה - היום - today is the conception of the world. **The potential for the world was created in Tishri. The world was created in actuality in Nissan. The seven months of Tishri through Nissan is like a seven-month pregnancy with the birth happening in Nissan.**

The Book vs The Story

That's the secret behind what the Sefer Yetzira (1:1) says: "Hashem created his world with a **book** a **book** and a **story**". The final book is the book at the end of time that will be a record of all history **as it was lived out**. The first book is the potential. **A book could be read in many ways and the reader of the story could put different accentuations and different punctuations that could put a twist and spin on how the story is actually understood** (similar to how each political party wants to be the one to **read out** the "report"). **This is the relationship between the written Torah – the "Book" and the Oral Torah – "the way the story is told". How the written Torah is put into action all goes by how the oral Torah explains it.**

Our Turf

In Tishrei the world is being re-created in potential and that's "the book" - the book of life and the book of death. These "Books" provide a script, but there's a lot of interpretation that could be put on the script. **The interpretation of the script, like the oral Torah, is exclusively in the hands of the Jewish people. We determine how the year plays out. It's included in our eternal mission of making potential move to actuality.** How the story is told is in the hands of the Jewish people. **Hashem is the sole king when it comes to setting the potential for the world. Tishrei ushers in the winter where everything collapses, but all the rain coming in during that time is building the potential.** Nissan ushers in spring which is actuality and that's in the hands of the Jewish people. **That's the secret that the Jewish kings count the years of their reign from the month of Nissan – that month represents the "turf" and leadership that the Jewish people have is in carving out the course of destiny - which is to move things from potential to actual.**

Sun vs Moon

That is what the moon represents and that's why we count time by the moon. We must keep it synced with the sun because Nissan is all about ushering in the Jewish mission of moving the world to actuality. That is why it's the first mitzvah that we got is a people. Our mission is to usher in the actuality that happens in the spring month. Moving towards actuality is what the lunar calendar represents, as opposed to the sun that doesn't renew, it just stays the same, and **that's why the goyim count time by the sun -they don't want to change.**

The Story of Life

The story of Yetzias Mitzrayim is the story of destiny. The destiny of the Jewish people and the destiny of the world is to bring all potential into full actuality and thus the world will attain perfection. The month of Nissan ushers in that world order and that's why we would think you would tell over the story of **Yetzias Mitzrayim** - the story of destiny - from Rosh Chodesh Nissan because **that new order starts with Rosh Chodesh Nissan**. Therefore, it's a 'chiddush' that we need not recount the story **Yetzias Mitzrayim** which is the story of destiny until - **Seder night - the night of the order!**

CHAPTER 3

SHABBOS HAGADOL & PESACH

Why Shabbos?

Chazal tell us that the special Halacha that the Jews had in Egypt to separate the korban Pesach on the 10th of Nissan came out on Shabbos that year. This is one of the sources for Shabbos HaGadol. The fact that we mark Shabbos HaGadol and not the 10th of Nissan forever after shows that the main force at play was Shabbos, because if it's to commemorate the separating of the korban Pesach (which we were not commanded to do in future generations) we would've been marking the 10th of Nissan. Why didn't Hashem just give us Shabbos? Shabbos remained hidden and was not revealed until after Krias Yam Suf by Marah. If we needed Shabbos before Pesach, why didn't we get it? How did separating of the korban Pesach supplement for Shabbos in that generation?

Shabbos & Pesach – the Chicken & the Egg

There is a special relationship between Shabbos and Pesach that needs to be explored. Pesach itself is called Shabbos in the command to count the omer. "Counting from the day after **Shabbos**" (Vayikra 23:15) refers to **Pesach** as we know through the oral transmission. But it's more than that: **Which is first, Shabbos or Pesach?** Historically speaking, when looking from Hashem's view of reality, Shabbos came first. It was created on the seventh day of creation and over 2000 years later Hashem took us out of Egypt and we got Pesach. **In our experience it's just the opposite: we got Pesach when taken out of Mitzrayim and then we got Shabbos subsequently in Marah.** This duality is also expressed in contradictory Pesukim. In parshas Mishpatim (Shemos 23:12-19) it lays out Shabbos and the three Regalim, and **Shabbos is first** and then Pesach shavuos and Succos. In parshas Ki-Sisa (Shemos 34:18-26) it again lays out Shabbos and the three Regalim, but **there it first lays out Pesach and then Shabbos** and then resumes to talk about Shavuos and Succos. There are two different versions of the "Aseres HaDibros" that were said simultaneously in one utterance. In the version in Parshas

Yisro it says that we keep Shabbos because **"six days Hashem created heaven and earth and rested on the seventh day" which would put Shabbos before Pesach that happened over 2000 years after creation.** However, in the version in Parshas Va'eschanan it says "remember that you were a slave in Egypt and Hashem took you out of there and therefore Hashem commanded you to keep the day of Shabbos" **according to that version Shabbos actually commemorates the exodus and that would put Shabbos after Pesach.**

Shabbos & Yom Tov – The Root & the Branches

In Parshas Emor in the parsha of "the Moadim that we declare" (Vayikra 23:2-43) - **it first opens up with Shabbos which we don't declare and then restarts "these are the Moadim of Hashem that you will declare"** and starts with Pesach. **Why is Shabbos there?** Shabbos is not declared by Beis Din like the months. Shabbos comes in automatically when the sun sets on Friday. Why did the parsha then **restart** "These are the moadim of Hashem" with Pesach? The Zohar explains that **Shabbos is the root of all Kedusha.** Only Hashem can make something out of nothing. Kedusha is a creation of Hashem like everything else. Hashem created Kedusha when He created Shabbos "and He blessed it and **sanctified** it". **Our ability to make YomimTovim or any other form of holiness is to actually draw upon the power of Shabbos** and that's why it's there and the parsha of the Moadim and yet in a league onto its own - **because it is the source – the Moadim are the branches.**

Escape Hatch

My Rebbe Maran HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shapira ZT"l further explained to me that aside from Shabbos being the source of Kedusha that all is drawn from, **the fact that the Jewish people have shabbos makes them able to access Kedusha.** This world is seemingly a sealed box of three dimensions that don't end anywhere. This is indeed the unfortunate state of **all non-Jews who are commanded to "never rest just like the world just keeps on turning"**. Shabbos which is the "seventh" is center. **"Center" does not exist in physical reality!** There is no space that can be called the center because it could be subdivided between the all the dimensions that it touches upon. Hashem says "I have a wonderful gift in my treasure house and I'll give it to the Jewish people" It's not just the command to keep Shabbos – **"the gift of Shabbos" is to give us the**

center of reality that's not accessible in physical space. Once we have Shabbos we can escape the limitations of the physical world. We access the point that's on no side of the three dimensions of physicality and yet permeates all dimensions and with that we can access the light of the Yomim Tovim.

Speech in Exile

However Hashem only gives his gifts to a worthy recipient. "..... I will give it to the **Jewish people** who I love" or as Chazal tell us Hashem told Shabbos ".....the **Jewish people** will be your mate". **However, you need a "Jewish people" that's separate from the rest of humanity. That's why we need Pesach to separate the Jewish people as being different from all the nations and only then there finally is a recipient for Shabbos in this world.** What exactly changed that made the **Jewish people** a different type of humanity with Yetzias Mitzrayim? How did the world change with Yetzias Mitzrayim?

The Zohar and the writings of the Arizal teach us that **prior to Yetzias Mitzrayim speech itself was in exile.** The Tikunei Zohar says that פסח is to be understood as two words פה - the mouth סה -speaks that with Yetzias Mitzrayim the power of speech was liberated and that is the significance that we have the Mitzvah of Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim - to talk about the exodus as we say in the Haggada "**the more we talk about Yetzias Mitzrayim the better**" because it is to celebrate the liberation of speech and "storytelling". What does all that mean?

What is Speech?

The gift of speech is not a sophisticated form of mating calls or warnings of danger. The animals manage just fine without language and live in packs with a communal structure and exhibit tremendous intelligence in caring for themselves and building their shelters. One can argue that they understand each other better than people understand each other - with all their language. Speech and language can't be just a more sophisticated form of communications like that which other lifeforms have. We got the power of speech from our Divine immortal soul from heaven after it merged with the body. "And he blew into his nostrils a breath of life and man became a creature of life" Onkelus translates "**creature of life**" as "**a speaking spirit**". **If speech comes from the**

Neshama from heaven it can't be pragmatic communication. We find speech at the very beginning of the Torah. **Hashem created the world through "speech"**. What is speech and what does it do?

Transmission from Thought to Physicality

With Speech Hashem created the world. This means that first Hashem "thought" the idea, "**put that thought into words**", and then that entity came into physical actuality - which means: **Speech is the transition from conceptual thought to physical reality.** The human being, with his intelligence that's augmented by his Neshama, is supposed to **apprehend abstract ideas like "right and wrong" and "ethics" and then put those ideas into words for the purpose of making them more "concrete" in a manner that he could live by in the physical world.** Ideas need to be put into words to be concretized in a manner that they could be put into a plan of action whether for himself or for others to follow by his instructions. Another word for instruction is "command" as in "**Mitzvah**"- commandment. The **Nefesh HaChaim** explains that **the Divine power in mitzvos is the Divine command** - that is what puts spiritual power in these actions that we do. **If not for the Divine words commanding us to do the Mitzvos they would have no spiritual power.** It is the Divine speech that facilitates prophecy and **it is the essence of what we mean by "Torah". "Torah" is that Hashem put his will and wisdom into words and communicated it to us.** With this we understand why **Speech emerged when man became a composite of body and soul because Speech is the bridge between the two it is the ability to communicate and transition from the spiritual into the physical.**

Chometz Matza Mitzvah

Prior to Yetzias Mitzrayim this power of speech to bridge the spiritual world of concepts and all that the Torah teaches was sealed off and Speech was just used for in the same manner that animals communicate and that's called that "**speech was in exile**" - it was not in its proper place and performing its real function and that's alluded to in חמץ. The letters א"ת ב"ש and מצה, חמץ, and מצוה in the system of א"ת ב"ש (alef interchangeable with Tav, Beis interchangeable with Shin, etc.) are interchangeable with י and ה The Gemara in Menachos (29b) teaches us with the letters of י and ה Hashem fashioned two worlds - the higher

world with י and the lower world with ה . We're supposed to unlock not just the spiritual power of the ה but to also draw power from the י and infuse it into physical reality. That is the significance of the Divine name of "four letters" - the powers of י and ה is fully absorbed into the ו and ה representing the forces of the physical realm (the ו representing the six edges of the three dimensions and the final ה representing the seventh - between them are the whole seven that we call "nature"). That's what the letters מ and צ represent, but prior to Yetzias Mitzrayim they were sealed off. That's what's represented by the ה of הִמָּצֵי - that we're not able to access what the מ and צ represent because our world was sealed off from heaven - the **unbroken roof** of the ה cut us off from the spiritual dimensions. The Zohar explains that "**Yetzias Mitzrayim broke the ה and it became a ה and spelled מציה**. **The break in the ה allows for spiritual to enter the physical** and ה could be subdivided into the letters ד (numerical value of 4) and the short leg א י that the even the power from the י permeates the four directions of the physical realm. That was accomplished with Yetzias Mitzrayim and following the 7 days of Pesach with the additional **six** weeks of the omer which is the numerical value of the ו then מציה becomes מצויה when we get the Torah and get commanded to keep **Mitzvos**.

The REAL Story

Prior to the power of speech being liberated, the line of communication between us and the spiritual was sealed off. Although they were prophets that walked the earth, the prophecy was one of transcendental experience, **Divinity was not revealed here within the earth**. The process of Yetzias Mitzrayim was to "**speak my Name** throughout the earth" (Shemos 9:16). That is why one of the Mitzvos of Seder night is to celebrate the **REAL power of speech** and tell the **story of Yetzias Mitzrayim**. In a story there's a intelligent plot that connects all the events - **there's a story in reality - it's called destiny!**

Shabbos Hagadol

The line of communication opened on "**Peh -Sach**" enables the transmission of Shabbos to earth. **Shabbos on earth is dependent on Pesach liberating the Jewish people and the power of speech which enables the transmission of holiness of Shabbos into physical realm**. However, as we stated before, the root of all Holiness, including Pesach,

is drawn from Shabbos and that's why these two holidays are inextricably bound up with each other and totally interdependent. Shabbos cannot be extended to earth without Pesach and Pesach cannot exist without Shabbos. This is the greatest "chicken – egg" dilemma. **The only way out of it was the event of Shabbos HaGadol which was a precursor for the concept of Shabbos**. On Shabbos we are separated from the nations of the world and from all physicality and we enter dimensions of holiness which are exclusively ours. "A goy that keep Shabbos deserves death" (Sanhedrin 58b). However, Shabbos could not be manifest on earth yet until Pesach. Hashem gave a special Mitzvah for that generation to generate a "spark of Shabbos". **The "spark of Shabbos" was created by the Jews separating themselves from the nations of the world "Pull and take" – "pull yourselves away from idol worship and take the sheep for the mitzvah"**. This is act of separating ourselves created for us a quasi-Shabbos of separating ourselves from the rest of the world and put us into a higher dimension that was enough to tap into Shabbos to enable us to make Pesach. Subsequently, in later years this special service wasn't necessary because Shabbos was on earth. **The Shabbos before Pesach is what energizes Pesach - but it's a BIG Shabbos because it's not just the energy source of the renewed Pesach it is also the energy source of renewed Shabbosos because Shabbos on earth is only through the power of Pesach!**

CHAPTER 4

What's So "Big" about Shabbos HaGadol

What Happened?

Shabbos HaGadol translate literally as "The Big *Shabbos*." What's so BIG about *Shabbos HaGadol*? As we wrote above, The Tur tells us that *Shabbos HaGadol* commemorates how on the tenth of Nissan the Jews in Egypt had a one time commandment of designating a lamb in preparation for the first *korban Pesach*. We have a tradition that the tenth of Nissan on the year of the first Pesach fell on a *Shabbos*, so *Shabbos HaGadol* reminds us of the first Korban Pesach's special selection ceremony every year on the *Shabbos* before Pesach. Why was that *mitzvah* only applicable to the Jews of the first Pesach, and why was that *mitzvah* not necessary for any other generation?

Regarding this question Rashi in Parshas Bo (12:6) brings from Chazal in the name of Rav Matya ben Charash: "Hashem said: it is time to fulfill the oath that I made to Avraham to redeem his children, however, they had no Mitzvos to be worthy of Redemption. Therefore Hashem gave them two Mitzvos the blood of Pesach and the blood of Bris Milah.... **but since they were steeped in Idol worship Hashem commanded them "משכו וקחו" - pull and take, pull your hands away from idol worship and take for yourselves the lamb for the sake of doing a Mitzvah**"

Why On Shabbos?

Usually when we commemorate an occasion we do so on the date of the event itself, not the day of the week. Why don't we remember the occasion of the first Korban Pesach on the tenth of Nissan, just as we celebrate the exodus from Egypt on the fifteenth of Nisan? This all relates our original question: "**What's so BIG about *Shabbos HaGadol*?**"

What is Big?

Let's explore the philosophical meaning of the word "Big." In everyday usage, big is not an absolute concept. It's all relative to what you are talking about. A big orange is fairly dwarfed by a small oak tree. Is there an absolute meaning to the concept of "Big"?

Hashem is, was, and always will be perfect. He is lacking nothing in any way, and it would seem that He is the pinnacle of "Bigness" - whatever that means. There can be no change in Hashem. The Pasuk says: "I am Hashem I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). Every day we say in *tefilla*:

אתה הוא עד שלא נברא העולם אתה הוא משנברא העולם – You are He [who was] before the world was created, You are [the same] He after the world was created. And yet, the Pasuk in *Tehillim* (104:1) says ה' אלוקי גדלת מאד – Hashem my Lord You have **become very Big**." The Midrash (Shochar Tov Tehillim 104) asks what it means by saying "Hashem has become very Big". Says the Midrash: before Hashem created the world He was "Big", but after He created it He became "very Big." Before the praise of the prophets He was "Big", but after the praise of the prophets He became "Very Big. What is this Midrash be telling us? How can we reconcile it with the truth of Hashem's absolute unchanging Perfection?

Extension

Although size is relative, as we mentioned before, there is an objective definition to "Big". **Big means extension** the more something extends the bigger it is. In Kabbalah we are taught that that גדול – Big is a synonym for the attribute of חסד-Kindness. **This is because the kind person extends himself beyond his personal space to help others.** Another form of "Big"/extension is **Revelation**. Something "hidden" is confined within boundaries, it is **revealed** to others when it **extends** beyond where it's hidden. Therefore, when we say "Big" we mean to say: "**extended to be revealed to others.**"

Avraham's BIG Legacy

Avraham Avinu is referred to as "the man BIG amongst giants" (Yehoshua 14:15 see Rashi). Avraham Avinu has a dual legacy from a common root. He was known for his kindness, as his attribute is חסד but he dedicated, and risked, his life to extend consciousness of Hashem into and throughout the world. For both reasons, that have a common root, he is called "the man BIG amongst giants".

Purpose of Creation

With this we reconcile a contradiction in writing of the Arizal and other sources. In some sources it states the Hashem created the world to

bestow goodness. In other sources it says that Hashem created the world to reveal the attributes of His Divine Names. **Kindness and Revelation come from the same root of “Big”**. This is especially true when regarding Hashem – **there is no greater “Goodness” than He revealing Himself, He is the ultimate “Good”** (see Derech Hashem section 1 chap 2)

What Changed?

Hashem has every perfection imaginable in full actuality, even without us We say daily in Adon Olam “Mater of the universe who Reigned before all was created, when all was made by His Will, **He was then called King**” Hashem IS KING even without a world, the only thing that changed by creation is that now there are others to call Him “King”. In a similar vein the Midrash Shochar Tov is telling us that even before creation Hashem was “Big” with all that it implies, He “becomes very Big” when the prophets gain recognition of His perfection and praise him. **The change is in us and in us alone!** He becomes “very Big” in the sense that we become aware of His greatness as well. After the creation of the world His greatness is extended to the realm of the consciousness of the created beings. Prior to creation knowledge of Hashem is “confined” to Hashem Himself, but with the creation of man it is extended to human consciousness. He was always “Big” in full actuality, but when we gain consciousness of Hashem it can be said that He has “become **Very Big**.” The Hebrew word for Very is מאד which are the same letters as אדם-man. What makes Hashem’s Innate Greatness “VERY (מאד) Great” is Man’s (אדם) recognition of that Greatness

A BIG Difference

Before the Exodus, the world was in a state of total lack of Hashem consciousness. Hashem had to bring the ten plagues on Egypt to shock the world in order to reveal knowledge of Hashem. The goal was to add to His “Bigness”, and to spread Hashem consciousness throughout the Earth. The Jewish people themselves were and are an essential part of that role. **We are the singular vessel to receive and convey the revelation.**

What Made Us Different?

The Jewish people were not yet ‘different’ from the Egyptian or any other people on earth. Hashem wanted to give the Jews Mitzvos to set them apart. Here is the problem: you have to be Jewish in the first place for Mitzvos to be of any significance or spiritual power. A goy who does any of our Mitzvos doesn’t generate any spiritual energy not for the cosmos and not for himself. How did the Jewish people ‘break out’ and put themselves in a position of Bris Milah and Korban Peach raising their level? The Jewish people’s act of separation and designation made them a different type of people – a people capable of becoming the vessel for Hashem’s permanent revelation on Earth. The act of separation was necessary, to position them so that on Pesach they were catapulted to another level.

Why should we, out of all of humanity, be privileged to attaining this higher level?

We made ourselves different through the act of taking aside the lamb. Through this *mitzvah* we symbolically and metaphysically separated ourselves from Egypt and prepared ourselves for Divine service. We thus made ourselves worthy of all the revelations we re-experience on *Seder* night, and becoming the vehicle of Divine revelation in the world for all time.

Already Separate

The special act of designating the Korban Pesach was necessary then, but we don’t need it now. Now we have the Torah and we keep *Mitzvos*, thus constantly renewing our position and testifying to Hashem’s ‘Greatness’. The one *mitzvah* that truly represents our unique role as Hashem’s witnesses is *Shabbos*.

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba Parsha 11) tells us how when *Shabbos* saw that each day of the week had a partner and she did not, she asked Hashem for a mate. Hashem made the Jewish people *Shabbos*’s mate. It is specially designated for the Jews, and a non-Jew is not permitted to keep *Shabbos*.

Shabbos is Hashem's day, and He shares it exclusively with His people. He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, and He shares HIS DAY with the Jewish people. Hashem wants us alone to testify that He is the creator. *Chazal* say (Chagiga 3b תו"ד"ה ומי 3b) that Hashem, the Jews, and *Shabbos* are three witnesses that attest to each other. Anyone else is trespassing.

A Big Day

During *Havdalah* at the end of *Shabbos* we proclaim "*Ha'mavdil... bein Yisroel l'amim* – the one who distinguishes between holy and mundane, between light and dark, between the Jews and the nations." The same way there is a difference between holy and mundane, light and dark, there is a difference between Yisroel and the other nations. We are the people of *Shabbos*, Hashem's people, and the *goyim* aren't. Every *Shabbos* renews our unique higher status of being the vehicle of the revelation of Hashem in this world, and adding to His 'Bigness', as it were.

In Egypt we did not yet have the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos*, so our special status was actualized by way of the *mitzvah* of separating the *korban Pesach* and thus separating ourselves. Now we have *Shabbos*. Every single week it reinforces how we are Hashem's people, we are His witnesses, and we are the vehicle of His Divine revelation in the world.

With this understanding we see that the essence of what occurred on the tenth of Nissan before the first Pesach now happens every *Shabbos*. Every *Shabbos* reinforces our exalted role, and our higher destiny. On the tenth of Nissan when we first needed to separate ourselves from humanity, we needed the lamb because we were not yet worthy of *Shabbos*.

It's the 'Big *Shabbos*' because this *Shabbos* set the precedent of our being 'Big' and set the tone for everything that follows in our mission of: "who is a **BIG** nation that Hashem is close to them whenever they call to Him" (Devarim 4:7) *Shabbos* is always great. It's a day when we as Jews bring down more awareness of Hashem into the world. But this is "**The BIG *Shabbos***" because the *Shabbos* close to Pesach is the renewal of the 'first *Shabbos*', the *Shabbos* that was the cornerstone of all Divine revelation that has come through and continues to come through us. It is

the *Shabbos* that makes us 'Big' and Hashem "Very Big." On *Shabbos HaGadol* we remember the fact that we as Jews have been given the special mission of being the vehicle of bringing expanded Hashem consciousness into the world.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction to ליל הסדר

Pre-planned Rush?!?

In the Haggadah we say that we eat Matzah to commemorate that Bnei Yisroel's dough didn't have time to rise prior to Hashem revealing Himself to them and redeemed them as the Pasuk says: "they baked the dough they took out of Egypt as matza....for they were chased out of Mitzrayim and they made no provisions..." (Shemos 12:39). Already on Rosh Chodesh Nissan Hashem commanded Moshe with all the laws of Pesach and the Seder night that they were to celebrate two weeks later in Mitzrayim. They knew redemption was imminent, **why didn't they pace themselves and prepare provisions? They left things for the last minute on purpose!** Furthermore, is that really the reason we eat Matzah and negate Chometz? **They were commanded in these Mitzvos already on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and held a Seder complete with Pesach, Matzah, and Major the night before "they were chased out of Mitzrayim"**. How can their "sudden" departure from Egypt be the reason we eat Matza and negate Chometz if they were commanded in all these Mitzvos prior to that event? Once we mention the Mitzvos of the Seder, let's raise the fundamental question: **Why is the Seder called "Seder" – order?**

L'shem Shomayim is a "Jump"?!?

"Pesach because Hashem 'passed over' the houses of Bnei Yisroel" Rashi on the Pasuk "Pesach for Hashem"(12:11)explains: "The Korban is what's called Pesach because Hashem 'skipped over' the houses of the Jews from amongst the houses of the Egyptians he jumped from Egyptian to Egyptian and the Jew in the middle was saved - **so also, you do all Hashem's Divine service for the sake of Heaven in a manner of skipping and jumping**". Why is doing Mitzvos for the sake of Heaven called "skipping and jumping"? How is it parallel to what Hashem did for us when he "skipped" over us?

Matzos & Mitzvos

"Guard the Matzos"(12:17) Rashi first explains the literal meaning that the Matzos have to be guarded from becoming Chometz he then brings the drasha of Rav Yoshia "do not read it as Matzos but rather as **Mitzvos** just like we do not allow the Matzos to become Chometz so also we don't allow the Mitzvos to become Chometz but rather if a Mitzvah comes your way do it immediately". **What do Mitzvos and Matzos have to do with each other?** What difference does it make if a Mitzvah is done immediately and quickly or if it's done slowly or delayed?

Why Midnight?

Moshe told the people that "at approximately midnight" Hashem will bring the final plague of Makas Bechoros. He was afraid they would get the calculations for midnight wrong and conclude that the threat was not delivered on time. Why was it important to do the final capstone plague at EXACTLY midnight which is impossible for humans to calculate accurately?

Bread & Brains

Hashem has great plans for Destiny since before creation. The sin of Adam changed human consciousness. Man can't naturally perceive truth and see the "**SEDER**" – order of reality as Hashem planned it and guides it. How does man "make sense" of the world around him? After his sin, Adam is consoled that at least "by the sweat of his brow he will eat **bread**". That makes him better than an animal because there's some **intelligence** and sophistication in the food he eats. This is perfectly reflective of where his mentality is. The Chometz represents the Yetzer Hara that man internalized because of sin of Adam, **that's why he eats bread and likes it** - Chometz fits comfortably with what his body has become. **Chometz represents the ego which is Man's sense of the self – the "I". Chometz also represents the entirety of the post-sin natural mentality of humanity.** The Human being makes order out of life by measuring it with "**Time & Space**", what's first, second, third, etc. in time and what's positioned in first place, second place, third place etc. **Chometz is comprised of time and space I.E. give it time and it will puff up and take up more space.** The human mind uses "Time & Space" to make order not only out of physical life but also for power and politics: "**grab the moment" "grab the position" "nice guys finish last".**

However, like Chometz, all perceived good things in physical life rapidly go stale and rot – nothing that is “good” by our perception lasts forever.

Destiny

The “Chometz way of thinking” is in total opposition to the idea of “**Destiny**”. “Destiny” is an all-encompassing plan for everything at the **right time** and in the **right place**. In Destiny, “First” isn’t defined by time & space just like the Torah, the blueprint of reality, is not necessarily in chronological order. In Destiny the **best things** are left for last at the end of time and everything is just building up towards that point – **that end point is “First” – “End of action is FIRST in thought”**. The Jewish people are called “Hashem’s **firstborn**” (Shemos 4:22) and this statement was to be subsequently demonstrated by the plague of firstborn. Which nation arose first, the Egyptians or the Jewish people? All the seventy nations emerged and set up their civilizations before the Jewish people arose and received the Torah. However, the Jewish people and the Torah ‘predate’ physical reality - the very first word of the Torah – בראשית - for the sake of the first - for the sake of the Jewish people who are called “first” and for the sake of the Torah which is called “first” (see Rashi there). All the other nations of the world follow chronological and spatial order of “chometz” and that’s why the seven Nations/Palestinians want the land of Israel – **because they were there first**.

Breaking out of the Bread Box

We follow the **SEDER** of Hashem’s plan for Destiny! **First in space-time means nothing to us- that’s “Chometz”!** With the Torah and Mitzvos we **break out** of the Earthly realm and the “Chometz mentality” and attain a destiny oriented “Torah mentality” and connect to the Heavenly reality. This is the secret as to why Chometz can be **annulled in the mind alone** and according to some Rishonim it is the **MAIN WAY** to rid ourselves of Chometz – **“Chometz” represents a false state of mind!** By no coincidence the first Mitzvah that we got was to set our calendar. This Mitzvah sets the tone of all Mitzvos: **we are above time and therefore control time**.

Chatzi Halayla & Pesach

“Exactly half-night” is not a time on a clock! **There is no stretch of time that can be called “Half-night” – every microsecond belongs either to**

the first half or the second half! This final plague happened outside of time. This same event is called “Pesach” – the skip/jump because Skipping/jumping in to NOT transverse space naturally – you skip steps – you jump to a higher plane - this is to be beyond space. It had to be that way – we are being liberated from the “Chometz” of space-time! This is the secret behind why Yetzias Mitzrayim had to be done “rushed” – no matter how much ahead of time we knew about the upcoming liberation, Yetzias Mitzrayim is purposely being set up as a rush - in order to defy time and to skip and jump to get out of regular space – **that’s true liberation – to get out of the chometz world order that came to the world by the sin of Adam. “There’s no earlier or later in the Torah” – even though the Mitzva of Matza was commanded ahead of the event it commemorates - being rushed to leave Egypt. It makes no difference. Chronology is not the point. **Matzah commemorates freedom from the world order of Chometz** – that liberation will be **rushed** – whenever it happens! **This is the secret that the mitzvos of Seder night are called the “SEDER”- order: because on this night we are liberated from the “order of Chometz” and live by the “SEDER”-order of the Torah!****

The Matza in the Mitzvah

Mitzvos are not regular actions like all other earthly affairs within space-time. **Mitzvos are there to make a connection between this world and what’s above physicality. That’s why Mitzvos have to be done quickly and immediately!** In order for Mitzvos to have the full effect they’re meant to have of **actually breaking out of space-time to make the connection to the higher realms – they must be done swiftly** - like everything **matzah** represents.

לשם שמים Liberation from the internal Mitzrayim

Mitzvos are supposed to be liberating experiences that break out of the physical parameters of time and space and connect us to the higher realms, **this includes to get us beyond the Yetzer Hara inside of us**. The worst Yetzer Hara is - גאווה **Egocentricity is our internal Chometz**. In business, you may make a lot of financial progress - but you’re not progressing as a person. You’re making exchanges, you’re demanding fair compensation for whatever goods you provide or services you render. If we “exchange” our Mitzvos for reward from Hashem it’s as if we’re “doing business” with Him – in other words – **We’re servicing ourselves** –

not Him! That's a tragedy **for us!** We're stuck in the **egocentricity** of our internal **Chometz**. Hashem "jumped over" us -showing that we're on a different plane and in different dimensions and not in regular space-time. **What about our internal time-space, our internal Chometz? We have to reciprocate and "jump out" of our ego which is our chometz and our Mitzrayim – the narrowness of selfishness - and serve Him for His sake.**

CHAPTER 6

סיפור יציאת מצרים

The *Mitzvah* of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim*

The whole "*Seder*" itself – with all of its customs and special foods – are all centered around retelling the story of the Exodus. How strange. Pesach is the only festival where recounting the events the holiday commemorates is an actual *mitzvah*. *Chazal* tell us that the more one can tell of the story on *seder* night, the more praiseworthy. Why isn't story telling an integral part of *Shavuos* or *Succos*, yet on *Pesach* it's "the more the better?"

In addition, when we recite the *kiddush* on *Shabbos* and the other major holidays, we say that they are in memory of *Yetzias Metzrayim*. In fact, many important *Mitzvos* are performed in commemoration of the Exodus, including *mezuzah* and *tefillin* and even *Shabbos*! Why does the Torah tell us that among the many *Mitzvos* that are rooted in the Exodus, even *Shabbos* is in memory of how Hashem took us out of bondage? Isn't *Shabbos* in memory of how Hashem rested after creating the world in six days¹?

Seder

The *seder* night and reading the *Haggadah* has its own "order" and detailed laws just like any other *mitzvah*, yet the aspect of order and set procedure is more prominent with *seder* night than any other *mitzvah*. The word *seder* actually means "order," and we even recite the full ordered list of the *Mitzvos* to be performed before the *seder* even begins. What's the deeper meaning behind this? Couldn't the main *mitzvah* of the *seder*, telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, be performed without this emphasis on an "order?"

¹ In fact, in the 10 Dibros of *parshas V'Eschanan* the reason for *Shabbos* is given as a memory for leaving Egypt, whereas in the listing of the 10 Dibros in *parshas Yisro* the reason for *Shabbos* is listed as remembering the creation of the world! The text of the *Kiddush* contains both of these reasons.

Out of Order

To answer these questions, we will explore the nature of Divine order Hashem intended. Essentially, Divine order is when we experience the connection between the natural and the supernatural – resulting in Divine revelation. This is Hashem’s intended design for the world.

Chazal tell us that the entire six thousand years of world history are divided into three eras: the two thousand years of “*tohu*” – void and formlessness, the two thousand years of Torah, and the two thousand years of the Messianic period.

As we said above (see Chapter 2 paragraph with heading “Promises made – Promises kept”), the period of “*tohu*” came to a close when the Jews left Egypt. Prior to that, the world was formless. Why? Because although in appearances the world was always running according to natural laws and in a set pattern, it still wasn’t functioning in line with the real plan. The world wasn’t running according to its proper pattern – it was out of its intended Divine order. It was lacking its true shape. There was a clear lack of Divine revelation – a single open miracle had never even occurred in the world.

In addition, before the Exodus the world was in a state so adulterated with evil that it seemed good and evil were at best balanced. It didn’t seem like the world was headed towards a higher destiny. The word **מצרים** comes from the root **מצר** – constricted. It was like the world was in a vice – it was stuck. It couldn’t move forward. This constricted modality is reflected in the secular life style – the rat race. It’s just the “same old – same old” thing: working to afford a car to get you to work so you can afford a vacation so you’ll be able to work more. It’s the same old story, with no reason or possibility for a higher or more refined existence.

Yetzias Metzrayim brought the world the dimension it was lacking by bringing about the ability for the supernatural to be superimposed onto the natural world. Unlike the first two thousand years of “*tohu*”, ***Yetzias Metzrayim*** ushered in a period of clear Divine revelation in the form of miracles. But more important than miracles that overpower the order of physicality, spirituality must interact with physicality to raise it up. This is

accomplished with the Jews’ performance of the Torah and *mitzvos*. Our national mission is to unify physicality and spirituality in order to bring the world in line with the intended Divine order.

Getting Out of the Box

With the world hopelessly stuck in this state, the Exodus didn’t merely serve to give us emancipation from our slavery. In Egypt we were just as mired in physicality and constricted consciousness as any other Egyptian – and even more so, as a result of our servitude. We needed to be separated and raised up as a nation so that we could fulfill our destiny. When Hashem took us out of Egypt, He transformed us into the nation of Torah and *mitzvos*. ***Yetzias Metzrayim*** is what made us capable of becoming the vehicle to bring the Divine into the natural world in keeping with Hashem’s plan, the world’s Divine order.

The Exodus thus restored the intended true world order. Therefore, everything connected to the revelation of Divinity – the purpose and direction of the world – is really a result of the Exodus. This includes all of the Torah and its *Mitzvos* – the vehicles of the divine revelation – as well as anything related to Hashem’s revelations to the world.

Now we can understand why even *Shabbos* is observed in remembrance of ***Yetzias Metzrayim***. It’s true that it is the day that Hashem rested after creating the universe – but that’s the point. Hashem is beyond this world, yet we rest on *Shabbos* from our physicality and bring Hashem’s Holiness into the week with the spirituality of this special mitzvah.

This capacity to align the natural with the supernatural, the physical with the spiritual, and bring Hashem consciousness into the world comes only from ***Yetzias Metzrayim***. Before the Exodus the world was stuck. It couldn’t progress towards the final goal of the Mashiach and universal Hashem consciousness – a world ready for the emergence of the World to Come.

Night of the Order

Now it is clear why the night we retell the story of the Exodus is called the “**ליל הסדר** – Night of the Order,” and we focus on “**order**” so much. The fixation on order alludes to how *seder* night renews the new order originally brought into the world with the events of the Exodus. Before

this night the world was without form, it didn't have the higher order of Torah and *mitzvos* that give us Hashem consciousness and reveals the Divine in the world.

This is why we must speak about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* as much as possible on the night of the *seder*. **The purpose of the *seder* night is to renew and reinforce the Divine order instituted with the Exodus.** Speaking essentially brings ideas down from the higher spiritual world of thought and clothes them in physical words here in this world.

As we said above (see section 2 chapter1 stating with the paragraph with heading "speech in exile"), there is a deeper way to understand the power of speech, related to the spiritual make up of a person. When Hashem created Adam and breathed His spirit into him the verse tells us that Adam became a *נפש חיה* – a living spirit. *Onkolus* translates the term *נפש חיה* to *רוחא ממללא* – a speaking spirit. It is the soul that gives Adam the ability to speak – when one speaks, he brings ideas down from the higher spiritual *Neshama* level to the physical level.

Because speech is a faculty of the soul, using this higher ability naturally brings down the higher spiritual realm to the lower domain. This is paralleled by the structure of the person himself. The soul dimension is expressed through the body. **The *Neshama* is revealed in this world through a person's speech.**

Freedom of Speech

With this insight we can understand an enigmatic statement of the holy Ari. He said that during the exile of Egypt the faculty of speech was in exile, and it was redeemed with the Exodus. What does this mean? Everyone knew how to speak, did they not? The answer lies in understanding that true speech is a faculty of the *Neshamah*, as explained above. Before *Yetzias Mitzrayim* people communicated, but it was not true speech. Their communication was like the sophisticated grunts, clicks, whistles and gestures of the animal kingdom. Animals also communicate information, the location of food, and resources, the desire to mate etc....

But the true speech of a human being is the capacity to bring down spiritual energy from above, from the level of the soul, and express it here in this world². Speech has the power to infuse this world with Divine energy from above. **When we tell the story of the Exodus, we are renewing the higher order that unites the spiritual with the physical. The more we talk about the story of the Exodus, the more our speech serves to connect the spiritual and the physical and reinforce the Divine order in the world.**

The All Encompassing Order

Now we understand why *seder* night is so important, and why telling the story of the other holidays does not need to be a *mitzvah*. Once we've told the story of redemption on Pesach the other stories are unnecessary. **The other holidays are merely aspects of the order brought into the world on Pesach.** The story and meaning of the other holidays are spoken of to enhance those holidays, but the most important retelling – the speech which reinforces the higher divine order introduced to the world with the Exodus – has already had its effect on **SEDER** night.

² It also serves to connect a *neshamah* to a *neshamah*, a higher level of relationship.

CHAPTER 7

מה נשתנה

***Mah Nishtanah* – Why Questions?**

This is one of the strangest parts of *seder* night. According to *Halachah* the question and answer format of *sipur Yetzias mitzrayim*, fulfilled by the *Mah Nishtanah* is **essential**. Chazal commanded us to do something “different” *seder* night in order to prompt the children to ask (see Rambam Hilchos Chometz u’Matza 7:3). This directive can be fulfilled with the “Karpas”. If there is no child present or able to ask the questions, each man is questioned by his spouse. If no one present is married a man may ask his friend. In fact, the Rambam (cited above) states that **a man who is alone on *seder* night asks himself the four questions!**

Why is the Q and A necessary? Why can’t we just explain the different *Mitzvos* and the reasons behind them without questions? What is the meaning in arranging the *Haggadah* in this way?

Shifting Understanding

As stated above, the *seder* ushers in a new world order – different and beyond that of the rest of the year. Year round we may have been stuck in a materialistic view, but the new order the Exodus ushers in is the era of Torah – when the world is in line with the Divine plan of revealing the spiritual in the physical.

We introduce the Four Questions with a question: **“Why is this night different from all other nights?”** By doing so we notice that the evening has a different order than **“normal”** – things are not the same. Then we can realize that the differences aren’t strange or out of line, they are different because this night follows the **“SEDER”** - a higher order.

Only by first realizing that this evening is different, can we realize that it’s above and beyond the norm. **We have to realize this isn’t just a “regular night” with added *Mitzvos* - it’s actually on a whole other plane with a whole different set of rules.**

A question forces you to realize that your current way of understanding doesn’t work. The question shows there needs to be a change in thinking. **The Four Questions are there to prompt you to realize that the way things happen year round are totally different from this new paradigm.**

The Four Questions point out what is “different” and show you what looks like a problem. If we would just present the information, we wouldn’t feel the irregularity and wouldn’t come to think on a higher level. We wouldn’t know that the *seder* is introducing a different world order. A question is what gets one to realize the full extent of what is happening.

The Power of a Question

The importance of the question is also reflected by the question and answer format of the Talmud. Why was it not written as a *halachik* codex as was the Rambam’s *Mishnah Torah*?

The Talmud is not only information, it is a dynamic system that enables us to adjust or change our thinking whenever necessary. Talmud study uses the power of the question as a system to help us leave our old patterns of thinking and develop higher Torah thought. **If not for the system of Talmudic dialectic, we would not have been able to keep Torah alive and relevant throughout the changing times.**

It all Started with Avraham Avinu

Perhaps the Jewish custom of answering a question with a question goes all the way back to Avraham Avinu. What caused him to come to the realization of the truth that the whole world around him was oblivious to? **He asked questions!** The Midrash Rabbah at the beginning of Parshas Lech Lecha says Avraham **asked**: “Does the world have someone who administers it and **in response to that question** Hashem revealed himself “I am the Master of the Universe”. The Rambam in his monumental collation of all the Midrashim on Avraham Avinu’s life further describes: “When this great one (Avraham) was weaned he was venturing with his mind. Although he was little, he started thinking by day and by night and **he wondered how can the universe constantly turn and not have any leader and someone who turns it?** For the universe cannot turn itself! He had no teacher and no one to impart

CHAPTER 8

עבדים היינו

information [to him] but rather he was stuck in 'Ur Casdim' amongst the foolish star worshippers and his father and his mother and the whole nation were star worshippers and he would serve with them, but **his heart would be wandering** and understanding until he attained the true path and understood the line of righteousness from his correct understanding....." (Hilchos Avoda Zara 1:3). **Avraham Avinu's Strength was that he was perpetually questioning** and never satisfied. His mind wandered further and further with the power of questioning the conventional wisdom. Therefore, by no coincidence, he is not just the first Jew but the whole story of the exile to Egypt and the eventual redemption, was already foretold to Avraham Avinu, as we invoke in the Haggadah. **He triggered the process of breaking the convention that came into full actuality with the Exodus.**

We harness Avraham's 'power of the question' on seder night in order to break out of a world order adulterated with evil. We break out of that order with our minds and see that it is no longer a viable world view. With the power of the question we realize that the answers are not just added information in line with the prior understanding, but they are a whole new paradigm.

The Four Questions are necessary because questions give us the power to escape the constrictions of our old world view, and to realize the higher Divine consciousness of the new Divine world order.

Avadim Hayinu

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויוציאנו ה' אלקינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה. ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משועבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem our Lord took us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if Hakadosh Baruch Hu had not taken our fathers from Egypt, then we and our children, and our children's' children would be [still] enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

This assertion is rather enigmatic. The Egyptian empire collapsed thousands of years ago. How could we still be slaves? Surely, we would have eventually been emancipated, or assimilated into the surrounding culture? There are a number of approaches to this question, but we will present one in keeping with our theme.

There are different levels of freedom from slavery. Normally there are two degrees of emancipation: a slave can escape or he can be legally freed. If a slave has escaped, he actually has full slave status – it's just that his master doesn't have access to him. This man is always looking over his shoulder.

A legally freed slave has no obligation to any other man. But he hasn't been essentially changed as a person either; he merely had an obligation of servitude removed.

When Hashem took us out of Egypt it was different – we were changed entirely. Leaving Egypt didn't only prevent Pharaoh from accessing us or take away our legal obligation to work for him. **When Hashem took us out, He gave us another level of existence – we now live under Hashem alone.** We are no longer the same. We are a different and better people.

CHAPTER 9

Relive & Renew

Real Freedom

Perhaps logistically we wouldn't actually be working for Pharaoh, but we also wouldn't be within a higher order, beholden only to Hashem. The words of the *Haggadah* **לפרעה במצרים** (enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt) seem redundant, as we would obviously be in Egypt if we were enslaved to Pharaoh. But in fact, **these words actually allude to the state we would be stuck in if not for the Exodus.** The word **פרעה** is made of the same letters as the word **עורה** – **the back of the neck**. This is the location of the connection between the head and spinal column, but there is no speech. **Speech would still be in *golus*, and the world would not be "facing" Hashem.** It would be as if we were back to back with Him. **מצרים** means constraints, as was explained above. We would still be stuck in the constraints of the old world order without speech, and without facing Hashem.

יד חזקה וזרוע נטויה

The *Haggadah* brings the Chazal that a person has to view himself on Pesach as if he himself is leaving Egypt. On a simple level this is our required attitude since as a result of the generation of the Exodus having been taken out, by proxy it happened to us as well. One might suppose that the generation of the Exodus could never again be subservient or regress into slavery or a lower plane of spirituality similar to their state of servitude in Egypt because they saw the miracles with their own eyes. That generation experienced an influx of spiritual energy like no other. With this understanding we would suppose that we could inherit an elevated status by way of our birth. But perhaps if conditions were right we could regress – even to a state similar to the servitude in Egypt. This is not the case. **In reality Hashem planted the power of the Exodus in each and every Jew for all time. We can never be subservient to any power besides Hashem because when He took us out of Egypt He took out every single generation to come.** On that historical first *Seder* night Hashem imbued each and every Jew who will ever live with the same power of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* granted to the Jews who actually left Egypt. Hashem took us out **ביד חזקה** with a "strong hand" – with the amazing power of the myriad miracles, and His stern judgment on Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. He also took us out **בזרוע נטויה** with an "outstretched arm" because **the power of the Exodus reaches across time and into every generation. We will never be slaves again.**

ואפילו כלנו חכמים, כלנו נבונים, כלנו זקנים, כלנו יודעים את התורה, מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח.

And even if we are all wise, all understanding, all elders, all know the Torah, it is still an obligation to tell the story of the Exodus. Anyone who expands upon his telling of the story of the Exodus, is praiseworthy.

Why is it that even if we know exactly what will be said – and there is absolutely no new information to be added – we still have to tell the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*? Why does the *Haggadah* list four types of wise people? The answer lies in the purpose of the *Haggadah* itself.

Rashi (Shemos 31:3) tells us that a **חכם - wise man** is someone who absorbs information, as the *Mishnah* in Avos states "Who is wise? One who learns from every man." He is a person who has mastery over data, and he knows all of the facts of the Exodus. Such a person must still recite the Exodus story. Learning what happened at the Exodus is not all there is to reciting the *Haggadah*.

Next, you might think the reason we recite the story is not to learn the facts themselves, but to have a greater depth of understanding. The *Haggadah* tells us that this is not so. A **גבון** is a person who attains additional penetrating and deep insights, yet even he must also tell the story of the Exodus on *seder* night. We may think that the recital of the Exodus is an exercise in the experiential, to help us really feel as it may have been. To this the *Haggadah* introduces **זקנים** - the elders. They have experienced the finest and the worst of life. Many of our elders of today have endured the holocaust, yet they are still obligated to tell the story of the Exodus.

If the purpose of the recital is not to gain information, understanding, or experience; then perhaps it's the depth of purity and spirituality of

יודעים את התורה - that come from exploring the higher Torah dimension. No, says the *Haggadah*. Even if you have access to all of the Torah's depths, you must still recite the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. But why?

Recounting and Renewing

We've learned that *seder* night isn't just a commemoration, we are reliving the new order that Hashem brought in via the Exodus. Prior to the Exodus the world was on the wrong track. Without intervention it would not reach the goals of the arrival of Mashiach and the coming of *Olam HaBah*. With *Yetzias Mitzrayim* the Divinely intended real order began, and on *Seder* night is the renewal of this order. **The Zohar tells us that as we recount the story and its details, all the Divine lights of the Exodus return at the *Seder* table. Their effect on the universe becomes more intense with each *Seder* each year.** All of this new Divine light shines with the retelling, and adds itself to the original light of the Exodus along with the additional light of each year's *seder*. **We literally make it happen again when we say it.** The same way speech is able to reach up into the spiritual realm of thought and conduct the ideas into the physical; we make the Exodus happen again, drawing the spiritual energy to us. Our speech converts thoughts to sound that fills the space of the physical world, and brings down Divine light with it. Telling over the *Haggadah* is not about imparting information. It's about making the Exodus happen all over again.

This why the *Haggadah* mentions the story of the *Tana'im* who spent the whole night telling the story of the Exodus. They would not feel the necessity for this the rest of the year, but on *Seder* night telling the story brings order into the universe. It adds light to each *Seder* – all the way to the back to the Exodus itself³.

³ The fact that this incident happened in Bnei Brak is a key point. There is a *Gemara* that says the *Tana'im* saw milk and honey flow in Bnei Brak. It was thus the ideal place to recognize the contrast between Egypt and the land flowing with milk and honey.

⁴ Rambam explaining Rabbi Alazar's statement "I am like seventy years old."

⁵ The Rambam referenced above understands that all agreed to mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* at night, they just could not find an allusion to this Halacha in the Chumash

All Days & Nights

Rabbi Elazar said that because of his outstanding diligence in his Torah study he had gained the wisdom of a seventy year old. He was so studious, that due to lack of nutrition and proper sleep he had prematurely aged⁴, yet he still could not merit to find where the Torah hints that the Exodus should be mentioned in evening prayers. We remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in the third section of Krias Shmah when we say "אני ה' אלוהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים...". – *I am Hashem your Lord who took you out of the land of Egypt...*" Seemingly, the Exodus was not mentioned in the evening⁵ until Ben Zoma explained the *Pasuk* "למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך" – In order that you may remember the day you left the land of Egypt **all** the days of your life." Why does it need to say "**all** the days of your life"? "The days of your life" refer to the day time, and the extra word "**all**" indicates remembering the Exodus at night as well.

But the *Chachamim* – the sages – disagreed. They interpret the "days of your life" to refer to the world prior to Mashiach, and "*all* the days..." to include the Messianic era.

This leads to a number of questions. In present day we follow Ben Zoma's understanding of the verse. Why? Don't we normally rule with the majority opinion? That proves that the two opinions are not mutually exclusive (see footnote 5). What's the true nature of this argument between Ben Zoma and the *Chachamim*? Why does this argument regarding the daily mention of the Exodus find its place in the *Haggadah* – which is a *mitzvah* specific to *Seder* night – as opposed to remembering the Exodus daily is a year round obligation. Understanding this argument will give us a much deeper understanding of what *Yetzias Mitzrayim* means for us – both on a national and a personal level.

Exodus “all the Days”

Let us begin our explanation with another question. Why is remembering the Exodus included in the *Krias Shmah*? How is it connected to accepting the yoke of Hashem’s majesty?

The Exodus ushers in the new world order which Hashem originally intended, insuring that His agenda will be carried out. When we recite the *Krias Shmah* we reaffirm our commitment to being a part of His order – we accept His will upon us. His plan first became manifest with *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, so referring to it during *Krias Shmah* is most appropriate.

Ben Zoma and the *Chachamim* are not arguing – they are giving us different levels to our understanding of the function and effects of the Exodus. The *Chachamim* point out that the world order ushered in by the Exodus doesn’t just affect the here and now. “**All** the days of your life” tells us that **the Exodus directly impacts the destiny of the world. It is what allows Moshiach to come, so of course we will still remember it when he arrives.**

Yetzias Mitzrayim started a developmental process leading to Mashiach. It is the seed of all redemption. All redemption was thus encoded in the Exodus itself. The *Chachamim* point out the full implication of the Exodus – how far its impact will reach.

Exodus “at Nights”

Ben Zoma points out an additional dimension to what the Exodus accomplished when it ushered in the new order. We accept that all Divine order is rooted in the Exodus. All of proper Jewish life from now until the time of Mashiach is a result of this event, as it set all redemptions into motion. But what about the “nights” of history? What about all occurrences that don’t seem to be in line with the Divine order? It’s true that the order renews itself – it comes back refreshed every Pesach – but what about the periods of chaos? Are they outside the realm of Hashem’s plan, Hashem forbid?

Ben Zoma tells us that we must realize that everything is a part of the system. In Jewish law the evening is the beginning of a new day. This is because the darkness serves to eliminate the old day and usher in the new. Chaos indicates the change between one order and a higher level order closer to the ultimate goal. **Chaos is what differentiates the two. This is the secret behind the chaos that will run amok before the coming of Moshiach. The “Fake world order” must be removed for the Perfect World order of Moshiach to set in.** Ben Zoma offers us a comforting perspective on the difficult, confusing times. They act as stepping stones to different eras. Hashem brings them about to force you to move ahead and change perspective⁶.

This is why we repeat the *Shmah* again at night even though we say it in the morning. We affirm that Hashem reigns over chaos as well – that it too is part of His plan -it is to bring higher order.

The darkness of our slavery was a part of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* gives us the power to escape any darkness or negativity we find ourselves in. The Exodus always gives us the ability to extricate ourselves and to rise above. We can know that we can always make it through our problems, and if we have fallen it is only so we can use the experience as a springboard to reach higher clarity and closeness to Hashem.

Ben Zoma and the *Chachamim* may argue on the focus of the verse, or which idea is more important to keep in mind. But they both agree that these important ideas were a part of the Exodus, and that each and every one of us can tap into their power.

⁶ This idea is actually another expression of the idea of the purpose of a question expressed in our explanation of the Four Questions.

CHAPTER 10

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל ברוך הוא כנגד ארבעה
בנים דברה התורה

Blessed be “HaMakom- the Place”, blessed be He, Blessed is who gave Torah to his nation Yisroel, Blessed be He. Blessed be

“HaMakom-The Place” - We know it is referring to Hashem, but why are we referring to Hashem as “HaMakom-The Place” now? Why are we repeating “Blessed Be He”? “Blessed be who gave Torah to His nation Yisroel” - why are we talking about this here and now? We’re in the holiday of Pesach which is the holiday of the Exodus and not Shavuot, the holiday of the giving of the Torah! Why are we repeating “Blessed Be He” again?

Why is it that we call Hashem “HaMakom” in some of our prayers? Chazal taught us that Hashem is called “HaMakom - the Place” because “*He is the place of the world but the world is not His place*”. Meaning: He makes existence possible – He makes space itself possible. It’s **not** that Hashem actualized the potential for existence, but rather **Hashem created the potential for existence in the first place – that’s what it means He is the “Makom” –** what facilitates existence (see more on this above: chapter 2 paragraph with heading “Potential vs Actual”).

We’ve mentioned many times the famous Gemara in Sanhedrin that divides up history and destiny into three eras - 2000 year of formlessness, that is 2000 years that preceded the Exodus, when the world wasn’t running in its proper order, the 2000 years of Torah, which “dawned” with Avraham Avinu and the Avos but gets actualized with the Exodus, and then there’s 2000 years of Mashiach. **The role of the first 2000 years of world history was to create the potential for the order that then fills the world.** Hashem had the world “grow up” and had the Jewish people build up to 600,000 men **and only then was the world**

ready and we had the right numbers to become the “**nation of the Torah**”⁷.... and that’s when the Exodus happened. That is what it means “**Baruch HaMakom - blessed be the place**”, **we are thanking Hashem for the first 2000 years of world history** because that’s what makes the new world order that is ushered in by the exodus possible, it is the **מקום-base** for that world order to manifest itself upon.

Where’s the Glory?

One might think that Hashem receives no glory out of the first 2000 years of world history. In those were 2000 years there wasn’t a Jewish people and there wasn’t a Torah on earth, and no nation was identifying as Hashem’s people. We say No! **ברוך הוא!** Blessed is **HE** – the “3rd person” pronoun in Hebrew is referred to as “**לשון נסתר**” – **Hidden tense- Hashem gets glory out of the 2000 years of “tohu” in a hidden way!** Everything that He did during those first 2000 years was a build up towards the Exodus. As we say later in the Haggadah “Hashem already planned it all out with Avraham Avinu” - how there’s going to be an exile to Egypt and there will be a redemption from there. Chazal tell us **מעשה לבנים** everything that happened in the lives of our Patriarchs was a preparation for what was going to happen to their descendants. Everything that happened prior to the exodus was a preparation for the Exodus.

What about the First 20 Generations?

The well-known examples we brought in the paragraph above are from the lives of the Avos that actually cross into the “**2000 years of Torah**” and laid the groundwork for that era as we have mentioned already a few times in this book. But what about the 20 generations before them, particularly the 10 generations from Adam to Noach that ended seemingly in the abysmal failure that was the flood? What glory could Hashem possibly get from those generations? However, interestingly enough the Gemara in Chullin (139a) says that there is an allusion to Moshe in the Pasuk at the end of Bereishis where Hashem decrees the flood, the Pasuk says **הוא בשר ויהיו ימיו מאה בשגם** “My spirit shall not contend with man forever, for he is flesh and his days should be one hundred and twenty years”. The literal

⁷ See more on this in Rabbeinu Avraham son of the Rambam’s Milchamos Hashem and the Ramchal’s Derech Hashem section 2 chapter 4

people virtuous, give them less requirements - not more! Without getting into all the different answers and explanations, we see that the principle is that we don't lose by having the greater responsibility of the Torah and Hashem Himself certainly doesn't lose. Even though there may be some called "Reshaim" who can't handle the higher requirements of the Torah, nonetheless Hashem gets greater glory than before Matan Torah from the Jewish "Reshaim", and not just from the Jews who uphold the Torah. **"Blessed is who gave Torah to His nation Yisroel"** - that's obvious, the added **ברוך הוא - Blessed be He** is for the nonobvious: He gets glory even from the "Rasha" who can't or isn't interested in observing Hashem's commandment. Hashem gets more glory from that Jewish Rasha who can't handle 613 Mitzvos than if He would have not given a Torah in the first place. All this was made possible by the Exodus. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* triggered this process into motion.

CHAPTER 11

ארבעה בנים

התורה **כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה התורה** the Torah talks regarding four sons. What does that mean? Why is that the continuation of the words "Blessed who gave the Torah to His nation Israel, Blessed is He"? To understand this, we must decode the theme of **"Four"** in Seder night. The **four** questions of the *Mah Nishtana*, **four** cups of wine, **four** sons, which are parallel to the **four** different expressions of redemption: **והוצאתי והצילתי וגאלתי ולקחתי**

On Every Side

If a person is on flat space, standing on the ground, he has four main directions he can go. He can either go forward, to the right, to the left, or he can go backwards. These are the basic vectors, any other direction is merely a combination between those four. Seder night is a new world order, as we've mentioned many times, and it's like the world is finally being finished. Prior to the exodus the world was like raw substance, matter without form. Tonight, the world goes from the potential to the actual. When **"going"** from potential to actual you can only **"go"** in **four** directions to actualize your potential. **The redemption was said in four different verbs to say that the redemption was all-encompassing. Hashem saved us from every possible direction in life and we are under Hashem alone from every which angle and perspective.**

Ideological Children

Children are the expansion and actualization of the race. Without a Torah it's just biological expansion. Biologically speaking: Kids are kids, there are not four different types of children, it's four of the same. **"Blessed who gave Torah to His nation" - ever since we have a Torah we live by, there are four different types of ideological children** (see Rambam Moreh Nevuchim section 1 chapter 7) **and these are "the four sons the Torah addresses"**. These **"different types of children"** are parallel to the four different directions that one can move in **דרך התורה**, - **all those directions are within the Torah**. The **חכם**, the wise son moves **straight ahead** to go deeper and deeper into the Torah. The **תם** the simple son, deviates to the **right**, but to the right isn't totally

CHAPTER 12

אַרְמֵי אוֹבֵד אָבִי

oppositional to moving forward. The שאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשׂאוֹל, who doesn't know to ask, his problem is worse, because he is oblivious. לִי אֵת פֶּתַח לִי we have to draw him close – as is well known “Right” is to be close and “Left” is to be far, as Chazal say “Push away with the left and draw close with the Right” (Sanhedrin 107b) we need to bring him close is to pull him in from the “Left”. “Left” isn't oppositional to moving forward, it's not forward but it's not backwards either. But then you have the רָשָׁע who is moving backwards, away from the Torah.

כַּנְגֵד אַרְבַּעַת בְּנֵי דְבַרֵּי הַתּוֹרָה These four categories wouldn't exist if we weren't a nation bound by Torah, we'd just be 'plain humanity'. **The Torah makes these four categories for a constructive purpose. The Torah has a response for each one, which means these four children stay within remain within the framework of the Torah.** The Torah saves them all, even the wicked son, who is seemingly going backwards. Even as he goes backwards, the Torah foresaw his question and the Torah said how to respond. **There is room for them all in the Torah.** The Torah makes room for them, caters for them, and ultimately saves them and elevates them.

Why is this the Text for the Mitzvah?

Arami Oved Avi was designated by Chazal to be the base of how we fulfil the Mitzvah of *Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim* (Pesachim 116a). All the details are in the context of saying drashos, interpretations and seeking allusions in these few sentences, in *Parshas Ki Savo* (Devarim 26:5-9). The *Rambam* further qualifies that the *Halacha* of “The more one speaks about *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* the better”, does not just apply to what we say when explaining to our children, but it also applies specifically to interpreting and extrapolating the *P'ssukim* of *Arami Oved Avi* (Hilchos Chometz U'Matza 7:4). This is extremely puzzling. First and foremost, even after all that the Haggadah sees alluded to, it still falls short of all the detail we would see if we would read straight from *Shemos*, through half way through *Beshalach*. What's almost equally as puzzling is why Chazal are having us disregard the *P'ssukim* in *Sefer Shemos* that are the actual narrative of *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*, in favor of the few short *P'ssukim* in *Parshas Ki Savo* which is not the actual narrative at all but rather what a Jew says when he brings his *Bikkurim*. What is it about *Arami Oved Avi* that it was chosen as the base and all explanation including *P'ssukim* from *Parshas Shemos* are only brought in, in the context of decoding what is alluded to in these few short *P'ssukim*?

Our Freedom of Speech – Our Words

To understand this, we will have to recall many ideas laid out thus far in this book, all the way back to the first chapter. As we have said, **our redemption from Egypt was not just to be politically free but to be masters over the world in partnership with Hashem, as His nation.** This is the secret that the years of our kings are counted from Nissan, as we explained above. We further explained that *Yetziyas Mitzrayim* restored the Hashem-given gift of speech to the Jewish people to communicate and create Holiness within this world. It is with this power that the Beis Din does the *Mitzva* of declaring the new moon and it is the power that the Jewish people have over the Torah and reality, the power

of תורה שבעל פה, the oral Torah that is carried and expressed by our mouths. And this is what the Navi says “and I put **My words in your mouth**..... to affix the sky and to found the earth and to tell Tzion you are “עמי” My nation”(Yeshayahu 51:16) . Chazal say not just to read it as “Ami”- my nation, but “Imi” with Me, literally in running the world. All this power was granted to us with *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*. We celebrate our power of speech and the **REAL ACTUAL ‘SPIN’** we can put on the story of Destiny. We need a base from scripture for our oral explanations, but even that ‘base’ should be ours to the fullest extent possible, as we will explain.

After 40 years Moshe speaks?

The second Midrash Tanchuma in Parshas Devarim on the words “These are the words that Moshe spoke” says: “said the Jewish people: yesterday you (Moshe) said “I am not a man of words” (Shemos 4:10) and now you are speaking so much! Said Rav Yitzchak he learned the Torah and he got healed.....**at the end of 40 years** after the Jews left Egypt he started to explain the Torah in **70 languages** ‘he clarified this Torah’ **the mouth that had said, ‘I am not a man of words’ said “These are the words that Moshe spoke....”** The Jewish people, only now, at the end of 40 years found that ‘Moshe spoke a lot’? What was for the last 39 years when he had taught them the whole Torah and is now reviewing it for the last time before he passes on just five weeks later? Furthermore, the Midrash said “he learned Torah and that’s what healed his tongue” - but the giving of the Torah was shortly after leaving Egypt! Only now **at the end of 40 years** it's called that ‘his tongue was healed, and he is speaking Torah’?

Sefer Devarim vs the rest of Chumash

There is a very great difference in style between the book of Devarim and the other four Chumashim. In the book of Devarim you’ll never find the common opening statement that we find elsewhere “Hashem said to Moshe to tell the Jewish people”. Devarim is, as the book starts, “These are the words that **Moshe spoke** as the whole book is written as Moshe’s monologue. This is not merely a difference in style, it is a reality! The Gemara (megillah 31b) states: “.... says Abayeh this halacha was only said regarding the curses in Vayikra but the in curses in Devarim the reader can stop in the middle. The reason is these in Vayikra were said in plural and Moshe said it over from the mouth of Hashem and

these (in Devarim) were said and singular and **Moshe said it from his own mouth**”. Tosfos adds that even though “**Moshe of said it from his own mouth**” it was with Ruach haKodesh. Let us be clear: **Moshe would not incorporate into the Torah scroll a single word or letter on his own! Everything that got written in the Torah scroll was by Divine command!** However, Moshe writes by Divine command things that human beings have said. Hashem instructed him to write in the Torah quotations from Pharaoh or the whole story of Bilaam that the Gemara in Bava Basra calls “the book of Bilaam” (see Even Shesiya on Parshas Balak). Words that Bilaam had originally said and his prophecies were incorporated into the Torah by Divine command. In sefer Devarim **Moshe is commanded to write his own words that he had spoken to the Jewish people in the Torah scroll**. The book of Devarim is equally a part of Chumash because Hashem commanded those words to be written in the Torah, but there is still a very great difference. What was written in the first four books are “Hashem’s words in Moshe’s mouth” and that’s what we mean by: “the Divine Presence speaks from his mouth”(Mechilta 18:19). Since they are not Moshe’s own words, rather Hashem’s words, Moshe is still “**not a man of words**”. The book of Devarim is comprised **by Divine command** of the **words of Moshe**. These were his Torah insights and ideas that he shared with the Jewish people. Moshe had the Divine inspiration to come up with these ideas and to say these words and then Hashem commanded him to incorporate these words in the Torah. This is similar to the difference between the oral law and the written law. The written law is clearly the words of Hashem that the prophet is relaying to us. In the oral law the Torah strikes root and grows within us and we start producing Torah! Chazal tell us “a man does not fully understand his Rebbe until after 40 years. What his Rebbe told him and his memories to say **the exact words of His Rebbe** will probably be sharpest earlier on, rather than later. However, the assimilation of the Rebbe’s way of thinking so **as the student has his Rebbe’s mind inside of him**, and not just the words, that’s a 40-year process. This was the 40th year since the giving of the Torah. Moshe was the ‘mouthpiece’ of the Divine Presence during these 40 years, but in course of these 40 years the Torah was gradually seeping inside of him. The Tanchuma we quoted earlier is paraphrased in the Midrash Rabbah as “when Moshe **acquired** (Zacha) Torah he became a man of speech”. At the end of the 40 years the Torah had been absorbed inside of him and “the Torah

healed his tongue” and **now he could produce his own Torah**. This is like the oral law. The Torah blossoms within the sages and “their mouths shine with Divrei Torah”

Why Devarim is called “Mishneh Torah”

With this we can have a greater understanding and appreciation of why the book of Devarim is called “Mishneh Torah”. The conventional explanation is that Devarim is ‘seconding’ i.e. reviewing much of what was already taught. This alone does not suffice as not everything is repeated and there are definitely some new ideas in Devarim that we don’t find earlier. “Moshe began to clarify this Torah” wasn’t just about the clarity from review, **it was to give us the tools to attain Clarity whenever we need it! This is the power of the oral law with its capacity to produce answers to new questions or to reconstruct lost information.** The book of “Devarim”-words is the power of the oral law being connected to the Chumash. This is the parting gift as Moshe is going to leave us and no longer be there to clarify the Torah. **He’s giving us the tools to clarify the Torah for ourselves and a bridge to stay connected.** The Netziv posits that what the Gemara (Nedarim 38a) says “Hashem gave the power of ‘pilpul’ to Moshe alone but he was generous and shared it with the Jewish people” is exactly what is happening in the book of Devarim. The power to analyze, to research the origins of halacha and produce new halacha with the ‘Middos shehaTorah nidreshes’ and all the other elements of ‘pilpul’ are being given over to compensate for Moshe’s impending absence. Already in the days of the mourning of Moshe massive amounts of material was forgotten and “**Osniel ben Kenaz restored it with his pilpul**” Moshe gives us this ‘pilpul’ with the book of Devarim. it’s an aspect of the oral law incorporated in the Chumash as bridge so that there will be a direct Continuum from that level to the Torah as we know it and understand it. **Therefore Chazal mandated that even the ‘base’ of the story that has to come from a ‘book’ should come from Devarim in general in from the words a Jew should say with his own mouth (when bringing Bikkurim), as these P’ssukim are reflective of our power of speaking Divrei Torah which is what we are celebrating on Seder night.**

What Is Lavan doing in the Haggada?

In the Haggadah of Pesach we quote the Pasuk, “**Arami Oved Avi Vayered Mitzrayma**” (Devarim 26:5) which the Baal HaHagaddah explains that Lavan was even worse than Pharaoh. Pharaoh only decreed the extermination of the Jewish males and Lavan wanted to “**uproot**” the whole [Jewish People]. Why is this fact that Lavan wanted to uproot the entire Jewish people a part of the Mitzvah of recounting the story of Yetziyas Mitzrayim? Seemingly we should only be concerned with the evildoings of Pharaoh alone. We don’t mention in the Haggadah how Haman also wanted to kill the entire Jewish People, which means that Lavan’s desire to uproot the whole Jewish People must be connected to Yetziyas Mitzrayim as indeed the Pasuk itself connects them and says that “the Aramenian wanted to destroy my father and he (our forefather) went down to Mitzrayim”. Furthermore, we have to ask ourselves did Lavan literally intend to murder his daughters and grandchildren? Can we be “**uprooted**” without being exterminated?

The Wall & The Name

After Yaakov and Lavan air their grievances against each other, Yaakov gives the command to gather stones and build a wall (31:45-46). There is something about the wall that is above and beyond securing our borders. It was a symbol that **they not cross over to harm each other**, but they would cross over for commerce and other beneficial purposes (31:47-52 Rashi there). The wall was a symbol and a testimony. **Why is the “wall” which is seemingly just a pragmatic barrier, the very symbol and testimony for the rules of engagement between Yaakov and Lavan?** Lavan insists on giving it the Aramaic name of “**Yigar Sahadusa**” and Yaakov counters with the Hebrew equivalent of “**Gal Eid**” (31:47). Why are they fighting over a name, especially as the meaning of the name is seemingly identical, just one is in Hebrew and the other is in Aramaic?

Our Aramaic Roots

The Jewish People always spoke Aramaic. It was the prevailing language in Mesopotamia, where Avraham Avinu was from. The Kuzari (2:68) says that Avraham used Hebrew for prayer and other religious practices and conducted all his regular earthly affairs in Aramaic. Undoubtedly, Yaakov spoke to Rachel and Leah in Aramaic as they grew up in the house of

Lavan and with this, the Maharsha (chidushei Aggados Megillah 3A D”H Targum shel Torah) explains the deep Jewish connection to Aramaic and what the Gemara means in Megillah, that Onkelus’ translation was actually to put in writing an Aramaic translation of the Torah whose basic rudiments were already received at Sinai. This is further emphasized by the obligation to read Parshas Hashavua twice as it’s written in the Torah and once with Onkelus, which is the halacha of **“Shnayim Mikrah V’Echad Targum”**. What’s more amazing is that the Gemara says in Sanhedrin (38 B) that **even Adam HaRishon spoke Aramaic** in addition to Hebrew and this corresponds to what the Gemara also writes there that Adam’s head was formed from the earth of Eretz Yisroel but his torso was formed from the earth of Bavel, where Aramaic is spoken, and the rest of his limbs were from the earth of the rest of the places of the world. **What is so special about Aramaic that it is seemingly as ancient and part of our tradition as Hebrew?** Why is it that the angels do not relate to prayers said in Aramaic (Shabbos 12 B)? Is it a coincidence that besides from the Mishnah, Tosefta and the Medrashei Halacha, such as the Mechilta, Safra and Sifrei are in Hebrew but the rest of the oral law, the Talmud and the Zohar are in Aramaic? The Gemara says in Sota (49 A) that ever since the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, every day is worse than the day before but what keeps the world going are Kaddish said after Aggadah and Kedusha D’Sidra, which is the Kedusha in “Uva Letzion” that is also said over in Aramaic. With all these factors in mind, it is even harder to understand why Yaakov rejected the Aramaic name Lavan gave to the wall, especially as he was in essence calling it the same name, just in Hebrew.

Liberated from Lavan

Lavan seemingly had the last word in the heated exchange between himself and Yaakov. He said, “the girls are my daughters and the children are my children and the flock is my flock and all that you see really belongs to me”. It was in response to this far-reaching all inclusive declaration of Lavan that Yaakov gives the command to gather stones and make a wall. What Lavan tried to do at that point, even after being warned by Hashem to not even talk badly to Yaakov, was **to subtly attempt to uproot the entire Jewish national identity** by declaring that Yaakov’s entire family and possessions are all really his, meaning: **they are Armenians and not a separate nation called the Jewish people**. This

is how **“Lavan was seeking to uproot all”**: **uprooting the entire concept that there is a separate nation called the Jews**. With this we can understand why Yaakov’s response is to **build the wall** to declare the separateness of the Jewish people. However, we were tainted, not just by Lavan’s statement to which the wall is a counter-measure, but by the fact that we are indeed genetically descended from him. For that reason we had to go down to Mitzrayim which was the **‘Kur haBarzel’** the smelting pot to get out all our impurities, which included our connection to Lavan. **With the act of being extracted from Egypt, we were not just separated from the Egyptians, but we were also separated from all the other nations in the world including our connection to Lavan** and that is why the story of Lavan is directly related to Yetzias Mitzrayim and is a part of the Haggadah.

CHAPTER 13

עשר מכות

Vengeance & Revelation

The idea of the *Makos* is not just that the Egyptians got punished as they deserved. The *Pasuk* (Shemos 9:16) says that Hashem allowed Pharaoh to survive the *Makos* for Hashem to display His might and have His name spoken throughout the earth. Similarly in Parshas Bo (10:1-2), Hashem says that He is hardening Pharaoh's heart in order to increase the miracles of the *Makos*, in order that we should tell our children and our children's children, how Hashem played the Egyptians and His miracles..." We see that the *Makos* served a constructive purpose (asides from the destruction of Egypt) for the revelation of pure Divine power within the physical realm. This is the secret of what the Zohar tell us that "all the *Makos* were plagues for Egypt but a healing for the Jewish people". Because the *Makos* had the dual purpose of destroying Egypt but also revealing Divine power that was soaked up by the Jewish people and elevated them from higher level to higher level. This is a precursor to what the Gemara says will happen in the future (may it be speedily in our days), that Hashem will take the sun out of its sheath (which means that the sun will shine a inner spiritual light that is generally obscured by the sheath which is its physical light) and those rays will mete out judgment to the evil but give healing to the righteous (Avoda Zara 3b-4a).

Banging the World into Shape

The Chiddushei HaRim points out that the fact that there were ten *Makos* is perfectly parallel to the ten utterances that the world was created with and to the ten *Dibros*. The only way the world can make the transition of being a natural world, created with ten utterances to being a world capable of hearing the ten *Dibros* directly from Hashem, was by its being refined by the ten *Makos* in the middle.

7 & 3

The first thing to observe, is that the Torah saw fit to separate the 10 plagues into two different Parshiyos. Seven out of ten appear in last week's Parsha, Parshas Veyeira and three out of ten are in this week's Parsha. Every Parsha represents a whole different lesson from Hashem.

The breaks between the Parshiyos are for contemplation. The next Parsha is a new level, therefore, the three later plagues are on a whole different level than the first seven. It's something that we have to explore.

Darkness

There's a common denominator between the last three plagues, in that they are all referred to as 'darkness'. By the first of the three, that of locust, the *Pasuk* says very openly, "it's going to cover "the eye of the earth" (we are going to come back to this concept in a second) and you won't be able to see the earth". There is darkness, that the earth will become invisible. As Rashi explains the p'ssukim, if you would take a satellite view of Egypt, you would see solid black of the locusts, everywhere where the Egyptians lived and where the Jews lived, you wouldn't see that solid black.

The next plague, the plague of darkness per se, where you couldn't see anything, except the Jews, they had light. Then, in the final plague, the plague of the firstborn, it happened in the "middle of the night". This common denominator of darkness in these last three plagues is not a coincidence.

Why Pass over?

The Torah saw fit to put the last three plagues together with the actual Exodus from Egypt. We know the whole Exodus is called 'Pesach' because the final plague leads into the Exodus. The final plague happens on seder night, the plague of the firstborn, where Hashem "passed over" the Jewish people. What does that mean? Rashi explains, if you would take a satellite picture, of Egypt, you would see Egyptians dropping dead in a straight line, all Egyptians along that line were dropping dead and "falling like dominoes", if there was a Jewish house in the way, the death force "jumps over" him and the Egyptian behind him drops dead, in a continuous straight line. That's 'Pesach'- "I will pass over you". Why does the death force have to go in a straight line making it necessary to "jump over the Jew"? Chart a windy path and go around the Jew. Why the "passing over"?

What is the “Eye of Earth”?

In the beginning of the Parsha, Moshe is commanded to appear before Pharaoh because Hashem ‘hardened his heart’. Pharaoh is broken already. These last plagues are not about convincing him. It’s all for “doing more miracles”. In the plague of locusts, Hashem says, “it’s going to cover the eye of the earth and you won’t be able to see the earth”. What is this thing, the **‘eye of the earth’**? The Passuk could just say, ‘you won’t be able to see the earth’. We find this expression, the **‘eye of the earth’** later, in Parshas Balak when Balak complains to Bilaam. He needs his help to curse the Jewish people. “There is a nation that left Egypt and it’s covering the **‘eye of the earth’** and they are encamped opposite me. What is the **‘eye of the earth’**?”

A matter of perspective

‘Eye of the earth’, refers to an earthly perspective! The perspective that the gentiles live by. The way that the goyim express their ‘eye of earth’ changes from generation to generation. When the gentiles were superstitious pagans, they thought that there was a wind Hashem and a sun Hashem, that run the world and if you don’t see it this way, you’re just not looking! It was ‘obvious’ to them to serve these forces. When they became a little more educated and a little less superstitious and then they talked about the laws of nature, whether it’s the physical laws, or whether it’s the laws of economy as “the way it is”. That’s the ever-changing, earthly perspective referred to by “eye of earth” - the way it looks to the average person on earth.

Then there is the “Heavenly perspective”. Being aware that everything comes from Heaven. Knowing that all our affairs are administrated by Divine providence. This is the “Jewish perspective” on reality. When the Jewish people were taken out of Egypt, the goal wasn’t just to attain a secular, political freedom, and the right of self-determination as a nation. If it would have been limited to that, the whole story of the Exodus could have been a lot shorter, and it could have ended in last week’s Parsha after 5 plagues, after Pharaoh was already a broken man. Yetzias Mitzrayim is about breaking past the whole secular way of life, to be a Holy nation belonging to Hashem, and hence a nation that has a “Heavenly perspective” on reality. “Yetzias Mitzrayim” literally means ‘getting out of narrowness’. To get out of the ‘earth box’, that allows for

all vices and all falsehood. **Freedom from the whole earthly way of looking at things**. These are the levels that are being set in this week’s Parsha.

Anti-Semitism

This explains Anti-Semitism. “The Jew just doesn’t belong”. “The Jew makes us nervous”. Why do people feel that way about Jews more than any ethnic group? The Jew innately doesn’t belong. The Jew represents a whole different world order and a **whole different perspective on reality**. The gentiles only have only an earth perspective. We are categorically different. We broke past the ‘earth box’ and we see things with a heavenly perspective. Therefore, the gentiles feel we are a threat to their “way of life”. That’s what Balak meant when he said, **‘they are covering the eye of the earth’**. “Our way of life, and our way of seeing and doing things, they are ‘covering over’ and that’s why we have to get rid of them.

Our Light – their Darkness

In these last three plagues, there is a common denominator of darkness for the Egyptians, not darkness for us. We are living on a higher level, that is a threat to their way of life. Since they can’t relate to this higher level it is **‘darkness’** for them. They can’t ‘see things’ our way. We bring a different perspective that is invisible to them. This is why in these last three plagues there is the common denominator of ‘darkness’. This is the power that the Jewish people are absorbing in this week’s Parsha.

Nature vs Supernatural

To further understand, the 10 plagues are parallel to the 10 sefiros, the 10 primary ways through which Hashem runs the world. The 7 lower sefiros, are forms of Divine providence that give the natural order and the natural order come from those 7 forces of Hashem’s providence. But then there’s the ‘higher way’, which are the ‘roots’ of nature. This level is where Hashem plans destiny itself and legislates the laws of nature. These levels are called “Keser” – Hashem’s will, “Chochma” – Hashem’s wisdom and “Bina” – Hashem’s understanding, in other words: They are **“His plan”** for reality. The Jewish people are **“rooted”** in that plan, and therefore we ‘see the plan’, which is ‘darkness’ to the gentiles. “You have done so many wonders Hashem our Lord, your **wonders and thoughts**

are directed towards us' (Tehillim 40:6). We are 'rooted' above nature, in Hashem's master plan. When Hashem first envisioned the world – He envisioned the Jewish people. This is the power being revealed in the last 3 plagues, the Jewish people is absorbing that power, so for them it is 'light' – for the gentiles – 'darkness'

Pass Over

Thus, by the plague of the first born, we are already living in a different dimension from the Egyptians. All the Egyptians were dropping dead in a 'straight line', demonstrates that death was decreed **on all first born in earthly Egypt**. The fact that the Jew doesn't die, shows that **they were are not in the same dimension**. He "**passed right over us**" to show we exist in a different dimension. We are on a whole different plateau than the rest of the natural world. That's "Chag Hapesach" – we were catapulted to a whole higher level. We are rooted in Hashem's master plan itself, above nature, with a perspective above the '**eye of the earth**'.

CHAPTER 14

דיינו

Yetzias Mitzrayim initiated the process of destiny that takes us from being the lowest of the low in this physical realm to the highest of the high and the spiritual realms. We go from being slaves to having unmitigated contact and intimacy with Hashem. **The major rungs on this great cosmic ladder are 15 in number** and this is the secret of the **15 שירי המעלות songs of Ascents** in Tehillim. This is also alluded to in the **15 steps leading from the women's gallery to the men's gallery in the Beis HaMikdash**.

This is all rooted in the fundamental programming of creation. The Gemara in Menachos (29) says on the pasuk "with the Name "י-ה" Hashem fashioned **worlds**". With the letter "י" which has a numerical value of **10** Hashem fashioned the higher world. This is alluded to in the letter "י" of the word "איש – man". With the letter "ה" which has the numerical value of **5**, which is alluded to in the letter "ה" from the word "אשה – woman", Hashem created this world (see Rashi Bereishis 2:4). That is the secret of the 15 steps between the woman's gallery and the men's gallery – they allude to all the steps in reality, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, the 15 steps allude to the letters of "י" and "ה" which have a combined value of 15.

In "**Dayeinu**" we give thanks for all the 15 major landmarks spanning from attaining levels in this world all the way to attaining the highest levels of clinging to Hashem. We are grateful for each level in its own right, let alone for all the levels that came before it and all the levels that came after it. "**Dayeinu**" divides into **three categories**:

The first **five** are how our situation in the **earthly realm** had a total reversal from being the lowest of the low to be the highest of the high. This is perfectly parallel to the "ה" – numerical value of **5** that the earthly realm was created with.

From the sixth level through the 15th we are thankful for the **supernatural**. These 10 levels are perfectly parallel to the letter "י" numerical value **10** with which the higher realms were created.

However, that also divides into two subcategories:

The middle group of **6 - 10** reflect how we've become above nature and the laws of nature do not subjugate us but rather **nature works for us**. The final group **11- 15** reflect levels of clinging to the infinite - Hashem Himself.

1 – 5 Getting to the top of the world

Our starting point is when we were not just slaves to the Egyptians, but we were persecuted by them, viewed as an accursed people, and they stole from us and gained affluence through our labor and taking advantage of our skills and knowledge all the way back to the days of Yosef.

It starts with **1)** The most basic level of **being liberated from Mitzrayim** and then **2) They are judged and punished** for persecuting us and then **3) Hashem takes down their “Hashems”** to show that we are not accursed, as they did not have any spiritual superiority over us and then **4) Hashem killed their firstborns** which is a whole level above and beyond the other nine plagues. The killing of the first-borns was already foretold when Moshe first appeared before Pharaoh he was to tell him in the name of Hashem “....**My first born son [is] Yisroel.....**if you did not send my people free I **will kill your first born**” (Shemos 4:22-23). First born represent royalty. The first born is always the chosen one. Therefore, Hashem killing their first born demonstrates that they are not royalty and **at that time our firstborns were all consecrated as a function of our royalty of being “Hashem’s First born”**. Finally, **5) Hashem gave us their money** which is the final reversal of all injustice. We got paid lavishly for all the work that we did. On a deeper level, they had been taking advantage of Jewish talent since the days of Yosef. Hashem meant for Yosef to be successful in saving Egypt **for the sake of saving the Jewish people**. This means that all that **all those resources and all that success was really for us** and here all those resources are finally restored to their rightful owners - the Jewish people.

6 – 10 Dominating Nature

Overcoming nature begins with **6) The splitting of the sea**. Besides from being a miracle in its own right, but it is to conquer one of the most basic natural elements - **the entirety of the element of water**. Chazal tell us that with the splitting of the sea **it is as if all the waters in the world split** (Rashi 14:21). Then **7) we passed in it on dry land** which shows

absolute conquest over the element of water which demonstrates that the power of that basic element was totally suspended. The reason why the **element of water** was totally subdued, besides from the pragmatic reason that they were up against a sea while being chased by the Egyptians, is because **the Egyptians harnessed the power of water**. They worshipped and took power from the Nile to use it against the Jewish people. **This was their secret behind the decree to drown the Jewish babies in the Nile. They believed that “their element” would dissolve the Jewish people**. But not only are the Jewish people now immune to water it but **8) they even dominated it and turned it against those who used to harness the water against them**. This is what most excited Yisro about *Kerias Yam Suf* (Shemos 18:11 see Rashi there). The parting of the sea and dominating it to attack its own worshippers may be **mistakenly viewed as a one-time event** that may be viewed as exceptional to the real level of the Jewish people. However, **9) to live in the desert in full comfort for 40 years** shows a total overcoming of the laws of nature **on a consistent basis**. The final level of this set is that **10) we were not even given physical food to live by, but rather we got the miraculous Mann**, bread from heaven made out of pure Divine light! **This demonstrates that we were not under nature in any way** because we don't need nature to sustain us. Having our physical bodies living off supernatural food had the effect to make our physical bodies worthy and able to receive the heavenly Torah, something which would be impossible if our bodies would be sustained by natural food (see *Mechilta* on 16:4)

11 – 15 Levels of Clinging to Hashem

11- Shabbos

The final series represents our **clinging to Hashem more than any other creature that Hashem created**. It starts by differentiating us from anything else. Shabbos was given to us even before the giving of the Torah, as were other Mitzvos, but the Haggadah focuses on Shabbos more than any of the other Mitzva we received before Sinai. That is because **the Jewish people having Shabbos shows that they are special and different from all else that Hashem created**. Shabbos is Hashem's special day. **He shared his special day when he didn't create anything with the Jewish people to show that they're above the rest of creation that was created during the six days**. We belong to him alone and that's

why we enjoy with Him His special day. It's not a coincidence that all that exists was created in six days and is parallel to the six edges of the three-dimensional world. **The 7th represents the center which is not on any side and doesn't take up physical space.** It is a Spiritual concept shared by Hashem who is, so to speak, the center of reality, in the sense that He sustains all. Shabbos is the center of the week that sustains all the other 6 days and so also do Jewish people take up that position of being the center of reality as all blessing and sustenance for reality comes through the Jewish people. (see Chapter 16 the paragraph with heading **"Seven"**)

12 – Drawn Close to Har Sinai

אילו קרבנו לפני הר סיני ולא נתן לנו את התורה דיינו – “If He would have drawn us close before Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah, ‘Dayeinu’ – it would have sufficed”. This is one of the hardest passages in the Haggadah: What would be the purpose of coming close to Mt. Sinai if not for the purpose of getting the Torah? The simplest explanation offered is because at the great event at Sinai we merited unmitigated Divine Revelation, it gave us the faith that Hashem exists, that there is prophecy, and that Moshe truly is Hashem’s representative. Another benefit of that event is that our sages say that at that time we transcended the ill effects of the sin of Adam and for a while we were immortal like Adam was before the sin (Shabbos 146a). **Rav Yitzchak Eizik Chaver** points out that these two benefits are integrally linked: The sin of Adam that brought about **mortality** was to partake of the tree of knowledge of Good and evil which was **to abandon the pure faith** and to sink into the limited human intelligence that we know today that is full of doubts and allows for the denial and all heresies. **Therefore, to have our faith restored healed all the ill effects of the sin of Adam.**

Authorized to Serve

The Ramchal gives another explanation which is of great depth and importance. He asked why the stress is “to be **drawn close** to Sinai”? What does **“drawn close”** mean? He explains: Not anyone that wants to serve Hashem may do so. Who gave you permission to serve Him? Who authorized you? What makes us special so that our Mitzvos have an effect on the cosmos whereas if a gentile or any other creature would do any of our Mitzvos it would be meaningless? This is because we received the authorization to serve Hashem at Sinai. We were called to serve Him

and that great event granted the authorization for our Mitzvos to make a difference. With this he explains the famous saying of our sages: **“Greater is he who is commanded and does [his duty] than someone who does it voluntarily”** (Kiddushin 31a). He who is commanded to do has the Divine authorization to serve Hashem that way, whereas the one who does it voluntarily, as much as his heart is in the right place, was never granted the authorization to serve Hashem with that particular Mitzvah. That’s what it means “to **draw us close** to Sinai” - **“Drawn Close”** means making us designated to serve him. The event at Sinai was a general authorization for all Mitzvos that were subsequently taught in the desert over 40 years after Moshe spent 40 days and nights in heaven learning the whole Torah following the great event at Sinai. The Ramchal further says that this is alluded to every single day in Bracha before Shema: “.....You **drew us close** to your Great Name”, this alludes to **“being drawn close to Sinai”** where we got the authorization to be those who served before him.

13 – Gave us the Torah

“And he gave us The Torah....” this goes way beyond being informed how to keep the Mitzvos, **it refers to literally the Torah itself!** The Heavenly Torah that was written “black fire on white fire” (Tanchuma Bereishis 1:1) was transferred to us, **we actually got the essence of the Torah** - not just information as to what the Torah says. The difference is that above and beyond having the Divine authorization to serve, **we now have the power of the Torah itself within us.** That’s why our Mitzvos truly reshape all of reality, even the highest realms! Our Mitzvos and the way we understand Torah affects the angels and even affects the way Hashem runs the world as the Torah is the blueprint of reality and he handed it to Jewish people. Giving us the power of Torah, itself made us partners with Hashem in creation and it also increased our intimacy with Him because we have His Will and Word internalized within us.

14 – Brought us into the Land of Israel

“And brought us into the land of Israel...” - The land of Israel is the focal point of creation. Mitzvos done there have more of a cosmic effect on everywhere else than Mitzvos done outside of land of Israel. It is also a place to attain full actualization of our spiritual perfection. Just like certain plants can only grow in certain climates and certain types of soil,

so also the Kuzari (2:12-14) explains the Jewish people can only attain their full measure of spiritual power **which includes prophecy** in the land of Israel. It is for this reason that “the air of the land of Israel makes wise” (Bava Basra 158b). It is the place where the Torah could best be understood. There is a direct correlation between the Torah and the very space of the land of Israel. When the Jewish people live and learn in the Land of Israel it actually expands! (Rav Yitzchak Eizik Chaver in his “Ohr Torah”). Above all, it is like an embassy of Heaven. It is a land directly under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Heaven. It provides further intimacy of living with Hashem in **His land**, as opposed to the rest of Earth that He granted to the rest of mankind.

15 – Built us the Beis Hamikdash for Atonement

“...And built us the Chosen House to atone for all our sins” - this is the highest level as the Beis HaMikdash represents as if we live in the same house with Hashem which is **a representation of our state in the world to come “sitting and enjoying the Aura of the Shechinah”** a taste of that was experienced when we visited on the “Three Regalim” – “to see the face of the Master the Lord of Israel” (Shemos 34:23). The emphasis on atonement is to stress that **this connection is permanent**. No matter how low we fall, we will always be forgiven and restored to the intimate inseparable connection to Hashem

CHAPTER 15

נִרְצָה

What is Nirtzah about?

The final phase of the *Seder* is called “**Nirtzah**” and it’s a very difficult phase to understand. The *Seder* per se has finished with the mitzvah of Hallel and we already officially closed the Seder with “**Chasal Sidur Pesach**”. Then comes another phase called “**Nirtzah**”- desired. The *meforshim* explain that it means: “if you have done the Seder and executed it correctly, you are desired by Heaven”. Isn’t this true of any mitzvah we do correctly? Once it’s been done properly, are we not desired by Heaven? Why is Seder Leil Pesach different from all other Mitzvos?

Why is this Seder different?

The answer lays in why *Seder* night is called the “**Seder**”- **the order**. Every *Mitzvah* that has any hint of complexity to it will be called a “*Seder*”, like “**Seder Eruv Tavshilin**”. What makes “**Seder Leil Pesach**” different from all the other “*Sedarim*”?

As we have explained in the past, destiny really gets going with *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Prior to that, the world was going nowhere. The *Avos* received promises for the future, but the promises are only fulfilled in actuality from *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and onwards. **The entire pattern that the world is following to go from potential to actual is the secret of what Chazal say, “in every generation a man should see himself as if he himself left Mitzrayim”!** Every generation is adding details within the framework of the script that was set in motion with *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. It’s not a coincidence that in the “**HaRachamans**” at the end of bentching on *Seder* night, we reference *Olam Haba*. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* initiated the pattern of destiny of going from this world as we know it, to higher levels of refinement and Divine Revelation culminating with *Olam Haba*.

The Long run of Destiny

After we’ve reconnected to the cosmic “**Seder**”- order that came into the world with *Pesach*, **we’ve renewed our connection and commitment to be the main players in the game of destiny**. The word “**Nirtzah**” comes

CHAPTER 16

אחד מי יודע

from the root **“Ratzon”** which means “will” or “desire”. **My Rebbe Maran HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shapira ZT” L** taught us that there’s an even more basic root to **“רצון”** – it is **“רץ”**- **to run**. Running towards what you “desire” shows that you really want it. In light of this observation, **the REAL definition of “Ratzon” is “DRIVE”**. When we’ve reconnected to the **“Seder”**, we’ve not just renewed our desire for Hashem and Hashem’s Desire for us, but above all **we affirm that we are in this for the “LONG RUN” of destiny**. **“משכני”** – pull me **“אחריך גרויפה”**- after you I will **RUN** (Shir HaShirim). The theme of *Shir HaShirim* is the eternal love story between the Jewish people and Hashem that stretches across all time. **That’s why it’s customary to say Shir HaShirim after the conclusion of “Nirtzah”**. Because of the mutual desire between Hashem and us that went into effect by *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we’re in it together for the **long run of destiny**. All the *‘Piyutim’* of **“Nirtza”** have to do with history and destiny; whether it’s all the events that happened **at night** in course of time, or the events that happened on **Pesach** in course of time. Then we hit the high point and reveal the very fundamentals of how destiny is constructed, with **numbers** and **concepts**. These are the meanings behind **Echad Miyodeah** and **Chad Gadya**.

Intro to Echad Mi Yodeah

“Numbers” are foundational concepts necessary to build any algorithm, formula, or plan of action, as is well known. If the **numbers** are all for **Hashem**, the **Torah**, and the **Jewish people**, that means that all the building blocks of destiny are already stacked to work for Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people. That’s the secret that it starts from **“One”** which is **Hashem** and ends in **“13”** which are **Hashem’s attributes** with which He displays **His omnipotence by having unconditional mercy on the Jewish people**. **13 is the same numerical value as the word “אחד” – which means “ONE”**. **My Rebbe Maran HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shapira ZT” L** explained that **we are in a loop that goes from 1 to 13**. Chazal tell us before Hashem created physical reality that “He and His Name him were one” and in the future, “On that day Hashem will be one and His Name one”. All of destiny is sandwiched in between these concepts and all other numbers are just branches of these elemental building blocks of 1 to 13. *[In the depth of it, the “One” is parallel to “Hashem is One and the “13” are attributes of mercy, as we know Hashem’s Divine Names are parallel to the attributes, and refers to “His Name is ECHA”D”]*.

Numbers are concepts. For example, if I just say ‘three’, that is idea. You will ask me for an application for that idea. You will ask me, three what? Three pounds? Three tons? Three miles? Three light years? This fantastic philosophical poem of *Echad Mi Yodeya*, who knows one is asking the fundamental question: **what do these numbers mean as concepts in their own right** as opposed to expressing quantities, which is merely a lowly earthly application. We are being taught a very great lesson in this poetic piece, that is more philosophy from the secrets of Torah than it is a poem. That numbers which are concepts and mathematics, which is the language of pure thought (**חשבון** – math is from the root, **חשב** to think) are all rooted in the Torah and are all there for the purpose of revealing the Truth of the Torah. The numbers go from one to thirteen. Thirteen is the numerical value of the word **אחד** which means ‘one’ because the course of destiny is one great loop that just like before the world was created it was clear that Hashem was the One and Only, so also, at the end of time “on that day Hashem will be **One** and His name will be **One**”. All the numbers in the middle are concepts that are steppingstones to complete this great loop. As we’ve stated many times in this book, destiny truly started progressing from *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and onwards and that’s why it is befitting to have this philosophical poem on Seder night as it alludes to all the revelations necessary to complete the course of destiny.

ONE

It begins with the ultimate concept, **“One is Hashem”**. The ancients have agreed that one is not a regular number. Numbers have the basic application of describing quantities. One is not a quantity, but you cannot reach two, without one. So also, we describe Hashem as **“One”**, to show that He is alone and not part of a set. For there is none like Him. But like the number one, He is the source and the Creator for anything outside of Him and hence, **“One is Hashem in the Heaven and the Earth”**, that He who is **One** and stands alone created all that is in heaven and earth and yet remains separate and unique – **One of a kind**.

TWO

Two are the *Luchos*. The *Luchos* are a manifestation of the Torah as they contain the ten *Dibros* which allude to all the 613 commandments. One would have thought that He who is One should have just created one thing. One would have thought that Hashem should only be interested in the heavens and not anything else. **The “twoness” of heaven and earth is rooted in the concept of the *Luchos* which is the essential revelation of the Torah.** The Gemara in Kesuvos (5a) says that heaven and earth was each created with a **distinct** Divine power that the prophets metaphorically call “Hashem’s hand” (see Even Shesiya Beshalach 5779 for an in depth discussion of this and see also the entry on the seventh day of Pesach in this book). **These “two hands” are actually the concept of the *Luchos*.** Just like a hand has five fingers, so also on each one of the *Luchos* has five *Dibros*. One of the *Luchos* are the commands between man and Hashem and that was the one from which the heavenly comes from. The other of the *Luchos* are the *mitzvos* between man and his fellow man which are our earthly affairs and that is the hand that created the earthly. So, the basic twoness of heaven and earth and how they both equally come from Hashem and are equally important to Him, is rooted in these two *Luchos* of the Torah which is His will and word.

THREE

The real revelation of the concept of three was represented by our three forefathers. Why did we have three forefathers? Each one a forefather in his own right, even though they were the son and grandson of Avraham. As is well known, Hashem’s administration of reality is in three modes which form a tripod. There is **חסד** -pure kindness. There is **דין** - the Divine judgment and then there is **רחמים** - mercy that includes and balances the two opposing poles of kindness and judgment. From our end, we serve Him with positive commandments demonstrating our love. By not transgressing the negative commandments we demonstrates our awe and fear of His judgement and with the learning of Torah we are inclusive of both as Torah includes the information of how to do both the positive commandments and how not to transgress the negative commandments. This is the secret of what our sages say, “on three things the world stands, on Torah, Divine service, and

Kindness” (Avos 1:2). Divine service is our willingness to sacrifice for Him, which shows our awe and fear.

The Jewish people are the receivers and conduits of Hashem’s revelations to the world and therefore, we needed three forefathers, each one parallel to one of the legs of the Tripod that Hashem administers the world with. Avraham is the vehicle for the pillar of kindness. Yitzchak who was willing to be sacrificed to serve Hashem is the pillar of judgment and Divine service and Yaakov is the pillar of Torah and mercy that includes both and negotiates between them.

FOUR

As we have mentioned earlier (see above the entry on the four sons), four is the concept of expansion. If the *Avos* would have not married the *Imahos*, their contribution would have never struck root and expanded. Each one of the *Avos* had to find his counterpart to connect to, so as to strike roots and have not just biological children, but also an ideological continuation that is the Jewish people. It is wonderous that Avraham and Yitzchak only married one woman that gets counted as one of our *Imahos* but Yaakov marries Rachel and Leah and **this is because as we have said above, Yaakov represents Torah and the Torah subdivides into the written law and the oral law and parallel to that he had to marry both Rachel and Leah and both of them are *Imahos*.** What brings it up to **four** is the matriarch parallel to the oral law and that’s exactly where the expansion of Torah lays. For it is in the Oral law that the Torah is perpetually expanding in every generation.

FIVE

The concept of five is the idea of a complete system. On a flat surface, that would minimally consist of the four directions and point center. It is well known that the complete Jewish soul is of five levels, *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshama*, *chaya* and *yechida* (for an expanded discussion on this see Even shesiya Chayei Sarah 5779). And indeed, according to the Kuzari, the levels of existence on earth are actually five: the inanimate, the vegetable, the animal, the speaking human being, and the Jewish people. There is much more to say about this, but the essential manifestation for the concept of five that has all the applications we mentioned, and many more, comes from the fact that there are five sections to the Book of Chumash. A book is a complete system and by

no coincidence, it has five parts to it. This is the secret of the five components that make up a system.

SIX

Six represents the six edges of the three dimensional world. As we wrote before, five represents a complete system but it is “flat”. Case in point, the Chumash is a wonderful, deep and meaningful book, truly a complete system. However, **there is not a single Mitzvah that can be fully put into practice based on information in the Chumash alone.** Even Bris Milah, it never says where and how much to cut. It is only with the six orders of the Mishnah, which is the oral law that the information of the Torah becomes “three dimensional” and able to be practiced in physicality. In the depth of it, **the fact that we live in a six-edged reality is rooted in the fact that the Torah has six orders of the Mishnah.**

SEVEN

Seven represents both the completion and seal on the six-edged world. Seven represents the center of the six edges. That’s where all the sides are complete. As is well known, the ancients divided everything into seven, parallel to the seven days of the week. Shabbos was both the completion of creation, as it “brought rest to the world” but also like the name **שבת** literally means, ceased creation. As both the completion and the seal and that’s why we say any number above seven represents the supernatural, as seven seals the natural world. This is the secret of what the Medrash says in Parshas Emor "why did the Torah say that an animal can only be brought for a sacrifice from the eighth day after its birth and onwards? **So the animal should pass through a Shabbos**". Shabbos puts a seal on the natural and only after the animal went through a Shabbos, it could be elevated beyond its natural state to become a sacrifice to Hashem. In a similar vein, the Medrash continues: “why did Hashem command that Bris milah be on the eighth day, so the baby would go through a Shabbos first” (which is one of the sources for a Shalom Zachar on Shabbos)....

EIGHT

The Jewish people who have been granted Shabbos are able to put a seal on nature and get past it (see earlier in this book in the section on Shabbos HaGadol). Therefore we can progress to the eighth which is

most exemplified by a **Bris Milah**. Bris Milah is above nature. By nature, the man has a foreskin, which by no coincidence will be tolerated for the first **seven days** of the child’s life. That **foreskin** represents how nature, which is seven, **covers over the truth of Divine providence.** The Jewish people cut off the foreskin to transcend the body and its temptations (the Rambam in the Moreh Nevuchim says that removing the foreskin actually mitigates the sex drive). With Bris Milah, we transcend the flesh and **it has the cosmic ramification of piercing the illusion that nature is everything and we reveal the supernatural.** That is why the Bris Milah is our special bond to Hashem, because **it expresses our most fundamental mission of piercing the illusion of nature and making Hashem known** throughout the world.

NINE

The concept of nine is the idea of going from potential to actual. The greatest example of that of the pregnancy that leads to birth. As is well known, human pregnancy is the living metaphor for going from potential to actual. As is well known, the Jewish people when they were in Egypt were compared to being a baby in the womb and the Exodus was their birth. Just like the pregnancy period is uncomfortable, so to our time in Egypt. So it will be in the future. As is well known in Chazal, the chaos before the coming of Moshiach are called **“the birth pangs of Mashiach”** (See above entry on “Exodus by night”). That is the secret behind what the Gemara says: “Mashiach will not come until after Israel will have been dominated by the ‘evil empire’ for **9 months**” (Sanhedrin 98b). An application of this idea is the nine days between **Rosh Hashanah, which is the day of the conception of the new year** and Yom Kippur, where everything is sealed and finalized, relative to Rosh Hashanah (this is all relative, see above entry Tishrei versus Nisan).

TEN

Ten represents the complete system of reality, both the natural and the supernatural. The complete system of reality was created with ‘ten utterances’ (Avos 1:1), as we explained above the ten makos was to condition reality in preparation for the giving of the Torah which was expressed by the ten Dibros. However the most elemental manifestation of the concept of ten are the ten Dibros, which allude to the entirety of Torah, as we wrote above and Hashem created the world

with those ten utterances with the goal of the Jewish people receiving the Torah which essentially are those ten Dibros.

ELEVEN

From this point onwards, everything will be centered around the Jewish people, as **the Jewish people reveal the infinite depths behind the 'ten'** and **the inner depth of the ten is what's represented by the final three.** The eleven stars refers to Yosef's dream but leaving out the son and the moon and Yosef himself. The eleven stars unto their own, represent an incomplete Jewish people, like we are in our state today with many of the tribes of Israel missing. But **this in itself is a tremendous revelation of Divine power** that the Jewish people fragmented and exiled amongst the nations continue to exist and will just not disappear. The Gemara in Yoma (69b) calls this **a revelation of the awesomeness of Hashem** and that's what the number eleven represents, incompleteness as Chazal point out, the amazing irony is that twelve is "שתי עשר" but eleven is "עשתי עשר", that extra letter that actually makes it less. As Chazal say: כל המוסיף גורע - whoever adds more than necessary is actually detracting. Therefore, eleven being more than ten is seemingly not advantageous at all. And yet the Jewish people in this disadvantageous state, still shine like the stars during this long and bitter exile. And that is a revelation of awesome Divine power.

TWELVE

The concept that the Jewish people are twelve tribes is directly related to the fact that there are six orders to the Mishnah. The oral law is carried within the Jewish people. The oral law splinters into multiple possibilities like the different sweeping approaches of Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel. On many issues, if not all, one rabbinic opinion will say 'permitted' and the other will say 'prohibited'. One will say 'innocent' and one will say 'guilty'. One will say 'pure' and one will say 'impure' and yet "both these and those are the words of the living Lord" (Eiruvin 13b). The six orders of the Mishnah sub divide minimally into two opposing opinions and that's why **the Jewish people are by no coincidence twelve tribes, as being carriers of the full diversity of the six orders of the Mishnah.** That is the secret that there are twelve months in the year which are actually two sets of six that are perfectly parallel to each

other, such as Nissan and Tishrei. Tu B'shvat and Tu B'Av, but that is part of a much longer discussion.....

THIRTEEN

Thirteen are the attributes of Hashem's mercy. By no coincidence thirteen is the numerical value of "אהד"one". Regarding these thirteen attributes Hashem says "I will grant grace to whoever I grant grace to" (Shemos 33:19) the Gemara in Brachos (7a) says that means that Hashem will even grant mercy to those who don't deserve it **simply because He wants to and no one can stop Him.** Similarly, Chazal say that "whenever the Jewish people invoke these thirteen attributes of mercy, they always get a response from Hashem" (Rosh Hashana 17b), not because the Jewish people deserve it but because Hashem loves them. He has unconditional mercy on them with the power of his Singular Omnipotence as the Ramchal in his "*Daas Tevunos*" explains, Hashem chose to display His omnipotent power, how He is the one and real power in reality, by having unconditional and absolute mercy on the Jewish people whom He chose. **With this destiny goes full circle and the revelation that Hashem is the One and only is complete.** The Torah was the revelation, and the Jewish people are the receptacles of that revelation and this is the secret of what we say by Shabbos Mincha, "you are אהדthe one singular powerאהד", has the numerical value of thirteen referring to these thirteen attributes of mercy "and your **Name** -which refers to the Torah - is אהד - which has the numerical value of thirteen which refers to that the Torah is extrapolated by the thirteen middos enumerated by Rebbe Yishmael. **This is also an allusion to the thirteen principles of faith of the Rambam which are necessary to accept the Torah as the absolute truth** (see more on this in our book "Even shesiyah" on the Rambam's 13 principles). "And who is like your nation Israel, גוי אחד - one nation - the Jewish people are the twelve tribes plus Yaakov or alternatively, thirteen tribes with Yosef subdivided into the tribes of Menashe and Ephraim.

CHAPTER 17

תד גדיא

Why History Repeats itself

Why does history repeat itself? Hashem created everything, **including the range of possibilities**. There are only certain types of failures and setbacks possible. For every type of failure Hashem created, He also created the types of remedies needed to fix them. Hashem also created the potential to progress to higher levels. **Hashem created all the possibilities and the role of our free will is to choose amongst the options Hashem created**. That's why "history repeats itself": in every generation the wicked are choosing from the range of possibilities for failures and wrongdoings that are available during that generation, **which are in set categories since creation**. The same is true of the remedies and advancements of the Tzadikim – they are choosing from the possibilities available to them in their times, which are in set categories since creation. This is the secret that "in every generation and generation a person must see himself as if he himself left Egypt" - **the advancement of destiny is to play out the details that are all implicit in the principles that were set in motion at the time of Yetzias Mitzrayim**.

Chad Gadya – The Destiny Codes

The *Piyut* of "Chad Gadya" is a metaphor for destiny. **The different characters of the narrative are different types of events in destiny**. Commentaries may differ in "pinpointing" the specific events in destiny that the characters represent, but they aren't mutually exclusive. Because those different events in destiny belong to the same category, whether it's the category of the "cat" or the category of the "ox", as we will demonstrate.

One Goat One Goat

The kid goat represents the Jewish people. The literal translation of the Hebrew word for goat is "עז" which also means brazen, as Chazal say that the Jewish people are the most brazen of the nations, if not for the Torah that calmed and refined them (Beitza 25b). Goats are also a part of what's called "צאן" - flock and we are the flock that follows Hashem,

as is often the metaphor for the Jewish people in Tanach. The reason why it is said repetitively, "**one goat, one goat**" is because **we have just one love, to Hashem - but it expresses itself in a duality** of the Mitzvos Aseh and the Mitzvos Lo Saaseh. Other commentaries say it refers to the two Dibros of 'אנכי ה' and 'לא יהיה לך', which we heard directly from Hashem, even though they are two Dibros, they still represent having only one love, "אנכי ה'" is to love Hashem and "לא יהיה לך", is to love none other. Others say "**one goat, one goat**" are the two goats that Yaakov prepared for Yitzchak to get the brachos out of him and push Eisav out. Two goats, but for the **singular purpose** of being the **one chosen people**. Others say that it refers to the two goats brought on Yom Kippur, the one that is sacrificed to Hashem and the one that is thrown to the Azazel. One represents the closeness that we have to Hashem and the other one represents that we reject whatever we have done wrong. **Two goats, one love**.

Father & Two Zuz

"**That father bought for two Zuz**" – all commentaries agree that the father is Hashem. The two Zuz represents the acquisition that made us His. It doesn't necessarily mean that the two Zuz were from His money. Some say the two Zuz represents the "מהצית השקל" with which we have the Divine service which makes us close to Hashem, as the word "קרוב" – sacrifice is from the root, "קרוב", close. Others say it is the two Zuz of declaring "נעשה" and "ונשמע" and others say the two Zuz represent the two Mitzvos Hashem gave us to make us worthy of redemption from Egypt, which is what made us His nation; the **Korban Pesach** and **Bris Milah**.

The Cat

The Gemorah in Horiyos (13a) says that **the cat** does not acknowledge his master. Therefore, most commentaries understand that the "cat" is Pharaoh "who **did not know** Yosef", who **Made Egypt Great A** long time ago and subsequently when Moshe came to demand that he release the Jewish people, Pharaoh said, "I **do not know** Hashem". Others have said that the cat refers to the sin of selling Yosef since Yosef rotted in jail for an additional two years because the minister of drink **did not acknowledge him and forgot him**. The brothers also lost sight of their brotherhood and how Yaakov would react and furthermore, they

actually slaughtered a goat (**like the cat**) and dipped Yosef's coat in it to make the ruse as if Yosef was mauled by an animal. These opinions are not mutually exclusive because it is the sin of the sale of Yosef that brought about the events that brought us to Golus Mitzrayim.

The Dog

The dog according to most commentaries represents Amalek. This is based on a Zohar and also a Chazal brought by Rashi in Parshas Beshalach (17:8). According to those who align the cat with the sale of Yosef, the dog represents Pharaoh who bit the tribes who were guilty of the sale of Yosef.

The Stick

The stick refers to the staff of Moshe which is consistent with all the different opinions because the staff of Moshe defeated both Amalek and Pharaoh. **The staff of Moshe was a branch of the "Eitz HaDaas"** (see Yalkut Reuveini parshas Chukas) and Moshe gripping it means that we take control of the setback of the "Eitz HaDaas" which caused the nations of the world to come into being. Moshe gripping the staff means destruction to our enemies. When he loses his grip on the staff, it becomes a snake representing the power of the "Eitz HaDaas" out of control morphing into the snake that caused the sin in the first place.

The Fire

The **fire** represents the most destructive force in reality, the sin of Avoda Zara. Most commentaries see this alluding to the sin of the Golden Calf where Ahron says, "...I threw it (the gold) into the **fire** and [from that] this [Golden] Calf emerged" (Shemos 32:24). It **'burned the stick'** refers to how it set back all the achievements of the staff of Moshe. The sin of the Golden Calf made us vulnerable for all generations setting back the protection that the staff of Moshe gave us. But it goes deeper than that, Moshe's grip on his staff represents taking control over the "Eitz HaDaas" and reclaiming all that it stole from us, most notably immortality. Chazal tell us that at Sinai, the contamination of the "Eitz HaDaas" ceased and we were immortal. But the sin of the Golden Calf restored our mortality and the internal Yetzer Hara and all weaknesses of the flesh.

The Water

The **water** that extinguished the fire represents the achievements of Moshe who was "drawn from the **water**". After the sin of the Golden Calf, he prayed for us to be spared and forgiven. An outpouring of prayer is likened to water, as the *Pasuk* says, "spill like **water** your heart before Hashem" (Eicha 2:19). He also put us through a repentance ritual which involved burning and grinding the Golden Calf and putting the pulverized ashes in the **water**, which we were forced to drink and that helped atone for the sin. Teshuva itself is likened to **water** (Bereishis Rabba 2:4) Above all, he fought for us to still get the Torah which is likened to **water** and fixes everything.

The Ox

The **ox** that drank the water refers to how sadly the Jewish people reverted to serving Avoda Zara. Most commentaries say that it is most alluding to the **golden calves** that Yeravam set up and forced the Jews to serve. Some commentaries see it as an allusion to how the Greeks tried to sever our connection to Hashem by forcing us to engrave on the horn of an **ox**, "we have no portion in the Lord of Israel". The common denominator is that these are instances that severed our connection to Hashem that were painstakingly rebuilt after the sin of the Golden Calf in the desert.

The Shochet

The **Shochet** who slaughtered the ox represents the **Anshei Knesses HaG'dola** who vanquished the *Yetzer Hora* for *Avoda Zara* once and for all. According to those who see in the **Ox** an allusion to the Greeks that tried to secularize us (as opposed to *Avoda Zara*), the Shochet can represent the **Chashmonaim** and the **Tikkun of Chanukah** that is lasting us until this day.

The Angel of Death

The **Angel of Death** refers to *Sinas Chinam* – baseless hatred between Jews. It caused a great deal of bloodshed in its own time and throughout the ages but worse than that, **it severed our connection with the Divine presence which is like national death** and threw us into this long and bitter exile that has yet to end. There are those who say that the **Angel of Death** refers to **Titus** who killed countless Jews and

destroyed the second *Beis HaMikdash*. This is no contradiction to what we just wrote because, as is well known, the sin of *Sinas Chinam* is what sealed our fate and empowered Titus to wreak all the havoc that he did culminating with the destruction of the second *Beis HaMikdash* built by the *Anshei Knesses HaG'dola* and re-inaugurated by the *Chashmonaim*.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu

As is well known, Chazal teach us the “*Yetzer Hara* is the Satan who is the Angel of Death”. Hakadosh Baruch Hu slaughtering the Angel of Death represents vanquishing all evil. **This is to go full circle back to Pesach as that is what the vanquishing of Chametz represents** and it’s what we pray for when we burn our Chametz. But when the *Yetzer Hara* is removed from reality, there will be no wrong doing not between us and Hashem and not between us and our fellow man. That will be the great day of world peace and “the world will be filled with knowledge of Hashem” (Yeshayahu 11:9), may it be speedily in our days.

CHAPTER 18

שביעי של פסח

Think Before you sing?

אז ישיר משה - Then **will sing** (ישיר) Moshe (Shemos 15:1). It that should say “then sang (שר) Moshe”! Why is there the extra letter “י” that makes it the future tense? Rashi explains: then, when Moshe saw the miracle **it occurred in his heart** to sing. Rashi cites further examples from Tanach that the extra “י” refers to thinking first. **Moshe’s heart told him to sing** and he followed through in front of all the Jewish people. The letter “י” refers to the ‘thought’. There are two issues to raise here: First of all, is this not the case for everything a thinking person does? He thinks before he acts or says something! What is different about Moshe’s song that makes it more “thought out in advance”? Secondly, why does the letter “י” symbolize “thinking”?

Rashi adds another idea from Chazal fitting the conventional of the verb being in future tense: “Then Moshe **will sing**” is alluding the resurrection of the Dead that will be in the future - then Moshe will sing again. Why is the resurrection being alluded to in the song that they’re singing in appreciation of “**Kerias Yam Suf**”?

Preconditions with Nature

A few Pesukim earlier (14:27) it says “and the Sea returned towards morning to **“לאיתנו”**- to its original strength”. Chazal say that the word **“לאיתנו”**- should be inverted to read **“לתנאו”** to its condition, meaning to say Hashem had made a precondition with the Seas that they must part for Benei Yisroel at the time ‘Kerias Yam suf’. Chazal go on to say that all the Miracles that ever happened come from preconditions that Hashem made with nature at the time of creation. Why does Hashem have to make preconditions with nature to allow for miracles? Why was this message taught to us by ‘Kerias Yam Suf’ in particular? Why is the allusion to the preconditions allowing for miracles by where the water actually reverts back to its natural state (original strength)? The allusion to the precondition facilitating Miracles should have been by where the water split!

The Finger and the Hand

On Seder night we read in the Haggadah the famous three way machlokes between Rabi Yosi Hagelili, Rabi Eliezer, and Rabi Akiva as to the extent of the Makos in Egypt and on Yam Suf respectively. All of them agree that whatever it was in Egypt it was 5 times worse at Yam Suf. By the plague of 'Kinim' in Egypt it says it was "a **Finger** of Hashem" (8:15) and by Yam Suf it says: "and Yisroel saw the Great **Hand** of Hashem" (15:31). A hand has five times as many fingers. **The math doesn't work: The one plague of 'Kinim' alone was called a "finger", not all 10 plagues together! Seemingly, in Egypt they got 10 "fingers" and on Yam Suf only 5 "fingers"**. Furthermore, by the plague of 'Dever' in Egypt it says: "the Hand of Hashem will strike your livestock" (9:2). The term "Hand" is used in the plagues in Egypt as well!

The Exception vs The Rule

The Maharal explains that the difference between "finger" and "hand" is not a quantitative difference but rather a **qualitative difference**. It is the difference between a single details versus an entire integrated system. The "finger" represents a detail. A "hand" is not five fingers. Five chopped off fingers in a bag does not constitute a hand. **It is a "hand" by virtue of how the five fingers are connected to the palm and function in the integrated unit call the "hand"**. In mitzrayim Pharaoh did a very good job at hardening his own heart for the first five plagues. What was he thinking, after having suffered so much each time? In science we determined that something is a "law" when get the same results all the time. If in some isolated instances the experiment yields a different result, we aren't concerned. So long as overwhelming majority of the time the same result is reached we will disregard the instances where we got a different result. We will assume that either we did not conduct the experiment correctly or some "fluke" happened. "Flukes" do not repeat themselves. Therefore, **they're not something to worry about**. The Pesukim say over and over that "when Pharaoh saw that the plague passed he hardened his heart" meaning: he dismissed the plagues as a "flukes". **Humanity saw all 10 plagues in Egypt as "fingers"- details which are exceptions to the rules of nature**. Even though it says "the Hand of Hashem will strike your livestock..." it doesn't say that anyone saw the "Hand". The plagues of Egypt **looked like "fingers"** - exceptions to the rules of nature.

Miracles as an Integrated System

At Yam Suf, not only did the waters split but **so did all the waters in the world!** (Rashi 14:21) It was a Global miracle affecting the entire element of water. This cannot be called an "exception to the rule". An 'exception' is just a detail and this miracle affected the **whole of water**. By 'Kerias Yam Suf' the "Hand" is revealed, meaning that **Miracles are not exceptions to the rules of nature, they are a whole system onto their own!** They "saw the Hand" means that they realized that Miracles are a whole integrated system.

Reconciling conflicting systems

This raises a crucial question: are there conflicting systems in reality? So long as there's only one set of rules, the fact that some exceptions happen here and there is not a major issue. These flukes will not repeat themselves. However, once it is established that Miracles are whole system onto their own, and not flukes, you have two equally real and recurrent systems seemingly in conflict with each other. How is reality not torn apart by two conflicting systems? **That is the function of the 'preconditions'!** Those 'conditions' reconcile the two systems as to when events will be natural and when nature 'bows out' and miracles take over.

Why is Nature so strong?

There is a deeper Point here: Not only is there 'harmony' between the two systems, **but the supernatural actually fuels nature!** We look at the laws of nature and we view them as "laws" - stable and immutable. That's why miracles seem 'impossible'. Where does nature get that strength from? **Miracles!** The '*Leshem Shevo V'Achlama*' explains: the 'conditions' were as follows: Nature will "**איתן**" – strong, "**בתנאי**"-conditionally. Meaning to say: **The system of miracles grants strength to the system of nature on condition that nature always be consistent with what Hashem wants for the world**. Hashem wants the Jewish people and the Torah. If those two agendas are ever at Peril, the laws of nature have to give way for miracles to take over and save the day. **What is 'danger'? When the 'natural circumstances' are hostile to your existence**. When the Jewish people are in 'danger' nature 'goes limp' and miracles take over to save them. We now understand why the allusion to the "condition with nature" is by the waters reverting back to their natural state. **Their 'original strength'** (as Rashi defines it) **is all on condition** that it be consistent with the same agenda that the Miracles support.

Body & Soul

Man, being a microcosm of the entirety of reality, has the entirety of these two systems represented in him. His body is a creature of nature encompassing the entirety of the natural world and his soul is from the higher world and is inclusive of all the higher Spheres as well as the spiritual dimension of the earthly sphere. Body and soul seem to be in a constant struggle parallel to the perceived struggle between the natural and the supernatural. The truth is, just like in the struggle between the natural and the supernatural is a misperception, and **really the supernatural feeds the natural, so also the perceived battle between body and soul is a misperception**. The soul gives the body not only life but a higher level of intelligence beyond what about biochemical brain achieve: prophecy and the secrets of the Torah.

The Song of the Neshama

The Nefesh HaChaim tells us that in any word in Hebrew there are three levels Parallel to the three prime levels of the soul. The 'אִוְתִיּוֹת' letters are parallel to the 'נִפְשׁ' which resides in the body. The 'נִקְוֹדוֹת'-vowels are parallel to the 'רוּחַ' that gives us our power of speech. The musical movement of the word called the 'טַעֲמִים' (in Yiddish 'trop') is parallel to the level called 'נִשְׁמָה' which gives us the ability to understand the depths of the Torah. The root of the word 'טַעֲמִים' is 'טַעַם' which means 'reason'. If we want to understand the inner reasoning of the Torah we can only do so with the power of our 'Neshama', the biochemical brain cannot fathom the depths of the Divine Torah. **'Musical movement' adds a depth of thought and emotion to the word. It reveals what you're thinking in addition to just the literal meaning of the word.** The Gemara in Menachos (29) says on the pasuk "with the Name "י-ה" Hashem fashioned worlds" with the letter "י" Hashem fashioned the higher world where the Neshaman came from and encompasses. **As the 'conditions' which are the 'portal of harmony' between nature and supernatural opened up, the Jewish people's bodies and souls were affected.** They started feeling an open flow of communication between their souls and bodies, **with the 'Neshama' giving levels of perception to the body they never experienced before!** Chazal say "even a maid servant at Yam Suf saw more than the prophet Yechezkel". The letter "י" with which the heavenly was created, is added to the verb 'sing' alluding to the depth of spiritual thought from their Heavenly souls that

occurred to them before they started 'singing' which means adding a level of thought above and beyond the literal meaning of the words.

Resurrection

With this we can understand the other Rashi that says that the future tense alludes to the resurrection. The illusion of the perceived struggle between body and soul is reinforced by the idea of death. Body and soul are doomed to Part ways, indicating that they can only 'hold it together' temporarily at best. By the Resurrection that misconception is set straight as we will see the body and soul fused together in the most amazing harmony, to be together forever and never to part. In the world of the resurrection the system of miracles and the system of nature will be totally fused.

Why Now?

After 'Kerias Yam suf' "they went 3 days without finding water" (15:22). The Gemara (Bava Kama 82a) says that it refers going 3 days without Torah learning, and they had to get some mitzvos to learn. Moshe Rabbeinu instituted that from then on we must read from the Torah every 3 days. The question is: they went their whole lives without learning Torah! Why is it that suddenly they can't go 3 days without learning Torah? The answer is: ever since "Kerias Yam Suf" they can feel their souls! The portal between the nature and supernatural, between body and soul, was revealed and now they forever feel **even within their bodies** the unquenchable thirst of the soul for the Torah.

The Landmark Reached on the Seventh Day

The first night of Pesach is literally a jump, a skip. We were catapulted to a very high supernatural state that was beyond our capacity to integrate. The day AFTER Pesach is when we start counting the Omer, which is to begin the integration process which culminates with the super-heavenly Torah being given to the earthly realm (- We will explain this in greater detail in our Sefira-Shavuot reader, *b'ezras Hashem*). The seventh day of Pesach and *Kriyas Yam Suf* which is within the days of the *Omer* is a great milestone of the integration process between the spiritual and the physical, between the soul and the body, as we have explained.