

Unlocking the Code

*The Letters of
Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson*

**TRANSLATIONS WITH
PRACTICAL LESSONS**
(Letter from Erev Pesach)

Shlomo Mordechai Hamburger

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson was the father and teacher of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (the "Rebbe"). Rabbi Levi Yitzchak passed away on the 20th of Av in 1944 (5704). This publication is in commemoration of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's 75th *yahrzeit*.

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Shlomo M. Hamburger is a partner in a large international law firm. He is the author of numerous books and articles and a frequent speaker and teacher on employee benefit matters. Shlomo is on the International Advisory Board for Chabad on Campus International and an active member of the Chabad Shul of Potomac, Maryland.

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smhpubs@gmail.com

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1310 48 Street, #300
Brooklyn, NY 11219
212-444-9102
info@rabbidalfin.com
www.jewishinfo.org

EREV PESACH LETTER, 1928²⁰

ב"ה, ערב פסח אחר חצות היום, תפר"ח.
דניפראפעטראווסק.

אוהבי בני שיחי'.

אם כי מכתבי יגיע אליך לסוף הפסח, עכ"ז הולכין אחר דעת הכותב, והכתיבה עצמה, שהוא ביום הראשון לפסח. ולזאת קבל את ברכתי היוצאת מקירות לבי, כי תחוג את חג המצות הבעל"ט בכשרות, פשוטן של דברים והוא העיקר, שתאכל את המצה בכשרות המצה עצמה, ובכשרות הגוף והנפש, שהמה יהיו כשרים לאכילת מצה.

מיכלא דמהימנותא, והיינו שהמצה תהי' ראוי' להאוכל והאוכל להמצה, שאז הוא זיווג שלם כדבעי למהוי. והיינו כי מצה נמשלה לאשה כמארז"ל כל האוכל מצה בע"פ כאלו בא על ארוסתו כו', הרי שנמשלה לאשה. ומצה היא רק קמח ומים, קמח מים גמט' רחל, שהיא הנוקבה העיקרית כידוע. ועיקר המצה הוא הפרוסה, והחלק הגדול של אפיקומן, שהוא המצה האמצעית דלוי, כי בנין המל' (הן הפרוסה החלק הקטן, רחל, והן החלק הגדול, האפיקומן, צפון, עלמא דאתכסיא, לאה) הוא מהגבורות דוקא, דהיינו לוי. ולכן צריכים לשמור את המצה כמ"ש ושמרתם את המצות, כי מאחר שהיא בחי' גבורות צריכים לשמרה. ואכילת המצה הוא בחי' זיווג כמ"ש כי אם הלחם אשר הוא אוכל, והוא מאכל אמונה, היינו לרמז, כי כל ענין הזיווגים הוא רק בדרך אמונה, ולא בשכל אנושי, וכמארז"ל אמונת זה סדר זרעים. פירוש לקיים מצות זרעים שהו"ע זיווג כדרז"ל ע"פ בבקר זרע זרעך כו', הוא בדרך אמונה. כי שכל אנושי אין תופס זה, שלכאורה עפ"י שכל די לו להפקיע א"ע ולפרנס א"ע, ולמה לו ליקח רחים על צוארו, רק הוא מפני אמונת אמן בה' אמת שלמעלה מן השכל לגמרי, וכמ"ש בית והון נחלת אבות, שבית והון יכול להיות מאבות מוחין, משא"כ הזיווג ליקח אשה משכלת מה', שם הוי' דלעילא, שלמעלה ממוחין, ועיין במד"ר ר"פ ויצא. (והמטרונוא דלעו"ז רצתה לעשות כאלה, שהכניסה אלף עבדים ואלף שפחות לזווגם ולא עלתה בידה כלל. ומה שהכניסה במספר אלף דוקא, היינו כי יניקת הלעו"ז הוא מהגבורות, ששרשם אלף, כידוע בענין אחוריים דאלקים שעולה אלף אל שדי במלואו, אלף, ושרשם מהמלך בלע דדעת דתהו שנפל לבריהא,

20 See *Likutei Levi Yitzchak*, Vol. 3, p. 197.

ששם הוא המספר אלף, והאלף עבדים הוא גבורות דוכרין, והאלף שפחות הוא גבורות נוקבין. (עדמ"ש במ"א בענין נערי ונערות בלעו"ז) והיחוד הוא ע"י גבורות, איש אש י' אשה אש ה'. ועפ"ז א"ש מה שבאש יש אות א', שלכאורה הי' צ"ל רק ש' לפי המבואר בל"ת להאריז"ל פ' וירא בפ' אש יצאה מחשבן, אך האות א' רומז על מספר אלף, ואכמ"ל. וכשתצרף מלת אשה למלת מצה יעלה מספר אמת, לרמז שהשרש הוא מאמת, שאמת הוא למעלה מהשכל, כי אמת הוא בעתיקא כידוע. וזהו וארשתיך לי באמונה שקאי על פסח, ועי"ז זוכים להסדר האחרון סדר טהורות, שהוא נרמז במלת ודעת בדרז"ל, היינו שזוכים למ"ת שבשבועות, וידעת את הוי'. וזהו"ע אכילת מצה בכשרות, וכשר ר"ת כמוצא שלל רב, לרמז על בירור הניצוצין שהוציאו ישראל ממצרים כמ"ש ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול, ע"י המצה. -- ובשמחה הו"ע הד' כוסות דליל פסח. כשרות מצד מצה, ושמחה שביין מצד הכוסות. ושרשם הוא המוחין דחו"ב, מצה מוחין דאבא, וכוסות מוחין דאימא, כמ"ש בפע"ח. והיינו כי כדי שיהי' יחוד זו"נ צ"ל מקודם יחוד חו"ב כידוע. ואכילת מצה הוא יחוד זו"נ וצ"ל מקודם הקערה דהמצות והכוסות יחוד חו"ב. ואוכלים המצה שהוא היחוד זו"נ, כי אימתי הוא היחוד בזמנא דנטלא מבי אבא כמ"ש בזהר פ' אמור ופ' וירא וכידוע. ולזאת בני מחמדי קיים בפשוטו וכמשמעו מצות אכילת מצה וכוסות, בכשרות ובשמחה. וזה יהי' לך לאות כי אחר זה תקיים גם מה שרומז הענין הזה וכן"ל. כי יקים לך ה' בית נאמן במלא מושג המלה, כי יהי' לך אשה משכלת ותשמח בחלקך בחיים, חיים גופנים ורוחניים גם יחד. תהי' מאושר בכל ותהי' בשלוה ומנוחה והשקט עד העולם. ועיינו תחזינה כל זה במהרה בימינו, כי יתבנה ויתכונן ביתך, בית נאמן, בנין עדי עד, לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת. ועייני אבותיך ירוננו וישמחו מרוב חדוה וגיל, מטובך ואשרך תכה"י, והי' שלום וכל טוב סלה.

והשי"ת יזכנו להתראות בחיים ושלום וכל הטוב, כחפץ אביך אוהבך אהבה בלי מצרים, חפץ בטובך והצלחתך תמיד כה"י.

לוי יצחק ש"ס.

SYNOPSIS

B”H

Erev Pesach after mid-day, 5688 (1928)

Dnepropetrovsk²¹

My beloved son,

Even though this letter will not reach you until the end of *Pesach*, we follow the intentions of the author and when he is writing, which is on the “first day of *Pesach*” {i.e., the day that precedes *Pesach*}. Thus, accept these blessings which emanate from the depths of my heart that you celebrate the upcoming holiday (which comes upon us for good) in a kosher way. In the literal sense, and that is the main thing, when you eat the *matzah*, both the *matzah* itself should be kosher and your body and soul should be “kosher” to eat *matzah*, which is bread of faith (מִיכְלֵא דְמִוּהֵי־מִנּוּתָא/ literally, food of faith).

This {i.e., eating the *matzah* and drinking the wine with *kashrus* and joy} should be a sign for you that after you eat the *matzah* and drink the wine the mystical allusions explained above will be established. Moreover, G-d will establish for you a faithful home with the full meaning and understanding of that word, because you will have a wise wife (אִשָּׁה מְשַׁכֶּלֶת/ *Isha Maskalet*) and you will rejoice in your share of life, your physical life together with your spiritual life. You will be satisfied with everything and

21 At the time this letter was written, the Rebbe was in Riga, Latvia. He had left Berlin on 16 Adar 5688 (March 8, 1928) to be with his future father-in-law, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn for the next several weeks. He would leave Riga for Berlin, Germany on 6 Iyar 5688 (April 26, 1928). See Oberlander and Shmotkin, *Early Years*, *supra*, pp. 278-279.

you will find tranquility, repose, and calm forever. We should see all of this with our eyes, speedily in our days, for your house will be built and established as a faithful home and an everlasting edifice for praise, renown, and beauty. And the eyes of your fathers will sing and be merry from great joy and gladness from your everlasting goodness and happiness. And you should have peace and all good things forever.

May we merit by G-d to see each other again in life, peace, and all goodness. This is the wish of your father who loves you with a love that is endless and without limitation. I wish for your goodness and success always and for all your days.

Levi Yitzchak Schneerson

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

B”H

Erev Pesach after mid-day, 5688 (1928)

Dnepropetrovsk

My beloved son,

Even though this letter will not reach you until the end of *Pesach*, we follow the intentions of the author and when he is writing, which is on the “first day of *Pesach*” {i.e., the day that precedes *Pesach*}.²² Thus, accept these blessings which emanate from the depths of my heart that you celebrate the upcoming holiday (which comes upon us for good) in a kosher way. In the literal sense, and that is the main thing, when you eat the *matzah*, both the *matzah* itself should be kosher and your body and soul should be “kosher” to eat *matzah*, which is bread of faith (דמרימונתא/מִיכְלָא לִיתְרָא/literally, food of faith).

The *matzah* (bread of faith) should be proper for the one who eats the *matzah* and the one who eats it should be “proper” for the *matzah*. {It is not enough for the *matzah* to be guarded and certified as kosher; the person who eats the *matzah* also needs to be properly prepared for its consumption.} Then it

22 As indicated in the letter’s heading, it was written on *Erev Pesach*, the day before *Pesach*. Therefore, it seems curious (at a cursory level) that, in the body of the letter, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak would refer to the letter being written on “the first day of *Pesach* (ביום הראשון/*bayom ha’rishon*)” However, the Talmud states in *Pesachim* (5a) that the phrase “ביום הראשון תשביתו שאור מבתיכם” (Exodus 12:15) refers to the day preceding *Pesach*, so that ביום הראשון/*bayom ha’rishon* is translated as “on the preceding day you shall clear away all leaven from your houses.” (See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 431:1.)

will have a proper and complete combination {literally pairing or coupling between the *matzah* and the person}.

{*Matzah* is analogized to female qualities represented by *Gevuros*}

Matzah is compared to a woman {particularly to a wife}.²³ {Here are three examples of that analogy.} As our rabbis stated {in the Talmud²⁴}, one who eats *matzah* on *Erev Pesach* is like one who has had inappropriately approached his fiancé {at a time when she is still in her father's house};²⁵ thus, *matzah* is compared to a woman. Also, *matzah* is made up solely of flour (קמח/*kemach*) and water (מים/*mayim*). *Kemach* {148} and *mayim* {90} have the gematria of רחל (*Rachel*) {238}. *Rachel* is a primary feminine representative of the *Shechina* (*Nukva*) as is

23 This letter is written in anticipation of the Rebbe's upcoming wedding. Therefore, the allusions in the letter are to the connection between *Pesach*, *matzah*, and a wedding between man and woman. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak will now present three separate analogies or examples illustrating how *matzah* is associated with a woman. The first is a reference in the Talmud to someone who eats *matzah* on *Erev Pesach*. The second is based on gematria and Kabbalistic connections to *Rachel*. The third is based on the nature of the middle *matzah* which is: (a) associated with the Kabbalistic *sefira* of *Gevura* (which is associated with females as opposed to *Chesed* which is associated with males); and (b) broken in two pieces corresponding to *Rachel* and *Leah*.

24 Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesachim* chapter 10.

25 The point of this analogy is to explain that there is something holy about eating *matzah* at the right time. Everything has its right time. Just as one must not approach one's fiancé until the proper holy time; one must eat the *matzah* at the right and holy time. It is not appropriate to indulge in order simply to satisfy one's emotional or physical desires.

known. {So, again, *matzah* (made from *kemach* (flour) and *mayim* (water)) is analogized to feminine qualities.}

The primary *matzah* is the “*perusah*,” the smaller part of the broken *matzah*, the bigger portion of which is the afikoman. This *matzah* is the middle *matzah* associated with the levi,²⁶ for the building of royalty/*Malchus* (both the smaller portion of *matzah* which corresponds to Rachel, and the larger portion, the afikoman, *Tzafun*²⁷ (hidden), which alludes to the concealed world and corresponds to Leah) is specifically through *Gevura* (strength),²⁸ represented by the levi.²⁹

26 The three *matzos* on the seder plate are known as symbolic of the three divisions of the Jewish people: Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael.

27 *Tzafun* is the part of the Passover seder where the afikoman is distributed and eaten.

28 *Gevura* is the attribute of judgment and restraint. Here the connection to Levi is not as much to the “tribe of Levi,” which is associated with *Tiferes*, as it is to the Levi'im whose Temple service is associated with *Gevura*. In Kabbalah, the Levites who perform the Temple service are associated with *Gevura* based on their music and singing which helped to elevate the worshippers and the sacrifices to their Divine source (much the same as fire) in order to draw down Divine blessing. The Kohanim are associated with the attribute of *Chesed* (kindness and love).

29 From one perspective, as explained in the previous footnote, Levi is associated with *Gevura* on account of the service of the Levi'im in the Temple. From another perspective, and as a general matter, Levi was the third son of Jacob. Just as Jacob, as the third patriarch, represents *Tiferes* (the combination of *Chesed* (Avraham) and *Gevura* (Yitzchak)), so does Levi (as in the tribe of Levi) represent *Tiferes*. (Also note that the gematria for *Tiferes* is 1,081 which is the sum of all numbers from 1 to 46 and the gematria of Levi is 46.) How can we reconcile the connection of Levi and *Tiferes* with Levi and *Gevura* in the letter's context? In the letter, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is referring to “Levi” in the context of the three *matzos*. At the seder,

Therefore, one must guard or watch over the *matzah*, as it is written³⁰ “you should guard the *matzos*.” Because it refers to *Gevura* specifically, it requires guarding.³¹

**{Eating the *matzah* is a “pairing”
between the *matzah* and the one who eats}**

Eating *matzah* also has the characteristic of “pairing” or coupling {using the word זיווג/*zivug*}, as is written,³² “except for the bread that he ate.” *Matzah* is also the bread of faith.³³ This

the three *matzos* on the seder plate correspond to the Kohen (the top *matzah*), Levi (the middle broken *matzah*), and Yisrael (the bottom *matzah*). The tribe of Levi (which is associated with *Tiferes*), is divided between the Kohanim and the Levi'im. *Tiferes* (Levi) then reflects a combination of *Chesed* (the Kohanim) which inclines toward the right side of *Tiferes* (Levi) and *Gevura* (the Levi'im) which inclines to the left side of *Tiferes* (Levi). According to Kabbalistic interpretation, we have seven honors (*aliyot*) for people called up to the Torah to correspond to the seven emotional attributes (*sefiros*). They are *Chesed* (Kohen), *Gevura* (Levi), *Tiferes* (Yisrael), *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod* and *Malchus*. See *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Derushei Krias Sefer Torah, Drush 2*. This shows that the same “Levi” who represents *Tiferes* can also represent *Gevura*.

30 *Shemot* 12:17.

31 *Gevura* can be emotional and severe without some constraint imposed to channel the energy. *Matzah*, representing *Gevura* in this analysis, must be watched because *Gevura* must be watched.

32 *Bereishit* 39:6. Potiphar left all his affairs in Joseph's hands “except for the bread that he ate.” Rashi explains that the “bread that he ate” is a euphemism for Potiphar's wife. This is why Rabbi Levi Yitzchak calls out this quote to support an allusion that eating *matzah* (like eating bread) has to pairing or coupling between a man and a woman.

33 Literally, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak refers to the “food” of faith (מאכל אמונה/*ma'achal emunah*), as at the outset of the letter (where he used the Aramaic term דמוהימנותא). Today, *matzah* is more typically

hints at a deeper idea because all matters of “pairs”³⁴ are through faith, not through human intellect.³⁵ As our sages say, faith is in *Seder Zeraim*.³⁶ This means fulfilling the *mitzvah* of seeds {children} which comes through the union {of the masculine and feminine}, as our sages of blessed memory said on the verse “In the morning you plant seeds,”³⁷ which is through faith.³⁸ Human intellect or logic cannot really grasp this. According to human intellect or logic, it seems like it is hard enough for someone to take care of himself and earn a living; why should he take the millstone upon his neck? {Why does he need all of these financial obligations imposed on him through having children and earning what he needs to sustain

referred to as the “bread of faith.” Also, in the context of the quote concerning Potiphar and Joseph (“except for the bread that he ate”), “bread of faith” is a more accurate translation.

- 34 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is continuing with the theme that “*matzah*” inherently refers to pairing (the one eating and the thing being eaten) and it also refers to a woman. Moreover, because it is the bread of faith, the pairing of a man and woman depends on faith, not intellect.
- 35 Here Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is alluding to coupling as through marriage, which is based on faith as described below.
- 36 *Zeraim* is the first chapter of the Mishnah. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is using a play on words here as the word *zeraim* (in Hebrew) means seeds and he is also referring to children as the “seeds” of the father.
- 37 *Koheles* 11:6. The complete verse is “In the morning, you plant seeds and in the evening do not withhold your hand, for you do not know which will succeed, this one or that one, or whether both of them will be equally good.” As such, it is an expression of faith – just do what you need to do and have faith that the outcome will be good. Rashi on this verse also indicates that it alludes to childbearing.
- 38 Planting seeds and having things grow is based on faith. So too, having children, as Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is going to explain, is a matter of faith and not a matter of human intellect or logic.

them?} Instead, the decision to “pair” is through a true faith in the G-d of truth that is completely above the level of intellect. As is written,³⁹ “property and wealth are an inheritance from fathers;” one can acquire the property and wealth by applying his intellect which is considered a father {to emotions}. On the other hand, making a match with a “truly wise woman אשה משכלת (*Isha Maskalet*) is from G-d,”⁴⁰ referring to the name of G-d represented by *Havayah* which is above intellect and logic.⁴¹

{Connection of 1,000 to Gevuros}

To further understand this idea, see the Midrash Rabbah on *Parshas Vayetze*.⁴² (The Roman Matron wanted to make

39 *Mishlei* (Proverbs) 19:14.

40 The full phrase from *Mishlei* (Proverbs) 19:14 is “Property and wealth are an inheritance from fathers; but a wise woman is from G-d.” In the letter, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak interprets “fathers” as a reference to intellect and logic (which is a father to emotions), from which property and riches are bequeathed; but the true treasure, a wise woman, is only from G-d.

41 There are a number of different names of G-d reflecting different attributes. In short, *Elokim* is the name of G-d reflecting the finite qualities of G-d as manifested in finite existence. (*Elokim* has the numerological correlation (gematria) of “*Hateva*” or nature.) The name of G-d referred to as *Havayah* (the *Yud* and *Hei* and *Vov* and *Hei*) refers to the higher infinite level of G-dliness.

42 The Midrash Rabbah (*Parshas Vayetze*) 68:3 quotes the verse from *Mishlei* (Proverbs) 19:14, “Property and wealth are an inheritance from fathers; but a wise woman is from G-d.” and (*ibid* 68:4) then tells the story of a Roman Matron who asked Rabbi Yossi, “In how many days did G-d create the world?” He told her that G-d created the world in six days. “What has G-d been doing since then?” she asked. Rabbi Yossi explained that G-d has been busy making matches. The Roman Matron was astounded. She thought it would be easy and logical to make matches. “Even I can do this,” she

matches, so she brought 1,000 male slaves and 1,000 female slaves and married them to each other. It did not work out well at all. But why did she bring 1,000 slaves specifically {why not 100? 500? 10?}? This is because the weaning of the world is from *Gevuros* (strength) and the source of strength is from “*elef*” {the Hebrew word for 1,000}; as is known regarding {(a)} the “*achorayim/backside*” of *Elokim* which corresponds to 1,000;⁴³ {(b)} *E-l Sha-ddai* which corresponds to 1,000 by

argued. She then took 1,000 male slaves and 1,000 female slaves and married them off one to the other. The next day, they came back to Matron and one’s head was cracked, another lost an eye, and another broke his leg. The matches did not work out as each one rejected the other. At that point, the Roman Matron admitted to Rabbi Yossi that G-d and His Torah are true and praiseworthy.

- 43 In gematria, the letters each correspond to numbers; aleph represents 1, bet represents 2, etc. The principles of filling in the letters with *milui* is a way of counting whereby each letter is in turn spelled out and then each of those letters are added up. For example, applying the basic gematria principle of *milui*, the word “aleph” אֵלֶף is spelled “aleph” א (1), “lamed” ל (30), “pey” פ (80), and the word corresponds to 111 (1+30+80). The principle of counting by “*achorayim*” is a type of counting via cumulative *miluim*. One applies *milui* to each letter and then adds each successive letter (applying *milui*) to the prior letter of the word. For example, when these principles are applied to the word אֱלֹהִים (*Elokim*), the numbers add up to 1,001:

אֵלֶף (111) + אֵלֶף למד (185) + אֵלֶף למד הה (195) + אֵלֶף למד הה יוד (215) + אֵלֶף למד הה יוד כּסּ (295) = 1,001

If, through using *achorayim* principles, the word *Elokim* adds up to 1,001, a question arises as to why Rabbi Levi Yitzchak states that it “corresponds with” 1,000. Perhaps the reason is based on what he wrote separately in another context (see *Likutei Levi Yitzchak* vol. 2 p. 358-359). There, he explained that if one counts *E-l Sha-ddai* by *miluim* it adds up to 999 and if you count *Elokim* by *achorayim* it adds up to 1,001. When you add the two of them together, it comes

gematria using the principles of filling in the letters (“*milui*”);⁴⁴ {(c)}the source {of the *Gevuros*} which is from King Bela {the first of the Edomite kings} who corresponds to *Da’as* {the attribute of knowledge} from *Tohu* that descended to the world of בריאה (creation),⁴⁵ which corresponds to the number 1,000;⁴⁶ {and (d)} the 1,000 male slaves {that} correspond to the male source of *Gevura* (strength) and the 1,000 female slaves {that} correspond to the female source of *Gevura* (similar to what is explained elsewhere about male and female youths in the other side.)

to 2,000 for the two concepts, which is twice 1,000. In that way, both of the words “correspond with” 1,000.

- 44 When the same principles of *milui* described in the previous footnote are applied to the name אל שדי (E-l Sha-ddai), the numbers add up to 999. There is a principle of counting known as “im hakollel” whereby the name that is the subject of study can count for an additional 1, adding up to 1,000. When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak writes that אל שדי adds up to 1,000 with the filling in concept of *milui*, this is what he means.
- 45 *Bela ben Be’or* was the first of the eight kings of Edom referred to in *Bereishit* 36:31-39. Each of the eight kings died before the other took over. As such, they refer to the process of descent of the 8 *sefiros* of *Tohu* (chaos) into the world of *Beriah*. Bela is the king associated with *da’as*, as *da’as* is the first *sefira* affected by *Shevirat Ha’Keilim* (the “breaking of the vessels”).
- 46 *Da’as* (which is knowledge), in Kabbalistic thought, is located between the “two shoulders.” The Hebrew name for shoulder is כתף (*katef*) whose numerical value is 500. Thus, *da’as* of *Tohu* located between the two shoulders has numerical value of 1,000 (500 times two). See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* vol. 2 p. 358.

{Connecting union of male and female with 1,000 and, thus, with *Gevuros*}

The union {of male and female} is by the attribute of *Gevura* (strength). The word אִישׁ (man) is אַשׁ (fire) with a ׳ {in the middle} and the word אִשָּׁה (woman) is אַשׁ (fire) with a ה {at the end}. According to this, it would be understood why the aleph in אַשׁ is necessary; although according to the explanation in the *Likutei Torah* of the Arizal, on *Parshas Vayeira*⁴⁷ in the meaning of the verse “Fire was brought out of *Cheshbon*,”⁴⁸ at first glance, it would seem that we only really need a *shin* for fire;⁴⁹ but according to what was mentioned above, the letter aleph actually hints at the number 1,000 (*elef* in Hebrew).

{Up to this point, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak has associated *Gevura* with fire, the number 1,000, *matzah*, and female qualities. From here, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak connects the source of this to a higher source of truth and faith (above intellect) in order to connect the pairing of *matzah* with the one who eats it and then to a wedding and the faith that is needed to make the wedding “work.”}

When you connect the word *ishah* to the word *matzah*, it comes to the same numeric equivalent of the word truth

47 On Amon and Moav (*Breishit* 19:37-38).

48 *Bamidbar* 21:28.

49 The Arizal explains in *Likutei Torah* on *Parshas Vayeira* (which is cited by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak in the letter) that the װ/*shin* refers to the 30 *gevuros* each one of which consists of 10 *sefiros* (for a total of 300). Fire is associated with *gevuros* and, therefore, the *shin* (װ) by itself refers to fire. {Also, *Sefer Yetzirah*, chapter 3, verses 4-8, explains that the letter *shin* (װ) is associated with fire. The letter *aleph* is associated with air and the letter *mem* is associated with water.}

(*emes*).⁵⁰ This tells us that the source {of the connection of *matzah* to a woman} is from truth. Truth is higher than intellect {as truth transcends logic} because truth is in *atik* {the inner aspect of *Kesser* which is higher than intellect} as is known.

This is also seen in the phrase “you are betrothed to me in faith (*emunah*)”⁵¹ which is connected to *Pesach* {as explained above with respect to *matzah* being the bread of faith}. On account of this, we can merit to participate in the final “Seder” which is *Seder Taharos* {the last tractate of the Mishnah} which hints at “*Da’as*” {as stated in the Talmud}.⁵² In turn we then merit *Matan Torah* which happens at *Shavuot*, “and you will know *Havayah*.”

This is the meaning of eating *matzah* “*b’kashrus*” (in a kosher way). כשר/*Kasher* {כ/*kaf*, ש/*shin*, ר/*reish*} is actually an acronym for כמוצא שלל רב “*k’motzei shallal rav*” (“like one who finds great treasure”).⁵³ This alludes to the refined sparks that B’nai Yisrael took out of Egypt, as is written: “After that they will go out with great treasure/possessions,”⁵⁴ alluding to the *matzah* {which we took with us out of Egypt}.

50 The numeric equivalent of *ishah* in Hebrew is 306 and the numeric equivalent of *matzah* in Hebrew is 135. The numeric equivalent of *emes* in Hebrew is 441 (sum of 306 plus 135).

51 Hosea 2:22. The full phrase is “You are betrothed to me in faith and you will know *Havayah*.” In the letter, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak splits up the phrase in his explanation in a similar stylistic manner to what he did in using the phrase from *Mishlei* above (see text at footnotes 39 and 40).

52 *Shabbos* 31a.

53 Psalms 119:162. The full sentence is “I rejoice over Your word like one who finds great treasure.”

54 *Bereishit* 15:14. Commentary on Psalms 119:162 does not refer to the “great treasure” as *matzah*. Instead commentary on Psalms

{Having expressed his deep wish for his son to celebrate the *Pesach* holiday in a “kosher” way (and explaining its meaning in depth according to Kabbalah), Rabbi Levi Yitzchak now continues his wish that his son should celebrate with *simcha* – happiness.}

{*Pesach* and Happiness}

And with happiness, this refers to the four cups of wine on the night of *Pesach*. *Kashrus* is from *matzah* and happiness or joy is from the wine in the four cups. Their source {i.e., the source of *matzah* and the four cups of wine} are from the “*Mochin*” (intellectual attributes) of *Chochma* and *Bina*. *Matzah* is the *Mochin* of *Abba*, and the cups are the *Mochin* of *Imma*, as is written in *Pri Eitz Chaim*.⁵⁵ For in order that there should be the union of *Za* and *Nukva* (the masculine and feminine emotional attributes), there first needs to be a unity of *Chochma* and *Bina*, as is known.⁵⁶ And the eating of the

refers to *bris milah* (ritual circumcision) or even Torah study itself as the great treasure. Here, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak clarifies that for purposes of his points in the letter, the “great treasure” refers to *matzah*. Interestingly, the entire sentence from Psalms 119:162 refers to the happiness experienced by one who has studied Torah; it is as if one found a great treasure. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak uses this quote (referring to happiness) as a transition from a discussion of *kashrut* to a discussion of happiness.

55 *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha’ar Chag HaMatzos, Perek 2.*

56 *Chochma* and *Bina* are the “higher” source of the emotive attributes *Za* and *Nukva*. As such, they represent the father (*Abba*) and mother (*Imma*) to the children represented by *Za* and *Nukva*. By way of analogy, if the children know that the parents are united, the children will unite behind the parents. If the children know that the parents are divided, they can “take sides” as it were and not be united. *Chochma* (representing the *matzah*) and *Bina* (represented by the four cups) are like the parents and if they are in sync, then the

matzah is the union of *Za* and *Nukva* {eating the *matzah* is how the message is drawn down to this world} and has to be preceded by the *matzah* being set up on the seder plate and together with the four cups it reflects the unity of *Chochma* and *Bina*. Eating the *matzah* is the unity of *Za* and *Nukva*, when the union {of *Za* and *Nukva*} takes place at the time that it is taken from the house of the father {the union of *Chochma* and *Bina*}, as is written in the Zohar on *Parshas Emor*⁵⁷ and *Parshas Vayeira* and as is known.

And thus, my dear son, fulfill literally the commandment of eating the *matzah* and drinking the four cups of wine, with *kashrus* and with *simcha* (joy).

{The conclusion – connecting the spiritual with the personal}

This {i.e., eating the *matzah* and drinking the wine with *kashrus* and joy} should be a sign for you that after you eat the *matzah* and drink the wine the mystical allusions explained above will be established. Moreover, G-d will establish for you a faithful home with the full meaning and understanding of that word, because you will have a wise wife (אשה משכלת/*Isha Maskalet*)⁵⁸ and you will rejoice in your share of life, your physical life together with your spiritual life. You will be satisfied with everything and you will find tranquility, repose, and calm forever. We should see all of this with our eyes, speedily in our days, for your house will be built and established as a faithful home and an everlasting edifice for praise, renown, and beauty. And the eyes of your fathers will sing and be merry from great joy and gladness from your

corresponding *middos* (*Za* and *Nukva*) can be united and pass on a unified single message through *Malchus*.

57 Vol. III 100b.

58 This alludes to the truly wise woman who comes from *Havayah* as explained above at footnote 40. It also alludes to the fact that אשה משכלת (*Isha Maskalet*) is only found through faith (*emunah*) and not logic (*sechel enushi*).

everlasting goodness and happiness. And you should have peace and all good things forever.

May we merit by G-d to see each other again in life, peace, and all goodness.⁵⁹ This is the wish of your father who loves you with a love that is endless and without limitation.⁶⁰ I wish for your goodness and success always and for all your days.

Levi Yitzchak Schneerson

⁵⁹ The meaning of life, and goodness, and peace is explained in the separate letter from Rabbi Levi Yitzchak from *Erev Rosh Hashanah*. This will be separately explained in a future summary.

⁶⁰ In Hebrew, the word for limitations used is מצרים (*meitzarim*), which is spelled the same as and alludes to מצרים (*mitzrayim*) (Egypt), which corresponds to physical and spiritual limitations, an appropriate word choice for *Erev Pesach* when this letter was written.

UNLOCKING THE CODE

The Letters of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson

Translations with Practical Lessons

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson was the father and teacher of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe. For about 25 years, the Rebbe lived, for the most part, in his parents' home where the Rebbe and his father developed a close personal bond. The Rebbe and his father last saw each other in the fall of 1927 (29 Tishrei 5688) and would never see each other again in the physical world. During 1928, and pending the Rebbe's wedding date, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak wrote a series of letters to his son all related to the Rebbe's upcoming wedding. Four of the letters were written on the eve of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, and Sukkot. In each letter, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak tied the holiday to his son's upcoming wedding through explaining the Kabbalistic significance of each holiday and how it relates to different aspects of marriage. These letters show not just Torah insights but also very personal insights into the close connection between Rabbi Levi Yitzchak (the then 50-year old father) and the Rebbe (his then 26-year old son).

"It is my obligation and great *zechus* to suggest, request, etc., that everyone study from {my father's} teachings..." From a letter of the Rebbe, *Motzei Tisha B'Av* 5744 (1984).

In this publication, Shlomo M. Hamburger translates and analyzes these four letters. In addition, Mr. Hamburger includes personal essays explaining some practical lessons to learn from these letters.



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