

# PARASHAS METZORA - PESACH

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SHIUR PRESENTED IN 5765

## PART 1 - THE EXILE AND REDEMPTION OF THE "MOUTH"

### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PESACH AND METZORA

There is an interesting Ibn Ezra on the pasuk in our parsha: זאת תהיה תורת המצורע ביום טהרתו והוא אל הכהן "this shall be the law for a *metzora* at the time of being purified, when he's brought to the *Kohen*" (Vayikra 14:2). This is the law of the *metzora* and how he goes through his *taharah* ceremony. It says (v. 3), ויצא הכהן אל מחוץ למחנה, "the *Kohen* goes outside the *machaneh*," וראה הכהן, "and the *Kohen* sees," והנה וצוה הכהן וליקח למטהר שתי צפרים חיים טהורות ועץ ארז "and behold the *nega tzara'as* has become healed from the *tzarua*." זרעו של הארז, "and the cedar wood, crimson thread, and hyssop to be brought for the one to be purified" (v. 4). They *shecht* one of the birds, and the pasuk says they take the blood into a vessel and then they dip the live bird in the *dam* of the bird that was *shechted* and they sprinkle it. It's a process.

There's a very interesting Ibn Ezra over here.<sup>1</sup> First, he points out that the העץ ארץ והאזב הוא הגדול וקטן במיני הצמחים, the *eitz erez*, the cedar tree, is the tallest among the trees, and the *eizov*, the hyssop is the smallest. והעד מדברי חכמת שלמה, and this is testified from Shlomo Hamelech's wisdom, ואין צורך לחפש על האזוב כי הוא ידוע בקבלה.

Now listen to this. והנה המצורע והבית המנוגע וטומאת המת קרובים, the *metzora*, the person who has *tza'aras*, and the house that gets *nega'im* are related. והנה גם הם כדמות פסח מצרים, and they are similarly related to Pesach Mitzrayim. The Ibn Ezra tells us an amazing *chiddush* over here! He tells us that there's a *hekesheh*, a comparison between the way the *metzora* becomes *tahor* from his own personal *galus* - after he is sent out of the *machaneh* - and the way Klal Yisrael prepared to get out of *Mitzrayim*. The *korban* that the Yidden brought to get out of *Mitzrayim* is described in Parshas Bo (12:22) וליקחתם אגודת אזוב "you should take a bundle of *eizov*," וטבלתם בדם "you should dip it in the blood," והגעתם אל המשקוף "and apply it to the lintel." The *taharah* of the *metzora* is similar to the *korban* Pesach that Klal Yisrael did in *Mitzrayim*. Both ceremonies involved *eizov*, *dam*, *tevilah bedam*, and *hazayah*. The question is, what's the *shaychus*? What's the connection?

### A SPEAKING MOUTH

You have to know the following: Rav Tzadok Hakohen, and many others, bring down that the word *pesach* is really an allusion. It's really two words. פה פה. *Peh* means 'mouth' and *sach* means 'talking.' It says the *dibur* (i.e. the Shechinah) was in *galus*. The Zohar says that before the Yidden got out *Mitzrayim*, the *dibur* was in *galus*. That's why Moshe Rabbeinu said לא איש דברים אני, "I'm not a man of words" (Shemos 4:10). "I represent Klal Yisrael's *matzav* of being in *galus*. The *dibur* is in *galus*. That's why I cannot speak." *Al yedei* the *geulas Mitzrayim*, the *dibur* went out of *galus*. What's the *pshtat*?

This is a very common theme. We're going to try to explain this today.

What was the episode that Hakadosh Baruch Hu used in order to bring about the *yeridah* to *Mitzrayim*? Yosef being sold. That means it came about as a result of the *sinas hashevatim* (hatred of the brothers) to Yosef. What caused the *sinah* of the *shevatim* to Yosef? Because Yosef spoke *ra* about his brothers. That's how it started. The *pasuk* says:

"And Yosef brought bad reports of them to their father" (Bereishis 37:2). Similarly, the Bnei Yisrael were deserving of the slavery in *Mitzrayim* because they had *ba'alei lashon hara* among them. Moshe Rabeinu said אךן נודע הדבר "now the matter is known" (Shemos 2:14). It says when Moshe Rabbeinu came on the second day and the Yidden said they're going to go snitch on him, he said אךן נודע הדבר. Rashi over there brings down that Moshe was thinking האומות מכל ישראל את משעבדו? What did Hashem do it for? Why did Hashem take them through such a difficult *shibud*? It says עד שראה בהם דלטורין, he saw amongst them *malshinim*, people who talk *lashon hara*. That's why he said אךן נודע הדבר "now the matter is known. The question that I had has now been answered." It means the *shibud Mitzrayim* was mainly in the area of *dibur*, speech. It wasn't *stam*. The essence of the *galus Mitzrayim* was considered a *galus* of the *dibur*. What's the *pshtat*?

The *pshtat* is like this. Pharaoh, the *melech* of *Mitzrayim* represented the aspect of *dibur ra* in the world. Therefore, someone who became *meshubad* to him, fell under his "spell". This notion was expressed by Pharaoh that even though he had many proofs that Hakadosh Baruch Hu existed, what did he say? מי ה' אשר אשמע בקולו? "who is Hashem that I should listen to His *dibur*?" (Shemos 5:2). I've told you this a number of times. The word Pharaoh is the letters of *peh ra*. Pharaoh is *pei reish ayin hei*. The first letter and the last letter is *peh* and the middle letters are *ra*. That was his essence. He was *medaber ra al Hashem*, he spoke against Hashem.

The Arizal says that "Pharaoh" (פרעה) is also the letters of the word הערף, (when spelled backwards) which means the "back of the neck." There are two words we use to describe the connection between the head and the body. The front we call the throat, and the back we call the "nape of the neck," which in *lashon hakodesh* is ערף. Pharaoh was called הערף, the "neck," which conceals the connection between his *seichel* (mind), and his heart. That's why he was considered the "neck." Because Pharaoh had a *peh ra* that's why he was referred to as the *oref*, "the back of the neck."<sup>2</sup>

And that is why Pharaoh was able to be *meshubad* (subjugate) Klal Yisrael, since there was a *pegam* in their own *koach hadibur*. There was a defect in their *koach hadibur*. What was the defect? They were *ba'alei lashon hara*. When they were *mesaken* that *cheit*, Pharaoh didn't have *koach* over them anymore.

<sup>1</sup> ועץ ארז ואזוב. הוא הגדול וקטן במיני הצמחים והעד מדברי חכמת שלמה ואין צורך לחפש על האזוב כי הוא ידוע בקבלה. והנה המצורע והבית המנוגע וטומאת המת קרובים והנה גם הם כדמות פסח מצרים.  
<sup>2</sup> Ed. note: in mystical writings, the face (or panim, which also means "interior"), is what gives illumination and reveals the soul. The "back" represents that which is concealed, as little can be discerned by looking at one's back. Based on the concept of sefiros, da'as corresponds to the throat - because it is what unites the mind and the heart (via speech), which is the function of da'as. Similar to the face then, the throat "illuminates" or reveals emotions through the power of speech. Pharaoh is compared to the "back of the neck" - representing exile and concealment, which prevents the intellect (i.e. mind) in connecting with one's emotions (i.e. heart). This is the ultimate constriction and the defect in the power of speech, which was "in exile" and this is what, on a deeper level, caused Klal Yisroel to be enslaved.

## REDEMPTION AND SHMIRAS HALASHON

There's a famous *Chazal* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 32:5) that many of you have heard. Maybe you didn't hear the end of it. It says בזכות ד' דברים שלא, because of four things Klal Yisrael was redeemed from *Mitzrayim*, they didn't change their names, שלא שנו את שמותם, they didn't change their language and it says שלא שנו את מלבושם, they didn't change their clothing and הרע על לשון הרע, שלא נחשדו על לשון הרע, they didn't speak lashon hora. So the medrash<sup>3</sup> asks: ומונין שלא נחשדו על לשון הרע והיו אוהבים זה את זה, how do you know that at the time before the *geula* Klal Yisrael had come to a *metzav* where they loved each other and they weren't talking *lashon hara* about each other? תלמוד לומר, it says, ושאלה אשה משכנתה, it says every woman should borrow from her neighbor. Klal Yisrael knew about this from the time Hashem spoke to Moshe by the *sneh*. Twelve months went by and nobody was *malshin*. No Jews revealed this secret to the *Mitzri'im* that they were planning on cleaning them out. The normal tendency is you get one Jew who wants to spill the beans to the *goy* so that he should ingratiate himself with the *goyim*, even though it's bad for the other Jews. But the Yidden elevated themselves from that aspect of *peh ra* and they weren't *nichshal* in the *cheit* of *lashon hara* during those last twelve months that they were in *Mitzrayim*. Then they were *zocheh* to be redeemed from *Mitzrayim*.

The problem with *lashon hara* is that it creates a separation. *Lashon hara* comes from *sinah*.

## SPEECH IS THE ESSENCE OF THE GEULAH

It comes out then that the *etzem nekudah* of the *geula* is alluded to in the name of the *chag*, Pesach. It means from now the *peh* is enabled to relate the *niflaos* of the Borei, which it wasn't able to do in the *galus*. That's why on the night of Pesach there's a *mitzvah* to *lesaper!* That's the *mitzvah*. The *mitzvah* is *sippur*. You don't have a *mitzvah* of *sippur* the rest of the year. *Davka* tonight there's a *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* - because we want to demonstrate that our *peh* became *tahor* from the *shibud* and it became opened and purified from its *tumah!*

The Sefas Emes writes that every day a person has to look back into *yetzias Mitzrayim* in order to be *zocheh* to proper speech. You know how we fulfill that? We're gaולה לתפילה. Every day we're gaולה לתפילה. Every day we say גאל ישראל. We say גאל ישראל. What's the next thing we say? Hashem open up my lips. It means you want to be *zocheh* to the pure *dibur*. You want to key in to *yetzias Mitzrayim*, and the *geulas Mitzrayim* is a freedom, a *taharah* on the *peh*. It's a beautiful *shtickel*. The Sefas Emes says this.<sup>4</sup>

Now let's go back to what the Ibn Ezra says, that there's a similarity between the *korbon pesach* the Yidden brought to get out of *Mitzrayim*, and the procedure of the *taharas hametzora*. Now we can understand what the common denominator is between *geulas Mitzrayim* and *geulas hametzora!* For the two *geulos*, the essence is the *galus* of the *dibur*. *Tzaras* comes because of *cheit halashon* and the *shibud* came because of *cheit halashon*.

The slavery started from the *loshon hara* of Yosef and the brothers and it continued because of the *lashon hora* of the informers in Klal Yisroel. Yosef and the brothers brought about *shibud Mitzrayim* which continued as long as they were still *malshinim* among the people, and then Klal Yisrael were redeemed from *Mitzrayim* when they had a *taharah* on the *peh*.

## THE KESHER BETWEEN PESACH AND THESE PARSHIYOS

Now, it's interesting to note that every year the reading of the *parshiyos* of *Tazria* and *Metzora* always falls out in the time of Pesach. Generally, it falls out before Pesach. Sometimes it falls out right after Pesach. It's not *stam* a *mikra*. There's a *kesher* between them. It's not a coincidence.

It says in the *Navi Michah* נפלאות אראנו מצרים מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות, כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות, that in the *geula ha'asidah*, the *geula* we're looking forward to, Hashem says, "I will show you *niflaos* like you saw in the days when you went out of *Mitzrayim*" (*Micah* 7:15). We have to learn from this that the *geula ha'asidah* will also be similar to the *geulas Mitzrayim*. Just like that *geula* came about from a *tikun* from the *cheit halashon*, the *chataim of sinas chinam* and *lashon hara* - which was the cause of the *churban Bayis Sheini* - will be corrected, the *geula* which we're waiting for the last two thousand years will finally come! That's the same *zach!* It's all connected! *Mamash*, you look back and you see how history repeats itself! You have the *sinas chinam* of the *dibur* of Yosef and his brothers, *yetzias Mitzrayim*, *lashon hara*, *tikun of lashon hara*, and coming out. *Churban Bayis Sheini* - the same thing! *Sinas chinam*, the *gemara* says, *lashon hara* is what caused it. The Chafetz Chaim says that this is what we need to be *mesaken*.<sup>5</sup>

## A QUESTION OF HOW TO READ KRIS SHEMA

There is a famous Rambam that says a person who reads *Krias Shema bechol lashon* (in any language) has to be very careful that he reads it well in that other *lashon*, just like he's *medakdek belashon hakodesh*. He has to have the right grammar and the right words and the right articulation when he does it in another language. Comes along the Ra'avid and he says אין זה מקובל על הדעת, it doesn't sit well on the mind. *why do I have to be medakdek after the peirush?* That means even though, surely, you have to be *medakdek* in *Krias Shema*, you have to say it without any mistakes and it has to be very articulate - that's only if you're reading it in *lashon hakodesh!* But if you're reading it *besha'ar leshonos*, there's no *ma'alah* of being perfect!

What's the *pshat* in the Ra'avid's *ta'anan*? The Ra'avid's *ta'anan* is like this. *Lashon kodesh* is unique in that, I'm saying what the essence of the thing is. All the other *leshonos* - I'm not saying what the thing is in essence. I'm explaining what the superficial function of this thing is. It's something about this thing. You can figure out what it is. That's the *chiluk*. If a guy calls a *beheimah* a 'beheimah,' the *pshat* is *bah mah*, 'in this, what's there.' It's the description of a *zach*. If I say you're 'an *adam*,' איש מן האדמה, it means there is 'amazing potential like *adamah* has potential.' It's the thing itself. But if I say you're 'a man,' if I say you're 'an animal' in English, that's just a *peirush hadevarim*. So in the *peirush hadevarim*, as long as what I'm trying to explain is understood, that's sufficient, even though I'm not saying it clearly. The fact that it

<sup>3</sup> ומנין שלא נחשדו על לשון הרע, והיו אוהבין זה את זה? שפאמר: (שמות ג, כב) "ושאלה אשה משכנתה". כבר היו בידם שנים עשר חדש, ואין את מוצא באחד מהם שהלשין על חברו (מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל, מסכתא דפסחא ה"ה)

<sup>4</sup> בפסוק הן ב"י לא שמעו כו' ואני ערל שפתיים ואמרו חז"ל כי הוא א' מעשרה ק"ו שבתורה. הדנה איתא בזוה"ק ואני ערל שפתיים כי הדיבור ה' בגלות ע"ש. פ"י כמו שיש ערלה בפתח המילה שהוא ברית המעורר שזכה אברהם אע"ה שיוסר הערלה ויתגלה לו ברית המילה. כן בברית הלשון שהוא פתח הדיבור בתורה יש ערלה כי ב' בריתות אלו הם פתיחות הפנימיות. כי כל האברים סתומים. זולת ב' אלו. וכל מקום שיש פתיחות פנימיות. יש ערלה והסתר. שלא כל הרוצה ליטול השם יבא ויטול. וכמו כן בכלל הוצרכו בני"ל לעבור כל מה שעבר עליהם במצרים לזכות להסיר ערלת הפה לזכות לברית הלשון והתורה. ולא עוד אלא שבכל יום צריכים להסתייע בזכירת יצ"מ כדי לזכות לפתיחות הפה. וזה סמיכות גאולה לתפילה. גאל ישראל ה' שפתי תפתח. ואלו הם ב' האותות שיש בכל איש ישראל. מילה ושבט ותפילין. ששבט ותפילין ב' אלו הם זכר ליצ"מ וזכין על ידיהם לתורה שהוא ברית הלשון. ובאמת כך הוא המדה סור מרע מקודם להיות דך מפסולת. אח"כ יפתח כח הפה בתורה. וכמו שהי' מקודם גלות מצרים שיזכו לתורה כמ"ש בהוציאו כו' תעבדון את האלקים וכן הוא לעולם. אכן משה רבינו ע"ה לימד זכות שיתן הקב"ה במתנה קצת פתחון פה בתורה לזכות ע"י אל הגאולה. וכן הוא לעולם כמאמרם ז"ל המקבל עליו עול תורה מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות. הרי שאפי"ל לא זכה לגאולה עדיין. מ"מ ע"י הרצון והתשוקה לקבל עול תורה. זוכה שיוכל לצאת לחירות להיות באמת מוכן אל התורה. וזהו הלימוד והק"ו שהוציא משה רבינו ע"ה מלבו כי הן ב"י לא שמעו כו' שאפי"ל להעביר הפסולת בלי שיוקדם איזה הארה מן התורה. הגם שאינה עדיין בשלימות. וכענין שאמרו חז"ל לעולם יטסקו אדם בתורה אפי"ל שלא לשמה. פ"י כשעדיין אינו מזוכך מפסולת שמתוך שיל"ש יבא לשמה (שפת אמת, שמות, וארא כ"ג)

<sup>5</sup> וכאשר נחפשה דרכינו ונחקרה, איזה עולות הם מהעקרים הגורמים לאריכת גלותנו, נמצאם הרבה. אך חטא הלשון הוא על פלו מפני כמה טעמים. אחד, כיון שזה היה העקר לסבת גלותנו, כמו שהבאנו מגמרא יומא ומירושלמי הנ"ל. אם כן כל כמה שלא נראה לתקן זה החטא, איך תוכל להיות גאולה. כיון שזה החטא פגם כל כך, ששעל ידיו זה גלותנו מארצנו. על אחת כמה וכמה שאינו מייחסנו לבוא לארצנו. ועוד הלא ידוע הוא שגזרו עליו גלות מקבר מעת מעשה המרגלים, כמו שכתוב בתהלים (פרק ק"ו, כ"א-כ"ב): "ווישא ידו להם להפיל אותם וגו' בגוים ולזרותם בארצות", וכמו שפרש רש"י שם והרמב"ם בהקדמה שפירש שמה (במדבר יד, א) חטא המרגלים הלא היה עון לשון הרע, וכמו דאיתא בערבי (דף ט"ו) אם כן אנו מקרזין (ע"כ) "ווישא ידו להם להפיל אותם וגו' בחטא קדם הגאולה, וכו' (מפרץ חיים, הקדמה)

wasn't grammatically correct is irrelevant. But if I'm saying the essence of the thing itself, in *lashon hakodesh*, then if I'm not saying it properly, it is not good enough.

In other words, *lashon hakodesh* is a true description of what the thing actually is. But every other *lashon* is a *peirush*. That's the secret of 70 languages. There is *lashon hakodesh* and there are *shivim leshonos*. *Shivim leshonos* are seventy different *perushim* based on each *lashon's* explanation of how they perceived it and it gives you their own '*shtickel Torah*' understanding.

Regarding the *geulas Mitzrayim* it says Hakadosh Baruch Hu took us out of Mitzrayim ורוממתנו מכל הלשונות, He elevated us above all the *leshonos*. In the *Hallel* today, we said יעקב מעם לוועז "When Klal Yisrael went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech" (Tehillim 114:1). We describe Egypt as being an *am loez*, a nation that speaks a foreign language. We went out of an *am loez*. We were elevated to a *bechinah* of *lashon hakodesh*. It means Klal Yisrael became free. They became locked into *lashon hakodesh*.

## GALUS ALWAYS STARTS WITH CHEIT HADIBUR

It's amazing. What's the first *galus* that the Yidden got after they were in the *midbar*? Where did the *galus* sprout its head again? By the *meraglim*. That also was caused by *lashon hara*, the *cheit hadibur*. It's interesting how the *galus* always starts with the *cheit hadibur*. The *mishnah* in *Eiruchin* (15a) says: שלא נחתם גזר דין על אבותינו במדבר אלא על לשון הרע "the sentence (of not entering Eretz Yisrael) imposed on our ancestors in the wilderness was sealed only due to the malicious speech (disseminated by the meraglim)." It says וינסו אותי זה עשר פעמים They angered Hashem ten times, but it was only this tenth time, when their sin involved *lashon hara*, that it decreed that they would not enter Eretz Yisrael.<sup>6</sup>

And Hashem said, "Now you cried. Now you're going to lose the first *Beis Hamikdash*, the second *Beis Hamikdash*. אתם בכיתם בכיה של חיים, you're going to cause a cry, a *bechayah ledoros*." It's not only *galus Mitzrayim*. It's all the *galuyos*. That's why this negative *dibur* is a special destructive *koach*.

*Tza'aras* is *mevatel* the bad *dibur*. The *dibur ra*, *lashon hora*, destroys the *penimiyus*, the essence of the Yisrael, which causes a person to become detached from his *shores* and now he has to go into *galus*. So the advantages of avoiding *cheit hadibbur* applies in day to day living too.

## SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The *mishnah* in *Avos* (1:17) states: וכל המרבה דברים מביא חטא. There's a famous *gemara* (Megillah 18a) that says מילה בסלע, a word is worth a *selah*, משתוקא בתרין, silence is worth two *selaim*. It says (Avos, ibid.) לגוף טוב משתיקה טובה. The healthiest thing that a person could do for his *guf* is *shetikah*. My grandfather (Rav Avigdor Miller) always used to tell us this. He lived by it. He used to always say, "It doesn't say *laneshamah*. It says it's bad *laguf*, for the body." אל תתן את פירך לחטיא את בשריך, don't let your mouth cause your *basar* to suffer. He used to say that's what *Chazal* tell us טוב משתיקה לגוף טוב משתיקה.

## THE OHR HACHAIM ON THE MAKKOS

There's an interesting Ohr Hachaim (Shemos 8:4) on the *asarah makkos*.<sup>7</sup> He says as follows. In the first *makkah* of *dam*, there was no *sakanah maves*. There was no danger to life because they had water. The *Mitzri'im* bought it from Yisrael. They didn't feel death imminently. They were inconvenienced. *Tzefardeiya* was two things. It was the noise and the fact that it *mamash* went into their stomachs. This *mamash* got closer to *sakanah*. They got scared. That's why you see when it comes to *dam*, Pharaoh told his *chartumim* to try to make the *dam* and they did so, as it says that Pharaoh turned around and said, "Ah, it's nothing." By the *tzefardeiya* they also replicated it, but here he already begged Moshe, 'ה' העתירו אל ה', to, "Daven to Hashem to get rid of this *maves*."

Now it's interesting. It says, ויסר הצפרדעים ממני, "remove all the frogs from me" (Shemos 8:4). All he wanted was to get rid of the *tzefardeiya* from 'within me.' I could live with the *tzefardeiya* around me, but not in me. Get them away from me. That's already getting too close to home.

*Kinim* again, there was a lot of pain but there was no *sakanah* that the *kinim* were going to pry up the stomachs and kill them. They knew it was *etzba Elokim*. They knew the *chartumim* couldn't do it but פרעה לב פרעה (Shemos 8:15).

Now, *makkas arov*, the wild animals already started to scare Pharaoh. The Ohr Hachaim says: וירא עד מאד and he called Moshe and he said, לכו רצו, It was the first time he's saying, "Go and *shecht*. I'm ready to send you out. *Daven* for me."

*Makkas dever*, the pestilence, when the animals started to die, since it was only in the animals, even though he saw in the *mikneh Yisrael* none of them died, he didn't ask for *rachamim* to get rid of it.

*Makkas shechin*, boils. There was no *sakanah* even though it was extremely uncomfortable to have this, he didn't ask Moshe again to *daven* to get rid of it.

*Makkas barad taka* caused big thunder from Hashem, *kolos* and *eish* came from *shamayim*. That put the fright of Hashem in him and he was afraid this was the beginning of the *mahapeichas Sedom veAmorah*. So Pharaoh said, "Hashem Hatzaddik. *Daven* for me!"

*Makkas arbeh*, again. His own mouth said, "Get rid of it for me, ויסר מעלי רק את המות הזה, He was concerned about this *maves*."

*Makkas choshech*, again, you don't see that he was asking from Moshe to *daven* for him. The Ohr Hachaim says a very interesting *chiddush*. He says, maybe it's because of the following. During the first three days, they lit lanterns and torches, which lit up the darkness. During the last three days, they couldn't move, so they couldn't call Moshe. They were stuck. Immediately after the seven days were over, Pharaoh told Moshe they could go, but he wanted a guarantee that they're going to come back. The *makkah* was already gone, so he didn't have to *daven* it should go away.

<sup>6</sup> נמצא האומר בפיו חמור מן העושה מעשה שכן מצינו שלא נחתם גזר דין על אבותינו במדבר אלא על לשון הרע שנאמר (במדבר יד, כב) וינסו אותי זה עשר פעמים וגו'. [רש"י מנתי' נמצא האומר בפיו חמור - דנותן מאה סלע והעושה מעשה דאונס בתולה לא יחייב אלא כן; רש"י גזר דין - שלא ליכנס לארץ; רש"י זה עשר פעמים - גבי מרגלים כתיב דמשמע על זה נחתם] <sup>7</sup> זה סדר מכותיו, ראשונה מכת דם לא היה לו בה סכנת מות, ומיני לצמא מצאו לו סביבות היאור או היה קונה מישראל לזה לא נרגש ממנה. מכת צפרדע היו בו שני דברים הא הראשונה הקול והשני שהיו נכנסים במעיהם דכתיב (לעיל ז' ט) ובכה ובעמר יעלו הצפרדעים, ומכה זו מבהלת הנפש ואין אדם בטוח בחייו, לזה אמר פרעה אל משה וגו' ויסר הצפרדעים ממני פי' מתוך בני מעיו וגו'. מכת כינים כי הגם שיצטער אבל אין שם סכנת מות כצפרדעים שתקוב בני מעיו וגו' ותעשנו טרפה, ולזה הגם שידע כי יצבע אלהים היא והעידו החרטומים כי אינם יכולים עשות אף על פי כן ויחזק לב וגו'. מכת ערוב אימות שן בהמות ששלח ה' בו בהלוחו וירא עד מאוד ותיקף שלח אחריהם ואמר (פסוק כא) לכו רצו וגו' אני אשלח וגו' העתירו בעדי. מכת דבר לצד שהיתה במקנה לבד הגם כי שלח וראה מקנה ישראל ולא מת אף על פי כן לא שת לבו לביקש רחמים. מכת שחין לצד שלא היה בו סכנה גם אפשר שנתכבד במכה זו ממה שלא הזכיר ה' בפ"י כי גם בו היה שחין ולא אמר אלא (לקמן ט' יא) כי היה שחין בחרטומים ובכל מצרים לזה לא בקש משה להתפלל בעדו. מכת ברד לצד שהרעים ה' משמים ונתן קולות ואש מן השמים נפלה עליהם אימתה ופחד שיעשה להם ממהפכת סדום ועמורה ופחד ורהב (ישעי' ס') לבבו ואמר ה' הצדיק וגו' העתירו אל ה' וגו' (ט' טז). מכת הארבה פ"ו ענה בו כי מה שנתרגש הוא לצד שירא יראת מות דכתיב (י' יז) ויסר מעלי רק את המות הזה. מכת חושך לא ראינו לו שבקש משה להתפלל, ואולי כי בג' ימים ראשונים היה מדליק עשיות ופנסות גדולות וירא את החושך ובג' ימים שניים שהיה חושך ממושש ולא קמו איש מתחתיו לא היה מציאות לו שילך אדם לקרא למשה כי לא קמו איש מתחתיו, ואחר ששלמו שבעת ימי אפילה (ש"ר יד) תכף ומיד שלח אחר משה ואמר אליו שילכו אלא שיתנו בטחון מהם שיחזרו ולא קבל משה, ולצד שכבר פסקה המכה לא הוצרך לומר לו התפלל.



that's why Moshe Rabbeinu had to circumcise them properly when they left Mitzrayim.<sup>10</sup>

*Chazal* tell us that when Klal Yisrael began to do that, there was an immediate response from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. What was the response? Once they were *meifer* their *bris*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu was הפך לבם, Hashem turned the hearts of the Egyptians, to hate His nation, להתנכל בעבדיו, to go and come up with terrible plans against the servants of Hashem (Tehillim 105:25). Two things. There's *amo*, His nation in general became hated, and for the *avdei Hashem*, plans were made against them.

You know what you see in this *Chazal*? What did you just hear? That the *Mitzri'im* turned against Klal Yisrael precisely when Hashem was הפך ליבם לשנא, Hashem has to actively turn the hearts of the *goyim* to hate His people. If you study history, you see Jewish people who were highly respected among cultured nations, and suddenly there was a change of heart. If you read the nonsense from the *umos haolam* it'll tell you because the economy went down. Whenever the economy suffers they look for a scapegoat, who to blame it on. But *Chazal* tell us there's no such thing as a *goy* hating a *Yid* or turning against a *Yid* unless it's הפך ליבם לשנא עמו!

Now the question is, why did the Jewish people do that? Why in the world when Yosef Hatzaddik died did they decide to do this crazy thing, to be *meifer* the *bris*? What happened?

The Beis Halevi explains that the Am Yisrael who were in Mitzrayim knew clearly that they were going to have to be subjected to Egyptian slavery. Hashem had told Avraham Avinu in the *bris bein habesarim*, וגם את הגוי אשר יעבדו, so they knew that they're going to experience an *avdu* under the thumb of the Egyptians. That means, as respected as they were in Egypt, as respected as Yosef Hatzaddik was, as respected as Yaakov Avinu was -

the history of Yaakov Avinu in Mitzrayim was *gevaldig* and they were the *Shivtei Kah* - still in all, they knew there was going to be a slavery. As unimaginable as it was rational, it had to happen. Now, why did they stop doing *bris*? It's a *pelah*.

The Beis Halevi explains that since they knew they were going to face slavery, all these '*chachamim*' got together, ויעבדו, they knew this is going to be. They began to come up with *eitzos* of how to limit the *shibud* and limit the hatred. "You don't have to just plunge in. Try to make it better." So firstly, they came up with a plan to attempt to show that they're, number one, loyal to the Mitzrim, they're loyal to the Egyptians, and second of all, not only are they loyal but they're similar. As if to say, "We're not that different." They felt that if you become close and you relate to the host nation and you minimize the differences between you and them, that will assist in minimizing the hatred.<sup>11</sup>

Nowadays, it's the exact same thing. A few years ago in France they had these terrible terrorist attacks. So what did they say? They came out with a thing: "No one should wear *yarmulkes* anymore. Don't wear *tzitzis*. You won't be as conspicuous." It made sense. It makes a lot of sense actually. According to this logic, when people look different, people feel different toward you. But if you don't look different, you don't feel different toward that person.

They understood when Yosef Hatzaddik died, the time was arriving for the fulfillment of that prophecy; they're going to be slaves in Mitzrayim for hundreds of years. They understood that. So they came up with an idea of how to avoid looking like strangers.

Now, the main difference between *goyim* and *Yidden* in their *guf* is in the *bris milah*. That sets the Jew apart, and it's a sign. A Jew wears the sign on his body. Before *matan* Torah there were no other *mitzvos* that Klal Yisrael had openly besides for *bris milah*. The *bris milah* set them apart as a descendant of *zaro shel Avraham*. So, they decided to minimize the *bris milah*.

Now, the Beis Halevi clarifies that they didn't actually neglect the *mitzvah* entirely. Would Klal Yisrael for such a reason stop doing *bris milah*? How can that be? That sounds a little serious to *mevatel bris milah*, thirteen covenants! It's from the big *mitzvah* that Avraham was given. Would they undo that *mitzvah*? It sounds preposterous. And the Beis Halevi says that it is preposterous. He explains that they weren't *mevatel* the *milah*. You know what they were *mevatel*? *Pri'ah*. There are two parts to the *milah*. There's the *milah*, the circumcision itself, where you cut off the *orlah* and then there's the *pri'ah* where the remaining membrane is pulled back. Avraham Avinu was only commanded on *milah*. He wasn't commanded on *pri'ah*. But Avraham Avinu did the *pri'ah* and Klal Yisrael emulated

him. They also did the *pri'ah* - until that point in time. But in Mitzrayim, after Yosef died, they decided we're not going to do *pri'ah* anymore. We're going to start to hide our *milah* without doing *pri'ah* so the *milah* is not as recognizable. What makes the *milah* completely recognizable is when you do the *pri'ah* and you uncover the *milah* besides for cutting off part of the *orlah*. So they made the cut but they didn't do the *pri'ah*. Even though the cut itself caused a difference between the Jew and the Mitzri, they wanted to stop doing the *pri'ah* in order to minimize the difference between them.

The Beis Halevi says that *milah* and *pri'ah* actually serve two different roles. He says *milah*, the cut, removes the *orlah*, the unwanted foreskin; it distinguishes the *yid* from the *goy*. But the *pri'ah* grants the person a *tosefos kedushah*, an additional level of *kedushah*. When we say *zugt* the Beis Halevi, it's referring to the *pri'ah*. That's the *chasimah*. That's the signature of the *milah*. In *Mitzrayim* they did the *milah*, but they wanted to find a medium of creating some safety measures. So they stopped doing the *pri'ah*. That way, they avoided attaining the *tosefes kedushah* in order to minimize the difference between themselves and the *Mitzri'im*. But the plan didn't work.

<sup>10</sup> ויקם מלך חדש. רב ושמואל, חד אמר חדש ממש, וחד אמר שנתחדשו גזרותיו, שחדש גזרות ופרעניות עליהם. טעמא דמאן דאמר חדש ממש, דכתיב: חדש, טעמא דמאן דאמר שחדש גזרותיו, דלא כתיב וימת וימלך. אש לא ידע את יוסף, על דעתיה דמאן דאמר חדש ניסא, ועל דעתיה דמאן דאמר שחדש גזרותיו מאי דרש ביה, דהוי דמי כמאן דלא ידע ליה ליוסף כלל. רבנן אמרי למה קראו מלך חדש, והלא פרעה עצמו היה, אלא שאמר המצריים לפרעה, בוא וקדודג לאמה זו. אמר להם שוטים אתם, עד עכשו משלכם אנו אוכלים, והיאך תדודג להם, אלולי יוסף לא היינו חיים. כיון שלא שמע להם, הורידוהו מפסאו ישלשה חדשים, עד שאמר להם כל מה שאתם רוצים הריני עמכם, והשיבו אותו, לפיכך כתיב: ויקם מלך חדש. רבנן פתחין פתחא להאי קרא (הושע ה, ז): בה' בגדו כי בניני זרים ילדו עתה יאכלם חדש את חלקיהם. ללמדך, לשמט יוסף הפרו ברית מילה, אמרו נהיה כמצרים. מכאן אתה למד שמשא מלך ביציאתן ממצרים, וכיון שעשו כן, הפך הקדוש ברוך הוא האהבה שהיו המצריים אוהבין אותו, לשנאה, שאמר (תהלים קה, כה): הפך לבם לשנא עמו להתנכל בעבדיו, לקים מה שצאמר (הושע ה, ז): עתה יאכלם חדש את חלקיהם. מלך חדש, שעמד וחדש עליהם גזרותיו. אשר לא ידע את יוסף, וכי לא היה מכיר את יוסף, אמר רבי אבון משל לאסד שרגם אוהבו של הפלך, אמר הפלך התיז את ראשו, כי למחר יעשה בי כך. לכך כתב עליו המקרא, כלומר היום אשר לא ידע את יוסף, למחר הוא עתיד לומר (שמות ה, ב): לא ידעתי את ה'.

<sup>11</sup> וזכה יבואר לנו דברי המדרש רבה פרשת שמות בה' בגדו כי בניני זרים ילדו עתה יאכלם חדש חלקיהם כשמת יוסף הצדיק הפרו ברית מילה אמרו נהיה כמצריים מיד הפך הקב"ה האהבה שהיו המצריים אוהבים אותה לשנאה שנאמר הפך לבם לשנא עמו כו' לקיים מה שנאמר עתה יאכלם חדש את חלקיהם זה מלך חדש שמחדש עליהם גזירות עכ"ל המדרש, ובליקוט הושע מסיים עוד חלקיהם שנחלקו מאחרי הקב"ה. ויש להבין מה שאמר הכתוב חלקיהם ותאר חטאם בלשון זה שנחלקו מאחרי הקב"ה ולא מצינו תואר זה במקום אחר. גם יש להבין למה אמר חלקיהם בלשון רבים והלא לומר חלקם ולשון חלקיהם משמעו שני חלקים. גם עיקר הדבר קשה להאמר דתיכף יבטלו מהם מצות מילה דרק היא היה מצוה מיוחדת להם יותר משאר בני נח והיאך יבטלו אותה, ועוד דרש הפסוק דהפך לבם לשנא עמו להתנכל בעבדיו שהיה אחרי שבטלו מצות מילה דהיאך קראם הפסוק עמו ועבדיו והלא לא נשאר להם גם מצוה אחת יותר מהמצריים. רק הענין דכשמת יוסף הצדיק הבינו כולם דמעתה יותחל השיעבוד בהם כדכיל ידעו מה שנאמר עליהם בברית בין הבתרים כי גר יהיה זרעך ועבדום וענו אותם ארבע מאות שנה והתחילו לטכס עצה להקל השעבוד והשנאה מעליהם ועלה בדעתם להתקרב להמצריים ולמעט ההבדל שביניהם כדי למעט ריחוק הלבבות דלפי שכל האנושי נראה דריחוק הגוף גורם לריחוק הלבבות וכשיממעט ההבדל שבגוף ביניהם יתמעט גם שנאת הלב מהם, ואז היה עיקר ההבדל בין ישראל למצרים רק מצות מילה לא יותר ולפי מה דרוצה הגמרא לומר דלא נצטוו על הפריעה ומ"מ הרי קיים אותה וכמו שקיים אברהם אבינו כל התורה וכן נהגו אחריה האבות והשבטים ובניהם ואח"כ נתייעצו להניח מלפרעו אחרי שבעצם אינם מחויבים בה כלל ולא היו זתורים בה רק בחיתוך המדרש שהיו מחויבים בוודאי דנחור בו. והגם דגם החיתוך גורם הבדל בינם למצריים דאינם נימולים כלל ורק הפריעה שהוא זתירות יתירה לפנים משוה"ד אמרו להניחה כדי למעט ההבדל שביניהם. וזהו שדקדק המדרש בלשונן ואמר הפרו ברית מילה אמרו נהיה כמצריים, דהחיתוך הוא הסרת העילה מקמי ברית והברית היא הפריעה כמבואר למעלה בזה"ק. ונמצא דהיו מובדלים במקצת מהמצריים ע"י החיתוך ולהתקדש לגמרי לא יגיעו במצות הפריעה. והנה איתא במדרש פרשה זו שאמר אברהם עד שלא מלתי היו באים הכותים ומדווגים לי אלא הקב"ה די שאני פטרונך. הרי מבואר כמ"ש דהמילה נותנת הבדל גדול בין ישראל לכותים והיא גורמת שנאה ביניהם והשיב לו הקב"ה די לך שאני פטרונך ולא יעילו ולא יפסידו לך לא בקרבנות ולא בשנאתם אחרי שאני אוהבך וישלח את אשתי אשתי אשתי אתו בעל כרחם. אבל כשהניחו מלפרעו ע"י החיתוך היו מובדלים מהמצריים וגרמה להם שנאה ומהקב"ה נחלקו במה שלא פרעו, וזהו שאה"כ עתה יאכל חדש חלקיהם וע"כ אמר הכתוב בלשון רבים, שנחלקו משני הצדדים וע"כ נתחדש עליהם השיעבוד. ומ"מ שפיר קראם הכתוב עמו ועבדיו אחרי שלא עשו שום איסור גמור בזה כיון דלא נצטוו רק על החיתוך (בית הלוי על התורה, לך לך ו)

When they did that Hashem turned the hearts of the *Mitzri'im* against the Am Yisrael. הפך לבם לשנא עמו.

This is so important, such a *yesod* from the Beis Halevi. My *rebbe* used to speak about this, how his *zeida*, the Beis HaLevi, explained that the Jew whose destiny was to be subjugated to the *galus Mitzrayim* and the other *galiyos* always seeks *eitzos* of how to minimize the *galus*. They come up with all kinds of rational *eitzos* which don't work and amount to nothing because all the hatred comes from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. הפך ליבם לשנא עמו.

### IMITATING THE GOYIM DOES NOT WORK

Sometimes you see chassidische Yidden putting on baseball caps. They want to look like they're cool. They think the *goyim* don't *chap* that they're Yidden. You have these guys with long beards who figured out some patent of folding, rolling, scrimping, crimping and tucking it under with rubber bands or other *eitzos* - and they end up looking like funny Jews. No one thinks that they're ISIS and no one thinks that they're a *goy*. If you're not sure, I'll tell you a little secret. When you want to break down the הבדלה בין ישראל לעמים, when you want to break down the difference that makes us stand out between us and them and you want to be *mekarev* yourself to them to look like them, so that they should think we're not so different, in response to that, Hakadosh Baruch Hu makes you more separate. He turns their hearts against you to hate you. It's not going to give you any safety. The person who thinks that's going to give him safety doesn't begin to know that Hashem runs the world and Hashem is the one who causes everything: אין אדם נוקף אצבעו מלמטה אלא אם כן מכריזין עליו מלמעלה, "a person injures his finger below, on earth, only if they declare about him on high that he should be injured" (Chullin 7b). Whatever the Germans did had nothing whatsoever to do with politics or the economy. It's a *pelah*, because the Jews in Germany were all German. They were pure Germans. And then, as my grandfather used to say, one of the *takanos* they made was that if you were a Jew, you had to have on your passport, "Moshe." If you called yourself Hans or Gretel or Adolf or Heinrich you had to first write Moshe, and a lady had to write, "Sarah." They gave you that name. It was a *havdalah*. They didn't let Jews act like regular *goyim*. They took away their businesses. פשטו ידם במומום. They kicked them out of their schools. You would think that what they wanted was that you be more הבריות עם. That is absolutely not what happened.

The Beis Halevi says, it's not even an *onesh*. It's Hashem helping the Jewish people guard themselves. They should be *shomer* themselves that they shouldn't mix with the *goyim*. It's for their good. Hashem wants us to be separate. Hashem wants us to act separate. Hashem wants us to live separately. So don't think, now if you go amongst *goyim* and you have your *tzitzis* out, that's going to bring you any negativity. I'll guarantee you it will bring you positivity!

### DON'T HIDE YOUR YAHADUS AND KEDUSHAH

A number of years ago when they started checking planes after the shoe bomber, there was a place in the airport where they scanned you and gave you a whole security check. One of the security guys called me over and he said, "Are you a rabbi?" "Yes." "Can I ask you a question? What are those strings? I saw a couple of people like you had those strings." I said, "These strings? It's Jewish power. People who wear them are people you should never start up with. They'll never start up with you, but it's a symbol of Jewish power." The people who are stringless have no power.

You have to know you can't imagine the *kavod* that they have for a person who is Jewish. As much as you think it's the opposite, it's not true. They have great *derech erez*. And a person has to understand that the more he identifies with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the more *shemirah* he is going to afford himself and the more *shemirah* Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to give him.

The Beis Halevi says that when they were *meifer* the *bris* in *Mitzrayim*, they did it for a protective measure. But they made a mistake. It was an error. They thought it would help them. It did the opposite. But it wasn't an *aveirah*. They weren't rejecting Hashem by this. That's why the *passuk* calls them *amo* and *avadav*. They're called His nation. They're called servants of Hashem. They're called one with Hashem.

You have to know that we're talking about the birth of the Jewish nation that transpired on Pesach. We have to understand that we're *kedoshim*. Our difference is not just certain behavior. We are inherently *kadosh*. We are on a higher level than them and you have to conduct yourself like that.

I'll tell you, I've had a lot of experiences in my life, where I saw that trying to tuck yourself in and looking like something you're not resulted in Hashem being הפך ליבם לשנא עמו. Hashem turns their heart. Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us acquire an appreciation for having *kedushas Yisrael*. It's a sign of loyalty to Hashem. Part of what Hashem wants from us as being loyal to Him. Not to be embarrassed by our association with Him but rather to be full of pride that we are associated with Hashem.

I've had a number of *goyim* ask me, "Are you the chosen nation?" and I said, "You betcha. Chosen nation, my friend." I said, "That's what the L-rd said. If you look in the bible it says, *I chose you to be My treasured nation*. That's what we are."

Now, what you have to add, however, is that chosenness doesn't empower us to subjugate others, to put down others. It's something that obligates us to act in an elevated manner. לפיכך אנתו חייבים. The fact that we're different makes us obligated.

### THE JUDGE AND THE LAWYER

I'll never forget what happened with a judge we were *mekarev* to Yiddishkeit who struggled about wearing his yarmulke. You see, a lot of people who wear yarmulkes struggle with wearing yarmulkes at work. They don't know if it's a good idea or not a good idea. They think maybe customers won't come. I was once at my dentist, and he walks into the room 'rolling on the floor.' I said, "Doc, what's so funny? Share the joke with me." He said, "You're not going to believe this!" This doctor wears a yarmulke. He tells me, in the next room, a kid came in with his mother, a *goyishe* kid and his mother tells him, "Doc, you want to hear an interesting story?" She says, "This past Friday, there was a big mass, a big *atzeres* of *goyim* in the biggest church in downtown Cleveland and one of the big popes came. He was wearing a big yarmulke. He walked down and everybody was looking at him with awe. And suddenly my kid calls out, 'Ma, he's a dentist!'" Because he knew his dentist wears a yarmulke, so he was sure that this guy must be a dentist too. So I got a good laugh because a *goyishe* kid thought a dentist wears a yarmulke!

In any case, this fellow we were *mekarev* was a former federal judge who eventually became a regular lawyer. He was in a very big case in Columbus, Ohio, not a very *Yiddishe* place. It was a multi-multimillion dollar case and both sides were fighting and arguing it out. It was Friday afternoon, and this lawyer (who had become observant) wanted to get home for Shabbos. So he asked the judge for something. The judge was going to give them time. They were trying to buy time. He told the judge, "I'm short on time." The judge said, "Why are you short on time? It's Friday afternoon, early. What's the problem?" He said, "I'm an observant Jew." He said, "So what?" He explained it to the judge. He said, "I've never heard about that." "Well, let me go." So the judge called a recess. "I'm going to check it out." He went and he called a rabbi and he found out that there is such a thing. He was shocked that you have to be home by a certain time. On Shabbos you can't do any *melachah*. He came back and said, "This lawyer is telling the truth! I'm not going to hear your arguments," he told the other side. They said, "Why not?!" He said, "Do you see that thing on his head? You know what that symbolizes?" And the Jewish guy is ready to die because he

didn't want anybody to see. Here, he tried to hide it inside his hair. The judge said, "Do you see that thing on his head? You know what that thing symbolizes? That he's an upstanding, honest citizen, so I'm accepting his version of the events." Bam!

He called me up and he said, "Rebbi, my yarmulke saved me! Not only did it not destroy me, but it saved me!"

That's the opposite of הפך ליבם לשנא עמו. So in case you think that you're going to protect yourself by acting like a *goy*, you're wrong. And that is one of the main lessons we have to come out with from *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

## HAVE A WONDERFUL YOM TOV!

### IN CONCLUSION

The Ibn Ezra points out the similarities between the *tahara* process of the *metzora* and Klal Yisrael leaving Mitzrayim. Both the *tzaraas* and the *shibud Mitzrayim* were caused by the *cheit* of *lashon hora*. That is why both the *galus* of the *metzora* and *galus Mitzrayim* were considered exiles of the *dibur*. Once Klal Yisrael was redeemed from Mitzrayim, the *koach* of *dibur* was also redeemed, as the Zohar tells us. The Arizal draws a powerful connection between the words *הערף* and *פרעה*, to show that Pharaoh is called a "neck," to indicate the interference and nullification between his body and his *seichel*, which caused a *pegam* of his mouth, giving him the *midah* of *peh ra*. This enabled him to subjugate Klal Yisrael, who also had a *pegam* in their *dibur*. It stemmed from the *lashon hora* in the incident of *mechiras Yosef* and continued in *galus Mitzrayim* through the slanderous actions of the *malshinim*. However, as soon as Klal Yisrael corrected the *cheit* - as indicated by Klal Yisrael not informing the Egyptians about Hashem's command to borrow gold and silver utensils - Pharaoh couldn't continue to subjugate them anymore. We can now understand that the essence of *Geulas Mitzrayim* is connected to the word *פֶּה* ("*peh-sach* - a speaking mouth"). This mouth, which was previously enslaved and couldn't relate the praises of Hakosh Boruch Hu, following *Geulas Mitzrayim* is commanded in the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. This demonstrates that the *dibur* of Klal Yisrael has been redeemed and has become *tahor*! With this, we can understand the words of the Ibn Ezra, that *dibur* is at the core of the two *geulos* (*Mitzrayim* and the *metzora*), which first was subjugated and enslaved through the *cheit* of *lashon hora*, but then became liberated. May we all internalize this crucial lesson in our own lives, to continue to emphasize learning *hilchos shmiras halashon*, to eradicate *sinas chinam*, and be *zoiche* to witness the *geula haasida*, iy"H.