

FAMILY EDITION STADTMAUER

הגדה של פסח מילטה Chadta

HAGGADAH SHEL PESACH

Milta Chadta

Thoughts, insights and discussions
on the Haggadah Shel Pesach,
collected from the teachings of HaGaon
Rabbi David Chai Abichatzeira, shlit"a



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When saying “*ha lachma anya*,” lift the Seder plate. Some have the custom to lift only the broken piece of the middle matzah. (There are various customs in this regard.)

הִא לְחַמָּא עֲנֵנָא דִּי אֲכַלָּו
אֲבָהָתְנָא בָּאֲרַעָא דְמִצְרָיִם.
כָּל דְכַפֵּין יִתְיַיְּוּ וַיְכֹל, כָּלִידְצָרִיךְ
יִתְיַיְּוּ וַיְפִסְחָ. הַשְׁתָּא הַכָּא, לְשָׁנָה
הַבָּא בָּאֲרַעָא דִיְשָׁרָאֵל.
הַשְׁתָּא הַכָּא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּא
בָּאֲרַעָא דִיְשָׁרָאֵל בְּנֵי חֹרִין:

Our custom is to repeat this three times.



This Is the Bread of Poverty

In the Depths of Darkness, We Became the Chosen Nation

The Chida (*Kuntres Peh Echad*) notes that the *gematriah* of the last letters of “*הִא לְחַמָּא עֲנֵנָא דִי*” (“This is the bread of poverty that...”) equals **אחד** (“one”). This comes to teach us that the poverty and oppression that our forefathers endured in Egypt were what forged us into the Chosen Nation, of whom it is written, **וּמְיֻחָד** - **כְּעַמָּךְ כִּיְשָׁرָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאָרֶץ** - “Who is like Your people Yisrael, one nation upon the Earth” (*Divrei HaYamim I* 17:21).

In these short words, the Chida reveals to us a principle of *emunah*, which is crucial for understanding the process of exile and redemption. From the very beginning of creation, Hashem set in place a fundamental rule that night must always precede day. “And it was evening, and it was morning, one day” (*Bereishis* 1:5). Chazal thus tell us, “As it was with the creation of the world. First darkness, then light” (*Shabbos* 77b).¹⁹⁵ We must always endure some kind

¹⁹⁵ *Shabbos* 77b: “Rabbi Zeira met Rav Yehudah... and asked him why the goats walk in front

of challenge before Hashem's kindness can be fully revealed. But in hindsight, we can see that the evening and morning together constitute "one day." They both serve the same ultimate goal, since without the darkness, the value of the light would never be appreciated. "There can be no light other than that which emerges from the darkness" (*Zohar, Tetzaveh* 184a).¹⁹⁶

Let Them Come and Eat

The Night on Which Prayers Are Answered

The word used here for matzah, *lechem oni*, has many interpretations. In one sense, it means the bread of poverty, since it was this simple, unleavened bread that our forefathers ate in Egypt. But the word *oneh* also means "answer," for which reason Chazal explain the phrase to mean, "the bread upon which many things are answered" (*Pesachim* 36a). Most simply, this means that the questions of the Haggadah are answered while the matzah sits before us. But on another level, it means that many prayers are answered on Seder Night, while the matzah sits before us.

Rebbe Shalom of Belz explained that the concepts of "bread of poverty" and "bread through which our prayers are answered" are intertwined, since the prayers of the impoverished have greater power in Heaven. Of this, David Hamelech said, "A prayer of the impoverished, when he is engulfed, and before Hashem he pours forth his prayer" (*Tehillim* 102:1. See *Zohar, Vayishlach* 168b).¹⁹⁷ The Torah tells us of the prayers of the poor, "If they cry out to Me,

of the flock, followed by the sheep. Rav Yehudah answered that this follows the way it was in the creation of the world, in which darkness preceded light." Rashi explains: "Goats are usually dark, while sheep are usually white."

¹⁹⁶ The complete passage from the *Zohar* reads: "There can be no light other than that which emerges from the darkness. When the side [of evil] is conquered, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is elevated above and His glory is magnified. There can no service of HaKadosh Baruch Hu except from within darkness, and there can be no good other than that which emerges from evil."

¹⁹⁷ The complete passage from the *Zohar* reads: "A prayer of the impoverished, when he is engulfed, and before Hashem he pours forth his prayer." This verse can be explained in many ways. David Hamelech said it when he looked upon the plight of the impoverished, and he also said it when he fled from his father-in-law (Shaul Hamelech). This is the prayer that the poor person prays to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and it precedes all the prayers

I will hear them, since I am gracious” (*Shemos* 22:26). A person need not be impoverished in terms of wealth for his prayers to be heard. Even a person with money can pray with the humble recognition that he has nothing of his own, since everything belongs to Hashem. These, too, are considered the “prayers of the poor” that are heard in Heaven.

On Seder Night, Hashem answers our prayers in our hardships and afflictions, just as He answered the prayers of our forefathers in Egypt.

Prayers for All Our Needs

For this reason, we declare on Seder Night: “This is the bread of poverty that our forefathers ate in the Land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who need come and partake of the Pesach.” This is the bread of poverty, through which our prayers are answered. The miracles that were wrought for our forefathers in Egypt are awakened again on this night. Therefore, let all who are hungry come and eat. Let them come before Hashem in prayer, and all their needs will be provided. We pray on this night for our “bread,” which symbolizes bountiful livelihood. It also symbolizes marriage, as we see from the verse, “[Potiphar] knew nothing but the bread that he ate” (*Bereishis* 39:6), which Rashi explains as a reference to his wife. It also symbolizes success in Torah study, as we see from the verse, “Go and partake of My bread” (*Mishlei* 9:5). All these things are available to us when we pray for them on this night.

“Let who all who need come and partake of the Pesach.” This refers to the Heavenly mercy that is available on this night, as we see from the verse, “He skipped (*pasach*) over the houses of Bnei Yisrael” (*Shemos* 12:27). Onkelos translates this as, “He had mercy on the houses of Bnei Yisrael.”

Parnassah Descends on Pesach

Chazal tell us that on Pesach we are judged for the year’s grain crop (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a).¹⁹⁸ This can be understood as a reference to livelihood in general,

in the world, as is written, ‘He does not despise the cry of the poor’ (*Tehillim* 22:25). Come and see, for the prayers of all men are prayers, but the prayers of the poor stand before HaKadosh Baruch Hu. They break down all the gates and doors, and they ascend to stand before Him. Of this it is written, ‘If he cries out to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.’”

¹⁹⁸ For this reason, the Torah commands us to bring the *omer* offering of grain on Pesach, so that all the grains of the year will be blessed (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b; *Bartenura* on *Rosh*

since grains are the staple of our diet. An allusion to this can be found in the *gematriah* of Pesach (פֶּסַח), which equals wheat (קְמַח).¹⁹⁹ Here too, we see a hint for the blessing of *parnassah* that descends on Pesach. Furthermore, the first letters of סַאל חַתְךָ spell Pesach. These words are the Names associated with *parnassah*. פָּאֵי is an acronym for פָּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יְדֵךָ - “Open Your hand [and satisfy the desire of every living thing]” (*Tehillim* 145:16). סַאל is the *at-bash* equivalent of חַתְךָ.²⁰⁰ And חַתְךָ is the Name associated with *parnassah*, as the Arizal writes.²⁰¹ It is found in the middle letters of the words [נִתְּנֵן לְחֵם לְכָל בָּשָׂר] - “He gives bread to all [flesh]” (*Tehillim* 136:25).²⁰² Together, the first letters of these three Names spell Pesach, since Pesach is the time when the blessing of bountiful livelihood descends to the world.²⁰³

Joy Is a Segulah for Parnassah

The *segulah* of Pesach is especially powerful when we fulfill its mitzvos with joy, and are truly happy over the holiday. In general, throughout a person’s life, there are many advantages to being happy. His entire *avodas Hashem* is more enthusiastic, and it is much easier for him to overcome the temptations that the yetzer hara throws his way.

In addition, happiness is a *segulah* for *parnassah*. Rebbe Baruch of Mezhibuzh *zt”l* (*Botzina D’Nehora, Re’eh*) found a hint for this from the verse וְהִנֵּה אַתָּה שָׁמֵחַ - “You shall be only happy” (*Devarim* 16:15), the last letters of which are חַתְךָ. As we said above, חַתְךָ is a Name associated with *parnassah*, as it is also the last letters of פָּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יְדֵךָ - “Open Your hand [and satisfy the desire

Hashanah 1:2).

¹⁹⁹ Cited from *Lev Simchah* (Gur).

²⁰⁰ The *gematriah* of סַאל also equals the combined Names of “הַנְּזִיר אֶת קְרָבָה”, as well as פָּאֵי.

²⁰¹ See *Pri Eitz Chaim* (*Shaar Hazemirosh* ch. 5): “When reciting פָּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יְדֵךָ, one should have in mind the first letters פָּאֵי, which is among the 72 Names of Hashem. It is also the essence of the connection between הַנְּזִיר and אֶת קְרָבָה, as the *gematriah* of “יְאַחֲדָוֹתָה” equals 72. One should also have in mind the last letters, חַתְךָ, which is also a holy Name of Hashem. The Kabbalists call it the Name associated with *parnassah*.”

See also *Erchei Kinuyim* (*Ches*): “חַתְךָ is the Name associated with *parnassah*, since it cuts (חָזַק) sustenance from *Ze’er Anpin* in order to sustain *Malchus*. This Name emerges from the last letters of פָּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יְדֵךָ, and its *gematriah* equals 72 (‘and He satisfies’).”

²⁰² Chida, *Yosef Tehilos*.

²⁰³ Rebbe Hershel of Ziditchov (cited in *Imrei Yosef, Emor*). Elsewhere, the same idea is cited in the name of Rebbe Mendel of Rimanov.

of every living thing].”²⁰⁴ Rebbe Yechezkel of Kuzmir (cited in *Beis Yaakov, Likutei Kuzmir*) found another hint for this from the verse, “Zevulun, rejoice when you go out” (*Devarim* 33:18). Rashi explains “rejoice” to mean “succeed.”²⁰⁵ The Imrei Shaul of Modzhitz (*Bo*) noted that the same parallel is found in the verse, “You shall be only happy.” There, the *Targum Yonasan* also interprets *samei’ach* (happy) as *b’atzlachusa* (successful).²⁰⁶

The Angel That Oversees Parnassah

During the twenty-two years that Yaakov and Yosef were separated, Yaakov languished in grief and misery.²⁰⁷ During this entire time, the angel that oversees *parnassah* did not visit him. Then, after Yosef sent him the message that he was alive, the verse states, “The spirit of their father Yaakov was revived” (*Bereishis* 45:27). He was happy again, after so many years, and the angel that oversees *parnassah* returned to him. We can see this from the verse, “**וְלֹא בָּאֵבָיו שָׁלַח כֹּזֶחֶת**” (“And to his father Yaakov, this is what he sent...”) (*Bereishis* 45:23). The *gematriah* of **כֹּזֶחֶת** is **חַתְךָ**, which as we said is the Name associated with *parnassah*. When Yosef sent Yaakov the good news, he also sent him the angel that oversees *parnassah*.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz (*Vayikra*) notes that being happy is a *segulah* for *parnassah*, as we see from the words **וְרֹא יְהִי תְּמִימָה אֶת שְׁמָךְ**, the last letters of which spell **חַתְךָ**, the Name of Hashem associated with *parnassah*. In the verse **וְאַשְׁר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תְּמִימָה בָּו** (“the fire of the Mizbe’ach shall burn upon it”), the word **שְׁמָךְ** can be read as an acronym for **וְרֹא יְהִי תְּמִימָה**. When a person is happy, he becomes a Mizbe’ach and also merits the Shulchan of the Beis Hamikdash, which signifies *parnassah*.

²⁰⁵ We can understand this better based on a teaching of Rav Chaim Vital in *Shaarei Kedushah* (2:4): “It is written, ‘The blessing of Hashem brings wealth, and toil (*etzev*) will add nothing to it’ (*Mishlei* 10:22). *Etzev* (which also means sadness) is from the filth with which **סְפָאָל** and the Snake contaminated Adam and Chava, as is written, ‘With *etzon* you shall eat,’ and, ‘With *etzon* you shall bear children’ (*Bereishis* 3:17,16). When there is *etzev*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu and His Shechinah depart.”

²⁰⁶ Although it is difficult to be happy as long as one lacks *parnassah*, he should try to strengthen himself and divert his mind from his monetary problems, and to be happy with what he has. This is as the Imrei Emes responded to a chassid who asked how he could be happy if he did not have *parnassah*. The Imrei Emes answered that happiness is itself a *segulah* for *parnassah*. True, it is difficult, but what wouldn’t a person do for *parnassah*?

²⁰⁷ “He refused to be comforted” (*Bereishis* 37:35).

²⁰⁸ See also *Beis Asher* (*Vayigash*).

Parnassah B'revach

When wishing a person abundant livelihood, it is common to use the expression “*parnassah b'revach*.” Literally, this means “expanded” income. Rebbe Yosef of Kosson zt”l (*Bnei Shileishim: Vayelaket Yosef* 104) noted that when we take the Hebrew word פָּרָנָסָה and expand each of its letters, spelling them in full, we arrive at פְּאַרְיַשׁ נָנוֹם סָמָךְ הָא. Then, if we take only the added letters of the expansion (without the first letter of each), their combined *gematriah* equals חַתָּם, the Name of Hashem associated with *parnassah*. Furthermore, the word *b'revach*, which in Hebrew is בְּרוּחַ, can be read as בְּרוּחַ, or “two times רֹוחַ.” Twice the *gematriah* of רֹוחַ is also חַתָּם.²⁰⁹

Chametz and Matzah

The Korban Pesach Is Like a Korban Todah

There are four categories of people who are obligated to make a special berachah of thanksgiving: “Those who survived an ocean voyage or a trip through the desert, those who recovered from an illness, and those who were released from prison” (*Berachos* 54b). When the Beis Hamikdash stood, a person who experienced any of these things would offer a Korban Todah (thanksgiving offering).

Bnei Yisrael, when they left Egypt, experienced all four of these things. They were released from the “prison” of slavery; they passed through the Yam Suf and the desert; and when they arrived at Har Sinai, they were healed of all their wounds and illnesses,²¹⁰ as Chazal comment on the verse, “You are entirely beautiful, My beloved, and there is no blemish upon you” (*Shir Hashirim Rabbah* 4:7).

The Korban Pesach, which is offered together with songs of joy and gratitude, is itself a kind of Korban Todah.²¹¹ With this we can understand the

²⁰⁹ *Pri Eitz Chaim* (*Shaar Hazemirosh* ch. 5).

²¹⁰ Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 18:4; *Shir Hashirim Rabbah* 4:7): “Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai taught: When Bnei Yisrael stood at Har Sinai and declared, ‘Na’aseh v’nishma!’, they had among them no *zavim*, *metzora’im*, lame, blind, mute, deaf, deranged, insane, fools, or people of split heart. Of that moment the verse states: ‘You are entirely beautiful, My beloved, and there is no blemish upon you.’”

²¹¹ Maharsha (*Chiddushei Aggados*, *Berachos*, s.v. *Arba’ah*). He further explains that the four cups of Seder Night correspond to the four who are obligated to give thanks.