

***And in order relate in the ears of your son... and you shall know that I am Hashem***

(Ex. 10:2). *Likkutei Basar Likkutei* (p. 69) cites Rabbi Yehoshua of Belz as explaining that this passage reveals to us the best that for a person to insure that whatever values and ideas about worshipping Hashem he instills in his children's heart will truly take root. That is, if he (the father) himself truly recognizes Hashem and knows Him, then he himself will strengthen his own belief in Hashem, and the ideas he passes on to his children will be more firmly rooted.

***That evil is facing you... (Ex. 10:10).*** Rabbi Ephraim Lunshitz (*Kli Yakar*) explains that “evil” (רעה) according to our sages refers the astral force of Mars. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 155b) says somebody born under the astrological influence of Mars will be destined to be the type of person who spills blood. Despite that astrological predisposition, the person himself can determine his own destiny and choose how this will play out in reality. He can spill blood as a murderer or as a butcher or *mohel*. The same is true of the presence of Mars in the Jews' astrological forecast. Pharaoh thought that their association with Mars portended the spilling of Jewish blood and their own death. However, in reality that blood represented the two commandments which Hashem gave the Jewish people in preparation for the exile: the commandment of the Korban Pesach and that of circumcision—both of which involved blood. The fulfillment of those two commandments counteracted the apparent deadly effects of Mars' influence. Indeed, the word “foreskin” (ערלה = 305) in *gematria* equals the phrase “that evil” (כי רעה = 305). Chida writes in *Midbar Kedemos* (*Maareches Ayin* 5) in the name of Rabbi Yonasan Eyebchutz that because Esav inherited the power of the “sword”, Esav is associated with the astral force of Mars. He is called Edom, meaning Red, like the Red Planet. Therefore, only he who is circumcised is best equipped to do battle against Esav. For this reason, when the Jewish people fought Amalek (a nation which descends from Esav's grandson Amalek) not long after the Exodus, it was not Moshe Rabbeinu who led them in battle—because Moshe Rabbeinu never had a circumcision, for he was born without a foreskin according to the Talmud. Rather, it was Yehoshua who led the Jewish People in fighting against Amalek. In fact, Yehoshua himself presided over the mass circumcision of the Jewish People as they entered the Holy Land. This also explains why *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* says that the Amalekites mocked the commandment of circumcision. Because the commandment of circumcision served to curtail the power of Amalek/Esav which is with

the “sword” of Mars, they attempted to deride that commandment and downplay its significance.<sup>1</sup>

***And he said to them: ‘Indeed, Hashem shall be with you, when I shall send you. [But] see that evil is facing you. Not so [like you have actually requested, rather] let the men now go and worship Hashem your god, for that it was you are [really] requesting. And he chased them away from the face of Pharaoh (Ex. 10:10–11).*** Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz of Frankfurt (*Panim Yafos*) explains that Pharaoh was particular about the Jewish children because he knew that as long as he could hold on to them, Hashem’s Divine Presence will remain in exile. This is gleaned from a passage in Eicha, “Her fledglings went into captivity before an enemy, and all the glory from the Daughter of Zion went out”, which the Midrash (*Eicha Rabbasi* 1:33) explains that this means that as long as the Jewish children remained in the Holy Land, the Holy Presence of Hashem did not leave that Land, but once the children left, the Holy Presence also left. The same was true in Egypt. Pharaoh realized that if he sent the Jewish children out with the adults, then the Holy Presence will follow them, so instead he opted to keep the children in Egypt and thereby keep His Holy Presence from returning to Its proper place. In a newer edition of Rabbi Horowitz’s work, *Panim Yafos HaShalem VaHaMevoar* (Jerusalem, 2009), p. 92, the editor cites another work of Rabbi Horowitz, *Tochachas Mussar*, where he explains that what motivated Pharaoh was the fact that he was steeped in impurity and had even reached the fiftieth level of impurity, yet even Pharaoh realized that evil does not exist in a vacuum, it too must be powered by harnessing spiritual power. He realized that receiving Divine energy from Hashem was essential to his own evil/impure ambitions, and thus Pharaoh wanted to hold the Holy Presence hostage in Egypt, and not allow it to leave his domain with the Jews.

***And Hashem said to Moshe: stretch out your hand upon the Heavens and there will be darkness over the Land of Egypt, and darkness materialized (Ex. 10:21).*** There is an interesting Midrash concerning the Plague of Darkness which requires our attention; the

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<sup>1</sup> *Avak Sofrim* (to *Vayera*) writes that even though Yitzchak gave his son Esav a circumcision, it did not help Esav overcome Evil Inclination. However, Rabbi Chaim Palagi (in *Nefesh Chaim*, *Maareches Ayin* 87) points out that other sources (i.e. *Daas Zekanim* to *Parshas Toldos*) say that Esav never had a circumcision: because he was born ruddy, they waited for him to mature before circumcising Esav because they worried for his health, and by the time he was already 13 years old, he was wicked and refused to be circumcised. See also *Bereishis Rabbah* (63) which says that Esav *hates* the blood of circumcision. R. Chaim Palagi also discusses sources which suggest that Esav did indeed have a circumcision, but nonetheless underwent a cosmetic procedure that gave him the appearance of somebody who still had a foreskin.

Midrash says: “Hashem said to the angels, ‘Are these [i.e. the Egyptians] fitting to be smitten with darkness?’ And all the angels agreed [that they were]. Why did Hashem smite the Egyptians with darkness? For two reasons: Because of the hidden treasures which the Jews were able to locate during the Plague of Darkness and later demand from the Egyptians, and because of the wicked Jews who perished during the Plague of Darkness when the Egyptians would not realize that they had died.” Rabbi Heschel of Krakow (*Chanukas HaTorah*)<sup>2</sup> asks the obvious question: Why did the Midrash have to bring the whole back-and-forth of Hashem asking the angels whether the Egyptians deserved this plague and their unanimous consent before explaining the reasons behind the Plague of Darkness? He explains that there is Halacha which says that if a Jewish Court unanimously convicts somebody of a capital crime, then he is automatically exempt from that punishment, because we say that the unanimous conviction must have overlooked something in his favor. This is because it is implausible that all the judges would agree to the same reasoning, there is always some other perspective, and thus if nothing was suggested, it must have not been a just trial. However, the *poskim* maintain that this only applies to a case in which all the judges support the conviction using the exact same reasoning. If, however, they all support the same verdict but for different reasoning, then the defendant is not let off the hook and is liable for capital punishment in accordance with majority’s ruling. Accordingly, the Midrash first cited the story of Hashem asking the angels’ opinion of the Plague of Darkness and that all the angels agreed that the Egyptians deserve such a punishment. Afterwards, the Midrash was bothered by how this can be reconciled with the procedural rules of a Jewish Court which does not convict capital offenses based on unanimous rulings. To resolve this, the Midrash explained that the angels’ ruling was not truly unanimous, because it was based on two different reasons (i.e. to find the hidden treasures and to kill the wicked Jews). Some angels agreed with one reason and some agreed with the other, so while the final verdict was unanimous, its reasoning was not unanimous and could thus be executed.

***And no man could get up... (Ex. 10:23).*** Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kallischer (*Sefer HaBris* here) asks how the Egyptians continued to live through the Plague of Darkness, if they couldn’t move for three days; how did they eat and drink? He answers that each Egyptian had Jewish neighbors attend to them and they fed the Egyptians during those three days. He alternatively answers that when it says that they couldn’t get up, this was because they were so scared of the darkness that engulfed them that they did not want to leave the security of

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<sup>2</sup> Also cited by the Chida in *Dvash le-Fi* (*Maareches Ches* 21). This idea is also found in the writings of Rabbi Yehonasan Eyebchutz, and it is well-known that in many instances people have confused the ideas of Rabbi Yehonasan Eyebchutz with Rabbi Heschel of Krakow’s and vice versa.

wherever they were. But there were still some brave Egyptians who were courageous enough to move about even during the intense darkness, and they were the ones who supplied food to everybody else. See also *Ha-Ksav Ve-Ha-Kabbalah* who explains that part of the miracle of the Plague of Darkness was that Hashem made the Egyptians see frightening images that scared them to such a degree that they froze in fear.

***And Moshe said, 'you will also give into our hands [animals for] sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and we will prepare them for Hashem our God' (Ex. 10:25).*** The Mishna (*Parah* 2:1) records the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer who maintains that one may not purchase animals from an idolator for use as a sacrifice, because we suspect that the idolator used that animal for bestiality and it has therefore been disqualified for use as a sacrifice. The Gemara (*Avodah Zarah* 24a) asks that this ruling is contradicted by the verse at hand in which Moshe tells the Pharaoh that he expects the Egyptians to give the Jews animals to use as sacrifices. How could the animals that the Jews will receive from the Egyptians be brought as sacrifices, if they should have suspected that the Egyptians had previously used those animals for bestiality? The verse at hand should prove that we do not have such suspicions and Rabbi Eliezer is wrong! The Gemara answers that one cannot bring proof from something that happened before the Sinaiatic Revelation to what the Halacha should be after the Sinaiatic Revelation. Then the Gemara follows up by asking a similar question: When the Philistines kidnapped the Ark of the Covenant, and then eventually decided to return it, the Bible relates (I Sam. Ch. 6) that the cows upon which the Philistines mounted the Ark miraculously found their way back to where the main altar was. The cows knew their way without any giving them direction, and then even sang praises of Hashem as they walked directly to their destination. It says also that in recognition of this great miracle, the Jews took those cows and offered them as a burnt-sacrifice to Hashem. The Gemara asks: How could they use the cows which came from the Philistines for ritual sacrifices, if this happened after the Sinaiatic Revelation and according to Rabbi Eliezer we should suspect that the Philistines had previously used those cows for bestiality, rendering them unfit for the altar? Finally, the Gemara answers that this was a temporary ruling which suspended the normative Halacha. Rashi explains that because of the great miracle which these cows performed, they had to be brought as burnt-offerings. This does not quite resolve the issue, as Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (*Har Tzvi Al HaTorah*, here) asks why should the fact that Hashem brought about a miracle through these cows justify breaking Halacha and allowing these cows to be brought as a sacrifice? After some back-and-forth, Rabbi Frank ultimately answers as follows: According to the letter of the law, one is actually allowed to bring a sacrifice from an animal which he received from a non-Jew. This is because according to Biblical Law, we can assume that the animal has not been disqualified by a bestial act,

because it was born free from such disqualification and thus has a *chazakah* which says that we can continue to look at it as such. This explains why Moshe said that the Egyptians will give the Jews animals to bring from them sacrifices. However, when Rabbi Eliezer in the Mishnah said that one cannot buy an animal from a gentile and bring it as a sacrifice, this is because of a Rabbinic Law which says that one must still suspect that the gentile engage in bestial actions with the animals in question. That later enactment did not yet apply in the time of Moshe, so Moshe was not beholden to that ruling. Moreover, explains Rabbi Frank in the time of Samuel when the cows miraculously brought home the Ark, the fact that Hashem performed a great miracle through these cows was viewed as verification to the Biblical assumption that these cows were not defiled, so on account of that great miracle, the Rabbinic suspicion was ignored, and the cows were offered as sacrifices.

**And also our flock (Ex. 10:26).** Or *HaChaim* explains that Jews requested a furlough in which they could also take “our flock” which includes non-Kosher animals. This is because even though they did not plan on using those non-Kosher animals as sacrifices, they still wanted to take their non-Kosher animals with them so that they could sell those animals and buy Kosher animals with that money, which they could bring as sacrifices. The Jews wanted every single living being of theirs to be used for holy purposes, without exception.

**Speak now in the ears of the nation [and tell them that] each man should ask of his friend... (Ex. 11:2).** It seems like the Torah refers to the Egyptians as the “friend” of each Jew. Why are they called their “friend”? The word “friend” (רֵיעַ) is related to the word “broken” (רָעוּעַ), because when two people are truly “friends”, each feels as though he is simply a piece that was broken off of what belongs to his friend. Indeed, Rashi explains (*Kesubos* 8a) that a bride and groom are referred to as *reim ha-abuvim* (“loving friends”) because they are assumed to reach this level of close friendship. The Torah warns commands, “Love thy friend like yourself”, which the Talmud (*Shabbos* 31a) explains means as referring to the Golden Rule: “That which you hate, do not unto your friend”. Rashi explains that “your friend” refers to Hashem<sup>3</sup> who gave us a certain set of commandments.

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<sup>3</sup> The Biblical passage which serves as the source of the Halacha that if one man’s ox gores another man’s ox, the first man must pay for the damages reads: “When a man’s ox gores an ox (of) his friend...” (Exodus 21:35). Interestingly, the Talmud (*Bava Kama* 38a) explains that “an ox of his friend” serves to exclude an ox that belongs to the Holy Temple, because the Owner of a holy ox is not one’s “friend”. This is somewhat problematic because we have just said that “your friend” refers specifically to Hashem, so how can the Talmud say that “friend” excludes Hashem? Rabbi Eytan Feiner (Rav of the White Shul in Far Rockaway) answers that the Holy Temple is the place of connection between man and the Jewish people. In that space, the relationship between man and God is not one of



If you do not want people to ignore whatever you say, then you should not ignore whatever He says. From here we see that one's "friend" is his wife or God,<sup>4</sup> or a fellow co-religionist, but not the Egyptians? See Malbim who explains that "his friend" actually does not refer to borrowing items from the Egyptians, but to borrowing from fellow Jews (the same idea is cited by *Pardes Yosef* and *Genuzot HaGra* in the name of the Vilna Gaon), so that the Egyptians would see this and assume it was some religious thing where they needed to borrow things, and thus would acquiesce to lend their own things as well.

***And for all of the Children of Israel, a dog did not [even] sharpen its tongue... (Ex. 11:7).*** The Ostrovtzer Gaon (*Kovetz Beis Meir*, vol. 4, 1 cited in *Beis Meir* vol. 1, *Parshas Noach* and Vol. 2 *Purim*, and *Chiddushei Sugyos* 3) offers a lengthy explanation of the significance of the fact that the dogs did not bark during the Plague of the Firstborn. He begins by citing the Talmud (*Megillah* 15b) which describes Esther on her way to meeting Achashverosh, when suddenly she passed by an idolatrous chapel and she felt the Holy Presence leave her. She said, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:2). Is it because I called Achashverosh a 'dog', as it says, 'Save me from the sword of my soul, from the lone dog' (Ps. 22:21)?" She then retracted that comment and called him a lion, as it says, "Save me from the mouth of the lion" (Ps. 22:22). The Ostrovtzer also cites another Talmudic passage (*Yoma* 21b) which says that the smoke of the fire atop the altar in the First Temple crouched

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man and "his friend", but rather one of a connection as though man and God are joined. Accordingly, something owned by the Temple's treasury cannot be said to be owned by one's "friend", because in the Temple, Hashem isn't one's "friend", He is totally connected to him, such that they are like one. Ibn Ezra cites the explanation of a Karaite interpreter named Ben Zuta who said that "his friend" is a description of the second ox. However, Ibn Ezra correctly notes that the second word "ox" is meant in the construct form, and should be read as "ox of", meaning, "his friend" refers to the owner of the ox, not the ox itself. Rather, Ibn Ezra wryly observes, the only human friend appropriate for an ox is Ben Zuta himself!

<sup>4</sup> The Vilna Gaon (in his commentary *Biur HaGra* to Prov. 25:17) explains that the Proverb, "Uproot your foot from your friend's house" means that one should not spend too much time in synagogue praying—rather prayers should be limited to a maximum of three hours. He too understands that "your friend" means God.

upon the altar like a lion, while the smoke of the fire in the Second Temple was said to crouch upon the altar like a dog. What is the difference between a dog and a lion? The Arizal explains that the smoke of the fire atop the altar functions as a means of protecting the Jewish people from sin. Based on this, the Ostrovtzer explains that there are two different forms of protection. If one has a protective lion, that lion protects its owner by personally going out and eliminating any threats using its own power. However, when one has a protective dog, the dog itself does not offer full protection, rather the dog's bark serves to alert its owner about an oncoming threat, so that the owner will know that he must do the protecting himself. In the First Temple period, the Jews' protection from sin was like that of a lion, which served to eliminate any outside threats on its own. However, in the Second Temple period, the Jews' protection from sin was on a lower level and did not fully protect them, rather it served to warn them of an oncoming threat that so they could better prepare themselves and save themselves from sin. With a lion, the protected person does not need to participate in his protection, but with a dog he has to contribute to his own protection, he cannot fully rely on the dog to save him.<sup>5</sup> In the story of Purim, the Divine "protection" came in the form of Haman and Achashverosh whose cruel decrees served to remind the Jews to repent their sins and come back to Hashem. In that way, the Jews' sins were sidestepped through the Jews' own actions of repentance, and Hashem only used Haman and Achashverosh as dogs to alert the Jews of their need to repent. In the Purim story, the Jews actually brought about their own salvation. However, in the Exodus from Egypt, the exact opposite was true. The catalyst for the Exodus was not the Jews' repentance, but rather came directly from Above. At the time of the Exodus, the Jews actually did not even deserve the miracles which were to aid them, yet Hashem still decided to help them out, and gave them extra *mitzvos* so that they will have the requisite merits—even though they did not repent. In the Exodus, Hashem did not use the Egyptians like "dogs" (as He did with Haman and Achashverosh) to arouse the Jews towards repentance, rather He took care of everything from start to finish, in the same way that a lion protects its owner without the

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<sup>5</sup> The Ostrovtzer Gaon applies this paradigm to the case of Noah, whom Hashem saved from the Deluge, but he had to participate in his own salvation by building an Ark. If Noah had reached the highest levels of righteousness and would have prayed that Hashem spared the people of his generation, then Hashem would have saved Noah all by Himself, instead He only offered Noah a lower level of salvation by alerting Noah as to what will come (i.e. a flood) and telling him what he can do to avoid it. Noah's salvation was like that of somebody guarded by a dog, as opposed to somebody guarded by a lion. For this reason, Rashi (Gen. 7:23) explains that Noah was struck by a *lion* for being recalcitrant in bringing food on time. That he was specifically hit by a lion serves to show that his level of Divine protection had not reached the level of protection that a lion affords.

owner having to actually involve himself. All of this is alluded to in the fact that no dog barked during the Plague of the Firstborns; there was no need for any dogs to alert the Jews, the entire salvation came about directly through Hashem.

***On bitter herbs you shall eat it (Ex. 12:8).*** Ibn Ezra explains in the name of a Spanish sage that in Egypt, there is a lot of moisture in the air because it gets its waters from the Nile, and there is never any rain, so the moisture gets trapped in the humidity of the air. Because of this, the Egyptians would commonly eat different bitter and sharp herbs, like grasses and mustard. Even if they had a meal consisting of only bread, the Egyptians would always make sure to have bitter herbs into which they would dip their bread, because they understood that the heat of the bitter herbs were the way to avoid the negative effects of the moist air.<sup>6</sup>

***Draw your hand and take for yourselves sheep according to your families (Ex. 12:21).*** The Michas Elazar, Munkatcher Rebbe, writes in *Divrei Torah* (4<sup>th</sup> edition, 103) that his ancestor, the *Yitav Lev* of Sighef writes that when the Jews in Egypt had to take sheep for their Paschal Lambs, the sheep would run to each Jew enthusiastically hoping to be offered as the sacrifice.

***...according to your families (Ex. 12:21).*** Rabbenu Bechaya writes that from here one learns that one should bring his relatives closer in order to be happy with them on holidays. He also writes that in the Future Redemption, Hashem promises that families will be reunited with one another, as it says, “On that day—the word of Hashem—I will be God for all the families of Israel” (Jer. 30:28). Ralbag writes that members of the same family should always be close to each other so that they can give whatever help the others’ need. He explains that this is derived from the fact that the Torah commands that the Paschal Offering be brought in groups of families, because the families are expected to stick together, and indeed in the first Passover in Egypt, Hashem even forbade people from leaving their house the entire night so that everybody can stay together. The brother of the Maharal writes in *Sefer HaChaim* (*Parnassa ve-Chalkalah*, ch. 3) that there is an ancient Jewish custom for every family to have at least one day a year in which they gather together for a festive meal. This is the meaning of the phrase *zevach-mishpacha* (I Sam. 20:29) which refers to a familial gathering.

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<sup>6</sup> See also *Nahar Mitzrayim* (Hilchos Sukkah, §3) by Rabbi Refael Aharon ben Shimon, the Chief Rabbi of Egypt, who writes that although the Jewish community in Egypt generally observed the laws of Sukkah according to its specifications, but they would nonetheless be lax about the requirement to *sleep* in the Sukkah, on the basis that Egyptian air is not healthy, and it could be dangerous to one’s health to sleep outside in the cold, moist air of Egypt.



***And the destroyer will not give in to come to your house to smite (Ex. 12:23).*** In the *Haggadah*, it says: “And I will pass through the Land of Egypt...” —I and not an angel. “And I will smite every firstborn...” (Ex. 12)—I and not a *saraph*. “And with all the gods of Egypt I will do justice” (Ex. 12)—I and not the messenger, for I am Hashem, I am He and none other. How can this passage in the *Haggadah* be reconciled with the Scriptural passage at hand which seems to suggest that Hashem sent a “destroyer” to carry out the Plague of Firstborn, and that “destroyer” seems to be independent of Him? Many early authorities, such as *Daas Zekanim*, *Chizkuni*, and *Drashos Ha-Ran* (*Drush* 4) explain that this means that Hashem went with all His glory to carry out this Plague, but that angels were also employed for the plague. The point of the *Haggadah* is not that it was *only* Hashem, but rather that it was not *only* other forces. The *Shibbolei HaLeket* answers that in the name of his brother Rav Binyamin HaRofeh that only the technical Plague of the Firstborn itself was done exclusively by Hashem, but not the tangential effects of the plague. Alternatively, the *Shibbolei HaLeket*, *Abudraham*, and Abarbanel explain that the word “destroyer” should not be taken as angelic force of destruction, rather it refers to the destruction itself. Meaning, Hashem simply promised that He will ensure that the destruction not reach the Jewish homes; this verse does not make mention of any independent “destroyer”. Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe (*Shiurei Chumab* to Ex. 12:12) explains that when Rashi cites the *Haggadah*, he writes, “I and not a messenger”, but in our version of the *Haggadah Shel Pesach* it actually says, “I and not the messenger”. What is “the messenger” with the definite article? Rabbi Wolbe explains that “the messenger” refers to the “known” messenger that Hashem commonly employs, i.e. nature. In this passage, Hashem reassures us that He will take care of this plague in a supernatural way, and nature will play no role.

***And Hashem will skip over the entrance (Ex. 12:23).*** *Butzina de-Nehora* explains that this verse alludes to the uniqueness of the Exodus from Egypt. The word for entrance, the verse is *pesach*. In general, the Talmud says that Hashem says, “If you open for me an opening (a *pesach*) like the tip of a needle, I will open for you an opening like the entrance to the Temple gallery”. This means that in order for one to receive Divine assistance, one must generally first appeal to Hashem in even an ever-so-slight way, and then Hashem will respond by showering that person with Divine assistance. However, in the case of the Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people had descended to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of impurity, and were so far away from appealing to Hashem, that waiting for them to do so would be futile. Instead, Hashem took the initiative Himself and took the first step of showering the Jewish people with His divine assistance. In doing so, He “skipped over” the requirement that one build an opening like the opening of the needle, and instead opened an entrance like that of to a gallery immediately. This departure from His normal way of doing things is alluded to in the verse

a hand: “And Hashem will skip over the *pesach* [requirement that one make from Him an] entrance [like the tip of a needle before receiving Divine assistance].”

***And it should be for you as a sign on your hand, and a remembrance between your eyes, so that the Torah of Hashem will be in your mouth, for with a strong hand Hashem took you out from Egypt (Ex. 13:9).*** The *Midrash Pliyab* (130), also cited by Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropolia (in the end of *Dan Yadin to Sefer Karnayim*) cites the following enigmatic statement: “We only lay *tefillin* on Shabbos!” Not only does the statement contradict normative Halacha, it also has no clear meaning! Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad writes (*Ben Ish Chai*, Year 1, *Chayei Sarah* 1) that he heard in the name of Rabbi Akiva Eiger that “on Shabbos” (בשבת) is an acronym for “on the place of hair, on the place of the bulge” (במקום שער במקום תפוח). This refers to the Halacha that the place of *tefillin* on the head is at the edge of one’s hairline, and the place of *tefillin* on the arm is at the forearm’s muscle bulge above the elbow’s bend. Rabbi Moshe Blau (*Mishnas Moshe*, here) explains that according to Halacha, a person who does not don *tefillin* cannot be included in the required quorum of ten men to make up a *minyan*. Rabbi Elazar Chaim Deutsch of Bonyhad rules in responsa *Pri HaSadeh* (vol. 3, 3) that this does not just apply to weekdays when it is obvious who is wearing *tefillin* and who not, but even on Shabbos and Holidays he who does not wear *tefillin* during the week is not to be counted in a *minyan*. Based on this, Rabbi Blau explains that the word “only” (אלא) should in the *Midrash Pliyab* should be read as an acronym for “it is forbidden to include them even” (אסור לצרפם אפילו), such that the entire statement should be rendered as, “[People who] do not wear *tefillin*, it is forbidden to include them [in a *minyan*] even on Shabbos” (אין מניחין תפילין אלייא בשבת). Another source points out that the *gematria* of the word “Shabbos” with its letters spelled out (שיין ביית תיין = 1188) equals that of the entire verse at hand (והיה לך לאות על ירך ולזכרון בין עיניך = 1188) and that of Deut. 6:8, “...as a sign on your hand, and *totafos* between...” (לאות על ירך והיו לטטפת בין) = 1188).

***And it will be when your son asks you tomorrow saying, ‘what is this?’ and you shall say to him, ‘with a strong hand, Hashem took us out of Egypt from the house of slaves’ (Ex. 13:14).*** *Yalkut Eliezer* explains that this verse alludes to the rationale espoused by those who have rejected the Torah. “And it will be when your son asks you” means that initially, they begin by simply asking “innocent questions”. Then, they will wholly reject the applicability of the Torah by saying “tomorrow”. Meaning, they will argue that “tomorrow” has arrived and with it has come time to discard the Torah, because “the times have changed” and the Torah is no longer relevant. The proper response to such heresy is to

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counter with the historical fact that Hashem miraculously took us out of Egypt and gave us the Torah which is timeless.