

# מקראי קודש

Mikraei Kodesh

Issue 6

Pesach 5780

A journal  
of Torah  
thoughts  
for a  
meaningful  
Yomtov



KOLLEL MENACHEM  
LUBAVITCH



# Mikraei Kodesh

Pesach 5780

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# מקראי קודש

A Kollel Menachem Lubavitch Publication

Dear Friends,

Why is this Pesach so different from all other Pesachs? In the last few weeks, the world and our lives as we know it have been turned upside-down.

Throughout all of this upheaval, Torah remains constant and unchanging and the Kollel has remained committed to our mission; spreading Torah and Chassidus throughout our community.

And we have picked up some new opportunities along the way. Harnessing online technologies, the Kollel has broadened its reach, broadcasting our shiurim to even bigger audiences. Zoom, Whatsapp, Cisco Webex and good old-fashioned phone calls have now become the mouthpieces of Chumash, Gemara, Chassidus and Halacha.

Kollel Menachem is proud to share with you the latest issue of Mikraei Kodesh - a journal of Torah thoughts for a meaningful Yomtov.

In this edition you will find a collection of essays and articles authored by the Rabbis of Kollel Menachem Lubavitch. From Pesach related Halachos to DNA in Jewish Law. We are sure that you and your family will enjoy reading this publication as you spend the Yomtov of Pesach together in your home.

The Rabbis of the Kollel dedicate themselves selflessly and tirelessly to our community, spreading Torah and Chassidus through a number of programs and initiatives including; Chavrusa learning, shiurim and publications such as this.

Kollel Menachem was established by the Lubavitcher Rebbe forty years ago with a vision, to create a vibrant centre from which Torah and Chassidus would spread throughout the Melbourne community, Australia and ultimately the entire world.

We are honoured and privileged to be able to serve our community in this capacity with the highest quality Torah learning opportunities.

Wishing you and your family a Kosher and Freilichen Pesach. Enjoy!

Rabbi Yonason Johnson  
Rosh Hakollel

Rabbi Shlomo Barber  
Director of Development



# Pesach 5780 - A Seder in Pyjamas?

Rabbi Boruch (Bochi) Broh

Growing up, I always felt like my family was strict when it came to Pesach. We peeled all our vegetables, hardly used any processed foods other than the basics, and when it came the time for Bedikas Chometz we were in it for the long run. We wouldn't be allowed to speak as we would follow my father throughout the whole house and for the next few hours searching every crack, in every room.

Then I read this story about Reb Yechezkel of Kozmir. I think if he lived today, he would put us all to shame.

In preparation for Pesach, Reb Yechezkel used to go to extraordinary lengths to avoid the slightest contact with chametz.

He would personally supervise the drawing of the water that was being prepared for all 8 days of Pesach, and keep a constant eye on the loading of all the barrels onto the wagon back for the journey home.

He would not allow anything to be placed on the floor. Once when someone stood a bottle of wine on the floor he did not drink it, (this is even though he had swept in-between all his floorboards with a feather).

On another occasion – it was Yom Kippur and he was offered a chair to rest on, but he didn't sit down until he had thoroughly checked that there was no chometz on the chair, since he was wearing the same white kittel that he would be wearing six months later at the Seder table.

The wheat which was harvested for milling into flour for the baking of his Shmura Matzah, was kept in a sack which was in turn placed into a cask. This cask was then deposited into another sack which was then tied up and suspended from the ceiling with a rope. One year when the time came to send the wheat off to be ground, someone promptly took hold of a kitchen knife – one which was used for chametz throughout the year – and reached up to cut the rope.

“Heaven forbid!” the tsaddik cried out. “Take a knife from the Pesach set!”

One of the bystanders thought that the precautions of the chumras was going just a little too far,

Sensing this, Reb Yechezkel turned to him and said:

“In defining the minimal quantity with which one transgresses the prohibition of chametz on Pesach the Sages say, “חמץ בפסח במשהו”. Now in their plain meaning these words of course indicate that this prohibition applies to even the minutest quantity – במשהו.

But listen again: the prohibition applies to each individual Bema Shehu - according to what he is. According to the spiritual level which each individual attains, to that degree of stringency does the prohibition of Chametz apply to him.”

My dear friends, Pesach 5780 is truly an unprecedented Pesach.

Last week my mother was speaking with a friend of ours who is a Holocaust survivor. She told my mother that she had spent Pesach in the ghetto, Pesach in the camps, Pesach in liberation. But never Pesach alone. This year she will be celebrating Pesach for the first time, alone.

As kids, when walking home after my extended family seder, we'd keep

keenly on the lookout for other families heading back from their sedarim so we could get an estimation of whose sedarim went on as long as ours. On the second day of Yom Tov, I'd compete with my cousins to see whose family had the longest seder when we weren't together.

So often in our lives, we use other people's experiences as the yard stick by which to measure the success of our own. It leaves us, we feel, with a fair estimation of where our standards lie when held up against those of others. This is an instinctive, subconscious and constant need to keep up with others in our daily lives.

From what clothes we wear, to what music we listen to, to what dishes we eat, to how we speak, what we read, what we watch.... the list doesn't end.

Wittingly or unwittingly, for better or for worse, to a large extent, our behaviours mirror the practices of others.

When we surround ourselves with the right people, this can act as the catalyst for meaningful change. But sadly more often than not, since society has fallen in its morals and the world leaders are not the leaders of yesteryear, the standards are only dropping, and with it, is our self-control to stand strong and not capitulate to societies cultural and social pressures that surround us.

But now, here we are. Everyone is stuck in their own homes.

Some will be lucky enough to spend Yom Tov with their immediate family. Others will be completely alone. No one is going to get a chance to speak to each other from Wednesday noon till Motzei Shabbos. It will purely be each family spending their Sedarim on their own, with no one to compare to, with no stories to conjure up with which to impress their friends the next day in Shul.

No one to discuss about how late your seder went.

No one to impress with how much Morror you had in one shot.

No one to reminisce, laugh and cry with, but you and your loved ones... and G-d.

Perhaps this is the lesson to be learned from Reb Yechezkel of Kohzmir's Pshat; with no-one looking in through the windows and with no-one to impress, how will your seder look like this year?

Will it be a pyjama dressed Seder, or will you still get dressed in your Yom Tov clothes dining with the finest silverware.

Was everything you were doing up until now just for a show, or is this actually where you are holding, or maybe you could be doing a lot more, and it's just been the social pressures that's restricting your growth.

Chometz Bapesach 'Bema Shehu'. Where are you actually holding?

It's time we grab this opportunity and take advantage of this crazy situation. Let's use out this introspective Pesach.

Turn inwards and ask yourself; What is MY relationship with G-d?

What goes down at this year's Seder is just between you and Him. Make it count!



# Spill it, Don't Drink it

Rabbi Aryeh Knapp

The Tzemach Tzedek passed on a tradition to his Chassidim, that when the Alter Rebbe was compiling his Siddur, he referenced 60 different texts and versions of the classic Siddur. By clarifying those texts, the Alter Rebbe compiled a refined and accurate Nusach of Tefillah that would be the Nusach through which the prayers of all Jews would be able to ascend on high.

The text of this Siddur would be completely in accordance with the writings of the Arizal and also in accordance with the arbiters of the Talmud and conformity with Halacha. Yet it would not explicitly include the secrets and mystical meanings (Kavanos) behind the words as this would prove to be above the average individual's grasp. Rather it would retain the specific mystical code of words while still remaining universal.

Nonetheless, we find that the Alter Rebbe did make a few exceptions to this rule. There are a number of places in the Siddur where the Alter Rebbe included the mystical intentions that one should have in mind while reading the associated texts<sup>1</sup>. The reason that these specific mystical intentions were included, is because they are relatable to the general public, both simpleton and scholar alike. Three of these instances are found in the Haggadah of Pesach.

The first time the Alter Rebbe writes one of the mystical intentions in the Haggadah is just before the 10 Plagues, when we say דם ואש ותמרות עשן - "Blood, fire and pillars of smoke". At this point we begin spilling the wine from our cups instead of drinking it. We do this for each of these 3 words and again when listing the ten plagues that befell Pharaoh and the Egyptians - in full form and with their acronym דצ"ח עד"ש באח"ב

The '10 Plagues' is one of the most powerful moments of the Seder. Below is an explanation of the 10 Plagues from the writings of Reb Aharon Strashelye - Harav Aharon Halevi Horowitz, one of the Alter Rebbe's foremost Talmidim.

When we read the 10 Plagues, the following question comes to mind; Why was the king of Egypt stricken so greatly? More specifically, why did there have to be ten plagues? Wouldn't it have sufficed for the Jewish people to be allowed to escape without harming anyone else?

In order to answer these questions, we must first explain, on a deeper level, the situation that the position the Jewish people were in while in Exile. Golus in Egypt was not just a physical slavery, it was a spiritual Exile, a Golus of the Neshama that applies to each one of us. Yetzias Mitzrayim means to go out of this inner Golus.

In Kabbalah, Egypt - מצרים - מצר-ים - represents the concept of החכמה (wisdom); The word מצרים is made up of the words מצר-ים, meaning the limitation or narrowness of the sea. Kabbalistically, the sea represents the Sefira of Chochma. This implies that the exile in Mitzrayim relates a limitation on the intellect.

Chochma (wisdom) is the כח השכל - the ability of the soul to conceive ideas. It is the first of the 10 Sefiros (the faculties of the soul that parallel the Divine energies through which Hashem creates and interacts with the world). The word Chochma can be arranged to spell מה, literally the power of 'what'. It is an all-inclusive attribute which includes within it all the ten faculties at once. Yet at the same time, it remains incomprehensible and unknown to all as one attempts to contemplate on the אור"ס (lit. the infinite light of Hashem).

The next Sefira is Bina (understanding). Bina is also known as רחובות הנהר - "the expansiveness of the river". The mind of Bina acts as the contemplating factor through which we come to understand the אור"ס in its different manifestations, how it is מוכ"ע וסוכ"ע - filling all of the worlds and encompassing all of the world.

After Chochma and Bina comes the Sefira of Daas (knowledge). Daas is a very unique attribute. It is also associated with the experience of profound awareness, described as הכרה והרגשה - a deep sensing and recognition of one's Creator. Daas acts as the internalizing factor for the understandings of Chochma and Bina. Via Daas, the intellectual understandings 'give birth' to our emotions. The primary emotions of the soul are the love and fear of G-d that are felt in the person's heart.

These three aspects of the intellect - Chochma, Bina and Daas (חב"ד) rest within the brain. They are depicted as a triad which we refer to as the סגל (the vowel in the Hebrew language that is shaped with 3 dots - 2 on top and the third beneath them in the middle). Chochma and Bina are placed on parallel. Daas is centred directly beneath them, to act as the conduit to the emotions.

In the physical body, the head and heart are separated by the narrow straits of our neck. So too, in order for the transmission from intellect to emotion (via Daas) to be successful, Daas requires to pass through the עורף (neck) that separates between the brain and the heart.

This stage is problematic, because in Kabbalah, the עורף is also where the concept of שכחה (forgetfulness) begins. This refers to forgetting the intellectual concepts and understandings of the brain (חב"ד), the understanding that אין עוד מלבדו, that there is nothing else besides Hashem. At the neck, the intellectual understandings can be intercepted. If the intellect cannot come down into the heart, the emotions of love and fear will not come into realization.

The letters of the word אלוּר also form the name פרעה, the one who said "who is הו'י... I do not know הו'י"<sup>2</sup>. He is not receptive to G-dly revelation and understanding.

Chassidus explains that on a deeper level, Pharaoh could only relate to the name אלקים, which represents judgement and constriction. This contraction of the Divine light gives room for existence to see itself as

separate from Hashem, existing in and of itself. Pharaoh is the prototype of this state, claiming "my Nile is my own, I made it for myself!"<sup>3</sup>

The Torah identifies 3 of Pharaoh's ministers - referred to in Chassidus as the שרי פרעה ג'. They are: the שר המשקים (the chief butler), the שר האופים (the chief baker) and the שר הטבחים (the chief slaughterer).

In the spiritual parallel, these 3 ministers are represented by the 3 main features of the neck; the trachea (the air pipe that leads to the lungs), the oesophagus (the food pipe) and the jugular veins. These three "ministers of Pharaoh" are the source of desire for eating, drinking and the pursuit of material worldly pleasures. It is these traits that clog the flow from the mind to the heart.

We can now understand why there was a need for ספרטה to be struck by the Ten plagues. We can also understand why they had to be carried out by through Moshe and Aharon specifically. And now we can also appreciate why we spill the wine into a broken vessel:

Moshe and Aharon represent the dimension of the intellect within each Jewish soul. The Ten plagues correspond to the Ten attributes of the

soul that act as the "breaking" of the קליפה of Pharaoh and Mitzrayim that block the flow of the אור.

After the Makkos and the revelation of G-dliness, even Pharaoh proclaims in the end הוי "is in the righteous, and I and my people are the wicked"<sup>4</sup>. With the breaking of Pharaoh, the flow from mind to heart can take place and the understandings and meditations of the intellect can give birth to the ultimate love and fear of G-d.

May we each merit to have our own personal Yetzias Mizrayim, whereby the G-dly understandings of our Neshama are able to flow through our psyche. So that we may feel genuine emotions of love and fear of Hashem, leading to inspired action; serving Hashem with Torah and Mitzvos that are passionate and filled with understanding and feeling.

1. The exceptions can be found in the following pages of the original versions of Tehilas Hashem: 1) p.22. 2) p.156/402. 3) p.390,391. 4) p.341
2. Exodus 5:2
3. Ezekiel 29:3
4. Exodus 9:27

## Trails of Blood - the Infamous Blood Libel

An excerpt from a comprehensive article by Rabbi Mendel Gurkov

On a chilly September evening some time ago, a young girl told her mother she was going out to play. "Make sure to be back by nightfall" her mother said. Night came but the girl did not return. A search party made up of the townspeople and police was hastily assembled. After hours of frantic searching, no trace of the girl was found. The police began to suspect foul play, and they put together a list of suspects. The next day Rabbi Berel Brennglass was brought in. The chief eyed the Rabbi up and down, cleared his throat, and laid out the charges: "we have reason to believe that the Jewish community kidnapped a girl for ritual murder".

Sound familiar? Undoubtedly, this is not the first time you've heard a story about the infamous Blood Libel, European history in the middle ages is filled with them. These false claims were synonymous with illogical anti-semitism, harkening back to a time and place where primitive views of society reigned supreme.

The story we began with, though, did not happen in Europe, in the middle ages. It happened in New York, 1928.

The christian claim that Jews murder their children to use their blood is so blatantly preposterous it seems ridiculous that anyone has ever believed it. Yet since its inception in the twelfth century, the Blood Libel has haunted the Jewish people. These claims have caused the destruction of large communities, incited murderous pogroms, and inflicted untold damage upon the image of worldwide Jewry. Perhaps the most disturbing part of this terrible accusation is how it has persisted throughout the generations. The world is a far different place now than it was in medieval Europe, yet Blood Libels still exists today.

The Blood Libel allegations have stamped its way through Jewish history, leaving behind trails of blood....

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"Vehi Sheamda..." Rabbi Betzalel Lowe led the people seated at his Pesach Seder in song. Rabbi Lowe was the Rabbi of the large Jewish community of Posan, Poland. The Rabbi looked lovingly at his wife, who was seated opposite him at the table. She was nine months pregnant, yet she had insisted on coming to the Seder. As Rabbi Betzalel began to explain a passage in the Haggadah he was interrupted by a loud groan coming from his wife. "I think the baby's coming" she managed to croak in between gasps.

The Seder became a scene of chaos. "Get the doctor!" someone shouted. Three young men were sent to find the doctor. They sprinted outside, rushing down the empty streets of the Jewish Ghetto.

Noticing the commotion, the armed guards posted at the entrance to the Ghetto came to investigate. As they arrived on the scene they noticed two men carrying a large object at the side of the house. As they approached they realized that the men were holding a body, which they were trying to deposit into Rabbi Lowe's house via a basement window.

"Stop!" the guards shouted. The men looked up and realized they had been caught. They turned heel and began to run towards the entrance of the Ghetto. As they tried to make their escape, they ran directly into the young men and the doctor, who were rushing to aid Rebbetzin Lowe. They stumbled and crashed into the ground. The guards caught up and placed the men under arrest. Upon further inspection they found the body of a young christian boy. "Why did you murder this boy?" questioned the guards. They picked up their batons and waved it threateningly. "Don't hit me, I'll tell you!" The smaller of the two men squeaked "We were hired to plant this body at the Rabbi's house. We were told that it was to be done specifically tonight, in order to frame the Rabbi for ritual murder". As the guards led the men away, the sounds of the Rebbetzin's labor could be heard. A few minutes later a Mazal Tov was in order, a baby boy had been born.

And so, even before Rabbi Yehuda Lowe was born, he was busy saving the Jewish people from the Blood Libel....

Though the Maharal was not able to eradicate the claims of Blood Libel, he did greatly diminish their validity. The aristocracy in central Europe started to doubt the unquestioned truth of these claims, and the Church commissioned several internal investigations into the matter. We do not know an exact number of Blood Libel's the Maharal managed to thwart, but it is certain that countless communities were saved due to his efforts. The Maharal continued leading the Jewish community of Prague from his perch at the Altneuschul until he passed away in 1609. A statue of the holy Rabbi Lowe stands outside Prague's city hall to this very day.

*Excerpts from Trails of Blood - a historical essay on the Blood Libel, chronicling some of the most famous Blood Libels in our history. By Rabbi Mendel Gurkov. Read the full article in the Yeshivah Shule magazine or visit [www.kollelmenachem.com.au/libel](http://www.kollelmenachem.com.au/libel)*

# Halachos of Maror

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Maror is eaten twice during the Seder. One Kzayis is eaten by itself for Maror and a second Kzayis is eaten together with Matzah for Korech. The Mitzvah Deoraisa of eating Maror only applied when the Korban Pesach was eaten. The obligation to eat Maror nowadays is Mideraban<sup>1</sup>.

## Five Species of Maror

The Mishna<sup>2</sup> lists 5 species that can be used to fulfil the Mitzvah of Maror; Chazeres, Tamcha, Charchavina, Ulshin and Maror. The Kzayis volume can be made up of a combination of all of these types. An alternate version<sup>3</sup> of the Mishna lists the species in a different order; Chazeres, Ulshin, Tamcha, Charchavina and Maror. The sequence in the Mishna has halachic significance, which will be discussed below.

Even though Maror means bitter, our sages explain that the Torah is referring to specific species which are called Maror<sup>4</sup>. The Gemara identifies these species using names that were used in their time. The Rishonim and Acharonim identify the species by the names that were used in their times. We also find arguments and differences in identification of each of the species.

For the purpose of this article, we will only discuss the 2 species which are commonly used for Maror – Chazeres and Tamcha. The vast majority of Poskim and the accepted identification in both Halacha and practise, identify Chazeres as lettuce and Tamcha as Chrein (horseradish). When using lettuce it is customary to use romaine lettuce.

## Chazeres - the preferred specie for Maror

The Gemara records that Ravina saw Rav Acha son of Rava searching for Merirsa (the specie identified as Maror) to use as Maror, presumably because it is the most bitter. Ravina said that even though it is bitterer, the optimal Mitzvah is to use Chazeres which is listed first in the Mishna.

Rava brings additional proofs why Chazeres is the preferable vegetable. The Gemara identifies Chazeres as Chasa. The word Chasa can mean pity, alluding to how Hashem took pity upon us when He took us out of Mitzrayim.

Further, Rabbi Yonason taught that the Egyptians resemble Maror. Just as Maror at its beginning is soft but in the end it is hard<sup>5</sup>, so too the Egyptians were soft at the beginning but in the end they were harsh. This refers to the Midrash that initially the Egyptians paid the Jewish people for their labour but eventually enslaved them without pay<sup>6</sup>. This explanation refers specifically to Chazeres.

After hearing these proofs, Rav Acha retracted his practise and would use Chazeres.

Whilst the Rambam does not write the ruling of the Ravina that Chazeres is preferable, the Tur rules like Ravina that the preferred Mitzvah is to use Chazeres. This is also the accepted Halacha in Shulchan Aruch<sup>7</sup>. One should give precedence to Chazeres even if it is more costly than

the other types<sup>8</sup>. The Alter Rebbe<sup>9</sup> explains that the hiddur of spending additional money to obtain Chazeres is equivalent to spending money on obtaining a Mehudar Esrog.

## Chazeres that is not bitter

The Alter Rebbe<sup>10</sup> rules that Chazeres is still the preferred Maror specie, even when it is sweet. Even though Chazeres is not bitter, since if it were left in the ground the stalks would become hard and bitter. It is for this reason that Chazeres is called Maror. The main thing is not to taste bitterness, but to use a specie that is called Maror. This is also the opinion of many other noted Acharonim<sup>11</sup>.

There are those who argue<sup>12</sup> that one must be able to taste bitterness and therefore should not use lettuce that is not bitter. They rule that one may not use 'sweet' lettuces that are commonly sold in the market and that one must wait until the lettuce has become bitter.

Common practise follows the Poskim who permit sweet lettuce to be used. This is also implied in the Beis Yosef<sup>13</sup>. Rabbi Yakov Emden in his Siddur Yavetz, writes that it is preferable to use lettuce - not like those ignoramuses ( חסידים ) who try to use bitter vegetables. Mishna Halachos<sup>14</sup> in his Teshuvah on the topic concludes; "let the humble ones eat and rejoice and embitter their mouths with sweet lettuce – Chasa, that Hashem should have pity on us always and forever".

In the absence of Chazeres, the order of preference follows the order in which the species are listed in the Mishna<sup>15</sup> (following the second order listed above).

## Using Chrein - horseradish

Chacham Tzvi<sup>16</sup> writes that Chazeres is lettuce leaf which is called Salad, which meets all of the criteria described in the Gemara. The custom in Ashkenaz and Poland of using Chrein was because Chazeres was not available (or because they were not proficient in the names of the species to be able to identify them). He writes that this actually gives rise to the following problem; one needs to eat a Kzayis volume of Maror. Since Chrein is so strong, people would not be able to eat the required amount. He also writes that using Chrein presents an issue of Sakana.

The Ba'er Heitev<sup>17</sup> records that the Minhag in Ashkenaz was to use Tamcha (Chrein). Teshuva Meahava<sup>18</sup> writes that the custom in Prague was to use Chrein, since the preferred species including Salata (lettuce) was not available. The Aruch Hashulchan similarly writes that in their locale, only the ministers had lettuce at that time of year.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger is of the opinion that one should specifically use Chrein. Even in a case of illness, he was loathe to follow the Chacham Tzvi who identified Chazeres as lettuce. Many communities have the custom of using Chrein. There are many halachic issues discussed concerning the use of Chrein for Maror including whether and when it should be grated, if one may eat it in its full strength and whether it can

be soaked to weaken its bitterness.

### Checking the lettuce

Chasam Sofer writes that in his Shabbos Hagadol Droscha he would warn the community that even though Chazeres is the preferred Maror, unless one has proficient, G-d fearing people to check and clean the lettuce from bugs, it is preferable to use Chrein. Even though Tamcha is only listed as the 3<sup>rd</sup> preference and Chazeres is listed first, it is far worse to transgress the many Issurim of consuming bugs, especially since Maror nowadays is only Rabbinic.

Other Achronim give similar warnings. Kaf Hachaim<sup>19</sup> writes that because of a concern of infestation, one should only use the stalks of the lettuce and not the leaves, unless they are G-d fearing and trustworthy enough to check properly and patiently.

Ben Ish Chai<sup>20</sup> writes about a Chacham who entered a courtyard on Erev Pesach and saw a woman washing 2 large baskets of lettuce for the seder. She was washing the lettuce quickly. The Chacham said to her that she would have more aveiros as a result of consuming bugs than she has hairs in her head. He told her that she should rather use the stalks only (where bugs are not found).

Washing and checking lettuce should not be given to a kitchen aid or cleaner to do. Nor should it be done by children. Checking of lettuce is a serious matter and one needs to know what to look for and how to identify bugs which can be small and green, making it difficult to see on the lettuce leaf.

It is worthwhile to note that the Gemara<sup>21</sup> teaches that for each water bug consumed one violates 4 Torah prohibitions. For each 'land' bug one violates 5 Torah prohibitions. For each flying bug that a person eats they violate 6 Biblical prohibitions.

Because levels of infestation differs from place to place, one should follow the guidelines of washing and checking from their local Kashrus Vaad.

### Kosher bugs in the Maror?

The Maror must be dipped in Charoses before it is eaten. The Gemara<sup>22</sup> explains that this is to negate the harmful effects of Kappa that is found in the Maror. Rashi and Rashbam explain that the Kappa refers to a poisonous sap that is present in Maror. Rabbeinu Chananel however identifies the Kappa as a type of worm. The Tosefta<sup>23</sup> refers to the Kappa as a bug that is found in vegetables.

The multiple Torah prohibitions on consuming bugs discussed above, do not apply to bugs that grow within a vegetable. The Tosefta teaches that Kappa in the vegetables is permitted to be eaten. However if the bugs emerge and are separated from the place that they had grown, they become forbidden.

The Gemara teaches us that even though the bugs that grow within the Maror are not forbidden, they are potentially poisonous and therefore must be neutralised by dipping the Maror in Charoses.

The Alter Rebbe<sup>24</sup> follows the explanation of Rabbeinu Chananel. However he suggests that the Kappa discussed in the Gemara is no longer found in our Maror. With this he justifies why we do not completely submerge the Maror in Charoses.

In the absence of Kappa, the function of Charoses is only as a reminder

of the mud that was used to make bricks. For this reminder it suffices to dip only part of the Maror. The Rebbe (Haggadah)<sup>25</sup> adds that nowadays it is preferable not to submerge the Maror entirely in Charoses so as not to negate the bitter taste of the Maror.

The Maror should be dipped before the Bracha over the Maror. Either way, the Charoses should be shaken off so that none of it remains on the Maror (Haggadah, Levush 475:1)<sup>26</sup> when it is eaten.

### Deeper meanings

The Kol Bo connects the word Chazeres to its literal meaning – to return. Using Chazeres for Maror alludes to how Hashem returned the Jewish people back to His service though the bitterness that they endured in Mitzrayim. Sefer Hamanhig<sup>27</sup> similarly writes that at the time of the Exodus, Hashem returned us to Him and had pity (Chasa) upon us to redeem us.

The Posuk in Mishlei<sup>28</sup> says – טוֹב אֶרְחַת יֶרֶק וְאֶהְיֶה נֶשֶׁם מִשּׁוֹר אֲבוֹס וְשִׂנְאָה רָבוּ – “Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox where there is hate”. The Midrash<sup>29</sup> teaches that this Posuk refers to the meal of Matzah and Maror (vegetables) that the Jewish people ate in Mitzrayim. The word אֶרְחַת spelled in full with a Vov (ארוחת) has the same Gematria as ( ארוחת Chazeres )<sup>30</sup>.

Tamcha תמיד מספרים כבוד א-ל, they constantly speak the praises of Hashem<sup>31</sup>. This teaches us that even in times of bitterness, the Jewish people still praise Hashem.

### Chabad custom

In the instructions on setting up the Kaarah, the Alter Rebbe writes that the Chazeres used for Korech is placed below the Maror. Many Haggadahs refer to the Maror used for Korech as Chazeres, to differentiate between it and the Maror that is eaten earlier on its own.

The Rebbe's Haggada – Likutei Taamim Uminhagim – writes that based on the different names used in the Haggadah, some would use different species for Maror and for Korech, even in a place where lettuce was available. The Rebbe discusses the possible rationale for doing this, but concludes that the preference is to use lettuce for both Maror and for Korech. Indeed, in his Shulchan Aruch<sup>32</sup> when describing the Kaarah, the Alter Rebbe refers to both as Maror – Maror and the Maror for Korech. The different names used in the Haggadah have Kabbalistic significance.

The Rebbe concludes that Chabad custom is to use a combination of both Chazeres (identified as lettuce) and Tamcha (identified as Chrein) for both Maror and Korech.

Based on the discussion above, Chazeres (lettuce) is more Mehudar and remains the preferable vegetable for Maror at the Seder and one does not require any Chrein at all. Adding Chrein is a matter of custom

(perhaps to have something with a bitter taste even though it is not halachically required). Therefore, if one can obtain a small amount of Chrein to add to the lettuce to fulfil the Minhag it would be good to do so. However, if Chrein is not available or if one is unable to eat Chrein, one can fulfil the Mitzvah Lemehadrin using only lettuce.

Based on the Kabbalah of the Ariza"l<sup>33</sup>, the Seder plate is set up with the Zera (bone), Beitz (egg), Maror, Charoses, Karas and Chazeres, ordered in the shape of 2 Segol vowels<sup>34</sup>. This reflects the Divine Sefiros that are arrayed in 3 columns; the right side, the left side and the centre.

קערה עפ"י האריז"ל  
כמובאר בבאר היטב וכן נהוג בתמוצות ישראל



- א. חכמה - מצת המוציא
- ב. בינה - מצת על אכילת מצה ואפיקומן
- ג. דעת - מצת כורך
- ד. חסד - זרוע
- ה. נבונה - ביצה זכר לחגיגה
- ו. ת"ת - מרור של ברכה
- ז. נצח - חרוסת
- ח. הוד כרפס
- ט. יסוד - מרור לכריכה
- י. מלכות - הקערה
- יא. ג' מצות הם כתר חכמה בינה

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# Tevilas Keilim in a Shaas Hadechak

Rabbi Michael Stern

One of the many issues confronting us this year in the wake of the Corona Virus is how to Toivel Keilim. We are familiar with the Halachic obligation to immerse Keilim purchased from a non-Jew in a Mikva<sup>1</sup>. If the Keili is made from metal, the obligation to immerse it is Biblical (according to most Poskim<sup>2</sup>). A Keili made of glass requires Tevilah Miderobnon<sup>3</sup>.

In many cities around the world Keilim Mikvaos have been closed as part of the restrictions in place to limit the virus' spread. Even in cities that have Keilim Mikvaos available, many people are nervous to use them.

One option which is perfectly acceptable in Halacha is to immerse Keilim in the ocean. Natural springs and lakes may be another equally satisfactory option. Rivers can also be used, however there are some halachic concerns and considerations that need to be clarified. Using options such as lakes and oceans<sup>4</sup> is not always an option since, in many cities they are not nearby. Access to them may also be restricted.

This year many Rabbonim have suggested relying upon the following leniencies:

Gifting or selling the Keili (utensil) to a non-Jew and then borrowing it back. Another possibility is declaring the Keili Hefker (ownerless).

## Transferring Ownership to Non-Jew

The Mordechai<sup>5</sup> discusses a case where one forgot to Toivel a Keili before Shabbos. He suggests that one give it to the non-Jew and then borrow it back. The rationale behind this suggestion is that a Keili borrowed from a non-Jew does not require Tevila<sup>6</sup>.

The Beis Yosef extends this leniency, permitting it to be relied upon even on a weekday in a situation where there is no Mikva available. The Mechaber and Rama record the ruling of the Mordechai in the last Seif in the Laws of Tevilas Keilim in the Shulchan Aruch<sup>7</sup>.

However, a number of Poskim have expressed their reservations about using this as an option.

The argument of Ha'arama:

Concerning a Rov who ruled that one may rely on this leniency, the Rashbash<sup>8</sup> commented that it was shocking. He writes that this appears to be a Ha'arama (subterfuge) as the gift is not a genuine one. The Gemora says that any gift that is given in a way of Ha'arama has no validity<sup>9</sup>.

It is clear in this case that the Keili is not being given as a Matana Gemura (complete gift) to the non-Jew. Firstly, there is the fact that one is not allowed to give a free gift to a non-Jew because of the prohibition of "Lo Sichonem" (do not show them grace).

Additionally, it is clear that this gift is only being given with the intent to borrow it. We can apply the principle "Sofo Mochiach Techiloso" (the end shows on the beginning). The fact that the non-Jew returns the Keili immediately after Shabbos shows that the entire exchange was

"Mirmah" (a trick). He concludes that a better option would be to rely on the Rambam, who allows Tevilas Keilim to be performed on Shabbos and Yom Tov<sup>10</sup>.

According to the Taz<sup>11</sup> to give the Keili to a non-Jew only helps temporarily - "lefi shoh". It may only be relied upon for that Shabbos, or if used during the week, only until a Mikva is available. He compares it to a case where a non-Jew deposited a Mashkon (deposit) with a Jew and has no intention of retrieving it. The Jew may not use it without Tevila. We find a similar scenario with a borrowed Tallis, which is only exempt from Tzitzis for 30 days. Afterwards it requires Tzitzis since it appears like it belongs to the borrower. Therefore the Taz rules that one must Toivel the Keili as soon as there is the possibility to do so.

The Darkei Teshuva<sup>12</sup> quotes a number of Poskim that defend this practice. Regarding the issue of "Lo Sichonem", the Amudei Aish writes that there is no "Chanina" here, especially since you are borrowing it back.

Regarding the issue of Ha'arama, the Yeshuos Yaakov<sup>13</sup> writes that Ha'arama is allowed by a Derobonan. Whilst the accepted position is that Tevilas Keilim is Mideoraisa, we can really upon the opinions that Tevilas Keilim is Derobonan to use this Ha'arama.

Regarding the issue of the Taz<sup>14</sup>, the Darkei Teshuva points out that we find Poskim such as the Shulchan Gevohah that use this as a solution for very large and heavy Keilim that can't be Toiveled even though they will be used by the Jewish "borrower" indefinitely. Many contemporary Poskim<sup>15</sup> apply this to sensitive digital equipment that will be ruined through Toiveling.

Rabbi Osher Weis<sup>16</sup> suggests that instead of giving the entire Keili to the non-Jew, he acquires only part of the Keili. Then he becomes a "Shutaf" (partner). Perhaps even the Taz would agree that there is no issue since it belongs to the Jew as well.

## Hefker

The Sefer Tevilas Keilim<sup>17</sup> writes that if one does not have in mind to acquire the Keili when purchasing it from the non-Jew it is exempt from Tevila. Since it has no owner, there is no prohibition to use it.

The Ketzos HaShulchan records a story where the Rebbe Rashab was traveling by train and purchased water at one of the stops. After he finished drinking, he threw the bottle out of the window. Rav Chaim Nae writes that in order for the Rebbe Rashab to use the Keili without Tevila he had in mind not to acquire the bottle. He only paid for the water. In order to demonstrate this, he threw out the bottle after he had finished drinking.

If the Keili was already purchased, there is an obligation to Toivel and Hefker post facto does not help. The Mahril Diskin<sup>18</sup> writes that the halacha is that if one is Mafkir a vineyard and works in it the following morning, it is still his. Further, if Hefker was an option, the Rama would have



mentioned it together with gifting it to a non-Jew.

The Sefer Tevilas Keilim also points out that the fact that none of the Poskim mention this option shows that it does not help. Since he is using the Keili that he was Mafkir, he automatically re-acquires it. At the best it is a very extreme Ha'arama and a self-contradiction. Since he wants to use the Keili, he doesn't want anyone to take it away, so it is not really Hefker. Nonetheless he brings in a footnote<sup>19</sup> that Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach holds that B'shas Hadchak (in a pressing situation) one could rely on Hefker.

The Har Tzvi<sup>20</sup> discusses whether Keilim taken in battle from Arabs by the Israeli military require Tevila. He brings from Reb Avraham of Tchechenov that if the non-Jew was Mafkir the Keili before the Jew acquired it, it is exempt from Tevilah. Rav Frank does not accept this and after asking a number of questions on this Sevara, he rules that the Keilim need Tevilah.

Rav Osher Weis<sup>21</sup> writes that although this is a Chidush Godol, he is not aware of any true "Pirchah" (rejection.). According to the Tchechenover, this should even help if the Jew is Mafkir the Keili himself and then reacquires it. He concludes with a Tzarich Iyun.

In conclusion since we are in a global Sha'as Hadchak and the first option of gifting the Keili to the non-Jew would require him to pick it up in order to make a Kinyan<sup>22</sup>, many Rabonim are suggesting utilizing the method of Hefker to avoid the requirement of Tevilas Keilim. They rationalise

that although it is by far the halachically weaker option, it is the safer option.

\* There is now an online website endorsed by Chabad Rabbonim in Montreal through which one can sell their Keilim to a non-Jew. This may be the preferable option where no Mikva or ocean option is available.

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|---|---|
| 11. ט"ז ס"ק יח  | 1. שולחן ערוך יורה דעה סימן קב עפ"י משנה ובריייתא ע"ז דף ע"ה-ב  |
| 12. ס"ק ק"א בשם שו"ת עמודי אש                             | 2. עיין שו"ת הרשב"ש סי' תסח שלמד בדעת הרמב"ם הלכ' מאכלות אסורות יז-ה שאינו אלא מדרבנן, אבל למעשה מוכח שדעת מחבר שטבילת כלי מתכת הוי מה"ת. עיין סעי' יד, טז ס"ק טז |
| 13. סי' יגס"ק ד   | 3. פרי חדש ס"ק ב  |
| 14. ס"ק יב, ועיין הגהות רעק"א ס"ק ד בשם כנסת הגדולה       | 4. עיין פ"ת ס"ק ד לענין שלג   |
| 15. ספר טבילת כלים פרק ד הערה כו, ועיין שו"ת מנחת אשר ג-כ | 5. הובא בבית יוסף בסוף סי' קב   |
| 16. הנ"ל  | 6. הנ"ל סעי' ח  |
| 17. ספר טבילת כלים ג-ח                                    | 7. הנ"ל סעי' טז   |
| 18. מהרל דיסקין בונטרס אחרון סי' ה אות קלו                | 8. הובא בפ"ת ס"ק טו   |
| 19. טו  | 9. ובי' בנדריים מח-א שכל מתנה שנעשית בהערמה דלא כלום היא, כל מתנה שאם הקדושה אינה הקודשת אינה מתנה.   |
| 20. שו"ת הר צבי יד' ס' קט                                 | 10. עיין ש"ע אדה"ז סי' שבג סעי' ז   |
| 21. שו"ת מנחת אשר ג, נז                                   |   |
| 22. עיין ש"ע אדה"ז סי' תמח סעי' ז,ח                       |   |

# Halachos of Maror

Continued from page 6

The right side (the Zeroa and Charoses) is associated with the attribute of Chesed (kindness). The left side (the egg and Karpas) is connected to the attribute of Gevurah (severity). The Maror and Chazeres are placed on the middle line, reflecting the attribute of Rachamim (mercy or compassion).

Seemingly, it would be more appropriate for the Maror to be placed on the left side since bitterness is an expression of Gevurah.

The Alter Rebbe explains that the bitterness of Maror refers to the bitterness that a person feels when self-reflecting on their distance from Hashem. This bitterness arouses a sense of Rachmanus on one's soul and the situation that it finds itself in. When we have Rachmanus on our spiritual situation, Hashem responds with Rachamim Rabim (abundant mercy) from above to help us. Since the Merirus leads to Rachamim, the Maror is placed on the middle column.

As discussed at the start of this article, in the absence of the Korban Pesach, the Biblical Mitzvah of Maror no longer applies. The Rabbis instituted a Rabbinic Mitzvah to eat Maror at the Seder as a Zecher L'Mikdash – a remembrance of how the Mitzvah was observed when the Beis Hamikdash stood. The reason for such Gezeiros is so that we do not forget about the Beis Hamikdash and more importantly that we do not forget the Mitzvos so that we will be able to observe them when the Beis Hamikdash is speedily rebuilt.

May we be zoche to the coming of Moshiach before Pesach so that we may once again fulfil the Mitzvah Maror Mideoraisa.

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|---|--|
| 1. Pesachim 120a, Rambam Hichos Chametz Umatzah 7:12  | 124, see Mishna Halachos volume 6 siman 92 and volume 7 siman 68. Mishna Halachos proposes that this is actually a Machlokes Rishonim. |
| 2. Pesachim 39a   | 13. ibid   |
| 3. This is the order quoted in Rif and is found in the Yerushalmi. It is the standard text found in the Mishnayos (as opposed to the Mishna as recorded in the Talmud).   | 14. 7:68   |
| 4. Shulchan Aruch Harav 473:27 quoting Chok Yakov   | 15. Tur and Beis Yosef 473 based on Haggahos Maimonios Hilchos Chametz Umatzah 7:20  |
| 5. Rashi understands the Gemara literally, referring to the stalks becoming harder. The Alter Rebbe explains that when the stalks harden, the lettuce becomes more and more bitter, just as the Egyptians started off sweet in their treatment of the Jews only to become bitter in the end | 16. Teshuva 119  |
| 6. Rashi  | 17. 473:11   |
| 7. 473:5  | 18. 2:262  |
| 8. Beis Yosef 473   | 19. 473:90   |
| 9. 473:30   | 20. Parshas Tzav   |
| 10. 473:30  | 21. Makkos 16b   |
| 11. Levush 473:5, Chok Yakov 473:17, Chayei Adam 130:3, Rabbi Yakov Emden (Siddur) and Aruch Hashulchan 473:16 and Chacham Tzvi quoted below.   | 22. 115b   |
| 12. Ridbaz on Yerushalmi Brachos chapter 6 and Chazon Ish 124. See also Chazon Ish. For a discussion and refutation on the position of the Chazon Ish Orach Chaim   | 23. Terumos 7:12   |
|   | 24. 475:11   |
|   | 25. Haggadah – Likutei Taamim Uminhagim  |
|   | 26. Haggadah, Levush 475:1   |
|   | 27. Siman 78   |
|   | 28. 15:17  |
|   | 29. Midrash Rabbah Balak 20:18   |
|   | 30. Rokeach 283  |
|   | 31. Chasam Sofer   |
|   | 32. 473:26   |
|   | 33. Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Chag Hamatzos chapter 6   |
|   | 34. Shulchan Aruch Harav 473:26  |

# Blood tests, DNA and Halacha

Rabbi Yossi Moshel

Based on a shiur given at this year's Yarchei Kallah learning program

In the mid twentieth century Rabbonim were approached with an issue as to whether a blood test could be used to discount a husband as not being the true father of a child.

Most Rabbonim disapproved of blood tests based on a piece of Aggadic Gemara in Maseches Niddah 31a. This Gemara discusses the 3 partners and their input in the creation of a child which is Hashem, the father and the mother.

Hashem contributes the life-force in the human which is the power to speak, see and hear. The father, as the Alter Rebbe mentions in the second perek of Tanya, contributes the white substance which forms sinews, nails and brain. And the mother contributes the red in the child from which comes the skin, hair and black of the eye.

Most Rabbonim, in contrast to scientific thought, discount using blood tests based on this Gemara. They infer from the Gemara that blood travels solely from mother to child and that the father has no input in the blood of the child based on the understanding that 'red' refers to the blood of the mother.

Although this is an Aggadic statement (which normally is not used to determine halacha) the Rabbonim still rely on the statement as proof against using blood tests to disprove paternity.

Halacha is determined by the Rabbonim based on Torah, which is Divine and eternal. It is therefore not subject to change. In contrast, scientific approaches are subject to change and revision.

An interesting example of halacha superseding science is in Hilchos Yomtov. The Shulchan Aruch notes that when someone believes their life will be in danger if they continue to fast on Yom Kippur we rely on the patient's judgment. This is so, even if the doctors determine that it is safe for them to continue fasting. This is an example that where medicine or science contradicts Halacha, we follow the rulings of Halacha over science.

Nevertheless some Rabbonim apply reasoning to allow for blood testing even taking into account the Gemara in Niddah.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who was regarded as one of the chief poskim of the last century in Eretz Yisroel and had a deep understanding of both halachic and scientific/medicinal knowledge, interprets the Gemara differently. He suggests that not necessarily is the Gemara saying that the mother is the sole determinant of the child's blood; rather she is the catalyst for the production of the blood. However, the father shares influence over his child's blood type.

Rabbi Osher Weiss in his sefer, *Minchas Osher*, asserts that throughout the Talmud we do not find the Gemara avoiding the use of the word dam/ blood, so why in this Talmudic passage does it not? It must be, he continues, that the Gemara does not view the mother as the only source of her child's blood.

Rav Dichovsky notes that the Rambam and Tashbetz write that medical assertions in the Gemara were based on medical knowledge at the time, rather than being Divinely inspired. This is in contrast though to the approach of the Rivash who declares that scientists cannot be relied upon when they contradict the Chachamim in the Gemara<sup>1</sup>.

## Rav Saadya Gaon's blood test

Sefer Chassidim (232) [ a 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century sefer written primarily by R' Yehuda Hachassid ], relates an intriguing story of an affluent husband who travels overseas with his servant on business, leaving his pregnant wife at home. Not too long after the husband dies and the servant seized the estate of his master claiming: 'I am his son.' A son born in the interim then appears and asserts that he is the rightful heir.

The son, fearful of the servant harming him if he were to publicly claim his inheritance approached Rav Saadya Gaon seeking his counsel. After receiving permission from the King to adjudicate the case, Rav Saadya Gaon exhumed the body of the father and removed one of the bones. He took blood samples from both the son and the slave and placed the bone first into the blood from the slave and then into the blood of the son. The bone absorbed the son's blood but not the slave's blood, thereby proving, in Rav Saadya's opinion, the identity of the true son, since the bone absorbing blood demonstrated genetic similarity.

The Elyah Rabbah, a well known Acharon, cites this story but poses a question based on an incident recorded in Bava Basrah 58a. The Gemara there relates a story of a husband who overhears his wife speaking to her daughter cautioning her to be 'tznius' (modest) when she is promiscuous. The daughter asks why and the mother replies 'because she has ten children and each child has a different father' (which was not known by the children or the husband).

Before passing away, the father said that his inheritance should only go to his biological son and not to his other children, who are not really his. He did not say which son was his biological child, presumably because he does not know himself. The sons approach Rav Benaah, who advises them to all visit the grave of their father, strike on it and wait for the father to emerge and announce who his real son is ( 'could the real son please stand up' ). All of the sons bar one follow his advice. Rav Benaah paskened that the son who did not do so is, in fact, the legitimate son.

The Rashbam explains that this is a case of Shuda Dedayan – discretion of the judge - loosely translated as a Solomonic decision. This is based on a famous case cited in Nach about two mothers who came to King Shlomo both claiming to be the true mother of the child. In his wisdom he decided that to be fair he will cut the child in two and give half to each mother. Before King Shlomo did so the mother cried out: "Wait! Give the child whole to the other mother rather than cutting him into two pieces". On observation of her obvious love for the child, Shlomo Hamelech granted the child to her.

The Elyah Rabba queries as to why Rav Benaah did not incorporate the method of Rav Saadya Gaon to instruct the sons to each dip a bone of their fathers into each of their blood samples, to establish who indeed is the bona fide son.

Based on the Rashbam, the Rashash understands that because there were ten sons, if Rav Benaah would in fact utilise Rav Saadya Gaon's method it would deem the other 9 sons mamzeirim [illegitimate children], thereby disqualifying the sons from marrying most other Jewish people and losing their progeny. Rav Benaah's method, in contrast would not render the children as mamzeirim but merely enable the true son to inherit his father's property<sup>2</sup>.

Rabbi Jachter reasons that based on the Rashash it can be said, that the contemporary Rabbonim who banned blood testing, did so as a result of the mamzeiros factor. They used the Aggadic Gemara as a support for their ruling, but not necessarily as the primary reason to not administer and give credence to blood testing.

In the 1980s DNA started to be used for genetic testing. At the time it was considered to be 99.6% accurate. In 1986 the Israeli Rabbinic Court of Appeals was presented with a case to adjudicate based on a ruling of a district Rabbinic Beis Din.

Rav Ovadia Yosef ( the Chief Sefardic Rabbi and one of the foremost poskim of the 20<sup>th</sup> century] together with Rav Yosef Kapach and Rav Yitzchok Karlitz, also extremely well regarded Rabbonim of their time, heard the following case.

A young man and woman lived in a de-facto relationship. Sometime after the couple separated, the woman discovered that she was pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a child. The man claimed to be the father while the woman insisted he wasn't the father. The man demanded a DNA sample to be taken to prove the validity of his claim but the woman refused.

The initial Beis Din ruled that if the woman would not consent to a DNA test, they would interpret her refusal as admission of the man indeed being the father. The woman escalated the matter to the board of appeal and the three aforementioned Rabbonim rejected the ruling of the district Beis Din.

Rav Ovadia Yosef's reasoning is found in his widely acclaimed set of Shaalos and Teshuvos (responsa) entitled Yabia Omer. He offers, what appears as a seemingly far-fetched reason to discount the use of DNA testing.

He states that in the Gemara in Yevamos (99a), it mentions the case of a child whose father may be one of two people, but does not propose DNA as one of the means to determine the true father. Therefore, it must be that the Gemara did not regard DNA as an acceptable method of determining paternal identity. [Although it may appear far-fetched, the Gemara is known to elicit certain principles - such as the case of the "flying camel" (See Makkos 5a). The underlying assumption is that Chaza"l in their wisdom would have been aware of DNA testing.

### Rav Dichovsky and the Ashdod Beis Din

In 1982, Rav Shlomo Dichovsky sat as a member of the Ashdod district Israeli Rabbinic Beis Din. A divorce agreement and Get were conducted in their presence. A short time later, the now ex-husband returned to

the court and claimed that he was the father of only one of his ex-wife's children, implying that his wife had been unfaithful. A blood test<sup>3</sup> was ordered by the Beis Din and they were informed that a DNA test was also administered at the lab which substantiated the father's claims. The wife still disagreed and denied ever having been unfaithful during their marriage.

Rav Dichovsky paskened that the father should not pay for child support, despite the child not being Halachically regarded as a mamzer, the reason being, that in halacha, in regards to adultery, we regard the wife to have the benefit of the doubt based on rov (majority). This is based on the Gemara in Sotah which states that we assume "rov beilos achar habaal" - that we assume that the wife will have had the majority of her relations with her husband.

Rav Dichovsky states that as the DNA is also based on rov (majority), one



Harav Shlomo Dichovsky

rov may not disqualify the other rov, and the case remains in a state of sofek (doubt). Thus the Beis Din cannot force the husband to pay child support (because of the din of hamoitze machairo olov harayeh- the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff).

Nevertheless the child is not considered to be a mamzer, because in order to discount the application of roiv beilos achar habaal,

an extremely high level of certainty is required. We see this in the following case in Mesechta Yevamos that is brought in Shulchan Aruch.

A husband travelled overseas and his wife gave birth 12 months after his departure. In such a case the Gemara assumes the husband to be the father and the child is not a mamzer. This means that Chaza"l see the remote possibility of the mother being pregnant for 12 months. This highlights the degree to which Rabbonim will reason, so as not to pronounce someone a mamzer. Rabbi Duchovsky also reasoned in 1982, that DNA was only 99.6% accurate (whereas currently it is regarded as 99.99% accurate).

The other two Rabbonim on the court disagreed and said that the DNA evidence is not admissible in this case at all and that the father must pay child support based on the Roiv Beilos. Additionally, there was a longstanding chazaka that the husband was the father of the two children. [Once again the case was elevated to the Appeals Court which upheld the ruling of the District Court].

In contrast to all the above rulings against DNA testing prior to 9/11, Rav Shomo Zalman Auerbach remained a strong advocate of DNA in the determination of parental identity. He ruled on a case of 2 babies that had been mixed up after birth in an Israeli hospital. After all investigations ended inconclusively, Rav Auerbach and Rabbi Waldenberg agreed it was permissible to use DNA testing to determine the identity of the parents of each child. Rabbi Auerbach reasoned that since DNA is accepted unequivocally throughout the world as a reliable test, then it also conforms to halachic standards as admissible evidence.

Rav Wosner (the Shevith Halevi) a famous world-renowned Torah authority in Israel, made a strong distinction. He permitted DNA to be used to allow Agunas to remarry. This would apply in cases such as 9/11. However, DNA could not be used to render someone a mamzer.

In his ruling after 9/11, he states that DNA can be used, but only to identify the deceased person; therefore, for the purposes of identification, the person's DNA sample is taken from a part of themselves, such as the hair from a brush at home. The DNA could not be compared to that of an immediate relative.

This approach would work for a case such as 9/11, but not to identify paternal identity, which would necessitate comparing the son's DNA to the father's. Perhaps a halachic precedent for this is found in the Gemarah where in order to identify a corpse, the Rabbonim utilise simanim muvhakim (such as a protruding tooth with a black marking) of the *deceased* but not simanim of a relative.

### What is DNA?

The human gene has several components. There is the autosomal chromosome with 22 pairs (from 1-22), each child inheriting a copy of 1 from their mother and 1 from their father, 2 from mother and 2 from father etc. There is also a 23<sup>rd</sup> chromosome which is the gender chromosome, made up of X and Y. A male is XY and a female is XX.

These 23 chromosomes together are called the nuclear gene. They actually make up a long sequence of 3 billion letters of patterns of letters A,G,T and C - the DNA. This creates the uniqueness of each person and thus its ability to distinguish between each individual.

The other component is the Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) which comes from the mitochondria, originally sourced from the mother's egg. When it is compared to the DNA as a whole it is very small, only containing 17,000 sequences. Although the father also has mtDNA, it is only passed on from mother to child.

The mtDNA has important Halachic ramifications. This is so because if a person were to take a DNA sample from an online heritage website, the test will compare the DNA to both the mother and father and although it may indicate that the person is 99% Jewish, it does not necessarily prove Jewish identity, since the remaining 1% may be from the mother's side.

mtDNA testing, in contrast, rectifies this problem since it only tests the maternal side. Based on this, Jewish genetic experts conducted numerous tests and found that a remarkable 40% of Ashkenazi Jews share a common gene of 100% Ashkenazic Jewish identity, which ostensibly traces back to 4 lines of primordial mothers (although we don't know who they are).

This test does not work for Sefardic Jews, since they do not have strong haplotypes (genetic groups).

MtDNA can *only* make someone Jewish but *cannot* disqualify them from being Jewish.

Based on the above, many Rabbonim have been faced with questions of birurei yahadus and the efficacy of DNA to be used to help determine a

person's Jewishness.

Recently, Rav Mordechai Sudrich, a Rabbi in Poland, was asked about a story of a man born in Vilna during the Holocaust who sheltered with a Polish family. Throughout his childhood he asked his parents if he is Jewish but they denied so repeatedly. As a young adult he began to study Christian theology and became a priest. Once his adopted father passed away his 'mother' revealed that he was, in fact, born Jewish.

Rabbi Sudrich allowed the man to consider himself Jewish especially after taking into account the man's mtDNA, which was shown to be part of that 40% with 100% Ashkenazi genes.

As a final contemporary story, Rabbi Ulman from Sydney, also an expert in genetics and Halacha, relates the following fascinating case:

A woman from a distinguished rabbinic family in America, asked about her brother who had left his Jewish identity and relocated to Europe. There he met a Polish woman with whom he had a child. The lady mentioned to his sister that she believes she has Jewish roots, being that her maternal great-grandmother lived in Odessa (a town in Ukraine with a large proportion of Jews) and had a common Jewish surname.

Rabbi Ulman requested that further research be conducted. Documents were collected demonstrating her maternal lineage and support her Jewish identity. Circumstantial testimony was garnered from a neighbour whose evidence was that the family was known to the Nazis but not turned over because they were well-liked. Additionally, a mtDNA test was conducted and indeed verified the woman's claims.

Some time later it was discovered that this woman's great grandmother's and grandfather's names were recorded in a registry that lists the names of the Jewish people of Odessa from that time.

Rabbi Ulman gave his psak which was co-signed by 4 other experts in Halacha and genetics including Rabbi Osher Weiss and Rabbi Birnbaum, that the woman and hence her child were Jewish.

1. And, in any event, given the fact that the majority of poskim do not accept blood tests based on this Gemara, even the Rambam should accept the teaching here as Ruach Hakodesh (Divinely inspired) and not regard it as medical knowledge of its time since the Gemara lists HASHEM as one of the partners in the child's creation, which is clearly not according to science anyway. [Writer of this article]

2. Here it would seem that the Rashash suggests that Rav Benah does not mean to use a scientific method which would indeed render the other sons as mamzeirim because it is considered a proof and is accurate but to rather use his discretion as a judge and say that this son is the heir (with his method a logical means to validate his decision). Whereas the case of Rav Saadyah Gaon was not being used to render the servant a mamzer. The servant was aware that he was not the true son of his master but merely wanted an excuse to seize the wealth, property and possessions his master had left behind. And, although we stated before that most contemporary Rabbonim did not accept blood testing as an acceptable method for paternal testing based on the mother being the sole source of the child's blood, the case of Rav Saadya Gaon is seemingly different because there the son used his blood to be absorbed into his father's bone, which in fact is a brilliant way to incorporate the Gemarah in Niddah. [Writer of this article]

3. Apparently blood testing was accepted by these Rabbonim





# We Need to Talk About Moshiach

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

*This year, we will be celebrating the Yomtov of Pesach in our homes. Whilst we will be missing out on davening in Shul and gathering together as a community and our Sedarim and Yomtov meals will be without guests, we have an amazing opportunity.*

*This year, we will be able to focus our attention on our families— particularly our children. This is certainly true for the Pesach Seder at the start of Yomtov but will also be so for the Seudas Moshiach at the Yomtov's end.*

*Seudas Moshiach is the highlight and crescendo of Pesach. Traditionally men and boys will celebrate this experience in Shul. Women may have their own gatherings. Young children and their mothers are usually at home.*

*This year we have the opportunity for the whole family to share Seudas Moshiach together. It presents an incredible opportunity to be able to inspire our families and strengthen our Emunah in the Geulah and the coming of Moshiach.*

*Instead of listening to our Rabbonim and community Mashpiim farbreng, we as parents now carry the responsibility to be Mashpia. Just as we prepare vertelach, sichos, stories and explanation to make our Sedarim inspiring for our families, focusing on each member according to their age and level, this year we need to do the same in preparing for and running our own Seudas Moshiach.*

*In this light, I would like to share the following idea which can be shared at your Seudas Moshiach.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Pesach is a time that we celebrate Geulah. Our main focus is on Yetzias Mitzrayim, yet as we celebrate this Geulah at the seder we also make a heartfelt request for the final Geulah;

“May we rejoice in the rebuilding of Your city and be happy in Your Avodah and we will eat from the sacrifices and the Korbon Pesach... And we will sing to You a new song (שיר חדש)<sup>1</sup> on our redemption and the liberation of our souls”. We pour the cup of Eliyahu Hanovi, the one who will announce the impending Geulah and open the door as if to usher in the Geulah itself.

On אחרון של פסח - the last day of Yomtov, we turn our focus more acutely to the final Geulah. On this day shines a revelation of Moshiach. The Haftorah of the last day is one of the most vivid Nevuos of the era of Moshiach: “a staff will come out from the stump of Yishai... the wolf will

lie with the lamb... and Hashem will extend His hand to bring back the remnant of His people from Assyria, Mitzrayim... and the islands of the sea”.

The Baal Shem Tov instituted the celebration of Seudas Moshiach on the last day of Pesach, and the Rebbe Rashab later introduced four cups of wine. The purpose of this meal is to manifest the revelation of Moshiach of this day into a tangible experience. As we physically eat this meal, we absorb the idea of Moshiach into our flesh and blood.

So though it is always opportune to discuss Moshiach, this Yomtov it's even more fitting to do so.

At the start of the Rebbe's Nesius, in the very first Maamer - Bosi Legani, the Rebbe set forth the agenda and goal of our generation: As the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe, we would be the ones to bring the Ikar Shechina back into the world; to bring Moshiach and the final Geulah.

The Rebbe's Nesius saw many phases and campaigns; Mivtzoim, Shlichus, Batei Chabad, Tzivos Hashem etc. These were all stages in preparing the world and guiding the Chassidim towards their final and ultimate Shlichus- the Mivtza to publicise the coming of Moshiach and to prepare to receive him. The Rebbe lived with Moshiach and anticipated the Geulah every moment. Almost every sicha would conclude mentioning Moshiach.

This reached a crescendo in the years 5771 and 5772. In the sichos of these years, the Rebbe said some powerful statements on the fact that we are ready for the immediate redemption; “Moshiach is already here”. “Everything is ready and we are sitting at the Seudah of the Levivayan, all that we need to do is to open our eyes”.

“אט אט קומט משיח!” - “הגיע זמן גאולתכם!” - “הנה זה (מלך המשיח) בא וכבר בא!”

“behold this one (Moshiach) is coming... and has already come!” “Not only do we have the Metzius of Moshiach, we also have the revelation of Moshiach.”

As the Rebbe spoke these words, every Chossid lived with Geulah, sensing with anticipation and passion the palpability and immediacy of Moshiach's arrival.

In 5772 at the last Kinus Hashluchim before Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe emphasised that the only remaining Shlichus now is to prepare ourselves and those around us to greet and receive Moshiach Tzidkeinu. This was

the final mission and instruction given to each one of us as Shluchim of the Rebbe. This remains the Tzav Hashaah, the call of the hour, until the mission is accomplished.

All of the things that we as Chassidim and Shluchim are doing around the world; Mivtzoim, Hafotzas Hayahadus and Hafotzas Hamayonos must still continue. But since that 5772 kinus, there is now an overriding focus. All of these activities must be permeated with the anticipation and hastening of the Geulah, the final Shlichus.

On Acharon shel Pesach 5699 (1939) the Friedrike Rebbe spoke about the Keli, the vessel through which we will bring Moshiach.

In Yaakov Avinu's parting blessing to his son Yehudah, Yaakov says "the sceptre (of rulership) will not depart from the tribe of Yehudah עד כי יבא שילה - "until Shiloh arrives". Shiloh refers to Moshiach to whom true kingship belongs שמהמלוכה שלו.

The Friedrike Rebbe points out that שילה has the same Gematria as משה (345). Moshe was the גואל ראשון, the first redeemer of the Jewish people. The Geulah from Mitzrayim opened up the channel for all subsequent Geulos, including the final Geulah. יבא שילה has the Gematria of Moshiach (358), the final redeemer.

The difference between שילה and יבא שילה, between משה and משיח is the word יבא. In this difference, says the Friedrike Rebbe, lies a deep allusion to what the Keli to bring Moshiach is.

יבא has the same Gematria as אחד (13). When there will be Achdus amongst the Jewish people in general and specifically an Achdus in speaking about Moshiach, מען זאל ריידן וועגן משיח, then we will be able to draw down the Geulah Shleimah through Moshiach.

When Moshe Rabbeinu was born, the Jewish people's hearts were elevated. They would speak joyously about Amram's special son Moshe. Even when Moshe was forced to flee Mitzrayim to Midian, the Jewish people did not forget about him. They would constantly mention him and speak about him. Until finally Hashem heard the Jewish people's talking and beseeching to bring about the Geulah. The same is true in our time. We must constantly be speaking about Moshiach.

Twenty six years after Gimmel Tammuz and even longer since we heard the Rebbe's proclamations, Mivtza Moshiach is a lot more difficult. With differing opinions and understandings, sitting together - אחד - in speaking about Moshiach is a challenge.

But we have faith in our Rebbe's words - דברי צדיקים חיים וקיימים - לעד. Moshe fled to Midian for 40 years, yet Bnei Yisroel did not lose hope. They continued to speak about Moshe and never did he leave their thoughts.

Just as our ancestors were redeemed from Mitzrayim in the merit of their Emunah in the Geulah, We need to strengthen our own Emunah in the Geulah. How do we keep our Emunah and focus on Geulah strong?

The words of כ"ח ניסן - the sicha that shook the world, still ring in our ears - tut altz vos ir kent! The Rebbe announced that he has done whatever he can to bring Moshiach and the only thing left is to entrust it to us to do everything within our ability to bring Moshiach. There was a great deal of confusion as to what the Rebbe wanted and what was meant by כלים דתיקון in אורות דתהו. Ideas, campaigns and suggestions came from around the world.

A few weeks later on Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora, the Rebbe set forth the דרך הישרה, the surest and swiftest way to bring Moshiach, and that is through learning Torah on matters of Moshiach and Geulah (עניני מלך המשיח ועניני הגאולה) in Torah Shebichsav and especially

the words of the Neviim, Gemora and Midrashim and especially... in the Maamarim and Likutei Sichos of the Nossi Hador.

In the Maamer V'ata Teztaveh, the Rebbe discusses the theme of Emunah. Every Jew has a deep Emunah in Hashem, but Emunah can remain Makif. Emunah needs to be fed and internalised so that it affects our conscious living, awareness and way of thinking. The same is true with our Emunah in the Geulah. Of course we believe the words and prophecy of the Rebbe. But we need to internalise it so that we can live with it and march forward in our campaign and Shlichus to bring Moshiach.

The way to internalise Emunah is through Daas, a personal understanding and relationship with what we learn. When we learn עניני משיח וגאולה we start to think and live Geulah. Moshiach becomes a reality.

The Midrash tells the tale of a king betrothed a young maiden. They were deeply in love and counting the days until their upcoming wedding. But one day, the king disappeared without a word and without a trace. Days became weeks, weeks became months and month slowly gave way to years.

The bride's friends mocked her. What are you waiting for? He is never coming back. It has been so long why don't you just move on? But finally, one day, the king returned. The wedding was celebrated in great style and finally the king and his queen were alone together.

The king asked his bride how she was able to remain devoted to him throughout the long years of his absence despite the taunts and logical claims of her friends?

She replied "in truth there were times when I too had doubts, when the mocking and taunts would get to me. But on our engagement you wrote me a letter where you promised me that we would live together forever in joy and love and closeness, how you would take care of me and how we would live a perfect life together. Every time I would have doubts I would take out that letter and read it over and over again. Reading your assurances would give me the strength to continue hoping and waiting.

We all need to reread the letter to strengthen our commitment and our faith, to make it easier for us to hold on though the time draws long.

As we conclude our Seudas Moshiach (and even before), let's translate the experience into practical action with a Hachlota.

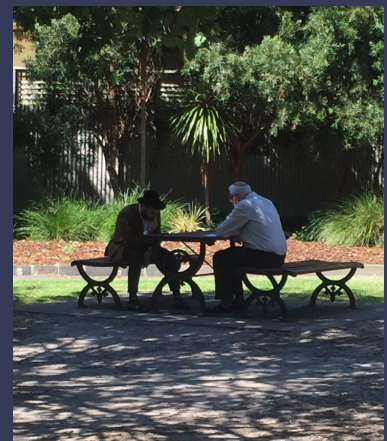
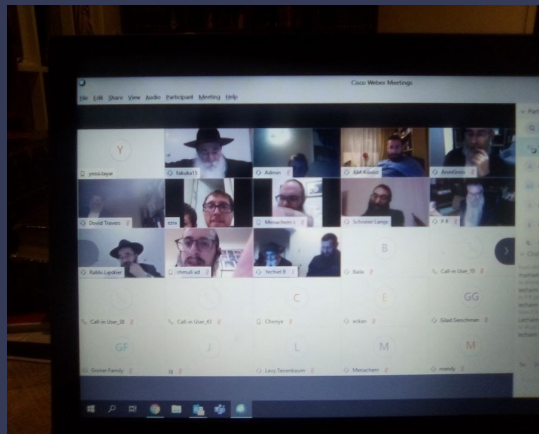
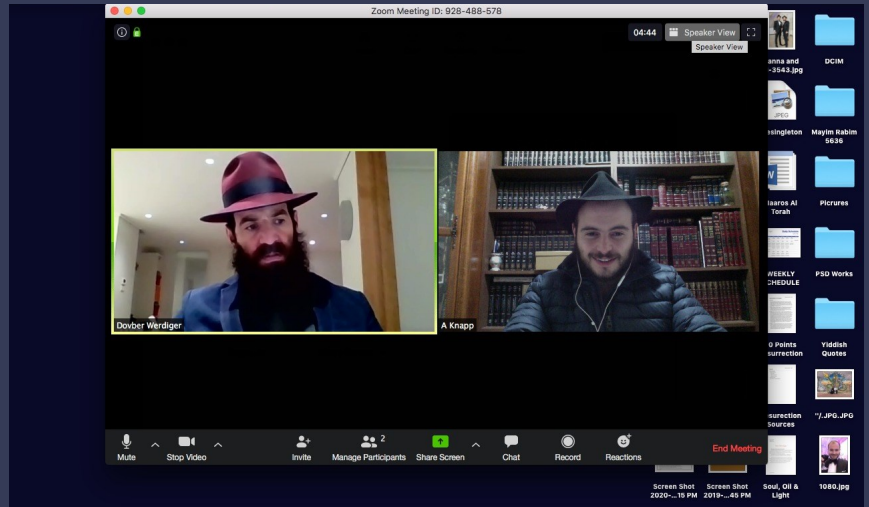
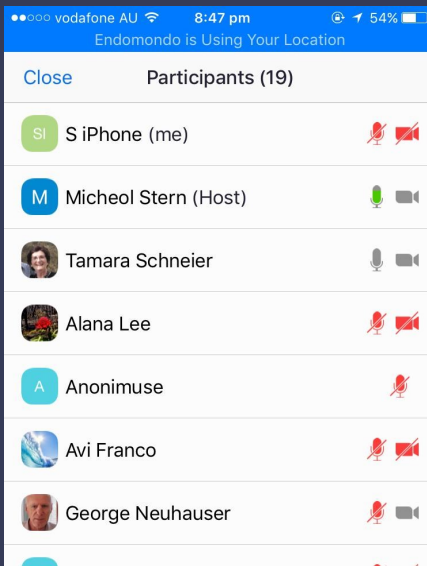
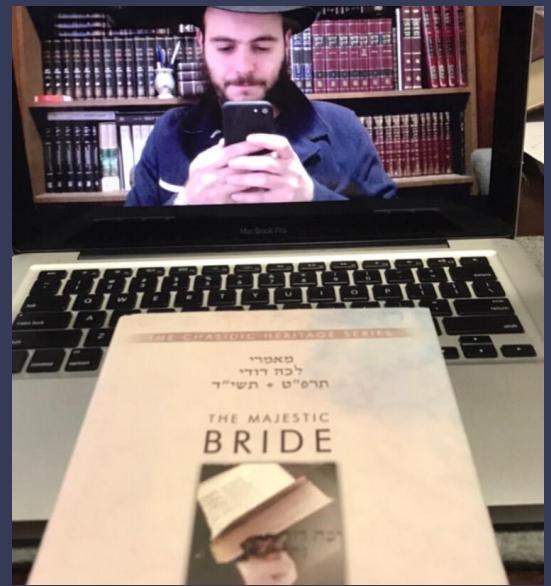
Just as we will spend Seudas Moshiach together as a family this year, let's make Moshiach a family experience throughout the year. Let's make a commitment to strengthen our family's Emunah in Geulah. One suggestion is to share a vort on Inyonei Geulah uMoshiach with our family at the dinner table each day or once a week on Shabbos. There are no shortage of fantastic publications and books to use.

מען זאל ריידן וועגן משיח, we need to start speaking about Moshiach; with ourselves, our families and a community.

May we merit the immediate revelation of Moshiach and be able to celebrate the Yomtov of Pesach in Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh and partake of the Korbanos - ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים. And then we will sing that final song, the פדות נפשנו ועל גאולתנו ועל הגאולה the song of Moshiach and the Geulah Hashleima.

1. Midrash Rabbah Shir Hashirim explains that the 9 songs which have been sung by the Jewish people to date (in the Tanach) are all referred to as נשירה feminine tense. This reflects the fact that like a woman who suffers the pain on childbirth subsequently will fall pregnant and go through the same experience, so to all previous Geulos were followed by subsequent exiles. The song which will be sung on the final Geulah שיר לה' שיר שיור לה' נפלאות עשה תודש כי נפלאות עשה in masculine form to emphasise that this will be a complete and final Geulah.

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# Pesach Story Collection

Masterfully retold by Rabbi Yossi Gopin

## One Erev Pesach in Vitebsk

The term “Batlan” was one often heard in the home of the esteemed philanthropist, Reb Yehudah Leib Segal of Vitebsk. You see, just recently, his daughter Sterna had married a young, introverted man by the name of Shneur Zalman.

While most sons-in-law were sources of Nachas to their parents-in-law, this one was a cause of great Agmas Nefesh, in particular to his mother-in-law. She couldn't stand how he was so detached from the goings on in the world! How he would leave his food untouched on the table of his father-in-law, saying that he didn't have time to wash his hands for a meal(!), or due to the great amount of fasts he would inflict upon himself.

He would simply sit in his spot, on the roof of the upper floor, meditating or learning, singing quietly to himself all the while, sometimes staring into the horizon for extended periods of time. He would daven in the Shul for hours, with his whole body shaking or clapping his hands in dveikus.

She hated it.

One evening, a lone figure, silhouetted against Ukraine's starry midnight sky, could be seen walking on one of the streets of Vitebsk. It was the Rov of the town.

Hurrying to his destination, he all of a sudden stopped, enraptured by a beautiful, soft but familiar voice. His heart started pounding. He recognized this voice. It was that of Shneur Zalman, the new son-in-law of Reb Yehudah Leib Segal.

He had already noticed his unique method in prayer, but he was yet to hear him learning. Hearing the beautiful sound of his song, interwoven with the deepest of understandings and the most exquisite of explanations to the sharpest of questions, the Rov could barely breathe in excitement. Making a mental note to return the next night, he pulled himself away from the sound and hastily continued on his way.

The next night again, minutes turned into hours, as the Rov inconspicuously stood, silent and spellbound, by the genius of the young prodigy. As dawn peeked over the horizon, the Rov walked home, now convinced as ever of the greatness of young Shneur Zalman. It would be his little secret.

Erev Pesach in Vitebsk, what a busy day! Families hurried to burn the last of their Chametz, after which the men went off to bake the Matzah while their wives stayed back at home and bustled around their kitchens - a taste over here, a bit more salt there, a stir to perfection - everyone wanted to be a part of the preparation for their beloved Yomtov.

At the home of Reb Yehudah Leib Segal too, servants and maid servants rushed in and out of the kitchen, while the mother of the house kept a

watchful eye on everything, her trained eyes alert for even the smallest question of Kashrus ... and off she would send the meat to the Rov for a Halachic ruling.

But today, when the question arose in the pot of liver, she thought to herself, “why do I need to go to the Rov? I have a son-in-law who does nothing all day but learn, at least such a question he should be able to answer!”.

The learned son-in-law was quickly summoned from his place on the roof to the kitchen, and given the pot of meat to pronounce his Halachic opinion. Gazing into the pot, he mused to himself for just a moment, and softly murmured in his regular sing-song voice, “Kosher, Kosher. Befitting Se'udas Yomtov”.

But this wasn't enough for his mother-in-law. She now handed the pot over to one of her servants, charging him with the task of bringing the pot to the town Rov, to pronounce his Halachic opinion.

Upon his arrival, the Rov thought about the question set before him, and soon concluded that the meat was not fitting to be eaten. Conclusion in hand, the attendant of the Rov took the pot with him to return it to its owner, and to notify of the Rov's Psak.

Upon hearing the words of the attendant, the rage of the mother-in-law could no longer be contained. “For what reason am I keeping this good for nothing son-in-law in my house? Until now, I thought at least he would be able to become the Rabbi of a community somewhere, and like that provide for his household! But now I see that in fact my dim witted son-in-law doesn't even know how to learn and deliver a simple Halachic ruling!” she vented at the attendant. “He won't last long in this house, I tell you now!” she fumed.

The attendant went back to his Master's house, and shared with him the words of the embittered mother-in-law.

Sensing the impending disgrace of the genius son-in-law, the Rov quickly put on his coat and rushed over to the house of Reb Yehudah Leib Segal. Arriving there, the scene that met his eyes was of a red-faced, very angry mother-in-law, and her husband, with a thoughtful look on his face, leaning against the wall. The sight of the Rov's arrival put a quick end to their discussion, as the host quickly moved to tend to his unexpected, special guest.

After exchanging greetings, the Rov explained that he had rushed over because of a number of questions that had put into doubt his original ruling regarding the pot of liver, and he requested that they don't yet give it over to the gentile butcher who would take all of the non-kosher meats from around town. Taking leave of his gracious host, off the Rov went to visit the second Rov in town, who lived just over the river. This was the respected and humble Reb Kalman.

Explaining to him the question that had been presented, the two great



Rabbis deliberated back and forth, discussing all of the permitting and prohibiting opinions, but alas, at the end of their discussion, they arrived at the same conclusion that the first Rov had come to. Their only justification for the son-in-law's ruling was a very shaky one, which would definitely not do justice to the genius that the first Rov knew him to be.

"Perhaps we should bring the son-in-law here, to explain his questionable ruling?" suggested Reb Kalman to his counterpart. For a moment, the first Rov hesitated. But then he shared his findings with his friend, explaining to him that in his opinion, this young scholar was greater in his knowledge of Torah than the two of them together. "Perhaps we should go and pay a visit to him" suggested the old Rov. In his humility, Reb Kalman acquiesced to the request, put on his coat, and together the two respected Rabbis went back to the house of Reb Yehudah Leib.

The arrival of the two respected Torah figures in their community took the hosts by surprise, and once again, Reb Yehudah Leib welcomed his honourable guests into his home, inviting them to sit with him in a large, comfortable lounge room. The young Shneur Zalman soon arrived in the doorway, and the Rabbonim explained their problems with his ruling, asking him to explain himself.

Not even for a moment, did the young man seem to second guess his ruling. His face shining and his being exuding warmth, the Rabbis slowly saw how their understanding of the law had been totally flawed. He opened up the Shulchan Oruch, pointing to the explanation of the Shach, and proceeded to explain it with such simplicity and yet such depth and profundity, everyone in the room were astounded by the greatness of his understanding. With tears in his eyes, Reb Kalman stood up in honour of the young man and kissed him on the head, even as the tears rolled down onto his silver beard.

From the doorway, his mother in law watched in disbelief at the scene unfolding in front of her eyes, utterly dumbfounded at the respect the two revered Rabbis were affording her son in law. The Rabbis beckoned her in, asking that the meat in question be prepared as quickly as possible so that they themselves could partake in it, displaying their absolute deference to the younger Rabbi's ruling.

The young Shneur Zalman would grow to become the Alter Rebbe.

## Taking care of Pesach expenses

Every Shabbos Mevorchim Nissan, The Maggid of Kozhnitz would share the following 3 stories as a Segulah for Yidden to receive abundant means for their Pesach expenses.

### ~ The first story ~

There once lived a poor Jewish man, let's call him... Reb Moshe. With incredible Divine Providence, Reb Moshe managed to put the funds together to brew a big barrel of vodka not long before the Jewish festival of Pesach. Happily, he prepared himself for the journey he would need to take in order to search for a buyer, reminding himself that with the income from this sale, he would definitely be able to afford the necessary means for his special festival.

The journey would be fraught with danger, because besides for the standard threat of armed robbers, the sale of vodka was a practice not allowed by the authorities without a special license - something which our friend Reb Moshe could never afford.

As he travelled around, he began to see that finding a buyer was a much more difficult job than he thought, and he would need to cross the border, to see if he could find a buyer on the other side. Unfortunately, Reb Moishe was detained at the border by the police, who confiscated his barrel of vodka.

Immediately, he travelled to his Rebbe, Reb Elimelech, and cried to him profusely, explaining that the authorities had confiscated his only way to pay for his Pesach needs. His Rebbe told him not to worry, and to go and tell the police to take a sip from the barrel, whereby they would find that the contents was not vodka, but water.

Reb Moshe rushed to the border to fulfil the advice of his Rebbe, and upon tasting it, they returned the barrel to him. Barrel in hand, Reb Moshe now rushed back to his Rebbe, crying to him that the vodka he had made to sell for his Pesach needs had turned to water! His Rebbe told him to taste the contents again, and he would find that there was vodka inside.

Thankfully, Reb Moshe soon found a buyer, who paid a handsome sum for his barrel of vodka, and he was able to afford a beautiful and abundant Pesach, for him and his family.

### ~ The second story ~

Many years ago, there lived a king, who lost his special signet ring. In an effort to recover his lost ring, the king sent out messengers to announce the following proclamation: "Anyone who takes upon himself to search for the king's missing ring, will receive a large sum of money to pay for all expenses necessary, to allow him to conduct the search".

In this king's province, lived a Jew in dire financial straits, who so wished he could afford to pay for even the basic Pesach necessities, but, alas he couldn't. Advised his wife, "Go and tell the king that you will search for His Majesty's ring, and use the money he provides, to pay for our Pesach needs. G-d will surely not forsake us in our time of need".

The Jew heeded his wife's words of faith, took the money the king willingly offered, and paid for all of his Pesach needs, even inviting a whole table full of poor guests, to help them celebrate the holy festival of Pesach.

Amongst the advisers of this king, was an anti-Semitic priest, who could not bear the sight of watching a Jew deceive the king. When the night of Pesach arrived, he went and spied on the Jew, and saw through his window how he was celebrating in such lavish style, and not searching for the king's ring whatsoever. The priest immediately stole back to the king, and told him what was going on, enjoining the king to come with him and see with his own eyes, to which the king agreed.

As they were looking on the Jew's Pesach seder, the king's eyes beheld an interesting custom that this Jew would observe. Upon reaching the poem "Dayenu", he would recite the entire paragraph aloud and have his guests shout back at him "Dayenu" at the end of each line.

Now, the name of this anti-Semitic priest was "Dayeni" and when the king heard that "Dayenu" was the word they were chanting, he thought to himself, "Right now the Jew must be deliberating with his friends as to who it was who stole the King's ring based on the evidence they have procured. And what are they all answering? Dayeni! It must be him who's the culprit, and that's why he's so worried about these Jews and their celebration!"

The King immediately commanded that the priest be locked up and be given stripes until he admits. It didn't take long for the priest to man up to his crime, and the Jew, together with all of his guests, enjoyed an ample, bountiful and festive Pesach.

### ~ The third story ~

There once lived a Jew who worked for a landlord. One day, not long before the Jewish festival of Pesach, the landlord was feeling particularly arrogant, and began to antagonise his Jewish employee. "Is it not true, that it is I who provides for all of your sustenance? Were it not for me

you would surely not have the means to put bread on your table.”

Now, this G-d fearing, sincere Jew was already long used to putting up with his employer's frequent rants, during which he would highly exaggerate his own greatness, talk with gall about anyone or anything he sensed to be even slightly greater than himself, and patronise anyone he laid his eyes upon, but upon hearing the blasphemous nature of this particular rant, the Jew could not bear to see G-d so blatantly disrespected. "Is there not a God in heaven who sustains each creature existing on this planet? I too, receive my sustenance from him, and the landlord is nothing but a messenger from heaven, whom G-d has chosen to provide for me right now. If the landlord would choose not to do so, G-d would find a way to provide for me and my family somehow else".

The landlord was, for some reason, very displeased with the answer of his employee, and commanded that he immediately leave his post, declaring that he would no longer be employing such an audacious and despicable Jew.

Understandably, without his regular source of income, the Jew was left to trust in G-d to provide for his Pesach needs. Indeed, the Jew had always received a very low salary, and without his job he would be unable to provide for even the bare necessities his family would need for Pesach.

Now, this landlord had a Treasury full of golden coins. From time to time he would indulge himself in a visit to his Treasury, and lovingly pick up a bunch of the coins, spitting on them and polishing them so he could watch them sparkle and shine.

On one particular visit, he brought with him his pet monkey, who loved to watch and imitate his owner going about his daily errands. The following day, the monkey visited the Treasury on his own, and mistaking its owner for having eaten the coins, the monkey consumed a large amount of those polished gold coins and as a result, returned his monkey-soul to his Maker not long after.

When the cleaner found the dead monkey in the Treasury, he removed it and brought it to its owner. "Oh well" said the landlord, "here's to a dead monkey. But what should I do with this dead monkey? I know! I will throw it into the house of that miserable Jew, let him clean up the mess!"

Our friend the Jew was sitting at his table, unsure how he would provide for his family's needs. All of a sudden, through the window flew a dead monkey and landed right on the table in front of him. As the monkey landed on the table, its stomach split open, revealing tens and tens of polished gold coins. Now the Jew had more than enough means to provide for his family for Pesach!

When the first night of the holiday arrived, the landlord sent his servant to go see how the Jew was celebrating his festival. Upon arriving back, the servant reported to his master that the Jew was in fact enjoying a

feast fit for a king, and his family were joyfully singing Pesach songs together.

The landlord summoned the Jew to tell him the story of how he procured the means to provide for his family, and upon hearing that G-d had sent him through his window a monkey full of gold coins, the landlord finally understood and admitted that it was G-d Who provided and continues to provide the sustenance of every creature on the face of the earth.

## The Chasam Sofer's preparations

Reb Moshe Sofer, also known as the Chasam Sofer, of righteous memory, was from the foremost Torah scholars of his generation. He had many disciples, and even attendants and servants, who would take care of his household work during the year. Even so, the Chasam Sofer would not allow even one person to assist him in his search for Chametz. Without any concern even for his own health, he would do it all entirely on his own.

His son, Reb Shimon Sofer, once asked him about this, saying "Father, do we not find throughout the entire Torah, that there is a concept of Shlichus – that one is able appoint a representative to fulfil one's obligations on their behalf)? Why can you not give some of the different aspects of your Bedikas Chometz to a Shaliach who can do those things for you?"

His father answered, "On the Seder night in the Haggadah, we quote the Possuk, - 'ועברתי בארץ מצרים והכיתי כל בכור' - and I passed through the land of Egypt and I smote every firstborn'.

The הגדה בעל (the author of the Haggadah) comments on this אני ולא מלאך, אני ולא שרף, אני ולא השליח, אני הוא ולא אחר - that it was Hashem Himself who came to kill the Egyptian firstborns and liberate the Jewish nation. If the Holy One blessed be He, did everything Himself without appointing any Shaliach, it demonstrates that on Pesach we don't look to the law of Shlichus in the fulfilment of the Mitzvah itself, rather everything should be done on our own".

Indeed, this remained the conduct of the Chasam Sofer until his final year, as his son tells over, how he would organise everything to do with the search and removal of Chometz - the sale of the Chometz, going from corner to corner and searching with great effort, the house, the upper floor, every box in the house, any place where Chometz may have been brought during the year - it was all done with painstaking effort by the Chasam Sofer himself, searching for many, many hours.

To such an extent was he not concerned with his own honour, that he would even check the chicken coop for himself! All because of his great dedication to emulate G-d Himself - and fulfil the Mitzvos of Pesach on his own without appointing a Shaliach!

# Wishing you and your family a Kosher and Freilichen Pesach

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# KOLLEL PESACH SHIURIM

Online learning. To get the schedule and links  
[www.kollelmenachem.com.au/shiurim](http://www.kollelmenachem.com.au/shiurim)

## Mesechta Sotah

Learn Mesechta Sotah this year during Sefira. Join the Kollel Rabbis  
for a nightly shiur learning a Daf a day.

**7:45pm Sunday-Thursday**

**Starts Sunday Chol Hamoed Pesach**

## Chol Hamoed Shiurim

### Trails of blood

*Take a walk through the history of the most infamous blood  
libels in our history*

**8:30pm Sunday April 12, Nissan 18**

**With Rabbi M. Gurkov**

## The Emunah to bring the Geulah

*Based on Gemara, Midrash and Chassidus*

**8:30pm Monday April 13, Nissan 19**

**With Rabbi Y. Johnson**

## Chol Hamoed morning Kollel

**Sunday, Monday and Tuesday**

**7:30am The Rebbe's Maamarim**

On Acharon Shel Pesach

**With Rabbi Johnson**

**10:30am Likutei Sichos**

Sichos of the Rebbe on Pesach

**With Rabbi Gopin**

**8:30am Likutei Torah on Pesach**

Maamarim of the Alter Rebbe

**With Rabbi Knapp**

**11:15am In depth Halacha**

Pesach and Sefiras Haomer

**With Rabbi Stern**



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