

Shabbos Hagadol³ Drasha - 5772
The Challenge of Finding our Chometz

Part I - Hiding the Chometz Prior to the Search

Rav Moshe Isserles, the Rama, writes (Orach Chaim 432:2) that “נוהגים להניח פתיתי חמץ במקום” שימצאם הבודק כדי שלא יהא ברכתו לבטלה, (מהר”י ברי”ן) ומיהו אם לא נתן לא עכב, דדעת כל אדם עם “הברכה לבער אם נמצה” “it is customary to place pieces of chometz somewhere where the searcher will find them in order that his blessing not be in vain, although if this was not done, it does not prevent him [from making the blessing], because every person’s intention [in making the blessing] is to destroy [the chometz] if he finds any.” In other words, the children should not hide the pieces of chometz so well that the father will be unable to find them. They should place the pieces of chometz in places where their father will be able to find them easily. The Mishna Berura there (also citing the Taz) explains that the Rama is not actually concerned about the issue of making a blessing in vain because the mitzva is to *search* for the chametz, and it means nothing if he does not find any.

The Shaar Hatziyun there quotes the Pischei Teshuva in the name of the Emek Halacha that “nowadays, דכהיום שהמנהג לכבד ולנקות הבית מכל חשש חמץ קדם ליל י”ד, יש למנהג זה יסוד מדינא” when the custom is to clean the house so well before the night of the fourteenth that there is no chance of finding chometz during the search, this custom has the status of an obligation.” In other words, today, we clean our houses so well that the entire house has the status of a מקום שאין מכניסין בו חמץ, a place where chometz is never brought, such that one is completely exempt from searching for chometz in his own house and is therefore only permitted to make the blessing if he places the pieces of chometz in the house before searching.

Rav Elyashiv, שליט”א accepts this reasoning and maintains that if one made the blessing and then conducted the search for chometz without first hiding pieces of chometz, his blessing was in vain. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, זצ”ל, however, holds (Halichos Shlomo) that it would not be a blessing in vain because he still had an obligation to perform the search “להבחין היטב אם” “in order to discern very well whether they truly cleaned every place and whether it did not happen that some chometz was not brought back in, so his blessing was proper.” According to Rav Shlomo Zalman, even where the house was cleaned very well in advance, it was still the search for the chometz that gave the house its status of a בית בדוק, a searched house.

According to Rav Elyashiv, the cleaning we perform in the house gives it the status of a מקום שאין מכניסין בו חמץ, a place where chometz is not brought, such that Chazal never instituted the mitzva of searching for chometz in such a house. According to Rav Shlomo Zalman, however, that the only way to discharge one’s obligation is through searching the house and that no אומדנא, assumption, exists that such a house is chometz-free, and one must search for chometz there and make a blessing.

³ Parshas Tzav.

The practical outcome, נפקא מינה, of this dispute is that according to Rav Elyashiv, the search is only performed for the sake of the pieces of chometz one hides in the house, such that after those pieces are found, there is no need to continue searching, as the tzadikim were accustomed to doing over the generations. According to him, the search is not truly an all-out search for the chometz and the blessing one says over the search is really just over the gathering of the ten pieces and their removal from the house. The blessing “על בעור חמץ,” “over the destruction of the chometz,” is really using the word “בעור” to mean “remove,” as in the pasuk (Devarim 26:13) “בערתי הקדש מן הבית,” “I have removed (“בערתי”) the holy items from the house.” The completion of this process is the burning of the chometz the next morning.

We all know that there is something deeper going on as well with these little pieces of bread. The halachic authorities all quote the Arizal that there are reasons according to kabbalah to place ten pieces of bread. Wherever the Arizal says that there should be ten of something, we understand that this corresponds to the ten sefiros, the ten types of forces in the world and the ten channels through which everything in this world exists. This means that these ten little pieces of chometz have some connection to all of reality.

Part II - Blessed is He Who has Given Me all that I Need

We know that according to the Tur (Orach Chaim 430), the great miracle that occurred on Shabbos Hagadol was that at the first Pesach, while we were still in Egypt, “ולקחו כ״א מישראל... והמצרים ראו זה ושאלום למה זה לכם והשיבו לשוחטו לשם פסח במצות ה' עשה לפסחו וקשרו בכרעי המטה... והמצרים ראו זה ושאלום למה זה לכם והשיבו לשוחטו לשם פסח במצות ה' עשה לפסחו וקשרו בכרעי המטה...” “and each Jewish person took a lamb for his Pesach offering and tied it to his bed posts... and the Egyptians saw this and asked them ‘why are you doing this?’ and they answered them ‘in order to slaughter it as a Pesach offering because of G-d’s command to us,’” and the Egyptians ground their teeth because they were slaughtering their gods.”

According to the deeper seforim, however, it is known (Zohar Yisro) that “כל ברכאן דלעילא ותתא” “all of the blessings above and below are dependant on the seventh day.” Pesach therefore draws its sanctity from the Shabbos before Pesach, from right now. According to this reality, this Shabbos is called “Shabbos Hagadol,” the “Great Shabbos,” because it contains within it the holiness of Shabbos as well as the sanctity of Pesach.

We must ask ourselves two questions about this mitzva to watch over the lamb starting on the tenth of Nissan. The first is why Hashem commanded us to watch over the lamb four full days before slaughtering it on the fourteenth of Nissan. Rashi (on Shmos 12:6) answers:

ומפני מה הקדים לקיחתו לשחיטתו ארבעה ימים מה שלא צוה כן בפסח דורות, היה ר' מתיא בן חרש אומר הרי הוא אומר (יחזקאל טז: ח) ואעבור עליך ואראך והנה עתך עת דודים, הגיעה שבועה שנשבעתי לאברהם שאגאל את בניו ולא היו בידם מצות להתעסק בהם כדי שיגאלו, שנאמר (שם ז) ואת ערום ועריה, ונתן להם שתי מצות דם פסח ודם מילה

Why did the Jewish people have to take the lamb four days before slaughtering it, which was not part of the mitzva of the Pesach offering in future generations? Rav Masya ben Charash says, the

verse (Yechezekl 16:8) says ‘and I will pass over you and I see you and behold, your time was a time of love. The time has come [to redeem] the oath that I made to Avraham that I would redeem his children,’ but they had no mitzvos to busy themselves without in order that they should be redeemed, as it says (Id. at 7) ‘and you were naked and bare,’ so I gave them two mitzvos: the blood of Pesach and the blood of bris mila.

But how does Rashi’s answer explain why the lamb for Pesach had to be brought into the house four days early? Putting aside the issue of bris mila, the Jewish people could have bought the lamb on the fourteenth of Nissan, the same day it was to be slaughtered in order to acquire the merit of the mitzva of the blood of Pesach. How has Rashi explained the requirement to bring the lamb into the home four days early?

The second question is why the Tur points out that the lamb was tied to the bedposts specifically. What difference does it make where the animal is tied while it is being kept in the home for those four days?

The words we are about to study will knock on the doors of your hearts. Please let them in! On Pesach, one is not only supposed to open the door for Eliyahu Hanavi, but also “כל דכפין,” “every impoverished person,” everyone who needs to come inside.

The deeper seforim teach us that Pesach is the Rosh Hashana of Emunah, of faith. We must not only believe that there is a G-d, but that He creates and conducts every created thing and He did does, and will do everything that is done, such that each person has everything that he is meant to have and that he is not meant to have anything which he does not have because (Yuma 38b) “אין אדם נוגע במוכן לחבירו,” “one does not have the ability to touch something that is not his.” According to the Zohar, matza is called “מיכלא דמהימנותא,” the “bread of emunah, faith”

Matza must be made from one of the five types of דגן, grain, and according to the Gemara (Brachos 40a) “ר”י אומר חטה היתה שאין התינוק יודע לקרות אבא ואמא עד שיטעום טעם דגן,” “Rabi Yehuda says [the fruit of the tree of knowledge from which Adam ate was] wheat because a child does not know how to call out “father” or “mother” until he has tasted grain.” According to Rabi Yehuda, דעת, knowledge means the innate knowledge of who one’s father and mother are, and that knowledge comes through eating the grain from which matza is made. A child has the innate understanding that the person giving him his food is his mother or father and they take care of everyting he needs.

On Pesach, when we eat “מיכלא דמהימנותא,” the “bread of emunah,” we internalize our connection with our Father. On Pesach we ask “אחד מי יודע?,” “Who knows One?” and we answer “I know One. I know the One who spoke and brought the world into being.” When we eat the bread of emunah, we are like that child who possesses an innate knowledge of his father “דזבין אבא בתרי זוזים,” “who was acquired by Father for two Zuzim,” with the two tablets on Sinai. It says in Tehillim (131:2) “וְדוּמַמְתִּי נִפְשִׁי כְּגִמְלָ עָלַי אִמּוֹ כְּגִמְלָ עָלַי נִפְשִׁי,” “I calmed my soul like a suckling upon its mother, like a suckling was my soul with me.” Just as a child knows,

even if not consciously, that everything that his mother does for him, even if it hurts or is uncomfortable, is for his good, so too my soul knows Hashem.

It is known that Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev's father in law was not happy that he was spending significant time traveling to Mezrich to study with the Magid. He expected him to devote all of his time to studying Torah in Berditchev. After one particularly long visit to Mezrich, he asked Rav Levi Yitzchak, "So what did you learn over all that time in Mezrich?" Rav Levi Yitzchak answered him that "I learned that there is a G-d." Unimpressed, his father in law called over the maid servant and asked her, "Do you believe in G-d?" She answered that of course, yes, she believes in G-d. After dismissing her, he said to Rav Levi Yitzchak, "You see, even a maid servant believes there is a G-d. I do not understand why you had to spend so much time in Mezrich to learn this." But Rav Levi Yitzchak answered him, "She *says* that there is a G-d. But I *know* there is a G-d."

Every morning we make thank Hashem "שעשה לי כל צרכי," "Who has taken care of all my needs." The Gemara (Brachos 60b) states that this blessing was initially instituted to be said when one puts his shoes on in the morning. And according to the Kaf Hachaim (46), one does not say the blessing of "שעשה לי כל צרכי," "Who has taken care of all my needs" on Yom Kippur when it is forbidden to wear proper shoes.

Those who have survived the Holocaust understand why having shoes means having everything one needs. In the camps, a person's most precious possession, for which he would give his life, was his shoes. Even growing up in America, my father, may he live and be well, who survived the camps, taught us how precious shoes are. We had a ritual in our home where everyone gathered their shoes together and brought them to my father who would polish all of the shoes for Shabbos. He always explained how important it is to take care of one's shoes. And when I got older, my initiation into manhood was taking over the job of polishing everyone's shoes each week before Shabbos.

The Chofetz Chaim, זי"ע, asked a certain Jew how his livelihood was going, and the man answered him "it could be better." The Chofetz Chaim, innocently answered him, "I don't understand what you mean. If Hashem wanted it to be better, then it would be better. Since it is not better, that must mean that it couldn't possibly be better than it is right now." Only the Master of the World knows the root of every soul and exactly *what each person needs*, his "כל צרכי," for his ultimate and eternal good.

What prevents a person from being fully aware that Hashem is in charge and makes sure that he has exactly what he is supposed to have? It is the earthliness that clouds our vision and dulls our spiritual senses. The moment our feet touch the earth in the morning when we sit up in bed, that earthliness threatens to take away our knowledge that Hashem gives us everything that we truly need. In order to put some space between that earthliness and ourselves, we wear shoes as a barrier. Perhaps that is an additional reason why Chazal instituted that the blessing of "שעשה לי כל צרכי," "Who has taken care of all my needs" is said when putting on one's shoes.

Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Baal Hatanya, once commented about Rav Shlomo'le Karliner that he was a טפח, and handbreadth, above the earth. The chassidim used to say that if you

looked under Rav Shlomo'le's feet, you would see that there was a little space between him and the ground. The Baal Hatanya's true intent, however, was that Rav Shlomo'le was not affected by the earthliness of the world, and that there always seemed to be a separation between his elevated perception of reality and the forces of earthliness.

Shoes represent man's effort to separate himself somewhat from the earth and remember “שעשה לי כל צרכי,” that Hashem takes care of all of a person's needs and that he has exactly what he is supposed to have. We can attain this perspective of faith on Pesach night when we eat the bread of emunah. Perhaps this is why Hashem commanded the Jewish people, “וְכָכָה תֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ... נַעֲלִיכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם...” “this is how you shall eat [the matza]... with your shoes on your feet...”

Based on this, we can understand why we eat maror, the bitter herb at the Seder. One may have wondered why we eat maror to remember the bitterness of Egypt. It might make more sense to distance ourselves from all bitterness to remember how Hashem redeemed us from the bitterness of Egypt. Instead of eating the maror, we should have a ceremony at the seder where we prepare a plate of maror and then throw it out of the house. In reality though, there is still bitterness in our lives. Just last week a Teimani woman and her husband were outside of their apartment in Rechovot when a fire broke out. The husband ran inside to save their five children, but in the end he and all five children were killed in the fire. This woman knows that we still have bitterness even after our redemption from Egypt.

At the seder, it is only after we have eaten the matza, the “מיכלא דמהימנותא,” the “bread of emunah,” and understand that “שעשה לי כל צרכי,” “He has taken care of all my needs,” that we may then eat the maror with the right perspective. After eating the bread of faith, we can understand how even the bitterness served to us in life is part of how Hashem “takes care of all of our needs” because He knows our souls' true needs. We do not content ourselves with recognizing that Hashem gives us exactly what we need, however. After eating the maror, we say הלל, praising Hashem for the bitterness.

As the Mishna says (Brachos 54a), “חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שמברך על הטובה שנאמר ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ... בכל מאדך בכל מדה ומדה שהוא מודד לך הוי מודה לו חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שמברך על הטובה שנאמר ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ... בכל מאדך בכל מדה ומדה שהוא מודד לך הוי מודה לו” [you shall love Hashem with all of your might,] [meaning that] with every portion which Hashem dishes out (מידה) to you, give thanks (מודה) to Him.” Rashi, on the same pasuk (Devarim 6:5) explains, “ובכל מאדך בכל מדה ומדה שמודד לך בין במדה טובה בין במדת פורענות,” “with all of your might, with every measure that Hashem metes out to you, [meaning one should love Hashem whether He deals a person] with a ‘good’ measure or a ‘bad’ measure.” In other words, we do not content ourselves with accepting the “bad,” the bitterness in our lives. We bless and thank Hashem for it because after we have eaten the bread of faith, we know that whatever is measured out to us is part of how Hashem gives us exactly what we need.

That is how our fathers and mothers survived our many bitter exiles. As the pasuk says (Shmos 1:6), “וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד,” “and the Jewish people were fruitful, swarmed, multiplied, and became exceedingly (בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד) numerous.” They accepted the bitterness of the exile with the attitude of “הוי מודה לו במאד מאד,” thanking Hashem exceedingly even for the “bad.” Through all their suffering, this faith in “ובכל מאדך,” “בכל מדה ומדה,”

thanking Hashem for whatever He gave them, “וְנִעְצְמוּ בְּמַאֵד מְאֹד,” became stronger and stronger, and they were strengthened by their belief in “בְּמַאֵד מְאֹד,” being exceedingly grateful for whatever Hashem gave them.

Because of the bitterness in life, we come to the seder with a lot more than four questions. We have questions about the quality of our marriages; it seems that we hear of a new divorce every day. We have questions about livelihood, our children, health, the situation with the Jews in Eretz Yisroel, and everything happening with the Jewish people throughout the exile as well. The matza, however, is called “לחם עוני,” “the bread of poverty, which Chazal (Pesachim 115b) call “לחם שעונים עליו דברים הרבה,” “the bread which answers many questions.” By internalizing emunah through the mitzva of eating the “מיכלא דמהימנותא,” the “bread of faith,” our questions are answered because we realize that there are no questions.

Along these lines, Rav Meir Premishlaner said a beautiful דרוש, homiletical teaching, on the pasuk (Devarim 10:16) “וּמִלֶּתֶם אֶת עַרְלַת לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַרְפְּכֶם לֹא תִקְשׁוּ עוֹד,” “And you shall circumcise the covering of your hearts and your necks will no longer be hard (לא תקשו עוד).” He explains that because of our sins, Hashem’s face is concealed and so we have many questions on G-d. But when we do teshuva, when we circumcise our hearts and remove the stubbornness, the stiffness of our necks, then “לא תקשו עוד,” all of our questions (קושיות) will automatically disappear. A Jew who has eaten the bread of faith and understands “שעשה לי כל צרכי,” that “He has taken care of all my needs,” has no more questions.

Jews who major in Yiddishkeit will understand the following words, though Jews for whom Yiddishkeit is their minor, for whom Torah and mitzvos are an interruption from what their life is about, will not relate to the following ideas at all. We know that for serious Jews, the biggest bitterness in life is the tests and temptations that threaten to throw them off course in their service of Hashem.

It is known that a Jew once came to the Chozeh of Lublin and poured out all of his bitterness, all of his maror, before the Chozeh. He told the Chozeh, though, that he accepted all of his difficulties with love and with emunah, but that he had one problem which he could not accept, and on which he still had a קושיא, a question. He was constantly busy with his work and the distractions and impurities that he came in contact with because of his livelihood made it impossible for him to concentrate on his Torah and mitzvos. He begged the Chozeh to daven for him that the obstacles to his service of Hashem associated with his work should be removed. The Chozeh agreed and began to daven for him. When they saw each other again, the Chozeh told the man that after he davened for him, they answered him from heaven that they did not require high level Torah and prayer from him right now. What they require from him in heaven right now is that with all of his פיזור הנפש, all of his confusion and distractions, that he does whatever he is able to in his service of Hashem.

Even one’s נסיונות, challenges, in his service of G-d, are part of how Hashem gives him exactly what he needs. Rav Nachman, in the Gemara in Eruvin (65a) says about his personal service of G-d, “אנן פועלי דיממי אנן,” “I am a day laborer.” He had the perspective that his personal job in Yiddishkeit is not to concern himself with the “big” chunks of exalted service of G-d. Rather, he viewed each individual piece of his service of Hashem as important in and of itself. Every little

piece counts. Especially when it is difficult to eke out a little mitzva here and there, each one becomes even more precious. As it says in Pirkei Avos (5:19), “לפום צערא אגרא,” “according to the pain is the gain.” Hashem knows how to weigh every piece of service of G-d according to who the person is and where he or she comes from. Everything is measured according to the person’s מסירות נפש, the self sacrifice and exertion a person puts in to accomplish each and every mitzva that he can in his effort to be a good worker, a faithful servant. “אן פועלי דיממי אן,” we are day workers, collecting every little mitzva we can.

Part III - Mitzvos with Self-Sacrifice

Now we can understand why Hashem told us to bring the lamb for Pesach into our homes several days before we were to slaughter it. Hashem gave the mitzva of Pesach in order to allow us to merit redemption. It therefore would not have been sufficient for Him to tell us to acquire the lamb a few minutes before slaughtering it. Hashem knew that the mitzva had to come with מסירות נפש, self-sacrifice and maror. We had to feel the pressure from our Egyptian neighbors for a few days, upset that we were about to slaughter their god. We had to sweat. Only a mitzva that comes with sweat and tears, with maror and מסירות נפש can open the door of redemption, the door to Egypt, and the door to Eliyahu.

In our generation, more people are learning Torah than ever before, and people are observing mitzvos in a way that is more מהודר, more proper, than ever before. Torah is more widely available than ever before and people have more time for learning than they ever had before. Yet, we lack excitement and life in our Torah and mitzvos. We are not talking about people who are not observant or those who have gone “off the derech” of Yiddishkeit. Within our own frum communities, we do not feel invigorated by Torah and mitzvos. Why is this?

I once attended a levaya in a very frum neighborhood. I arrived with my father before it began and, because it was hot outside, we went upstairs to a small beis medresh to learn until the levaya began. As we were sitting there, I looked around at all of the people in the beis medresh and everyone was lethargic and seemed “down.” One man was sitting in his talis and tefillin, with his face propped up on his hand, munching on some cake, someone else was mumbling some davening as he periodically dozed off, and another person was sleeping with a sefer in front of him. When the levaya began to start outside, I told my father, “I don’t think we need to go to the levaya outside. There’s already a levaya going on in here!”

The Rebbe, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk in his sefer Noam Elimelech on Parshas Kedoshim (ד”ה (וכרמך) says that a person must sanctify his limbs and sinews with good deeds and must toil with practical mitzvos. We must use our bodies to build a Sukah, we must use our hands to grind flour for the matza. In previous generations, everything was hard. Mitzvos came with struggle, sweat, and toil. Just a few years ago, we would spend hours looking for a couple of kosher hadasim. The mitzvos required more work. This purified the body and made each mitzva very precious to the person.

Today, everything is easy for us. We have trucks delivering easy-lock Sukkas directly to our homes. Workers will build them for us as well. We buy instant oil snap-off Chanukah menorahs. We receive our hadasim for Sukkos in a vacuum-sealed plastic bags. In previous generations,

even the decorations for the Sukkah required a lot of work. My father told me how in Europe, they used to carefully fill small glass bottles with oils to hang up in the Sukkah. When we do not put in any exertion, effort, or *מסירות נפש*, self-sacrifice in a mitzva, we do not feel any gratification or excitement in doing the mitzva. It is the same thing with respect to Pesach. When our children see us toiling and working to clean and prepare everything for Pesach, there is an excitement when the Yuntif comes. For those people who just lock up their houses and drop into a hotel for Pesach, there is no pleasure and vitality in the mitzvos associated with the Yuntif. Working to prepare for a mitzva purifies the body and prepares it to feel the sweetness of Hashem's mitzvos.

The Gemara in Kiddushin (41a) “מצוה בו יותר משלוחו,” “it is better to do a mitzva one's self than through an agent.” Rashi there explains that this is because “דכי עסיק גופו במצות מקבל שכר” “because when one is engaged in doing mitzvos with his body, he receives more reward.”

The previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rebbe Rayatz, before becoming Rebbe, was the menahel, director, of the Lubavitch yeshiva. The administration of the yeshiva wanted to expel a certain boy from yeshiva who was not learning no matter what they tried. The Rayatz was unsure of what to do so he asked his father, the Rebbe Rashab. It was right before Pesach, and the Rebbe Rashab told him to put the boy in charge of cleaning the yeshiva for Pesach and coordinating the cooking of all of the yeshiva's food for Pesach. The Rebbe Rayatz did this and the boy completely turned around to become one of the yeshiva's finest students. After Pesach he asked his father how he knew that this would work. So he answered him that toiling in mitzvos purifies physicality. It lifts a Jew up.

According to this, we understand why Hashem told us to take a one-year-old lamb into the house four days before Pesach, with all of its messes, the obligation to feed it, and the derision and fear we endured from the Egyptians because of the mitzva. What an impression this must have made on their children! Imagine how the Jewish children saw their parents working and suffering the hatred of the Egyptians as we prepared to slaughter their gods for the sake of the mitzva. We now understand why the lamb had to be tied to the bed posts.

The Torah refers to one's descendants as his “bed.” As the pasuk (Bereishis 47:31) says “וַיִּשְׁתָּחוּ וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל עַל רֹאשׁ הַמֶּטֶה” “and Yisroel prostrated himself on the head of the bed,” which Rashi explains to mean “על שהיתה מטתו שלמה” that Yisroel bowed in order to give thanks for the fact that “his bed was whole,” i.e., he had no wicked children. Therefore, when Hashem told the Jewish people to take a lamb and tie it to the bed on Shabbos Hagadol, four days before Pesach, the intent was that the self-sacrifice of the mitzva should bind the mitzva to their children, to the future generations. Even the word for “posts,” “כרעי,” implies “children,” based on the Gemara in Eruvin (70b) which call's one's son “כרעיה דאבוח,” “the leg (“כרעיה”/bedpost) of the father.”

The *רשע*, the wicked son, understands that we must keep the mitzvos. But his question is “מה לכם, העבודה הזאת לכם,” “why is it that you do all of this work?” He doesn't understand why the family can't simply go to a hotel for Pesach. Why does it have to involve so much work and toil? He does not understand that while eating the matza and maror may only take a few minutes, the primary part of the mitzva, the sweat and toil of preparing for Pesach, purify the Jewish body. They give a person “shoes” to separate him from earthliness. The work and preparations are what

make Yiddishkeit sweet. That is the fundamental aspect of Judasim which the wicked son denies. When one lacks the sweat and sacrifice of the mitzvos, all that's left is the maror, the bitterness of Yiddishkeit and what a terrible precedent that sets for our children.

Part IV - Back to the Ten Pieces of Chometz

We can now return to the Rama's statement that one must place pieces of chometz in the house in order that the searcher should be able to find them during the search for the chometz. According to the Zohar Hakadosh (Teruma), Hashem created the evil inclination within a person to attempt to tempt him ("לפתות", which has the same root as pieces, "פתיתים"). The Zohar analogizes this to a king who wants to test whether his son truly loves him. He therefore hires someone to tempt his son to do something against his will. The king's intent in sending this person to tempt his son is that the son should not succumb to the difficult test. Rather, the purpose is to strengthen the love and the connection between him and his son. Therefore, when the son overcomes the test and does not allow himself to transgress his father's will by giving in when he is tested, this causes his father, the king, to rejoice immensely.

We can now understand the halacha that one is supposed to place the pieces of chometz (the "פתיתים," which can also mean "temptations," פתויים) somewhere where the person can easily find them. Hashem places all sorts of "chometz" in our lives, things that make it more difficult to learn Torah, to do mitzvos, and to maintain the holiness of our minds. The obstacles to our service of G-d are not coincidental. They were placed there "שימצאם הבודק," so that one who tries will be able to find them and get rid of them. Hashem is not trying to trick us or cause us to fail. He knows us and knows exactly what challenges we need in order to bring out our love for Hashem. Just like the children should not hide the chometz so well that the one who is searching should fail to find it, so too Hashem places chometz in our lives which we can overcome, but which challenges us and makes us work and toil to achieve whatever we accomplish in Yiddishkeit.

As we explained above, whenever the Arizal says that we should have ten of something, it means that this thing includes all ten sefiros, all of the different types of forces that exist in the world. By looking for the ten pieces of chometz in our lives and trying to rid ourselves of them, we strengthen and purify all ten aspects of nature which are derived from the ten sefiros (חב"ד. חגיית. נהי"ם). Therefore, the ten pieces of chometz (פתויים/פתיתים) must be placed where they will easily be found. The challenges Hashem gives us to make our accomplishments in Yiddishkeit sweeter because they come with hard work and despite obstacles are designed so that we will have the ability to overcome them. Hashem hides the chometz out in the open so that a serious Jew who searches the chambers of his own heart will find them, and will be able to drive them out of himself and destroy them just as he does with the chometz. Everything comes from Hashem, the great and loving king who places chometz in our lives so that we can overcome it and grow closer to Him.

In conclusion, I would like to share a poem based on Rebbe Nosson's Likutei Tefilos (II:30), which is quite fitting to what we have been learning:

Obstacles

You know, dear G-d, that so many obstacles
Seem to stand in my way
To keep me from You and from really living.

They appear on all sides
Like walls of iron,
Like flooding streams or rivers of fire.

And so I remain distant from You.

However, You have revealed That You are hiding there
In the barriers themselves.

My limited vision has held me back,
But my faith tells me
I can move forward.
That the obstacles are not real at all,
Since You are there within them.

So I come to You
For understanding
That the obstacles are only an illusion

That they will disappear
If I can be really strong
In my desire to come close to You.

Help me, dear G-d, have the strength
And courage to overcome the obstacles,
Whether they are created by others,
Or by my own impure desires,
My doubts and confusions.

Have mercy on me
So that my mind and heart
Are strong with true belief.

Then there is no such thing
As an obstacle that can keep me from You.

May it be Hashem's will that we find the chometz in our lives and destroy it and that the process of doing so should make Hashem's Torah and mitzvos even sweeter. Then all of the maror will become sweet and may we merit to return לשנה הבאה בירושלים, next year in Yerushalayim בגאולה שלמה ואמיתית במהרה בימינו אמן.