

no matter how low a person - even a *rasha* - has sunk, there is still a spark of G-dliness hidden inside of him, albeit surrounded and covered by his "רע" - the evil and negative actions, the inappropriate dress, the foul language and crude behavior. But deep down, his insides are pure and holy.

The two "ש" that are found on the boxes of *Tefillin*, are different. One contains three lines and one contains four. This is to symbolize our roots. We, *Bnei Yisroel*, are all the children of the three fathers (אבות) and four mothers (אמהות) who gave us our genes which bring us close to *Hashem*.

"הקחה את שיניו" - Emphasize his "SHINS." Look at where

he is coming from and not where he is right now. He has the potential for greatness if you can look past his outer shell.

Every person's potential for greatness lies in the ability to PASS-OVER another's faults and mistakes. We all mess up from time to time. We must pass-over our own mistakes and move forward! Maybe this idea is the reason why we also "passed through" the Red Sea on the last day of *Pesach*. So that we can have "bookends" for both the first and last days.

May we be able to see the good in all of our children in all situations, so that we can truly be free to serve *Hashem* with love and joy. CHAG KOSHER V'SAMEACH!

בְּעֶשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ שֵׁה לֶבֶת אֶבֶת שֵׁה לֶבֶת ... (שְׁמֹת יב-ג)

לְעֵלוֹ נִשְׁמַת אַבְנֵי מוֹרְעוֹ חֲרָבֵי חַיִּים חֶסֶף בֶּן ר' יִשְׂרָאֵל אַבְרָהָם קוֹפְמָאן ז"ל

מחשבת הלב

once again to experience the *Shabbos Hagadol*-like *nissim* in a greater light ב.שנה הזאת בקרוב בימינו אמן

ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל ... ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול (ה'ש"פ) *Hashem* promised *Avraham Avinu* that after the enslavement of his descendants, they would leave *Mitzrayim* with great riches. We say this *posuk* in the הגדה and again in *dayeinu*, "ותן לנו את ממונם". The *Yidden* were told to "borrow" the *Mitzriyim's* possessions, never to return them. Why did *Hashem* orchestrate this as a ruse, involving trickery and not in a straightforward, more "kosher" manner?

It's been said in the name of the **Vilna Gaon ז"ל** that this was done, *b'davka*, מדה כנגד מדה. The day Pharaoh enticed the *Yidden* into working for him, he perpetrated an elaborate deception. He paid them and even worked himself. Afterwards, he gave them no choice and it evolved into forced labor, with no remuneration. Thus, the same way he tricked them, *Hashem* reimbursed the *Yidden* by tricking their oppressors.

On קריעת ים סוף of נס, after the שבועי של פסח, the *Yidden* again struck it rich, and looted *Mitzrayim* by taking from the ויסע משה היס. However, the *posuk* we *lain* on *Yom Tov* בימת היס, Moshe had to forcibly instruct them to move on and stop taking the wealth. **Sefer Maasei Hashem** asks: why were they precluded from taking more? On the contrary! Let them once again fulfill the promise of "ויאחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול"?

There's a beautiful elucidation from the **ספר אפרוקי**, which leads us right into the next season of the year. He says that the *Yidden* in *Mitzrayim*, pitiful slaves, had less understanding and appreciation for spirituality. They needed riches to make it exciting to become the עם ה'. After they observed myriad *nissim* of *yetzias mitzrayim* and *kriyas yam suf*, having seen the epitome of "זה קלי ואנוהו", they were expected to be enthralled, not with the allure of money, but rather with the *metzius* of being a *Yid* - *Hashem's* child! Thus, Moshe exhorted them to stop and leave. As we experience this unique "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות ... זמן חירותו and relive the words ... כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים" "מי כעמך ישראל". There's nothing like being a *Yid*!

Shabbos Hagadol was so named, due to the great miracle that occurred in *Mitzrayim* prior to our nation's exodus. On the 10th of *Nisan*, we were told to take a sheep and tie it to the bedpost as a preparation to *shecht* it as a *Korban Pesach*. The sheep was the deity of the Egyptians. Yet the *Mitzriyim* didn't harm any *yid* due to this extreme abuse of their god. That was a *nes* that we recall each year. The *Meforshim* ask why celebrate this *nes* on the *Shabbos* before *Pesach* and not on its actual anniversary of the 10th of *Nisan*?

Perhaps we can suggest the following *machshava*: We begin counting *Sefiras Haomer* "ממחרת השבת", the day after the first day of *Pesach*. Why is *Pesach* called *Shabbos*? What is this obvious connection? *Klal Yisroel* was on the 49th level of impurity, and not worthy of being redeemed. Nevertheless, *Hashem*, in his infinite kindness, took us out of there. Hence, the *Yom Tov* celebrates a "pro bono" gift, an undeserved present from Above. Other *Yamim Tovim* are referred to as *hisorerus* and *lertana*, a *hisorerus* originating with us, down on earth, in order to receive the *hashpaos* and effect of the *chag*. *Pesach*, on the other hand, is an *אתערותא דלעילא*, in which those *hashpaos* originate with *Hashem*, as He awakens us and lifts us up. *Shabbos* is also *קביעי וקיימי*; set and fixed in time. It is *Hashem's* day. That is the connection between *Shabbos* and *Pesach*. Our job after *Pesach* is to count the days we are to be working on improving ourselves, and to make each and every one of the days count! Maybe this is why *Chazal* chose the *Shabbos* preceding *Pesach* to remember the miracle, and not the 10th of *Nisan* as *Shabbos* is, in essence, a prelude, of sorts, to *Pesach*.

Based on this, we can better understand a *Gemara* in *Megillah* that states that when Haman was persuading *Achashveirosh* to agree to annihilate the *Yidden*, he depicted the Jews as lazy good for nothings, because they never work, saying שבת הייס, שבת הייס. Why *Pesach* and not *Sukkos* which is even longer? Because, as we said above, *Yidden* aren't worthy of *Hashem's* protection when they just utilize the *אתערותא דלעילא* without working themselves. That's what *Pesach* and *Shabbos* have in common. May we be *zoche*

doesn't know you, and we'll close the file."

R' Yankel went down to the station and was met by an officer who told him that neither the original officer who called him was there nor was the person who made the complaint. R' Yankel told him the story and the officer told him not to worry. "Just sign this statement, and you're free to go." R' Yankel asked him to read it and the officer read, "I, the undersigned hereby declare that I do not know the above-named family and that I have no complaint against them and therefore"

"Wait a minute. That's not true," said R' Yankel. "It's not true? You yourself said you don't even know these people."

R' Yankel answered, "True, I don't know them. But it's not true that I have no complaints against them. Of course I do. They're destroying their children spiritually." The police officer waved a hand dismissively. "Forget it. It's just the standard text."

But R' Yankel was insistent. "Then change it. Just write that I don't know them." The officer wrote it, R' Yankel signed it, and then the officer asked. "Tell me, Rabbi, why do you learn so much? Learn and learn and learn. All *Bnei Brak* is filled with people learning from morning till night. What are you learning all that time? What are you learning so much?"

"Tell me something," R' Yankel asked, "do you enjoy fine wine?" The officer smiled and nodded.

"What types are you familiar with?" The officer listed names of wines at a dizzying pace until R' Yankel finally lifted a hand. "Okay. That's enough. I get the picture. What does wine taste like?"

"Well, each one has a different taste."

"What's the difference between them?"

"Are you making fun of me?" the officer responded. "You have to taste them to understand."

"Aha," R' Yankel said. "About the *Torah* it says, 'He brought me to the House of Wine' (*Shir HaShirim* 2:4), and whoever tastes it won't want to leave. If this really interests you and you're serious, come to an *Arachim* seminar next week. The *Torah* you will learn there will be sweeter than the wine you drink. First go and then we'll talk." The officer said he'd think about it.

Just a few short weeks later, R' Yankel's phone rang again. It was the police officer from the station calling to inform the "learned" rabbi that he was learning *Torah* too and he even started to put on *Tefillin*! (Rav Yankel Galinsky by Feldheim.)

משל למה הדבר דומה

ושמרתם את המצות כי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את צבאותיכם מארץ מצרים ... (שְׁמֹת יב-ו)

משל: One year, the **Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, R' Yehudah Zev Segal ז"ל**, traveled to the United States to spend *Pesach* with his children. It was R' Segal's custom to eat only *matzos* which were baked under his personal supervision and along with his suitcases, the *Rosh Yeshivah* brought to the airport a few boxes of *matzos*.

As he stood on line to check in his luggage, another traveler stood behind him in the line. "Rabbi, I see that you have quite a bit of baggage. Let me give you some advice. I'm a seasoned traveler and I've been around quite a bit. I can tell you that your things are going to be very much overweight just from the look of it - it will certainly cost you a pretty penny."

R' Segal explained that he had no choice but to bring these extra boxes with him on the flight for the upcoming Passover holiday. "Take my advice, rabbi," said the English chap. "Put those boxes on the side somewhere; no one will take them. When you get to the counter, just show them your suitcases. Later, when you board the plane, take the boxes with you - I assure you that no one will bother you and you will save a great deal of money."

R' Segal looked at the man as if he had not heard him correctly. "I don't understand - are you suggesting that I try to trick the airline personnel? That I steal the cost of the boxes? How can a person do such a thing? It is totally dishonest!" The man shrugged his shoulders and went on his way.

In the end, the boxes of *matza* cost the *Manchester Rosh Yeshivah* an extra fifty British pounds in baggage fees, quite an exorbitant amount, in addition to his regular travel fees. But the *Rosh Yeshivah* was not upset. Quite the contrary, he smiled widely. As he withdrew the money from his wallet to pay for the *matzos*, he remarked joyfully, "Another *hiddur* (beautification) in the *mitzvah* of *matza*!" There is more than one way to beautify a *mitzvah*.

נמשל: *Chazal* tell us that "*Chametz*" is a reference to arrogance (just as bread rises, arrogance causes a person's head to swell) and "*Matza*" reflects humility. A Jew must remain humble in all of his ways, however, with respect to the nations of the world, who wish to deceive, humiliate and scorn the Jewish people and remove us from our *Avodas Hashem*, a *Yid* must show his pride and act with decisiveness. Humility (*Matza*) is an admirable trait and a Jew must show the *goyim* of the world how we live with this trait and act honorably, honestly and for the good of the world. This lesson comes directly from Hashem. "*For in the midst of that day, Hashem took out your legions from the Land of Egypt.*" There was no messenger, no angel or guardian to whom *Hashem* entrusted the task of redeeming His people from slavery; rather, *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* in all His glory, took it upon Himself to do this great act, demonstrating to us the exalted quality of His nation, and how we must perceive ourselves in relation to the other nations of the world.

As Shalom was entering the camp, he was discovered by a guard, who detected something up his sleeve. He pulled out the *matzos* and in a fit of anger snatched them away, threw them to the floor and trampled them with his thick leather boot. Then he administered a beating that almost killed Shalom. He was literally a hair's breadth away from dying when the guard got distracted and walked away. This spared his life.

With his remaining strength, Shalom collected the few remaining crumbs on the ground and put together barely a single *kezayis* of *matza*. He staggered back to the barracks where Chaim'ke helped him lay down and regain his strength. But now, a question arose: who should be given the opportunity to eat this *kezayis*? Chaim'ke claimed that the *matza* was his since he was the one who introduced the idea. If not for Chaim'ke, they wouldn't have any *matza*, let alone a *kezayis*.

Shalom, on the other hand, claimed that he nearly sacrificed his life for this *kezayis*, and it surely belonged to him. The two men discussed the matter intensely, until finally Shalom agreed to give the *mitzvah* to Chaim'ke - on two conditions: 1) Chaim'ke must recite the entire *Haggadah* with him word for word. 2) Although he wouldn't eat the *matza*, the *sechar*, reward of the *mitzvah*, would be solely his. Chaim'ke didn't hesitate and agreed to both conditions.

That night, at their small makeshift *seder*, they sat down to recite the *Haggadah*. Many fellow inmates gathered alongside to partake in the *seder*, although they wouldn't have any *matza* to eat. Chaim'ke kept the agreement. He ate the *kezayis* of *matza* while Shalom had the *Haggadah* dictated to him word for word. The next morning, as they were both laboring in the camp, a Nazi walked by and overheard Chaim'ke singing some tunes of *Hallel* to himself. He walked over and shot Chaim'ke on the spot. His dead body was removed and Shalom never heard about him ever again.

Until last night, Shalom told his *Rav*, R' Shlomo Yitzchok Unger. Out of nowhere, Chaim'ke suddenly appeared to him in a dream, requesting that he relinquish the *sechar* of that *mitzvah* that they did in the barracks and how much it means to him in the next world. "I understand that we had a deal," said Cham'ke weeping as he spoke, "but I am begging you to allow me to have the reward." Shalom wanted to know what he should say.

Hearing this question, R' Unger said that this question should be brought to the **Machnovka Rebbe, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heshel Twersky ז"ל**, a survivor himself. The *Rebbe* heard the *shailah* and replied that rightfully Shalom should give the *sechar* to Chaim'ke. This puzzled Shalom. "Rightfully? I was the one that endangered my life for this!"

The *Rebbe* replied, "The reason is since you given the opportunity to eat *matza* many more times over the years. Whereas Chaim'ke, on the other hand, this was his final time fulfilling the *mitzvah*, therefore you should rightfully give it to him."

The *Rebbe* then instructed Shalom to head to the *shul*, open the *Aron Kodesh*, and recount the whole account. "After recalling the incident in full, say that you grant Chaim'ke with the *sechar* of the *mitzvah*." Shalom did as he was told.

Recounting the episode in the *shul* caused him to awaken old emotions. He cried and wept and by the time he got home, he was exhausted from the effort and fell into a deep slumber. Suddenly, there was Chaim'ke in his dream. This time, his face was face glowing with joy and he thanked Shalom immensely for giving him the reward of the *mitzvah*. After he awoke, Shalom returned to the *Rebbe*, and reported the conclusion of the story.

The *Machnovka Rebbe* was shaken by this story. He explained that what shocked him was not the fact that his solution worked, rather it was an analogy he took from here. "This man had gone through the war. With all the *yesurim* he confronted he definitely received a complete *kapara* for anything he needed. Yet, he is making a trip from the next world in order to beg for the reward of one single *mitzvah*!"

הביאני אל בית היין ודגלתי עלי אהבה (שר השירים ב-ד)

The *mitzvah* of *Arba Kosos*, the four cups of wine that we drink at the *seder*, commemorate that we were once slaves in Egypt and *Hashem* took us out and freed us. However, our Sages tell us, "אין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתורה" – true freedom is only achieved through learning *Torah*. So in essence even if we drink wine, we are really commemorating the fact that *Hashem* brought us out of Egypt in order to accept the *Torah* and become true free men.

A story is told about the legendary *Maggid, R' Yankel Galinsky ז"ל*. After he immigrated to *Eretz Yisroel* he was very involved in bringing youth closer to *yiddishkeit*. One day he received a strange phone call, out of the blue. "A complaint has been filed against you here at the police station," a police officer told him. R' Yankel was taken aback. A complaint filed against him with the police? What in the world was that all about? "Can it be a mistake?" he asked.

"It's not a mistake. A family living in *Yaffo* claims that they sent their children to learn in a missionary school and you keep pestering them all the time to take the kids out of there. They said you're pressuring and harassing them."

R' Yankel was truly sorry he didn't have a share in the important *mitzvah* of saving Jewish children from spiritual destruction, but he really didn't know the family and was in no way connected with the matter. "I don't know them," he said pleasantly to the police office. "I really have no idea what you're talking about."

"Okay, then come down to the police station. We'll ask the complainant to come too so that he can see for himself that he

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אכהתנא בארעא דמצרים כל דיכפין ייתי ויכול כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח ... (סדר הגדה של פסח)

Shortly after the 1948 War of Independence, a few days before the holiday of **Pesach**, a young fellow was tragically killed in Jerusalem in an artillery barrage launched by the Jordanian legion on the holy city of Jerusalem. His distraught widow was left to look after her three young children alone.

R' Yehoshua Heschel Brim ז"ל, the venerable *Rosh Yeshivah* of the *Bohush Chassidus* in Jerusalem, assumed responsibility for the family's welfare. He asked a *talmid* of his to come to the bereaved home on the night of *Pesach* to conduct the *seder* for the widow and her young children. After *Maariv*, R' Yehoshua Heschel walked from the *shul* to the home of the family to ensure that the young fellow had arrived and that their needs were well taken care of.

To his dismay, he saw that the *bochur* had failed to show up. After waiting a short while, he stood up, made *Kiddush* for the family and proceeded to conduct a beautiful *seder* for them. To the widow's joy, he shared with the children the story of the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and delighted them with a reenactment of the ten *makkos*.

It was late at night when the children finally fell asleep around the *seder* table, at which point he left the widow's home to take care of his own family. He entered his home, greeted his family and began once again conducting the *seder* and fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. His *Rebbetzin* and children, however, were agitated over his long absence and the anxious and frustrating wait they had endured. After the meal, when emotions were calmer, he explained to them the reason for his extended delay.

His *Rebbetzin*, still troubled, remarked, "It was very nice that you performed such a *mitzvah*, but what about the family waiting at home? Doesn't *chessed* begin at home?"

The *Rosh Yeshivah* sighed and responded by relating a story about a time, two years earlier, when he had visited the great **Chazon Ish ז"ל**, who exhorted him to find a suitable mate for a friend of his, an older *bochur* who had still not found his *bashert*. R' Yehoshua Heschel introduced his friend to a wonderful young girl from *Tel Aviv* and the two scheduled their engagement party. To the delight of the young man, the *Chazon Ish* promised to attend the party.

When R' Yehoshua Heschel arrived at the *Chazon Ish's* home to accompany him to the party, the elderly sage was sitting with a young couple engaged in earnest conversation. The *Rav* continued to talk with this couple for over an hour while R' Yehoshua Heschel fidgeted and agitated outside the room.

Finally, the *Chazon Ish* concluded his discussion with the young couple and escorted them to the door. He explained to R' Yehoshua Heschel as they left for the engagement party that the young couple with whom he had spent so much time were Holocaust survivors who had married in a DP camp and just recently arrived in the Holy Land. They had very little money and needed advice on how to establish themselves in business. They were about to open a haberdashery store and detailed to the *Chazon Ish* each and every purchase that they were about to make to stock their new store.

The *Rav* told R' Yehoshua Heschel that he understood that he was keeping many people waiting by spending so much time with the couple. But the many individuals at the party were equally responsible for this young couple's welfare, he said. By waiting patiently, they too were sharing in the *mitzvah* of ensuring the financial security of these two battered survivors who were alone in the world.

R' Yehoshua Heschel explained to his family that upon entering the widow's house and grasping the situation, he knew that he had to take care of their needs by conducting their *seder*. It wasn't his responsibility alone, he said, but rather the shared responsibility of his family. By keeping their own *seder* on hold until the bereaved woman and her orphans were taken care of, the entire family played an important role in bringing the joy of *Yom Tov* to the grieving family.

וישא העם את בצקו מרם יחמין משארתם צררת בשמלתם על שכמם ... (שמות יב-לד)

The *Rav* of *Chug Chasam Sofer, R' Shlomo Yitzchok Unger ז"ל*, survived the holocaust and started his life anew in *Bnei Brak*. He opened a *shul* and became a renowned *posek*. He had a unique talent of strengthening others; as most of the *misapallelim* in his *shul* were likewise survivors, he worked hard to encourage them to continue on with life.

One day, a man we will call Shalom came to him with a question. He prefaced the question with a story that took place during the war. The story goes as follows: With Shalom in the barracks was an inmate by the name of Chaim'ke. One day, Chaim'ke informed him that *Pesach* is very soon and he figured out a way to bake *matzos*. Right outside the fence was a wheat factory. Chaim'ke had noticed that a bag of wheat had ripped apart leaving kernels of wheat lying on the floor. If Shalom could somehow get outside the fence, grab some kernels, grind them, bake them, and make *matzos*, they will have for *Pesach*. Shalom wasn't sure but after Chaim'ke pressed him, he agreed to the "mission." Stealthily he made his way outside the fence and managed to get a hold of a few kernels. Hurriedly, he ground them, made a dough and baked the dough on a burning hot tray. The *matza* totaled two *Kezaysim*. This would suffice for him and Chaim'ke, with each eating one *kezayis*.