

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



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PESACH

תשע"ח

## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Bread That Generates Answers from Above

"הא לחמא עניא ד' אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים..."  
Harav Yehoshua of Belz said:

Seder night, when the *mitzvos* are arrayed before us, is an especially auspicious time for our *tefillas* to be accepted with compassion and goodwill. The Gemara alludes to this (*Pesachim* 115b) by calling the *matzah* the "*lechem oni*" – "*she'onim alav devarim harbeh*", that many things are answered because of it. This means that when we eat the *matzos*, "*onim*"—from Above, many of the things that Am Yisrael asks for are answered.

Thus the Rebbe explained the request of *Ha Lachma Anya* at the beginning of the *Haggadah*: This is the *matzah* in whose merit Hashem answers our *tefillas*, like He answered our forbears in Egypt. Indeed, that is why it is the time to ask: "*Kol dichfin yesei veyeichol*" – those who need *parnassah* will receive their sustenance with generosity, "*kol ditzrich yesei veyifsach*" – those who need a general *yeshuah* will receive Heavenly compassion [as *Onkelos* explains (*Shemos* 12:23): *Psach: chamal*, a language of compassion.] However, the best thing is to ask on this night "Next year in Eretz Yisrael."

Haggadah Shel Pesach Kol Yehudah

### When One Doesn't Know How to Open – HaKadosh Baruch Hu Opens For Him

"ושאינו יודע לשאול - את פתח לו"  
Harav Naftali of Ropschitz explained the words of the *Midrash* (*Shir Hashirim* 5:2): "HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Yisrael: My son, open for Me one opening of *teshuvah* the size of the eye of a needle and I will open doorways for you that will be big enough for carriages and cars to enter." That "opening of *teshuvah* the size of the eye of a needle" are the *brachos* of "*Hashiveinu Avinu*" and "*Selach Lanu*." One who has *kavanah* in these *brachos* is guaranteed Heavenly Mercy and will merit to rectify that

which he has done wrong.

Based on this, his *talmid* Harav Yisrael Dov Gelernter, the Rav of Yeshnitz, adds that this is what the *Haggadah* is alluding to: "*Veshe'eino yodea lishol*" – even one

### Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen  
in the Parashah

#### Redemption from Egypt in the Merit of Amen

"ויעצמו במאד מאד"

"*Bime'od me'od*" (with the *kollel*) is numerically equivalent to "amen." The *Haggadah* hints to us that in the merit of intensifying the observance of replying amen, whose root is *emunah*, Yisrael merited to be redeemed from Egypt. As the *Midrash* says (*Yalkut Shimoni Hoshea* 519), "Our forbears in Egypt were only redeemed from Egypt in the merit of *amanah* (faith), as it says "*Vaya'amen ha'am*."

Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirah Kayam

#### Kaddish After the Haggadah

"אחד מי יודע"

If we add all the numbers of "*Mi Yodea*", from one to thirteen, we get a sum of 91, which is numerically equivalent to "amen."

This can be explained according to the words of the Gemara (*Sotah* 49a) that the world exists in the merit of "*Yehei Shemei Rabba d'aggadata*" – replying "*Amen yehei Shemei Rabba*" after *Kaddish* that is recited after a *drashah* on the subjects of *Aggadah*. Therefore, we conclude the *Haggadah* with the poem of "*Echad Mi Yodea*" that alludes to the word "amen" so that it will be considered like replying "amen" to a *Kaddish* recited after learning *Aggadah*.

Reshima D'Haggadata

who does not know how to daven and ask properly for *teshuvah*, "*at psach lo*" – HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself opens for him that 'opening...the size of the eye of a needle.'

Revid Hazahav, Likutim

### When Does the Promise Protect Klal Yisrael

"ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם...והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו"

Harav Shimon Sofer of Krakow uses a beautiful parable to explain why the words "*Yodoa teida...*" are written next to "*Vehi she'amdah*":

A person moved from one country to another, where he got into trouble and was sued for a huge sum of money; he lost the case in court. In distress, he turned to the ambassador of his country, who exercised his connections until he was able to annul the punishment. In time, the man was able to get citizenship in the new country where he had settled, and a short time later he was once again sued and charged a heavy fine. This time, too, he appealed to the ambassador of his native country, but this time, the latter did not want to help him, saying "You cut off connections to your native land, so why are you turning to me?!"

Here, too, the *Haggadah* hints to every Jew, wherever he may be: When you are among the gentiles, don't assimilate among them, *chalilah*, but rather "*Yadoa teida ki ger yihiyeh zaracha*" – you should know that your offspring will be strangers" – always remind yourself that you are not a "resident" of the land of your exile. Only this way will you have the right to then turn to Hashem in prayer in a time of trouble, and the promise of: "*Vehi she'amdah l'avoseinu velanu...*" and "HaKadosh Baruch Hu saves us from their hands," will be fulfilled.

Ateres Pa"z [Harav M. A. Zussman-Sofer] Vol. I, p. 232

Seder night, the night on which we are supposed to instill *chinuch* of *emunah*, is the *yahrtzeit* of the *Shevet Halevi*, zy"q, who accompanied the activities of Bnei Emunim until his final days.

On this holy night, it is most fitting that we peruse the holy words that he delivered at a Bnei Emunim gathering, which are like a will and testament for future generations:

"It is a great *tikkun* to strengthen the reply of amen among the children. Aside for the actual virtue of answering amen, there are two other virtues:

1. We strengthen the pillar of *tefillah* through this, and 2. We strengthen the pillar of *emunah*, which is one of the things that needs *chizuk*. From now it is clear that this *takanah* has a tremendous merit, and it is a step towards the greeting of *Mashiach Tzidkeinu...*"

Bnei Emunim. *Emunah* from generation to generation.





## Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the  
Seder Hatefillah

### Chad Gadya

At the end of the Seder, after a night full of *mitzvos*, we recite *Nirtzah*. This section includes various *piyutim*, songs, from ancient times that touch on an array of fundamentals of *emunah*. Reciting them in a special, pleasant way, each in accordance with the traditions of his forbears, evokes yearning and closeness to Hashem.

One of the most prominent of those *piyutim* is *Chad Gadya*. This ancient song is attributed to the period following the *Churban*, and we recite it in Aramaic. It is written like a riddle that includes many secrets and significances that contain endless depth.

The source of *Chad Gadya* is very ancient, although there is no clear *mesorah*, a tradition, as to when it began being recited on Seder night. There are those who believe that it was included in *Nirtzah* some four hundred years ago, around the year 5350, while others believe it is from the period of the first Ashkenaz Chassidim (see *Haggadah Shel Pesach Marbeh Lesaper*).

On this same subject, it is fitting to cite the Chida, who writes a sharp answer to someone who questioned the source of this *piyut* (*Shu"t Chaim Sha'al*, Vol. I, 28):

"Thousands of [bnei] Yisrael in the cities of Poland and Germany and its environs, and early sages and *gedolim*...and even today, numerous *roshei yeshivah* and *gaonim* of our time... all said and say this *piyut*...because it is not an empty thing, and we already know the greatness of the *piyutim* of Ashkenaz that are based on the true wisdom of the holy words of the Arizal, and they wrote in the name of Rabbeinu Eliezer of Germeiza, author of the *Rokeach*, zt"l, that the subjects of their *piyutim* and their nuances have been passed down from one person to the next..."

It should be noted that the *Haggadah Marbeh Lesaper*, by Harav Yedidya Ti'ah Weill, zya, writes that the reason we say *Chad Gadya* on Seder night is because the *mekubalim* write (see *Tikkunei Zohar*) that the *shechitah* of the *yetzer hara* in the future will be on 14 Nissan, and the primary *simchah* over this will be on Seder night. Therefore, it was established that we recite this *piyut* on Seder night.

### The "Riddle" That Concludes the Haggadah

There are hundreds of commentaries on this *piyut* from the writings of the leading commentators of the *Haggadah*, and each one expounds in detail as to what each line alludes to, and what the meaning of each of the subjects is: the kid, the cat, the dog and so forth.

There is not enough space here to cite all the commentaries on this *piyut*, yet it is important to note what Chazal wrote (*Haggadas Rala"ch Peirushim* in the name of the Tashbetz), that it is not for naught that it is written as a parable, in a way that is hidden. This way, each person can delve into it and reach the maximum understanding and strengthen himself in many areas relating to *emunah* and the Seder. Through this, he will fulfill the words, "*Kol hamarbeh lesaper*, he who relates a lot about the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is praiseworthy."

### Who Acted Out of Line?

A central question that many of the commentators grapple with, and through which they reach some understanding about the meaning of the *piyut*, is the question of guilt:

If we peruse the story of *Chad Gadya*, we find that the dog acted fairly when he bit the cat and took revenge on behalf of the kid goat, and if so, the stick was not right when it hit him, and the fire justifiably burned it. By contrast, the water was not justified in extinguishing the

fire, but the ox acted fairly by drinking the water, the *shochet* was out of line when he slaughtered the ox and thus the Angel of Death was right to take his soul...

Harav Yehonasan Eibeschutz explained the relevance between this *piyut* and the redemption from Egypt based on this question. It should be noted that the background for his explanation is a moving story that the Chasam Sofer would relate on Seder night, as he heard from his *rebbe*, Harav Nosson Adler:

It was during the great dispute between the *gedolei olam*, Harav Yehonasan Eibeschutz and the Yaavetz. The dispute was *l'Shem Shamayim*, but like most disputes, there were others who got involved unnecessarily and even spoke very harshly about the *rabbanim* on the opposite side.

Once, Rav Yehonasan Eibeschutz found himself in a strange place. He passed by a group of people who were discussing the dispute and they were harshly ridiculing one of the sides. Rav Yehonasan approached them, without them knowing who he was, and said: "Rabbosai, can I ask you a question on the *Haggadah*?" They replied that he could, and he then asked this question [regarding the guilt in *Chad Gadya*]. When they had no answer, he answered himself:

One can also ask why the Egyptians were punished; did they not fulfill the mitzvah of "*va'avadam v'inu osam*"—and they would be made slaves and tortured" with the greatest *hiddur*? The answer can be gleaned from the story of *Chad Gadya*: It is true that the cat needed to be punished for eating the kid goat, but who asked the dog to get involved in the fight between these two? We find that his punishment is rightfully deserved, because out of hatred for the cat, he chose to be the one to punish him. The same answer applies to the rest of the song: The Egyptians were similarly punished, because the decree that Bnei Yisrael would be tortured and enslaved did not specify which nation would be the one to do it. Because the Egyptians, in their hatred for Bnei Yisrael, chose to do it themselves, it is right that they be punished with the full severity.

Rav Yehonasan concluded his words with clear rebuke for those people who were not careful about the respect of Torah scholars and were getting involved in a dispute that had nothing to do with them, and told them that they would be judged and even punished severely for doing so. (*Mishneh Sachir*, *Moadim*, commentary on *Chad Gadya*)

### Nuances In the Wording

The Chasam Sofer explains why the poet repeats the whole chain of events in each stanza (*Toras Moshe*, *Haggadah Shel Pesach* p. 40). He says that this alludes to the fact that every nation that has struck us throughout the generations was sure that there was no hope for us and that we would be lost from the world. However the truth is that the "*chad gadya*" to which Klal Yisrael is compared lives on for eternity and specifically those nations who wanted to destroy us have been wiped out from the world. When HaKadosh Baruch Hu will slay the Angel of Death, then that "*gedi*", that kid goat, will stand and witness the punishment that will be meted out to those that harassed it.

Hence some explained the repetitive language of "*chad gadya, chad gadya*" as an allusion to the fact that Am Yisrael has remained like a "*seh tamim*", an unblemished sheep, and has not deviated from its faith throughout all the travails of the exiles. The *chad gadya* that existed at the time that HaKadosh Baruch Hu acquired us as a nation, is the same *chad gadya* that will exist in the End of Days. (*Mishneh Sachir*, *Moadim*, *Peirush Chad Gadya*, in the name of Harav Asher Anshel Jungreis of Csenger).

## A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About  
Amen and Tefillah

### "Sorfo Mishmanei Yipol Velod Beyeked Yikod Pesach" (From the *piyut* V'amartem Zevach Pesach)

It was a difficult time for Klal Yisrael in general, and the residents of Yerushalayim in particular, when Sancheriv and his armies prepared to invade the city. His army was fearsome, and included tens of thousands of soldiers that converged from all over the world to help the king fight his wars. When they camped outside of Yerushalayim, they resembled like a huge swarm of locusts at rest prior to their attack on the city in an attempt to destroy its denizens.

The residents were overcome with fear and pleaded fervently to Hashem to spare them from their aggressors.

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 94b-95a) describes the story as derived from the words of the *passuk* (*Yeshayah* 10:32) "*Od hayom beNov la'amod yenofef yado Har Bayis bas Tzion givas Yerushalayim*".

That evening was Erev Pesach. Before his arrival in Yerushalayim, Sancheriv hastened to Nov, which was a ten day distance from Yerushalayim. There, he wanted to ask the stargazers if he would succeed in capturing the city. The stargazers replied that his opportunity to do so was extant only for that day and that if he would manage to get to Yerushalayim before the sun set – then his success was guaranteed.

When Sancheriv heard this, he pushed himself and was able to cover the great distance in one day. When he reached the outskirts of the city, and asked to be granted a view into it to plan his war, he could not do so because of the high wall that surrounded Yerushalayim. As such, his soldiers spread blankets one on top of the other until there was a place high enough for him to be able to look out over the whole city.

From above, Yerushalayim appeared very small to him, and he was scornful: "Is this Yerushalayim that in order to capture I had to conquer so many other nations and take tens and tens of thousands of soldiers to help me? It is smaller and weaker than all the other cities in the nations that I have conquered!"

Thus Sancheriv stood on his high perch, waving his hand in dismissal at the Mountain of Hashem, the holiest place on earth, and waiting for the moment that he would trounce Yerushalayim under the hoofs of his horses and the feet of his soldiers.

When they saw this, his generals were ready to move ahead. "Let's go and fight them!" they cried. But, overcome with arrogance, he ignored the advice of the stargazers and told his ministers and soldiers, "You are surely tired from the long trip, and it is better you should rest overnight. We will conquer them tomorrow and win them easily!"

They went to sleep, and that night, Hashem sent His angels and struck the camp of Ashur, with 185,000 people. Their clothes survived, yet their bodies were burned inside their clothes. (see *Shabbos* 113b). In the morning, they were all dead bodies. The survivors fled for their lives in terror, and the Jews saw salvation.

That is how the occupation of Sancheriv came to an end with a mighty downfall, *bechasdei Hashem*.

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This remarkable story sheds light on the tremendous miracle that brought about such great salvation for Yerushalayim and its residents; it was passed from person to person for generations. Harav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, zya, followed by his great disciples and their disciples, would relate it each year at the Seder table, when they reached the *piyut*, "*V'amartem Zevach Pesach*."

As stated, on Erev Pesach, Sancheriv bore down on Yerushalayim. The residents who had already heard about the stargazers' advice to Sancheriv were terrified that the enemy was about to overrun the city. They needed great *mesirus nefesh* to fulfill the mitzvah of *Korban Pesach* that year, fearing that they would not have time to eat it that night. But, as believers, the children of believers, they did not want to forgo this holy mitzvah, and said to themselves, "At least we will merit to fulfill the mitzvah of slaughtering the *Korban Pesach*, which is a mitzvah in and of itself, as long as we are still alive. We will do our part; if me merit to also fulfill the mitzvah of roasting it – then we are fortunate, and if we also merit the mitzvah of eating it – how much more fortunate we are and how good is our fate."

When they finished carrying out the mitzvah of slaughtering the *korban* and did not yet hear the noise of Sancheriv's approaching army, they began preparing to roast it, with true joy in the mitzvah and a fiery *emunah*. But there was pall of fear and terror over the whole city, and that caused them to do the roasting hastily and without concentration. Hence, the meat was ruined and when they came to take the out of the ovens, they discovered that most of it had been scorched by the fire; there were hardly any edible parts left.

Bnei Yisrael were deeply distraught at that moment, realizing that their fear of Sancheriv and his armies had precluded them from properly fulfilling the mitzvah. In their pain, they poured out their hearts in prayer to Hashem, crying and weeping:

"Please Hashem, may it be Your will that just like our Pesach was burned by fire, so should the soldiers of Sancheriv be burned by Your holy fire, and save us, in your great compassion, from falling into their hands!"

That Pesach night was spent in repentance and prayer, and fulfilling the mitzvah of eating the *Korban Pesach*, along with *matzah* and *maror*. They fulfilled these *mitzvos* with great *mesirus nefesh*, and early in the morning, when the news spread about the miraculous downfall of Sancheriv's armies, just as Am Yisrael had asked, by fire that consumed their bodies, they all broke out in songs of praise to Hashem. Since then, to this day, we note this miracle in the *piyut* "*V'amartem zevach Pesach*."

"*Sorfu mishmanei Pul VeLod*" – the strong soldiers of Pul and Lod, the generals of Sancheriv, were burned, "*Beyeked Yikod Pesach*" – in that fire that consumed and burned the *Korban Pesach* of Bnei Yisrael.

*Derech Pikudecha Mitzvas Aseh 6; Shemuos Menachem Tzion, Pesach*