

Yeshivat Har Hamor Friday Program Presents

כי עין בעין יראו

בשוב ה' ציון

Rav Kook on the Exodus

  
YESHIVAT HAR HAMOR JERUSALEM

Pesach 5774

”כי עין בעין יראו בשוב ה' ציון“ (ישעיהו נב:ח)

*“For eye to eye they will see when Hashem returns to Tzion” (Isaiah 52:8)*

“How can we see eye to eye with Hashem? We must understand that this expression is similar to the expression “face to face” where one person speaks directly opposite another. So too with “eye to eye.” If we do not open our eyes and see that Hashem is responsible for all that happens to us then we will never understand the purpose of our existence. We must face reality “eye to eye” - our eye focused on, so to speak, the Divine “eye”.... The time has come. In these days the Jewish People are progressing towards the ultimate Redemption despite many complications and hardships. We are drawing near the “new light that will shine on Tzion”..”

**Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, ztz”l**

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לע"נ

# חיים פנחס בן משה יוסף ז"ל

איש אמת  
אהב עם ישראל  
וארץ ישראל



This collection of articles written by the students of  
"Har Hamor Fridays" is in memory of

Mr. Hyman P. Golombeck, z"l

## Introduction

This journal is the product of a very special group of Yeshiva students who have devoted their Fridays during their year in Israel to the study of Rav Kook's writings at Yeshivat Har HaMor. Every Friday, while many of their Friends snuggled in their beds, these young men got up, prayed, and got on the bus to Har HaMor because they committed themselves to enhance their connection with Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Torat Yisrael.

The study of Rav Kook's writing entails two main fields. The first is understanding Rav Kook's ideas, the second is opening up the texts themselves and learning them. The first was accomplished through shiurim by Rav David Samson and Rav David Jami. The second through textual study groups with avreichim of the yeshiva in Hebrew and English.

This year we chose Rav Kook's commentary on the end of Parshat Bo which can be found in the Siddur Olat Reiya on pages 36 - 43. The pesukim involve the Exodus from Egypt, the Mitzvot of the firstborn, and tefillin. Every student was assigned a portion of the commentary studied it with our avreichim, and wrote an essay on it.

It is a great pleasure to present the results of this endeavour to you.

Three years ago when we at Har Hamor came up with the idea of bringing American Yeshiva students on Friday mornings to study Rav Kook's writings many were skeptical. They said these kids won't give up their Fridays for Torah. Three years later there were those who said that you can give a shiur in Rav Kook's ideas, but to actually have them open up the texts and learn - that's impossible! I am proud to say that our students proved the skeptics wrong on both accounts. Although the project was not simple, their essays are well researched, well written, and are a true testament to their hard work and connection to the Torah that has been learned.

I would like to thank our dear friends Sheldon and Anne Golombek who have been staunch supporters of the program and have dedicated this journal in loving memory of their dear father, Mr. Hyman P. Golombeck who has recently passed away. May the Torah of Eretz Yisrael be in his zchut.

Chag Kasher VeSameach!

**Rabbi Ailon Meir**

*Director of Har HaMor Fridays*

## Letter from the Rosh Yeshiva

*“I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me”*

Onkelos explains “brought you to Me” as “brought you towards My service”  
Targum Yonatan explains that same possuk as “brought you towards My House of Torah”.

In order to come to G-d’s service and His House of Torah, we need to be borne on the wings of eagles.

The king of all birds, the eagle, uses its wings to soar to the heights. There it rules unopposed. There it fears no assault. For the Service of G-d, we too need to rise to the heights.

In the Exodus of Egypt, G-d “raised us beyond all language”, beyond all ability to describe us. We were raised beyond all lowly thoughts and base morals. We were taken from enslavement to troubles and narrow mindedness to a great and broad freedom.

There, in the service of G-d and with the Torah on our lips, we fear no assault and will forever be free.

Dear friends,

May you and yours celebrate the Holiday of our Freedom with happiness and joy,

Have a Kosher and Happy Holiday,

**Rav Amiel Sternberg**

*Rosh Yeshivat Har Hamor*

# Letter from the Director of Development

## A word on Yeshivat Har HaMor

Dear friend,

The Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Amiel Sternberg, shlit”a, told me how pleased he is to discover gifted students whose burning ambition is to devote themselves heart and soul to the full-time study of Torah in a traditional Yeshiva setting. It gives him special pleasure to see such talented students coming from abroad to study Hashem’s sacred Torah in the yeshivot of Eretz Yisrael. Yeshivat Har Hamor has taken responsibility for absorbing these promising students. Our Yeshiva is a microcosm of the ingathering of the exiles and the restoration of the Jewish People to its sacred abode. We invest in our gifted students from abroad and it is our hope that the Har HaMor Fridays program will expand and continue to attract new students seeking to join the ranks of the exalted Talmidei Chachamim of Eretz Yisrael.

The goal of Yeshivat Har Hamor is to strengthen and advance the Torah renaissance and the rebirth of the Jewish people, both of which are taking place in Israel today. Yeshivat Har Hamor was founded on the idea formulated by HaRav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook zt”l and his son HaRav Tzvi Yehudah Kook zt”l that the Jewish people have a gift to give the world. This gift must be nurtured by intense Torah study aimed at this end and can best be made through a secure, thriving, and vibrant Israel. This is the objective of our approximately four hundred and fifty students, about half of whom are “avrechim,” young married men, engaged in advanced studies.

These young men all invest long hours in the study of Torah for its own sake, with dedication, great love and reverence for God. They challenge themselves to direct all of their thoughts and spiritual strengths to the learning of Torah without any distraction and interruption.

Armed with the love for the Jewish people and a burning desire to give that they absorbed while studying in the yeshiva, many of our alumni serve as heads of other yeshivot, rabbis and teachers in various Torah institutions and schools throughout, and even outside, of Israel. Many of our alumni have been motivated by their studies in the yeshiva to serve as officers in the Israel Defense Forces, or have played key roles in establishing new communities in previously uninhabited parts of Eretz Yisrael.

Regarding new communities I point to the new villages set up in the Chalutza region of the Western Negev with the active support and guidance of the faculty of the yeshiva. Many of our alumni have joined these communities and are working in education or agriculture. In addition, in the past few years, several of our alumni have been appointed to positions as

rabbis of new communities in Samaria, the Binyamin and Chalutza regions.

A large circle of other Torah schools – yeshivot and mechinot – are influenced by Yeshivat Har Hamor; they draw inspiration from this very central Torah institution. This circle includes Yeshivat Tel-Aviv, the Hesder Yeshiva of Mitzpe Ramon, the Mechina in Eli, and the Otzem Mechina of the Neve community in the Chalutza region, among others.

We pray for the continued emergence of eminent Torah scholars, educators, soldiers, officers and other men of action from the center of Torah called Yeshivat Har Hamor. Those who draw water from this well are strong hearted, filled with humility and a fear of God, and overflowing with love for our people and our land. They are a blessing for us all and may be measured by their deeds.



**Rabbi Lior Silber**

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## מאמרי הראיה/חירות וביעור חמץ

אלה השנים המסמנים לנו את חג הגאולה, חג הפסח, זמן חירותנו. ולדורות מה אנחנו למדים מאלה שני הנושאים הללו התלויים זה בזה? התשובה הנצחית היא, שתנאי הגאולה שנים המה: החירות העצמית, חירות הגוף מכל שיעבוד זה, מכל שיעבוד הכופה את צלם אלקים אשר באדם להיות משועבד לכל כח אשר הוא מוריד את ערכו, את תפארת גדולתו והדרת קדשו, והחירות הזאת אינה נקנית כי אם על ידי חירותה של הנשמה, חירות הרוח מכל מה שהוא מטה אותו ממסילתה הישרה והאיתנה היצוקה במהותו העצמית. אבל אלה שני סוגי החירות אינם באים, ואין האדם בתור אישיות פרטית ולא העם בתור קיבוץ שלם בעל רוח מיוחד זוכה להם, כי אם על ידי הביעור מכל גבול ואת כל דבר המעכב את חירותו, שזה חמצו השאור שבעיסה שהיזקו מצוי ביותר בעת אשר אור של גאולה מתנוצץ עליו. להתלמד אנו צריכים איך לסגל לנו את אותו רוח הגדול של החירות, אשר זרח עלינו אמנם בתקופות המאורות שלנו אשר יצא כברק נוצץ בהופעתה של הגאולה הראשונה, גאולת מצרים, אשר נגלה עלינו מלך-מלכי-המלכים הקדוש-ברוך-הוא בכבודו הגדול וקרבתו לעבודתו, שהיא חירותנו הגמורה, והרים אותנו משפלותה של העבדות הנכריה מאשר שוא היא עבודתה. ההבדל שבין העבד לבן-חורין איננו רק הבדל מעמדי, מה שבמקרה זה הוא משועבד לאחר וזה הוא בלתי משועבד. אנו יכולים למצוא עבד משכיל שרוחו הוא מלא חירות, ולהיפך בן-חורין שרוחו הוא רוח של עבד. החירות הצביונית היא אותו הרוח הנשאה, שהאדם וכן העם בכלל מתרומם על ידה להיות נאמן להעצמיות הפנימית שלו, להתכונה נפשית של צלם אלקים אשר בקרבנו, ובתכונה כזאת אפשר לו להרגיש את חייו בתור חיים מגמתיים, שהם שווים את ערכם. מה שאין כן בעל הרוח של עבדות, שלעולם אין תכן חייו והרגשתו ומאירים בתכונתו הנפשית העצמית, כי עם במה שהוא טוב ויפה אצל האחר השולט עליו איזה שליטה שהיא, בין שהיא רשמית בין שהיא מוסרית, - במה שהאחר מוצא שהוא יפה יטוב.

ואנחנו לאורה הפנימי של החירות העצמית הזאת, "חרות על הלוחות, אל תקרא חרות אלא חירות", נסע ונלך להבליט יותר ויותר את עצמאותנו הרעננה הפנימית, שקנינו על ידי גילוי שכונה, אותה חירות שקנינו על ידי הפלא הגדול היחיד בעולם, שנעשה עמנו בעת שגאלנו ה' יתברך וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים לחירות עולם.

בואו נא אחים אל הסדר כולנו, יודע לנו שהננו בני מלכים, ועם שהחירות היא גורלו הנצחי, לא עבד ישראל ולא יליד בית ולא יהי לבת, מאז אשר נשא ברמה מיום חג חירותנו, את דגל החירות וביעור החמץ אשר יבואו כמים בקרבנו וכשמן בעצמותנו על ידי כח האיתנים של המפעל הקדוש והנאמן, בקיימנו את דבר ד' גואל ישראל מעולם ועד עולם, אשר צונו לשמור את המצות. שמרו את החירות ואת ביעור החמץ, והגאלו מהרה גאולה שלמה.

Avi Pinto

Torat Shraga

I would like to share with you a timeless lesson that we can all take out from Pesach. There are two names for the holiday of Pesach - חג הפסח, and זמן חירותנו. Rav Kook explains that there are two different types of freedom; there is the physical freedom (i.e. being legally free), and there is the freedom of the soul (חירות העצמאות). It is better to be a slave and possess the



freedom of the soul, than to be legally free but not spiritually free. The person who is a slave is only suffering for a duration of the workday, after which he is free to do what he wishes. However, for one who is legally free and not spiritually free - the entire world is his prison!

Pesach commemorates both of these freedoms. God freed us from our physical enslavement to Pharaoh, and He revealed Himself to us and gave us the Torah.

People who live their entire lives chasing material pleasures and are always trying to impress others are NOT free! If you are living your life based on what others will think of you instead of what you want and know is right, then you are living for someone else. You are not in control of your life; you are like a slave. If you live your life based on what you know is right, following in the footsteps of God and His commandments, then you are in control of your life and are truly free!

## וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר

כל דבור, שבא מאת הגבורה אל משה, היה בכח הדבור הזה עצמו כח השפעה של אמירה אל ישראל, באופן שתהיה האמירה, שמפי משה אל ישראל, עומדת בכחה העליון על פי אותה המדרגה של שלמות הדיבור, שמפי הגבורה למשה, מפני שלכתחילה היה כח השפעת הדבור לאמר.

## Avi Rosengard

Yesodei HaTorah

When you imagine Moshe Rabeinu telling over to Bnei Yisrael the word of Hashem, how holy do you think the words being retold are? Were they just casual conversation? Were they similar to your average rabbi's Shabbos דבר תורה, or was there something more to it?

Rav Kook explains that the most commonly found pasuk in the Torah, “וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר” implies that Moshe's speeches to Bnei Yisrael had the same exact level of holiness as Hashem's words to Moshe. This is because the ‘And G-d spoke’ goes to (אל) ‘Moshe saying’ (at that same level). This explanation fits perfectly with the Ramban in Shemot (20,7), who states “But the other [last 8] Statements [Commandments 3-10 of the Ten Commandments], they [בני ישראל] received their explanation from Moshe's mouth as they heard the sounds of the words from 'ה.”

The Ramban did not have to emphasize that the words were coming from Moshe's mouth; he could have just written that Moshe had explained these words. By saying the explanations came from Moshe's mouth, which is passive verb usage, the Ramban seems to imply that Moshe's mouth was a tool used by Hashem.

Since the first two Commandments are the basis for the entire Torah, Hashem wanted to deliver them Himself as proof that “He is Hashem” and “There are no other G-ds.” However, the rest of the commandments did not need to come from Him directly, and could come

through Moshe as a medium. Yet another detail from the Cecil B. DeMille film, *The Ten Commandments*, portrayed incorrectly.

## קִדְשׁ-לִי כָּל-בְּכוֹר

הבכור הוא מקודש בטבעו, יהיה הטבע הזה טבע כחני, לא פעלי, ומ"מ יש בו כח של קדושה. אמנם הענין של הכח, שאינו בפועל, הוא באמת תכן חסר וחלוני, כי הקודש העליון קודש ד' הוא לעולם בפועל, ולגבי גבוה אין ענין שבכח כלל כ"א הכל הוא בפועל הגמור. וע"ז צריכים לקדש על ידי הקדושה העליונה, שהיא הקדושה המיוחדת לשם, לקדש על גבה את הקדושה הטבעית, הצפונה כבר בתור דבר שבכח. קדש לי כל בכור.

## Binyomin Korubkin

Yesodei HaTorah

Regarding the mitzvah of the sanctification of firstborn animals and fruits, Hashem tells Moshe: "*Kadesh li kol bechor*" meaning "Sanctify for me every firstborn." Rav Kook asks: The mitzvah of bikurim (first-borns) is to bring the first fruits and animals to the Beis HaMikdash as a donation because they are holy. However, if we are told to bring them because they are already holy, then what does it mean when Hashem tells Moshe "*Kadesh li kol bechor*," to sanctify all of them? Are they not already sanctified from birth? How can we actively make holy something which already is? Rav Kook explains that there are two "modes" of holiness regarding firstborn. There is the "potential" holiness and the active or "kinetic" holiness. The firstborn are instilled with an inherent kedushah at birth. However, it is only in the state of its potential greatness. It is not yet actively holy. To unleash the true kedusha of these firstborn, we must bring them to the Temple and bring out the kinetic holy energy imbued within them. This is precisely, according to Rav Kook, what Hashem is telling Moshe, "*Kadesh li kol bechor*."

## פֶּטֶר כָּל-רֶחֶם, בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

התחלת הלידה היא הנותנת את הכח להצביון של מהות הלידה, את תארה הפנימי הספוגה בה, שמתגלה אח"כ בתכונה ידועה בכל העתיד להולד אח"כ. וזאת היא צורת קדושת ישראל, שמתפשטת מראשית הלידה על כל הבאים לצאת לאויר העולם מכחה של הלידה. פטר כל רחם מבני ישראל.

## Yoni Fried

Torat Shraga

### *So He Came First: What's The Big Deal?*

While reading through the pesukim of Parshat Bo that discuss the avodah of Pesach, we come across a bunch of interesting, yet odd details involving the process of remembering our redemption. These details, which at first glance seem unimportant, irrelevant, and somewhat boring, can easily be taken at surface value without proper focus and concentration.

Rav Kook writes that great potential lies within these pesukim. With his admiring and philosophical outlook, he digs beneath the surface and uncovers the deep and profound ideas hiding behind the seemingly simple detailed text of the Torah.

The Pasuk (13:2) states “Sanctify to me every firstborn, the first of each womb, among the children of Israel.” Coming across this pasuk, I was very bothered by the wordy and seemingly irrelevant details provided. We know that the Torah is not a history book filled with useless details, but rather it's a guidebook for life that consists of deep, meaningful, and profound messages. The concept of the “*Peter Rechem*,” the firstborn, bothered me. This is not the first time that the Torah has mentioned the firstborn. The Torah constantly seems to give tremendous significance and emphasis towards the firstborn. The firstborn gets a lot of attention from his parents until number two comes along, and he also has to deal with the parents' lack of experience, but that's about it. What is so special about the one who was born first?

Rav Kook gives a short and sweet, yet profound and deep approach to the Torah's attitude toward the firstborn. On the words “*Peter Kol Rechem*,” Rav Kook explains that the beginning birth, the first birth, provides and represents the strength of character and the essence of all its future siblings. Rav Kook simply explains that the firstborn, so to speak, paves the path which the rest of the family will ride along. He explains furthermore, that the inner features which the firstborn is filled with is revealed in the inner features of future births. To put it simply, the firstborn gives character to all the future births. Rav Kook concludes his beautiful interpretation, and explains that through the firstborn, the “*Peter Rechem*,” the kedusha is represented in the rest of the family. This is also applicable to all of Am Yisroel; the firstborns provide kedusha to the rest of B'nei Yisroel. This is the meaning, says Rav Kook, of “*Peter Kol Rechem B'nei Yisroel*”.

### **בְּאָדָם, וּבְבִהֶמָה: לִי הוּא**

בעצם יש אחדות פנימית ושרשית בנפש כל חי. והנפש הכוללת, נפש החיים, מקפת היא את נפש האדם ואת נפש הבהמה. “תוצא הארץ נפש חיה למינה”, כלול בזה “נפשו של אדם הראשון” (ב"ר), שגם נפש הבהמה, להחיות בהמה רבה אשר על הארץ, מצדה היא נמשכת. אמנם דוקא בתכונה אנושית חפשית עליונה, בתכונה של התגלות הקודש העליון, אפשר להודיע ולגלות את החבור השרשי, שיש לאדם עם הבהמה מצד הנפשיות, ולכונן את הישועה הכללית לכל, “אדם ובהמה תושיע ד”. באדם ובבהמה לי הוא.

## David Rosenthal

Lev HaTorah

In Parshat Bo, God says to Moshe: “קדש לי כל בכור... באדם ובהמה לי הוא.” “Sanctify to Me every firstborn... of man and beast is mine.” It’s understandable why God would want the firstborn humans to be sanctified, but why does God also request the animals to be made holy? The answer may be found in the words “לי הוא.” Shouldn’t God have said לי הם, referring to both humans and animals? With that, God may be hinting at the connection man shares with animal. Rav Kook writes that man and animal share a very strong connection, an inherent oneness; our essence of life, our soul. The only way we know of this intense אחדות that we as humans share with animals is because God blessed us with a higher understanding to comprehend. We’re more than animal; we have more than just our animal instincts and desires. So when God says “קדש לי,” He is telling us to take that animal instinct within us and make it קדש, holy.

**קִדְשׁ-לִי כָל-בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל-רֶחֶם, בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל--בְּאָדָם, וּבַבְּהֵמָה: לִי, הוּא**  
 הקדושה היא כללית, בכל המציאות היא מופעת, אלא שהיא עלומה ומסותרת מצד גסות החיים, ובאה כנסת ישראל לעולם לגלות את הצפון ולהראות את בהירות הקודש. על כן צריך כל בכור, פטר כל רחם, בישראל, להתקדש, מפני שיש קדושה מתפשטת באדם ובבהמה, והמה לדי' המה באמת, אלא שאין קדושתם נראית, וע"י ההתגלות של קדושת בכורות ישראל יתגלה אור הקודש בכל המציאות, בכל החיים כולם, באדם ובבהמה.

## Andrew Goldstein

Torat Shraga

Rav Kook on this pasuk writes that kedushah is inherent in everything; every creation is inculcated with it. Kedushah is only hidden due to the profanity of life, גסות החיים, and it is the job of Knesset Yisrael to reveal the hidden and to demonstrate the בהירות הקודש, Holy Brightness. Therefore, it is necessary for every firstborn in Israel to be sanctified; there is holiness within every human and animal, for Hashem and truth, that is unfortunately not revealed. But the same way that Bnei Yisrael is the firstborn of the world and is in charge of being a Light unto the Nations, the revelation of the kedusha of the firstborn acts as a candle, illuminating the holiness of all the creations and all of life, in animals and in humanity. This is because each firstborn, whether human or animal, has within it a natural potential of kedushah imbued in its soul.

The Sefer Kuzari writes that when one encounters someone who is kadosh, he will be inspired by such an encounter and his own holiness will be unveiled. We can say that this is why each firstborn is dedicated to Hashem. This way they can transform their naturally imbued potential kedusha into active kedusha and reach levels where they can inspire the

kedusha of others to be revealed.

Also, we can learn from the role of the kohanim who took the place of the firstborn what the role of the firstborn really is. The kohanim were charged with being the teachers of the Jewish people, directing them to serve Hashem and achieve their potential. If the firstborn had not been punished for the sin of the Golden Calf, this would mean that in almost every household there would be a teacher. In each family there would be multiple candles of kedusha, radiating the will of Hashem, and helping to reveal the kedusha within us all.

Even after the sin of the Golden Calf, the firstborn can still complete their mission of illumination by directing themselves and their actions towards Hashem. May we realize our capabilities and expose our kedusha and achieve our ultimate potential in this world and the next.



**וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם, זְכוֹר אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִהְיֶה זְכוֹר בְּטֹבַע הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁל הָעָם. זֶהוּ הַרֵז אֲשֶׁר הוֹדִיעַ: שִׁיעַמְדוּ עַל הַטֹּבַע הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁלָּהֶם וַיִּדְעוּ שֶׁהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוּא מוֹכֵרָה לְהִיּוֹת זְכוֹר, בְּתַכּוּנָה שֶׁל מִקּוֹה.

**אֲשֶׁר יִצְאֲתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים**

הוּא יִהְיֶה זְכוֹר בְּצַבִּיּוֹנוֹ הַמִּיּוּחָד, שֶׁנִּשְׁתַּנִּיתִם עַל יַד מַעֲבֹדוֹת לְחֵירוֹת

## Gamliel HaCohen

### Yesodei HaTorah

Rav Kook notes a beautiful and deep message here. This day would be remembered on the national soul of Bnei Yisrael, in the way that they stood on their nature and knew that it was worthy of a special (more intimate) remembrance *Btchuna shel Makor*, an ultimate source of character that we (Bnei Yisrael) can eternally draw from. (Think Haggadah/Pesach Seder)

This message extends to a physical sense as well. That day was when Hashem freed us from slavery in Mitzrayim and we became His nation bound only to Him and His Torah, thus granting us a higher sense of purpose and ingraining us with a character both mentally and physically awesome and unique: to be His nation in both mind and body within the guidelines of the Torah.



**כִּי בַחֲזֹק יָד, הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה**

דָּבָר גָּדוֹל אִירַע בְּיוֹם זֶה, שְׁנוּיִים עֲצֵמִיִּים אִירַעוּ בּוֹ בְּכֹל מֵהוֹתְכֶם וּבְכֹל הַקֶּפְכֶם. הַכֹּל הִיָּה מֵאוֹגֵד לְהִיּוֹת הַמַּעֲמֵד שֶׁלְכֶם עוֹמֵד כַּמְקֵדֵם לְהַשָּׂאֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּבֵית עֲבָדִים. וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוּא שֶׁגֵּרַם בְּסִגְלוֹתוֹ, הַמִּיּוּעָדָה

מראש, שבו יתגלה אותו חוזק היד שהיה בכחו לנתק את כל מוסרות העבדות, להעתיק מהמצב העבדתי למצב החרות נגד כל הגורמים הרבים של העבדות. ע"כ מוכרח הוא היום הזה להיות זכור.

## Ray Levy

Torat Shraga

On the words “*Ki bechozek yad*,” Rav Kook comments that at this point during the ge’ula (redemption) process, something had changed in their essence and mentality because of their newfound surroundings. Before this point, they had a slave mentality and had wanted to remain in Egypt. Even if the toil was harsh, Am Yisrael had gotten accustomed to the crude Egyptian lifestyle at the time, and even if it meant harsh oppression, the Jews felt that it was home for them. With this newly discovered freedom, the Jews had now been fully exposed to the hand of Hashem and were all prepared to trust in whatever Hashem had planned for them—entering a land of their own, the holy land of Eretz Yisrael. The hand of Hashem, Rav Kook explains, is what caused the mental change in Am Yisrael, which is what even allowed the maidservants who saw Hashem split the Red Sea attain the level of prophecy of the later prophet Yechezkel.

## וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל, חֻמֵץ

כשם שזכירתו היא זכירה טבעית נפשית בכלל, ככה התוכן המעשי המזכיר, המראה על זכרונו והמקיים אותו, הוא טבוע שאי אפשר להיות אחרת. לא יאכל חמץ, אי אפשר שיאכל חמץ ביום הזה, הזכור בטבעיותו הרוחנית בעומק הנפשיות שלכם.

## Ben Kean

Yesodei HaTorah

On the words “*וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל חֻמֵץ*,” “and chametz will not be eaten” Rav Kook writes that this is not just a prohibition against eating chametz on Pesach, but that it is actually natural for people not to eat chametz on Pesach.

What does this mean that it is actually unnatural for Jews to eat chametz on Pesach? How can this be? I think I would find it very easy to eat a slice of pizza any day of the year, Pesach or otherwise, and I doubt I would feel any worse physically for it. In fact, I would probably feel better because of how much I like pizza.

Obviously, this is not what Rav Kook means. When we look at the context of these words in the חומש, we see that this comes after the mitzva to “remember the day we left Egypt, from the house of slavery.” As such, we know that the fact that it is unnatural for us to eat chametz on Pesach must be in some way connected to the exodus from Egypt.

When our ancestors left Egypt, something fundamental changed in the Jewish people. We went



from being a subjugated slave people to a free nation. We went from a life steeped in idolatry to one steeped in Torah and service of God. We took on the spiritual mission and covenant of our ancestors, Avraham, Yitzhak, and Ya'akov to spread the knowledge of God to the world. Something changed in the spiritual nature of the Jewish people, and Pesach is the day that we remember that change and the miracles that God performed to make that happen.

Matza, the opposite of chametz, represents a number of things. It is called לחם עוני (bread of poverty) because it represents the poverty and lack of proper bread for our ancestors in Egypt. It is a reminder that when we left Egypt, we didn't have the proper time to let our dough rise, so it baked into matza, rather than chametz.

Rav Kook is telling us that on Pesach, we remember the great change that happened to the collective soul of the Jewish people. Eating chametz on Pesach weakens the soul's natural remembrance of Yetziat Mitzrayim. In a state of natural, pure expression of the soul it would be entirely impossible to eat that pizza on Pesach because that would interrupt the neshama's remembrance of the great spiritual uplifting that it had during Yetziat Mitzrayim.

### הַיּוֹם, אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים, בְּחֹדֶשׁ, הָאָבִיב

פעולת היציאה שלכם היא פעולה חודרת בכל היקום, פעולה חודרת בכל הטבע, פעולה חודרת בכל מה שהוא למעלה מן הטבע. היום הוא מיוחד במהותו הרוחנית, להיות מוכן ליציאה שלכם, והוא בחודש האביב, שהפריחה והחיים המתחדשים מוכרים בו כ"כ בכל הטבע. קנה כאן מקום אחד כל תמצית הבריאה, להיות הכל משותף עם יציאתכם המופלאה.

Ariel Bagley

Torat Shraga

## *Pesach: The Seeds of the World's Eternal Redemption*

When we think of Pesach, we immediately conjure up mental images of slavery, Egypt, Moshe, and ultimately, freedom. These motifs certainly have widespread thematic significance to the chag, but there seems to be one theme that is rather abstract; freedom. To truly understand the question of what "freedom" is, we need to ask several questions first. What are we being freed from? Once we are freed, what are the next steps for us to grow as a nation? Does this freedom affect the whole world, or just Am Yisrael? And, finally, what is the "season" of geula, as Nissan is referred to? All these ideas, once fully explored, will give us the proper understanding of Yetziat Mitzrayim, and, hopefully, will propel our simcha this chag to greater heights.

Our freedom from slavery in Egypt is the main theme of this chag. To have an appreciation of our freedom, we have to understand, theologically, our subjugation. A central tenet of being a Jew is that we have the freedom to choose between observing and neglecting our obligation to the 613 Mitzvot. If one does not don tefilin, or observe the laws pertaining



to Kashrut properly, one does not receive an instant punishment from the cosmos. There are several reasons why this is so. The first is that it wouldn't really give us the choice to do wrong, because the fear of retribution would be hanging over our heads, and our relationship with God would solely be defined by that fear, with no possibility for love. That, in and of itself, runs counter to the idea that we have to love God with all of our heart. Another reason is that it wouldn't allow us to attain Olam Habah, for, after all, we observed the mitzvot simply because we did not want to die. Since God created the world to give us reward and let our souls reach ever greater heights, it would render the whole creation useless. But that seemingly still doesn't answer our first question of why the subjugation in Egypt was so bad. However, the answer lies in the idea of free will we just elaborated on. Mitzrayim, in Hebrew, connotes subjugation, bondage, and entrapment. It is, in a nutshell, representative of the feeling of being boxed in and trapped. Our freedom to observe the Torah and the commandments represents our way of countering these negative ideas. For, if we have the mitzvot, we have the ability to grow and attain meaning and a connection to our Master. And, only by having the ability to freely pursue those mitzvot do we attain that reward. In essence, by Hashem taking us out of the land of stagnation, bondage, and entrapment, and delivering us to the land of growth, reward, and connection to God, we are given the ability to grow and attain reward individually, and as a People.

We just established that our freedom represents the keys to our growth as a people. But, now that we are freed from Mitzrayim, what are the next steps for us as a people? We left Egypt, but we are a disorganized and disheveled group of nomadic former slaves. Why are we thanking God for this freedom if it means being thrown in the desert, alone and afraid, with no experience working out of the confines of slavery? The Maharal asks this, and answers that God imbued us with the characteristics of a freed nation after Egypt. He allowed us to undergo a great paradigm shift where we change from a group of people with the mentality of a slave; to the free, unified people we are today. For if we stayed with the same mentality as when we left Egypt, there is no conceivable way we could have existed at all, let alone as a people. But I believe that this represents something deeper than that. I think that, since this freedom allowed us to think individually within the context of the nation, it gave us the tools to survive forever. If we were freed and just handed the Torah, even if we accepted it willingly, it still wouldn't have allowed us to transmit the Torah to the next generations. One of the reasons why learning Torah is so deep is because it relates to each and every Jew. Whether it is Talmud, Nach, Rashi, Machshava, Mussar, or Emunah, just to name a few, each Jew is given something he can work with and connect to God with. A slave looks at anything in his life in black and white terms; does this please or dissuade my master. How can I use this to please my master? Everything in his life is used to relate to his master. And that aspect of being a slave is good, and that's why we are referred to as slaves several times in the selichot of Elul and the Yamim Noraim liturgy. It is only when we use that as the ends to our existence, devoid of individualism, and not a means of obtaining a relationship that bears our own imprint, that the slave mentality becomes a problem. That is why a release from that paradigm, and the ability to connect to God by looking into ourselves to relate to our Creator, is the true essence of us becoming a people that

can sustain the Torah for generations to come.

The problem we once again are left with is that our answers don't explain why this freedom had to come now, in the month of Nissan. Why couldn't it have come in the winter, summer, or fall? In his commentary to the tefilah of Shacharit, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook zt"l, noted 20th century sage and first Chief Rabbi of Israel, writes about the idea of freedom in relation to both the month of Nissan and the effect that our freedom has on the world at large. We humans relate to time as it appears to us. When we have a meeting at 5:00 in the evening, we cannot become part of the meeting until we are living 5:00. True, we can prepare and ponder the upcoming time and whatever it is we are about to face, but until we are one with the time, every preparatory and/or intellectual pondering of that time exists in abstract. God has the unique ability to relate to all of time, past, present, and future, as one single entity that is a long continuation of the creation of the world. That is why we have chagim at different times of the year. We can only relate to the idea the chag is trying to send us at the time it is in. Furthermore, since we have established that each time period, since it is divvied up, attests to our mortality, we tacitly acknowledge that each time frame has cosmological significance. That, once again, leaves us asking the question of what the time that this freedom exists means. The answer, though, lies in what we have just established. By virtue of the fact that the season falls out in the spring, and in has divine meaning, it by extension has meaning in the physical season it falls out in. Spring is, at its root, a season of renewal. We see life teeming anew all around us. That, of course, relates to our renewal as a people, arising from the ground and depths of slavery to a new and sanctified people worthy of the Torah. The timing of the chag also shows us that God is the source of everything, and, conversely, we cannot relate to nature without relating to Him first. So God is not merely a being that chooses a time to redeem us out of nowhere, but rather, he shows us that to relate to time is to relate to the source. Our relation to the source changes, but the source itself stays the same. The fact that we were redeemed from Egypt into the desert and not straight into Eretz Yisrael shows us that this redemption affects the whole world.

The redemption from Egypt is not only a physical redemption akin to ones release from jail, but rather, it is a theological statement by which God gives us the ability to become the nation we are forever. It is the key to our free will, our eternal transmission of the Torah, and our relation to God through the gift of time. That is why we thank God for the gift he gave us 3,000 years ago three times a day, and it is the reason this redemption is a hallmark of our faith. Hopefully with this understanding we can be zocheh to see the true eternal light of Mashiach in our times.

וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבִיֵאֵד יְהוָה אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֲמֹרִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי,  
 אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לָתֵת לָהּ, אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב, וְדָבָשׁ; וְעַבְדָּתָ אֶת-  
 הָעִבְרָה הַזֹּאת, בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה

מכוונים הם מקריה הפרטיים של ארץ ישראל אל המאורעות הגדולים, של הופעת הקדושה של אור

ד', אשר באו בגללה. על כן חקוק אותו הרושם של מועד האביב, בשלמותו, בארץ הקדושה בתור אספקלריא מכוונת, המראה לנו את האור והזוהר, את חדוש החיים והחרות אשר נעשה לנו בימי אביבנו הגדול, במועד צאתנו ממצרים בחזקת יד של אדון כל המעשים ברוך הוא. והובע יסוד זה בארץ המיוחדת, שהיא זבת חלב ודבש, הארץ של חמשת העמים הנקובים בזה, שתולדותיה ותוצאות אדמתה הן מורות על הפעולה המדויקת והנפלאה של אוירה, ורושם האביב זורח בה בכל אורו ויפעת הדרו, וממנה מסתעף הוד השפעתה על כל האדמה, שהאביב הוא רושם תחיתה, בהקבלה המכוונת של "ועבדת את העבודה הזאת בחודש הזה".

## Jacob Kahn

Lev HaTorah

There is a connection between the the spring, Eretz Yisroel and Chag HaPesach that are all mentioned together in Shemot:13-4,5. The spring of Eretz Yisroel, while Am Yisroel was still in Egypt, had a major impression on the entire event of the exodus. It wasn't until the renewal in Eretz Yisroel - the spring, that the nation itself had its renewal and rebirth from Egypt, to return to the land and serve Hashem. The exodus was a time of renewal for the entire Jewish nation. Even though the land was occupied by the five Canaanite nations, the connection between the land and its people was and is always in existence. The Land of Milk and Honey is Am Yisroel's foundation and the goal of the exodus from Egypt. Eretz Yisroel is the center of the entire world and its spring power and energy radiates further than the Middle East. Every spring in Eretz Yisroel radiates to the entire Jewish nation that is spread out throughout the world.

Through us, the Jewish nation in foreign countries, the renewal of this time is spread. It is always a time for us to return to Hashem and inspire those around us to seek the truth and have their own exodus from their enslavement. Every spring is a rebirth for us to try to bring ourselves to Eretz Yisroel. We will always have this connection with our land and it will always be our foundation and direction throughout our history.



### שְׁבַעַת יָמִים, תֹּאכַל מִצֶּת; וּבִיּוֹם, הַשְּׁבִיעִי, חַג, לִיהוָה

הרושם של הקדושה, אשר להופעה האלהית של יציאת מצרים, צריך שימשך שבעת ימים. מובן, שכל יום יש לו ענין בפני עצמו, ומסירת רושם בפני עצמו. אבל היחוד של כל יום בפ"ע הוא רק פרט אחד מהכלל הכולל, של הרושם המבוקש בכל שבעת הימים, ומשום כך צריך להיות היום השביעי, החותם של הימים, הכולל בקרבו, יחד עם רשימתו הפרטית, בתור יום אחד מתוך כל הימים, גם את רושם הכללות וכח המאחד, שהוא מאחד בכחו וביסוד רשומו את כל הרשמים הפרטיים של כל שבעת הימים כולם. הרושם הכללי זהו החגיגות בהכרתה הקדושה האלהית, הבאה מתוך הא כילה של המצות אשר לשבעת הימים, שבעת ימים תאכל מצות, והשלמת הדברים בגמר פרי צ יור רשימתם העליונה באה בחתימת הימים, וביום השביעי חג לד'.

## Max Jacobson

Yesodei HaTorah

“Seven days you will eat matzos and the seventh day will be a holiday for Hashem.” The imprint of kedusha is to show the Godliness of Yetziat Mitzraim that entangles the seven days. It is clear that every day has a matter in itself and a transmission of an imprint in itself. But the solidarity of “every day,” is in itself only excluding one from the general of the group, of the imprint of the request in all seven days. And because of this it needs to be the seventh day, the seal of the days, the inclusion among them, together with its special imprint, separating one day from the all the other days. Also, it is a general imprint and a uniting force, that it unites in its power and in its foundational imprint, all the special imprints of all of the seven days. The general imprint is that this is a festival in the severing of the Godly kedusha, the one that comes from the eating of the matzot that are for seven days, “Seven days you will eat matzot,” and the completion of the things with the final fruit illustrating their elevated imprint, the one that comes in sealing the days, and in the seventh day of holiday.

### מִצּוֹת, יֹאכֵל, אֶת, שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים; וְלֹא-יִרְאֶה לָךְ חֶמֶץ, וְלֹא-יִרְאֶה לָךְ שָׂאֵר--בְּכֹל-גְּבוּלְךָ

הרושם בא בין מצד החיוב, בין מצד השלילה, מצד הקום ועשה ומצד השב ואל תעשה. היתרון של הרושם החיובי, הבא מצד השלילה, הוא שרשומו הוא מתמיד בלא הפסקה כלל, מה שאי אפשר להיות בענין שהוא חיובי ומפעלי. על זה באה המצוה, באיזה אופן יהיה הרושם עומד קים בלא הפסק כל שבעת הימים, שמצות תאכלו כל שבעת הימים, מה שהוא דבר נמנע בתכונה של קום ועשה, אבל הוא בא במילואו כשהוא נפעל מתכונה שלילית של שב ואל תעשה, כלומר הרושם הגדול של הרחקת החמץ, שהוא ממולא בכל מילואו ב“לא יראה לך חמץ ולא יראה לך שאור בכל גבולך”. מזה ידענו, שעיקר יסוד חובת אכילת מצה כל שבעת הימים היא בעיקרה מניעת אכילת חמץ, שעל פיה יש ציור לענין הרישום של אכילת מצה, כל שבעת הימים, בלא שום הפסק, כמדתה של שב ואל תעשה, שהיא מתמדת, והרישום החנוכי שבא על ידה הוא מתעלה בשביל כך לתכונה שופעת את הפעלתה בלא שום הפסקה כלל.

## Sam Cohen

Mechina Bnei David - Eli - Lieutenant Pikud HaOref

*“You shall eat matzot all seven days, and you shall not see any leavened bread nor any wheat in your domain.”*

Why does the pasuk seem to repeat itself? Eat matzah for the duration, and keep away the leavened food. We know that the Torah doesn't have superfluous words, and definitely not whole sentences. Rav Kook explains: The pasuk represents the positive and the negative sides

of the mitzvah. One might think that it would be enough to be commanded to eat matzah for seven days, but we all realize that as human beings, we are unable to fulfill this mitzvah on a constant basis. Because of that, we are also given the commandment to not have any leavened foods within our domain during the holiday. This complements the commandment to eat matzah, by turning it into a mitzvah that we fulfill constantly, just by refraining from having leavened food in our domain. Rav Kook explains further; “From here we learn that the main aspect of the obligation to eat matzah is NOT eating matzah! It is as if we are constantly eating the matzah, similar to the constant nature of the commandment to not have leavened food within our domain.”

Why is it of such importance to constantly eat matzah? We know that when the Jews left Egypt, didn't have time to let the bread leaven before leaving. In their desire to leave bondage and achieve freedom to serve Hashem, they didn't let the bread rise. So too can we, by eating matzah for seven days, we can overcome our own slavery to the the hustle and bustle of the rest of the year, and achieve freedom to reassert our devotion to living a life serving Hashem!



**וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעֵבֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם**  
 התכן של התנחלותם של רשמי הקדושה, זהו יסוד המורשה הנצחית, וכל דבר מפעלות ד', להפליא עמו במצרים, באותות נוראים, היה מכון כדי לעשות זכר לנפלאותיו. המטרה העליונה של הנפלאות שנעשו, מושגת היא ע"י השמירה של רשומיהם לדורות עולמים. הדורות מצדם הם ג"כ מעלים, מזככים את הרשמים העליונים, שואבים מהם את אורם הגדול, ע"י הפעלתם של הרשמים על הדורות במסלולם. כל מגמתם של הגדולים, אשר עשה ד' במצרים עמנו, היתה בעבור זה, בעבור שהגנו עם שומר אמונים, שהרשמים של המעשים הגדולים לא יסורו מאתנו לנצח, ועדי עד הננו שואבים מאוצרם אור חיים ודעת קדושים. "חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך" ובעבור זה עשה ד' לי בצאתי ממצרים.

## Eitan Bar David

Torat Shraga

In understanding מצרים מצרים, an obvious yet fundamental question must be answered; why did Hashem take us out of Egypt with a myriad of miracles, from the ten plagues to the splitting of the sea - would it not have been enough for the exodus to occur through more natural means? In the Haggadah's interpretation of the four sons, it is clear that the רשע bases his question on the assumption that Hashem did not take him out of Egypt, but rather his ancestors. Therefore, in response, the Haggadah quotes the פסוק from שמות יג: that states "וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֵבֹר זֶה" interpreting the verse to mean that had the רשע been in Egypt he would not have been redeemed. Elsewhere in the Haggadah the same פסוק is used to show that not only did Hashem take our ancestors out of Egypt, but even we were part of the redemption. However, it is unclear what exactly the "זה" in the פסוק is referring to. While most might describe "זה" as referring to something external and physical, such as matzah or Israel, Rav Kook explains that "זה" refers to the very telling over of the story described in the פסוק. In other words, the reason



we're brought out of Egypt was so that all these miracles could take place and be retold. In a certain sense, Hashem took us out of Egypt so that He could take us out of Egypt! In furthering the significance of this point, Rav Kook explains the need for what might seem like backwards logic employed by Hashem. The purpose of the miracles was to make an indelible impression upon the Jewish people not only as individuals in the current generation, but one that would last for eternity. The miracles themselves created a necessity to remember the awesomeness with which we were freed from Egypt. Through relating those events, as evident in the very mitzvah to relate the story on Pesach, we will forever remain the people of Hashem. In truth, the Torah itself relates the significance of the miracles. Most notably in שמות יב: it says "וְלָמַעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאֲזְנֵי בְנֵי וְבָנֵי-בְנֵי אֶת אֲשֶׁר" "הִתְעַלְלֹתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-אֶתְרֵי אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי בָם וְיָדַעְתֶּם כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוָה" Clearly the Torah understands the need for such miracles not only for the generation that experienced them. The events leading to the establishment of the Jews as a nation needed to occur through supernatural means, in order that in every generation, the remembrance of Gods power would set us apart as an עם קדוש.

**וְהָיָה לָךְ לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ, וּלְזָכְרוֹן בֵּין עַיְנֶיךָ, לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת יְהוָה,**

**בְּפִיךָ: כִּי בְיַד חֻזְקָה, הוֹצֵאתָ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם**

החיקוק של רשמי הנפלאות צריך שיוחק על כח המפעל, על יסוד פעולת החיים, ועל כח הרעיון, יסוד המחשבה וההרגשה. שני אלה יחדיו יהפכו את הטבע החלוני של האדם לטבע קדוש אלהי, ותורת ד' תהיה בפיו, טבעית, בהגיוני לבבו. כל ההכנה הזאת דרושה היא, מפני שכל היסוד של יציאת מצרים היה להלחם בטבע הגס של החיים, המטביע את האדם במצולותיה של החלוניות, ומאחר שיסודם הגס של החיים כ"כ חזק הוא, וכדי להלחם בו עד שינוצח הטבע החלוני שבאדם, כדי שיחול בקרבו אותו מאור של הטבע הקדוש שלו, צריכה היתה יד חזקה להגלות, על כן צריכין אנחנו להמעשים הקדושים הללו של הנחת תפלין על היד ועל הראש, כדי לסייע בסגולתם את המפעל הגדול הזה, של התהפכותו של הכח הגדול של החיים החלוניים הגסים, לכח חיים אציליים נהדרים בקדושה. ע"כ רק ע"י שיהיו לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך, אחרי כל התעצומה הזאת, תהיה תורת ד' בפיך, ולא מבלעדה, כי כשם שלפעולה הכללית, להכניע את הרוח החלוני הגס של האנושיות, שאז נתבלט במצרים, היה צורך ביד חזקה, להוציא אותך ממצרים בדבר ד', כמו כן צריך להמשיך את המפעל הזה, של נצחון הקודש על החלוניות שבחיים, בכח רב וביד חזקה שעוזה וגבורתה יגלו ע"י המפעל הכביר של המצוה הזאת הנאדרה בקדושתה האותית, של התפלין, שהיא מקפת בכפילות כחה, בעזוזתה הגדולה, את המפעל עם ההשקפה, היד והעין; כי רק בכח כביר ומכופל זה אפשר להמשיך את מה שנעשה מני אז ביד חזקה.

Ariel Shamah

Torat Shraga

### *The Super Powers*

The second we turned thirteen we were told that we are now adults with all these new responsibilities, obligated in all the mitzvot, a major one being תפלין. But what really is the

reason behind them? Why must we strap parchments to our arms and heads? Through learning and being involved with Har HaMor, I came upon one of the writings of Rav Kook.

Rav Kook explains, through his beautiful and poetic language, that our wearing of תפלין can, did and should have an impact on our lives. In our lives there are two powers that govern the way we live: our thought, the basis of our feelings and ideas, and our actions, the basis for our daily lives. He states that the two components of the תפלין namely the ראש and the יד transform the nature of these two powers to become קדוש.

These two powers have the ability, says Rav Kook, to switch our nature from being secular to being 'קדוש אלוקי' and that's what happened in יציאת מצרים. The entire point of יציאת מצרים was to fight the secular powers and to make us 'קדוש אלוקי'. In order for God to make that happen he had to make his החזקה יד appear through all the miracles that happened on the way out.

In order for the תורה to be natural in our hearts and thoughts, God had to take us out with His החזקה יד. Nowadays, in order to keep this transformation going we must wear our תפלין on our heads and arms. The תפלין on our heads represents the power of thought and the תפלין on our arms represents our daily actions. Whenever we wear our תפלין we should be reminded of the החזקה יד that got us out of the influential secular lifestyle, and through that we will keep ה' תורת in our minds and actions constantly and naturally.

### וְשִׁמְרַתְּ אֶת-הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת, לְמוֹעֵדָהּ, מִיָּמִים, יְמִימָה

הכח הגורם של התמדת הרשמים הקדושים שלא יזוון, צריך הוא שיהיה חוזר ומתגלה במועדו, באותו הפרק של הזמן, שהוכן מראש בכדי שכחו של אור הקודש יגלה בעולם. ע"י הגלותו בזמנו פועלת היא סגולתו להמשיך את הפעלת רשומו, משנה לשנה, בצורה מתקיימת, באופן שכנסת ישראל חיה היא בתדירות ברשם הקדוש של הפעולה הכבירה של יד ד' החזקה, אשר נתגלה לנו ביציאת מצרים, בלא שום הפרעה והפסק. כחו של רשם ההתמדה בא מכחה של סגולת הזמן, ומצטרפת היא סגולת המשמרת מתוך מועדה המכוון, להיות נמשכת וחוזרת, מימים ימימה, ומשנה לשנה יביע אמו, עד שתקיף הופעת הקדושה את שטף הזמנים כולם לדור דורים.

## Reuiv Goodwin

### Yesodei HaTorah

*You shall observe this statute in it's season, from year to year.*

I think this verse teaches all of us an important lesson. Rav Kook writes that keeping something every year, a statute Hashem has given us, keeps some sort of holy imprints alive and keeps the world going. There are many different characteristics a חק brings with it. One of the biggest things it shows is the ultimate faith that one has in Hashem when one fulfills a חק. Why? Because a חק doesn't have rational reasons behind it. It's just someone doing a mitzvah לשמה - purely for the ultimate sake of doing the mitzvah.



Furthermore, this specific mitzvah of having to do it the same time every year shows the consistency we must have when doing Hashem's mitzvos. Consistency is something that keeps the holy spirit in the world, and Rav Kook points that out with regards to this mitzvah. When someone consistently serves Hashem in this world, it is literally something that keeps this world going. This is one of the characteristic of this specific חק which we should merit to be able to fulfill.

## וְהָיָה כִּי-יבִאֲדָ יְהוָה, אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי, כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָךְ, וּלְאַבְתָּיִךְ; וְנִתְּנָה, לָךְ

ארץ ישראל יש לה הסגולות החיות העליונות, של יסוד הקדושה היותר עליונה המתגלה בעולם, שיש בכחה להפך את התכן היותר רע והיותר מקולקל לטובה ולברכה. לפיכך שם הארץ היא כנען, האיש המקולקל והמקולל, אוצר הכיעור והזוהמה והשפלות האנושית, וכל אלה הנטיות השפלות נטעו באנושיות, מפני שיש אוצר חיים נעלה מאד גנוז בה דוקא אוצר אור שבמטמוני החשך, ורק הכח הנעלה, הנובע מיסוד האורה העליונה, יסוד שבועת עולמים בדבר ד', המוטבע בסגולת הארץ הפנימית, העלול להתגלות רק ע"י עם ד', הממשיכים את יסוד קדושתם מאבות העולם עד דור אחרון, זהו היסוד הבסיסי לבחירה הנפלאה של העם ושל הארץ יחידו, המקושר מאד ביסוד התולדתי התכוני ההולך ומופיע בחיים הדוריים, לארץ ולדרים עליה, ע"פ ברית ושבועה. ועל כן נאמרה הקדמה זו של פסוק זה בכל פרטיותה: והיה כי יביאך ד' אל ארץ הכנעני, וההבאה שמה הרי היא כאשר נשבע לך, ולאבותיך, התכן היסודי שהונח בתכונת סגולת הארץ באפן בלתי משתנה בעצם, להיות לה קשר רוחני אמיץ עם האבות והבנים יחדו, והיחס של הכנעניות של הארץ כולה, - מסר ונתנה לך, בכחך למזוג, להפכו ולהעלותו אל מרום הקודש, להוציא ממסגר אסיר.

## Daniel Albert

Lev HaTorah

Rav Kook says that the small events of ארץ ישראל are connected to the greater ones. The small events happen because of the big events. For example, being born, or becoming a Bar Mitzvah. Which one is greater? Being born might be greater, in that birth brings us into the world, but the ultimate goal is to become a Bar Mitzvah. Without being born, there is no Bar Mitzvah, so being born (the greater) happens only to allow something else (being a Bar Mitzvah- smaller event).

The four nations mentioned in this פסוק (along with the other three not mentioned), were placed in the land just for בני ישראל to come in and inherit it. Without these nations working the fields, the land would have become too tough to work, devoid of all nutrients, for it is not good to let the ground lay fallow for too long.

Coming into the land of Israel is like the end, or even the continuation, of the Exodus story. The Pesach story occurred in the season of spring, אביב, accounting for one of the many

names of Pesach חג האביב. The imprints of the spring are the products of the land, the חלב (from a fig) and the דבש (from a date). The land, therefore, made these nations strong, and because of this אביב, they became strong to their full potential! Their strength was to the full potential within nature, just below miraculous, so when עם ישראל came in and conquered these nations, it was, in fact, quite miraculous.

The kedusha of Pesach causes spring. Pesach is the representation of חרות, freedom, the birth of עם ישראל. Spring is the rebirth of plants and greenery, and therefore Spring and Pesach fall together because they are both epitomes of rebirth. For non-Jews it's the exact opposite! They believe there are שדים, demons, in the winter, and therefore Halloween is in the winter. In the spring it gets warm, and to represent reproduction and rebirth, they have Easter, the rabbit, in the spring. Their holidays are caused by the seasons, but for us, because עם ישראל was born in the spring, the spring comes for Pesach, and not the other way around.

## וְהֵעֲבֵרְתָּ כָּל-פֶּטֶר-רְחֹס, לַיהוָה; וְכָל-פֶּטֶר שְׁגֵר בְּהֵמָה, אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ הַזְּכָרִים--לַיהוָה

ההתחלות הטבעיות נתונות הן בתכן החיים במורד, והירידה הזאת הוכנה מראש לשם עליה עליונה, זוהר קודש לנצח, בקשר עם הכנעניות של הארץ, שממנה תוצאות, ע"י סגולתן של ישראל, בחבור הקודש של אבות העולם ודורות בני אל חי יחד, לפאר את החיים בפאר עליון. כמו כן הבכורה התולדתית הפועלת בחיים, הבכורה הפוסרת את הרחם, הנושאת בכחה את התכן התולדתי לכל אורך קו בעתיד, זה הכח הנה יעבור לד', כהעברת הנחלה ממקום למקום, מערך לערך, והדבר מקיף את יסוד החי כולו, ומכניס בקרבו גם את הנפשיות של הבהמה, מצד סגולתה המפעלית, היסוד העקרי שבתולדה והמשכת החיים, הזכרים לד'.

## Max Hollander

Migdal HaTorah

In Parshat Bo (13:11-12) the Torah says, "And it will be that when Hashem will bring you to the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your forefathers, and He will give it to you; then you shall set apart any that first emerges from the womb for Hashem, and of each first calf of livestock that belong to you, the males are Hashem's." This is referring to, of course, the commandment of Pidyon Haben, giving your firstborn son to the Kohen, and acquiring him back with a few gold coins, and donating the firstborn of your cattle to the Beit Hamikdash. Rav Kook explains that all things in this world start out at a low point. A baby is born with no knowledge of Torah, for example. However, it's this low point that allows room for growth. Rav Kook quotes the Zohar which says that the Torah uses the term "Canaan" rather than "Israel" when promising us the land to express this concept of bettering something! The only difference is that here, instead of a baby, it's the land itself experiencing growth. The land is raised through the merit of our forefathers and passed down through the generations, from a land of tumah

and goyim to the home of the Jewish people. Rav Kook further explains the connection of the land to the firstborn. They both serve a similar function. However, to understand this we need a bit more background in what exactly a firstborn son is. Originally, before the sin of the Golden Calf, the firstborn sons were supposed to lead the services in the Beit Hamikdash, and each family was supposed to have their own personal priest in a sense. The firstborn is meant to serve as an example of what the rest of the family can achieve. He is an example of a complete servant of Hashem, with the ability to become better than he was before. That is what Israel is for the world, a symbol of what other nations can be, something greater and better than they were before, and in that way Bnei Yisrael can inspire the entire world in an extremely powerful way.

## וְכֹל-פֶּטֶר חֲמֹר תִּפְדֶּה בְּשֶׁה, וְאִם-לֹא תִפְדֶּה וְעִרְפָּתוֹ; וְכֹל בְּכוֹר אָדָם בְּבִנְיָהּ, תִּפְדֶּה

הדבר מתפשט עד לתחיתיה של הנפש הבהמית, גם במערכה החיצונה שלה, שאם לא תוכל היא לעלות ביסוד הקודש יש לה ערך של תמורה, ואופי של כח גורם תוכני קודש, מועילים בבנין האצילי של העולם וההויה, שזהו תכן הפדיון. ואם הכח הזה, העלול להיות כח גורם להעשיר את יסוד הקודש, לא יעשה את תפקידו, אז השללתו היא ג"כ ענין של הרחבת גבול הקודש, המשמש פעולה ודוגמא יחד והיסוד האנושי, שעוד לא הגיע זמנו של צירופו המוחלט, עד שיהיה כחו התולדתי כבר מוכן לקידוש גבוה בהתגלות עליונה, צריך הוא שערכו יערך לפי הכח הגנוז בו, והפדיון הוא השומר את כח הקודש בתמורתו העליונה, עד בא אף אני בכור אתנהו ועליון למלכי ארץ. זמנו להגלות, בכל זהרו המבהיק, ע"י סגולת "בני בכורי ישראל": "אף אני בכור אתנהו ועליון למלכי ארץ" ומסכם המקרא בזה את האפן של תקון העולם מצד הבהמיות החיצונה, בצורתה החיובית של הפדיון, וכל פטר חמור תפדה בשׂה, ואת אופנה השלילי ע"י העריפה, ואם לא תפדה וערפתו, ואת האפן של שמירת הסגולה הקדושה הפנימית, עד בא עתה ע"י הפדיון העליון, וכל בכור אדם בבנין תפדה.

Ariel Rafie

Torat Shraga

### *Decapitation... A productive solution?*

When first reading the passage at the end of Parshat Bo (Shemot 13:13) describing the redemption process of a firstborn donkey, I was surprised by the seemingly satanic procedure of breaking the donkey's neck by way of swinging a long sword at the back of its neck. This is the ultimatum given to one who does not redeem a sheep to be given to a kohen in place of the donkey. This practice stems from the prominence of the firstborn that is to be redeemed from its consecrated status in which it is to serve or be used exclusively for the service of the holy Temple or its priests. In Rashi's commentary on the passage, he quotes the Mechilta which explains that "one who did not redeem the firstborn caused a financial loss to the kohanim, and therefore should suffer a financial loss."

After seeing this I was bothered by the following questions. Generally, we see by the laws dealing with one who causes a financial loss to his friend, the Halacha dictates that he is liable to compensate the one who suffered the financial loss. In addition to this first step of compensation, he may be fined a second penalty payment of some sort causing him a financial loss as part of his atonement for his wrongdoing. Why, in this case, is the one who causes a financial loss disciplined in a similar fashion? We take away his donkey, but he is not reimbursing the kohanim in any way? Furthermore, what productive purpose does it serve to break the donkey's neck and kill it in such an extreme manner?

Rav Kook gives over his understanding of this passage in a way which sheds light on all of these questions. He begins clarifying the inner workings and designs of the process of redemption by explaining that the firstborn has an inherent holiness which is to be used for the direct service of Hashem. This potential holiness is one that exists not only in the firstborn male of the family; it also exists in the firstborn of clean mammals and donkeys. The firstborn donkey, being an unclean mammal, is unable to be elevated and as a result the sanctity stored in it has no way of expressing itself. Nevertheless one is able to redeem it onto a sheep which can then be elevated and given to a kohen thereby actualizing its potential. This potential is one which is unable to be ignored but must be expressed. In the event that one is unable or chooses not to redeem the donkey with a sheep, there is a tributary method which is to be taken in order to express this bottled up potential, namely, decapitation of the donkey. This dramatic ceremony relieves the Godly potential that is stored up in the donkey while demonstrating the magnitude of this potential, albeit in a negative display.

Based on Rav Kook's reasoning, we can now piece together and formulate answers to our questions. Firstly, perhaps the financial loss that one causes is not one which is directed at the kohanim themselves as individuals or even a group of people, rather it is one which is directed at the assembly of kohanim belonging to Hashem as his personal "stash" of consecrated people, animals and objects that are to serve Him. Therefore, it is not one which may be classified under dealings of man and his friend, otherwise known as *bein adam lechavero*, but rather falls under the category of man and Hashem, *bein adam lemakom*. Hence, there is no compensation between a man and his friend which must be achieved; rather one must atone for his dealings with man and Hashem. Lastly, his failure to elevate the holy potential of this firstborn into the domain of Hashem, actualizing its great potential, causes the donkey's potential to race down an alternate route, for this great force is unable to sit in a dormant state for long. Instead, it is to be actualized and expressed in this negative yet awesome display being the decapitation of the donkey.

וְהָיָה כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בְּנֶךְךָ, מָחָר--לֵאמֹר מַה-זֹּאת: וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו--בְּחֹזֶק יָד

הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם, מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

המצוה, המכוונת לעלה ולקדש את הכח התולדותי, של יסוד המשך החיים והדורות, מעוררת בסגולתה את לב הדורות, לכסוף לחקר התכן של כח הסגולה, הגנוזה ביסודו הגדול של הדור הישראלי,

והדברים יגיעו שהבן ישאל, ויבא לידי הערה, מה זאת, מה ענין של הקדשת הבכורה בצרופיה ואפניה השונים, בהכללתה ובפרטיות קדושת הבהמה, והתנאי המותנה בקדושת פטר חמור ביחוד, וערך הפדיון והעריפה, ועל כולם ערך קדושת בכור האדם ותכן פדיונו. והתשובה תהיה: הפעולה שעשה ד' עמנו, להוציאנו מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים, להעלותנו מהתכונה הגסה של מצרים, אשר בשר חמורים בשרם, ואשר העבדות היתה כ"כ קשורה עמנו, ע"י הורדת ערך החיים שלנו בכלל, אחרי שהנצוץ האלהי שלנו הית גם אז, מכח מקור מטענו, כ"כ נשגב ונעלה, וחוקק היד הזה הוא כח מתפשט על כל ערכי החיים, חיי הבהמה, בתכונתה הטהורה ובתכונתה הטמאה, וחיי האדם, בצרופו וחוכבו העליון.

## Daniel Lavian

### Torat Shraga

למה בתורה כתוב שהבן ישאל שאלה פה ולא במצוה אחרת? הבן הבכור שואל למה הוא קדוש כי המצוה מדברת דוקא עליו. ומה בדיוק השאלה "מה זאת" שכתוב בפסוק? השאלה היא, מה העניין של הקדשת הבכורה, גם לבן אדם וגם לבהמה וחמור? ועוד, למה החמור, שזה בהמה טמאה, קבל הזכות להיות מיוחד מכל הבהמות האחרות?

התשובה: עם ישראל היו מתחת המצרים, כמו חמורים שנאמר: "אשר בשר חמורים בשרם" (יחזקאל כג:ב). הבית שלנו היה העבדות שלנו, והנצוץ שבנפשנו שקבלנו מהאבות שנאמר "מכח מקור מטענו" כמעט נעלם. כי כבר ידוע שבני ישראל היה במדרגה של ארבעים ותשע שערים של טומאה. ואז ה' לקח אותנו מהבור הזה, מהמקום הכי תחתון והרים אותנו עד הגובה. ה' עשה את ההרמה הזאת עם הקדושה שיש בהפדיון כי העיקר של בני ישראל, הבכור (עד חטא העגל שגרם ה' להחליף את הקדושה מהבכורים ללויים). ההרמה הזו היה כל כך חזק שאפילו הרכוש של בני ישראל נכלל בהמצוה. וכמו שאמרנו, ה' דוקא בחר בהחמור לזכור איפה היינו ואיפה אנחנו עכשיו.

**וַיְהִי, כִּי-הִקְשָׁה פְּרַעְהַ לְשַׁלְּחֵנוּ, וַיַּהֲרֹג יְהוָה כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם,**

**מִבְּכוֹר אָדָם וְעַד-בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה; עַל-כֵּן אֲנִי זֹבֵחַ לַיהוָה, כָּל-פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם**

**הַזְּכָרִים, וְכָל-בְּכוֹר בְּנֵי, אֶפְדָּה**

יודעים אנו, שיסודו של קשי הלב אשר לפרעה היה נעוץ בכח היסודי של החפץ האמיץ, אשר לכח הרע והגסות הרשעה, לעכב את מהלך החיים של האורה האלהית, שלא יאיר בעולם. כח המאון הזה, וכל קשיות הלב שלו, הוא נעוץ במעמד המהותי של משך החיים וכיעורם החשוך, שלקחה טומאת מצרים בו את החלק הראשי. והוצרך הדבר לבא בתכונה זו של מכת בכורות, של הכחשת היסוד הראשי של משך החיים הטמאים, כדי שתהיה אפשרות לפנות דרך להארת אור חיי הקודש, בתוקף החיים כולם וכל ההיקף שלהם, ממרומי אור נשמת האדם, עד שפל עומק נפש הבהמה, ויהרודג' כל בכור באר"מ מבכור אדם ועד בכור בהמה. על כן אני זובח לד' כל פטר רחם הזכרים, כח המפעלי שבחיים, ופתיחת נביעות היותו, וכל בכור בני אפדה, לשמור את סגולתו העליונה של בכור האדם, עד שיתוקן עולם במלא זיוו, ויזכר כבודו מבעד להסתרתה של התמורה והפדיון, התחתיתי, שהיא מעוטה בו עדיין.

## Yoni Gold

Yesodei HaTorah

The question is obvious. Why is one man's refusal to let his slaves go free a severe enough crime to bring about the deaths of all the firstborn boys and animals of a whole nation? Rav Kook elaborates on the severity of this sin. He explains that the refusal to free the Jewish people was the manifestation of a deeply rooted stubbornness and arrogance which was not only found within Pharaoh, but in the very culture that Egypt was built upon. This extreme stubbornness and arrogance ultimately prevented God's presence from shining into the lives of the people who lived in Egypt since one who is arrogant denies God as the Supreme and Almighty Ruler with which no one and nothing else can compare. The lives of the people of Egypt were essentially devoid of all presence of God, and the only remedy which could effectively fix the situation of Egypt was the killing of all the firstborns of Egypt. This would drive home the message that a life which rejects the reality of God is a worthless one.

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**וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל-יְדֹכָהּ, וּלְטוֹטַפֵּת בֵּין עֵינֶיהָ: כִּי בְחֶזֶק יָד, הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָיִם**

המלחמה נגד הטבע הגס, ששליטתו היא מתפשטת במלא החמריות וכחותיה היא דורשת את כל האמץ ואת כל המרץ של האדם, כל חייושף כחותיו המעשיים וההרגשיים, וכל איזור כחותיו הרוחניים העליונים. אך אזו יתחבר אור הקודש, אשר בפנימיותו של האדם, עם אור העליון האלהי הממלא את כל אפסי תבל, לרומם את כל המעשים, ולתן עז לאור הקודש, לנצח על מלאכת ד', בשמים ממעל ובארץ מתחת, בחיי מלא העולמים, בחיי הזמנים, ובחיי הנשמה והגויה אשר לאדם, עדי יכון כשמש כסא ד', באור אמת ואמונת אומן, שהוא יסוד פארן של ישראל, אות החיל והחוסן של תפלה, של יד, ופאר הדר הקודש, אשר שם ד' נקרא עליו, של תפלה של ראש, הממשיכים רב כח ואמץ ממקור הגבורה העליונה, ימין ד' עשה חיל.

## Shimon Takhalov

Yesodei HaTorah

“Rav Kook comments on this pasuk and explains that when it says “ולטוטפת בין עיניה” it refers to the תפילין, which serves as a remembrance for Yetziat Mitzrayim.

Rav Kook also gives an insight on this pasuk: Only when all the strengths and efforts are directed against the obscene nature that spreads throughout all physicality, will the holy light inside man join with the supreme Godly light in order to succeed in the work of God. This will manifest itself through the life which fills the world, times, and the soul and physical body of man. This, in turn, will lead to the “establishment of God's throne as the sun” in a true light and real faith. This is the foundation for תפילין.



In my understanding of the Ramban, Hashem gave us certain mitzvot, such as תפילין, מזוזה, קריאת שמע, and שמע, in order to remind us of Him. Therefore, when a Jew fulfills these commandments, he recognizes the many miracles that Hashem performed, which are the foundation for the whole Torah.

After learning Rashi, Ramban, and Rav Kook's commentaries, I concluded that תפילין are portents that indicate the recognition of Hashem and the acceptance of the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom by the whole world. Just as all the nations of the world heard of the great miracles that Hashem performed in מצרים and feared Bnei Yisrael and their God, during the time of the final redemption all the people of the world will accept Hashem as the King over the entire world. As the רמב"ן quotes: "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך" - "And all the nations of the land will see that the name of Hashem and they will fear you."









YESHIVAT HAR HAMOR JERUSALEM

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