

בכל דור
ודור

In every
generation,

חייב
אדם

a person is
required,

לראות
את עצמו

to see
themselves,

כאילו

as if

הוא יצא
ממצרים

they personally
went out of
Egypt.

BECHOL

Leaving Mitzrayim Behind

1. TEACHING FREEDOM

Why is This Message Foundational?

One can easily wonder about the inclusion of this Pesach-themed *mishnah* in the Twelve *Pesukim*.

Of course, the *Torah* commands us to remember the Exodus of Egypt every day.¹ Furthermore, the *Haggadah* states that, “Had Hashem

1. *Devarim* 16:3. On a practical level, this obligation is fulfilled by the mention of *Yetzias*

not taken our forefathers out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would still be slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.”² Clearly, *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is meant to have a place in our minds, but what makes it so integral to the life of a Jewish child?

Each year, when Pesach comes around, we teach even the youngest children about *Bnei Yisrael's* enslavement and *geulah* while seeking to engage them in the Seder. Certainly, as a concept, *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is foundational, but what about this message is relevant to a child's everyday life?

Who Am I?

The explanation of *bechol's* relevance can be found in a prominent feature of the Rebbe's approach to children:

In our world before the *Geulah*, everything has within it both good and bad. Nothing is perfect, and goodness does not prevail without struggle. Within the person, there are also these two dynamics, the *yetzer tov*, the positive inclination, and the *yetzer hara*, the negative inclination.³ As explained in Kabbalah and *Chassidus*, these two voices within the Jew result from two unique souls, the *nefesh HaEloki*, the G-dly soul, and the *nefesh habahamis*, the animalistic soul.⁴

In the Rebbe's worldview, it is vitally important to teach children about the *yetzer hara* and its tactics. Children are not too young to be taught to recognize when an urge or desire is coming from the *yetzer hara's* bad advice and be empowered to overcome it.⁵ In fact,

Mitzrayim in the third section of *Shema*. See also 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, p. 73. Notably, this is also one of *Sheish Zechiros*, the daily Six Remembrances, which is published in *Siddurim*.

2. *Maggid*, in the section of *Avadim Hayinu*.

3. See *Bereishis* 8:21; *Berachos* 61a.

4. For the sources of this idea, see *Tanya* Ch. 1; *Eitz Chaim*, 42:1; *Likkutei Torah*, *Devarim*, 27a. The overlap between the *yetzer hara* and the *nefesh habahamis* is that the *yetzer hara* are the *middos*, or emotive capacities, of the *nefesh habehamis*. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5670, p. 160, and the preceding discussion there; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5698, pp. 261ff.

5. 5th day of Pesach 5748, *Toras Menachem* 5748, Vol. 3, p. 128. Importantly, Hashem would not allow the *yetzer hara* to bother Jewish children if not for this very purpose: Hashem wants even young children to demonstrate their innate wisdom in recognizing which urges and ideas come from the *yetzer hara* and display the determination to disregard them. If

this is a founding premise of *Tzivos Hashem*, that children are Hashem's soldiers whose mission is to win the battle against the *yetzer hara*.⁶

Importantly, despite speaking so often about the child's struggle with the *yetzer hara*, the Rebbe's tone was consistent in emphasizing to children their inner goodness. Never did the Rebbe describe the *yetzer hara* as being integral to the child's personal identity. Consistently, children are taught that their fight is to be waged against **the** *yetzer hara*, not **their** *yetzer hara*.⁷

Every child has within them the entire compound of a *nefesh HaElohis*, a *nefesh habahamis*, and a physical body. Nonetheless, the *yetzer hara* is to be viewed as though it is something outside of themselves - it's just not who "I" am. In the Rebbe's view, we can teach our children that as *Yidden*, one need not even **consider** the option of listening to the *yetzer hara*, because this is completely foreign to who we are.⁸

What is Behind this Approach

This perspective is quite revolutionary.

Common perception sees the *nefesh habahamis*'s tendencies and behaviors to be much more defining as to who the person is than their *neshamah*. Seemingly, the *yetzer hara* has a strategic upper hand, as its influence relates best to how the physical body and the person's "inner animal" wish to behave. Nevertheless, the Rebbe

this were not possible, then we would not have these improper urges in the first place. Ibid.

6. See for example 24 Kislev 5742, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 446; 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 28. See also 5th Day of Pesach 5746, *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 3, pp. 117, 120, regarding the formative influence this has on a child's lifelong *avodas Hashem*, as well as the inherent value which Hashem finds in their childish efforts.

7. See 7 Elul 5750, *Toras Menachem* 5750, Vol. 4, pp. 218-219.

8. See for example 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1782-1784.

Interestingly, this idea of dissociation from the *yetzer hara* is even more important for children than adults. As will be discussed more broadly in Vol. 2. of this series, the *neshamah* is only fully integrated within the person at their *bar* or *bas mitzvah*, while the *nefesh habahamis* and *yetzer hara* are fully present from birth. This apparent disadvantage is overcome by the child **overriding** the *yetzer hara* with the ultimate power of their *neshamah*'s core which is always whole, even in the early stages of a child's development. *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 3, pp. 1846-1848.

teaches that one need not be a perfect *tzaddik* to consider the *yetzer hara* as an **outside** opponent, rather than an **internal** influence.

The Rebbe explained that this is not because the *yetzer hara* is weak and not much of a threat, but because **Hashem took every Yid out of Mitzrayim.**⁹

For a Jew to be in the ancient land of *Mitzrayim* meant that they had no chance to live freely. Pharaoh was in charge, and with his wickedness, he saw to it that the Jewish People would become his slaves. He forced the *Yidden* to do his bidding rather than allowing them to serve Hashem. From this confining circumstance, Hashem redeemed our people, letting us free to be who we truly are.

This same message applies throughout all generations. Inside ourselves we have a *yetzer hara* who seeks to be just like Pharaoh.¹⁰ It wishes to make us be its soldiers and slaves who must follow its selfish and un-G-dly orders. Importantly though, this time we are not stuck in *Mitzrayim*. Hashem has already given us freedom - freedom to live as *Yidden* and serve Hashem with full conviction that we are doing what is right.

This explains why the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer hara* are not to be seen as having equal standing. The struggle caused by the *yetzer hara* is very real, but the child can be certain that any negative urges are not intrinsic to “me.” Hashem will always liberate me from my inner Pharaoh, and I’ll have the upper hand in winning this battle.¹¹

Daily Liberation

With this, we can readily understand why *Bechol dor vedor* is so prominently featured in the Twelve *Pesukim*.

Here the *mishnah* teaches us that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* has constant relevance to our *avodas Hashem*. Establishing our connection to the Torah and Hashem - in *Torah Tziva* and *Shema* - is very important. However, these messages cannot be properly applied if we feel

9. See for example 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 36.

10. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, p. 1780, where the Rebbe describes the *yetzer hara* as Pharaoh’s representative in our times.

11. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1780ff.; 10 Elul 5748, *Toras Menachem* 5748, Vol. 4, pp. 255ff.

trapped as “slaves” to the *yetzer hara*’s “*mitzrayim*.” To make it clear to the child who they truly are, we need to teach them that Hashem is always redeeming us from our inner *galus*. We are free to be our true selves.¹²

This is reflected in the Alter Rebbe’s words in *Tanya*, where this *mishnah* is quoted with some explanatory words:

“*Bechol dor vador vechol yom vayom*,” “In every generation **and every single day**,” “*chayav adam lir’os es atzmo*,” “a person is obligated to regard themselves,” “*ki’elul hu yatza hayom mi’Mitzrayim*,” “as if they had **that day** come out of Egypt.”¹³

As is clearly apparent, the Alter Rebbe is emphasizing that present-day *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not just for once in a while; rather, it is integral to daily life as a Jew in this world. With the *neshamah* being challenged by bodily interests and a *yetzer hara* who makes it seem that he is in charge, we need to constantly be mindful that Hashem is all-powerful and He is freeing us **today** so we can be our true selves and win our inner battle.¹⁴

Instant Change



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Importantly, the Torah teaches us that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* ultimately took place in the flash of an instant.

The *Bnei Yisrael* were in *Mitzrayim* for a really long time, two hundred and ten years. Generations were born into Pharaoh’s oppressive yoke of slavery, and at the time, their *galus* must have seemed endless. It was impossible to escape from Egypt’s heavily fortified borders, and our ancestors were trapped with no way out.¹⁵ Even as the Egyptians were being punished with the plagues, the *Yidden* were still unable to leave their land of affliction. Then, in a single day, at a single moment, our ancestors became free.

12. *Sichos Kodosh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 449–450; 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 34ff.; 10 Sivan 5742, *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 3, p. 1596.

13. *Tanya*, Ch. 47. See 1 Nissan 5740, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, p. 175; 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, p. 71.

14. 24 Elul 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 5, p. 2989.

15. *Mechilta* on *Shemos* 18:1.

In the words of Chazal: “When the time of *geulah* arrived, *lo ikvan HaMakom keheref ayin*, Hashem did not delay them even for a blink of an eye.”¹⁶

Similarly, children ought to know and internalize that Hashem’s personal redemption of their *neshamah* from the *yetzer hara* can happen in a single moment. It can happen right now.¹⁷

Life is such that our behavior follows certain patterns. By human nature, we are likely to act tomorrow as we did yesterday and today. On so many levels, what we do follows the habits we have established over time.¹⁸ Likewise, if we have already fallen into the habit of letting our *yetzer hara* rule a part of our lives, it can seem incredibly challenging to halt this cycle and regain control.

A child may wonder:¹⁹ “How can I possibly dedicate every minute to serving Hashem when I have so many ongoing interactions with all sorts of stuff?” “I am already involved with things that might be selfish or wrong, and it feels like change is going to be really hard?” Furthermore, “Everyone already knows me for my mischief; how can I break the trend?”

This is where the child leans into the message that becoming free need not take a long time. Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim* in just a single moment, and so too, we can be free from our *yetzer hara* and negative habits instantaneously. No matter how trapped we were feeling a minute earlier, Hashem is all-powerful and now is the perfect moment to get a fresh liberated start. “In the blink of an eye,” we can feel like new people and march out of our personal *mitzrayim* “*Beyad ramah*,”²⁰ filled with pride and conviction.²¹

16. *Mechilta* and *Rashi* on *Shemos* 12:41.

17. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 449-450. See also 6 Iyar 5742, *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 3, pp. 1412-1413, regarding the relevant lesson from *Tehillim* 38:23, which expresses the *Yid*’s plea: “*Chusha le’ezerai, Hashem Teshuasi*,” “Hasten to my aid, O Hashem, my salvation.”

18. 7 Elul 5750, *Toras Menachem* 5750, Vol. 4, p. 211; 4th Day of Sukkos 5750, *Toras Menachem* 5750, Vol. 1, p. 166.

19. See *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, p. 449; 6th day of Sukkos 5748, *Sichah* 3.

20. *Shemos* 14:8. “The *Bnei Yisrael* were marching out ‘with an upraised hand’ (i.e. triumphantly).”

21. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 449-450.

Making It Real



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On a practical level, to introduce such a positive perspective to children takes some effort.

The *yetzer hara* does not appear as a stranger trying to give us bad advice. It doesn't say, "Hi, I'm the *yetzer hara*, please listen to my negative suggestions." Instead, it claims to be our friend and says: "Why hold yourself back? Why should you go against my ideas, just try doing what I will tell you. I've got some really exciting stuff." Then the child thinks, "hey, I'm a smart kid, why don't I have some fun..."²²

The *yetzer hara's* sneaky scheme is to make the child think of themselves as **part of the problem**. The *yetzer hara* puts in all its effort so that the child should think that the two of them are on the same team.

As parents, we must surely not accept this false narrative, and instead, we must establish with full conviction that every Jewish child is entirely distinct from the *yetzer hara's* negativity. We must remember that every child truly wants to do what is right and is tasked to fight **the** *yetzer hara*, not **their** *yetzer hara*, as it were. To clarify, it's not that we seek to give negativity a free pass, but we simply **dis-associate** negative urges and temptations from **who the child really is**.

With this internal clarity, we can help kids break free from this negative self-perception and deliver a total "knock out" to the *yetzer hara*. Rather than thinking of the *yetzer hara* as part of their identity and being afraid to hurt themselves in the process, we ought to convey that we are *Yidden* through and through, and the *yetzer hara* is not a part of who we are.²³

In this vein, the Rebbe often spoke to children about completely vanquishing the *yetzer hara*.²⁴ Jewish children are intrinsically soldiers of Hashem's army and we have the ability to shed any other identity or self-perception. Although the challenges posed by the

22. 6th day of Sukkos 5748, *Sichah* 3; 7 Elul 5750, *Toras Menachem* 5750, Vol. 4, p. 218.

23. 6th day of Sukkos 5748, *Toras Menachem* 5748, Vol. 1, pp. 277-279.

24. This was a recurring theme in the Rebbe's talks to children. For an example in this context, see 16 Adar 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 2, pp. 1103-1104.

yetzer hara will persist until *Mashiach* arrives, from a child's perspective, we can consistently rise above the struggle, disconnecting completely from its negative influence.²⁵

Likewise, a poignant expression of this approach can be deduced from the wording of the *niggun* "Hey Tzama Tzama," taught by the Rebbe. There, a metaphor is used to describe the *yetzer hara*. He is portrayed as *durin Marko*, silly Mark,²⁶ who makes it to the trade fair but instead of buying and selling for profit, all he does is create pointless trouble.²⁷

Giving the *yetzer hara* a name and portraying it as outside influence rather than an internal voice establishes with clarity that the child is intrinsically pure and in no way is a Jewish child part of the *yetzer hara's* gang.²⁸

Just as a child has no doubt of the fact that we are no longer Pharaoh's slaves, the message of *Bechol* is that we are also not slaves of the *yetzer hara*. We have what it takes to succeed in serving Hashem as His soldiers and no one can hold us back.²⁹

25. For example, the Rebbe described to the children that when we burn the *chametz* on Erev Pesach, we also throw our spiritual *chametz*, the *yetzer hara*, into the fire. In the customary *tefillah*, we ask that just as we have destroyed our *chametz*, Hashem should also rid us from the *yetzer hara*. The Rebbe pointed out that surely Hashem fulfills our request, effectively neutralizing the *yetzer hara* from being a threat. This implies that from Pesach onwards, children should feel completely liberated from the *yetzer hara*.

However, this does not mean that from then on, a child should let their guard down and expect life to be without struggles. Rather, what remains of the *yetzer hara*, the Rebbe explained, is that Hashem gives us just enough struggle so that everyone can know how smart and strong Jewish children really are as they continuously discern the *yetzer hara's* strategies and consistently outsmart him. See 5th day of Pesach 5748, *Toras Menachem* 5748, Vol. 3, pp. 128-130; 4th Day of Pesach 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 3, p. 1487. See also 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 38;

26. In the original Russo-Ukrainian words of the *niggun*, Marko is used as a common generic name similar to John in English.

27. This *niggun* was taught by the Rebbe on Simchas Torah 5718. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 21, p. 113. See also *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 2, p. 614.

28. The notion of referring to the *yetzer hara* as a fool, thereby separating oneself from his influence is found in *Koheles* (4:13) where *Shlomo HaMelech* describes the *yetzer hara* as a "*melech zakein u'kesil*," "an old and foolish king." See also 24 Elul 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 5, p. 2987.

29. See for example 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1780-1784; 5th Day of Pesach 5746, *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 3, p. 121.

Takeaways

- Children should be taught about the *yetzer hara* so that they can properly distinguish between their two internal voices as soldiers of Hashem's army.
- The daily *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is to be liberated from the *yetzer hara*'s Pharaoh-like influence.
- It's proper that the *yetzer hara* be viewed as an outside force, completely distinct from who a Jew truly is.

2. LAYERS OF RELEVANCE

Pesach's Lasting Message

Along with this foundational message that every Jew has the innate ability to overcome the *yetzer hara*, *Bechol* also reminds children about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on a more general level.

Children are taught *Yetzias Mitzrayim*'s importance from a very young age. Each year, in the lead-up to Pesach, we teach kids all about the Yom Tov and the story of our enslavement and redemption.³⁰ At the Seder, they are the "first speakers,"³¹ asking the Four Questions they have learned and rehearsed. In fact, the entire order of the Seder with all its *mitzvos* and *minhagim* is all structured as a response to the children's questions.³²

From the effort invested, it is clear that the objective of this all is so that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* should be a **guiding principle** in a child's life. We do not wish them to forget the experience until next Pesach comes around. Rather, we aim to give it over in a manner which will carry **enduring** meaning and relevance.³³

30. See also 16 Adar 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 2, p. 1103, where the Rebbe encourages children to prepare for Pesach from Purim onwards by studying the relevant *halachos*, preparing the Four Questions, and encouraging other children to do the same.

31. 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 35, et al.

32. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1778-1779. As stated in the *pasuk* with regard to retelling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on the Seder night, "*Ki yish'alcha bincha*," "When your child will ask." *Devarim* 6:20. See *Pesachim* 116a; Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim*, 473:14, 40.

33. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 146-147; 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 37ff. See also 4th day of Pesach 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 3, pp. 1293f., where the

Children have a unique ability to relate to *geulah* and apply it in their young lives. Back in *Mitzrayim*, being raised in the darkest of times, children had the advantage of “*heim hikiruhu techilah*,” they were the first to recognize Hashem.³⁴ Similarly today, children approach Pesach with a unique joy and excitement that surpasses that of adults. Kids are the center of attention at the Seder, because, in truth, they are best equipped to take its messages to heart.³⁵

During Pesach and throughout the year, *Bechol* provides our children insight into their *geulah* connection, and allows them to express it in many real-life applications.³⁶

Shaping Our Identity

On a basic level, the reason that “In every generation we must see ourselves as if we personally left *Mitzrayim*” is because *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not just the story of our history; it’s the foundation of who we are. The birth of *Am Yisrael* is that Hashem redeemed us from being slaves in *Mitzrayim*.³⁷ This *geulah* was not only for our ancestors of old to leave slavery, but also to forever transform us into a free people – free to be who we truly are.³⁸

As the *Haggadah* itself sums up *Yetzias Mitzrayim*’s enduring relevance immediately following the passage of *Bechol*: “Therefore, it is our duty to thank Hashem for all these miracles which He did for our forefathers and **for us**. He took **us** from slavery to freedom... from deep darkness to great light, and from bondage to redemption.”³⁹

On a literal level, the ancient Egyptian “slavery,” “deep darkness,” and “bondage” are all long gone; that was our forefathers’

Rebbe learns from *Bechol* that the lessons from Pesach, the humility of *matzah* and so on are to be applied all year long.

34. *Sotah* 11b.

35. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, p. 1778.

36. See also *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, p. 147.

37. *Yechezkel* Ch. 16. See 4th Day of Pesach 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 3, pp. 1488.

38. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1778ff.; 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, pp. 71-74.

39. An abridgment of *Haggadah Shel Pesach*, *Maggid*, section of *Lefichach*.

experience. However, the “freedom,” “great light,” and “redemption” which they were granted still exists. We can still experience and appreciate these wonderful benefits granted by Hashem when taking our ancestors out from *Mitzrayim*.⁴⁰

Especially relevant to children, the first time the Jewish People are referred to as *Tzivos Hashem*, “Hashem’s army,” is upon *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.⁴¹ This means that the liberation granted to us in that first *geulah* is essential to our identity as Hashem’s soldiers. A slave to Pharaoh cannot simultaneously be a proper soldier for Hashem. It’s only when we leave *Mitzrayim* that we can truly belong to Hashem and be fully devoted to fulfilling His mission.⁴²

Pesach’s lessons are in fact tremendously important in a child’s daily life as our identity as soldiers of *Tzivos Hashem* is refreshed and renewed on a yearly basis. Our *avodas Hashem* is meant to keep growing. At this time each year, we gain greater degrees of freedom and “great light” so that we can serve Hashem as His devoted soldiers in the best manner possible.⁴³

Why Are We Different?

On Pesach night, the Jewish child begins the Four Questions with the words, “*Ma Nishtanah halaylah hazeh mikol haleilos*,” “Why is this night different than all other nights?”

For the average child, this opening question probes into something deeper than: “Is tonight a week night, or is it something else?” The child already knows its Pesach and they already know that this night has many special *mitzvos*.⁴⁴

40. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, *ibid*.

41. See *Shemos* 12:41.

42. 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 35.

43. *Ibid*.

44. On one occasion, the Rebbe explained that a child’s recitation of the Four Questions should ideally be delivered “**by heart**.” More than saying that they should be said from **memory**, this English expression alludes to the idea that a child’s Four Questions should also convey the personal question of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*’s current relevance which the child holds in their **heart**. 15 Nissan 5737, *Sichos Kodesh* 5737, Vol. 1, p. 784, to Rabbi Moshe Feller.

Rather, the child's question is likely more about **personal relevance**. To paraphrase the Haggadah's *ben chacham*, "the wise son,"⁴⁵ the child's question may be something like this: "I'll do the whole Seder because Hashem told us to, but what does this all really mean?" "Is there something that is different and impactful about tonight that will enrich the way I do a *mitzvah*, make a *berachah* on food, and behave as a soldier in *Tzivos Hashem*?"⁴⁶

In some form, the question that children ask at the Seder is not "Why is this night different?", but, "Why am **I different**?" "Why is the **Jewish People different than** all others?"⁴⁷

Each child is unique, and every child can ask this question of *Mah Nishtanah* with their own inflection and personal query. But essentially the question waiting to be answered on Seder night is, "Why are we always a *nishtanah*? Why, just why, aren't we ever the same as others? What is it that truly sets us apart from our neighbors?"

The parent's responsibility of "*Vehigadeta lebincha*,"⁴⁸ is to ensure that their child's question is properly answered through the retelling of the Haggadah and the *mitzvos* of the night.⁴⁹ A child should be able to move forward from Pesach with a sense of clarity and conviction in who we are and why we do the things we do. The message of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is meant to shape our identity as *Yidden* and as *Tzivos Hashem*.⁵⁰

45. *Haggadah Shel Pesach, Maggid*, section of *Chacham Mah Hu Omer*.

46. As discussed in the *Haggadah*, the Torah speaks of four children. The Rebbe asserted that most Jewish children fit into the category of a *ben chacham*, the wise child, making this probing question relevant to them. Furthermore, upon receiving a satisfying answer to their questions, kids should go on to share this wisdom with other children who are still at the stage of the other "three children." 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1778-1780.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 1779; 5th Day of Pesach 5748, *Toras Menachem* 5748, Vol. 3, p. 127.

48. *Shemos* 13:8.

49. Notably, the Rebbe would frequently ask parents in the days before Pesach if they had prepared the answers to the Four Questions.

50. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1778ff.; 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, pp. 34ff.

Notably, the subsequent Four Questions all relate to practical activities. The children ask "why do we do this?" and "why don't we do that?" This suggests that the inspiration drawn from Pesach should promote tangible applications in a child's daily behavior. 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, *ibid.*

The Answer Our Children Deserve

So, what exactly is the answer to the children's question of *Mah Nishtanah*? What is the message that our children are waiting to hear? Where can we find clear delivery of the impactful relevance of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?

In the Rebbe's talks to children, these ideas are all associated with the *mishnah* of *Bechol*. In just a few words, *Chazal* articulated that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is **relevant** in every generation - "*Bechol dor vador*;" it is **personal** - "*chayav adam lir'os es atzmo*;" and it is transformational - "*ke'ilu hu yatza mi'Mitzrayim*."

Bechol teaches about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on many levels, all of which are important for children to internalize:

- 1) It teaches us the relevance of the *Geulah* that happened in the **past** for our ancestors in Egypt.
- 2) It helps us recognize Hashem's liberation in the **current** moment.
- 3) It guides us in preparing for the **future** coming of *Mashiach*, the ultimate *Geulah*.

Bechol establishes that Hashem is not just our G-d, but also our *Goel*, our redeemer.⁵¹ As will be discussed in the coming sub-chapters, this special relationship applies "*bechol dor vador*," in every generation, and it has major importance then, now, and forever.

Takeaways

- *Bechol* provides opportunity to internalize the identity shift of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.
- The Pesach Seder and the Four Questions are built around this ideal.
- There are many layers of *geulah*, past, present, and future, and this important *mishnah* is about all three.

51. See for example 4th Day of Pesach 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 3, p. 1487.

3. A RELEVANT PAST

Forever Grateful

On a basic level, the remembrance of the fact that our people's story began with a harsh slavery and Hashem's miraculous liberation shapes a *Yid's* attitude in relating to Hashem. A *Yid* has so many reasons to love Hashem and devote themselves in serving Him,⁵² but *Yetzias Mitzrayim* adds something significant: It's not just that I **want** to serve Hashem; I actually **owe** it to Him.

A child can understand that Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim* with a purpose.⁵³ Every day that we live freely and not as slaves in *Mitzrayim* reminds us to fulfill our obligation towards Hashem, our liberator. As stated in *Bechol*, we must consider it as if **we ourselves** were liberated from *Mitzrayim*. We should never forget the wondrous kindness Hashem did for us and this will naturally foster a strong sense of commitment to Him.⁵⁴

Of course, by the time a child learns about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* they already know that as *Yidden* we are personally obligated to fulfill Hashem's commands. However, without internalizing the concept of Hashem being our redeemer, a child may think of their observance as being an expression of their **personal devotion** to Hashem. The everlasting relevance of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* as expressed in *Bechol* allows the child to recognize that serving Hashem is not just a personal choice; it's something **He can expect of us** because of what He has done for us.

Importantly, not only does Hashem "have the right" to ask us to do His *mitzvos* as a result of what He has done for us, but we can be happy about it too. After all, a debt of gratitude is not a burden but a joy.⁵⁵

On a related note, *Bechol* reminds us that we constantly have something to be happy about. *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not just something that our Bubbies and Zaidies of long ago were able

52. See above, *Shema Yisrael*, pp. 00ff.

53. See Rashi on Vayikra 11:45, 22:33.

54. See *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 4, pp. 2550-2551, 2559.

55. See *Sichos Kodosh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 146-147.

to celebrate. Rather, every day that we wake up in the morning and we are not slaves to Pharaoh in *Mitzrayim*, we can be happy and grateful for our freedom.⁵⁶

Permanent Freedom

On a deeper level, *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is an event that changed the status of *Am Yisrael* forever. Hashem took out “*me’avdus lecheirus*,” “from slavery to freedom,”⁵⁷ and made it that we can never become true slaves again. This was not a one-time-fix; it’s a gift of freedom that lasts forever.⁵⁸

Sometimes, a person can experience a positive change, but the improvement might only last a little while. For instance, a poor person may become rich, only to later lose their fortune and return to poverty. Likewise, a person may recover from an illness, only to later fall sick again with a different ailment.

One might make the mistake of thinking that *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is a similar kind of event. Perhaps, Hashem took us out of one slavery, but then in another *galus* we may find ourselves in the same predicament. This however is not the case. No later *galus* or personal situation of a *Yid* can be as restrictive as our ancestor’s slavery in *Mitzrayim*. No matter what we may be going through, we are always internally free.⁵⁹

A *Yid* is Never for Sale

To better elucidate to our children this idea of *Am Yisrael*’s everlasting internal freedom, we can explain that within the suffering of slavery there are really two dimensions:

56. 24 Elul 5745, *Sichah* 2. See also 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, pp. 71-72.

57. *Haggadah Shel Pesach*, *Maggid*, section of *Lefichach*.

58. Each year, we celebrate Pesach as *Zman Cheiruseinu*, “the Time of **our** Freedom,” indicating that the freedom gained during *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is still current and personal. Likewise, on Pesach we don’t just **talk** about freedom, but we also **eat it** in the form of *matzah* because we too are free. 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, p. 71.

59. *Maharal*, *Gevuros Hashem*, Ch. 61; 5th day of Pesach 5749, *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 3, p. 36; Lag B’Omer 5744, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 292.

- 1) The slave's activities: This relates to the practical tasks that a slave must perform for their master. Be it building *Pisom* and *Ramseis* with backbreaking labor, or picking tomatoes in the field, a slave has no choice but to fulfill their master's wishes.
- 2) The slave's identity: This element of slavery is a lot more personal. It's that the slave's entire person is the **property** of the master. The slave is robbed of their sense of self; it's as if they are not an independent person at all.

In *Mitzrayim*, both of these components were present. Being a slave to Pharaoh meant that *Yidden* were forced to fulfill his cruel orders, but that wasn't all. Pharaoh also made the *Yidden* themselves feel stuck as being his slaves. He made them feel helpless of ever being free.

However, once Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim* and established our status as belonging to Him as His servants, this changed forever. In *galus*, there may be situations where a *Yid* doesn't feel totally free in terms of **what they can do**, but we are always free in terms of **who we are**. After we left *Mitzrayim*'s ownership, no one can ever own our beings again. No matter what, we will always belong to Hashem, and His Torah and *mitzvos* are what we are about.⁶⁰

Throughout our history, we have had many oppressors, but none could ever make us forget that we are Hashem's people. This can be compared to the reality that once an item is purchased, no one else can buy it from the store. It has already been sold and is no longer available for purchase. Similarly, *Am Yisrael* was already "purchased" by Hashem during *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Matan Torah*, and He will never put us up for sale.⁶¹

In this sense, the message of *Bechol* is that we should always recognize our internal freedom. We should know that regardless of any life struggles we may be facing, our true identity is deeper than it all. We belong to Hashem, and no one can rob us of who we are inside.

60. See *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 3, p. 162.

61. See *Rashi* on *Vayikra* 25:42. See also 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, pp. 73-74.

Our *neshamah* is stronger than any opposition and we will surely win the battle against the *yetzer hara* and overcome any other struggle.⁶²

Takeaways

- The constant reminder of our ancestors' liberation makes us feel grateful to Hashem and boosts our devotion to serving Him properly.
- Even today, we still directly benefit from that first *geulah* as it prevents us from ever becoming slaves again.
- We are forever free because we intrinsically belong to Hashem, and nothing can ever revoke our bond.

4. A TRANSFORMATIVE PRESENT

A Yid has No Restrictions

Beyond the enduring relevance of *Am Yisrael's geulah* from the actual land of *Mitzrayim* thousands of years ago, *Bechol* also has a more current application.

As discussed above, *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is an ongoing process. Children can be taught that the Hebrew word "*Mitzrayim*" is rooted in the word "*meitzar*," meaning confinement and limitation.⁶³ Any force or circumstance that holds a *Yid* back from doing what is right and feeling properly connected to Hashem, His Torah and other *Yidden* is all a *mitzrayim*. Not only is the *yetzer hara* like a Pharaoh who wishes to make us his slaves, but really any limitation in serving Hashem is a *mitzrayim* as well.⁶⁴

Earlier, we discussed how the constant act of Hashem taking us out of *Mitzrayim* helps us to detach ourselves from the *yetzer hara*.⁶⁵

62. See above, fn. 60. In the famous words of the Rebbeim, "Only our bodies were placed into *Galus*, but not our souls." See *Sichos Kodesh* 5737, Vol. 2, pp. 198ff., where it is applied in context of the enduring freedom from *Mitzrayim* and in relation to children's education.

63. See for example *Torah Ohr*, 57b ff., 64a-b, 71c, et al.

64. 4th day of Pesach 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 3, p. 1293.

65. Above, p. 00.

However, even once this is accomplished, there are still forces outside of ourselves over which we have very little control.

Sometimes, there are concerns of physical and emotional well-being, financial issues, and family circumstances which don't seem to allow us to live as we should.⁶⁶

Often, we are also surrounded by neighbors and others who don't understand the special role of a Jewish child. They wonder why a *Yiddishe* girl should dress with full *tznius*, or why a *Yiddishe* boy should always wear his *tzitzis*.⁶⁷ Sometimes, our environment seeks to interrupt us from doing what is right and we may feel pressured by society to cut corners and compromise in some details of Torah and *mitzvos*, *chas veshalom*.⁶⁸

Due to the darkness of *galus*, there are times that our enemies even threaten to hurt *Am Yisrael*. They devise evil plans and attempt to scare us with all sorts of threats and hateful messages.⁶⁹

The message of *Bechol* is that Hashem will always redeem us from any *mitzrayim*, ancient or modern day. Hashem will always protect us and care for us, just as He did when He took us out of the first *Mitzrayim*.⁷⁰ If we face any hardship or challenge, we can rise above it completely. We can feel optimistic and happy, knowing with confidence that Hashem will help us overcome the challenge and live truly free.⁷¹

66. 4th day of Pesach 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, *ibid*.

67. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, p. 1779. Notably, the Rebbe mentions there that the concept of *tznius* is meant to apply to non-Jewish children as well, albeit not necessarily to the same extent as Jewish children.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 1779-1780.

69. 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, pp. 72f.

70. *Ibid*. See there, where the Rebbe connects this to Hashem's promise that he will always save us from the hand of our enemies as we declare by the Seder in *Ve'hi She'amdah*.

See also 4th day of Sukkos 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 1, pp. 203-204, where the Rebbe derives from *Bechol* that the special protection Hashem offered His newly established *Tzivos Hashem*, the Jewish People, while they traveled in the desert after leaving *Mitzrayim* continues to shield every Jew for all time.

71. See 24 Elul 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 5, p. 2989-2890.

As was discussed above, this personal *geulah* can happen very quickly, in fact, “in the blink of an eye.”⁷² In one moment, a child can feel isolated and unmotivated, and then by just remembering the power of Hashem’s current *Yetzias Mitzrayim* they can be completely liberated and invigorated.

For example, a child may find themselves thinking: “Should I really be trying to be so consistent in serving Hashem? When I look around me, I see that not all the adults are so perfect? Maybe I should settle for something less?”

But through simply remembering *Bechol*, the child can realize that none of us need to be stuck in what was good enough until now. For two hundred and ten years, our ancestors were stuck in *Mitzrayim*, then in a flash they became free to serve Hashem. So too, whatever constraints and excuses we had until now can be left behind us and all of us, children and adults, better role models and less than stellar role models, can all begin a new and liberated start right now.⁷³

Achieving Freedom

When trying to actually internalize *Bechol*’s message of current liberation some basic questions are bound to come up. One may wonder: “Is there something I should do different?” “If Hashem is helping me and taking me out of my personal *mitzrayim*, how do I make the most of it?” “What should I change in my daily life to be truly free?”

In the Rebbe’s talks to children, several approaches are provided:

A Show of Force: To redeem the *Bnei Yisrael* from *Mitzrayim*, Hashem demonstrated tremendous strength which overwhelmed the Egyptians until they begged the *Yidden* to leave. Similarly, when we wish to break free from our personal Pharaoh, we must do so with “*milchamah u’veiyad chazakah*,” “a war and a strong hand.”⁷⁴

72. Above, p. 63.

73. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 449-450.

74. *Devarim* 4:34, quoted in *Haggadah Shel Pesach*, *Maggid*, section of *U’Veyad Chazakah*.

We should exert effort and confidence in fulfilling *mitzvos* without giving any regard to the *yetzer hara*'s distractions. Moreover, in an expression of *ahavas Yisrael*, we should also help other children perform *mitzvos* and feel confident about being a *Yid*, despite being different from others around them. In this manner, we can be sure that victory will be achieved and the *yetzer hara* will "drown in the *Yam Suf*," just like Pharaoh's army.⁷⁵

Humble Confidence: *Matzah* is a symbol of our *geulah* while also representing humility. Unlike *chametz* which puffs up with air and represents *gaavah*, haughtiness, the *matzah* is flat and low. This teaches us that the way to properly leave our inner *mitzrayim* is to know that it's not our own ability and power that makes us overcome our obstacles, but Hashem's strength. He is the strongest of all and only when we place our trust in Him are we able to stand up tall and defeat the *yetzer hara*.⁷⁶

Winning with Joy: The *yetzer hara* is bound to give up when he feels like he doesn't stand a chance. What intimidates the *yetzer hara* most is when he realizes that Jewish children are not just doing what they should, but that their *avodas Hashem* is filled with excitement and joy. Seeing their enthusiasm, the *yetzer hara* knows that nothing can be done to stop them, and he simply avoids confrontation.⁷⁷

Connect with Torah and Mitzvos: True freedom is not empty or frivolous. In *Lashon HaKodesh*, the word *Cheirus*, freedom, is similar to *charus*, engraved, referring to the carved letters of the *Aseres HaDibros* on the *Luchos*.⁷⁸ This teaches us that the way to truly experience the freedom of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is to "engrave" the Torah and *mitzvos* into our hearts to the point that we and our *Yiddishkeit* should be indivisible.⁷⁹

75. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, p. 1779. See also 24 Elul 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 5, pp. 2989-2990.

76. 4th day of Pesach 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 3, pp. 1293-1294. See also 5th Day of Pesach 5746, *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 3, pp. 116-118, regarding increasing in *emunah*, which is also symbolism of the *matzah*. As explained there, this serves as a proper positive (*aseh tov*) counterpart to the (*sur mei'ra*) eradication of the *yetzer hara*'s *chametz*.

77. 10 Sivan 5742, *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 3, p. 1597.

78. *Pirkei Avos*, 6:2.

79. See 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 3, p. 73; Lag B'Omer 5744, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 292.

Notably, this message of freedom is particularly relevant to children. Even in the best of circumstances, adults have many considerable responsibilities and obligations. Between making a living, providing children with their needs, and keeping house, parents always have a lot going on. Children though have all their needs provided for and can feel the sense of freedom to invest all their effort into learning more Torah and doing *mitzvos* in the best way possible.⁸⁰

An Invincible Nation

As we discussed above, a significant element of the *Twelve Pesukim* is the spiritual power which they hold to weaken, suppress, and even transform *Am Yisrael's* enemies.⁸¹

As is stated in *Tehillim*, “*Mipi olelim veyonkim yasadeta oz ... lehashbis oyeiv umesnakeim*,” “Out of the mouths of infants and babies You have established strength ... to put an end to enemy and avenger.”⁸²

While, to a great degree, all Torah study of children has this power, the Rebbe explained how these specific Torah passages are especially effective. Each of the *Twelve Pesukim* and Sayings of *Chazal* make the case for the uniqueness of the Jewish People and clarifies our G-dly mission in this world. When our enemies’ spiritual source perceive these messages being studied and recited by children, it weakens their strength and leads to the disruption of harmful plots against *Am Yisrael*.

With regard to *Bechol*, the relevance to “*lehashbis oyeiv umesnakeim*” is obvious. In its day, Pharaoh’s Egypt was the world superpower and they had managed to oppress *Bnei Yisrael* in the harshest ways, but this did not last. Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim* with great wonders and tremendous force. As *Bechol* declares, this was just the beginning. From then on, *Am Yisrael* are promised miraculous deliverance and eternal endurance. This makes our adversaries’

80. 4th day of Pesach 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, *ibid.*, p. 72.

81. Introduction, p. 000.

82. *Tehillim* 8:3.

spiritual power realize that any plan to harm the Jewish People is bound to fail and completely pointless.

In this light, when we teach children this *mishnah*, we are not only illuminating their own lives with a personal *geulah*. Rather, we are also activating a force of spiritual protection for all of *Am Yisrael*.⁸³

Takeaways

- Hashem's protection and help which He provided during *Yetzias Mitzrayim* applies to our times as well.
- We can increase in our avodah and experience a personal *geulah* without any delay.
- The power of *Bechol* is that it activates this special liberation in the present as well bringing actual protection and blessing for *Am Yisrael*.

5. AN IMMINENT FUTURE

Awaiting *Geulah*

Ultimately, the goal of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was not to give *Yidden* partial freedom in a turbulent world. Rather, its true intent is that *Am Yisrael* should be completely redeemed so that we can serve Hashem without any *galus* whatsoever. To be a *Yid* in *galus* but relatively free from the *yetzer hara* is not enough. Even if the people around us do not make it hard for us to serve Hashem, we are still not truly free. Hashem's promise of *Geulah* is meant to happen in the most literal sense with the true and complete *Geulah* through *Mashiach tzidkeinu*.⁸⁴

For a person born in *Galus*, the talk of an imminent *Geulah* may seem far off.

One may wonder, "How can I truly prepare for *Mashiach's* arrival when I'm still stuck in *Galus*?"⁸⁵

83. *Sichos Kodosh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 449-451.

84. In a sense, all matters related to the current *galus* are continuations of the first *galus* in *Mitzrayim*. 20 Shevat 5741, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 312, and fn. 32.

85. 10 Sivan 5742, *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 3, p. 1596.

Conversely, some may ask, “How can I possibly achieve freedom from the *yetzer hara* when *Mashiach* is yet to arrive? Maybe I need his help to change.”⁸⁶

Others may ask even further, “How can I feel that the *Geulah* is coming soon when it feels so unrealistic? *Galus* is the only thing I know.”

All these questions are answered by the *mishnah* of *Bechol*. Hashem already took us out of a bitter *galus* in *Mitzrayim*. Hashem is our Redeemer, then, now, and always. We can trust Him that He will bring the *Geulah* just as He promised us.⁸⁷ *Geulah* applies “*Bechol dor vador*,” and freedom begets freedom. The more free we become from our personal *galus*, the more ready we become for *Mashiach*’s global *Geulah*.⁸⁸

Furthermore, when we work to redeem our *neshamah* from its troubles with the *yetzer hara*, Hashem rushes to help us out. It’s our efforts themselves which speed up the complete *Geulah*, when Hashem will take both our bodies and our *neshamos* out of all *Galus* with *Mashiach* now!⁸⁹

Similar Preparations

There is a lot that we can do to actively prepare for *Mashiach*. In fact, a founding principle of *Tzivos Hashem* is that children’s current mission is to achieve total victory over the *yetzer hara* by bringing *Mashiach* now.⁹⁰

Importantly, there is a relevant message to be gained from *Bechol* which teaches us how to properly prepare for *Mashiach*’s arrival:⁹¹

Beyond instructing us to always see *Yetzias Mitzrayim* as something current, the *mishnah* tells us to **think of ourselves** as if we are leaving *Mitzrayim*. In a literal sense, this means that it is proper to take

86. 4th Day of Pesach 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 3, pp. 1490-1492.

87. 10 Sivan 5742, *Toras Menachem* 5742, *ibid*.

88. 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, p. 1781.

89. 4th Day of Pesach 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, *ibid*.

90. See below, *We Want Mashiach Now*, p. 000.

91. The following is culled from 1 Nissan 5740, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, pp. 175ff.

some time and **imagine ourselves in those times**. “In every generation,” we can be better equipped to leave our **current** constraints when we think about how *Am Yisrael* conducted themselves during the **original Yetzias Mitzrayim**.

In this light, there are important lessons to be learned from the time when our ancestors were getting ready to leave *Mitzrayim* which apply to our times. Among them are the following:

Following Hashem’s Instructions: Due to the burdens of slavery, keeping *mitzvos* properly was not something that the *Bnei Yisrael* in *Mitzrayim* were very accustomed to. Nevertheless, when Moshe and Aharon informed the *Yidden* of the *mitzvos* that Hashem had instructed, they immediately went about putting them into practice. This teaches us that as we get ready to leave *Galus* we should make sure to do Hashem’s *mitzvos* in the best way possible.

Mobilizing the Children: As was mentioned above, the children in *Mitzrayim* had the advantage of being the first to recognize Hashem.⁹² In our times, this informs us to prepare for the ultimate *Geulah* by bolstering children’s connection to Hashem.

Prepare to Build Hashem’s Home: One detail of what Jewish children were involved with before *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was the preparation of supplies for the *Mishkan* that would be built in the desert. There was a tradition from *Yaakov Avinu* that at some point they would be given the *mitzvah* to build a home for Hashem.⁹³ Although children were technically exempt from this *mitzvah* they took part nonetheless. This applies in our times, that children should be encouraged to make their personal bedrooms into a mini *Mikdash* for Hashem.

Takeaways

- *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is not over; in a sense it’s just begun.
- Our personal *geulah* efforts can transform our time into the moment of actual global redemption.
- In our times, we should learn lessons from the first *geulah* generation as they apply now as well.

92. “*Heim hikiruhu techilah.*” *Sotah* 11b.

93. See *Rashi* on *Shemos* 26:15.

A P P L I C A T I O N S

- **Teach children to see others for who they truly are:**

At times, the way we change our own self-perception is by looking differently at others as well. To best internalize our personal freedom from the *yetzer hara*, it is helpful to also teach others to do the same. Kids can be taught to look past other children's exterior and instead help them feel their *neshamah's* inner freedom which is waiting to be uncovered.¹

- **Emphasize Jewish lifestyle in dress, behavior, and values:**

In day to day life, there is the constant pressure to conform with the secular society around us. The lessons of *Bechol* are a powerful source of conviction and joy in living like a *Yid* and being proud to be different than all other nations.²

- **Utilize the season of Pesach to convey formative lessons of *Geulah*:**

From Rosh Chodesh Nissan and on is the yearly season of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This is a time that children are most ready to learn about the present-day relevance of *Bechol*. Not only the Seder and the Four Questions can be illuminated with personal relevance, but even things like Pesach cleaning can be recognized as *geulah'dik* as well.³

1. See 4th Day of Pesach 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 3, pp. 1779-1780.

2. 24 Elul 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 5, pp. 2989-2990

3. 1 Nissan 5740, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, pp. 175ff., et al.

P L A Y A C T S

**A PHARAOH IN OUR TIMES?**

Mommy is in the car with the kids on the way to school. As they often do, they are utilizing the morning drive to say the Twelve Pesukim with Mommy sharing an occasional insight. Several weeks later, the effects of this lesson on Bechol are noticed with five-year-old Malkie following her father's instructions on table manners.

The children are taking turns leading their siblings in the Pesukim when their mother interjects after Bechol.

MOMMY: *Kinderlach*, does anyone know why we are talking about *Mitzrayim* when we are still months away from Pesach?

The question is met mostly with silence.

CHAIM (aged 7): Well sometimes we say the *Pesukim* closer to Pesach too...

MOMMY: I hear you, Chaim. In fact, your birthday is right after Pesach, and we always say the *Pesukim* then... But *kinderlach*, did you know that *Bechol* actually tells us to always think as if we are going out of *Mitzrayim* now?

MALKIE: Out of *Mitzrayim*? I never was in *Mitzrayim*!

MOMMY: Good point. Were you ever in a place that feels like *Mitzrayim*?

CHAIM (joking around): I don't think so. I never went anywhere where people were wearing big Pharaoh hats...

MOMMY: Well, here's the thing: Pharaohs aren't just kings with funny hats. The *yetzer hara* tries to be like Pharaoh and make everyone listen to him. He wants us to be his slaves...

MOMMY (continues): Sometimes, the *yetzer hara* tries to trick *kinderlach* and makes them feel like there is no way out, just like in *Mitzrayim*. So that's why *Bechol* reminds us that we don't have to listen to the *yetzer hara* even when he acts like a Pharaoh. That's called going out of a "*yetzer hara mitzrayim*." We can always remember that we are Hashem's soldiers, not Pharaoh's soldiers...

One night at supper, several weeks later...

Malkie is rather unsettled and starts testing the boundaries by putting her feet on the table.

TATTY: We put our feet on the floor.

Malkie ignores her father's words and stretches her feet further, towards her brother's plate.

CHAIM: Stop it, Malkie! Put your feet down.

TATTY (more directed at Chaim's frustration than Malkie's defiance):
I think Malkie needs help remembering that she is a proud soldier in *Tzivos Hashem* and not a slave to a Pharaoh...

Malike's feet go down immediately.

MOMMY: Good job, Malkie! I see that you listened to Tatty as soon as you remembered that you're really Hashem's soldier.



THE CHILD IS NOT THE YETZER HARA

Four-year-old Tzvi was with his father on the playground when an older boy, Yossi (aged 7), snatched his favorite toy. After Tzvi's father applied some lessons from Bechol Dor, both boys were able to leave the altercation happy.

TZVI (rushing tearfully to his father): Taaatty! Yossi took my screwdriver... and he is not giving it back!

TATTY: Oy vey. That toy screwdriver is your favorite and I'm **sure** you want it back. I'll come to help you. Where did Yossi go?

TZVI (pointing, still very flustered): There, Tatty! He's there on his bike. He just grabbed it from me and said it's his turn...

TATTY (holding Tzvi's hand while rushing over to Yossi): No need to worry, Tzvi, I'll help you. Yossi will give it right back to you; you'll see.

As they approach, the father slows their pace.

TZVI'S TATTY (calmly): Hello, Yossi. I see you **really** like this toy screwdriver.

YOSSI (age 7): Yeah.

Yossi looks to the ground.

TZVI'S TATTY: Yeah, it's a really nice screwdriver.

Yossi is quiet, waiting for the authoritative demand to return the toy.

TZVI'S TATTY: Yossi, can you think of a *mitzvah* that **you can do** with this screwdriver?

Yossi is surprised by the lack of confrontation. Gradually, his eyes lift from the ground as they fill with curiosity.

YOSSI: Give it back?

TZVI'S TATTY: Wow, that does sound like a big *mitzvah*. Do you think such a special *mitzvah* will make Hashem happy?

YOSSI: Um... yeah.

TZVI'S TATTY: And are you a soldier in Hashem's army who loves to make Hashem happy?

Yossi's face brightens as he reaches for the coveted toy in his pocket.

YOSSI: Uh huh.

Yossi nods proudly as he gently hands the screwdriver to Tzvi.

TZVI'S TATTY: And are you happy, Yossi, that you made Hashem happy?

Yossi smiles broadly as he speeds off on his bike, and the relieved Tzvi goes back to play.

On the way home...

TATTY: You know something, Tzvi? Today on the playground, I think we learned an important lesson.

TATTY: When you called me over to help you with the screwdriver, I thought for a second that maybe Yossi really wanted to act not

nicely and that he really wanted to take away your toy. Then, I remembered about the Twelve *Pesukim* and all about *Bechol*.

Tzvi's curiosity is ignited and he is listening intently.

TATTY: Before we went out of *Mitzrayim*, were we slaves to Pharaoh?

TZVI: Yeah. Moshe told Pharaoh to let the *Yidden* go, but Pharaoh said, "No, no, no, I will not let them go!"

TATTY: Exactly, Tzvi. Well, did you know that the *yetzer hara* tries to be just like Pharaoh? He says listen to me and not to Hashem. He says, "No, no, no, don't do a *mitzvah*," "No, no, no, don't behave with *ahavas Yisrael*"...

TZVI (self-righteously nods): Yeah, I don't listen to the *yetzer hara*.

TATTY: I hear that. You really don't, because you are Hashem's soldier, not the *yetzer hara* or Pharaoh's soldier. And that's exactly what happened with Yossi. The minute we reminded him about a *mitzvah* and what makes Hashem happy, he did it right away!

Tzvi nods with appreciation clutching his precious toy screwdriver.