

## Insights into the Haggadah

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### הַשְׁתָּא הִכָּא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל

In the Ha Lachma Anya, we say Hashata hacha, L'shana Haba'a B'arah D'Yisroel- Now we are here, next year we should be in the Land of Israel. Don't we know where we are? Generally speaking, a person knows where they are at any given time. Why does the Ba'al Haggadah use this phrase, when we most certainly know where we are?

During the dark days of the Holocaust, as Pesach was drawing near, the Nazis were approaching the town of Chust and the chassidim asked their rebbe, the Chuster Rav, for chizuk. The Chuster Rebbe asked his chassidim this very same question. And then he explained: Hashata hacha doesn't mean "we are here," rather it could be translated as "we are STILL here." Despite all that we have endured as a Nation throughout our history, we are STILL HERE. Through all the wars, the crusades and pogroms, we are still here. And as long as we can say Hashata hacha, we are still here, then we surely can say L'shana Haba'a b'arah D'Yisroel- we hope next year to be in the Holy Land.

The hard boiled egg is one of the items that we place on the k'arah. There are a number of explanations to why the egg is there. One explanation is to show the connection between the Seder Night and Tisha B'av. The night of the week that the seder is on, is the same night of the week of Tisha B'av. At the seudas hamafsekes of Tisha B'av we eat an egg, so we have one present at the Seder as well. Based on the p'shat of the Chuster Rebbe, perhaps there's a deeper meaning of the symbolism of the egg. When an egg is placed in water, it is soft. When it is put in a pot, on the fire, it becomes harder. It toughens. So too, with K'lal Yisroel. In every generation there are those that rise up to 'put the fire' under us and attack us. Despite their attempts, we persevere- we get stronger, we grow and we thrive.

Later in the Haggadah, K'lal Yisroel is compared to grass, "revava k'tzemach hasodeh". The more often that grass is cut, the quicker it grows back- taller and stronger than before. Klal Yisroel is like that grass. No matter how often and how hard we're attacked, we respond with strength and resiliency.

**יכול מראש חדש? תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום? תלמוד לומר בעבור זה – בעבור זה לא אמרתי, אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך**

The paragraph of Yachol Mei Rosh Chodesh is discussing when sipur yetziyas Mitzrayim should be related. You might have thought the obligation begins on Rosh Chodesh, but we are told bayom hahu- we discuss it during the day of Pesach. However, we are told ba'avur zeh, which teaches us that the obligation begins only when the matzah and marror are before us, which is a reference to the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

The Haggadah Yishalcha Binchah explains that these words are teaching us a tremendous lesson in chinuch banim. As parents, we envision a derech for our children. We hope to see them grow and mature spiritually. We tell our children to take out a sefer and learn. We tell them to do chessed. We tell them to sit still in Shul and daven properly. If we really want this for our children, then placing demands upon them isn't enough. Rather, "when the matzah and marror are before us," means that the children see that we demonstrate our devotion by doing the very same action that we are requesting of them. We must set the proper example. To convey our mesorah effectively, we must genuinely behave in the same exalted manner that we speak about.

There is a story told about a boy turning 13. His father tells him what it means to become a Bar mitzvah. ` You come to Shul on time, sit in your place and daven every word beautifully. The young boy innocently turned to his father and asked "Tatty, when are **you** becoming Bar mitzva?!?" Whether this is a true story or not - I don't know. But the message is clear. If you want your childr to take a sefer and sit and learn, then you must do the same.

By Kabolos HaTorah the pasuk says "ro'im es ha'kollos- we saw the thunder." Rabbi Paysach Krohn explains these words based on the above concept. When we impart chinuch to our children, it is not enough that they hear our kollos- our requests. Rather **ro'im** es ha'kollos- they must **see** those behaviors that they hear from us. If they see us do that which we expect from them, then b'ezras Hashem, the mesorah will continue.

This is a yesod gadol in chinuch. If we want our children to embrace our spiritual ideals, then just talking about them is not enough: To impart the beauty of tefila- we must daven properly and without talking during davening. Show them proper kedushas beis knesses. To impart the beauty of speaking kindly of others and exhibiting the beauty of kedushas hapeh- we must train ourselves not to speak loшон hora or negatively of others. We have to be the real deal!

## וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קְלוֹנוֹ. כַּמָּה שָׁנְאַמְרָ: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקוֹתֵם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם, אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב

Hashem heard our cries. Hashem heard our groaning. And He remembered the covenant he made with the Avos. The word "na'akosom- groaning," is referenced in Shemos (6:5).

וְגַם אֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי, אֶת־נַאֲקוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם, מֵעַבְדִּים אֲתֶם וְאִזְכֹּר אֶת־בְּרִיתִי, and I have also heard the groaning of the B'nei Yisroel, whom the Egyptians are enslaving; and I will remember My covenant.

The Chasam Sofer, zy'a, wonders: the word "v'gam" means 'also'. Hashem "also" heard the groaning- who else heard the groaning of Bnei Yisroel?

The answer is: that Hashem heard the groaning of B'nei Yisroel that one Yid acutely felt the pain of another Yid. That although one Jew was personally suffering, he still cried out and empathized with the pain of another. Hashem saw that B'nei Yisroel were "nosei b'ol im chaveiro" – empathized with each other. Hashem saw that, and then **v'gam**, Hashem **also** heard our cries. When Hashem saw that we cared and cried for each other, He also heard our suffering and remembered the covenant that He made with the Avos.

The Gemara in Berachos tells us: that even if someone has a proverbial sword against their neck, "al yimneh atzmo min harachamim"-he should not stop asking Hashem for mercy, because yeshuas Hashem, salvation from Hashem, can come k'heref ayin, in the blink of an eye. There was a yungerman who was terminally ill, and his Rebbe came to visit him in the hospital. During their conversation, the yungerman inquired about a potential shidduch for another bachor in the yeshiva. The Rebbe was incredulous! Here was someone who was terminally ill, and yet he was still able to focus on the needs of his friends. The Rebbe wondered how this was possible. The yungerman answered with a novel translation of this gemara. Even when the sword is against someone's neck, al yimneh atzmo min harachamim- it does not absolve him, nor exempt him, from rachamim - from his obligation to have compassion and concern for a fellow Yid. Simply remarkable!

### **Borei Pri Hagafen**

The bracha that we make most often at the seder is Borei P'ri Hagafen. The Chasam Sofer teaches us that with Yetzias Mitzrayim, we experienced redemption on two levels. One was geulah, our physical redemption, as we were freed from slavery and our bodies were no longer enslaved. Additionally, we had p'dus nafsheinu, our souls were freed to serve our Creator. The word "גפן" is an acronym for "גאולתינו פדות נפשינו" - a reference to both our physical and our spiritual redemption.

## כל ימי חייהך להביא לימות המשיח

The Radomsker Rebbe translated these words as: כל ימי חייהך - all the days of your life, live them להביא לימות המשיח -to bring about Moshiach. We must show Hashem that we are living a life that yearns for the coming of Moshiach. Sometimes we lose sight of this- we get consumed with trivialities and distracted from our goals. The pasuk says that Bnei Yisroel left "Mitachas sivlos Mitzrayim- from under the burden of the Egyptians". The word "sovel" can also mean to become complacent. Complacency is extremely dangerous. When we become complacent- we make no effort to grow and move forward. We have to unburden ourselves of "Sivlos Mitzrayim"- of our sense of complacency, and live our daily lives 'lehavi limos haMoshiach' - actions that bring about the geulah sheleimah.

### The Calculation of the Years Spent in Mitzrayim

Golus Mitzrayim was supposed to last 400 years (starting with the birth of Yitzchok), however, we were liberated after only 210 years. One reason given is "rubbo, k'kullo" - the concept that a majority is like the entirety. Since 210 is a majority of 400, it was like we were enslaved for 400 years. Why then weren't we freed after 201 years, since 201 is the minimum number of years that compose a majority of 400?

In Parshas Shemos, the pasuk says "וַיֵּרָא בְּסִבְלֵתָם" - Moshe saw their burden." The Medrash tells us that after seeing the pain of Klal Yisroel, Moshe returned to Pharaoh and requested that the Jews be given a day of rest. Moshe suggested, that by doing so, the slaves would perform better. Pharaoh acquiesced and Moshe chose Shabbos as the day Klal Yisroel would not work. Based on this Medrash, the Pininei Kedem makes a stunning calculation. Moshe Rabbeinu was 17 years old when he instituted Shabbos as the day of rest for Klal Yisroel in Mitzrayim. He was 80 when Yetzias Mitzrayim occurred. Therefore, for 63 years, Klal Yisroel did not work one day a week -the day of Shabbos. There are seven days in a week, and one-seventh of 63 years is 9 years, reducing the actual time enslaved from 210 years to 201, which is rubbo, k'kullo!

The Vilna Gaon zy"l, explains that the amount that Bnei Yisroel suffered during the 210 years was equivalent to 400 years- as the pasuk states: "Vayemareru es chayeihem- the Mitzriyim embittered their lives." The trop on these words is kadma v'azla. The words kadma v'azla mean we got up and went out early. The Vilna Gaon says: kadma v'azla- we got up and left Mitzrayim early after only 210 years **because** Vayemareru es chayeihem-the Mitzriyim embittered our lives so intensely.

The Vilna Gaon then adds that the gematria of קדמא ואזלא is exactly 190, precisely the number of years that our shibud was reduced ( from 400 to 210)!

Some say that Golus Mitzrayim began 30 years earlier (at the Bris Bein Habesarim) and lasted 430 years. In Pirkei D'Reb Elazar, R' Elazar ben Azarya says that the shibud lasted 430 years. According to this calculation, Bnei Yisroel were actually enslaved for less than half of the prescribed number or years of golus, as 210 years is five years less than the half of 430. To compensate for this discrepancy, R' Elazar adds the 3 years of Menashe and 2 of Ephraim in which they didn't participate in Egyptian royalty, and these 5 years are added to the 210 years, making the shibud exactly half of the 430 years. According to this opinion, half, and not rubbo ( a majority) sufficed, and Hashem was mochel the other half in the zechus of the Avos. Rabbi Homnick, pointed out to me that in Parshas Bo ( by Makkas Bechoros) the word דל is mentioned five times. דל has a gematria of 43. 43 times five is 215. An allusion to the 215 years that Hashem forgave Bnei Yisroel in the z'chus of our Avos.

During the Seder we drink 4 kosos- cups of wine, and there is a 5th, the Kos shel Eliyahu which we do not drink. These cups of wine correspond to the five l'shonos of geula: V'hotzeisi, v'hitzalti, v'go'alti, v'lakachti and the fifth is v'heiveisi. The gematria of the word כוס is 86. 86 multiplied by the 5 cups of wine, is exactly 430, once again alluding to the 430 years of Shibud Mitzrayim.

### **Remaining Positive**

The gematria of כוס is 86. Half of 86 is 43, which is the gematria of the word דל. Sometimes we are presented with situations and we left to decide how to view it- is the cup "half full or half empty". The word דל represents the ideal of remaining positive. The kapitel of Tehillim, Mizmor l'sodah, which we recite daily in our Shacharis expresses how grateful we must be to Hashem. This kapitel has exactly 43 words-the gematria of דל! This is an integral theme of the Seder-strengthening our Emunah by remaining positive and appreciating all the goodness that Hashem bestows upon us. We must work on not viewing the cup as "half empty", not being pessimistic and negative, rather דל- to display a positive outlook with emunah and bitachon.

The Arba Kosos remind us that we must strengthen our emunah and see the events that affect us, from a positive perspective.

This concept of "how to view half" can be found in a gemara which discusses a conversation between Hashem and Yitzchok. Hashem says to Yitzchok "palgi alai, upalgialach - half is My responsibility, and half is yours." "Palgi alai- Hashem will eliminate war in the world and there will be a fulfillment of "lo yilmedu od milchama", however- "palgialach- we must work on "s'or shebe'issa- the chametz which is a

reference to the yetzer harah". The more we work on our half- fighting the yetzer harah, the more Hashem will do His half for us and bring harmony in the world.

At the Seder we have three matzos, and the Maharal points out that these represent the Avos - Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. It is the middle matzah which we break in half - the matzah of Yitzchak. This alludes to the gemara of palgi alai, upalgi alach.

### Arba Banim

The Chasam Sofer teaches us: k'neged arba bonim dibra HaTorah- the word k'neged can be translated as "**According to** the four children..." According to the needs of each child, we must adapt our techniques, depending on what the child needs in each particular situation. What works for one child may not work for another. The gemara in Brachos teaches us כִּיּוֹן שְׁנֵצְטָרֵךְ אָדָם לְבִרְיוֹת, פְּנִיּוֹ מִשְׁתַּנּוֹת כְּכֶרוֹם. The gemara is discussing someone who needs to rely on others. Sometimes it can be so embarrassing that at times his face will change colors, like that of the exotic bird called a kerum.

The Chasam Sofer says that these words can be understood as: כִּיּוֹן שְׁנֵצְטָרֵךְ אָדָם לְבִרְיוֹת - someone who is **needed by others**- other people turn to him for help, such a person פְּנִיּוֹ מִשְׁתַּנּוֹת כְּכֶרוֹם, should constantly "change colors" - adapt his behavior to the needs of those he is helping. We must help each person on their own level. We must validate others, show them ahava, recognize their needs and be there for them. We must adjust and tailor to each person individually. **K'neged** arba bonim- according to the needs of each one of our children.

We must connect not only with each child individually, but with the various aspects of their personality that a child may manifest. The gematria of the word בן is 52, and the Haggadah speaks about 4 children. 52 multiplied four times is 208, which is the exact gematria of יצחק! It is the "Yitzchok Matzah" that we break, representing that sometimes there is a "break", a disconnect in the arba banim.

We yearn for the day that the middle matzah will be whole again- representing complete unity and shalom within Klal Yisroel. As we mentioned above, the yom tov of Pesach strongly correlates to Tisha B'av. When the middle matzah is finally made whole once again, the day of Tisha B'av will become a yom tov rather than a day of mourning. We yearn for the fulfillment of נחמו נחמו עמי - the day when we will be comforted and experience the final redemption. The word נחמו has the gematria of 104- exactly half of 208. Palgi alai, palgi alach! May we merit the day that the 2 halves of this matzah be whole once again creating the עמי **נחמו נחמו** - the day that all of Klal Yisroel, **together**, will return to Eretz Yisroel with the coming of Mashiach Tzidkeinu, and we will merit מן הפסחים ומן הזבחים!!