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**A complete set of selected maamarim from Torah Or and Likkutei Torah has been substantially completed, Boruch Hashem. Most of these can be viewed, in draft form, at [LikuteiTorah.com](http://LikuteiTorah.com).**

**Words of the Living G-d, vol. 1, containing maamarim from Sefer Bereishis, was published several years ago by Purity Press. Vol. 3, on Sefer Vayikra, will be published b'ezras Hashem after Pesach. This requires substantial funds, and contributions are sought for this purpose.**

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BS"D

# The Meaning of Matza



Including profound explanations of the passages in the Haggadah in which it is mentioned



*An adaptation of the discourse  
LeHavin Mah SheKasuv BaHaggadah,  
"Matzah Zu SheAnu Ochlim..."  
found in Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's  
Likkutei Torah*

BS"D

## **FOREWORD TO THE 2005 EDITION**

With humility and gratitude to the Al-mighty, I am pleased to offer the public this English adaptation of the *ma'amar* (discourse in Chassidic philosophy), *L'havin Ma Shekasuv B'hagadah*, "*Matzah Zu She'anu Ochlim...*", which appears in the original in *Likutei Torah*, *Vayikra*, beginning at p. 11b.

The present adaptation is one of a set of selected *ma'amarim* from *Torah Or* and *Likutei Torah* by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, of blessed memory (known as the *Alter Rebbe*), which *Hashem* has graciously enabled me to complete. These are now being readied for publication, with G-d's help.

Chassidic tradition considers *Torah Or* and *Likutei Torah* the "Oral Torah" of Chassidus, for they expand and elaborate the principles of Jewish mysticism set forth by the *Alter Rebbe* in more concise form in his masterwork, *Tanya*—the "Written Torah" of Chassidus.

A unique and important—indeed, historic—aspect of these adaptations is that they are, in a very real sense, a "primary source": explanation and background material is very liberally included within the text, to be sure, but the work remains, essentially, representative *ma'amarim* from *Torah Or* and *Likutei Torah* rendered into English for the first time anywhere.

This is therefore a work for the serious student—in the sense that any philosophical work is for "serious" readers—but it does not require any background at all in either Chassidic philosophy or even Jewish knowledge. I have attempted to convey the *Alter Rebbe's* original teachings to even the utterly uninitiated, provided they 1) understand English and 2) are willing to think about what they are reading.

Needless to say, mistakes are inevitable in human undertaking, and I take full responsibility for any found within. I would very much appreciate if they would be brought to my attention at [puritypress@gmail.com](mailto:puritypress@gmail.com).

I dedicate this booklet to my wife Leah, to my parents, and to my children, and with prayerful best wishes on the occasion of the upcoming marriage, in a good and auspicious time, of my son Avremil to our future daughter-in-law Devorah Leah. Our sages teach that "our forefathers were redeemed [from the Egyptian bondage] in [the Hebrew month of] Nissan, and in Nissan we are destined to be redeemed [from this final exile by the Messiah]. In our days as well, the Lubavitcher Rebbe has prophesied the imminent arrival of the Messiah. May this come true immediately, and may we all celebrate together the upcoming holiday of Passover, the festival of our freedom, from within the context of the immediate redemption by *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.

Yitzchok Dovid Wagshul  
(Yitzchok Dovid ben R. Menachem Mendel)  
Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY  
*Ta'anis B'chorim (mukdam)* 5765 / April 21, 2005

## **ADDITIONAL NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION**

As many readers will know, since the last publication of this booklet two beautifully produced volumes of *maamarim* in this series have been published, and are available in stores worldwide. They are *Beyond All Reason*—containing the Purim *maamar Chayav Inash Livsumei* from *Torah Or*—and *Words of the Living G-d, vol. 1*—containing 12 *maamarim* from *Torah Or* on *Sefer Bereishis*. Now, *b'ezras Hashem*, another volume stands ready for press: the long-awaited *Words of the Living G-d, vol. 3*—containing 10 *maamarim* from *Likkutei Torah* on *Sefer Vayikra*.

One might wonder, since drafts of virtually all these *maamarim* have been posted on *LikuteiTorah.com* since 2002, why is it taking so long to publish them? The answer is simple: it costs money! But the solution is simple, too: it is **you**. Please do not think that someone else will donate, because experience has shown that (with notable exceptions, may Hashem bless them) they won't. Therefore, I appeal to you: if you agree that it is worthwhile to publish *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah* adapted into English, please come forward and claim your share in this unique *zechus* by emailing [puritypress@gmail.com](mailto:puritypress@gmail.com), or by contacting me personally. You can still participate in the *Vayikra* volume. May the merit of the Alter Rebbe stand you and your family in good stead forever.

Best wishes for a kosher and joyous Pesach to all.

--Yitzchok Dovid Wagshul  
Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY  
7 Nissan, 5771

## 8

*"A Time When Matza and Maror Are Before You":  
Advantage of Mitzva Performance in this World*



FINALLY, IT should be noted that the lofty revelations we have been discussing are only available within this physical world, where it is possible to perform mitzvos. This, too, is alluded to by the Haggadah's wording. The full expression quoted earlier is "[the phrase] 'for the sake of this' [indicates] a time when matza and maror [are present]." Maror, bitter herbs, symbolize sincere repentance, in which the penitent feels bitter over his or her sins. One is not stuck in the low depths to which one's transgressions have brought one; instead, one can rise to a higher level through *t'shuvah*, repentance. This can only be accomplished in this world, but once one has entered the next world, the opportunity for repentance and spiritual change is over. Likewise, matza symbolizes, as we have said, protection from contamination by the forces of unholiness. In the next world, however, there will be no unholiness; alternatively, even what non-exclusively-holy things may exist will nevertheless be spiritually purified, so that, even if they are not positively holy, they will certainly not impede holiness anymore. Thus, we must take full advantage of the opportunity presented during this time "when matza and maror [are present]."



referred to as *mochin d'abba*, “the intellectual faculties [literally, the brains] of *abba*”; it is, in fact, directed exclusively at the “sons” – the Jews.

....)

*T'zav/Pesach*

***L'havin Ma Shekasuv B'hagadah,  
"Matzah Zo She'anu Ochlin..."***

*An adaptation of the  
ma'amar found in Likutei Torah*



**1**

*Matza: Mitzva or Happenstance?*



A PASSAGE IN the Passover Haggadah (the text read at the Passover Seder, in which we recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt) explains the reason we eat Matzah as follows: “This matzah that we are eating is on account of what? On account of [the fact that] our forefathers’ dough did not have a chance to rise before ‘the King of the kings of kings’ [i.e.,] the Holy One, blessed is He, was revealed to them and redeemed them, as it is stated (Exodus 12:39), ‘And they baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for it was not leavened; because they were driven out of Egypt and they could not delay, nor had they made [any other] provision for themselves.’”

This passage implies that had they not been expelled from Egypt – had their dough only had time to rise – they would have

eaten *chometz* (leavened bread and similar items, which, unlike matzah, have risen). Yet this seems inconsistent with another part of the Biblical account (Exodus 12:8), which relates that, while still in Egypt, the Jews were commanded to sacrifice a lamb and eat it together with matzah and bitter herbs. In other words, the Jews had been expressly commanded to eat matzah even before they left Egypt; how, then, are we to understand the verse which attributes the eating of the matzah to the mere happenstance of their leaving in such a rush? Furthermore, not only does this apparent inconsistency exist with respect to the historical exodus from Egypt, but we also find it with respect to the Biblically-mandated practice of Jews from that time forward to commemorate the exodus from year to year. In instructing us to do so, the Torah says (Exodus 12:19), "[For] seven days, leaven shall not be found [in your possession ... instead,] in all your dwellings you shall eat matzohs." The context makes clear that the purpose of this command is to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. Yet during the actual Exodus, the prohibition against leaven only applied for one day, not seven (*Pesachim* 96b).

The explanation, however, as the commentator *Mizrachi* writes, is that indeed, since Passover in Egypt was only one day, the Jews of the Exodus had no reason to eat matzah after leaving, other than that their dough had not risen. In subsequent years, however, to commemorate the entire episode – including the fact that they ended up eating matzah for a longer period – we eat it for the duration of the holiday.

Nevertheless, there is still a great deal to be said about the significance of matzah, and to understand some of this, we must first examine a fundamental distinction between *Yom Tov* (the major Jewish holidays) and Shabbos.

This idea lies at the root of the phrase we recite in the Haggadah (quoting *D'varim* 6:21), "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt." It was in Egypt, during the exile, that we were slaves because of the power tapped into by *Par'o*. However, when the time came to break free of Egypt, "for the sake of this...a time when matza [is present]": the actual performance of the mitzvah of matza drew the sublime radiance of *abba* down specifically onto the Jews and not onto the Egyptians ("for me [exclusively]"). This is also hinted at by the Haggadah's phrase (in connection with the expression *li*, "for me"), "for me and not for him; had he [the wicked son] been there, he would not have been redeemed." In other words, previously, even a wicked person could get by in Egypt by tapping into the spiritual life force available through *achorayim*, the "back" or the "other" level; not so once G-d directed His holiness exclusively "to me," to the Jews.

This, then, is the meaning of "I am the One, and no other." The "other" referred to is the spiritual level of *achorayim*, "otherness," which can serve as a source of life force even to the undeserving by virtue of the fact that G-d Himself is utterly above the distinction between good and evil. The Haggadah is telling us that through the mitzvah of matza ("for the sake of this"), the holiness was made exclusive to the Jews ("for me").

(This needs clarification, though, for can we not ask: if the holiness is of that rarified level at which good and evil are all the same, how is it even possible for it to be restricted specifically to good? Is that not a contradiction? Nevertheless, G-d can do anything, including this. True, the spirituality elicited by the first night's matza is of an order where dark and light are the same, etc. Yet, as explained, matza draws this transcendent spirituality down within the level of *chochma ila'a* (the supernal *chochmah*), that is, the level known as *abba*, "father." The Jews are called "sons" of our "father," G-d; is it really surprising, then, that there exists a special and direct relationship from Father to sons? Jewish mysticism speaks of a son as being ultimately derived from the brain of the father. Recall that the spiritual transmission that comes to us through eating matza is

are devoted to G-d. To prevent G-d's spiritual benevolence from being usurped by the forces of unholiness, as it were, Moshe prayed that G-d's presence not dwell among those elements, and G-d granted his request, as it is written (Exodus 33: 17), "Also this thing which you have spoken, I will do."

However, had G-d not granted Moshe's prayer to "restrict" His revelation, the forces of evil would have received just as much G-dly energy as the forces of good, as we find regarding *Bilam* (Balaam), who had the power of prophecy in spite of his being a depraved sinner. To reiterate, this is all because on the level of G-d's very "self," so to speak, the level of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, there is no distinction between good and evil; to G-d, the utterly transcendent, it is all the same.

This was the source of Pharaoh's power as well. He was able to enslave the Jews because he had tapped into that sublime level at which good and evil are all the same. (This is hinted in the Hebrew spelling of the word Pharaoh, *Par'oh*, which is spelled with the same letters as the word for the back of the neck, *oref*. As explained elsewhere, the face expresses a person's inner feelings to the outside, whereas on the opposite side of the head from the face, we find the blank uniformity of the *oref*. Yet the two are on the same level, indicating that the same spiritual plane that is reachable directly, through the front, is also accessible from the back (*achorayim*).

(The quality of the transmission is different, though. If, for example, one gives one's grandchild a crisp new one-hundred dollar bill as a birthday gift, one very likely places it in a nice card and writes a loving message first. If one is actually present when the gift is given, one will probably look on, beaming with pleasure, as the child opens their present. If, on the other hand, one must pay a one-hundred dollar parking ticket, one probably does so with great resentment. One could envision turning on one's heel, tossing the money over one's shoulder at the parking official, and stalking off in disgust. It's the same one hundred dollars either way, but the relationship between giver and recipient bears no comparison.)

## 2

### *Yom Tov and Shabbos*



**B**EFORE DOING so, let us take note of something within our own makeup:

When a person gets a new idea, it seems to pop into their mind as if from nowhere. At this stage, the idea is still somewhat unformed and needs to be thought through and developed. Only after this has been done can one be said to truly understand the initial flash of insight that sprang into their mind. In Hebrew, the initial stage, at which new ideas are first conceived, is called by the technical term *chochmah*, while the subsequent development of understanding is referred to as *bina*.

A person can derive great satisfaction, even outright joy, from intellectual comprehension of an idea. This feeling, however, comes only after one has completed the *bina* stage of the intellectual process. It is at that point that one feels one has "mastered" the concept, has added something new to their understanding. At the *chochmah* stage, however, while it is possible to get excited when one senses, so to speak, that bulb lighting up over one's head, this is more anticipation, expectation that one will successfully develop the idea, than the true satisfaction and pleasure one experiences after having done so. In *chochmah*, the idea is present, it has been revealed to the person, but it is still beyond their comprehension and so does not bring about joy.

Intuitively, we tend to think of *chochmah* as a higher, more rarified, level than *bina*. There is, however, something which transcends even *chochmah*. *Chochmah*, as explained above, is the ability of the mind to conceive new ideas, seemingly out of nowhere. This

utterly inscrutable, unknowable source of ideas, the “nowhere” from whence they spring, may itself be thought of as a level which transcends everything: *chochmah*, *bina*, and all subsequent stages.

The above is hinted at in the verse (Job 28:12), “From where shall wisdom be found?” In Hebrew, this expression can also be read, “Wisdom [*chochmah*] will be found from ‘Where’ [*ayin*],” that is, the level known as *chochmah* derives from the antecedent level known as “Where,” or *ayin* (a word which can also be translated as “Nothing”).

In a spiritual sense, all the above is an allegory representing different degrees of G-dly revelation. Jewish philosophy separates the human personality into ten discrete levels, consisting of the three intellectual faculties *chochmah*, *bina* and *da’as*, followed by seven emotions such as love and fear. In this overall scheme, *bina* – understanding – is a sublime and exalted level, second only to *chochmah*, the highest human faculty. Jewish mysticism therefore uses the term *bina* to refer to a certain lofty degree of G-dly revelation; *chochmah* is used to indicate a level even higher than that.

What is more, on each specific level, the revelation of G-dliness is in a manner which corresponds to the characteristics of human *chochmah*, *bina*, etc. That is, the G-dly revelation alluded to by the term *chochmah* is so sublime that it cannot be fully grasped; it is there, just as a new and as-yet-unformed idea is perceptible to a person, but it is still beyond our grasp, reflecting the *ayin*, or “Nothingness,” from which it came. This in turn symbolizes that transcendent and unknowable aspect of G-d that cannot be revealed at all, not even in the inchoate manner of *chochmah*. Likewise, when we speak of G-d’s “understanding,” or *bina*, we are referring to a level of G-dly revelation that is somewhat more within the ability of mortals to grasp, somewhat more “down to earth,” than *chochmah*. The same may be said of all ten attributes, known as the ten *sefiros*, that the Kabbalah allegorically ascribes to G-d.

(In fact, rather than these Divine attributes mirroring the human personality, it was the latter which was deliberately fashioned

## 7

### “I am the One and no other”: Direct Revelation Specifically for the Jews



HOWEVER, A new question now presents itself: since we have already explained that it was G-d Himself (“I”) and not an angel, a *seraph*, or a messenger, who took the Jews out of Egypt, why is it necessary to add, “I am the One, and no other”? What “other” has been left unaddressed, that we still need to clarify that it wasn’t that either?

The answer will be understood in light of further insight into the exalted level at which there is no distinction between light and dark, good and evil.

Throughout the month of Elul and continuing until after the Day of Atonement, we invoke the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy (see Exodus 34:6-7) in our prayers. This is because these thirteen attributes stem from such a lofty level that, indeed, there is no distinction between good and evil; accordingly, the sins of a penitent can be overlooked. That is also why Moshe (at G-d’s suggestion) invoked the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy when pleading for G-d to forgive the Jews after they had worshipped the golden calf.

When Moshe understood the sublime spiritual level he had called forth by invoking the Thirteen Attributes, however, he immediately fell upon his face (Exodus 34:8) and pleaded that G-d’s presence should not rest upon idol worshippers (*ovdei kochavim*) (*B’rachos* 7a, interpreting Exodus 33:16). He did so because he perceived that among G-d’s attributes was that He is longsuffering, tolerant (*erech apayim*); this could have resulted in G-d’s relating to all people equally, sinners and saints, idol worshippers and those who



Finally, just as human comprehension – *bina* – brings about a certain joy in the person, the revelation of the spiritual level known as *bina* occasions great joy as well.

Now, *Yom Tov*, a Jewish holiday, is characterized by the manifestation of G-dliness to the degree referred to as *bina*. That is why *Yom Tov* is a time of great joy and celebration. The joy of *Yom Tov*, is, in fact, so much an integral part of the holiday that it is a requirement of Jewish Law, in accordance with the verse (Deuteronomy 16:14), "And you shall rejoice on your holiday." On Shabbos, by contrast, we experience a relatively higher G-dly revelation on the exalted order of *chochmah*, which is why Shabbos, although a happy time, to be sure, is not associated specifically with joy as is *Yom Tov*. (Instead, for reasons that will be explained later, Shabbos is associated with pleasure. That is why it is a mitzvah to enjoy delicious foods and otherwise engage in pleasurable activities on Shabbos.)

The Divine attributes (or *sefiros*) of *chochmah* and *bina* are Kabbalistically identified, respectively, as *abba* and *imma*, father and mother. We may thus find a reference to the above idea in the verse (Psalms 113:9), recited as part of the Hallel prayer on *Yom Tov*, "He restores the barren woman [to become] a household; a joyful mother of children..." It is specifically the aspect known as "mother," that is, *bina*, which is associated with "joy."

The distinction between the revelations of *chochmah* (experienced on Shabbos) and *bina* (experienced on *Yom Tov*) will be better understood by considering that there are basically two modes of Divine revelation:

On one level, G-d makes Himself known to us through a progressive order of revelation, analogous to cause and effect. That is to say, the spiritual source of a given created entity may be discerned

within or inferred from the characteristics of that entity, as a cause may be inferred from its effect. In a chain of causes and effects, each effect is itself a cause with respect to the succeeding link in the chain: A causes B, which in turn causes C, etc. In theory, even the final link in such a chain contains an element of the initial link, since Z, the final effect, contains an element of its immediate cause Y, which in turn contains an element of its own immediate cause X (which element of X is therefore also implicit within the end result Z), and so on back to the initial cause A. To use a more concrete example, one's intellect may possess knowledge that a certain thing is desirable. A person knowledgeable in painting and art, for instance, may know that certain factors are characteristic of great works of art and that a given painting possesses those features. This objective knowledge may motivate one's emotions to desire the painting in question. And the emotional feeling of desire for that painting may be expressed in the person's conscious thought about the painting and how to realize his or her desire to acquire it. There is a fixed order to this progression: one's abstract knowledge of art would not directly give rise to thoughts of acquiring a particular painting, even if one is studying about that very painting. A necessary intervening step would be for the knowledge to first bring about a desire for that painting. Only then would it be worthwhile to entertain such thoughts as what would be the best manner of approaching the museum directors with a bid, how to raise the funds, etc. Thus, those thoughts reflect an underlying desire for the painting, which is in turn evidence of sufficient knowledge to know that it is desirable. This "cause and effect" manner of progression may be termed "something from something," *yesh miyesh*. As it relates to G-dly revelation, it refers to the fact that G-d manifests Himself on a very sublime spiritual level, which in turn is reflected in a relatively lower level, and so on, progressively downward until the spirituality finds expression even in physical creations.

The other mode of G-dly manifestation transcends the entire fixed order of spiritual progression (known as *sefer ha-bishtalshelus*), and may be characterized as "something from nothing," or *yesh me'ayin*. Instead of the effect resulting from some pre-existing cause,

Now, of course, everything proceeds from none other than Hashem Himself. Even the spiritual levels alluded to by the expressions, "angel, *seraph*, and messenger" are not independent powers (G-d forbid); they are nothing but G-d's "tools," as it were, like clay in the hand of the sculptor, through which G-d channels His creative energy into the universe. Nevertheless, the G-dly light and influence channeled through these levels comes, by definition, by way of the fixed hierarchy of creation (*sefer ha-bishtalshelus*): the G-dly revelation is transmitted from one level to the next, in a manner of cause and effect, and finally invested within the spiritual level of "angel," or "*seraph*," and so on. By contrast, revelation of an order that transcends the entire *sefer ha-bishtalshelus* to begin with cannot be contained within the vessel, for example, of "angel," such that that spiritual level, "angel," should facilitate its manifestation. That is what is meant by specifically "I, and not an angel, etc."

this," that is, the fact that through matza, the *mochin d'abba* are called forth, about which it is written "From where shall wisdom be found?" As explained above, this verse alludes to a level of G-dliness so sublime that it transcends the entire fixed hierarchy of creation (*seder ha-bishtalsbelus*), a level at which there is no difference between darkness and light, higher or lower (as the verse says (*Tehillim* 139:14), "like darkness; like light," and as we recite in the High-Holiday liturgy, "[G-d is] uniform, and equates [the small and the great]..."). Because of that, it was possible for the sublime level of *Havaye (mochin d'abba)* to be revealed even "to me" down in the physical world of *Asiyah*.

This, too, is alluded to in the words of the Haggadah. It is written (Exodus 12:12), "And I [G-d] passed through the land of Egypt"; the Haggadah, quoting this verse, gives the interpretation of the *Sifri*, that the Hebrew word meaning "and I passed through" indicates, "I and not an angel; I and not a *seraph*; I and not a messenger; [rather] I am the One, and no other." The three levels mentioned (angel, *seraph*, and messenger) hint at the three realms of *B'riah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. Within the highest of the four spiritual realms, that is, *Atzilus*, there are likewise levels that correspond to these lower realms of *B'riah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*: within *Atzilus* itself, the *s'fira* of *malchus* is considered the "*Asiyah* aspect of *Atzilus*"; the *s'firas* of the triad *chagas* are the "*Yetzirah* aspect of *Atzilus*"; and the *s'fira* of *bina* is the "*B'riah* aspect of *Atzilus*." (This is another explanation of "I and not an angel": *malchus* is also called "the angel.") The point is that it was not by means of any of those spiritual levels that the Jews were freed from Egypt; rather, it was the level associated with G-d Himself – "I" – namely, it was through the drawing forth of *ohr abba*, the very source of *chochmah*, the "*Atzilus* aspect of *Atzilus*."

Any "lesser" revelation would not have done the trick, so to speak, for Egypt was a place of the utmost impurity, so much so that only a revelation of the level at which, in fact (*Tehillim* 139:14), "even darkness cannot darken before You...darkness and light are both alike," could "work." This level is specifically that of *ohr abba*

which in turn was the result of a prior existing cause, etc. (even if the ultimate first cause is G-d), *yesh me'ayin* is a direct manifestation of that incomprehensible level of G-d as He transcends *seder ha-bishtalsbelus*, progressive manifestation. Thus, what is manifest in the end is not a reflection of a reflection of a reflection, etc., of G-d, but actually G-d Himself, directly revealed.

We are now in a better position to understand the joy associated with *Yom Tov*. As noted above, *Yom Tov* is a time of revelation of the sublime spiritual level of *bina*. As explained elsewhere (see, e.g., the synopsis of the discourse *V'Hinei Anachnu M'Almim Alumim* on the Torah portion *Vayeishev*), G-d's attribute of sovereignty (in mystical terms, the *sefira* of *malchus*) is invested, throughout the year (i.e., on non-holidays), within the three "lower" spiritual realms of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* (collectively abbreviated *BYA*). This is in accordance with the fixed order of progression of spiritual revelation explained above. From its position in *BYA*, the attribute of *malchus* – which is the spiritual source (the "cause" in the cause and effect chain) of the created universe – cannot perceive its own "cause" within G-dliness. However, the revelation of *bina* – G-d's attribute of understanding, as it were – on *Yom Tov* allows *malchus* (and, therefore, the universe at large) to comprehend its own spiritual source, its own "cause."

Any time an "effect" draws close to its "cause," great joy results for the "effect." This is because proximity to its cause makes the effect realize, on the one hand, how, as a mere effect of that cause and not a part of the cause itself, the effect is nothing more than a dimmed reflection of some underlying reality and not itself the "real thing." Its existence is essentially one of darkness and concealment; it is a sham. On the other hand, by drawing close to the cause, the effect is enabled to perceive this truth after all, and the realization that it is now coming from the darkness into the glorious light is what causes the joy. This is comparable to the inexpressible joy of a prince who, no longer imprisoned, sees his father the king again.

On *Yom Tov*, then, we experience a revelation of G-d's attribute of *bina*, which elevates us to the point that we rejoice in the perception of our spiritual source, which this revelation brings about. That is the mystical significance of the verse quoted above: "[G-d] restores the barren woman [to become] a household; a joyful mother of children..." The Hebrew expression, "the barren woman ... a household" is *akeres habayis*, which is a double entendre in which the word *akeres* can mean both "barren woman" and "foundation." In the latter sense, the phrase would mean, "foundation of the household." Both meanings refer to the attribute of *malchus*, since "she" (*malchus* is considered feminine) is, as the relative "lowest" of the ten *sefiros* and that *sefirah* which descends into the realms of *BYA*, the foundation of the entire spiritual structure; yet at the same time "barren" in that she cannot, from that low position, have any perception of her spiritual source. Nevertheless, G-d "restores" her through the revelation of *bina* – the "mother," as explained above – on *Yom Tov*, so that she herself becomes no longer barren but rejoices in this great revelation.

The above is also alluded to by the verse (Psalms 66:6), "They will go through the river on foot; there we will rejoice in Him." Mystical literature interprets the verse (Genesis 2:10), "A river went forth from Eden to water the garden" as referring to the attribute of *bina*, an outpouring, or "river," of comprehension and transmission of holiness which flows from "Eden" (the highest attribute, or *chochmah*) through the intervening *sefiros* all the way to the "garden" – *malchus* – at the end. In our verse from Psalms, the Hebrew word for "on foot" is an allusion to *Yom Tov*, because the three major Jewish holidays, on which Jews from all over the land of Israel would make a pilgrimage to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, are called for this reason "the three feet." The verse can thus be interpreted to mean, "On 'foot,' i.e., *Yom Tov*, we go through the 'river' that is *bina* and thereby rejoice in G-d, Whose revelation we experience then."

The verse (Isaiah 58:13), "And you shall call Shabbos a delight," hints at this. The Hebrew word for "delight" is *oneg*, spelled by the letters *ayin*, *nun* and *gimmel*. These three letters are the initial

## 6

### *Matza on the First Night: The Revelation of the Radiance of Abba*



UP TO THIS POINT, we have been discussing the second category of matza defined above, the matza we eat throughout the holiday. Let us now turn our attention to the first category, the matza of the first night of Passover.

This category of matza is what is meant in the Haggadah's statement, "For the sake of this, G-d acted on my behalf [a more literal translation: 'G-d did [what He did] for me'] as I was going out of Egypt: [the phrase] 'for the sake of this' [indicates] a time when matza ... [is present]."

The name of G-d used in the above statement is the Tetragrammaton, *Havaye*. The Hebrew word for "did," as in "G-d did," can be read as if it meant "was done." In that case, the phrase would mean "the spiritual level associated with the Divine name *Havaye* 'was done,' was brought about, was accomplished. In other words, "because of this," the elicitation of matza, "the level of *Havaye* was brought about" – namely, the revelation of *ohr abba*.

This is underscored by the word *li*, "for me." Not only was the spiritual level of the name *Havaye*, the blessed Light of the *Ein Sof*, made manifest ("G-d did"), it was manifest "to me," all the way down here in this physical world where I am, the physical realm of *Asiyah*.

And how is it possible for such a lofty revelation to be made openly manifest even "to me" in this lowly world, and while I was still in Egypt, besides? Indeed, that was only possible "because of

that we ourselves should draw the protective benefits of matza (resulting from the revelation of *ohr abba*) into the rest of the holiday, as explained above. Mystically, this is because the seven days represent the seven *midos*, the seven “emotional” *s’firos* from *chesed* through *malchus*. The Kabbalah teaches that the mystical “breaking of the vessels” (*sh’viras ha-keilim*) only affected the seven lower *s’firos* (i.e., the *midos*), leaving them susceptible to encroachment by the forces of unholiness. Accordingly, the subsequent days of Passover, which are associated with these *midos*, require the extra degree of protection we bring about by scrupulously avoiding *chametz* during that period, investing those days also with the qualities of matza and *bitul*.

letters of the Hebrew words *Eden*, *Nahar*, and *Gan* (Eden, River, and Garden) – symbolizing the concept explained in the previous paragraph.

The joy we have been discussing comes from comprehension of the G-dliness that is revealed on *Yom Tov*, a manifestation of G-dliness on the level of *bina*. By contrast, none of the above can apply to revelation of the spiritual level of *chochmah*, which is superior to *bina*. This is because *chochmah* is a spiritual level so lofty that it is beyond comprehension; its revelation therefore does not engender joy. It is *bina* which is characterized by the joy of intellectual comprehension. *Chochmah*, the faculty to conceive ideas, is like a “blank slate” upon which those ideas may be written; it is characterized by complete absence of “self” and total receptivity, instead, to the ideas to be conceived. What happens when *chochmah* is revealed, then, is not joy, but a negation of self in deference to the unknowable G-d. This is what we experience on Shabbos.

While the revelation of *bina* makes an “effect” recognize and rejoice in its superior “cause” – which may be thought of as an elevation of the effect to a higher level – revelation of *chochmah* means manifestation of that aspect of G-d before Whom darkness and light, up and down, etc. are all the same. One has not been “elevated”; instead, “higher” and “lower” have themselves become equivalent in that all is insignificant before G-d. In the face of a revelation of this magnitude, there is simply no meaning to being “elevated.” Instead, all is as naught before G-d.

And this is the meaning of the verse (Exodus 31:14), “You shall observe the Shabbos, for it is holy.”

The Hebrew word for “holy,” *kodesh*, alludes to the spiritual level associated with Shabbos, as just discussed. By contrast, *Yom Tov* is referred to, not as *kodesh*, but by the term *mikra kodesh*, “[that which] calls forth holiness.” This reflects the fact that, although *Yom Tov* itself is not on the same exalted spiritual plane as Shabbos, the potential exists on *Yom Tov* – through performance of the mitzvos of

that holiday – for us to call forth, to elicit, a manifestation of G-dliness stemming from the level known as *kodesh*, which is manifest on Shabbos automatically.

Now, we must understand a crucial point in connection with the above: the concept of rejoicing on *Yom Tov*, when the level of *bina* is manifest, is not (only) joy over the revelation of *bina* as described above. Rather, the joy is primarily over the element of *chochmah* invested within *bina* – i.e., it is over the *kodesh* called forth on the holiday, the day of *mikra kodesh*. For *bina*, although an exalted spiritual level, to be sure, is nevertheless considered *yesh* (“something”) in relation to *chochmah*, the only *sefira* that truly reflects *ayin* (“nothingness”). It would certainly not be proper for us to rejoice over anything other than G-d Himself, the ultimate *ayin*, as opposed to any creation of His, any form of *yesh*.

Still, *bina* is not just “any” *yesh*: all *yesh* comes from *ayin*, and *bina* represents *yesh* as it comes from *ayin*. Thus, *bina* is inseparable from *chochmah*; in fact, the Kabbalah (*Zohar* III, 4a) calls these two *sefiros* the “two inseparable friends.” It has been explained elsewhere (see, e.g., the adaptation of the discourse, *U’Sefartem Lachem MiMacharas HaShabbos* on the Torah portion *Emor*) that the *sefiros* are actually composites: each contains within itself aspects of all the others. Among the other *sefiros* are *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*. We said above that *mikra kodesh* means a “calling forth” of *kodesh*, of *chochmah*, into *bina*; technically, what is invested within *bina* are the *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod* (collectively abbreviated “NHY,” pronounced “n’hee”) aspects of *chochmah*. On *Yom Tov*, then, we elicit NHY of *chochmah* into *bina*, and this is the (main) reason for our joy.

revelation of *abba* still occurs on the first night through fulfilling the Biblical command to eat matza then, it is necessary for us to carry its effects over into the remaining days of the holiday (as hinted by the grammar of the verse, “matzos shall be eaten for the seven days”), by eating matza – or, actually, by not eating chametz – throughout the entire Passover.

The above is also consistent with the verse (Mishlei 24:21), “Fear G-d, my son, and the king.” The simple meaning of this verse is that, just as one must fear G-d even though one does not see Him (and thereby, one will keep from sin), one must likewise fear the king, even though one might not see him in person, thereby avoiding the capital offense of treason. This is the explanation given in the work, *Kad HaKemach* in the section, “Fear.” However, on a homiletical level (*D’varim Rabba*, 2:33), the verse can be interpreted as if it read, “and reign” (*u-m’loch*) instead of “and the king” (*va-melech*). Then, the meaning would be, “Fear G-d, my son, and reign [over your impulse to sin].”

Both interpretations are correct. Through true fear of the “King of the kings of kings” (similar to the first interpretation, although that refers to a human king), one automatically rules over his or her own impulse to sin, for one would not be drawn after the pleasures of this world if one is truly in reverent awe and *bitul* (a state of self-nullification) before G-d.

One’s evil impulse is symbolized by *chametz*, as in the verse (*Tehillim* 71:4), “Save me, my G-d...from the hand of the...violent person (*chometz*).” This comparison is a play on words, since the word for “violent person” is similar to “*chametz*.” Thus, just as true fear of the King (G-d) negates the possibility of sin, the revelation to our forefathers leaving Egypt of the “King of the kings of kings” automatically rendered the possibility of *chametz* (encroachment by the forces of evil) null.

Subsequent generations, however, had need of the requirement that “matzos shall be eaten for the seven days” – that is,

Another explanation of this expression is that it describes G-d's manner of ruling and conducting the worlds through His ten *s'firos*. The word "kings" refers to the lower triad (excluding *malchus*) of *s'firos*, i.e., the attributes of *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod* (collectively abbreviated "N.H.Y." and pronounced *n'hee*). The phrase "kings of" (*malchei*) refers to the middle triad, comprised of *chesed*, *g'vurah*, and *tiferes* (abbreviated "C.G.T."; pronounced *chagas*). Finally, "King of the kings of" (*melech malchei*) refers to the highest triad, formed by *chochmah*, *bina*, and *da'as* ("C.B.D."; pronounced *chabad*). The *s'firos* of N.H.Y. illuminate the realm of *Asiyah*; the realm of *Yetzirah* is illuminated by C.G.T.; and in the world of *B'riah*, it is the *s'fira* of *bina* that predominates. However, the attribute of *chochmah* shines in the highest realm of *Atzilus*, for it is only within *chochmah* that the blessed *Or Ein Sof*, G-d's Infinite Light, characteristic of *Atzilus*, can be invested. That, then, is the level alluded to by the phrase "the King of the kings of kings": the level of *chochmah*, which contains within it the blessed Light of the *Ein Sof*.

The revelation of the *s'fira* of *chochmah* is thus an open manifestation of the spiritual level of *ohr abba* (the radiance of *abba* [father]), in the face of which, as explained above, the forces of evil have no hold.

To summarize, then, all the above is the inner meaning of the Haggadah's relating – with respect to the second category of matza, that is, the matza we eat all through the holiday – that our forefathers' dough did not have a chance to rise before 'the King of the kings of kings' [i.e.,] the Holy One, blessed is He, was revealed to them. Their dough did not have a chance to rise – that is, to become *chametz*, symbolizing the forces of evil – precisely because 'the King of the kings of kings,' that is, the quality of *abba*, the attribute of *chochma*, was openly manifest unto them.

During historic Passover, that happened automatically on the first night, by virtue of the revelation of the light of *abba*, and continued all through the holiday because of the spiritual influence and protection of Moshe and Aharon. Today, however, while the

### 3

#### Matza: The "Food of Faith"



AS A GENERAL observation, this drawing down of *chochmah* into *bina* is accomplished on the holidays of the year by prayer (*t'fillah*) and reciting the *Hallel* prayer. However, these practices are of Rabbinic origin. There are also Biblical commandments specific to each respective holiday; on Passover, it is accomplished through the commandment of eating matza.

Matza, as everyone knows, is unleavened bread. It has not risen; it remains flat, "small." In our context, this alludes to a concept known as *katnus abba*, which may be loosely translated as "a small, or limited, perception of *abba* (father)."

As explained above, "father" is a reference to the *sefira* of *chochmah*. Matza symbolizes *mochin d'abba*, "the intellectual faculties of *abba* (father)." The meaning of this can be understood in light of the fact that a newborn, although able to produce sound, is not capable of intelligent speech. This later stage of development is mystically associated with the child's weaning and introduction to solid food, specifically bread, as the Talmud (*B'rachos* 40a) teaches (in support of the proposition that the Tree of Knowledge, which introduced an intellectual awareness to Adam and Eve, was actually wheat), "A child does not know to call 'Father!'...until it has tasted the taste of grain."

Now, even after tasting grain, a child certainly does not understand what a "father" actually is; he or she merely knows, in a simple, childlike way, that that certain man is something special to him or her: he is (depending on the child's language) "Daddy," "Tatty," or "Abba." This is what is meant by *katnus abba*, "a small, or limited, perception of *abba*."

Matza represents *mochin d’abba*, “the intellectual faculties of *abba*.” Yet, like the child who does not really understand what he or she means by “father,” we cannot fully grasp G-d. What we can have, though, might just be even more precious: a simple, childlike intuition of our relationship to Him, the certain knowledge, unconstrained by the limits of reason, that G-d is “Daddy,” “Tatty,” “Abba.”

This is the inner meaning of the teaching that “a child does not know to call ‘Father!’...until it has tasted the taste of grain.” It is only by eating matza (“tasting grain”) – drawing *NHY* of *chochmah* into *bina* on the *Yom Tov* of Passover – that we can gain this special relationship with our Father, this recognition of Him as our Father – even if it is only in the form of *katnus*, the limited perception of a child. This is why the *Zohar* (In *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5708, p. 166, the Rebbe states, “In *Sefer Ta’amei HaMitzvos* of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, he indicates the *Zohar* [on the Torah portion] *Vayeitzei*, p. 157. This must be looked into a bit. See *Zohar* II, 41a.”) refers to matza as the “food of faith” – it has the spiritual effect of infusing into our Jewish souls our characteristic, supra-rational, simple faith in G-d.

## 5

### *Matza After the First Night: Their Dough Had No Chance To Rise*



THUS, IT TURNS out that there are really two distinct categories of matza: the matza of the first night of Passover, which is a Biblical obligation even today, and the matza eaten throughout the rest of the seven days, which is really more a function of avoiding *chametz* than of eating specifically matza. It is with reference to the second category of matza that the Haggadah states that it is “on account of [the fact that] our forefathers’ dough did not have a chance to rise before ‘the King of the kings of kings’ [i.e.,] the Holy One, blessed is He, was revealed to them and redeemed them.” That is, it really was a sort of “happenstance” (their dough didn’t have a chance to rise) that caused the Jews who left Egypt during historic Passover to eat matza all seven days, for they didn’t really need the spiritual protection it afforded, as explained above.

For them, protection against encroachment by the forces of unholiness was automatic, as hinted in the wording of the above quote, which refers to G-d as “the King of the kings of kings.”

On a simple level, the “kings” referred to in this expression are the human kings found in this lower world. “Kings of kings” alludes to the spiritual *sarim*, the archangels of each particular nation (see *Daniel* 10:13: “the archangel of the Kingdom of Persia...”). In this sense, the expression under discussion implies that the Holy One, Blessed is He, Who rules over all, is thus “the King of the kings of kings.”



## 4

### *First Night vs. Balance of the Holiday; Historic Passover vs. As Observed Today*



**N**OW, THIS DRAWING down of *mochin d'abba* in matza only occurs on the first night of Passover. From then on, a different purpose is served by eating matza. It is written (Exodus 13:7), "matzos shall be eaten for the seven days." In the original, this sentence may be considered grammatically irregular. The Hebrew language uses the word *eis* (sometimes *es*), which has no English equivalent, to indicate the direct object. For example, to say "I ate the matza," one would not say *achalti* (I ate) *hamatza* (the matza); the correct phrase would be *achalti es hamatza*. The word *es* indicates the direct object of the sentence ("the matza"). In Hebrew, the above verse reads, *matzos yei-acheil eis shiv'as hayamim* – the word *eis* is used before the words meaning "the seven days," as though the seven days were the direct object; that is, as though the seven days should be "fed" the matza.

This is a mystical allusion to the spiritual function of matza for the duration of Passover, i.e., after the first night. It is indeed necessary to "feed" the seven days of Passover with the matza. What this means is that the benefit of matza on the first night – namely, the spiritual level of *abba* – should provide "nourishment" to, transmit its influence into, all the following days of the holiday.

(During the first week of *s'firas ha-omer*, the period of counting the days between Passover and Shavuot – the entirety of which initial week falls during Passover – we also find that those seven days are associated with the "seven *mochin* of *chochmah*," i.e., that the *sefirah* of

*chochma* is invested within each of the seven *midos* (emotional *sefiros*) manifest each day of that initial week's *s'fira* count.)

There is a reason why all seven days "need" the benefit of *mochin d'abba*. As explained elsewhere (see the adaptation of the discourse *Vayeavek Ish Imo* on the Torah portion *Vayisblach*), G-d does not bestow His creative life-force into the forces of evil. Evil is only able to exist by usurping some of the "leftover" spirituality that the forces of good have received. The more "good" something is, the more G-dly life-force it possesses. Thus, it is necessary to be vigilant where great holiness is present, to safeguard against the possibility that any of that spirituality might be "siphoned off" by the "other side" (G-d forbid).

The Midrash (*M'chilta* to *B'shalach*, *P'sichta*; *Bamidbar Rabba* 1, 2; *Tanchuma* to *B'shalach* 3) tells us that the protective cloud column (see Exodus 13:21) which escorted the Jews out of Egypt would kill snakes and scorpions in the Jews' path. Snakes and scorpions symbolize the forces of evil, and the cloud killing them symbolizes the concept that a lofty spiritual level known as a *makif*, or "transcendent" level, is able to "kill," to destroy the evil.

During historic Passover, as noted at the beginning, the prohibition against *chametz*, leavened bread – which also symbolizes evil – only applied for one day. This was all that was needed, for the Jews were accompanied by Moshe (Moses) and Aharon (Aaron), who were both on the exalted spiritual level of *abba*. Their very presence served to safeguard the Jews against encroachment by forces of evil (G-d forbid), indeed, the protective clouds were called the "clouds of Aharon," for they were the *makifei abba* ("transcendent levels of *abba*") and possessed the power to destroy evil and prevent the possibility of any holiness being "hijacked." The clouds never left the Jews, as it says (Exodus 13:22), "[G-d] would not remove the cloud column by day." Accordingly, that first Passover, it was enough that the Jews drew down the *mochin d'abba* on the first night, when it infused our souls with that special, childlike Jewish faith in G-d; once that was done, the matza and the associated protective aspect of

*mochin d'abba* was not needed, since Moshe and Aharon themselves were enough of a protection against evil.

By contrast, each subsequent Passover, as observed to this day, we do eat matza all seven days, because we need the spiritual protection from the forces of evil furnished by *mochin d'abba*. Actually, our eating matza today (after the first night, that is (although note well that outside the Land of Israel, the first two nights of Passover have the status of the first night)) is not a requirement unto itself; the real requirement is strict avoidance of *chametz* all seven days. This is because, as explained, *chametz* represents the forces of evil, and we must avoid these scrupulously. The matza of the first night, though, remains a Biblical commandment, for even today, it provides protection that does not stop throughout all the following days, as hinted in the verse "[G-d] would not remove the cloud column by day." This refers to the first day, representing the attribute of *chesed*, the influence of which extends throughout the seven days of Passover (as touched upon above in connection with *s'firas ha-omer*; each of the seven *midos* of the first week of *s'firah* are associated with the *s'fira* of *chesed*).