

MAGGID

Of the Passover Hagaddah

A Translation and adaptation
into English of

Tzafnat Pa'ane'ach

By

Our Master and Teacher
The Holy and Godly Tzaddik

Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Peace be upon him

Adapted into English by:

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The Author's Introduction

His name is thus called *Tzaphnat Pa'anei'ach*-the Unraveller of Mysteries, for the hidden are revealed to him and the arms of his foundations are strengthened upon the way of truth and the received knowledge, for Yosef is the ruler in all the stories of the redemption from Egypt. He is the one who explains to all the people of the land. May the pious one delight in glory. May he rejoice in his repose in the Garden of Eden.

May *HaShem*-יהו"ה shine His countenance upon you my brother and open your eyes in the luminary of His Torah and guide you in the comprehension of it, so that you may know the might of His signs and wonders, through which one enters the level of love of Him, blessed is He.

Know my friend, that as the seed of Yehudah and Ephraim, we have been commanded of old to relate the exodus from Egypt, to understand concealed secrets as the sun shining at noon.

According to the level that our forefathers gave us from the simple meaning, we can neither apprehend nor see our signs, to uplift them to a level more significant than all other levels, such that even such a great man as Rabbi Elazar had to say, "I have not merited to understand why the exodus from Egypt is mentioned [in the *Shema* recital every] night."

However, know my masters, that even though these matters are as simply understood, nonetheless, the level of *soul*

within them is very great and the name of her brother was Yaktan-יקטן.¹

Accordingly, because I see the greatness of the level of the exodus from Egypt, to explain the hints of the matter, and to understand doubly from it, therefore I hereby am setting the Gates of Righteousness in order, to open the eyes, so that all who see them will say, “This is the House of God and this is the Gate of the Heavens.”

¹ Meaning “He who makes little of himself.” See Genesis 10:25; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 6:4; 37:7 and elsewhere. [Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, whose name Gikatilla (Chiquitilla) means “the little one-*HaKatan*-הקטן,” would sign his name Yosef ben Avraham HaKatan.]

**הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.
כָּל דְּכַפִּין יִימֵי וַיִּיכַל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִימֵי וַיִּפְסַח. הָשְׁתָּא
הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. הָשְׁתָּא עַבְדִּי,
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנִי חוֹרִין.**

THIS IS THE BREAD OF OPPRESSION that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are in need come and join us for the Pesach. Now we are here. Next year in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves; next year we shall be free.

Know that the Matzah is not called bread of oppression because it is bread of oppression in the sense of being lower in level than leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ). Rather, leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ) is the true bread of oppression, and is comparable to the inability to see the light of the sun or any other brilliant light. That is, because of the weakness of the receptacle of the recipient, he is incapable of seeing the brilliant light as it is in its elevated state, unless some darkness is mingled with it, [such as seeing it through a dark lense], thus weakening it, and he then is capable of grasping it, this being the matter of the vision of those of weak sight. The same is so of leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ) and Matzah.

To explain, the word “leaven-*Chametz*-חמץ” is of the same root as in the verse,² “The schemer and the brutal-*Chometz*-חומץ,” and in the verse,³ “Strengthen the victim-*Chamotz*-חמוץ.” For, when the dough leaves its original strength and leans toward becoming ruined, it is called “spoiled-*Machmetzet*-מתמצת,” and when wine is ruined and leaves its strength and goodness, it is called “vinegar-*Chometz*-חומץ.”

Now, because in this world man is composed of coarse matter that restraints and obstructs the grasp of his intellect (*Sechel*), that “spoiling-*Chametz*-חמץ” is called “sourdough-*Se'or*-שאור.” Our sages, of blessed memory, thus said,⁴ “Master of the world, it is revealed and known before You that my will is to do Your will, but that the ‘sourness-*Se'or*’ in the dough obstructs the goodness.”

They thus gave us a great principle that “sourdough-*Se'or*” is that which leads to loss and ruin and obstructs one’s grasp. Therefore, because the nature of man’s substance is coarse, he is incapable of understanding matters of intellect to their ultimate truth, unless there is an admixture of matters that cause “leavening” in them, meaning that matters of intellect are compared [by way of analogy] to bodily matters. He thus also gave us leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ) which is comparable to one’s grasp, this being like “the sourness in the dough.”

Now, just as we are incapable of grasping the intellect without it being mixed with the sensory, we likewise are

² Psalms 71:4

³ Isaiah 1:17

⁴ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a

incapable of always eating matzah, unless sourdough is mixed into it, and it becomes leavened. Therefore, understand that the comparison of sourdough in the Matzah is like the comparison of the physical with the intellectual.

Therefore, the Blessed One had to tell us in the Torah that since the Jewish people are leaving Egypt and are destined to grasp the elevated level of prophecy when standing at Mount Sinai, and will become free of the sensory, so that the “dough” of Egypt will become entirely Matzah, having no “sourdough” in it, so that nothing else will be mixed into one’s grasp, He therefore said,⁵ “The people took its dough before it could leaven.”

About the secret of this verse, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶ “The Matzot that they took out of Egypt had the taste of Manna.” Behold the great extent that they awaken us to this, by informing us that the level of the Matzah is close to the level of the Manna! About this the verse states,⁷ “Men ate the bread of the mighty angels.” This is because the bread of the mighty angels is Matzah and Manna. However, because of the weak nature of man, he eats leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ) and his grasp is weak and spoiled (*Chamutz*-חמוץ).

As a result of this principle, the Elevated One commanded us in His Torah,⁸ “You shall not cause any leavening or honey to go up in smoke [as a fire offering to *HaShem*-יהו"ה].” Now, about why the thanksgiving offering

⁵ Exodus 12:34

⁶ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 38b

⁷ Psalms 78:25 (see Rashi there)

⁸ Leviticus 2:11

(*Todah*) was of leaven, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁹ “All the sacrifices are destined to be nullified [in the future], but the thanksgiving offering (*Todah*) will not be nullified.”

I now will illuminate your eyes about this mystery. As known, whosoever transgresses one of the negative prohibitive *mitzvot* is called a sinner, whether he was compelled to do so, whether he did so inadvertently, or whether he did it intentionally. Even if one says that, in truth, “The Merciful One exempts one who is compelled,”¹⁰ in that he is exempt from excision (*Karet*), from bringing a sacrifice, and from the punishment appropriate to that sin, nonetheless, if he was not fitting of sin, *HaShem*-יהו"ה would not have caused a sin to be committed by his hand. About this our sages, of blessed memory, said,¹¹ “One sin leads to another sin.” This is the secret of [the verse],¹² “No iniquity will befall a righteous man.”

Now, when a person returns in repentance (*Teshuvah*), leaving all the sins he has done, pleads for forgiveness for them, and confesses (*Modeh*-מודה) before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as the verse states,¹³ “He shall confess what he had sinned,” then *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, forgives him of his sin and wipes his transgression away, as the verse states,¹⁴ “One who confesses and forsakes them, will be granted mercy,” and it states,¹⁵ “I make my sin known to You etc.”

⁹ Pesikta Zutreta, Tzav 23a

¹⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 54a

¹¹ Mishnah Avot 4:2

¹² Proverbs 12:21

¹³ Leviticus 5:5

¹⁴ Proverbs 28:13

¹⁵ Psalms 32:5

If you understand this, you then will understand why the thanksgiving offering (*Todah*-תודה) was of leaven (*Chametz*). This is because it is appropriate for a person to always confess for the “*Chometz*-חומץ,” iniquity and evil he has done, and it is appropriate for his sin to be remembered in his heart, as the verse states,¹⁶ “For I know my transgressions,” and it states,¹⁷ “For once I had returned, I was remorseful etc.”

Now, since there is destined to be the time that the Holy One, blessed is He, promised Israel, that “the sourness in the dough,” will be nullified and uprooted from the world, this being the evil inclination, as the verse states,¹⁸ “I will remove the heart of stone etc.,” it therefore was necessary for the sages to state¹⁹ that all the sacrifices are destined to be nullified. For, if there is no evil inclination, there is no sin, and if there is no sin, there is no sacrifice.

However, [this is not so of] the thanksgiving offering (*Todah*), which is a remembrance of the sins we once did, about which we will be embarrassed and ashamed of how we had angered our Creator, blessed is He. This is why a subsequent verse states,²⁰ “Then you will remember your evil ways.” This is the secret of why the thanksgiving offering (*Todah*) will not be nullified, and the secret of [the verse], “For I know my transgressions etc.”

After informing you of this, know that this is why [on Passover] even the tiniest measure of leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ) is

¹⁶ Psalms 51:5

¹⁷ Jeremiah 31:18

¹⁸ Ezekiel 36:26

¹⁹ Midrash Rabba, Tzav 9:7

²⁰ Ezekiel 36:31

forbidden, and we are commanded to destroy it. For, this hints that the Holy One, blessed is He, is destined to remove the evil inclination, which is the “leaven” (*Chametz*-חמץ) from the world, to destroy it and uproot it, so that utterly nothing will remain of it.

This is why our sages, of blessed memory, stated, that [on Passover] even the tiniest measure of leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ) is rendered unfit, and one is liable for it, for when the verse states,²¹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה your God will circumcise your heart etc.,” this is a promise that He will remove the evil inclination from the world and that utterly nothing will remain of it. About this He said,²² “I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will become pure,” and about this the verse states,²³ “You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

Now, from beginning to end, the exodus from Egypt is both a guarantee and a good tiding of all the goodness we are destined to receive. This is because its beginning is that it is the primary essence of all miracles and wonders, and its end is the primary essence of the world that is destined to be introduced to us, in which miracles and wonders will be unnecessary, since we **all** will be righteous *Tzaddikim* and will fulfill the will of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with love.

All this is known and accepted by virtue of the Matzah. For, so did *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, say and promise,²⁴ “Arise! Shine! For your light has arrived, and the glory of *HaShem*-יהו"ה shines upon you... The sun will no longer be for

²¹ Deuteronomy 30:6

²² Ezekiel 36:25

²³ Micah 7:19

²⁴ Isaiah 60:1-19

you the light of day etc.” The reason for all this is because we are students of the Creator, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and it is from His mouth that we receive instruction, as the verse states,²⁵ “All your children will be students of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” Because this is the secret of the elevated level of the Matzah, it therefore was necessary to command that the sacrifice of the thanksgiving offering be of Matzah loaves.

Now, after having awakened you to this matter, let us return and finish what we began explaining. We thus will say that the secret of, “this is the bread of oppression,” hints to the blessing over bread recited on the piece [of Matzah] and to the teaching,²⁶ “[The phrase] ‘bread of oppression’ comes to exclude [Matzah] that was boiled or [baked as] a large cake.” However, it does not hint that Matzah is called “bread of oppression” simply because it Matzah.

Later [in the Haggadah] it states, “This Matzah that we eat, what does it recall? It recalls the dough of our ancestors that did not have time to leaven etc.” In other words, the reason given for the Matzah is that it is the result of the redemption and mercy, rather than the oppression and servitude. Understand this well, in that the servitude is like the leaven (*Chametz*), whereas the redemption is like the Matzah. This is why the Hagaddah states, “The dough of our ancestors did not have time to leaven before the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He, revealed Himself and redeemed them etc.” Understand this very well, for had it leavened, it would have been fitting that they remain in servitude.

²⁵ Isaiah 54:13

²⁶ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 36b

Now, the passage continues [and states], “that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt.” However, as known, they did not eat Matzah in Egypt. This is attested to by the verse,²⁷ “They baked the dough that they **took out** of Egypt into unleavened cakes (matzah).” This is clear testimony to what we have said.

In contrast, the reason for the bitter herb (Maror) is because “they embittered their lives etc.” Thus, contemplate that leaven (*Chametz*) hints at our being mingled with materiality, which restrains and obstructs the grasp, and that according to the smallness of the grasp, is the greatness of the exile and its difficulty, as it states,²⁸ “Because you did not serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה [your God with gladness and goodness of heart] etc., so will you serve your enemies etc.” This also is the secret of the verse,²⁹ “Although they pay tribute to the nations, now I will gather them.”

In contrast, the Matzah hints that we find favor before He who formed us, blessed is the mention of Him, as in the secret of the verse,³⁰ “One who finds Me has found (*Matza*-מצא) life etc.” In conclusion, the quality of complete judgment (*Din*) is in the leaven (*Chametz*-חמץ), whereas the quality of complete mercy (*Rachamim*) is in the Matzah (מצה).

Now, about the statement in the order of the Haggadah, “Let all who are hungry come and eat,” this hints that when we only will eat Matzah in the coming future, since we then will

²⁷ Exodus 12:39

²⁸ Deuteronomy 28:47

²⁹ Hosea 8:10

³⁰ Proverbs 8:35

“not hunger for bread and not thirst for water etc.”³¹ about this the verse states,³² “I will satisfy the desire of the priests with fat, and My people will be sated with My goodness – the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”

In the end, when the coarse substance will be removed and we will return to be as radiant as sapphires, as the verse states,³³ “I will lay your foundation with sapphires,” we then will hear and receive from the mouth of the Almighty One, and He “will transform the nations to [speak] a clear language,”³⁴ and we will constantly yearn for the sweet grasp of Him, as the verse states,³⁵ “My soul yearns, indeed it expires, for the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.” This is the secret of the verse,³⁶ “I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh,” which will take place once their sustenance is entirely Matzah.

It is in this regard that they juxtaposed the words, “Now we are here, next year [in the land of Israel; Now we are slaves; next year we shall be free],” by which they thereby publicized the entire secret we have said. This is because the repetitive language hints at two redemptions, this being the secret of the redemption of the body from servitude to freedom, and the secret of the redemption of the intellectual soul from the exile of the evil inclination, who obstructs its grasp. This is why they hinted at the matter by repeating, “Now we are here, next year

³¹ Amos 8:11

³² Jeremiah 31:13

³³ Isaiah 54:11

³⁴ Zephaniah 3:9

³⁵ Psalms 84:3

³⁶ Joel 3:1

in the land of Israel; Now we are slaves; next year we shall be free in the land of Israel.”

**מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות? שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת
אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמָצָה, הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה – כָּלוּ מָצָה.
שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֹר יִרְקוֹת – הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה
(כָּלוּ) מָרוֹר. שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטְבִילִין אֲפִילוֹ
פַּעַם אַחַת – הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים. שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת
אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין – הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּנוּ
מְסֻבִּין.**

WHAT MAKES THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT THAN ALL OTHER NIGHTS, that in all other nights we eat bread and Matzah, but tonight is all Matzah? That in all other nights we eat other greens, but tonight is (all) bitter herbs? That in all other nights we do not dip [our food] even once, but tonight two times? That in all other nights we eat whether sitting or reclining, but tonight we all are reclining?

Let it not arise in your mind that our sages, of blessed memory, went out of their way [without reason] in emphasizing the matter of relating the story of the exodus from Egypt, in stating “even if we are all sages,” we still must ask saying,

“what makes [this night] different [than all other nights].” It is not for nothing that they said this, since even a person who is alone, and is an actual sage, must still ask himself saying, “what makes [this night] different [than all other nights].”

This is because they said this for the sake of a very great, awesome and primary principle. This is because [through doing so] they awakened us to the fact that there are several places in Torah, in which it seems as if they were overly stringent, though to our eyes, as we imagine it, it appears as something minor. However, we should not think that, in and of itself, the matter is indeed minor, but rather it only seems so because of our low stature and the deficiencies of our souls, in that we do not grasp the depth of that matter. About this the verse states,³⁷ “For it is not an empty thing for you (*Mikem*-מכם),” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁸ “If it is empty, it is from you (*Mikem*-מכם) that it is empty.”

After having given you this introduction, know that there can be those who say, “Why did He command us to be so stringent [on Passover] about the matter of leaven (*Chametz*),” though according to what is [empirically] seen with the eye, it does not seem to have a reason, and thus from the perspective of reason, it seems to be the most minor of all *mitzvot*. This is because [with other *mitzvot*], even though we do not grasp them to their ultimate depth, we nevertheless have some hint of understanding or are awakened [to some matter by it], such as in the prohibition of eating [prohibited] fat, or eating blood, or other forbidden foods and the like. This is because they all are

³⁷ Deuteronomy 32:47

³⁸ Talmud Yerushalmi, Sukkah 4:2

for the purpose of fixing one's constitution and establishing his body to be as best as it can be. However, about the matter of [eating] Matzah, it is obligatory for a specific limited time, at which time leaven (*Chametz*) is prohibited, but is permitted the rest of the year. What need is there for this? Moreover, regarding all other forbidden foods, they are prohibited forever, except for *Tevel*³⁹ and the like, until the [required tithes] have been separated from them. However, in regard to this, why is it only forbidden for a specific period of time, unlike all other prohibited [foods]?

Now, all this in order to stimulate a person to think in his mind and contemplate this *mitzvah*, after which he will say, why does the prohibition of *Chametz* include even the tiniest amount, whereas all other prohibitions related to food have specific known measures, except for “wine of libation” (*Yayin Nesech*),⁴⁰ which has a known stated reason regarding the matter of idolatry, that “you shall thoroughly revile and abhor it.”⁴¹

This being so, from all the above matters, our sages, of blessed memory, awakened us that when it comes to something to which reason does not attest, and its level appears to the eye to be minor, yet *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, treats it so strictly that its punishment is excision (*Karet*), it is appropriate that we investigate it. For, were we not to investigate it, it would remain as if the One who said it was lacking and His words are empty and to be ignored, Heaven forbid to think so. About such an

³⁹ Produce that has not yet been tithed and is thus forbidden to be consumed until the required tithes have been separated from them.

⁴⁰ Wine utilized as a libation for idolatrous practice.

⁴¹ Deuteronomy 7:26

attitude the verse states,⁴² “He disgraced the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.”

It is with this principle in mind that our sages, of blessed memory, awakened us and said that we must see a reason for this, and ask why the *mitzvot* of Matzah and *Chametz* differ from all the other prohibitions of the Torah, as we have said. Thus, because this investigation is so important, that [even] Rabbi Elazar had to say “I did not merit etc.” That is, if this investigation is not so great and important, many great and brilliant sages, such as Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Tarfon, and Rabbi Akiva, would not have occupied themselves in it the whole [Passover] night until the time of the morning *Shema* recital, and they would not have missed the time of its recital for something that is knowable with minor investigation.

However, because the secret of the exodus from Egypt hints at **all** the goodness we are destined to receive from that time on, in body and soul, all of it being included in it, it therefore was necessary for them to investigate and contemplate it very well. We already hinted slightly at the secret of this investigation in the reasons regarding *chametz*-חמץ and *matzah*-מצה.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרַעַה בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיּוֹצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה
אֶלְהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרַע נְטוּיָה. וְאֵלּוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הָרִי אָנוּ

⁴² Numbers 15:31

וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ מִשְׁעָבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם.
וְאֶפִּילוּ כָּלֵנוּ חֲכָמִים כָּלֵנוּ גִבּוֹרִים כָּלֵנוּ זִקְנִים כָּלֵנוּ
יֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מְצֻנָּה עָלֵינוּ לְסֹפֵר בִּיציאת מִצְרַיִם.
וְכָל הַמִּרְבֵּה לְסֹפֵר בִּיציאת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח.

WE WERE SLAVES to Pharaoh in Egypt, and *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God brought us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not brought our fathers out of Egypt – then we, and our children, and our children's children, would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if we were all wise, all intelligent, all venerable and all knowledgeable in the Torah, the command would still be upon us to tell of the exodus from Egypt; and the more one tells of the exodus from Egypt, the more admirable.

To explain, in response to the question, "What makes this night different than all other nights," it is appropriate to say, "We were slaves." That is, in truth, for a question such as this, this is the correct answer. I therefore shall awaken you to the secret of this wisdom, stated in Torah in a hidden way, that our sages, of blessed memory, hinted at with "narrowing

windows,”⁴³ whereas we, who are impoverished, feel about like the blind, and are all blind.

Know that *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, turns causes and rotates matters to uphold His decrees in the creations, both for good and the opposite thereof. Now, when the Elevated One, told Yaakov,⁴⁴ “Have no fear of descending to Egypt,” as known, if Yaakov was not afraid, He would not have told him, “Have no fear.” For, it only is appropriate to say “Have no fear” to one who is afraid. This being so, we must know what Yaakov was so fearful of, so greatly that the Elevated One had to tell him, “Have no fear.”

Know, my friend, that those who have True Knowledge and the Masters of Kabbalah, all agree that our forefather Yaakov, peace be upon him, saw the attribute of judgment-*Din* stretched out against his children upon their descent into Egypt, and he saw that they would not be worthy of ever leaving there. For, according to the quality of strict judgment-*Din*, they were to descend there, and from the angle of the [natural] conduct of the world according to the supernal workings, they were never to ascend.

Because this was so, he was terrified and consternated until the Elevated One had to promise him that even though they would descend into the attribute of strict judgment-*Din*, and that according to the order of the supernal workings they were not worthy of leaving there, He said,⁴⁵ “I shall descend with you to

⁴³ Kings I 6:4

⁴⁴ Genesis 46:3

⁴⁵ Genesis 46:4

Egypt,⁴⁶ and I shall also surely bring you up.” This is indeed true, since according to the orders [of the world], they have no way to ascend. Nevertheless, “I shall change the conduct of the world, and I shall overturn the orders of all systems, both the supernal orders and the lower orders, and I then shall take them out with [My] greatness (*Gedulah*) and [My] might (*Gevurah*), not because of any directives of any [angelic] power or constellation.” About this He said, “**I-Anochi-אנכי** shall also surely bring you up.” Thus, contemplate [the meaning of] the statement, “We were slaves etc.”

This being so, contemplate the great principle upon which we have stood you, and you will see why this hints to “a strong hand and an outstretched arm.” That is, this is the secret of overturning the conduct of the world by way of miracles and wonders, and it is about this that He said, “**I-Anochi-אנכי** shall also surely bring you up etc.”

Now that you know this, contemplate that the exodus from Egypt depended on the miraculous, and this why Yaakov feared, until *HaShem-יהוה* had to promise him stating, “Have no fear of descending into Egypt.” Therefore, *HaShem-יהוה*, blessed is He, had to smite the gods of Egypt with the tenth plague, changing the supernal orders, meaning changing the order of the separate intellects (the angels) from whom power is bestowed to the celestial spheres, and from them the bestowal

⁴⁶ It is for this reason that the name “Egypt” in this verse (Genesis 46:4) is written with the letter *Hey-ה* – “*Mitzraymah-מצרים*,” this being the final letter *Hey-ה* of the Name *HaShem-יהוה*, which is the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem-יהוה*, the *Shechinah*, which dwells with the Jewish people even as they are in exile. (See Rabbeinu Bacheye to Genesis 46:4.)

flows to the lower [terrestrial] beings. About this the verse states,⁴⁷ “He removed the wheels of their chariots.”

This being so, contemplate the great principle that we have transmitted to you about the teaching “we were slaves,” and guard and remember all that we have included in it, and thereby know to what extent the power of this repentance (*Teshuvah*) reaches, for it is a foundation and fundamental principle of the entire Torah.

Now, about the statement, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt,” [indicating] that the exile in Egypt was worse than any other place, this nonetheless was out of the compassion of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and His mercies toward us. Because since He decreed exile upon us, for a matter of which I have yet to inform you, He decreed that we should be exiled to a place that is bestowed and full of every manner of worldly goodness, and all food is found there free of charge, for no money, as the verse states,⁴⁸ “Like the garden of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, like the land of Egypt,” and it states,⁴⁹ “[In the land of Egypt], as we sat by the meat pot, [when we ate bread to satiety,” and],⁵⁰ “We remember the fish [that we ate in Egypt free of charge].” This is because when a slave is enslaved to hard labor, but they ultimately diminish his sustenance, he will become depleted and die in panic. However, because there [in Egypt] sustenance was in great abundance, therefore, even while toiling in difficult servitude, they would be capable of bearing the toil and labor.

⁴⁷ Exodus 14:25

⁴⁸ Genesis 13:10

⁴⁹ Exodus 16:3

⁵⁰ Numbers 11:5

Moreover, it is because the Elevated One told our forefathers and promised them that He would increase their descendants like the stars in the heavens, and as known, an abundance of children requires abundance without constraint, and with [abundant] dispersion. It therefore was necessary for the Elevated One to [specifically] exile them in Egypt so that there would be ample sustenance commensurate to their children. About this the verse states,⁵¹ “I shall establish you as a great nation there.” This is the secret of the verse,⁵² “Yosef sustained his father [and his brothers and all his father’s household with food according to the children].” We will also further explain the secrets of this teaching later, with additional wonders from He who is of perfect knowledge, with the help of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

**מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־
עֲזַרְיָה וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן שֶׁהָיוּ מְסַבִּין בְּבֵנֵי־
בְּרַק וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם כָּל־אוֹתוֹ הַלֵּילָה,
עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם רַבּוֹתֵינוּ הִגִּיעַ זְמַן
קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע נָשִׁל שְׁחֵרִית.**

IT ONCE HAPPENED, that Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria and Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon reclined [for the Passover seder]

⁵¹ Genesis 46:3

⁵² Genesis 47:12

in Bnei Brak. And they told of the Exodus from Egypt all that night; until their students came in and said, “Our teachers – the time for saying the morning *Shema* has come.”

You already know the secret of the sages mentioned here, that they were the greatest sages of Israel in the [secrets of] the Workings of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*) and in the secrets of changes to the natural order. For, although you will find many great pillars amongst the sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud, not all of them received the [secrets] of the Workings of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*). Our sages, of blessed memory, already stated in Talmud⁵³ that “Rabbi so and so was expert [and lectured] before so and so in the teachings,” and otherwise they would say to one another,⁵⁴ “Stop your words and speak about [the laws] of Nega’im and Ohalot,” in that they were engaged in the orders of the Chariot (*Merkavah*) regarding secrets of changing the conduct of the world by way of miracles.

Thus, since these sages also had the received knowledge regarding the Workings of the Chariot (*Merkavah*) which are included in the Oral Torah, as it states,⁵⁵ “Rabbi Yochanan said to Rabbi Elazar,⁵⁶ ‘Come and I will teach you the Workings of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*),’ to which he responded, ‘I

⁵³ See Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14b

⁵⁴ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14a

⁵⁵ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 13a

⁵⁶ The text here reads Rabbi Eliezer, but our edition of the Talmud reads Rabbi Elazar. As he mentions this again in the next section in association with Rabbi Elazar, it is most likely a typo.

have not yet sufficiently aged.”” You already know what is publicized regarding the sages mentioned in the above teaching, that they were experts in the secret of the Working of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*), and you already know that about Rabbi Akiva it states that “he entered in peace and went out in peace.”⁵⁷

This being so, contemplate the secret of the exodus from Egypt, and the secret of the holiday of Passover in its laws and *mitzvot*, and the secret of the Matzah, the Maror, and all the other matters connected to them, as they all are included in the secrets of grasping the Supernal, the grasp of Godliness.

We have a received knowledge (Kabbalah) that all these sages are a link in the chain of the knowledge of the Working of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*) that was transmitted from Sinai until the right pillar, the pious Chassid, Rabbi Yitzchak the blind, son of the holy Rabbi Avraham, the root of holiness. In truth, for people such as these, it is appropriate to expound and investigate the secret of “*Mah Nishtanah*” and the secret of the exodus from Egypt all night long. This being so, go and see where they reached in relating the exodus from Egypt, and the secret matters included in this Haggadah that we are accustomed to merely recite.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן-עֲזַרְיָה הָרִי אֲנִי כָּבֹן
שְׁבָעִים שָׁנָה וְלֹא זָכִיתִי שְׁתַּאֲמֵר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם
בְּלִילוֹת עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶן זֹמָא, שְׁנַאֲמַר, לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת

⁵⁷ Talmud Yerushalmi, Chagigah 2:1

יֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלֵּילוֹת. וְחֻכָּמִים אֹמְרִים יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהָבִיא לִימּוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ:

RABBI ELAZAR BEN AZARIA SAID: I am like a seventy-year-old man, and never have I merited to find the command to mention the Exodus from Egypt at night – until Ben Zoma interpreted it: It is written, “So that you remember the day of your exodus from Egypt all the days of your life.” “The days of your life” means the days; “**all** the days of your life” includes the nights. The sages say, “The days of your life” means this world; “all the days of your life” comes to include the days of Moshiach.

You already know what our sages, of blessed memory, stated in Talmud, in Tractate Brachot,⁵⁸ in the Mishnah,⁵⁹ as to whether the evening prayer is optional or obligatory, in regard to his statement, “I am like a seventy-year-old man and never have I merited etc.” They said that Rabbi Elazar was eighteen years old and was unfit to serve as the head of the academy, not because of his youth, but because he did not have the appearance of age, which is one of the parameters and known signs required [to be taught] the wondrous secrets. This relates

⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 28a

⁵⁹ Mishnah Brachot 1:5

to the secret [mentioned before] that “Rabbi Yochanan said [to Rabbi Elazar], ‘Come and I will teach you the Workings of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*) etc.”

About his words, “**until Ben Zoma interpreted,**” you already know who Ben Zoma is from the matter of the four who entered the Pardes,⁶⁰ Ben Zoma being one of them. All this bears clear testimony that the secret of relating the story of the exodus from Egypt is the secret of relating the miracles that were brought about by His might, blessed is He, and how they changed the normal conduct of the world. In their discussions they would mention how each particular miracle was done by way of *HaShem* יהוה-ה"ס Supernal dominion. For, they knew the power of the natural order and the power that exerts force over the natural order.

Thus, this was a holy gathering, and it is about people such as this that they stated, “The more one tells of the exodus from Egypt, the more admirable.” That is, they would enter the sanctum of the Chariot (*Merkavah*) and see with the eye of their grasp how the waters turned to blood, and [how] the frogs swarmed, as though they themselves were literally there at the time of the miracle, and so likewise with each and every miracle.

Now, in regard to the statement in the Mishnah, that the exodus from Egypt is recalled all the days of one’s life, such that they brought the strength of the Scripture that they expounded, that “the days of your life” refers to this world etc., I shall hint at the great secret hidden in the recesses of this

⁶⁰ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14b

Mishnah, and why it was necessary for our sages, of blessed memory, to say this.

Know, that being that the exodus from Egypt was the beginning and primary root of all the goodness that the Blessed One has done with us, in that “had He not taken us out of Egypt, and not given us the Torah, and not given us etc.” This being so, the exodus from Egypt is the secret and primary root of **all the goodness** that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, has done with us throughout.

Thus, I cannot possibly not grant you the benefit of gracing you with this great root, such that I will open the Gates of Light and stand you upon the secret of this Mishnah. However, though these matters are lengthy, I will summarize them.

Know, that it is appropriate for a person to inquire and investigate why the Elevated One created man with two inclinations. For, being that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is good and bestows goodness, why then did He see fit to create man with both a good inclination and an evil inclination? Would it not have been better for only the good one to be, without the evil inclination opposing him?

The answer to this question is as follows: Know that all the deeds of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, are straightforward, and He foretells all from beginning to end.⁶¹ It is He who created and prepared both this world and the coming world. In this world, He prepared the potential for deeds that are worthy of being done, and He transmitted the Torah to inform man of those matters that should be brought out from the potential to

⁶¹ Isaiah 46:10

the actual, this world being called the world of trials and tests. For, since permission is granted in the hands of man to increase in good deeds, therefore, according to his deeds he receives recompense and goodly reward beyond numeration and limitation, as the verse states,⁶² “How abundant is Your goodness that You have stored away for those who fear You.”

However, if a person wants to make himself wicked, though he has the Torah [which instructs him] to do good and be upright and guides him to every goodness and perfection - who then is it who caused his destruction? Is it not from himself alone that fire came and consumed him? However, if man had no evil inclination, he would not be worthy of receiving reward for all the good he did, since he had no obstacle to obstruct him. This being so, we find that the evil inclination is a very great rectification and perfection for one who desires to choose the upright path, who does not have iniquity and evil within himself, being that the Torah establishes the foundations by which to build the ruins [of the evil inclination] and cure his sickness.

Therefore, the two inclinations are a very great need in this world, this world being the world of trial and test. However, in the coming world, which is the world of the reward, there will be no need for either the good or the evil inclination, for as they already stated, “what was, was.” All there will then be is the receiving of the reward according to the deed.

After this introduction, know that the statement, “**‘The days of your life’ refers to this world,**” is an important secret,

⁶² Psalms 31:20

namely, that all the goodness that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, does with us in this world, is because we went out of Egypt and accepted the Torah, which repairs the breaches of the evil inclination.

The meaning of “**“all the days of your life’ comes to include the days of Moshiach,**” is that this is the reason for the Matzah, as we have stated. For, when *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, will circumcise the foreskins of our hearts and remove the evil inclination from us, not leaving a little or a lot, we then will be pure and adhere to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, grasping Him with a grasp that neither ceases nor separates as a result of the physical.

There then will be the fulfillment of the verse,⁶³ “[They will say on that day], ‘Behold, this is our God, we hoped to Him [that He would save us; this is *HaShem*-יהו"ה to Whom we hoped, let us exult and be glad in His salvation],” according to what they expounded about it.⁶⁴ This likewise is the meaning of the verse,⁶⁵ “You shall draw water with joy from the springs [of salvation] etc.”

The primary essence of all the goodness we are destined for, is the secret of the exodus from Egypt, and receiving the Torah and fulfilling it, which we have done in this world, and because of which we merit all the goodness hidden in store for us, and the guarantees of the coming world. This being so, we find that this verse, “So that you remember the day of your exodus from Egypt all the days of your life” includes this world

⁶³ Isaiah 25:9

⁶⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Taanit 31a

⁶⁵ Isaiah 12:3

in the beginning and the coming world in the end. We thus find that everything is included in the exodus from Egypt, and that it is the secret and primary essence of [the verse],⁶⁶ “Death will be swallowed up forever,” which depends on the secret of the Chametz and Matzah mentioned above.⁶⁷ This should suffice to explain this Mishnah.

**בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בָּרוּךְ הוּא, בָּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בָּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּנִגְדַּ אַרְבַּעַה בָּנִים דְּבָרָה תּוֹרָה:
אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינֵנוּ יוֹדֵעַ
לְשִׁאוֹל.**

BLESSED IS THE EVER PRESENT ONE –
blessed is He. Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His
people Israel – blessed is He. The Torah spoke
corresponding to four sons – one who is wise, one who
is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not
know to ask.

Know that the Torah includes all knowledges and
viewpoints in the world, for if you say otherwise, it is as if [to
say] the Torah is deficient. Now, since the exodus from Egypt
is the primary essence and root in accepting the yoke of the
Kingdom of Heaven, so that we become His servants, our sages

⁶⁶ Isaiah 25:8

⁶⁷ In the section of “This is the bread of oppression.”

therefore had to begin opening the gates of righteousness, [and inform us] that there is one potential that comes into actualization for good and evil, and there is [another potential] that comes neither for this nor for that. This being so, since we are obliged to accept the Torah, this being the secret of the Kingdom of Heaven, it thus is not possible for us all to be equal.

This is the secret of what I explained in the preceding Mishnah, that there are some who are righteous (*Tzaddikim*), some who are wicked (*Resha'im*), and some who are so and so. This being so, it must be said that it should not arise in one's heart that there is any deficiency [in the Torah], since all that is done and all that is destined to be, is all foreseen in [the Torah] and is all engraved in it. This is why our sages stated, "The Torah spoke of four sons etc."

I now will explain this primary principle, since it is an important peg upon which everything hangs and a pillar upon which everything rests. Know that since it is so amongst mankind, that some are righteous (*Tzaddikim*), some are intermediates (*Beinonim*), and some are wicked (*Resha'im*), this is the secret of the test and trial, and the secret of the good inclination and evil inclination that we discussed before.

Now, in His Torah, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, wrote of these four classes, in four known places in the Torah portions, which differ one from the other, each of which awakens us and attests to an important foundation and primary principle of which there is no loftier.

For, the son who is called wise (*Chacham*) is written of in a known Torah portion that relates to those such as him, and the same is so of the wicked (*Rasha*) son, the simple (*Tam*) son, and

the son who does not know to ask (*Eino Yode'ah Lishol*). That is, they all have a primary root, and all come [to inform] of only a primary known matter, and all are included in the secret of “six-hundred-thousand footsoldiers [are the people].”⁶⁸ This is because six-hundred-thousand Jews are called “the multitudes of Israel,” and when one beholds this many Jews, he is obliged to recite the blessing, “Blessed is He who knows all secrets.”⁶⁹ That is, He knows the knowledge and viewpoint of each and every one of them, and not one is like the other.⁷⁰

Now, the Torah includes all their views, and thus one wise sage said to his fellow,⁷¹ “When I saw you, I made the blessing, ‘Blessed is He who knows all secrets,’ being that you are equal in measure to the multitudes.” It is appropriate for all who are wise to contemplate the words of this sage. For, the sage over whom he made this blessing [which is reserved to be recited] over the multitudes, had knowledge that included all knowledges and viewpoints included in the multitudes, and he knew how to conduct himself with each one according to his knowledge and viewpoint.

To further explain, Torah itself attests that all knowledges and viewpoints were found in that standing at Mount Sinai, and the verse therefore stated,⁷² “whosoever is here, standing with us today,”⁷³ and then continues stating,⁷⁴ “Perhaps there is a man or woman amongst you, [a family or

⁶⁸ Numbers 11:21

⁶⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 58a

⁷⁰ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 58a *ibid.*; Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 21:2

⁷¹ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 58a *ibid.*

⁷² Deuteronomy 29:14

⁷³ (“and whosoever is not here with us today.”)

⁷⁴ Deuteronomy 29:17

tribe, whose heart turns away today] etc.” It thus included all knowledges and viewpoints at that standing. Thus, since this is so, we therefore shall explain each of the four who are mentioned, each according to what is appropriate to him.

תָּכֶם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵדוֹת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם. וְאִיךָ אֶתָּה אָמֹר לוֹ
כִּהְלָכֹת הִפְסַח: אֵין מִפְּטִירִין אַחֵר הִפְסַח אֶפִּיקוֹמָן.

THE WISE SON what does he say? “What are the testimonies, the statutes and ordinances, that *HaShem* our God, commanded you?” And you must tell him the laws of Pesach: “After eating the Pesach offering one does not eat anything more.”

You already know what the secrets of testimonies (*Eidot*-עֵדוֹת), statutes (*Chukim*-חֻקִּים) and ordinances (*Mishpatim*-מִשְׁפָּטִים) are. The secret of “testimonies-*Eidot*-עֵדוֹת” mentioned in the Torah, refers to all things that no person has the capacity to grasp by way of investigation through logical proofs, even if he would live for a thousand years twice over. This refers to the matter of the novel creation of the world, in the matter of His desire from nothing.

For, there is no man in the world who can find any proof that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was compelled to create the world and to do so when He did, and in seven days, and with these forms, this likeness, and these measures. Rather, it all

newly comes forth according to the decree of His wisdom and will. These matters, and those like them, are such that no person can grasp by observable proofs, but solely by way of the received knowledge, in that He commanded us to testify to its truth, and even though we cannot grasp it through observable proofs, He told us to be faithful and not question Him, and to attest that it is just as written in His Torah, such as the matter we attest to that “six days *HaShem*-יהו"ה made [the heavens and the earth] etc.”⁷⁵

That is, even though we did not see how the world began and was newly created from nothing, we nonetheless are obliged to attest that it indeed is as in His words. This is why on the two Tablets (*Luchot*) [the commandment] “you shall not bear false testimony (*Eid Shaker*-עד שקר),”⁷⁶ is opposite [the commandment to] “Keep the Shabbat.”⁷⁷

About this Dovid said,⁷⁸ “The testimony (*Eidut*-עדות) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is trustworthy, it makes a fool wise.” The explanation is that all testimony (*Eidut*-עדות) coming from the mouth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, though we have not seen it and only have heard it from Him, it is trustworthy and true, having no falsehood in it, and thus one should not question it. [Moreover] it makes the fool wise. For, even though there utterly was nothing present when He began creating the world, and all who argue about this are fools, nonetheless, even though one who testifies to this is a fool, being that he was not present at that time, when he bears testimony such as this, he is wise.

⁷⁵ Exodus 20:11; 31:17

⁷⁶ Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17

⁷⁷ Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:12

⁷⁸ Psalms 19:8

Now, wherever in Torah you find mention of “His *mitzvot* and His testimonies,” any *mitzvah* that is impossible to grasp to its ultimate clarity, to which we attest as a received knowledge (*Kabbalah*), in which we rely for its attestation upon the Creator, blessed is He, is called a “testimony-*Eidut*-עדות.” This is the meaning of the verse, ““The testimony (*Eidut*-עדות) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is trustworthy etc.,” as in the secret of the verse,⁷⁹ “Who (*Mi*-מי) has stood upon the secret of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, who (*Mi*-מי) has seen or heard His word,” and the secret of [the verse],⁸⁰ “I alone spread out the heavens and firmed the earth of My own accord-*Me'eetee*-מאתי.” Do not just read it as “of My own accord-*Me'eetee*-מאתי,” but read it as “Who was with me-*Mi Eetee*-מי אתי.”⁸¹ This being so, this is why it states, “the testimony-*Eidut*-עדות.”

The secret of “statutes-*Chukim*-חוקים” refers to all *mitzvot* the reasons of which are hidden, and it is not in the capacity of mankind to grasp then with ultimate clarity. However, the sages amongst them do grasp some, but not all, of their reasons. Examples of this are the [mitzvot of] the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*), *Sha'atnez*,⁸² the Scapegoat (*Se'ir HaMishtaleyach*),⁸³ and the decapitated calf (*Egla Arufa*),⁸⁴ the reasons of which are very deep. All these are called “statutes-*Chukim*-חוקים.”

⁷⁹ Jeremiah 23:18

⁸⁰ Isaiah 44:24

⁸¹ The verse is written as “Who was with me-*Mi Eetee*-מי אתי,” but is read as “of My own accord-*Me'eetee*-מאתי.” *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה title “Who-*Mi*-מי” refers to the Understanding-*Binah*. See *Shaarei Orah* by the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light, Gate Eight (Binah)*.

⁸² A forbidden mixture of wool and linen. See Leviticus 19:19

⁸³ Leviticus 16:5-10

⁸⁴ Deuteronomy 21:1-9

Now, you already know what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁸⁵ on the verse,⁸⁶ “This is the decree (*Chukat*-חֻקַּת) of the Torah,” that “these are decrees that I have decreed upon you, and you have no right to question them, even though Satan argues against them and the nations of the world taunt against them, such as the matter of the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*) and the Scapegoat (*Se’ir HaMishtaleyach*).”

This being so, the *mitzvot* called “statutes-*Chukim*-חֻקִּים” are closer to being grasped than those called “testimonies-*Eidot*-עֵדוּת.” About [*mitzvot*] that are called “statutes-*Chukim*-חֻקִּים,” Dovid, peace be upon him, stated,⁸⁷ “The precepts of *HaShem*-ה' are upright, gladdening the heart,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁸⁸ “To whom do they cause gladdening of the heart? To him for whom they are upright,” meaning that he understands and knows the secrets of their hidden and deep reasons.

The secret of the *mitzvot* called “ordinances-*Mishpatim*-מִשְׁפָּטִים” are all those things that mankind recognizes as being for their benefit, such as the [laws regarding] the four types of custodians,⁸⁹ and all other laws that are for the rectification of civilization and society. For, in all these, their benefit is known to all men. These are called “ordinances-*Mishpatim*-מִשְׁפָּטִים.” The verse thus states,⁹⁰ “These are the ordinances that you shall place before them.” That is, their reasons are known and

⁸⁵ Talmud Bavli Yoma 67b; Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 7

⁸⁶ Numbers 19:2 and Rashi there

⁸⁷ Psalms 19:9

⁸⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Yoma 72b

⁸⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 94a

⁹⁰ Exodus 21:1

recognized by mankind, and it thus states, “that you shall place before them (*Lifneihem*-לפניהם).”

After having awakened you to these three designations, “testimonies” (*Eidot*-עדות), “statutes” (*Chukim*-חוקים) and “ordinances” (*Mishpatim*-משפטים), we shall return to the subject under discussion and state that being that the wise [son] is wise, all his questions have deep wisdom, in that they are the words of the wise. Thus, when the Haggadah states, “The wise son, what does he say,” [then] listing the entire Torah, this is because the entire Torah is the question of the wise [son], meaning, that which is the deepest and is called “testimonies” (*Eidot*-עדות), as well as the “statutes” (*Chukim*-חוקים) and the “ordinances” (*Mishpatim*-משפטים).

He listed them in the order of their level of greatness, beginning with those that are impossible to grasp because of their depth, these being the “testimonies” (*Eidot*-עדות). He then juxtaposed the “statutes” (*Chukim*-חוקים) to them, in that they are very deep but are closer to being grasped. After this [He mentioned] the “ordinances” (*Mishpatim*-משפטים), which are known by all mankind.

For, such is the way of every person who is wise at heart, in that even those *mitzvot* that are deep and he does not grasp, he investigates them until he takes them out of the category of “testimonies” (*Eidot*-עדות) and into the category of “statutes” (*Chukim*-חוקים) and from the category of “statutes” (*Chukim*-חוקים) into the category of “ordinances” (*Mishpatim*-משפטים). Understand this very well. Furthermore, the question of the

wise [son] is about matters that include all the orders of Torah, and “a three-ply cord is not easily severed.”⁹¹

Now, after having informed you of the secret of the question of the wise [son], we shall return to explaining this chapter [of the Haggadah] and shall state as follows: When [the Hagaddah] wished to inform us of the greatness of the wise [son], it stated [that he asks], “What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances that *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, commanded you.” However, there is room for a question here. For, [the Haggadah] takes issue with the wicked [son] when he says, “What is this service for you,” about which they said, ““for you-*Lechem*-לכם’ and not for him, thus removing himself from the whole.” This being so, how is it that the wise [son] says, “that *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, commanded you-*Etchem*-אתכם,” in which the word “you-*Etchem*-אתכם” is similar to the word “for you-*Lachem*-לכם?”

Know that “a wise man has eyes in his head,”⁹² and thus, when the wise [son] says, “that *HaShem*-יהו"ה **our God** commanded,” he is including himself with all Israel in accepting the Kingdom of Heaven. The fact that he said “you-*Etchem*-אתכם” is like a person who says this to diminish himself in humility, in that he is not fitting nor is on a level that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, should command him, even though he is included with those who serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

Thus, here [the Hagaddah] informs us of the superiority of the wise [son] compared to the wicked [son] and what [the wicked son] has done by not including himself [in the whole]

⁹¹ Ecclesiastes 4:12

⁹² Ecclesiastes 2:14

as they said that at first, [the wicked son] did not mention *HaShem*-יהו"ה and in the end, he said "what is this service for you." This being so, "the advantage of the wise over the fool, is like the advantage of light over darkness."⁹³

Now that you know this, let us awaken you to why in the question of the wise son here, "testimonies" (*Eidot*-עדות), "statutes" (*Chukim*-חוקים) and "ordinances" (*Mishpatim*-משפטים) are included, such that the response is, "You must tell him the laws of Passover: After eating the Passover offering one does not eat anything more." This being so, in which of these three qualities is the matter of the Passover offering included?

Know that the Passover offering is included in all three. That is, it is included in the category of "testimonies" (*Eidot*-עדות) in that there is none amongst the mystery of the creation of the world or amongst the secret of the reversal of its orders by a prophet, who knows except for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. It is included in the category of "statutes" (*Chukim*-חוקים), in that the *mitzvah* of the Passover offering, the *Matzot*, the blood, the hyssop, and the like, are included in the laws of Passover, and they all are in the category of "statutes" (*Chukim*-חוקים) in that not all people merit to know them.

Additionally, it is included in the category of "ordinances" (*Mishpatim*-משפטים) in that their benefit is publicized before the eyes of the whole world, since all this was done by us when we left Egypt from slavery to freedom, from suffering to joy, and from mourning to festivity. This being so, [all] the secrets of "testimonies" (*Eidot*-עדות), "statutes" (*Chukim*-חוקים), and

⁹³ See Ecclesiastes 2:13

“ordinances” (*Mishpatim*-משפטים), are included in the exodus from Egypt. Thus, about this they said,⁹⁴ “Because it is a statute (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel, a testimony (*Eidot*-עדות)⁹⁵ for the God of Yaakov.” Thus, the answer to all this is that “after eating the Passover offering one does not eat anything more.” We shall further inform you about the secret of this answer to [the wise son] later, with the help of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

This being so, we find that the words of the wise [son] are according to what is appropriate to him. Thus, after having spoken about the question of the wise [son], we shall now inform [you] of the secret of the Torah portion that the wise [son] is appropriately unified with.

That is, before the Torah portion about the wise son,⁹⁶ is the Torah portion of “You shall not test *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God... you shall do what is upright and good etc.,”⁹⁷ and the Torah portion of “It shall be that when *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God brings you to the Land,”⁹⁸ and the Torah portion of “Listen Israel, *HaShem*-יהו"ה is our God, *HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-אהד יהו"ה,”⁹⁹ this being the first paragraph of the *Shema* recital, which includes all of Torah from beginning to end, in which it states,¹⁰⁰ “You shall teach them thoroughly to your

⁹⁴ Psalms 81:5

⁹⁵ The text here reads “testimony (*Eidot*-עדות),” whereas the actual verse reads “Because it is a statute (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel, an ordinance (*Mishpat*-משפט),” and then [the next verse] continues “He appointed it as a testimony (*Eidot*-עדות) for Yosef, when He went out over the land of Egypt,” thus including all three categories.

⁹⁶ Deuteronomy 6:20-25 – “If your son asks you tomorrow saying, ‘What are the testimonies, and statutes, and ordinances that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, our God, commanded you?’”

⁹⁷ Deuteronomy 6:16-19

⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 6:10-15

⁹⁹ Deuteronomy 6:4-9

¹⁰⁰ Deuteronomy 6:7

children.” Then, in the next portion juxtaposed to it, the verse states, “You shall not test *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God... you shall do what is upright and good etc.” This being so, you have done and fulfilled these three portions, which are the purification of the body and the soul, and with effort. The wise [son] is therefore fitting to ask about the statutes (*Chukim*) and ordinances (*Mishpatim*). This being so, know and contemplate how the words of our Torah are all said in an order of chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*), and “as a flame is bound to the coal.”¹⁰¹ This shall suffice to awaken us to the words of the wise [son].

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם – וְלֹא לוֹ. וּלְפִי שְׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכָּלָל כְּפָר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִם אַתָּה הַקָּהָה אֶת שְׁנֵי נְאֻמוֹר לוֹ: "בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשִׂה יְהוָה לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם". לִי וְלֹא-לוֹ. אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה שָׁם, לֹא הָיָה נִגָּאֵל:

THE WICKED SON what does he say? “What is this labor for you?” He says, “For you,” and not for him. When he sets himself apart from the whole, he denies the very core of our beliefs. And you must set his teeth on edge and tell him, “Because of this, *HaShem* did for me when I came out of Egypt.” For me,” and not for

¹⁰¹ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

him; had he been there he would not have been redeemed.

Know that the wicked [son's] questions are according to his qualities. He does not mention "testimonies" (*Eidot*-עדות), "statutes" (*Chukim*-חוקים), or "ordinances" (*Mishpatim*-משפטים), but takes it all as a matter of "labor-*Avodah*-עבודה," like a slave doing a chore and [carrying a] heavy burden. He therefore says, "What is this labor for you-*Lachem*-לכם," in which he truly means "for you-*Lachem*-לכם," and does not mention his [own] *mitzvot*, as we discussed above about the words of the wise [son].

The response to him is, "Because of this, *HaShem*-יהו"ה did for me," for me and not for him etc. For, as known, a miracle is only done once there is trust (*Bitachon*) in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. About this it states that the tribe of Yehudah jumped into the sea before it split,¹⁰² as the verse states,¹⁰³ "The children of Israel came into the sea etc.," and it only split after this, as [the verse continues to state], "on dry land." There thus is mention here of a love within a love [for the wise son].

However, you need to know why our sages, of blessed memory, connected this response to the question of the wicked son, being that it is the response to the wise son, because in the Torah, these [verses] are not ordered according to the order that our sages, of blessed memory, ordered them [in the Hagaddah].

¹⁰² See Mechilta d'Rashbi to Exodus 14:20

¹⁰³ Exodus 14:22

For, in response to the question of the wicked son,¹⁰⁴ “When your children say to you etc.,” the next Torah verse states,¹⁰⁵ “You shall say, ‘It is a Passover feast offering to *HaShem*-יהו” etc.,” and it does not say,¹⁰⁶ “Because of this, *HaShem*-יהו” did [for me],” which only is said [later in the Torah] in the portion of “Sanctify every firstborn to Me.”¹⁰⁷

It thus is necessary to delve into whether it is so that in the portion of the wise son, when it mentions his question,¹⁰⁸ “What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances etc.,” the response [there] was,¹⁰⁹ “You shall say to your son, ‘We were slaves etc.’” Understand this very well. This being so, you need to know our answers to all these [questions] in the words of the simple son and the words of one who does not know to ask.

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת. וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו "בְּחֻזֶּק יָד הוֹצֵאתָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

THE SIMPLE SON what does he say? “What is this?” And you must tell him, “With a strong hand *HaShem* brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.”

¹⁰⁴ Exodus 12:26 – “When your children say to you, ‘What is this labor for you?’”

¹⁰⁵ Exodus 12:27

¹⁰⁶ Exodus 13:8

¹⁰⁷ Exodus 13

¹⁰⁸ Deuteronomy 6:20

¹⁰⁹ Deuteronomy 6:21 – This being the response of the Haggadah to the simple son (*Tam*-תָּם).

An important principle that we must transmit to you is the secret of he who is called “simple-*Tam*-תם.” You already know that one who is called “simple-*Tam*-תם” is deficient, whereas one who truly is whole is called “perfect-*Tamim*-תמים.” It thus is in this regard that the verse states about Avraham,¹¹⁰ “Walk before Me and be perfect-*Tamim*-תמים,” for until then he was deficient. That is, he was whole in his trust (*Bitachon*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, but was deficient in his body, in that he was uncircumcised.

It is for this reason that in that very Torah portion, he was told and commanded about the matter of the circumcision. It also states in Torah,¹¹¹ “You shall be wholehearted-*Tamim*-תמים with *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.” Do not err by what the verse states about Yaakov,¹¹² “Yaakov was a simple-*Tam*-תם man.” For, he still had a small measure of deficiency, and he was made perfect-*Tamim*-תמים when he grasped and was victorious over the angel and was told,¹¹³ “No longer will it be said that your name is Yaakov etc.” Examine this and you will discover that this is so.

The same is so of Iyov [about whom the verse states],¹¹⁴ “A simple-*Tam*-תם and upright man who fears God.” The secret of the word “simple-*Tam*-תם” used at the beginning of [the book of] Iyov informs us that it was fitting for him to undergo the sufferings that he underwent. It is about this that at the end of

¹¹⁰ Genesis 17:1

¹¹¹ Deuteronomy 18:13

¹¹² Genesis 25:27

¹¹³ Genesis 32:29

¹¹⁴ Job 2:3

all his words, it states,¹¹⁵ “Iyov then responded to *HaShem*-יהו"ה... I heard of You through hearsay... Therefore, I renounce [my words] and relent.” Examine it and so you will discover. Likewise, one must distance himself from an innocuous bull (*Shor Tam*-שור תם).¹¹⁶ Thus the general principle and conclusion is as we have said, and being that it is a primary principle, do not question it. Moreover, if you find something that contradicts our words, attribute the deficiency to yourself.

To return to the subject under discussion, know that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, had to revolve matters and causes, so that Yishmael would be born of Avraham before Yitzchak, and that Esav came out before Yaakov, and that Reuven was born before Levi, all these being wondrous secrets and awesome matters. Moreover, He had to command in His Torah that every firstborn receives a double portion [of inheritance]¹¹⁷ and there are awesome secrets in this too.

The reason is that from above to below, the closer [one] is superior, whereas from below to above, the closer [one] is inferior. This then, explains the statements of the wise son, the wicked son, and the son who does not know to ask, for they all are included in the Torah portion of “Sanctify every firstborn to me,”¹¹⁸ and it is written,¹¹⁹ “And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time [‘what is this?'] etc.”

The reason is because when it comes to the first seminal drop and seed, to the degree that it is closer to materiality, to

¹¹⁵ Job 42:5

¹¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 33a

¹¹⁷ Deuteronomy 21:17

¹¹⁸ Exodus 13

¹¹⁹ Exodus 13:14

that degree it is coarser, until the materiality is diminished and refined. Understand this very well, in that this is the reason for Yishmael and Yitzchak, and Esav and Yaakov, and Reuven and Levi, and this is why the [sages] stated, “Every firstborn is an idiot.”¹²⁰

However, it can be said, “Did Avraham not have relations before Yishmael?” The truth is that he did have relations, for had he not had relations the verse would not have said,¹²¹ “And Sarai was barren,” and Avraham said,¹²² “You have given me no offspring.” The general principle that arises from all this, is as explained, that the more distant [one] is more refined than [the firstborn,] as stated above.

This being so, contemplate that what was stated here, hinges the matter on the Torah portion to the one for whom it is appropriate. However, we find that in the Torah portion of the exodus from Egypt it states,¹²³ “It shall be that when your children say to you, [‘What is this labor for you’] etc.,” this being the question of the wicked son, this is to inform you that wherever fear of Heaven is absent, one will only learn mockery, wickedness, and all evil qualities. Thus, because the Israelites lived amongst the Egyptians, it was not possible that some of them did not learn from their ways, or [from the ways] the rabble of peoples who ascended [from Egypt] with them.

The Torah thus states that children are destined to come from them who are fitting of asking this question, and it

¹²⁰ See Bava Batra 126b and Rashi there; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 21:9 and elsewhere.

¹²¹ Genesis 11:30

¹²² Genesis 15:3

¹²³ Exodus 12:26

therefore included them by using the plural form, meaning, from the rabble that became mixed with Israel, stating, “When your **children-*Bneichem*-בניכם** say to you” [in the plural].

In contrast, the wise son is included in the singular form, being that he is singular and righteous, [as the verse states],¹²⁴ “If your **son-*Beencha*-בןך** asks you tomorrow saying, [‘what are the testimonies’] etc.” The son who does not know to ask is included in the Torah portion of Egypt,¹²⁵ “Draw forth or purchase for yourselves one of the flock etc.” Thus, the wicked son is included in the language used for the rabble, which is in the plural form, stating, “When your children-*Bneichem*-בניכם say to you etc.” This being so, this should suffice for the intelligent.

וְשִׂאֵינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל – אֶת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, וְהִגַּדְתָּ
 לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֶבְרִית זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי
 בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם

AND THE ONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW TO ASK you must open for him, as it states: “And you shall tell your son on that day, ‘Because of this, *HaShem* did for me when I came out of Egypt.’”

We already included him in the words of the simple son (*Tam*-תם). Now, the son who does not know to ask is included

¹²⁴ Deuteronomy 6:20

¹²⁵ Exodus 12:21

in the Torah portion of the firstborn, the secret of which I already have informed you. The response to him is close in similarity to the wicked son, only that Torah calls it the answer to his question [as well].¹²⁶ The verse thus states, “And you shall tell your son-*v’Heegadeta L’Veencha*-והגדת לבנך.” Understand the meaning of the word “you shall tell-*v’Heegadeta*-והגדת,” in that it is a word that connotes speaking with strength and setting the teeth of the heretic and the wicked son on edge, as in the verse,¹²⁷ “Your neck is an iron sinew-*Geed*-גיד.” It is upon this that they relied in stating [about the wicked son], “You must set his teeth on edge and tell him.” However, the reason that after using the word “You shall tell-*v’Heegadeta*-והגדת” it uses the word “your son-*Veencha*-בנך” [in the singular] is specifically to exclude the son who does not know to ask. This is why the response to him is not juxtaposed to a question, as it is with the wise son and the simple son. For, about the wise son a question was stated, and the answer was juxtaposed to it,¹²⁸ “If your son asks you tomorrow saying, ‘What are the testimonies etc.’ You shall say-*v’Amarta*-ואמרת to your son, ‘We were slaves etc.’” Likewise, in regard to the simple son it states,¹²⁹ “And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time ‘what is this?’” and the answer [immediately follows], “You shall say-*v’Amarta*-ואמרת to him, ‘With a strong hand *HaShem*-יהו”ה took us out etc.’”

¹²⁶ In the original printing of this work the text here is an acronym “ת”ל” which in later printings was interpreted as “the answer to his question-*Teshuvah L’She’eilato*”-תשובה לשאלתו,” as we have rendered it here.

¹²⁷ Isaiah 48:4

¹²⁸ Deuteronomy 6:20-21

¹²⁹ Exodus 13:14

However, when it comes to the question of the son who does not know to ask, the answer is not juxtaposed to the question, since one who is wicked is unworthy of an answer, but only the breaking of his teeth, and the one who does not know to ask is unworthy of an answer, but only of being informed of the matter. Understand this very well, and you will discover many keys to gates that are locked and to which there is no way to enter except by way of the received knowledge (*Kabbalah*) or with the help of the Supernal One, blessed is He.

Contemplate the fact that about the wicked son it says, “You shall tell-*v’Heegadeta*-והגדת,” meaning, a response that is as hard as sinews, whereas to the wise son and the simple son it states, “You shall say-*v’Amarta*-ואמרת.” Understand this very well. Once you understand the primary principle that we have transmitted to you here, you will know why they explained about the son who does not know to ask, from where they did etc.¹³⁰

**יָכוֹל מֵרֹאשׁ חֲדָשׁ? תִּלְמִיד לּוֹמֵר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אִי
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יָכוֹל מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם? תִּלְמִיד לּוֹמֵר בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה
— בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה לֹא אָמַרְתִּי, אֲלֵא בְּשַׁעַה שֵׁישׁ מִצָּה וּמָרוֹר
מִנֵּחִים לְפָנֶיךָ.**

¹³⁰ Also see *Gevurot HaShem* of the Maharal of Prague to this section of the *Haggadah*.

ONE MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT this means from the beginning of the month. It therefore teaches, “on that day.” Had it only said “on that day,” one might have thought [that the obligation] applies during the day. It therefore says, “Because of this” – “because of *this*” can only be said when Matzah and bitter herbs are laying before you.

מִתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קִרְבָּנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעִבּוֹדָתוֹ, וְשֵׁנִיאָמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-כָּל-הָעָם, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֶבֶר הַנָּהָר יֵשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תֵּרַח אָבִי אֲבִרָהָם וְאָבִי נָחוֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. וְאַתָּה אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם אֶת-אֲבִרָהָם מֵעֶבֶר הַנָּהָר וְאוֹלֹךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, וְאַרְבֶּה אֶת-זֶרְעוֹ וְאַתָּן-לוֹ אֶת-יִצְחָק. וְאַתָּן לְיִצְחָק אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וְאַתָּה-עָשׂו, וְאַתָּן לְעֵשָׂו אֶת-הָר שְׁעִיר לְרִשְׁתָּ אוֹתוֹ, וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם.

AT FIRST, our ancestors were idolators. But now the Ever Present One has drawn us close in service of Him; as the verse states: “Yehoshua said to all the people, “This is what *HaShem*-יהו"ה, God of Israel, said: Of old,

your ancestors dwelt beyond the river – Terach the father of Avraham, the father of Nachor – and they served other gods. But I took your father Avraham from beyond the river, and I led him in all the land of Canaan, and I multiplied his offspring and gave him Yitzchak. And to Yitzchak I gave Yaakov and Esav, and I gave Esav Mount Seir as an inheritance, whereas Yaakov and his children went down to Egypt.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³¹ “He begins with [their] disgrace and concludes with [their] praise.” I now will illuminate your eyes to matters that are the secrets of the world. However, before I begin, I will preface with an introduction, as follows: You already are aware that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, granted man free choice, and He neither forces him to goodness nor its opposite. All this is of great benefit, for if this was not so, no righteous person could ever receive reward and no wicked person [could receive] punishment. This being so, every person must perform his deeds by his free choice, and *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, gives him according to his deeds.

After having given you this preface, know that if *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, chooses a single nation and separates it by force from all other nations, then [the nations could argue], “You compelled a certain nation to be special in serving You, but You did not compel us to do so as well. Had

¹³¹ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 116a

You compelled us, we too would fulfill Your will. However, since You arranged that we will be far from Your Torah, why punish us? It is You who caused those to be good and these to be evil.” This argument would be very strong, and there would be no one who could refute it.

Thus, since this is so, it was necessary for the Supernal One to inform us that our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, was the son of a completely wicked man, for he was the son of Terach, who was called Terach-*תרע* because every day he would cause “the wrath to boil-*Martiyach Aph*-*מרתיח אף*” of the Holy One, blessed is He.

Thus, an important principle and great secret has been made known here, namely, that the people of Israel are special to *HaShem*-*יהו"ה* not by compulsion, but out of [their] complete love, free choice, desire, and free will. I now will further explain:

Know that being that Avraham the son of Terach was a righteous person (*Tzaddik*) the son of a wicked person (*Rasha*), therefore our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, by himself awakened to pursue pure and true reasoning, giving ear and analysis to the workings of the order of the world, until through them, he grasped his Creator, and there was a revelation upon him of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) which was appropriate to reveal to him, and told him,¹³² “Go for yourself from your land... and I will bless those who bless you etc.”

After this, he then heard a foundation founded on the foundation of truth, without which there is no truth. Know that since *HaShem*-*יהו"ה*, may He be exalted, is “a faithful God

¹³² Genesis 12:1-3

without iniquity,”¹³³ who does not act with evil toward anyone who is unbefitting of evil, and we see that out of His love of Israel He has perpetrated evil to various nations, avenging the vengeance [of Israel] against their enemies, such that He becomes their enemy because of His love of Israel.

However, had *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be elevated, done this without cause or reason, His justice would then be crooked, perverse, and violent. For if it is unbefitting for man, who is but maggots and worms, to avenge the blood of someone who is not his relative, being that only a relative can avenge for the blood, then how much more so in regard to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, sending plagues and punishments upon the nations because of Israel. Should it not be according to straightforward justice? Because of this, it was necessary for Him, may He be exalted, to inform us that “all His paths are completely just,”¹³⁴ without any perverseness or crookedness in them whatsoever.

They thus began the Haggadah by saying that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, did not bestow complete goodness, multiplying their offspring and making them into a great nation, and take retribution against their enemies, in avenging their vengeance, all for free. Rather, everything He did and is destined to do, is a debt that He is obligated to pay.

For, when Avraham, who is the forefather of this nation, was in the house of his father, his father being a completely wicked idolator, he nevertheless roused himself to investigate and awaken himself to knowledge and understanding, to clarify

¹³³ Deuteronomy 32:4

¹³⁴ See Deuteronomy 32:4 *ibid*.

and purify the true orders of the world, and through investigating the orders and workings of the world, he came to know and understand that there is a God who created the world, who alone is preexistent, and that there is none other besides Him.¹³⁵

He thus yearned and pined to grasp his Creator, and he began informing [the world] and proclaiming the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the eternal God of the world,¹³⁶ until he was taken to be burned in Ur of the Chaldeans, and yet did not stop his proclamations, until *HaShem*-יהו"ה revealed Himself to him and saved him from the fiery furnace.

He then left his father's house and left his family and went into exile, wandering from place to place and from city to city and proclaiming *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, on account of which he suffered various trials with his body, his wife, his money, and his only son, and yet he was not concerned with anything other than fulfilling the will of the Creator, may He be exalted.

HaShem-יהו"ה thus said,¹³⁷ "I Myself swear – the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה – that because you have done this thing... I shall surely bless you etc." This being so, he gave a very strong reason and cause for all the good that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, does and will do for the descendants of Avraham, and on account of which He does evil to their enemies. All this is because our forefather Avraham was the first who came to serve Him. Thus, everything that *HaShem*-יהו"ה does from that point

¹³⁵ Deuteronomy 4:35

¹³⁶ Genesis 21:33

¹³⁷ Genesis 22:16

on, in bestowing goodness to Israel and evil to their enemies, is for the sake of Avraham who loved Him.¹³⁸

It therefore was necessary to state, “At first our ancestors were idolators” for two reasons. The first reason is to inform us that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, did not compel this nation to be special to him out of all the other nations. This is because from their very inception and foundation, out of his own knowledge, volition and choice, their father Avraham began serving the Creator, may He be exalted, and commanded his children and their descendants who followed after him and serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, as the verse states,¹³⁹ “For I have loved him, because he commands his children and household after him [that they keep the way of *HaShem*-יהו"ה] etc.” Thus, this nullifies the argument of the nations, who in the future would say that He chose Israel and compelled them to be His servants.

The second reason is because all the goodness that He bestows to the descendants of Avraham, or the evil that He does to their enemies, is all done with righteousness and justice. For, Avraham was the first to serve the Creator, may He be exalted, with complete service, to the point that the obligation was set upon *HaShem*-יהו"ה to bestow goodness to those who do goodness to his descendants, and to do evil to those who do evil to them, as the verse states, “I will bless those who bless you etc.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ See Isaiah 41:8

¹³⁹ Genesis 18:19

¹⁴⁰ Genesis 12:3

This being so, we find that when they said, “At first our ancestors were idolators,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated, “He begins with disgrace and concludes with praise,” it all is out of great importance, to inform us why this nation is special to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted.

This then, is the meaning of “disgrace,” that through their disgrace they thereby came to be praised. Understand this very well and always remember this principle, not losing sight of it.¹⁴¹ This is the secret of [the words], “But now the Ever Present One has drawn us close in service of Him.” Now that you know this, go and check this Mishnah, “At first our ancestors etc.,” and you will see that from beginning to end it accords to what we have said. For, it begins with Terach and concludes with Yaakov and his children.

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חָשַׁב אֶת־הַקֶּץ, לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם, יָדַע תֵּדַע כִּי־גֵר יִהְיֶה וְרַעַד בְּאַרְץ לֹא לָהֶם, וַעֲבָדוּם וַעֲנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִי וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ בְּרַכְשׁ גָּדוֹל.

BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO ISRAEL – blessed is He. For the Holy

¹⁴¹ See Proverbs 4:21

One, blessed is He, calculated the end and fulfilled what He had spoken to our father Avraham in the Covenant between the Pieces. As it says: “He said to Avram, ‘Know that your descendants will be strangers in a land not their own, and they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years; but know that I shall judge the nation that enslaves them, and they then will leave with great wealth.’”

Here we must inform you of a very deep and important secret, this being the secret of the Covenant between the Pieces. To preface, this matter of the Covenant between the Pieces took place five years before Avraham left Charan. For, upon Avraham’s departure from Charan he was seventy-five years old, and the Covenant between the Pieces took place when he was seventy years old. This is the secret of the verse,¹⁴² “It was at the end of four-hundred and thirty years.” For, the enslavement of his descendants was for the duration of four-hundred years, as it states in the verse,¹⁴³ “Know that your descendants will be strangers [etc., four-hundred years].” This being so, we find that between the Covenant between the Pieces and the birth of Yitzchak there were thirty years, being that Avraham was then one-hundred years old.¹⁴⁴

Now, what we must attest to regarding the Covenant between the Pieces is that our forefather Avraham, peace be

¹⁴² Exodus 12:41

¹⁴³ Genesis 15:13

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 21:5

upon him, said to Him,¹⁴⁵ “You have given no offspring to me,” and *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, answered him,¹⁴⁶ “He who comes forth from you [shall inherit you]. And He took him outside, and said, ‘Gaze, [now, to the heavens] etc.’”

The principle in this is that the birth of Yitzchak was outside the order of the stars, and the stars have no portion in him, but *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone is His portion, as it states,¹⁴⁷ “For the portion of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is His people.” He therefore told him, “Gaze, now, to the Heavens... So shall your offspring be etc.” In other words, He said to him, “Contemplate and see that according to the orders of the stars, it is not possible for you to have a son from Sarah,” to which he responded, “Indeed this is so.” He thus said to him, “This being so, I must recreate and renew an alternate world equal to the entire world, as it states, “Thus-*Koh*-כה shall your offspring be etc.,”¹⁴⁸ about which the

¹⁴⁵ Genesis 15:3

¹⁴⁶ Genesis 15:4-5

¹⁴⁷ Deuteronomy 32:9

¹⁴⁸ Regarding *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה title “Thus-*Koh*-כה,” see Shaarei Orah by the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate One (*Malchut*). [The Holy One, blessed is He, responded that amongst all the orders of the stars and all the other hosts of the world, whether in the supernal worlds or the lower worlds, none can bear seed without the power of this Divine quality called “Thus-*Koh*-כה.” For, this is the gate of prayer, and through it all must enter to entreat and supplicate before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, to affect changes to the power of the constellations (*Mazalot*). It is this Divine quality that can transform the quality of judgment to mercy, and exchange death for life, exchange illness for health, exchange barren for fertile. For, all is dependent upon it, and it is thus called, The Opening of the Wellsprings-*Petach Eynayim*-פתח עינים. Thus, since everything is dependent upon the Divine quality called, “Thus-*Koh*-כה,” *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, answered Avraham, “Thus-*Koh*-כה shall your offspring be.” In other words, it is as if He said to him, “Through this quality you may enter to the Source of all sources and to the Wellspring of all effects, until you reach the place called the Supernal Crown (*Keter Elyon*), which is the *Mazal*-מזל over all the constellations-*Mazalot*-מזלות, since it is from it that living waters flow-*Nozel*-נוזל to all the constellations-*Mazalot*-מזלות. It is in this manner that you shall bear seed.]

prophet, peace be upon him, stated,¹⁴⁹ “Thus-*Koh*-כה says *HaShem*-ה' יהו" who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundation of the earth, and fashions the spirit of man within him.” We thus see that the birth of Yitzchak was equal to the heavens and earth.

The verse after this then states,¹⁵⁰ “And he trusted in *HaShem*-ה' יהו" and he considered it to Him as a charity.” Now, who considered to who? Avraham considered it of the Creator, may He be exalted, that this matter was as a charity. That is to say, “If *HaShem*-ה' יהו" will do such a great thing as this, even though I am unworthy, then it solely is out of His kindness and charity, may He be exalted.” For, such is the way of the pious, in that they diminish themselves, and it therefore says, “he considered it to Him as a charity etc.”

Now, after this He said to him,¹⁵¹ “I am *HaShem*-ה' יהו" who took you out of Ur of the Chaldeans etc.” Then [Avraham] said to Him,¹⁵² “Whereby shall I know that I am to inherit it?” At this juncture there is room for deep analysis. For, how is it that he did not question the matter of [being granted] offspring, which required changes in the order of creation, yet when it came to a matter that is close to the possible, he said, “Whereby shall I know”?

Know that you should not think that Avraham questioned the attributes of the Supernal One, Heaven forbid to think so. Rather, he was saying as follows, “Master of the

¹⁴⁹ See Isaiah 42:5 & Zechariah 12:1 [the text here appears to be a conjoining of the two verses which are similar in content].

¹⁵⁰ Genesis 15:6

¹⁵¹ Genesis 15:7

¹⁵² Genesis 15:8

world, You promised to give me the Land, to inherit it, and I truly know that you will fulfill your promise and give me the Land. This being so, by what matter shall I know that my children will merit to inherit the Land, and that you will not remove them from it as a result of sins?” This is why he said, “Whereby shall I know that I will give it as an inheritance-*Eerashenah*-אֵירָשְׁנָה” and did not say, “Whereby shall I know that you will give it-*Teetnenah*-תֵּתְנֶנָּה.”

It is in this regard that *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He, answered him that He will give his children the order of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) through which they will atone for all sins that they might do. This is the secret of [the continuation],¹⁵³ “Take to Me three heifers,” but it is time to speak briefly about this matter here.

However, what I will say is that *HaShem*-יְהוָה, may He be exalted, told Avraham that since He has formed a covenant with him which will be eternally sustained with his offspring, this being so, what are his children to do if they sin and are worthy of the death penalty according to the proper judgment? The Supernal One thus informed him that the atonement for sins would be in one of two ways, either through the punishment of purgatory in the coming world, or through the punishment of exile in this world.¹⁵⁴

This is the secret of the “dread [and] great darkness.” The secret of “dread-*Eimah*-אִימָה” is the suffering of exile and servitude to the kingdoms, and the secret of “darkness-*Chasheichah*-חֲשִׁיכָה” is purgatory, as known by way of the

¹⁵³ Genesis 15:9

¹⁵⁴ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 44:21

received knowledge (*Kabbalah*) of our sages, of blessed memory.¹⁵⁵ He thus told Avraham to choose which mode of atonement he prefers for his children, and Avraham pleaded for mercy before the Supernal One that He should choose the lighter one, so the Supernal One chose exile and said,¹⁵⁶ “Know that your descendants will be strangers.” About this they stated that exile atones for sin.

However, it is incumbent upon us to examine the matter with a proper examination. For, the intention of the exile in Egypt is for a great mystery. That is, since *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, chose the descendants of Avraham, had He not put them in exile, it would be impossible for them to receive the Torah. For had he increased and multiplied them and bestowed beneficence upon them without the exile, they would take possession of the land and be successful in it, but without receiving Torah from the mouth of the Almighty.

[This being so], how would He compel them to go into a desert and prohibit many things from them that they are accustomed to, whether in regard to forbidden foods, forbidden relationships, or any other *mitzvot*. Nowadays, if we restrain ourselves from eating meat or drinking wine for even a single day, this causes us great suffering, since we are accustomed to them. How much more so when it comes to the prohibitions of the six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot* for all generations. Is there anything more difficult for the inclination of man?

It therefore was necessary for the Supernal One to exile them in Egypt so that they will increase and multiply, so that

¹⁵⁵ Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 6

¹⁵⁶ Genesis 15:13

His promise will be fulfilled in them in Egypt, and that they will not be permitted to leave, in that they all remained under the dominion of that kingdom. All this was caused so that they will not be scattered in other places, but that they rather will be ready and gathered [in one place].

Then, when *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, sent our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, He said to him, "Go and tell the children of Israel, 'There are six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot* that you must accept, and if you accept them, I then will redeem you, and if not, you will remain as you are.'" Such was the agreement in Egypt, as the verse states,¹⁵⁷ "When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain."

The entire secret is hinted in the verse,¹⁵⁸ "This is My Name (*Shmee*-שמי) forever, and this is My Remembrance (*Zichri*-זכרי) from generation to generation."¹⁵⁹ This being so, we thus find that the exile in Egypt was the cause for receiving the Torah, and receiving the Torah is the cause for receiving the reward and the great goodness that is bestowed to us from Him, may He be exalted.

After this, we must examine that the Supernal One did not say, "Know that your descendants will be strangers **in the land of Egypt**." This is because He made no such decree upon Egypt. Rather, He said, "in a land not their own." This is so that He does not conclude and render the judgment until the

¹⁵⁷ Exodus 3:12

¹⁵⁸ Exodus 3:15

¹⁵⁹ See Ginat Egoz of the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 3 (The Letters of Creation, Part 2), The Gate explaining how our Torah is sustained by the true reality of the Singular Name of *HaShem*, blessed is He.

culpable one be fitting of that judgment. This is the secret of the verse,¹⁶⁰ “The fourth generation shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite will not yet be full until then.”

However, about His words,¹⁶¹ “But also the nation that they will serve, I shall judge etc.,” behold, what *HaShem*-יהו"ה says He does, and what He promises He fulfills, revolving the causes and arranging the matters. That is, he brought famine to the land of Egypt and all the lands, but there was grain in Egypt, which was sold until all the money in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was depleted, and all [the wealth] accumulated in Egypt and was brought into Pharaoh's treasuries, to be hidden and protected until [the fulfillment of the conclusion of the verse],¹⁶² “and afterwards they will leave with great wealth.” For, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, says and does, decrees and fulfills. This should suffice [in explaining] this Mishnah.

**וְהָיָא שְׁעֻמָּדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד
עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֶלָּא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים
עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקְדוּשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.**

AND THIS [PROMISE] HAS STOOD FOR our ancestors and us; for not one alone has risen to destroy us: but in every generation they rise up to destroy us –

¹⁶⁰ Genesis 15:16

¹⁶¹ Genesis 15:14

¹⁶² Genesis 15:14 *ibid.*

but the Holy One, blessed is He, saves us from their hands.

From this point on the order of the Haggadah begins. It is fitting to awaken to why the section called Haggadah begins from this Mishnah, until the section of “and with signs” (*u’v’Otot*-וּבְאוֹתוֹת) and the section of “and with wonders” (*u’v’Mofteem*-וּבְמוֹפְתֵימ). For, they all are drawn with the verses [cited] in the Haggadah, which are in order: “It will be when you enter the land,”¹⁶³ “I declare today to *HaShem*-יְהוָה your God etc.,”¹⁶⁴ “An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather,”¹⁶⁵ “The Egyptians mistreated etc.,”¹⁶⁶ “Then we cried out,”¹⁶⁷ “*HaShem*-יְהוָה took us out etc.”¹⁶⁸ Until here is the order of the verses upon which our sages, of blessed memory, founded the order of the Haggadah, and for each particular matter included in these verses they gave proof. For example, they stated, “Few in number,” and then gave the proof, “As it states, ‘with seventy souls.’” The same is so of each Mishnah.

Having awakened you to the order of the Haggadah, we now will return [to the subject] and explain this Mishnah, as follows: As known, each creature in creation would not have been created were it not to receive power from the stars, and the stars from the [angelic] intellects, in that the ascent and descent of the creatures is according to the ascent and descent of the

¹⁶³ Deuteronomy 26:1

¹⁶⁴ Deuteronomy 26:3

¹⁶⁵ Deuteronomy 26:5

¹⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 26:6

¹⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 26:7

¹⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 26:8

stars, all except for Israel, who are not under the dominion of any star or thing,¹⁶⁹ as we have said.

Rather, they are *HaShem's* יהו"ה portion and their sustainment depends on the will of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted. Thus when they anger Him, He conceals His countenance from them and they are consumed. They therefore stated, **"It was not One-Echad אחד alone who rose up to destroy us etc."**

However, in His mercies He does not become so angered against us to destroy us, as the verse states,¹⁷⁰ "For the sake of His Great Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה shall not forsake His people." Therefore, the Holy One, blessed is He, returns and turns to us with the eye of His mercies, and saves us. It therefore states, **"but the Holy One, blessed is He, saves us from their hands."** This being so, understand and contemplate the foundation upon which the Haggadah is built. I shall soon mention it [again] in its proper order, with the help of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

צא ולמד מה בקש לְבֵן הָאֲרָמִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לַיַּעֲקֹב
אָבִינוּ: שְׁפָרְעָה לֹא גִזַּר אֱלֹא עַל הַזְּכָרִים, וְלָבֵן בִּקֵּשׁ
לַעֲקֹר אֶת־הַכֹּל. שְׁנֵאָמַר: אֲרָמִי אֲבִי, וַיֵּרֶד
מִצְרֵימָה וַיִּגָּר נָשָׁם בְּמִתִּי מֵעֵט, וַיְהִי־נָשָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל
עֹצוֹם וָרֶב.

¹⁶⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 156a-b; Nedarim 32a

¹⁷⁰ Samuel I 12:22

GO AND LEARN what Lavan the Aramean sought to do to our father Yaakov: Pharaoh only condemned the boys, but Lavan sought to uproot everything, as written: “An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather. He descended to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation – great, strong, and numerous.”

As known, according to the strength of each generation are its trials. That is, because our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, was fitting to receive those trials, *HaShem*-יהוה, may He be exalted, therefore tested him with them, as the verse states,¹⁷¹ “*HaShem*-יהוה tests the righteous.” The same was so of Yitzchak, and likewise of Yaakov, peace be upon him. It therefore was necessary for them to say about him that he underwent an even greater danger than the danger of Egypt. This is why it states, “**Pharaoh only condemned the boys, but Lavan sought to uproot everything, as it is written etc.**”

This thus resolves matters for you. Namely, every Jew as an individual [is tested] according to what he is capable of bearing and his strength in bearing sufferings. If his strength is great he receives greater suffering, and if his strength is weak he receives lesser suffering, as it states “*HaShem*-יהוה tests the righteous.” Our sages, of blessed memory, already gave an

¹⁷¹ Psalms 11:5

analogy for this, stating,¹⁷² “The craftsman does not strike the anvil... and the potter does not test the fragile vessels.”

This being so, understand and contemplate the great principle that they hinted in this, in that it is an important principle [to understand about] various places where suffering is mentioned in the Torah, the prophets, the scriptures, and the Talmud. Through it, the matters of Iyov, Rabbi Akiva, and those like them, are explained.

וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם – אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבָר.

“AND HE DESCENDED TO EGYPT” –
Compelled, according to the word.

This accords to the secret we told you in the portion of “we were slaves,” in that it is to this end that it was necessary for the Supernal One to override the supernal orders and take them out of there with a strong hand. This is the meaning of “compelled, according to the word.” Contemplate this great demonstration of how this explains everything that we have said, as well as the secret of [the verse],¹⁷³ “I shall also surely bring you up.”

¹⁷² Midrash Bereishit Rabbah 55:2; Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2:16 – “A potter, when he wants to evaluate [the products of] his kiln does not test the fragile vessels. Why? Because he would not be able to knock on them, even once, without breaking them. What does he test? The sturdy vessels, since even if he knocks on one of them several times, he will not break it. So likewise, the Holy One, blessed is He, does not test the wicked, but rather, the righteous, as it states, ‘*HaShem* יְהוָה tests the righteous.’” Also see Sefer HaMashalim by the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories, Section 142.

¹⁷³ Genesis 46:4

וַיָּגֵר שָׁם. מִלֵּמַד שְׁלֹא יָרַד יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּעַ
 בְּמִצְרַיִם אֲלָא לְגֹר שָׁם, שְׁנֵאמַר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה,
 לְגֹר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין מְרֻעָה לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לַעֲבָדֶיךָ,
 כִּי כָבֵד הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן, וְעַתָּה יִשְׁבּוּ־נָא עַבְדֶּיךָ
 בְּאֶרֶץ גִּשׁוֹן.

“AND SOJOURNED THERE” – From this we learn that our father Yaakov did not go down to assimilate in Egypt, but only to sojourn there temporarily, as it states, “They said to Pharaoh, ‘We have come to *sojourn* in this land, for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks, because the famine is heavy in the land of Canaan; and now, if you please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.”

As known, all lands are assigned to the dominion of the [angelic] ministers and supernal orders that are over them. Only the land of Israel is the heritage and portion of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, and is called “the land of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” - and the seed of Avraham are the seed of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This being so, it is by law that the special nation that is His portion should dwell in the land that is singled out for His Great Name.

Now, for the righteous *Tzaddik* Yaakov, leaving the land of Israel was very difficult, due to an important secret.

That is, our sages stated,¹⁷⁴ “Whosoever resides outside the Land is considered like one who has no God.” This is the meaning of [his words],¹⁷⁵ “And I return in peace to my father’s house, and *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be a God to me.”

Thus, it is because he was compelled according to the word that he departed from there, being forced by the famine and by the promise of the *Shechinah*. However, he had in his mind to return to the land of Israel if he would be able to do so. This teaches that “Yaakov did not go down to assimilate into Egypt, but only to sojourn there,” being compelled to do so because of the famine, as it states, “We have come to sojourn in this land [for there is no pasture] etc.” Understand what you have heard.

**בְּמִתִּי מְעַט. כָּמָה שְׁנֵאֲמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נִפְשׁ יָרְדוּ
אֲבוֹתַי מִצְרָיִמָּה, וְעַתָּה שְׂמֹךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי
הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב.**

“FEW IN NUMBER” – As it says: “Your ancestors were but seventy souls when they went down to Egypt – and now *HaShem* your God, has made you as numerous as the stars in the heavens.”

Know that all seventy souls that descended to Egypt are for a known intention, in that they are likened to the orders of

¹⁷⁴ Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 110b

¹⁷⁵ Genesis 28:21

the heavens, these corresponding to those, as He said [to Avraham],¹⁷⁶ “Thus shall your offspring be.” Therefore, until they numbered seventy, they did not leave the Land.

We have a received knowledge that the number seventy is the secret of the seventy thrones of the supernal [angelic] ministers in the heavens, who reign over all the nations of the world, and all the orders of creation are divided amongst them according to the secret of the seven days, and the secret of the seven years, and the secret of the seven sabbaticals, such that there are no more than these.

It is from these seventy that all bodies branched out and to them they shall return. This is why the greatness of the Holy Temple was with the Great Sanhedrin [court] of seventy elders, as the verse states,¹⁷⁷ “Gather seventy men to me.” This is also the secret of the seventy bulls offered on the holiday [of Sukkot], in that all nations were included in the goodness bestowed to Israel, as the verse states,¹⁷⁸ “All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you.” That is, it is because of Israel that all nations are blessed, just as all branches are blessed when the root is blessed.

Now, because it was appropriate for the root to be received in the land of Israel, it was necessary to state, “Your ancestors were only seventy souls when they went down to Egypt,” and from that point forward is the branching forth of the branches, about which [the verse continues and] states,¹⁷⁹ “and now *HaShem*-יהוה your God has made you as numerous

¹⁷⁶ Genesis 15:5

¹⁷⁷ Numbers 11:16

¹⁷⁸ Genesis 12:3

¹⁷⁹ Deuteronomy 10:22

as the stars in the sky.” Pay no heed to the fact that it states, “And Yosef was in Egypt,” for they all are included in the count of seventy. This being so, contemplate the secret of this Mishnah.¹⁸⁰

וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי. מִלִּמַּד שְׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְיָנִים שָׁם.

“AND THERE HE BECAME A NATION” – This teaches that Israel were distinct there.

Now, our Holy Torah awakens the sleeper with sharp arrows. For, do you not already know that it first stated,¹⁸¹ “For the Egyptians could not bear to eat with the Hebrews, [it being loathsome to the Egyptians] etc.” That is, because the Jewish people are loathsome and despised by the nations, this itself causes their goodness, in that they cannot assimilate with them. It therefore states, “And there he became a nation,” and “they are scattered and dispersed [among the peoples], their laws are different from every other people,”¹⁸² and its customs are different from their customs, and they all are wretched and lowly in their eyes.

However, they excelled (*Metzuyananim*-מִצְוִינִים) in some *mitzvot* that they were commanded by our holy forefathers, which they were taught (as a transmitted Kabbalah), as the verse states,¹⁸³ “Because he commands his children and household after him [that they should keep the way of *HaShem*-יְהוָה] etc.”

¹⁸⁰ See Rabbeinu Bachaye to Genesis 46:27

¹⁸¹ Genesis 43:32

¹⁸² See Esther 3:8

¹⁸³ Genesis 18:19

This is why this Mishnah states “distinct-*Metzuyanim*-מצויינים” [which also means “excelled”] as in the root “the Gates of Excellence-*Shaarei Tziyon*-שערי ציון.” Understand this.

גָּדוֹל עָצוֹם – כָּמָה שְׁנֵאָמַר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ
וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ בְּמָאד מְאֹד, וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ
אֹתָם.

“**GREAT, MIGHTY**” – As it says: “And the children of Israel were fertile and they swarmed and grew *more and more numerous* and strong, and the land was filled with them.”

“Know that every promise made by *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, will neither stop nor cease until His good promise is fulfilled, as He said,¹⁸⁴ “I shall not leave you until I will have done [that which I have spoken about you] etc.” Now, when they said that Israel were “great” and “mighty” they were not saying that the people of Israel are more numerous than all the nations, being that the Torah attests,¹⁸⁵ “[Not because you are more numerous etc.,] for you are the fewest of all peoples.” Rather, it is because the people of Israel are made like the forms of the orders of the world, and the numeration of them and their firstborn, known about them in the book of Numbers and the exodus from Egypt, is solely with the intent of the Supernal

¹⁸⁴ Genesis 28:15

¹⁸⁵ Deuteronomy 7:7

Sefirot. It thus was necessary to say about them that they are “great, mighty, and numerous,” according to the appropriate numeration.

Based on this principle, it is fitting that you know the secret mentioned before about the principle of the “six-hundred thousand,” that these refer to the mystery of the arrangement of the forms of man according to their various knowledges and views. This is why the land of Israel was divided according to the number of those who left Egypt, as they were counted by Moshe and Aharon, and not by the count of Moshe and Elazar. For, when the verse states,¹⁸⁶ “By the number of the names, every male according to their headcount, from twenty years of age and up etc.,” this refers to the secret of the multitudes of Israel.

Understand this important principle. For, from the seventy roots, there are six-hundred branches born to the six directions, and the central point stands in the center and “is hung with a thousand shields.”¹⁸⁷ This is the secret of [the verse],¹⁸⁸ “Sixty warriors encircle it etc.”

You also must know the difference between “great-*Gadol*-גדול,” “mighty-*Atzum*-עצום,” and “numerous-*Rav*-רב.” That is, “great-*Gadol*-גדול” in form (*Tzurah*), “mighty-*Atzum*-עצום” in strength (*Ko’ach*), and “numerous-*Rav*-רב” in number (*Mispar*). Understand this. With this principle in mind, contemplate that the forms of the vegetation on earth

¹⁸⁶ Numbers 1:2-3

¹⁸⁷ Song of Songs 4:4

¹⁸⁸ Song of Songs 3:7

correspond in number to the stars of the heavens, to fulfill the verse, “Thus shall your offspring be.”

וְרַב – כָּמָה לְשָׁנְאֵמֶר: רַבָּה כְּצֶמַח הַשָּׂדֶה נִתְּתִיךָ,
וּתְרַבִּי וּתִגְדְּלִי וּתִבְאִי בַעֲדֵי עַדָּיִים, לְשָׂדִים נִלְנוּ וּשְׂעָרֶךָ
צִמָּח, וְאַתָּה עָרַם וְעָרְיָה. וְאַעֲבֹר עָלֶיךָ וְאַרְאֶךָ
מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדָמֶיךָ, וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדָמֶיךָ חַיִּי, וְאָמַר לְךָ
בְּדָמֶיךָ חַיִּי.

“AND NUMEROUS” – As it says: “I made you as numerous as the vegetation of the field, and you increased and grew, and you came to have great charm, your breasts developed and your hair growing, but you were naked and bare. And I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your own blood – and I said to you, ‘By your blood you shall live’; I said to you, ‘By your blood you shall live!’”

This is explained in the adjacent words, as in the secret of the verse, “I made you as numerous (*Revavah*-רַבָּה) as the vegetation of the field.” For, since the forms of the plants are unified to the stars, so likewise, every single Jew is unified with a class of star (*Kochav*-כּוֹכַב)¹⁸⁹ in the heights. This is the secret

¹⁸⁹ See *Ginat Egoz* by the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1), The seven letters בִּגְדִי כִפְרִית

of [the verse],¹⁹⁰ “Reside tranquilly, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, amongst the myriad (*Revavot*-רבבות) thousands of Israel,” and it thus is all explained.

וַיַּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרִים וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ, וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה.

“AND THE EGYPTIANS DEALT CRUELLY WITH US AND OPPRESSED US AND IMPOSED HARD LABOR ON US.”

וַיַּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרִים – כָּמָה שְׁנָאֵמָר: הֵבָה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ פֶּן יִרְבֶּה, וְהָיָה כִּי־תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסֵף גַּם־הוּא עַל שְׁנֵאֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם־בָּנוּ, וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ.

“AND THE EGYPTIANS DEALT CRUELLY WITH US” – As it says: “Come, let us act wisely against [this people], lest it grows great, and if war happens they

correspond to the seven orbiting planets (*Kochavei Lechet*) – “Contemplate that even the smallest celestial body is known as *Kochav*-כוכב-Star. Contemplate what this name consists of. The *כ"ו* of *כ"ו*-26 *כוכב*-*Kochav* refers to the singular name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה-26, whereas the *כ"ב* of *כ"ב*-22 *כוכב*-*Kochav* refers to the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph-Beit*, and this is the meaning of *Kochav*-כוכב. If this is included in even the smallest celestial body, then contemplate the extent of what is included in the other celestial bodies, each according to its size. Thus, it is not for nothing that the prophet Isaiah (40:26) stated, “Lift up your eyes on high and behold Who created these.”

¹⁹⁰ Numbers 10:36

might join our enemies, fight against us, and go up from the land.”

As known, this Mishnah returns to enlighten us about what we began with. Namely, that because the Egyptians dealt cruelly with us for no reason and without any provocation on our part, like other nations, as the Torah attests to stating¹⁹¹ [that they said], “Come, let us outsmart [this people] etc.,” and thus it already attests that they did so to be destructive and violent. Thus *HaShem*-יהוה, may He be exalted – the True Judge who renders justice and righteousness in truth – rendered judgment and justice upon them for two reasons.

The first is because we are His people and His servants, the children of Avraham, His servant whom He loves, and He thus is obliged to avenge the vengeance of **His** people and **His** servants, to inflict evil upon those who do evil to us. The second is out of straightforward judgment and justice, to save the afflicted from those who afflict them without cause.

It thus begins to tell us that they dealt cruelly with us in recompense for the goodness that our forefather and elder, Yaakov, peace be upon him, blessed Pharaoh and granted Egypt [the blessings of] abundant produce once he went to live there. That is, when Yaakov went down to Egypt, only two years of [the seven year] famine had passed (and he only blessed it once he went there), and from that time on, the decree that “there still are five years in which there shall neither be plowing nor harvest” was annulled. This is why about the third year the

¹⁹¹ Exodus 1:10

verse states,¹⁹² “Here is seed for you – sow the land.” However, in recompense for the goodness bestowed upon them by the righteous Yosef, as in their words to him,¹⁹³ “You have saved our lives; may we find favor in your eyes, my lord etc.,” [they did the opposite].

**וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ – כָּמָה לְשֹׁנְאָמֵר: וַיַּשִּׁימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים
לְמַעַן עֲצֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם, וַיִּבְנוּ עָרֵי מִסְכָּנוֹת לְפַרְעֹה אֶת־
פִּתּוֹם וְאֶת־רַעַמְסֵס.**

“AND THEY OPPRESSED US” – As it says: “They placed taskmasters over [the people] to oppress them under their burdens; they built store-cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses.”

The meaning of this oppression is that it was not enough that they acted cruelly to derive benefit, but they even oppressed them in matters that they derived no benefit from. This is the secret of the verse,¹⁹⁴ “So they appointed taskmasters over [the people] **to oppress them** etc.” The verse thus attests that they did not do so with the intention of benefiting, but solely to oppress and subjugate them. This being so, behold and understand, for is there any greater wickedness than this?

¹⁹² Genesis 47:23

¹⁹³ Genesis 47:25

¹⁹⁴ Exodus 1:11

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כָּמָה שָׁנָאֹמֶר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ
מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָפָר.

“AND IMPOSED HARD LABOR ON US” – As it says: “The Egyptians enslaved the children of Israel with heavy labor.”

This comes to inform us that it was not enough for them to act cruelly with us for no cause, bestowing evil upon us in recompense for goodness, nor even that they oppressed us in matters from which they derived no benefit, subjugating us with them. That is, even such oppression was not enough for them, but they oppressed us with the greatest and most difficult oppression possible, about which it states, “hard labor.”

This being so, we find three levels [of oppression] one greater than the other: “They dealt cruelly with us” – without cause; “They oppressed us” – without need; “And imposed hard labor on us” – this being the most severe of all forms of subjugation and oppression.

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־
קִלְגֵּנוּ, וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנִיָּנוּ וְאֶת־עֲמָלֵנוּ וְאֶת־לִחְצָנוּ.

“AND WE CRIED OUT TO *HASHEM*, the God of our fathers, and *HaShem* heard our voice and saw our oppression and our labor and pressure.”

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ – כָּמָה שָׁנָאֲמַר: וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הֵהֶם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם, וַיֹּאנְחוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן-הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ, וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים מִן הָעֲבֹדָה.

“AND WE CRIED OUT TO *HASHEM*, God of our fathers” – As it says: “It came to be, when a long time had passed, that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel groaned under the burden of the work, and they cried out, and their plea rose to God from amid the work.”

As known, they had the received knowledge (*Kabbalah*) from our holy forefathers about the secret of [the verse],¹⁹⁵ “The voice is the voice of Yaakov.” That is, it is not as the Rav¹⁹⁶ writes in the Guide,¹⁹⁷ that at that time the Israelites denied the existence of the Creator, so that our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, had to give them proof of His existence, may He be

¹⁹⁵ Genesis 27:22

¹⁹⁶ The Rambam

¹⁹⁷ Moreh Nevuchim – The Guide for the Perplexed 1:63

exalted. This is not so, and it is unbecoming to listen to this and certainly to believe it.

Rather, the Torah attests that, “we cried out to *HaShem*-יהו"ה the God of our fathers,” and as known, the God of our holy forefathers hears the prayers of His pious ones, and “He hears their cry and delivers them.”¹⁹⁸ These are the weapons by which we battle against our foes, “for not by their sword did they possess the land, nor did their own arm help them, but by Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance – for You favored them.”¹⁹⁹

Now, by their stating that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, hears the cry of His pious ones, **there is an important promise here, that the longer the exile continues and is strengthened, it [actually] is signs of the redemption, since it is then that Israel prays with a pure heart to their Father in Heaven, and He hears their cry and “He takes them out of their straits,”**²⁰⁰ as it states,²⁰¹ “And the children of Israel groaned etc.”

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוֹ. כָּמָה שָׁנְאָמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע
אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־
אַבְרָהָם, אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב.

¹⁹⁸ Psalms 145:19

¹⁹⁹ Psalms 44:4

²⁰⁰ Psalms 107:28

²⁰¹ Exodus 2:23

“AND HASHEM HEARD OUR VOICE” – As it says: “And God heard their groans, and God remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov.”

As known, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, does not require hearing with the ear, nor any other senses. However, it is sin that separates between us and Him,²⁰² though He is closer than close, for no redeemer is closer than Him. Nevertheless, times of redemption are signified by four things: Hearing, remembering, seeing, and knowing, [as it states],²⁰³ “God-*Elohi*”*m*-אלהי"ם **heard** their moaning,” “and God-*Elohi*”*m*-אלהי"ם **remembered**,” “God-*Elohi*”*m*-אלהי"ם **saw** the children of Israel,” “and God-*Elohi*”*m*-אלהי"ם **knew**.” Contemplate that *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה title “God-*Elohi*”*m*-אלהי"ם” is used with each of these.²⁰⁴ However, these are deep secrets and permission has not been granted to reveal them.

**וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנֵינוּ – זֶה פְּרִישׁוֹת דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, כָּמָה
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּדַּע אֱלֹהִים.**

“AND HE SAW OUR OPPRESSION” – This is the separation of husband from wife, as it states: “And God saw the children of Israel, and God knew.”

²⁰² Isaiah 59:2

²⁰³ Exodus 2:24-25

²⁰⁴ Though once would have sufficed. See Rabbeinu Bachaye there.

The secret of this entire matter is known from the verse, “God saw the children of Israel, [and God knew].” That is, He brought Wisdom-*Chochmah* close to Understanding-*Binah* and He called the construct Knowledge-*Da’at*, this being the secret of seeing the Countenance (*Re’iyat Panim*), and it is then that the time of redemption came. Understand this, for celibacy is the opposite of “And [God] knew-*VaYeida*”²⁰⁵.

**וְאֵת-עַמָּלָנוּ – אֵלֹוּ הַבָּנִים. כָּמָה נִשְׁנְאָמֵר: כָּל-הַבֵּן
הַיָּלֹוד הַיָּאֲרָה תִשְׁלִיכֶהוּ וְכָל-הַבֵּת תִּחְיֶיוּ.**

“**AND OUR LABOR**” – These are the sons, as it says: “Every boy that is born, throw him into the river, and let all the girls live.”

As known, all striving that a man strives, labors, and toils, which indeed is toil and labor, is to bring sustenance and repair to his children, because they came forth from his loins. It is on their behalf that he belabors himself, thus lacking goodness for his own soul, just to adequately sustain and provide for his children. It therefore states, “And our labor.” Is there is any greater toil and labor than children?

²⁰⁵ As it states (Genesis 4:1), “And Adam knew (*Yada*-ידע) his wife Chava, and she conceived etc.”

**וְאֶת־לִחְצָנוּ – זֶה הַדָּחֶק, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְגַם־רָאִיתִי
אֶת־הַלֶּחֶץ אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לִחְצִים אֹתָם.**

“AND OUR STRESS” – This is the pressure, as it says:
“I have seen the pressure that Egypt presses them.”

This refers to stress of time. For they would not let them rest, even to swallow their spit, and even if they wanted to rest from their weary labor for even for a moment, they would not allow them, as the verse states,²⁰⁶ “[You shall no longer give straw...] but the quota of bricks that they made yesterday and before yesterday, you shall impose upon them.” That is, they imposed new harsh decrees against them, one after the other.

**וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֹרַע נְטוּיָה,
וּבְמָרָא גָדֹל, וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמִפְתִּים.**

“AND HASHEM BROUGHT US OUT of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with awesome happening and with signs and wonders.”

**וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל־יְדֵי מְלָאךְ, וְלֹא עַל־
יְדֵי שָׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ, אֲלָא הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא**

²⁰⁶ Exodus 5:7-8

בְּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבַעֲצָמוֹ. שְׁנֵאמַר: וְעַבְרָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם
 בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, וְהִפֵּיתִי כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם
 וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי
 יְהוָה.

“**AND HASHEM TOOK US OUT** of Egypt” -Not through an angel, not through a seraph, and not through any emissary, but the Holy One, in His glory and by Himself. As it says: “I shall pass through the land of Egypt on this night; and I shall smite every firstborn son in the land of Egypt, man and beast, and I shall pass judgment on all the gods of Egypt: I am *HaShem*.”

This returns to the sweetness that they entered into [before],²⁰⁷ that He said,²⁰⁸ “*I-Anochi*-אֲנִי will bring you up and also ascend.” That is, He Himself had to take them out of Egypt,²⁰⁹ in that it was necessary for Him to change the orders of the supernal workings and the [angelic] ministers appointed over them, which is something that can only be done by *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted. For, it is He who passes judgment on the gods of Egypt, which are the upper angels

²⁰⁷ In the section on “We were slaves – *Avadim HaYinu*.”

²⁰⁸ Genesis 46:4

²⁰⁹ Also see *Shaarei Orah* by the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light*, Gate Eight (*Binah*), section on “The Great Shofar-*Shofar Gadol*.” שופר גדול.

appointed over the arrangement of the stars, in that their influence is over the land of Egypt.

Moreover, as known, all the wise men of Egypt and its astrologers were in agreement that [at that time, according to the constellations], the land of Egypt would be bestowed with all goodness, fatness, and flourishing. However, at that [very same] time *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, sent His hand upon it, overturning it and destroying it, as He said,²¹⁰ "Where are they? Where are your wise men?" "And the spirit of Egypt was emptied within it etc."²¹¹ For, it is He, may He be exalted, who renders judgment and justice "upon the hosts of the heavens in the heavens,"²¹² and then "with the kings of the earth on the earth."²¹³

Now, our forefather Yaakov, peace be upon him, knew that his children would be enslaved in Egypt for generations, and *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, told him that He would change the order of the supernal systems and take them out with His great strength. It therefore states, "I shall pass judgment on all the gods of Egypt etc." [That is], I first will pass judgment on the hosts of the heavens, and then on the firstborn [of Egypt]. It therefore states "not through an angel, and not through any emissary" known to be of Him, being that there are none who can do all this except for Him alone, may He be exalted. Now, when He exacted judgment upon the angels above, He fulfilled His promise and "all the legions of *HaShem*-יהו"ה left the land

²¹⁰ Isaiah 19:12

²¹¹ Isaiah 19:3

²¹² Isaiah 24:21

²¹³ Isaiah 24:21 *ibid.*

of Egypt,” as in the secret of “I-*Anochi* אנכי shall bring you up and also shall ascend (*A’alecha Gam Aloh* עלה-גם).”

וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה – אֲנִי וְלֹא מַלְאָךְ; וְהִכֵּיתִי כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שָׂרָף; וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה נְשָׁפֹטִים. אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשָּׁלִיחַ; אֲנִי יְהוָה. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר.

“**I SHALL PASS THROUGH** the land of Egypt on that night” – I and not an angel. “I shall smite every firstborn son in the land of Egypt” – I and not a seraph. “And I shall pass judgment on all the gods of Egypt” – I and not an emissary. “I am *HaShem*” – It is I and no other.

בְּיָד חֲזָקָה – זֶה הַדָּבָר, כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִנֵּה יַד-יְהוָה הוֹיָה בְּמִקְנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה, בַּסּוּסִים, בַּחֲמֹרִים, בַּגְּמֻלִים, בַּבָּקָר וּבַצֹּאן, דָּבָר כָּבֵד מְאֹד.

“**WITH A STRONG HAND**” – This refers to the pestilence, as it says: “The hand of *HaShem* shall be upon your cattle in the field, on your horses, donkeys, camels, on the herd and on the flock – a very heavy pestilence.”

I now shall awaken you to a great and glorious matter. Know that Above there is no felt hand, but rather Above there is a true hand, called the fourth *Sefirah*,²¹⁴ which includes fifty and is called by the name of the five *Sefirot* of His hand.²¹⁵ It is called “pestilence-*Dever*-דבר” in all places, as in [the verse],²¹⁶ “Pestilence (*Dever*-דבר) goes before Him,” and as in the secret [of the verse],²¹⁷ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will attach the pestilence (*Dever*-דבר) to you etc.” Understand very well that the quality of Judgment-*Din* afflicts through the known secret of His hand. The hand (*Yad*-יד) mentioned here includes five *Sefirot*, and He therefore smote them in five classes, “your horses, donkeys etc.” Understand and contemplate this. The secret of this is that since [the sorcerers] said,²¹⁸ “It is a **finger** of God-*Elohi*” מֵאלֹהִים, therefore it was necessary to smite them with the full hand.

**וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה – זֶה הַחֶרֶב, כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְחָרְבוּ
שְׁלוֹפָה בִּידּוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.**

²¹⁴ The *Sefirah* of Might-*Gevurah* is called “the fourth” according to the order of *Sefer Yetzirah* (1:12) in which Wisdom-*Chochmah* is called the first, Understanding-*Binah* is called the second, Kindness-*Chessed* is called the third, and Might-*Gevurah* is called the fourth.

²¹⁵ Each of which includes ten, thus arriving at the number fifty.

²¹⁶ Habakkuk 3:5

²¹⁷ Deuteronomy 28:21

²¹⁸ Exodus 8:15

“AND WITH AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM” –

This refers to the sword, as it says: “And His sword was drawn in His hand, stretched out over Yerushalayim.”

This refers to the right [hand]²¹⁹ which²²⁰ “smashes the enemy.” It exacts vengeance and retribution upon our enemies and all who hate us, as the verse states,²²¹ “Awaken! Awaken! Don strength, O’ arm (*Zro’ah*-זרוע) of *HaShem*-יהוה! Awaken as in the days of old, as in previous generations. Are You not the One who decimated the haughty, who terrified the sea serpent? Are You not the One who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; [Who made the depths of the sea into a path for the redeemed ones to cross]?” It likewise states,²²² “[For not by their sword did they possess the land, nor did their own arm help them;] but by Your right hand, your arm (*Zro’acha*-זרוע), and the light of Your Countenance – for You favored them.”

This quality is called,²²³ “His harsh, great, mighty sword (*Charbo*-חרבו).” These two qualities, “With a strong hand-*b’Yad Chazakah*-ביד חזקה” and “an outstretched arm-*Zro’ah Netuyah*-זרוע נטויה” are included in the reason for the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) [about which the verse states,²²⁴ “Let us now go for a three-day journey in the wilderness and we shall bring offerings to *HaShem*-יהוה our God], lest He strike us with the

²¹⁹ The *Sefirah* of Kindness-*Chessed*

²²⁰ Exodus 15:6 – “Your right hand, *HaShem*-יהוה, smashes the enemy.”

²²¹ Isaiah 51:9

²²² Psalms 44:4

²²³ Isaiah 27:1

²²⁴ Exodus 5:3

pestilence (*Dever*-דבר) or with the sword (*Cherev*-חרב).²²⁵
Understand this.

וּבְמוֹרָא גָדֹל – זו גְּלוּי נְשִׁינָה, כָּמָה נִשְׁנְאַמֵּר: אוֹ
הַנִּסָּה אֱלֹהִים לָבוֹא לְקַחַת לוֹ גּוֹי מִקֶּרֶב גּוֹי בְּמַסַּת
בְּאַתַּת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה וּבִיד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה
וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדוֹלִים כָּל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לָכֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
בְּמִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֶיךָ.

“AND WITH AN AWESOME HAPPENING” – This refers to the revelation of His Presence, as it says: “Has any god ever attempted to come and take a nation out of a nation, with trials and with signs and wonders, with war and with a strong hand, with an outstretched arm, inspiring great awe, as all that *HaShem* your God, did for you in Egypt, before your eyes?”

As known about the supernal angels, because of their great elevation, awe and dread, when they are seen by prophets and seers, “their robustness changes to pallor,”²²⁶ as happened with Daniel’s vision, about which [it states,²²⁷ “I, Daniel, alone saw the vision]; the people who were with me did not see the

²²⁵ See Rabbeinu Bachaye to Exodus 5:3

²²⁶ See Daniel 10:8

²²⁷ Daniel 10:7

vision etc.,” and Daniel said,²²⁸ “I fell upon my face to the ground.”

Similarly, at [the giving of the Torah at] Mount Sinai, all Israel fell on their faces with quaking and trembling, and said,²²⁹ “Let me no longer see this great fire, so that I will not die.” Now, if this happened to people such as them, who were holy and pure, how much more is this so for those who are uncircumcised of heart and uncircumcised of flesh, when the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the *Shechinah*, is revealed to them, with the strong hand of vengeance and with the outstretched arm that smashes the enemy.

This being so, it truly is fitting to call it an awesome happening (*Mora Gadol*-מורא גדול) with great awe, dread, shaking and trembling. For this truly is appropriate for whosoever is unprepared and unbefitting of beholding such a sight. Thus, through this great vision a great many visions come upon them beyond count, and they shrivel and melt like wax from fire.

וּבִּאֲתוֹת – זֶה הַמָּטָה, כְּמָה לְשִׁנְאָמֶר: וְאֶת-הַמָּטָה הַזֶּה
תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ, אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה-בּוֹ אֶת-הָאֲתוֹת.

“WITH SIGNS” – This refers to the staff, as it says: “Take this staff in your hand, and with it you shall perform the signs.”

²²⁸ See Daniel 10:9

²²⁹ Deuteronomy 18:16

“Signs-*Otot*-אותות” refers to all things that change the natural order of the normal conduct of the world, in which the change does not damage the one who opposes it, like the matter of transforming the staff into a snake, or his hand turning white, or like the waters of the river turning into blood on dry land. This is the meaning of the statement,²³⁰ “Take this staff in your hand,” and about this it states, “and with it you shall perform the signs etc.” Look and see that those things called “signs-*Otot*-אותות” change the normal conduct of the world, but without causing damage to one who opposes them.

**וּבְמִלְכָּתִים – זֶה הַדָּם, כָּמָה שְׁנֵאָמַר: וְנִתְּתִי מוֹפְתִים
בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ**

“AND WITH WONDERS” – This refers to the blood, as it says: “I will set wonders in the sky and on the earth.”

“Wonders-*Mofteem*-מוֹפְתִים” refers to all miracles that inflicted damage upon Egypt. [However, based on this, a question arises, for does the verse not state,²³¹ “When Pharaoh speaks to you saying, ‘Provide a wonder-*Mofeit*-מוֹפֵת for yourselves?’” However, it can be said that there too, damage was inflicted upon them, as the verse states,²³² “The staff of Aharon swallowed their staffs etc.” Nevertheless, another

²³⁰ Exodus 4:17

²³¹ Exodus 7:9

²³² Exodus 7:12

question remains. Why would Pharaoh ask for a “wonder-*Mofeit*-מופת” when he could have asked for a “sign-*Ot*-אות.” This requires further delving.²³³

It states, “This refers to the blood,” which included all ten plagues. The reason it says “blood” is because the blood was the first of all the ten plagues, as the verse states,²³⁴ “Behold, you have not heeded up to now. So says *HaShem*-יהוה, ‘By this you shall know.’” They thus have informed us of the difference between “signs-*Otot*-אותות” and “wonders-*Mofteem*-מופתים.” That is, both these and those involve changing the normal conduct of the world, but these do not inflict damage, whereas those inflict damage.

It is in this regard [that it states],²³⁵ “I will set wonders-*Mofteem*-מופתים.” To conclude, the word “wonders-*Mofteem*-מופתים” includes all ten plagues. This is an important principle in the verse,²³⁶ “[If there should arise a prophet or a dreamer of dreams within you] and he will produce for you a sign-*Ot*-אות or a wonder-*Mofeit*-מופת” That is, a “sign-*Ot*-אות” refers to a change in the nature of something without causing damage to another, whereas a “wonder-*Mofeit*-מופת” is a change in the nature [of something] that either is damaging or beneficial.

²³³ This parenthesis is not present in other editions, and is only found only in the edition published by Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Shklov, may the mention of the righteous bring blessing.

²³⁴ Exodus 7:16-17

²³⁵ Joel 3:3

²³⁶ Deuteronomy 13:2

דָּם וָאֵשׁ וְתִמְרוֹת עָשָׁן.

**BLOOD, AND FIRE,
AND PILLARS OF SMOKE.**

דָּבָר אֶחָד: בְּיַד חֲזָקָה – שְׁתֵּים, וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה –
שְׁתֵּים, וּבִמְרָא גָדֹל – שְׁתֵּים, וּבְאֲתוֹת – שְׁתֵּים,
וּבִמְכָּתִים – שְׁתֵּים.

Another interpretation: “With a strong hand” – Two.
“And an outstretched arm” – Two. “With an awesome
happening” – Two. “With signs” – Two. “And with
wonders” – Two.

אֱלֹהֵי עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־
הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֱלֹהֵי הֵן:

דָּם. צִפְרִידֵּעַ. כְּנִים. עָרוֹב. דָּבָר. שְׁחִין.
בָּרָד. אֲרֶבֶה. חֲשָׁךְ. מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת.

THESE WERE THE TEN PLAGUES that the Holy One, blessed is He, brought upon Egypt, and these are them:

**BLOOD. FROGS. LICE. WILD ANIMALS.
PESTILENCE. BOILS. HAIL. LOCUSTS.
DARKNESS. THE SMITING OF THE
FIRSTBORN.**

Now, *HaShem*-יהוה, may He be exalted, had to change the orders of the world during the ten plagues, in the secret of the four foundational elements below, in the secret of the celestial orders of the heavens above, and in the secret of the angels, who are above the heavens. This is to inform us that it is He, blessed is He, who rules over the angels, over the heavens, and over the earth, and there is none else besides Him. I now shall briefly hint at this for you:

In the first plague the waters were transformed to blood to inform us that it is He, may He be exalted, who rules with His might over the whole world. Now, because the Nile, the river of Egypt, bestows to the earth when it overflows twice yearly, watering it and causing it to spout and grow, and because Pharaoh said,²³⁷ “My river is mine and I made myself,” He therefore began by smiting that which is the foundation of their civilization, and its prosperity and flourishing. He thus said,²³⁸ “Behold, with the staff that is in my hand I shall strike

²³⁷ Ezekiel 29:3

²³⁸ Exodus 7:17-20

the waters that are in the river... and all the water in the river changed to blood.”

In the second plague, the waters swarmed with frogs, to inform us that everything is under His dominion, and it is in His ability to do as He desires and pleases. Thus mankind should certainly be in awe and fear of Him and fulfill His will.

In Third plague, He began to smite the earth itself, to inform us that the earth, which by nature usually gives rise to all kinds of fragrant herbs and delightful fruits, was transformed to something foul and despicable, such that there is nothing more despicable.

With the fourth plague He informed us that the creatures of the earth and the wild animals of the wilderness are all at His beck and call, prepared to fulfill His will and to act as His emissaries, may He be exalted. Now, the plagues of the earth are like the plagues of the water (and the animals of the water are like the animals of the land). That is, these four plagues are two on the earth and two in the water. The first plague changed the body of water itself, and the second plague actualized His will with the swarming creatures of the water, the third plague was to change the body of the earth, and the fourth plague was to actualize His will with the creatures of the earth.

[The Fifth plague:] After having completed the plagues with the two lower foundational elements [water and earth], from there He began ascending to the air, which is above the water and the earth. The plague of (pestilence) [the air] is attributed to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, as the verse

states,²³⁹ “The hand of *HaShem*-יהו"ה shall be upon your cattle.” This plague called, “pestilence-*Dever*-דבר,” is known to be an airborne affliction, such that when the air is foul it is called “pestilence-*Dever*-דבר,” as known to those who know the natural sciences.

Thus, when he transformed the water to blood, and the earth to lice, and the air to pestilence, it is to say that he transformed it to the opposite of its nature, to destroy rather than give life. This is why it specifies that this [plague] was only in the fields, for had it been in the cities, not a single person in all of Egypt would have remained.²⁴⁰ Rather, he let them endure, as He said,²⁴¹ “However, for this I have let you endure, in order to show you My strength, [and so that My Name may be declared throughout the world].”

[The sixth plague:] After having transformed the body of the air into a force of destruction in the fifth plague, He then sent the arrows of the air, as He did with the frogs of the water and the wild animals of the earth. That is, He sent boils and blisters to erupt upon man,²⁴² all this being a novelty in the transformation of the air. This being so, [we see that] three foundational elements were changed in six things, three in their bodies themselves, and three in novel things being brought forth from them.

The seventh plague was with fire, the fourth [and highest] foundational element above the air, the nature of which is to be drawn above. Now, just as He transformed the water to

²³⁹ Exodus 9:3

²⁴⁰ See Exodus 9:15

²⁴¹ Exodus 9:16

²⁴² Exodus 9:10

blood, the earth to lice, and the air to pestilence, He [likewise] transformed the body of fire into the power of water. That is, though the nature of fire is to ascend above, he transformed it to [descend] below. This is the meaning of “there was hail and flaming fire within the hail etc., and fire went earthward.”²⁴³ He thus transformed its nature [to descend] from above to below.

The eighth plague, which is the plague of locusts, I do not know the reason for, or what it indicates.

The ninth plague is that after mentioning the four foundational elements and the changes in them, He then began making changes to the orders of the celestial systems of the heavens. He made it known that though the sun is the biggest and greatest star in the sky, it has no power or dominion relative to His will, to overshadow His will, and this certainly is so of all the other stars [in the sky].

The verse thus states, “There was thick darkness etc.,” to inform us that the orbit of the sun in the sky by day and by night, is not according to its own will, but solely by the desire of the Creator, may He be exalted, who created everything, and it is in His power to suspend everything and remove it, and there is no star, constellation, or other heavenly system that has any power [whatsoever], as in the words of Nevuchadnezzar,²⁴⁴ “He acts according to His will with the hosts of heaven; no one can stay His hand.”

This being so, the ninth plague was against the systems and orders of the heavens, and it thus affected the sun, which is the biggest of the systems, and the changes in it are visible to

²⁴³ Exodus 9:24, 9:23

²⁴⁴ Daniel 4:32

our eyes of all flesh to a greater degree than with all other stars, whose orbital paths are not as known or revealed to us.

The tenth plague was a change to the angelic orders that are above the heavens. He therefore said,²⁴⁵ “I shall pass judgment on all the gods of Egypt – I am *HaShem*-יהוה.” For, were it not for this plague, they never would have been fit to depart from there. However, by Him changing the orders of the world and its systems, “He is able to humble those who walk arrogantly.”²⁴⁶ This is the secret of [the verse],²⁴⁷ “*I-Anochi*-אני shall bring you up and also ascend.” Understand that it was for this reason that it was necessary for He Himself to do this act, not through the intermediary of an angel, since there is no angel that is appointed over [or has the ability to] change the angelic orders, as He does.

However, *HaShem*-יהוה, may He be exalted, rules over all and can do with them as He pleases and desires. This being so, the secret of the ten plagues includes His dominion over the three worlds, this being His dominion over the lowly world, the world of the celestial spheres, and the world of the angels, and above them all is the Singular Lord who rules over all,²⁴⁸ who is exalted beyond all blessing and praise!²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Exodus 12:12

²⁴⁶ Daniel 4:34

²⁴⁷ Genesis 46:4

²⁴⁸ Sefer Yetzirah 1:5

²⁴⁹ Nehemiah 9:5

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הָיָה נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סִמָּנִים:

דְּצ"ךְ עַד"שׁ בְּאֶח"ב

Rabbi Yehuda grouped them into acronyms:

DETZA"KH, ADA"SH, BE'ACH"AV

After having informed you of the matter of the ten plagues, we now will continue and awaken you to the signs given by Rabbi Yehudah – דְּצ"ךְ עַד"שׁ בְּאֶח"ב. Now, if you say that these signs were simply given according to the order that the plagues happened, as stated before, then of what benefit is it?²⁵⁰

Now, if we say as our sages, of blessed memory, stated, that the first two plagues were preceded by a warning, and the third plague was without warning, it still requires a more glorious and elevated matter [to explain this].²⁵¹ That is, the sign “*DeTza"Ch*” דְּצ"ךְ represents the plagues done by Aharon with the staff. For, about the blood (*Dam*-דָּם) the verse states,²⁵² “Say to Aharon, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt etc.’” About the frogs (*Tzefarde*’ah-צַפַּרְדֵּי-עַ) it states,²⁵³ “Say to Aharon, ‘Stretch out your hand with your

²⁵⁰ That is, of what benefit or significance is there in his grouping them under acronyms?

²⁵¹ Also see *Gevurot HaShem* of the Maharal of Prague.

²⁵² Exodus 7:19

²⁵³ Exodus 8:1

staff over the rivers etc.” About the lice (*Keeneem*-כְּנִיִּם) it states,²⁵⁴ “Say to Aharon, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth.’”

The sign “*ADa"Sh*”-עַד"שׁ represents those plagues done by *HaShem*-יְהו"ה, may He be exalted. The wild animals (*Arov*-עֲרוֹב) as it states,²⁵⁵ “Behold, I shall incite against you... [the swarm of wild beasts] etc.” Pestilence (*Dever*-דֵּבֶר) as it states,²⁵⁶ “The hand of *HaShem*-יְהו"ה shall be upon your cattle.” The plague of boils (*Shecheen*-שַׁחֲיִן) was done by Moshe and Aharon in agreement with *HaShem*-יְהו"ה, may He be exalted, [as it states],²⁵⁷ “Take for yourselves handfuls of furnace soot.”

The sign “*Be'Ach"Av*”-בְּאֶחָב represents those plagues done by Moshe alone. The hail (*Barad*-בָּרָד) as it states,²⁵⁸ “*HaShem*-יְהו"ה said to Moshe, ‘Stretch out your hand toward heaven etc.’” The locusts (*Arbeh*-אַרְבֵּה), as it states,²⁵⁹ “*HaShem*-יְהו"ה said to Moshe, ‘Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt [for the locust-swarm] etc.’” The darkness (*Choshech*-חֹשֶׁךְ), [as it states],²⁶⁰ “*HaShem*-יְהו"ה said to Moshe, ‘Stretch forth your hand toward the heavens, and there shall be darkness etc.’”

This concludes [first three plagues of the acronym “*Be'A"Ch*”-בְּאֶחָח.” The tenth, which is the plague of the firstborn (*Bechorot*-בְּכוֹרוֹת) was done by *HaShem*-יְהו"ה, as the verse

²⁵⁴ Exodus 8:12

²⁵⁵ Exodus 8:16

²⁵⁶ Exodus 9:3

²⁵⁷ Exodus 9:8

²⁵⁸ Exodus 9:22

²⁵⁹ Exodus 10:12

²⁶⁰ Exodus 10:21

states,²⁶¹ “I shall go through the land of Egypt on this night, [and I shall strike every firstborn in the land of Egypt] etc.” We thus find that all these signs given by Rabbi Yehudah include important principles by which to distinguish between the ten plagues.

After having discussed the matter of the ten plagues in a general way, it is fitting that we clarify and refine the secret of the tenth plague, which is the plague of the firstborns, with greater detail. We shall give the reason why the plague of God was specifically sent upon the firstborn, rather than anything else.

Know that the masters of the True Kabbalah said in Talmud²⁶² that “Egypt is second only to the land of Israel,” this being founded on the verse,²⁶³ “Like the garden of *HaShem*-יהוה, like the land of Egypt.” The Torah thus hints at an important principle. For of what relevance to the law is the verse that states,²⁶⁴ “Chevron was built seven years before Tzo’an in Egypt”?²⁶⁵ Rather, it all is [to inform us] of very important principles.²⁶⁶

After having given you this introduction, know that *HaShem*-יהוה, may He be exalted, who is singular in His world, created all systems and orders, both the upper and the lower. He appointed all the systems and orders “the higher one, and

²⁶¹ Exodus 12:12

²⁶² See Talmud Bavli, Sotah 34b; Ketubot 112a

²⁶³ Genesis 13:10

²⁶⁴ Numbers 13:22

²⁶⁵ See Sotah 34b; Ketubot 112a *ibid*.

²⁶⁶ Also see *Shaarei Orah* by the same author, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light*, Gate One (*Malchut*), Gate Eight (*Binah*).

even the higher one,”²⁶⁷ and he created all the habitations of the earth below, and appointed stars and supernal angels over them, “the higher one, and even the higher one.” However, above them all is the Singular Master who reigns over all, and who brought everything into being and created everything.

Now, of all the places He created in His world, He only chose Tziyon as His portion, which is the foundation of the habitation, as it states,²⁶⁸ “Tziyon – the foundation of the world,” and it states,²⁶⁹ “For *HaShem*-יהו"ה has chosen Tziyon; He has desired it for His habitation.” This is why Yerushalayim and the entire chosen land, is called “the Land of God-*Eretz Ya*”ארץ י"ה-ה.”

Moreover, the Torah states [about this],²⁷⁰ “It is a land that *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God seeks out; the eyes of *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year,” and Yerushalayim is called “the seat of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” However, over all the other parts of the earth He appointed angelic ministers, each one ruling over his particular portion. About this the verse states, “the minister of the kingdom of Persia,”²⁷¹ and “the minister of the kingdom of Greece.”²⁷²

Now that you know this principle, know that when they stated that “Egypt is second only to the land of Israel,” they were hinting at the greatest angelic minister of all the supernal

²⁶⁷ Ecclesiastes 5:7

²⁶⁸ Midrash Tanchuma, Kedoshim 10:1

²⁶⁹ Psalms 132:13

²⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 11:12

²⁷¹ Daniel 10:20

²⁷² Daniel 10:20 *ibid.*

ministers, who is adjacent to and closest to the Kingdom, this being the angelic minister of Egypt. This is why the land of Egypt is second to the land of Israel etc., in that he is second to the King.

This is similar to what we find about the great Sanhedrin of seventy, that those who sat next to the head of the Academy, who was in the center, were more elevated than those who were more distant [from him]. Thus, amongst the upper beings, the angelic minister of Egypt is called “the firstborn,” since his kingdom is second to the Kingdom of *HaShem* יהו"ה and His portion, may He be exalted.

[This is why the land of Egypt is adjacent to the land of Israel] and this is why the Egyptians worshipped the constellation Aries (*Taleh*-טלה), which is the first of the twelve constellations, which rises in the month of Nissan, during which it was fitting for the world to be created according to the equilibrium of time.²⁷³ Understand this very well.

Thus, because Pharaoh and the Egyptians denied the existence of the Creator of the world, may He be exalted, and they appropriated the reign to the supernal angelic ministers, it was necessary that He, may He be exalted, inform them that He is the Singular Master who reigns over all the angelic ministers, over all the hosts of heavens and over all the orders of the world, and that there is none besides Him.²⁷⁴ It is not for nothing that He had to do this in Egypt, and during the month of Nissan, and

²⁷³ See at length in *Ginat Egoz* of the same author Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1).

²⁷⁴ Deuteronomy 4:35

with the firstborns, and on the 15th of the month of Nissan. All these are known principles.

I shall further explain: He had to do this in Egypt, which is the chief of the dominion of all the angels above, so that it will not be said that there is a higher reign Above, that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, cannot overcome. Furthermore, He had to do it Himself and not through the medium of an angel, being that there is no greater angel to vanquish than this one, being that he is the closest to the Kingdom. This is because the land of Egypt, which is his portion, is second to the land of Israel.

He had to do this in the month of Nissan, at which time the days and nights are equal, and [according to the equilibrium of time] the world was created in it, and the sun, which is the greatest of the upper [celestial spheres], began in it. Likewise, it had to be done to the firstborn, being that their angelic minister is the "firstborn," as we have said, and he reigns over the constellation of Aries (*Taleh*-טלה), which is the first of the twelve months of the year.

Moreover, it had to be done on the fifteenth of the month of Nissan so that it could not be said that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, vanquished their god when he was not in his full strength and elevation, being that Aries ascends until the 15th and descends from the 15th and on, thus only having a single point of perfection in its ascendancy, at the true center of the lunar month.²⁷⁵ It thus is according to this that when their god

²⁷⁵ See at length in *Ginat Egoz* of the same author Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1).

was in his full strength, as mentioned, *HaShem*-יהו"ה rendered judgment against him and removed him from his reign.

Thus, at the very same time that the Egyptians [astrologically] calculated that their god would bestow their land with [the greatest] bounty of food and sustenance and elevate them high above, it literally is at that very point, that He lowered them to the lowest depth, as He said,²⁷⁶ “Where are they? Where are your wise men? Let them tell you now, let them try to know what *HaShem*-יהו"ה, Master of Legions, has planned for Egypt.” The reason it happened to the firstborn is because the firstborn were singled out [by the Egyptians to be dedicated to] their god²⁷⁷ who is the “firstborn.” Thus, this plague came measure for measure.

This then, is the reign of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and His might, in making His rulership and wonders known. The plague of the firstborns was brought about by His hand for a great purpose, in that through it He builds and establishes His true singularity and oneness. He then took out His legions, His people, the children of Israel, from Egypt, once Pharaoh, Egypt, and all the peoples of the world knew that there utterly is nothing in the upper realms and in the lower realms whose order cannot be changed by *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, whether in the four foundational elements below, whether in the luminaries of the heavens above, or whether in the chief of all the angels in the highest heights above, and moreover, He does so at a time when they are in their true state of dominion and in their full strength.

²⁷⁶ Isaiah 19:12

²⁷⁷ See Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 4:8 and elsewhere.

We thus find that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, singularly rules over all, "and *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone is exalted on that day," and no argument remains for them to say that there is anything that the Holy One, blessed is He, is incapable of, like when they said,²⁷⁸ "Their God is a God of the mountains, and not a God of the lowlands."

He then took all His legions out of Egypt, as He said,²⁷⁹ "One more plague shall I bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; after that, he shall send you from here. When he sends, it shall be complete – he shall drive you out of here." This then, is the God of the world, who Creates everything from the true reality of His being. Everything that He desires He does,²⁸⁰ His thoughts are very deep,²⁸¹ causing causes and arranging matters until His decrees are fulfilled.

Now, *HaShem*-יהו"ה blessed is He, arranged for there to be famine in Egypt for two reasons. The first was to cause Yaakov and his children to descend into Egypt. The second was to accumulate all the wealth and all the gold and silver into Egypt, so that they hold the wealth for the entire duration of the descent in Egypt, for at that time it was gathered, and it was Yosef who gathered it.

Thus, when they left Egypt, there was the fulfillment of [His promise],²⁸² "and afterwards they will leave with great wealth." For, at that time they plundered all the wealth [of Egypt], as our sages, of blessed memory, expounded [on the

²⁷⁸ Kings I 20:23, 20:28

²⁷⁹ Exodus 11:1

²⁸⁰ Psalms 135:6

²⁸¹ Psalms 92:6

²⁸² Genesis 15:14 *ibid*.

verse],²⁸³ “They emptied Egypt,” that,²⁸⁴ “They made it like the depth [of the sea] devoid of fish,” this being the extent to which they emptied it of gold, silver, and all precious things. This is the heritage of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,²⁸⁵ happy are those who trust in Him. For, since then, we can come and relate His great might and strength, and the depth of His thoughts.

This being so, the plague of the firstborns came for the matters we informed you of, by His hand with an awesome happening, may He be exalted. It seems to me that this awakening should suffice for whosoever is intelligent [and for all who *HaShem*-יהו"ה gave eyes to see and ears to hear].

רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: מִנֵּינ אֶתָּה אוֹמֵר שֶׁלְקוֹ
הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם עֲשׂוֹר מַכּוֹת וְעַל הַיָּם לְקוֹ תַּמְנָשִׁים
מַכּוֹת? בְּמִצְרַיִם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחֲרָטָמִם
אֶל-פְּרָעָה, אֲצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹהִים הוּא. וְעַל הַיָּם מָה הוּא
אוֹמֵר? וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה
בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת-יְהוָה, וַיֹּאמְרִינוּ בִּיהוָה
וּבַמֶּשֶׁה עֲבָדוֹ. כִּמָּה לְקוֹ בְּאֲצַבֵּעַ? עֲשׂוֹר מַכּוֹת. אָמור
מֵעַתָּה: בְּמִצְרַיִם לְקוֹ עֲשׂוֹר מַכּוֹת וְעַל הַיָּם לְקוֹ תַּמְנָשִׁים
מַכּוֹת.

²⁸³ Exodus 12:36

²⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 9b

²⁸⁵ See Isaiah 54:17

RABBI YOSSI HAGELILI SAYS: From where do you know that the Egyptians were struck with ten plagues in Egypt and fifty at the sea? For in Egypt the verse said, “The astrologers said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God,”” whereas at the sea it says, “When Israel saw the great hand that *HaShem* raised against the Egyptians, the people feared *HaShem*, and they believed in *HaShem* and in His servant Moses.” If a finger smote them with ten plagues, conclude from this that they were smitten with ten plagues in Egypt and with fifty plagues at the sea.

This great sage came to inform us that when the Egyptians cruelly oppressed and burdened the children of Avraham, the chosen one of *HaShem*-יהוה, with hard labor for no cause or reason, He avenged the vengeance of His people and servants. Thus, do not think that the Egyptians only suffered ten plagues, for though they themselves acted improperly, proper judgement was rendered against them.

That is, in Egypt they were smitten with ten plagues, this being in accordance with the finger, whereas at the sea they were smitten according to the number of the whole hand, with fifty plagues. That is, ten plagues for each finger, like the five fingers of the hand.

Now, if the words of this sage are solely according to the simple meaning of these verses, know and understand a great principle, that “the Great Hand-*Yad HaGedolah*-יד הגדולה”

is the Supernal quality of Judgment-*Din*,²⁸⁶ and is the right [hand]²⁸⁷ which²⁸⁸ “smashes the enemy.” There are wondrous secrets here, but we are not permitted to reveal them. Nonetheless, from what has been revealed, some of the concealed will become clear to you, if you have a soul.

רבי אליעזר אומר: מִיָּיִן שְׁפַל-מֶכָּה וּמֶכָּה
שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצָּרִים בְּמִצָּרִים הִיָּתָה
שֶׁל אַרְבַּע מַכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: יִשְׁלַח-בָּם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ,
עֲבָרָה וָזַעַם וְצָרָה, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלֵּאכֵי רָעִים. עֲבָרָה –
אֶחָד, וָזַעַם – שְׁתֵּים, וְצָרָה – שְׁלֹשׁ, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלֵּאכֵי
רָעִים – אַרְבַּע. אֲמֹר מֵעַתָּה: בְּמִצָּרִים לָקוּ אַרְבָּעִים
מַכּוֹת וְעַל הֵימָּה לָקוּ מֵאֲתֵימָה מַכּוֹת.

RABBI ELIEZER SAYS: How can you know that each and every plague that the Holy One, blessed is He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was in fact made of four plagues? For it says, “His fury was sent down upon them, great anger, rage, and distress, a company of messengers of destruction.” “Great anger” – one, “rage” – two, “distress” – three, “a company of

²⁸⁶ See earlier in the section on “with an outstretched arm.”

²⁸⁷ The *Sefirah* of Kindness-*Chessed*

²⁸⁸ Exodus 15:6 – “Your right hand, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, smashes the enemy.”

messengers of destruction” – four. Conclude from this that they were smitten with forty plagues in Egypt, and with two hundred plagues at the sea.

He continued to explain and inform us not to think that each plague consisted of only one plague, and he explained how each one included four harsh and evil plagues, due to overturning each of the four chariots of the world, as in the verse,²⁸⁹ “Strike the lintel and the side posts will quake.” In each of them the orders of the world were changed, according to the four systems of the heavens, the four seasons, the four camps of the *Shechinah* above, and the four seasons below.

This being so, we find that the ten plagues squared, included forty, and fifty at the sea squared includes two hundred. However, I cannot expressly publicize and inform you of each of these evil plagues, for there is none capable of publicizing this. Only the Perfect One, may He be exalted, knows all the bonds of the world, because He tied and untied them [and who can inform us of this] except if a prophet sent from Him comes to inform us of the wonders of His might.

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר: מִיָּיִן שְׁפָל-מֶכָּה וּמֶכָּה שְׁהֵבִיא
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמַּצָּרִים בְּמַצָּרִים הָיְתָה נֶשֶׁל
חֲמִשׁ מִכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: יִשְׁלַח-בָּם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ, עֲבָרָה
וְזַעַם וְצָרָה, מִשְׁלַחַת מִלֵּאכֵי רָעִים. חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ – אַחַת,

²⁸⁹ Amos 9:1

עֲבָרָה – נְשָׁתִים, וְזַעַם – שְׁלוֹשׁ, וְצָרָה – אַרְבַּע,
 מְשִׁלַּחַת מַלְאָכֵי רָעִים – חֲמִשׁ. אָמֹר מַעֲתָה: בְּמִצְרַיִם
 לָקֹו חֲמִשִּׁים מִכּוֹת וְעַל הַיָּם לָקֹו חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֲתַיִם
 מִכּוֹת.

RABBI AKIVA SAYS: From where do you know that each and every plague that the Holy One brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was in fact made up of five plagues? For it says, “His fury was sent down upon them, great anger, rage, and distress, a company of messengers of destruction.” “His fury” – one, “great anger” – two, “rage” – three, “distress” – four, “a company of messengers of destruction” – five. Conclude from this that they were smitten with fifty plagues in Egypt, and with two hundred and fifty plagues at the sea.

Rabbi Akiva added in explanation and said that the five *Sefirot* known to the masters of Kabbalah, which include all the upper and lower systems within them, each of these five *Sefirot* was included in each plague. Thus, the ten plagues were made into fifty plagues, and the fifty of the sea into two hundred and fifty (of the hand). It all is known in the secret of Knowledge-*Da'at*. For, the “Assembly of Israel” (*Knesset Yisroel*), which is the fifth *Sefirah*, avenges the vengeance of their enemies and is the secret of the *Hey-א"ה*, which is the “Great Hand” (*Yad*

HaGedolah) hinted at by the sea, which includes five fingers in the secret of five *Sefirot*.

This being so, Rabbi Akiva, peace be upon him, informed us of an important principle. Namely, that all the orders of the angelic ministers of the world were overturned against the Egyptians into enemies, and the fifth-*Hey-א"ה* *Sefirah* tells them such,²⁹⁰ “Here-*Hey-א"ה* is seed for you – sow the land.” The secret of this *Sefirah* is the secret of [the verse],²⁹¹ “I put to death and I bring to life, I struck down and I will heal.”

That is, it is this *Sefirah* called “the Assembly of Israel” (*Knesset Yisroel*) which healed the affliction of Egypt during the **five** (*Hey-ה-5*) years of famine, and it is she who “overturned her rivers into tar, and her soil into sulfur,”²⁹² since she saw the cruelty and violence that the Egyptians perpetrated against us with no wrongdoing on our part. It is according to this principle that the Torah hints that it is fitting that we always remember this hand.

Thus, at the end of the portion it states,²⁹³ “It shall be a sign upon your hand-*Yadchah-ידכה*.” Understand the wonders of He who is of perfect knowledge and how He added an extra letter that is not necessary according to the simple meaning,²⁹⁴ solely to explain the deep and hidden secret that our hand-*Yad-*

²⁹⁰ Genesis 47:23

²⁹¹ Deuteronomy 32:39

²⁹² See Isaiah 34:9

²⁹³ Exodus 13:16

²⁹⁴ The word “your hand” is normally spelled “*Yadcha-ידך*,” absent the extraneous additional letter *Hey-ה*, as it states elsewhere (Deuteronomy 6:8), “Bind them as a sign upon your hand-*Yadecha-ידך*.”

יד is the secret of the known *Hey-ה* (*Hey HaYediya*, [the definite article]).

It is she who avenges and exacts retribution for us against our enemies. It is about her that the verse states,²⁹⁵ “Awaken! Awaken! Don strength (*Oz-עוז*), O’ arm of *HaShem-ה'* יהו"ה! Awaken etc.” It is upon her that the secret of the Tefillin is founded. This is why our sages, of blessed memory, stated,²⁹⁶ “Strength-*Oz-עוז* refers only to Tefillin, as the verse states,²⁹⁷ ‘*HaShem-ה'* יהו"ה has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength,” and our weak hand (*Yad KeHeh-כהה* יד) is [opposite] His right. This should suffice for all who are wise of heart.

This being so, contemplate to what extent the Egyptians were punished in order to fulfill what the Supernal One said to Avraham His beloved,²⁹⁸ “But also the nation that they will serve, I shall judge etc.” For, He avenges the vengeance of His people and servants, and saw the measure of their pain and servitude, to give their enemies recompense measure for measure for their [wicked] deeds, [as the verse states],²⁹⁹ “I have heard its outcry because of its taskmasters, for I have known of its sufferings etc.” Contemplate the matter and understand the vision, that He knows the travails of the hearts of his people, and He is fit to render judgement and avenge their vengeance.

²⁹⁵ Isaiah 51:9

²⁹⁶ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6a; Sefer HaKaneh 25:4

²⁹⁷ Isaiah 62:8

²⁹⁸ Genesis 15:14

²⁹⁹ Exodus 3:7

It thus is on account of their [wicked] deeds that the many mighty, different, and redoubled plagues came upon them. May *HaShem*-יהו"ה who saw the suffering [of the children of Israel], who heard their groan and their cry and saved them, hear the voice of our cry today, as we are in a difficult exile and suffering hardships, and may He speedily fulfill in us, the verse,³⁰⁰ "As in the days when you left the land of Egypt I will show them wonders."

כַּמָּה מַעֲלֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמָקוֹם עָלֵינוּ!

**HOW MANY LEVELS OF GOODNESS DID
THE EVER PRESENT ONE DO FOR US!**

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים, דִּינוּ.

Had He brought us out of Egypt
without bringing judgment upon [our oppressors],
it would have been enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים, וְלֹא עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם, דִּינוּ.

³⁰⁰ Micah 7:15

Had He brought judgment upon them
but not upon their gods,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו עָשָׂה בַּאלֹהֵיהֶם, וְלֹא הָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, דִּינוּ.

Had He brought judgment upon their gods
without killing their firstborn sons,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו הָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מָמוֹנָם,
דִּינוּ.

Had He killed their firstborn sons
without giving us their wealth,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מָמוֹנָם וְלֹא קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם, דִּינוּ.

Had He given us their wealth
without splitting the sea for us,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו קרע לנו את־הים ולא העבירנו בתוכו בַּחֲרָבָה,
דִּינוּ.

Had He split the sea for us
but not brought us through it dry,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו העבירנו בתוכו בַּחֲרָבָה ולא שָׁקַע צָרֵנוּ בתוכו
דִּינוּ.

Had He brought us through [the sea] dry
without drowning our enemies in it,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו שָׁקַע צָרֵנוּ בתוכו ולא סָפַק צָרָכֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר
אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה דִּינוּ.

Had He drowned our enemies in it
without providing for our needs
for forty years in the desert,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה ולא האכילנו
את־המן דִּינוּ.

Had He provided for our needs
for forty years in the desert,
without feeding us the manna,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו האכילנו את־המן ולא נתן לנו את־השבת, דִּינוּ.

Had He fed us the manna
without giving us the Shabbat,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו נתן לנו את־השבת, ולא קרבנו לפני הר סיני,
דִּינוּ.

Had He given us the Shabbat
without drawing us close to Mount Sinai,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני, ולא נתן לנו את־התורה.
דִּינוּ.

Had He drawn us close to Mount Sinai
without giving us the Torah,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו נתן לנו את-התורה ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,
דינו.

Had He given us the Torah
without bringing us to the land of Israel,
it would have been enough for us.

אלו הכניסנו לארץ ישראל ולא בנה לנו את-בית
הביתרה דינו.

Had He brought us to the land of Israel
and not built His chosen House
it would have been enough for us.

In this Mishnah, [our sages], peace be upon them,
awakened us to rouse ourselves from the slumber of
forgetfulness, and to rise from the pit of laziness, to know,
investigate, and contemplate the great debt that is upon us to
accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven wholeheartedly and
willingly, [with a good eye and a pure heart].

For, we must calculate in our souls that had a human being done many kindnesses to us, and we did not repay him or precede him with kindness, how shameful would we be before him, and he would choose to do [to us] that which is good in his eyes. How much more so is this certainly so of the Creator of the world, may He be exalted, who did (many) wonders and miracles for us.

Now, if you say that the merit of our forefathers preceded Him, [in answer to this, know that] our sages, of blessed memory, testified that a single act of goodness that He did for us in Egypt equals all the merit of our forefathers. This is why it is necessary [for us] to say, “Had He brought us out of Egypt without bringing judgment upon [our oppressors] it would have been enough for us.”

That is, that would have been sufficient payment to fulfill the debt upon Him in bestowing goodness to us (and redeeming us). However, out of His great kindness and compassion, in that the Supernal One is compassionate and merciful and bestows goodness to those who trust in Him, [in such a case] His gifts and kindnesses have no defined measure, end, or limit, just as He, blessed is He, has no measure, end or limit.

Therefore, judgment dictates that we must recognize [and acknowledge] Him, may He be exalted, serving Him wholeheartedly and fulfilling His *mitzvot* with a pure heart, thanking, praising, lauding, and extolling such a Master as this, thanking Him for both the good and the bad, and receiving suffering with joy, with the knowledge that after the suffering

we will have tranquility, peace, and security, with gladness and joy.

The exile in Egypt stands as a sign and witness [to this]. It therefore is fitting for us to suffer hardships on His behalf and to rejoice in them, with the knowledge that there is reward for our deeds and hope for our end, and that He again will bestow much goodness upon us, as He stated in the verse,³⁰¹ “Instead of your shame which was doubled, and the disgrace that they would bemoan as their portion [they therefore will inherit a double portion in their land and eternal gladness will be theirs].” He similarly said,³⁰² “Instead of your doubled shame and disgrace that they bemoaned as their portion” and,³⁰³ “Instead of copper I will bring gold.” We await all this, and He, may He be exalted, is ready and prepared to save us, if only we call out and cry before Him with a pure heart, as the verse states,³⁰⁴ “We cried out to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the God of our fathers and *HaShem*-יהו"ה heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression,” and it states,³⁰⁵ “He carries out the will of those who fear Him [and He will hear their cry and save them].”

After having greatly awakening you to “all the levels of goodness,” that He did for us, each one of us must rise, awaken and know the great measure of thanks and praise we must have to His Great Name, as hinted in these words. Were it not for fear of the great length required, we would mention the many mysteries and secrets present in each of these levels.

³⁰¹ Isaiah 61:7

³⁰² Isaiah 60:15

³⁰³ Isaiah 60:17

³⁰⁴ Deuteronomy 26:7; Exodus 2:23

³⁰⁵ Psalms 145:19

Nonetheless, from the little that has been mentioned, all who are wise of heart should awaken with alacrity and quickness in the knowledge of the great strength of His power to either bestow goodness or its opposite, in that He bestows goodness to those who love Him, and evil to those who hate Him. May He, blessed is He, open our eyes to the luminary of grasping Him, and may He put the fear of Him into our hearts, so that we may live and merit inheriting His goodness and His blessing.

עַל אַחַת, כָּמָה וְכָמָה, טוֹבָה כְּפוּלָה וּמִכְפֹּלֶת לַמָּקוֹם
עָלֵינוּ: שְׁהוֹצִיאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וַעֲשֵׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים,
וַעֲשֵׂה בְּאַלְהֵיהֶם, וְהָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־
מִמוֹנָם, וְקָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם, וְהַעֲבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בַּחֲרָבָה,
וְשָׁקַע צָרָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְסִפֵּק צָרָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים
שָׁנָה, וְהֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשֶּׁבֶת, וְקָרַבָּנוּ
לִפְנֵי הָרַם סִינַי, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, וְהַכְנִיסָנוּ לָאָרֶץ
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבָנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־כָּל־
עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

HOW MANY AND MANIFOLD are the Ever Present One's kindnesses to us – for He brought us out of Egypt and brought judgment upon [our oppressors]

and upon their gods, and He killed their firstborn sons and gave us their wealth, and He split the sea for us and brought us through it on dry land and drowned our enemies there, and He provided for our needs for forty years in the desert and fed us manna, and He gave us the Shabbat, and He drew us close to Mount Sinai and gave us the Torah, and He brought us to the land of Israel and built His chosen House for us, so that we can find atonement [there] for all our sins.

Contemplate that they concluded this Mishnah stating at the end of it all, “and built His chosen House for us etc.” For, this is the first root, and is the condition that our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, stipulated with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, when he said,³⁰⁶ “Whereby shall I know that I am to inherit it?” That is, “What are the things that my children should do to atone for their sins, so that they will inherit the land that is given to them, for them and their offspring forever.”

The Supernal One responded to him that the sacrificial offerings will atone for their sins, this being the secret of [the verse],³⁰⁷ “Take to Me three heifers etc.” Behold and contemplate that all the goodness and kindness mentioned above depend on the quality of atonement. Now, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, fulfilled everything that He promised

³⁰⁶ Genesis 15:8

³⁰⁷ Genesis 15:9

Avraham, as in the words of the prophet,³⁰⁸ “Not one of any of the good things of which *HaShem*-יהו"ה had promised to the House of Israel was lacking, [everything came to pass].”

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה
דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יָדָיו חֻבָּתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמָרֹר.

RABBAN GAMLIEL would say: Whosoever does not say these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation, and these are them:

PESACH, MATZAH, AND MAROR.

This great sage informed us that it is fitting for us to always recall the miracles and wonders that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, did for our forefathers, as though He literally did them for us. This is because of two reasons. The first is that when we recall the wonders and kindnesses that He did for them, our hearts will be strengthened to do His will and trust in Him.

The second reason is that since we are their children and we know what He did for our fathers, we thereby know what

³⁰⁸ Joshua 21:43

He is destined to do for us or for our children. When we always remember this, our faith is then strengthened and our trust is increased. Thus, this sage said that three specific things are of primary importance which should be recalled, “Pesach etc.”

Now, I already informed you that the Egyptians worshipped the constellation Aires, and therefore whoever ate meat was abhorrent in their eyes, as our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, said,³⁰⁹ “We shall slaughter the abomination of Egypt [before their eyes] etc.,” and he commanded,³¹⁰ “Take or buy [for yourselves one of the flock for your families, and slaughter the Pesach offering] etc.” That is, [he instructed them] to slaughter it before their very eyes, in order to inform them that there utterly is no power to the angelic minister that rules over them, nor to the constellation Aires that bestows to them, as they had said, and that at the very same time that it was [astrologically] fitting that the strength [of Aries] be bestowed upon them, their firstborn sons who were appointed to serve this constellation died, and the children of Israel went out with an outstretched arm.³¹¹

About this the verse states,³¹² “And the Egyptians were burying those who *HaShem*-יהו"ה had smitten, every firstborn; [and upon their gods *HaShem*-יהו"ה inflicted punishments].” Even though He granted permission to the destroyer to destroy, nevertheless, the Guardian of Israel shields His pious ones who trust in Him, as the verse states,³¹³ “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה will pass

³⁰⁹ Exodus 8:22

³¹⁰ Exodus 12:21

³¹¹ Exodus 14:8; Numbers 33:3

³¹² Numbers 33:4

³¹³ Exodus 12:23

over (*Pasach*-פסח) the entrance, [and will not permit the destroyer to enter your homes to smite].”

פֶּסַח נִשְׁהִיו אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים בְּזֶמֶן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קִיָּם, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם לְשֹׁם לְפָסַח הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאָמַר: וְאָמַרְתֶּם זָבַח-פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה, אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל-בְּתֵי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת-מִצְרַיִם, וְאֶת-בְּתֵינוּ הִצִּיל, וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ.

THE PESACH is what our ancestors ate when the Holy Temple stood: and what does it recall? It recalls the Holy One, blessed is He, passing over (*Pasach*) the houses of our ancestors in Egypt, as it says: “You shall say: ‘It is a Pesach offering for *HaShem*, for He passed over (*Pasach*) the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved those in our homes’ – and the people bowed and prostrated themselves.”

מִצֵּה זוֹ נִשְׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם לְשֹׁם לְפָסַח הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְגֵאָלָם, הַסִּפִּיק בְּצִקָּם שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחֲמִיץ עַד שְׁנִגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְגֵאָלָם,

שְׁנֵאמַר: וַיֹּאכְלוּ אֶת־הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עִגְתַּ
מִצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ, כִּי גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ
לְהִתְמַהֵּמֶה, וְגַם־צָדָה לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

THIS MATZAH that we eat: what does it recall? It recalls the dough of our ancestors, which did not have time to rise before the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them, as says: “They baked the dough that they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for it had not risen, for they were cast out of Egypt and could not delay, and they made no provision for the way.”

The reason for the Matzah is as we already said. It is for this reason that it states, “The dough of our ancestors, which did not have time to sour etc.” For this indeed is the truth, that had it soured they would not have been redeemed, as we included and said in the Mishnah, “This is the bread of oppression etc.” To conclude, redemption is with Matzah, and exile is with Chametz. The intelligent will understand.

מָרֹר זֶה שֶׁאֲנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוּם מָה? עַל שׁוּם
שֶׁמָּרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאמַר:
וַיִּמָּרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה, בַּחֲמֹר וּבִלְבָנִים

וּבְכָל-עֲבֹדָה בַּשָּׂדֶה אֶת כָּל עֲבֹדָתָם אֲשֶׁר-עָבְדוּ בָהֶם
בְּכָרָד.

THESE BITTER HERBS that we eat: what do they recall? They recall the bitterness that the Egyptians imposed on the lives of our ancestors in Egypt, as it says: “They embittered their lives with hard labor, with clay and with bricks and with all labors of the field, with all the work by which they enslaved them – hard labor.”

The reason for the bitterness (Maror) is included in [the explanation of the verse],³¹⁴ “The Egyptians dealt cruelly with us etc.,” as we wrote above. Now, since the matter is so, it is fitting for us to remember the bitter taste, in order to thank *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, for taking us out of bitterness to sweetness, and as He did for us then, so shall He always do for us. This is the secret of faith (*Emunah*) and trust (*Bitachon*).

בְּכָל-דּוֹר וְדּוֹר חֵיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת-עֲצָמוֹ כְּאֵלֹ
הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
לֵאמֹר, בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי בִצְאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא
אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלֶבֶד גָּעַל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלֵא אֲף
אוֹתָנוּ גָּעַל עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֵאמַר: וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן

³¹⁴ Deuteronomy 26:6

הָבִיא אוֹתָנוּ, לָתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

IN EACH AND EVERY GENERATION, each person is obligated see himself as if he himself came out of Egypt, as it says: “And you shall tell your child on that day, ‘Because of this, *HaShem* did for me when I came out of Egypt.’” It was not only our ancestors whom the Holy One, blessed is He, redeemed. He redeemed us too along with them, as it says: “He took us out of there, to bring us to the land He promised to our ancestors and give it to us.”

This Mishnah is a primary root and foundation for what we already preceded and mentioned in our words on [the section] “We were slaves etc.” That is, had *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, not taken our forefathers out etc., we still would be entrenched in our servitude, whereas if they were taken out of their servitude to freedom, then we too are called free men.

This being so, “It was not only our ancestors whom the Holy One, blessed is He, redeemed etc.” All this is hinted in the verse,³¹⁵ “Have no fear of descending into Egypt.” For, our forefather Yaakov, peace be upon him, saw that the exile would be drawn out for his children until the end of all generations, until *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, promised him that He

³¹⁵ Genesis 46:3

would change the orders of the world etc. “We therefore are obligated to [thank] etc.,” meaning, to a greater degree than our forefathers. For, though they were redeemed, they tasted the bitter taste of their exile, whereas we have tasted the taste of the redemption, being that it is by virtue of the power of that redemption that we are free men and have not tasted the taste of the exile. We thus say, “[We therefore are obligated to thank etc.] the One who performed all these miracles for our forefathers and for us etc.”

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבֵּחַ, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדָּר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעַלֶּה, וּלְקַלֵּס לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וּלְנוּ אֶת-כָּל-הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֶּה: הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה, וּמֵאֲכָל לַיּוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גָּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגָאֻלָּה. וְנֹאמַר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה: הַלְלוּיָהּ.

THEREFORE, WE ARE OBLIGED TO THANK, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, raise high, and acclaim He who has performed all these miracles for our ancestors and for us; who has brought us out from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from grief to celebration; from darkness to great light and from enslavement to redemption; and we therefore shall sing a new song before Him. Halleluyah!

הַלְלוּיָהּ הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה, הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה. יְהִי
שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מִעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם. מִמִּזְרַח־שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד־
מְבוֹאוֹ מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם יְהוָה. רָם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְהוָה, עַל
הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ. מִי כִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְּגַבִּיהִי לְשָׁבֶת.
הַמְּשַׁפִּילִי לִרְאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ. מְקִימִי מַעַפָּר דָּל,
מַאֲשֵׁפֶת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן. לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עַם־נְדִיבִים, עַם נְדִיבֵי
עַמּוֹ. מוֹשִׁיבִי עֶקְרֶת הַבַּיִת, אֶם־הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה,
הַלְלוּיָהּ.

HALLELUYAH, Servants of *HaShem*, give praise;
praise the name of *HaShem*. Blessed be the Name of
HaShem now and for evermore. From the rising of the
sun in the east to its setting, may the Name of *HaShem*
be praised. *HaShem* is exalted above all nations; His glory
is above the heavens. Who is like *HaShem* our God, who
sits enthroned on high, yet turns so low to see the
heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust
and the needy from the refuse heap, giving them a place
alongside princes, the princes of His people. He makes
the woman in a childless house a happy mother of
children. *Halleluyah!*

The primary praise included in this passage, which includes all praises in the world, is that we are the servants of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and not servants of an angel or constellation. Rather, we are under Him, may He be exalted, and it is to Him that we must offer thanks and praise “from the rising of the sun in the east etc.”³¹⁶ This matter hinges on [the directions of] east and west, being that the settlement of the earth begins from east to west, in that the intermediate [climate] of the air begins in the east.

In contrast, this is not so of north to south, being that the south is unsettled because of its heat, and the north [is unsettled] because of its cold. Rather, the length (*Orech*-אורך) of the inhabited lands [stretches] from east to west, whereas the width (*Rochav*-רוחב) [of the earth] is from north to south. About this the verse states,³¹⁷ “Have you contemplated the width (*Rechvei*-רחבי) of the earth etc.”

This is because settled habitation does not begin in the north and end in the south, but it all is settled from the east to the west. The verse therefore states,³¹⁸ “For from the rising of the sun in the east, to its setting, My Name is great amongst the nations.” Understand this.

It then states,³¹⁹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה is exalted above all nations.” In this he included the secret of the miracles and wonders that were performed in Egypt, for through them all the nations know that “*HaShem*-יהו"ה is exalted, [but] He sees the

³¹⁶ Psalms 113:3

³¹⁷ Job 38:18

³¹⁸ Malachi 1:11

³¹⁹ Psalms 113:4

lowly.”³²⁰ He then further magnified the praise of the Creator, may He be exalted, and said, “Who is like *HaShem*-יהוה our God.”

He then relates the providence of *HaShem*-יהוה, may He be exalted, for both good and bad, all according to what is appropriate. He thus said, “He raises the poor from the dust,” and went even further, stating that their goodness will be everlasting, which is the meaning of, “He makes the woman in a childless house a happy mother of children etc.”

בַּצֵּאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מַעַם לֵעֲזוּ.
הִיָּתָה יְהוּדָה לְקִדְשׁוֹ, יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשָׁלוֹתָיו. הֵיָם רָאָה
וַיִּנָּס, הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר. הַהָרִים רָקְדּוּ כְּאֵילִים,
גְּבָעוֹת כְּבָנֵי צֹאן. מִה־לֵּךְ הֵיָם כִּי תָנוּס, הַיַּרְדֵּן – תִּסָּב
לְאַחֹר. הַהָרִים – תִּרְקְדּוּ כְּאֵילִים, גְּבָעוֹת כְּבָנֵי־צֹאן.
מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אֶרֶץ, מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. הַהִפְכִי
הַצֹּר אֶגְמִים־מִים, חֲלָמִישׁ לְמַעֲיָנוֹ־מִים.

WHEN ISRAEL CAME OUT OF EGYPT, the house of Yaakov from a people of foreign tongue, Yehudah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion. The sea saw and fled; the Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. Why

³²⁰ Psalms 138:6

was it, sea, that you fled? Jordan, why did you turn back? Why, mountains, did you skip like rams, and you, hills, like lambs? It was at the presence of *HaShem*, Creator of the earth, at the presence of the God of Yaakov, who turned the rock into a pool of water, flint into a flowing spring.

In this passage he relates all the miracles and wonders that were performed at the sea, as well as the miracles that were performed in the desert, as in the verse,³²¹ “Who brings forth water from the flint rock.” It is through relating these wonders that we hope and wait for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may He be exalted, that He should perform a sign for us and redeem us in the near future, with the help of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ
וְגָאֵל אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה
לֶאֱכֹל־בּוֹ מִצֶּה וּמָרוֹר. כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
יִגְיַעֲנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלִרְגָלִים אַחֲרִים הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאָתָנוּ
לְשָׁלוֹם, שְׂמֵחִים בְּבִגְדֵי עִירָה וְשִׂשְׂיִם בַּעֲבוּדָתָךְ.
וְנֹאכַל שָׁם מִן הַזִּבְחִים וּמִן הַפֶּסַחִים אֲשֶׁר יִגִּיעַ דָּמָם
עַל קִיר מִזְבִּיחֶךָ לְרִצּוֹן, וְנוֹדָה לָּךְ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל

³²¹ Deuteronomy 8:15

גְּאֻלָּתֵנוּ וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, גֹּאֲלֵ
יִשְׂרָאֵל.

BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM our God, King of the world, who has redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt and brought us to this night to eat matzah and bitter herbs. So may *HaShem* our God bring us in peace to other seasons and festivals that are coming to us, happy in the building of Your city and rejoicing in Your service; and there we will eat of sacrifices and Pesach offerings [*On Motzaei Shabbat*: of Pesach offerings and sacrifices] of which the blood will reach the side of Your altar to be accepted. And we shall thank You with a new song for our redemption and for the salvation of our lives. Blessed are You, *HaShem*, Redeemer of Israel.

Do you not see from the beginning words of this blessing, that it gives precedence to “who has redeemed **us**” before [mentioning] the redemption of our ancestors. This is to show that He has done more for us than He did for them, as we wrote above. Through this, they informed us that it is fitting for us to bless Him, may He be exalted, for all the goodness that He bestows upon us, and for all that we derive benefit from. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³²² “It is forbidden

³²² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35a

for a person to derive benefit from this world without [reciting] a blessing.”

This being so, we shall bless Him, may He be exalted, for this great salvation, and just as this blessing starts with the redemption He has done for us, so shall we request of Him, may He be exalted, to do goodness with us at the end, to take us out of this bitter exile, so that this blessing will be said over the main and perfect redemption that will not be followed by any further lacking or exile, for we then shall go out of all travails to great goodness and the like.

We then will bring our intellects³²³ out from potential to actualization, and His Kingdom will then be complete, as the verse states,³²⁴ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will be King etc.” We then will “thank You with a new song,” about the perpetual redemption You will do for us, of which they said “a new song-*Sheer Chadash*-שיר חדש” [in the masculine] and not “a new song-*Sheerah Chadashah*-שירה חדשה” [in the feminine], being that the “song-*Sheer*-שיר” in the masculine stands forever in a single quality, whereas the “song-*Sheerah*-שירה” [in the feminine] of the sea was followed by subsequent travails that arose, like a woman who sometimes is pregnant and sometimes is not.³²⁵

However, in the end there will be a “song-*Sheer*-שיר” [in the masculine] and not a “song-*Sheerah*-שירה” [in the feminine]. About this, the prophet, peace be upon him, said,³²⁶ “This song (*Sheer*-שיר) will be yours like the night of the

³²³ Our souls

³²⁴ Zachariah 14:9

³²⁵ Midrash Shemot Rabba 23:11; Mechilta to Exodus (Beshalach) 15:1; Tosefot entitled “*Hachi Garsinan v'Nomar*” to Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 116b.

³²⁶ Isaiah 30:29

festival's consecration, [and heartfelt gladness like one who walks with a flute, to come to the mountain of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, to the Rock of Israel].”

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי
הַגֶּפֶן.

Blessed are You, *HaShem* our God, King of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

With praise to *HaShem*, this concludes the commentary of the Haggadah according to Kabbalah, written by Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, may the mention of the righteous and the holy bring blessing.