

Weekly Shiur

7 Shevat 5773

(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

Lechaim lechaim.

A. Three of the Hagadah's four sons in parashat Bo

The plagues in Bo correspond to the first three sefirot

Parashat Bo begins with the words, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart... So that you may tell your son and your grandson how I tortured Egypt and the omens that I placed upon them." A few verses later we read, "Tomorrow I will send the locust in your land..." and in the continuation of the parashah we learn of the two final plagues. These 3 plagues correspond to the 3 intellectual faculties (the locust to understanding, the darkness to wisdom, and the plague of the firstborn to the keter, the super-consciousness). The 7 plagues in Va'eira (last week's parashah) correspond to the 7 lower sefirot. After the intellectual and super-consciousness of Egypt are struck by plagues, the Jewish people can be released from their bondage.

There are many allusions to these three plagues in the parashah and as we will see, there are central themes that relate to the number 3. The parasha's name itself equals 3 (סב) alluding to these 3 final plagues. The alef of Bo corresponds to the plague of the firstborn and the bet of Bo corresponds to the locust and the darkness that go together, as we said that they are wisdom and understanding, "two companions that never part." The bet is separate from the alef.

Preparing for Pesach and the order of the sons in our parashah

There are few more important things in this parashah whose symbol is bet alef (סב). One of them is the sons in the Passover Hagadah. Actually, this is the week in which we prepare for reading the Hagadah on Pesach which will be in 2 months. Among the four sons, the dialogue held with 3 of them comes explicitly from our parashah. Their respective references appear, not in the order brought by the Hagadah, but in the order from below to above, which is the order brought in the kavanot of the Arizal.

The wicked son and the sincere son (rasha and the tam)

First we hear the words of the Rashah, the wicked son. These appear in chapter 12, verse 26, "And should it come to pass that your children will say to you: What is this service for you?" This is the question that in the Talmud and in the Hagadah is asked by the wicked son asks. The Torah continues, "And you shall say: This is a Paschal sacrifice for God who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when He plagued the Egyptians...." Interestingly, this reply is not the one that the Hagadah gives as a response to the wicked son (the reply in the Hagadah is taken from a much later

verse, Exodus 13:8). So the wicked son is addressed first in the parashah. Following this dialogue with the wicked son we read the two parashiyot (paragraphs) that are well known because we read them when donning Tefilin.

We'll skip for a moment over the son who doesn't know how to ask (שאינו יודע לשאול). The maftir, the final 3 verses (another allusion to the entire parashah's name, Bo which is equal to 3) contains the dialogue with the sincere son, the Tam (תם). He too asks, "What is this?" (Exodus 13:14). The answer we give him (in the Hagadah too) is in the next verse, "You shall tell him, God took us out of Egypt with a mighty hand." The final verse again is about Tefilin.

The son who doesn't know how to ask

Now we said there the (lower, according to the Arizal) 3 sons and the dialogue with them appears in parashat Bo explicitly. The one we've skipped over is the one for whom the entire Hagadah is actually said on the Seder night. It is for him that we fulfill the mitzvah of telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt on the Seder night. The Torah reads (Exodus 13:8), "You shall tell your son on that day..." (והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר). This statement appears without a question to introduce it, so its very fitting to identify it the way the sages do, that this is not a response, but a way to open the conversation with the son who does not know how to ask questions.

The son who is not being

Actually, the description of this son as "he who does not know how to ask" (שאינו יודע לשאול) is in itself a little strange. When we call someone wise, or wicked, that is a single word that captures their essence. Likewise with the sincere son (the תם). If we would shorten the fourth son's name into one word, we would call him the "one who is not" (אינו). Rebbe Nachman for instance, gives the four sons an acronym, based on the way they are described in the Hagadah. He uses the word, Shacharit (שחרית), where the *chet* is the initial of the wise son (חכם), the *reish* is the wicked one's (רשע) initial, the *tav* is the sincere son's (תם) initial, and the *shin* serves as the initial for the son who doesn't know (how to ask questions), or the שאינו. But, if we call him the Eino (אינו) for short, "the one who is not," then the acronym will be the word אחרת. Indeed, as we will discuss much more later, the son who doesn't know how to ask is best described as "he who is not" (אינו). He is like the hyle (היילי), the formless matter.

From the word "When I came out of [Egypt]" (בצאתי), in this same verse addressed at the son who doesn't know how to ask, we learn another mitzvah, that every Jew should see himself as if he left Egypt today.

Bo: the educational parashah

Educating all our children

So again, in our parashah, the majority of the four sons are represented, not just the sons as they are in the Hagadah, but the different types of children that are addressed

throughout the entire Torah. The entire Torah is meant to address all four types of children. We can say that parashat Bo is all about Chinuch (education). And the main thing to take from all of this is that we have to address and instruct each son, all types of children that we have, by learning from this parashah.

A common point about the wise and the wicked sons

As we said earlier, there is only one son who is not mentioned, the wise one. The dialogue with him is taken from a much later section of the Pentateuch, from the Book of Deuteronomy (6:20). He asks a very complex question, "What is the nature of the laws that Havayah your God has commanded you with?" The answer given to the wise son there (the continuation of that same verse in Deuteronomy), is also not brought in the Hagadah. So there is a common theme to the wise son and the wicked son. Both receive in the Hagadah answers that are not the ones given them in the Torah.

The sons and the four Worlds

Indeed, the order of the sons in the Hagadah is such that they are brought together, one after the other. But, as we mentioned according to the Arizal's kavanot the order is from the wicked one, to the one who does not know how to ask, to the sincere son, to the wise one (רשע אינו תם חכם). What does "son" (בן) symbolize in the Arizal's Kabbalah? It is the filling of Havayah (God's essential Name) that equals 52 (יוד הוּהּ), the value of the word "son" (בן). The Arizal explains that each of the 4 sons represents the Name בן, in each of the 4 Worlds, from Action (Asiyah) to Emanation (Atzilut).

The wicked son's centrality

There is an important point to note here, if we're discussing how all four sons are "son." Actually, we quoted this already earlier, but note that the wicked son is not referred to in the singular form "your son" in the Torah. Rather it refers to him in the plural form, "your sons" (בניכם), suggesting that the wicked son is not just a single individual but rather represents an entire generation. This is also very fitting with how the Arizal places him in correspondence with the World of Action (Asiyah), because that is where plurality exists. The World of Action is the World of plurality. The purpose of all creation is the lowest world, the World of Action, "The Almighty craved having a dwelling place below." And the son there is the wicked one, that is why he is the first to be addressed in the Torah's order of the 4 sons, he is the main character in the World of Action and he represents not just one son, but many sons, even all our sons.

Now let's look at how the other 3 sons are addressed. When the one who does not know how to ask is addressed he is called "your son" (בנך), the same is true of the sincere son and the one who doesn't know how to ask, they are all referred to as "your son" (בנך). But, now let's see how they are referred to in the reply. The one who does not know how to ask, is referred to as we said without him having asked a question. So the reply is the only reference to him. When it comes to the sincere son, it says, "You shall say to him," it doesn't say, "you shall say to your son." But, when the reply is given to the

wise son, he is indeed called "your son" even when replied to. Meaning, that when the answer is given to the wise son, he is addressed in an endearing way, alluding to the fact that he is the most loved of all the sons by his father.

Do not address the wicked directly

When it comes to the wicked son, it is important to notice that he never really asks anything, he just says, "What is this service for you." The verb used is, "Your sons will say to you" (כי יאמרו אליכם בניכם). In response, the way the father is commanded to answer is not by replying, but also just by stating something. He just says, "This is the Paschal lamb." The wicked son says something. The father says something. That is the way the wicked son is treated. The idea here is that the father does not want to address him directly. It's like he doesn't want to look at him. The father seems to be either talking to himself, or simply addressing all present. The wicked son says something, and then the father just says something. Not as a reply. It can be for one of two reasons: either the father himself doesn't want to fall into the wicked son's doubts, or he wants to strengthen every one else present and therefore addresses them so that they don't fall into the wicked son's Apikorosos.

Tomorrow as near-present and future

There is another important detail we will look at. About Beriah (Creation) and Atzilut (Emanation), corresponding with the sincere son and the wise son, the verses (here in Bo and regarding the wise son, later in Va'etchanan) use the word "tomorrow" (מחר), "Your son will ask you tomorrow." *Rashi* notes this and says that the word tomorrow can have two meanings. There is "tomorrow" that actually means in the present. But, there is also "tomorrow" that is after some time passes. But, in Va'etchanan (regarding the wise son), *Rashi* doesn't mention both options for interpretation, only the option that the tomorrow is after some time. From this we learn that the wise son's "tomorrow" is indeed in the future, but the sincere (Tam) son's tomorrow is some intermediate between the present and the future. The wise son is connected with the future, something we will discuss further later on.

The wise son's stance

What does the sincere son ask about? He doesn't ask about the Paschal lamb, about the matzah, the bitter herbs, he asks about the firstborns and all the mitzvot that go with them, such as redeeming the firstborn in both people and animals. This is his question, not directly about Pesach. But, the answer given him is about Pesach. What about the wise son. He asks מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים, "What are the testimonies, the laws, and the regulations...." It doesn't seem that he's asking about Pesach at all, he is asking about the entire Torah. There are commentaries that do want to connect this with Passover, but the literal meaning here is that he is asking a general question about the Torah. What are the mitzvot, the laws, the regulations that God has commanded us? The answer given the wise son is the longest of all the answers given. It begins with,

"You shall tell him that we were slaves in Egypt... and it ends with, "And it shall be considered a tzedakah for us for keeping all of these commandments before Havayah our God, as we have been commanded" (וצדקה תהיה לנו כי נשמור את כל המצוה הזאת לפני ה') (אלקיני כאשר צונו).

The Ohr Hachayim explains that this answer implies serving God out of love, because it is described as "before God." In the future, when the Temple is built, we will perform God's will exactly how he intended it to be performed, out of love alone. But, in the present, performing God's will is accompanied by fear. The future stance is called אהבה רבה בתענוגים, great-pleasurable love. It contains awe within it, but the awe remains hidden through inter-inclusion. Why is this all mentioned only in parashat Va'etchanan? Why is the wise son's question and answer delayed until the final book of the Torah, specifically until parashat Va'etchanan? Because that is where the Torah speaks of the mitzvah to love God. The Shema is there and the next verse after the profession of our faith in one God is the verse, ואהבת, "You shall love Havayah your God...", etc. After we have been commanded to love God, it becomes possible to hear the wise son's question and reply that the main point of the entire Torah is that וצדקה תהיה לנו, the reward that is mostly in the World to Come. The end of Va'etchanan is היום לעשותם, To perform them (the mitzvot) today, and to receive the reward for them "tomorrow."

So again, as we saw before, the wise son's mind is in the future. It's not that he wants to finish with this World and enter the next, rather that he wants to draw the World to Come into our present reality. That is the meaning of כימי השמים על הארץ, the days of the heavens (the World to Come) on the earth (this World), to make the Almighty a dwelling place below. The commentaries say that even though he says, What is this service that God our God has commanded us, by saying "our God," and including himself within the command "commanded us," that is why he is different from the wicked son who asks a very similar question.

The one who doesn't know how to ask: wicked, infantile, or a concealed tzadik?

How is the answer to the one who doesn't know how to ask different from the one given to the wicked son? If a child is sitting at the table and remains quiet, does that mean that he's stupid? No. It might be that he is afraid to ask. So I have to nudge him to get him to ask. He may indeed be one who does not have enough thought to think of what to say, but it might be that he's a concealed tzadik. It's impossible to know what he really is. So the father thinks that either he's not smart enough, or he thinks that he just scorns and ridicules the whole thing so much, that he's not even willing to give the topic any attention—he is even worse in this case than the wicked son. That is why the answer to both of them is similar, but with the word לי, for me, being able to be interpreted in two different ways. Either like the wicked son—if you would have been there you would not have been saved, or it means that I know about it, as I am closer to the events, and now I'll open the topic for you so that you can begin to think about it.

The same thing is with the verb described in how to reply to the one who doesn't know how to ask, והגדת, You shall tell. This verb can be either harsh words, or it can be

like Aggadah, stories, the types of stories that draw the heart. There are actually a number of degrees with speech. There can be saying (אמירה), which is the softest of all. Then there is speaking (דיבור), which is more harsh. And finally, there is saying (הגדה), which can be either the harshest (more harsh than speech), or it can be the softest (softer than saying). So, if the son who doesn't know how to ask turns out to be wicked, more wicked than the wicked son, then the הגדה is the harshest. But, if it turns out that he is simply infantile, like a child that does not yet have any self-consciousness; he doesn't feel himself to be something (a separate being) in the world yet, then he should be addressed in the softest and nicest way. If he is without self-consciousness, then he is certainly fitting of being described as היילי, the hyle, the formless matter, the not-being, we ascribed to him earlier (איני). But, the father can't say this as "we," because this child is a different generation from the father (who was present at the Exodus).

The wise son and his father are like brothers

Let's return to the wise son. After he says, "we" and "Havayah our God" the father who endears him, replies 14 times with the pronoun "we" (or in other verbs that are in the first-person plural form). So, on the one hand we've seen that the difference between the generations is greatest by the wise son, because his "tomorrow" is the furthest in the future. On the other hand, what is reflected in his dialogue with his father, is that the father and son are like one. They are like brothers. This is a wondrous thing about the wise son. That he and his father, as much as they are apart, they are like brothers, together in the same generation.

C. The son's questions: From the concrete to the abstract

Parashat Bo is the 15th parashah in the Pentateuch, where 15 alludes to wisdom and understanding. This is the first number that is a holy Name. Va'etchanan, where the four sons end, is the 45th parashah in the Pentateuch. So the relation between them is 1:3, 1 to Bo (בא = 3). If we multiply 15 by Bo (בא), or 3, we get 45, the ordinal number of Va'etchanan. In Bo there are three sons. The final son, the sincere one is in the final 3 verses of the parashah. And behold, Bo (3) times 15 equals 45, the value of מה, What? This is the word that is common to all four sons. The only one who doesn't say "What?" is the one who doesn't ask... apparently his "What?" (מה) is like utter self-nulification, and so it can't be heard. 3 times 45 is equal to מצה, matzah. Matzah is called לחם עוני, because many things are said (עונים עליו דברים הרבה) over it, when it is on the table. We said that the sincere son asks about the laws of the firstborn. The wicked son is the most practical, he asks about the actual Paschal lamb. The one who doesn't know how to ask, we answer זה בעבור זה, "For this sake..." referring to the matzah and the bitter herbs, מצה ומרור. Even though he doesn't ask a question, the context is about the matzah and the bitter herbs. The laws of the firstborn are a bit less connected to Pesach, but still, one might argue that the entire way the Torah treats firstborn is derived from what happened with them in Egypt.

So we have here another ascent of Worlds: in the World of Action, the question is about the Paschal lamb. Today the World of Action is barren as we cannot bring this sacrifice. The matzah, which is about rectifying our character, it comes to nullify our sense of self, it rectifies the heart. It too is a practical mitzvah. Matzah is also anger in Hebrew (מצה ומריבה) and so matzah is able to rectify anger. This is the world of Yetzirah, the World of Formation, where the character traits are. These are the two revealed aspects of the Worlds, והנגלת. They are therefore directly related to Pesach. The sincere son corresponds to the World of Beriah of creation, where the firstborn are. And the wise son is in Emanation, asking about the entire Torah.

D. The wise son seeks the point of inception – Likutei Moharan 64

What does the wise son say אתכם, "You?" which sounds a lot like how the wicked son distances himself and removes himself from the entire affair? As much as the wise son is part of the Jewish people, he wants to reach the point of inception (נקודת הראשית). What is this point from which all the mitzvot, all the Worlds, emanate from? There are an infinite number of laws (הלכות). The wise son wants to know where they all come from. If he can grasp that first point from where everything emanates, he feels good. But, if he is missing that initial point, that point of inception, he feels confused. Therefore the word אתכם, refers to the beginning point of the entire Jewish people. Just as the Jewish people all begin from Abraham, so the wise son wants to return to the inception. He refers to this by saying אתכם, "you." Like in the verse, קורא הדורות מראש. All the generations are in the head, the first point, and then like lines they are read one by one, one after the other. On the one hand, the wise son is the farthest away, on the other hand he identifies the most with the Torah. And he wants to know, Where did you come from (מאין באת)? Both regarding the Torah's mitzvot and regarding the Patriarchs.

Why are the Jewish people chosen?

The Beit Yakov, the Izhbitzer's son, deals in length with the four sons, and he explains that the wise son's question really revolves around the Jewish people's chosen status. The wicked son he says completely rejects this special status. The wise son does not reject it, he is just perplexed by it. He knows that since God chose it, we have the Torah, we have mitzvot, etc. and since then we deserve to be special. But, why in the first place did God choose us. Why did he choose Abraham. It's like a little child who keeps asking you "why" and "why" and "why," going further back until there is a certain place where there is no longer any answer. So if we go back far enough, the wise son senses that there is no real reason that can be given. The reason will only be revealed in the future.

Only Moshe Rabbeinu has the power to come to Pharaoh

Now we took this from the Beit Yaakov. But, what he is saying is similar to how Rebbe Nachman explains that there are questions that come from the empty space (הלל)

(הפנוי), the place which is likened to Pharaoh himself, and in that place there are questions that have no answers, and whomever enters that place only gets more and more confused. But, says Rebbe Nachman that there is an exception to this rule, Moshe Rabbeinu, who is able to enter this empty space and redeem it. No one else is allowed to enter this space. Moshe Rabbeinu didn't know that he is different, that is why he was afraid to enter and approach Pharaoh. But, God knew that he was special and therefore commanded him to "come to Pharaoh." It's not that once he enters, he knows how to answer these questions that are not real questions and are only meant to confuse people. Rather, that by entering, he can redeem all the perplexed souls that are stuck in this empty space. The person stuck there can't free himself, but with aid from Above, there is nothing that is lost and Moshe Rabbeinu can come in and guide them out. Even the wicked son, even though we say, if he was there in Egypt he would not have been redeemed, we say that since the Torah was given, he is sitting here with us, he was redeemed, thanks to the Torah. Or, we can say that this is thanks to Moshe Rabbeinu coming to redeem him. Moshe Rabbeinu knows that secret of silence and the secret of music, nigun, he has simple and pure faith and thanks to these he can bring these souls that have fallen into the empty space, they have like fallen into a black hole. This is all hinted to in the plague of the locust. Again, Pharaoh is this black hole. There are foreign wisdoms that are simply fallen wisdom, but they do contain wisdom. About these, it is a mitzvah to enter and know what to reply to someone who has doubts. But, there are places, likened to Pharaoh, that are between the light that surrounds all worlds and the light that enters all worlds (סובב וממלא). The Rebbe would also cry about the fact that he too cannot understand how the empty space, the space where the contraction rules, will eventually in the future reveal God's essence. Rebbe Nachman says that Moshe Rabbeinu enters this space, knowing that in the future there will be an answer to this question. What is the answer that will be given in the future, for instance to the question we noted from the Beit Yaakov about why God chose us? The sign of the wise son is that he is never content with the obvious answer. He is always searching for a deeper cause, another level of why. He has to continue going deeper and deeper until he reaches this empty space, and there he has to know how to stop and through his simple faith, to remain steadfast.

The answer to the empty space in the form of the song of faith

What is the answer then to this empty space? It is in the word "locust" (ארבה). At the end of Job, Elihu ben Berachel says, אכן רוח היא באנוש ונשמת שדי תבינם. Indeed it is a spirit in man, and the soul of God will give them understanding. The spirit here is music, the nigun, or it is faith, as we explained in previous classes. Meaning that it refers to a nigun of faith, like תשורי מראש אמנה, you will sing from the heights of faith.

The importance of learning Likutei Moharan with the Tanya

Anyone who learns Tanya knows that the Sovev (the surrounding light is everywhere). In Rebbe Nachman's teaching it sounds like the surrounding light is only outside—that's why it's so important to learn Likutei Moharan with Tanya (indeed, the

usual commentaries on LM all quote the Tanya here to explain this point properly). Indeed, in my own person and private consciousness it is as if the surrounding light is far removed, surrounding my entire consciousness, and the light that enters all worlds, is what enters my consciousness, and in between is the empty space. But, in reality, universally speaking, the Sovev is everywhere, it is called Sovev only because it cannot be fathomed, so one way of symbolizing this is by imagining that it is far away. But, actually, it is everywhere.

The exodus as giving birth to the four sons

So now, returning to the plague of locust, which is the secret of secrets. Locusts (ארבה) is equal to 208, or 4 times 52, the value of "son" (בן), alluding to the 4 sons. The Beit Yaakov says a simple pshat, that why did the Torah speak about 4 sons specifically regarding the Exodus from Egypt? This is a sign that before the Exodus, there were not yet 4 sons. This was something that became a reality only with the Exodus. Why? Because the Exodus is like giving birth. In the womb, there is not yet any difference between the different sons. The proof is of course from Isaac and Esau. Rebbeccah had two sons in her, but could not yet tell them apart. Indeed all of the Tanya is to try to explain to me that the reason I sometimes have a good thought and sometimes a negative thought, because there are two in me (two souls: the animal and the Divine). So to come out of this doubt, this is what the Exodus from Egypt is. The entire Tanya is coming out of Egypt because it is the ability to differentiate between the different forces inside us, to tell the difference between the sons. "Four sons" (ארבעה בנים) itself equals Egypt (מצרים). "About four" (כנגד ארבעה) equals Pharaoh (פרעה). In Egypt the sons are still mixed up with one another. You can't tell which one is the wicked one, and which is the wise one.

According to Rebbe Nachman, who is the opposite of the wise son? He has a whole story about the wise and the sincere man (החכם והתם). Rashi too places the wise and the sincere opposite from one another. You might have thought that the wise man should be the opposite of the wicked one, but really the opposite of the wicked one is the Righteous one the tzadik. But, there is no tzadik. We might say that here, in our parashah, the father plays the role of the missing fourth son, the wise son. But, once we arrive at parashat Va'etchanan, and there we already have the wise son, then the father takes on the role of the righteous son, the tzadik. He is the one running the Seder and addressing each one of his sons. So when all four are present, the father takes on the role of the tzadik, of the Moshe Rabbeinu, he is the Rebbe, Moshe Rabbeinu, and he is supposed to be the one running the Seder, he is the one educating all four sons.

Moshe Rabbeinu identifies with the one who doesn't know how to ask

Who does he identify with the most? Who would Moshe Rabbeinu identify with the most? With the one who does not know how to ask. Like a teacher in a classroom, he identifies most with the child who can't ask. Among the four species of Sukot, Moshe and Aharon correspond to the two willow branches. Apart from corresponding the 4 sons to the Four Worlds, we can also correspond them to the sefirot, and this time it

exactly follows the order in the Hagadah, so this is the rationale in the Hagadah. The wise one corresponds to loving-kindness, the wicked one to might (gevurah), the Tam relates to Yaakov, the sincere one, sitting in tents, so it is Tiferet (תפארת). Finally, the one who doesn't know how to ask, that corresponds to victory and acknowledgment that have the least intellect. This is like ordering them based on their IQ, on their intelligence. But, it is Moshe RAbbeinu, the wisest who sympathizes the most with the one who doesn't know how to ask.

Returning to the wise one's nigun, תשורי מראש אמנה, he is required to come to Pharaoh, he is allowed to enter the empty space to redeem souls from that place with his music.

The questions asked by the sons are necessarily related to the Seder (except for the one who doesn't know how to ask). The higher we go, the more distance there is from the Seder, the wise one is the furthest from the Seder. The wicked son asks about what is happening in the Seder of that very year. So the order in the Torah is that as we progress toward the wise son we grow more distant from the Seder. Still, the wise son wants to arrive at the point of inception. There are people who because they want to reach that initial point, they ignore all the details. But, the Rambam, knew all the details and in the Guide he reaches the final conclusion, that the purpose of the entire Torah and the mitzvoth is to nullify idolatry. But, the answer given here to the wise son is that in the end the entire Torah is all the slavery in Egypt, the exile in Egypt and the Exodus from Egypt. To get to this point of inception for the entire Torah... If you begin with the 10 Commandments, you have I am Havayah your God, and You shall have no gods over me. To arrive at the point that everything is the Exodus from Egypt, you have to grow distant. Only when you are so distant can it be revealed to you that the point of inception is that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Why is this not the answer given to the wise son? Because, actually this answer was given even before the part where the 4 sons are mentioned. The Hagadah begins with "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt." And then comes the part with the 4 sons. The answer given the wise son and the wicked son is very similar, ויאף אתה אמור לו, except by the wicked son we add the words הקקה את שניו, knock his teeth out and tell him. The Hagadah here is alluding to the phrase, אף עשיתני, "It too have I created." This explains the very strange custom that the Rebbe Rashab had to ridicule the wise son, because for him he represented the academics. All because with both the wicked son and the wise son we find the word ויאף אתה, where the word אף always alludes to anger, anger at him. So the point until now is that in order to reach the point of inception, Moshe Rabbeinu entering the empty space, you have to grow distant, both in time and in perspective. You need to have the perspective of many generations to get the point here. For example, that until the entire Jewish people get it that the whole point is the Ba'al Shem Tov, it takes time. It can't happen in the BST's generation. You need a lot of time to pass until you can realize this. This is how the BST is. He is the furthest away, his "tomorrow" is furthest in the future, and he is the one to whom you can say in the end that "We were slaves to Pharaoh." All this was just to explain this one point. There are a few more points about this parashah, it is all about chinuch, about educating our children and it is the true preparation for Passover.

One more point before we break. On the word "this" in **זֶה בַּעֲבוּר זֶה** there are 3 different literal interpretations. According to Rashi and the Ibn Ezra, it refers to the time that matzah and bitter herbs are before you, it is a concretization of the mitzvah. When I say, **זֶה בַּעֲבוּר** and **בְּגִלְלֵי**, are they synonymous? No. Because if there is a cause and effect, we say because of A came B. If you do A you will get B. **בְּגִלְלֵי** means that it roles, **מִתְגַּלְגֵּל**. But you can't say that because of B you should do A, you have to say for **(בַּעֲבוּר)** B you should do A. That is the difference between them. So again the purpose of all the miracles in Egypt was for the matzah and the bitter herbs, action is the final purpose.

But, the Ramban and the Rashbam (Rashi's grandson), dispute Rashi's opinion and they write the opposite. **זֶה בַּעֲבוּר זֶה**, the word "this" refers to the miracles. They don't accept the sages' explanation that it refers to the matzah and the bitter herbs. They learn from next week's parashah, that "this" refers to the revelation of Divinity through the miracles.

A third opinion is brought by the Panim Yafot, that **זֶה בַּעֲבוּר זֶה**, refers to the beginning of the verse, which says, "You shall tell your son on that day..." meaning that it is all in order to tell your children. This is the purpose of it all. This is perhaps the best explanation. How do we know that this is all related to educating our children. The name Bo can be seen as an acronym for the phrase **בְּנֵי אֶתֶם** "You are sons..." The son who doesn't know how to ask, he is the one who is afraid of entering the empty space. Moshe too doesn't want to enter the empty space, the void, until God commands him to do so. The sons refers to the wicked son and the one who doesn't know how to ask. The word "you" **אֶתֶם**, refers to the Tam, **תָּם**, the sincere son. Then it says, so that you tell your son and your grandson how I tortured Egypt. Rashi writes that this torturing is laughter. After 5 plagues Pharaoh was willing to let the Jewish people go. Why did God harden his heart? So that we have something to tell our children about. So this entire parashah and all that happens in it is only to provide us with stories to tell our children during the Seder. So this is the best explanation for "for this," **זֶה בַּעֲבוּר זֶה**.

So again there are three meanings for "this." 1) the matzah and bitter herbs, 2) the miracles, 3) the storytelling about the plagues and the miracles.

We can correspond this to the 3 meanings of the word sefirah, which are the 3 parts of every sefirah: 1) the inner aspect of a sefirah is its light, and that is the revelation of Godliness through the miracles themselves. 2) the middle aspect of the sefirah is its story, the story telling. 3) the external aspect of a sefirah is its number, and here we are referring to the measures dictating the performance of every mitzvah, like how much matzah we need to eat in the Seder, etc.

If we multiply "this" **זֶה** by 3, we get 36, which is the value of **אֵלֶּה**, where the 3 letters refer to these three aspects of sefirah.

Finally for this part, where is there an allusion that this parashah will discuss only 3 of the 4 sons, that all 3 plagues mentioned in this parashah are all so that we have stories to tell our children. Indeed children are called **עוֹלָלִים**, which also means **אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלֵתִי** **בְּמִצְרַיִם**, how I tortured Egypt. So where do these three sons appear right away? When it says, **לְמַעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְּנֶךָ וּבֶן בְּנֶךָ**, So that you tell your son, and your son's son (grandson). So there are 3 sons here. Also, after the word **פָּרַעַה** **בֹּא אֵל**, after "come" **בֹּא**, the next time that bet and alef appear together is in the word **בְּאָזְנֵי**, in the ears. The idea here is that the

father in the story is like Moshe Rabbeinu, and Moshe Rabbeinu of course rules like Beit Shamai that procreation requires two sons (like he had). So the father here is inviting the entire family to the Seder. So far, there are only 2 sons, and 1 grandson. We might wonder, why is it that the 1st son doesn't have any children, only the second one has a son? We have to say that the first son is the wicked one, who doesn't want to procreate and have children. The second son is a good child, and he is the sincere one. For that reason his son is the one who doesn't know how to ask. Indeed, this is exactly the order in which the sons are mentioned later in the parashah, first the wicked son, then the sincere son, and finally the one who doesn't know how to ask. All the rules of education are related in this parashah. It's all so that at the very end of time, we come to realize that the entire Torah, all its commandments, everything in it, its point of inception is to recall how we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. From this point we will come to love God.

Now there still has to be at least one allusion to all 4 sons in our parashah. Let's return to the beginning, it says, ויקד העם וישתחו וילכו ויעשו בני ישראל כן עשו. There are 4 verbs here. ויקד, the bowed down (2 verbs) and then it says וילכו ויעשו they went and performed. These 4 verbs are the rectification of all 4 sons. To bow down is the wise one, to fall down on their faces is the sincere son, and so on. Normally, the word holy is related to burning fire, but it also relates to they bowed down (ויקד וישתחו), and there is holiness that is point-line-area. We say this because as much as the wise man is looking for details and knows all the details, he is looking for the point. To bow down is already area. But, there is a difference between ויקד וישתחו and point-line because bowing down represents nullification, whereas area represents expansion. Therefore it is more fitting to call point line area קודש, with a vav. How many times does this couple of verbs ויקד וישתחו appear in the Torah? Four times. The first by Eliezer, then here by the entire Jewish people. Then after Moshe was shown the 13 attributes of mercy, and finally by Balaam. These four instances also correspond to the four sons. Eliezer bows down before God, he is the only one who it says that he bows down before God, so he is the wise son. Balaam it says, bows down to his nose, he is the wicked son. The Jewish people here are the sincere son and when Moshe Rabbeinu is the one who cannot ask, because he is the formless matter.

In Ayin Beis the Rebbe Rashab discusses 4 types of processes in nature: from concealed to revealed, from nothing to something, from substance to extension, from potential to actual. The four sons make all of us sons, from the wicked one to the wise one, we are all considered God's children. And as we said four times "son" equals ארבה, which means having many children, like in הרבה ארבה, the promise that Eve will bear children. This word ארבה appears in Bereisheet 4 times. The first time, it appears is when God tells Eve, I will increase your sorrow and your pregnancy and you will give birth to children in sorrow. The pshat is that the more children there are, the more צער גידול בנים (difficulties of taking care of children) there is. Pregnancy is the sorrow of being in exile in Egypt. Giving birth is the sorrow of coming out of Egypt. The second time is when the angel addresses Hagar, telling her she will have many children. The third time is when God tells Abraham that he will have many children, now referring to Isaac. The fourth is

a promise God makes to Abraham after the Akeida, the binding of Isaac, and as we mentioned ארבה is equal to יצחק (Isaac).

Who were Abraham's four sons? First Isaac, the wise son. Then he has Yaakov, the sincere one. He has Ishmael who is the one who doesn't know how to ask. Finally he has Esau who is the wicked son. This very much fits with the four times that the word ארבה appears in Bereisheet. Eve's first son, Cain is the wicked son. Ishmael is the one who doesn't know how to ask. Then Yaakov is the sincere son, and Yitzchak is the wise son.

What we need to explain in length is how these four types of process correspond to the type of understanding that each of the four sons has. Specifically here in the Exodus it is demonstrated that regardless, we are all God's sons. The words son, בן, is related to understanding, מבין. Each has a particular way of understanding and they're all necessary.

In short, the highest type of process (incidentally, the best place to learn these is here in Ayin Beis and in Rebbe Hilel's commentary on the 3rd chapter of Sha'ar Hayichud) is substance and extension (from God's essence to the infinite light), then from the concealed to the revealed, and then from nothing to something and finally from potential to actual. The wise son understands the first process from substance to extension. The sincere son understands the process from the infinite light all the way to the World of Emanation, which is from the concealed to the revealed. The one who doesn't know how to ask understands the process from Emanation to the lower worlds, from nothing to something. Finally, the wicked son is the one who understands the process from potential to actual, he is the only one who knows how to actualize things, and that is why he is so important.

The two extremes here are from the concealed to the revealed (something that is and is suddenly revealed) and from nothing to something (something that is not in reality and then suddenly comes into being). The one who doesn't know how to ask, he doesn't ask, because it's all so surprising. What will appear in a moment was not at all here a moment ago.

The Exodus from Egypt is to be a son. There is of course a son who becomes a servant again, but the purpose of the Exodus is to become sons, regardless of which one of the sons we are. Lechaim lechaim, may we merit to see how Hashem chooses us, before all the nations, and Mashiach will come and build the Temple for us.