



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
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Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Pesach – Hagaddah

In Every Generation One Must View Himself as if He Left Egypt

The *Hagaddah* states: "In every generation, an individual is required to view himself as if he left Egypt. This is as the *pasuk* states, 'And you shall tell your son on this day saying, 'On account of this did Hashem do for me when He took me out of Egypt.' Not only our forefathers alone did *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* redeem; rather He even redeemed us together with them as well."

Questions:

- 1- How can an individual bring the exodus from Egypt to life and actually fulfill the requirement "to see himself as if he left Egypt?"
- 2- To answer the above question, we will first quote the statement of our Sages, "There is no free man expect for the one who engages in Torah study." This statement is seemingly not understood: How is an individual considered to be a free man by toiling in Torah?
- 3- Our Sages have also stated, "Who are the 'kings'? Torah sages." Where do we find an expression of royalty in Torah sages?

What Are the Parameters of a Free Man?

We will commence our explanation by stating a fundamental concept: Man is comprised of two parts – a body and an intellect or a body and a soul. We must first reach an understanding of whether it is proper that the body should control the individual or whether the intellect and soul should govern man's deeds. Which is the measuring stick of success? It is clear that the fool who fails to use his intellect is not truly alive. This is because all of his deeds are spontaneous reactions like those of an animal. It is inconceivable that such an individual will be successful in life, for he will inevitably suffer damages and losses throughout his days. This is in contrast to the individual whose intellect dictates his deeds, and he chooses his actions based on whether they are correct or not – he is the one who will succeed in life. It is clear to every thinking individual that he has been created with limitations and is not all-powerful, and he therefore is incapable of attaining all that he wishes to attain. For indeed, man's desire is without limitation, and he must therefore know the fundamental principle, that not every desire is readily attainable. If he does not internalize this, his life will be totally lacking because of the endless pursuit of his wants, and because of the sadness that will constantly accompany him due to his inability to attain that which he craves. This is comparable to a small boy whose intellect still does not dictate his actions. He wants whatever he sees and therefore constantly cries over anything he cannot have. Perhaps someone will mistakenly claim that one whose intellect controls his desires is not truly free because he refrains from experiencing the world's delights. The answer to this is simple: Having grown accustomed to the influence of his intellect, it becomes like second-nature to live accordingly. We see that one who smokes cannot bear not having cigarettes. However, one who does not smoke does not feel that he is missing anything by not smoking; he even prefers *not* to smoke as it causes incomparable damage to the body. We see then that lacking a particular worldly delight does not reduce the amount of pleasure and enjoyment that one has in life. This feeling stems only from the fact that since he has grown so accustomed to this delight it has become like second-nature to him. It is therefore



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simple that subjugating the body to the intellect is the correct and successful way to live. The opposite results in a life similar to that of an animal. With this, we can understand the concepts of freedom, a free man, and a king. A king issues orders and is free to do as he pleases, as he is the king. A slave, on the other hand, is enslaved to a master and is obligated to carry out his will, even if he lacks interest in doing so. The Jewish Nation was Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and against their will they were forced to do crushing labor. When they left Egypt, they were freed from their yoke and therefore truly felt that they had gone free. An individual should contemplate the fact that in the framework of Divine service, Pharaoh is comparable to the *yetzer hara*. When we contemplate life itself, and realize just how much man is enslaved to his desires; how he toils each day to provide himself with his physical needs which include food, a house, a car, and all the other pleasures that his body demands, we will realize that we are still truly enslaved to Pharaoh, the *yetzer hara* of each and every Jew that oppresses him. This is to the extent, that if an individual grows accustomed to enjoying a certain pleasure, it is disastrous if he cannot have it. For example, take an individual who is used to smoking, and acts insane if he cannot have a cigarette, or an individual who is used to having a cup of coffee each morning, and without it he feels like his head is exploding. This person is a slave to his cigarette and coffee, for he cannot control himself, and his body demands it from him. While he is not actually being enslaved by Pharaoh, he is nevertheless being forced to yield to the demands of his body and cannot, therefore, be considered a free man. On the other hand, when a person empowers his intellect over his body and thinks about what is primary in life and what is secondary, acting with wisdom, he is a king who is the epitome of a free man. Therefore the *Tanna* states in *Pirkei Avot*, "Who is the strong man? The one who conquers his evil inclination." For more important than conquering a great city is controlling one's *yetzer hara* and refusing to be drawn after each physical delight. Our Sages have therefore stated, "Who are 'kings'? The Torah sages," because they are engaged in Torah study, and there is no man freer than one who studies Torah. For he is the one who dictates what his body does and is not enslaved to it. Accordingly, we can understand that the time of the Jewish people's exodus from Egyptian slavery to freedom, is a time that is especially ripe for achieving freedom from one's *yetzer hara*, who as previously stated was represented by Pharaoh. For example, there are individuals who are enslaved to sleep and to their beds. It is very difficult for them to get out of bed despite the fact that they know that this ruins their lives as they are unproductive and unable to counter the draw of their body to rise at the necessary time. How many homes and lives have been ruined this way? How detrimental is this to the *chinuch* of their children who witness this? Such individuals are totally enslaved.

Story About *Maran HaChida*

When *Maran HaChida* was sent out as an emissary, he arrived at his destination and was greeted with royal honor. There was a lot drawn to determine who would merit hosting the Chida. Eventually, it was determined that on *Erev Shabbat* he would stay at the home of one wealthy individual, and sleep at the home of a different wealthy individual, etc. Since it was his custom to snuff *tabak*, when he went to his host on *Erev Shabbat*, he brought his box of *tabak* along with him. However, following the meal, he went to the home of the next host to sleep, but forgot his box of *tabak*. In middle of the night, the Chida needed to inhale the *tabak*, but he could not find it. He concluded that he must have left the *tabak* in the house of the wealthy man in which he ate the meal. He therefore rose and got dressed. Despite the fact that it was raining and cold outside, and the hour was late, he went to the house of the first host and knocked on the door. The wealthy man woke up and asked, "Who is it?"



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The Chida identified himself and apologized, saying that that he had forgotten his box of *tabak* in his house and that he now needed it. The man searched, located the *tabak*, and gave it to *Maran HaChida*. The Chida then returned to the house of the second host to sleep. He was unable to sleep however, incredulous that he had just done such a thing. How could it be that for a whiff of *tabak* he could rise at such a late hour, get dressed, and despite the rain and cold go to the house of the first host, and all the more so, to wake him up! All this for such an insignificant item like *tabak*, and he had been unable to wait until the morning. Even though it was Shabbat, he nevertheless cried over what he had done, and resolved never again to touch *tabak*, seeing that his desire had so overcome him. The next day, in the *bet haknesset*, he spoke about how a person who is not careful to act in accordance with the commandment of *kedoshim tihiyu* ["And you should be holy"] and control his desires, can easily come to transgress the Will of Hashem.

Words of Mussar

Now it is clear how we are obligated to contemplate and take advantage of the opportunity presented to us on the night of Pesach. Similar to the freedom experienced by the slaves of Pharaoh who were totally subjugated but redeemed by Hashem to be His Chosen Nation, so too, must each individual be freed from his *yetzer hara*, who is the Pharaoh of each generation and each individual. He must be emancipated from the subjugation to his physical needs, empower the intellect over his actions, and be transformed into a free man.

Extending a blessing for a *chag kasher ve'sameach*,

Rav Mordechai Malka