

A Tremendous Insight from the Chasam Sofer

The Dispute between Avraham and Sarah  
Regarding "kemach" - Meal versus "soles" - Fine Flour  
Concerns Two methodologies of Teaching Yisroel Torah

In this week's parsha, parshas Vayeira, we read about Avraham Avinu's encounter with the three malochim sent by HKB"H to visit him (18, 5): "וַאֲקַח: פַּת לֶחֶם וְסַעְדוּ לְבַבְכֶם אַחֲרֵי תַעֲבוּרוּ כִּי עַל כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל עַבְדְּכֶם, וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵּן תַעֲשֶׂה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ, וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֱהֱלָה אֶל שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מֵהָרִי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קִמַּח סֹלֶת לּוֹשֵׁי" "ועשי עוגות" – he says to them, "I will fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves, then go on – inasmuch as you have passed your servant's way." They said, "Do so, just as you have said." So Avraham hastened to the tent to Sarah and said, "Hurry! Three se'ahs of meal, fine flour! Knead and make cakes!"

Concerning this passage, we have learned in the Gemoreh (Bovo Metzio 87a): "כְּתִיב קִמַּח וְכִתִּיב סֹלֶת, אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק, מִכֶּאֱנָן שֶׁהָאִשָּׁה צָרָה עֵינֶיהָ בְּאוֹרְחִים – יוֹתֵר מִן הָאִישׁ" – it is written meal (kemach) and it is written fine flour (soles); Rabbi Yitzchak said: From here we see that a woman is stingier than a man toward guests. Rashi explains: "הִיא אִמְרָה" – היא אמרה: "קִמַּח וְהוּא סֹלֶת" – in other words, Sarah instructed to give the guests "kemach," which is coarse flour referred to as meal, whereas Avraham instructed to give them "soles," which is fine flour that has been sifted thoroughly. Seemingly, this suggests that Sarah was stingier concerning the guests, since she did not wish to prepare them cakes from fine flour, soles, but rather from meal, kemach.

This is surely surprising in light of the fact that we find that HKB"H instructs Avraham (Bereishis 21, 12): "כָּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ" – Whatever Sarah tells you, heed her voice. Rashi enlightens us: "בְּקוֹל רוּחַ הַקּוֹדֵשׁ שָׁבָה, לְמַדְנֵנוּ שֶׁהִיא אַבְרָהָם טַפַּל לְשָׂרָה" – we learn from here that Sarah's gift

of prophecy surpassed that of Avraham. If so, how can we even imagine that Sarah was being stingy and did not wish to entertain the guests as graciously as Avraham did?

Furthermore, the Midrash Tanchuma (Chayei Sarah 4) teaches us that Avraham eulogized Sarah in the following terms (Mishlei 31, 1): "אִשָּׁת חַיִל מִי יִמְצָא" – Who can find a woman of valor? The Midrash elucidates the subsequent pesukim as follows (ibid. 19): "יָדִיָּה שְׁלַחָה בְּכִישׁוֹר, שֶׁהִיָּתָה נּוֹתֵנָת מֵאֵכֶל לְעוֹבְרִים: וְשִׁבִים, כִּפָּה פָרְשָׁה לְעֹנִי, שֶׁהִיָּתָה נּוֹתֵנָת צְדָקוֹת וּמִלְבִּשֵׁת עֲרוּמִים" – she provided food for those who passed by, was charitable and clothed those in need. We see, in fact, that Avraham praised Sarah for the gracious manner in which she welcomed guests. So, how is it possible to describe her as being stingy toward guests?

It is also worth noting, Chazal's revelation in the Midrash (S.R. 28, 1): "וּמִשָּׁה עָלָה אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים... עָשָׂה בְּאוֹתָהּ שֶׁעָה בְּקִשׁוֹ מִלְּאֲכֵי הַשָּׂרָת לְפָגוּעַ בְּמִשָּׁה, עָשָׂה בּוֹ הַקֵּב" – קִלְסְטִירִין שֶׁל פְּנֵי שֶׁל מִשָּׁה דּוֹמָה לְאַבְרָהָם, אָמַר לָהֶם הַקֵּב"ה, אֵי אַתֶּם מִתְבַּיִשִּׁין הַיָּמֵנוּ, לֹא זֶהוּ שִׁירְדַתְּם אֲצִלּוֹ וְאַכְלַתֶּם בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ" – In the merit of the gracious manner in which Avraham welcomed the three malochim, his three heavenly visitors, HKB"H silenced the malochim's accusations against Yisroel at the time of Matan-Torah.

Therefore, we must clarify the following: (a) what is the impact of HKB"H's rebuke to the malochim: "אֵי אַתֶּם מִתְבַּיִשִּׁין הַיָּמֵנוּ, לֹא זֶהוּ שִׁירְדַתְּם אֲצִלּוֹ וְאַכְלַתֶּם בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ" – aren't you embarrassed to treat him in this manner, after he welcomed you and fed you so graciously, when you went down to his home? Why does the fact that they dined by Avraham, compel them

to forego their intense desire to receive the Torah?  
 (b) Why did the malochim wish to harm Moshe when he ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah? They must have known that he only did so at HKB"H's command. So, why would they dare harm the King of Kings loyal agent?

### "Kemach" Represents Torah Dialectics "Soles" Represents a Clear-cut Teaching

Let us begin with the illuminating insight of our incomparable teacher, the Chasam Sofer. He interprets this dispute between Avraham and Sarah — as to whether to serve the guests bread baked from refined flour or from meal — as a practical and philosophical debate concerning the ideal method of relaying Torah knowledge. In *Deroshos Chasam Sofer* (Part 2, p. 403, column 1) he writes:

"ידוע כי הכנסת אורחים של אברהם אבינו ע"ה היתה בשני דברים, אחד באכילה גופנית ועליה יתפרש קמח סולת כפשוטו, והשניה דבר ה' זו הלכה, שלימד דעת את אורחיו. והנה מצינו (גדרים לח.) שהקב"ה לא מסר פלפול התורה אלא למשה רבינו ע"ה, והוא נהג בה טובת עין ומסרה לישראל".

The matter of Avraham Avinu welcoming guests can be viewed on two levels. First of all, he provided them with physical nutrition; in this context, "kemach soles" simply refers to meal and fine flour. Secondly, he nourished them spiritually by enlightening his guests in the ways of Hashem. Now, the *Gemoreh* (Nedorim 38a) teaches us that HKB"H only gave the gift of "pilpul haTorah," Torah dialectics, to Moshe Rabeinu; Moshe graciously shared this gift with all of Yisroel.

Let us try and understand the debate, as it were, between HKB"H and Moshe as to whether to give the valuable tool of "pilpul" to Yisroel or not. Concerning this issue, the Chasam Sofer explains that HKB"H wished to give Yisroel the Torah in a precise, refined and unambiguous form:

"והנה רצה הקב"ה שימסור לישראל הלכה ברורה, מנופה בשלוש עשרה נפה כמות שהיא, מבלי שיצטרך לפלפל עד שיבוא אל האמת, מילפותא פלונית או מהיקש פלוני, אמנם משה רבינו ע"ה רצה לזכות את ישראל גם במצוה ההיא כי רבה היא, ועל ידיה הולכים ממדרגה למדרגה ולא יעמוד במקום אחד.

אמנם מצד אחד נראה יותר טובה במה שרצה ה', שלא ימסר להם הפלפול רק הלכה ברורה כמות שהיא, כדי שלא יתערב בה שקר ח"ו על ידי סברת אנושית. וזה בעצמה היה פלפולו של אברהם אבינו ע"ה עם שרה הגדולה בנביאה יותר ממנו, הוא אמר לתת לפניהם סולת מנופה, הסברה המחודשת ממנו [כלומר מסקנת הלכה] מבלי שילמדם אופן העיון, ואיך ידעו לחדש לבנות ולסתור על מנת לבנות.

אמנם היא אמרה קמח ינתן לפניהם, וילמדם להוציא ממנו סולת נקיה. וזה נראה ח"ו כצרת עין מאמנו שרה, שלא להודיעם מיד הסברה נכונה, אמנם הפסוק מפארה על זה ואמר (משלי לא כז) צופיה הליכות ביתה, שהיתה צופה ומביט טוב יותר ללמוד להם הליכות, להלך ממדרגה למדרגה, ולחם עצלות לא תאכל, כי זהו לחם עצלות לומר ההלכה כמות שהיא בלי בירור כלל, הגם שהיא ברורה מכל מקום עצלות היא".

HKB"H wished to give Yisroel "halachah berurah" — thoroughly refined laws and lessons — not requiring involved debates and discussions, "pilpul," in order to arrive at the truth of the matter. On the other hand, Moshe Rabeinu, a"h, wanted Yisroel to have the merit of the mitzvah of laboring and toiling to refine the laws and lessons; in this manner, they would not remain stagnant, but, rather, would steadily rise spiritually.

In truth, the benefit of HKB"H's intent not to give Yisroel the power of "pilpul" but only "halachah berurah" is apparent; the risk of introducing human error and incorrect interpretations of Torah law is avoided. This, in fact, is the dispute that Avraham Avinu, a"h, was having with Sarah — whose prophetic powers were greater than his. He wanted to present the guests with "soles" — the thoroughly refined halachic conclusion — without teaching them the methodology necessary to arrive at said conclusion.

Sarah, on the other hand, wished to present them with "kemach," meal, and to teach them how to refine the flour to achieve the desired final product. At first glance, her actions could be misinterpreted as representing stinginess. The possuk in *Mishlei* (31, 27) praises her and teaches us otherwise. She foresaw that it was best to teach them how to rise from one spiritual level to the next.

We see from the Chasam Sofer that the debate, as it were, between HKB"H and Moshe Rabeinu at the time of Matan Torah is the very same debate that we find here going on between Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imeinu. HKB"H wanted to give Yisroel "halachah berurah," without the element of "pilpul," in order to avoid the introduction of human error and incorrect interpretations into the realm of Torah study; whereas, Moshe Rabeinu felt that "pilpul," delving into Torah issues analytically, was essential for a Jew.

Avraham Avinu was a proponent of HKB"H's methodology — to present Yisroel with "halachah berurah," resembling "soles," finely-sifted flour. Sarah, on the other hand, shared Moshe Rabeinu's view that it was preferable to present Yisroel with "kemach," the unrefined halachah — necessitating Torah dialectics in order to achieve the true meaning of the Torah.

### **Sarah's Methodology Prevails: "She Does Not Eat the Bread of Laziness"**

In the end, Sarah Imeinu prevails; the guests are given Torah in the form of "kemach," meal, unrefined flour. For, it is apparent from the Chasam Sofer's commentary, that Moshe Rabeinu also determined that this methodology was preferable, as illustrated by his decision to share the power of "pilpul haTorah" with Yisroel — a decision to which HKB"H acquiesced. Furthermore, even Avraham Avinu, in his eulogy of Sarah, praises her for her choice of this methodology, as he proclaims: **צופיה הליכות ביתה ולחם עצלות לא — תאכל** — **She anticipates the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of laziness.**

Additionally, the Torah testifies to the fact that Avraham Avinu was himself a prophet. For, HKB"H says to Avimelech (Bereishis 20, 7): **ועתה השב אשת — האישי כי נביא הוא — But now, return the man's wife for he is a prophet.** Thus, Avraham surely foresaw that HKB"H would instruct him: **כל אשר תאמר אליך — שרה שמע בקולה** — follow whatever Sarah tells you to do. As we have learned, he was inferior to Sarah as a prophet. So, he accepted her opinion, even at this juncture, to present the guests with Torah in the form of "kemach," forcing them to utilize the power of "pilpul" to refine the lessons that they would learn.

Before proceeding, it is worth addressing one obvious question. How is it possible that HKB"H chose not to give Yisroel the gift of "pilpul," but only "halachah berurah," yet Moshe Rabeinu defied HKB"H's will and gave Yisroel the power of "pilpul" anyway? In reality, the answer to this question is quite clear. From the very onset, HKB"H wanted Moshe Rabeinu, Yisroel's trustworthy shepherd, to be the one to make this decision — whether or not to bestow this essential gift upon Yisroel; it was up to Moshe Rabeinu to determine that this was indeed HKB"H's will.

### **"Without 'Kemach' There Is No Torah"**

In the final analysis, we see that the decision was made in accordance with the opinions of Sarah Imeinu and Moshe Rabeinu. They held that it is preferable to deliver the Torah to Yisroel in the form of "kemach" — an unrefined, somewhat ambiguous halachah — to insure that Yisroel would toil in their Torah study, employing dialectics and in-depth analysis to refine the halachah into "soles."

The reason that this method of Torah study is essential is suggested by the following Gemoreh (Berochos 63b): **מנין שאין דברי תורה מתקיימין אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה, שנאמר (במדבר יט יד) זאת — התורה אדם כי ימות באהל — from where do we know that words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself over the Torah? For it is stated (Bamidbor 19, 14): This is the Torah of a man who dies in a tent.**

The Turei Zahav (O.C. 47, 1) explains the matter as follows: **שהתורה אינה מתקיימת אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה, דהיינו שעוסק בפלפול ומשא ומתן של תורה, כמו שכתב [רש"י] על [ויקרא כו ג] בחקותי תלכו, על מנת שתהיו עמלים בתורה, מה שאין כן באותם שלומדים דברי תורה מתוך עונג ואינם יגעים בה אין התורה מתקיימת אצלם.** In order for a Jew to retain the Torah that he has learned, and for it to become a part of him, he must figuratively kill himself on its behalf; he must adopt an intense methodology of learning characterized by dialectics. Rashi (Vayikro 26, 3) comments that those who do not labor in their Torah study, but rather learn in a leisurely fashion, will not retain their Torah.

How beautifully this coincides with the maxim of the Tanna Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah (Avos 3, 17): **אם אין קמח אין תורה, אם אין תורה אין קמח** — **if there is no "kemach" there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no "kemach."** He is teaching us a very important lesson. If one does not toil and extend oneself in one's Torah study, one will not acquire Torah knowledge. It is necessary to engage in Torah study in the form of "kemach," delving into each halachah in depth and clarifying even the minutest details, in order to achieve a true understanding of the subject.

If one receives the material already refined and prepared, in the form of "soles," without laboring and exerting oneself, then **"אין תורה"** — one will fail to acquire what the Torah has to offer. For, we have learned: **אין דברי תורה מתקיימין אלא במי שממית עצמו עליה** — **the words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself over it.** Conversely, we can deduce that **"אם אין תורה"** — if one realizes that he has failed to retain the Torah that he has learned, this is an indication that **"אין קמח"** — he did not expend sufficient effort in his studies; he did not work to refine the "kemach."

Based on this concept, I would like to propose an interpretation of the dialogue that took place between Avraham and the malochim (Bereishis 18, 9): **ויאמרו אליו איה שרה אשתך, ויאמר הנה באהל** — **they asked him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" He replied, "She is here in the tent."** What prompted the malochim to inquire as to Sarah's whereabouts? Our blessed sages address this issue as follows (Bava Metzia 87a): **יודעים היו מלאכי השרת ששרה אמנו באהל היתה, אלא מאי באהל כדי לחבבה על בעלה** — **the malochim knew that Sarah Imeinu was in the tent; they contrived to elicit this response, "in the tent," in order to endear her to her husband.**

Based on what we have established thus far, we can suggest that the malochim were aware of the dispute going on between Avraham and Sarah — whether to present the guests with Torah in the form of "soles" or Torah in the form of "kemach." Upon seeing that Avraham had conceded and had prepared for them

bread made of "kemach," they asked him: **איה שרה** — **"Where is Sarah, your wife?"** They were not inquiring as to her physical whereabouts, but rather wanted to understand her reasoning. **איה שרה** — why does she believe that it is preferable to serve her guests Torah in the form of "kemach" rather than serving them "soles" — halachah berurah, unambiguous, precise lessons?

Avraham's response — **"הנה באהל"** — alludes to the concept of **"אדם כי ימות באהל"**. Sarah chose to serve "kemach," to insure that Yisroel would figuratively kill themselves in order to acquire Torah. They would struggle and labor tirelessly **"in the tent of Torah,"** to refine and purify the "kemach," in order to produce clean, pure "soles." [We can embellish this idea with a small addendum: the numerical value of the two Hebrew words **קמח סל** as they appear in the Torah, i.e. **סל** is spelled without a "vav,"  $148+490=638$ , equals **אברהם יצחק יעקב**. This gematriah alludes to the fact that all three of the Patriarchs agreed to this methodology and adopted it for all of their future generations.]

### It Is Impossible to Achieve Clarity in a Torah Issue Without Stumbling Along the Way

Continuing along this path, let us rise to the occasion and reconcile the commentary of the Chasam Sofer cited above:

**"והנה רצה הקב"ה שימסור לישראל הלכה ברורה, מנופה בשלוש עשרי נפה כמות שהיא, מבלי שיצטרך לפלפל עד שיבוא אל האמת... אמנם מצד אחר נראה יותר טובה במה שרצה ה', שלא ימסר להם הפלפול רק הלכה ברורה כמות שהיא, כדי שלא יתערב בה שקר ח"ו על ידי סברת אנושית."**

HKB"H wished to give Yisroel "halachah berurah" — thoroughly refined laws and lessons — not requiring involved debates and discussions, "pilpul," in order to arrive at the truth of the matter. . . In truth, the benefit of HKB"H's intent not to give Yisroel the power of "pilpul" but only "halachah berurah" is apparent; the risk of introducing human error and incorrect interpretations of Torah law is avoided.

This raises an obvious question. In the final analysis, Moshe Rabeinu determined, along with HKB"H's blessings, to impart the power of "pilpul haTorah" to Yisroel — so that they would labor over the Torah in the form of "kemach," in order to clarify the halachah and arrive at the truth of the matter in the form of "soles." How, then, do we avoid the possibility: **שלא** "שלא" "יתערב בה שקר ח"ו על ידי סברת אנושית" — that false interpretations, chas v'shalom, will not be introduced into halachah due to errors of human logic?

To resolve this issue, let us introduce a phrase from Yisroel's sweet psalmist (Tehillim 85, 12): **אמת מארץ — truth will sprout from the earth.** What does it mean that truth will sprout from the earth? Let us suggest an interpretation. When a person plants a seed in the ground in order to grow grain or fruit, he must first plow the soil and water it; then he must clear the land of the thorns and debris; only then will the earth give forth healthy produce worthy of consumption.

Similarly, it is impossible for a mere physical being of flesh and blood to ascertain the truth of a matter without first laboring and evaluating all aspects of the subject. Along the way, he is sure to make several logical mistakes until HKB"H ultimately enlightens him to arrive at the truth. This process is reflected by the Gemoreh's (Gittin 43a) elucidation of the possuk (Yeshayah 3, 6): **והמכשלה הזאת תחת ידך - אין אדם — and this stumbling-block is under your hand**"; here the Torah is referred to as a stumbling-block, because a person does not achieve a true understanding of a Torah-related issue without first stumbling several times in its interpretation.

This, then, is the meaning of the phrase: **אמת** "אמת" **מארץ תצמוח — the truth of a matter will only be revealed by following a process similar to growing produce from the earth**; all of the thorns, which are the errors in reasoning and logic, must first be eliminated. We find, therefore, that all of the ideas and theories entertained along the way, before arriving at the truth of the matter, although many of them were invalid, are, nevertheless, an inseparable part of

the final conclusion. Without them, the truth of the matter would never have been ascertained.

It is now much clearer why Moshe Rabeinu elected to give over the gift of "pilpul" to Yisroel. He intended for them to clarify the truth of halachic matters by laboring in their Torah studies. Despite the false interpretations and logical errors that were likely to arise, he understood that the correct interpretations were unachievable without these snags along the way. As such, they were all an integral part of the ultimate truth.

### The Incorrect Elements of Torah Related Disputes Form the Neshomeh's Surrounding Light

Now, come and see, a fascinating insight regarding this subject that I found in the Deroshos Chasam Sofer (Part 2, p. 403, column 2), and must be publicized among all Torah scholars. A light is formed from Torah study that is sincere and focused on arriving at the truth of the matter; this light becomes an integral part of the neshomeh. Elements of the dialectics that do not touch upon the truth of the matter do not become one with the neshomeh. Rather, they form a surrounding light, akin to a Rabbinical cloak for the neshomeh, **"חלוקת דרבנן"**. Just as the garment surrounds a man's body externally, so, too, the erroneous elements of Torah debates form an external, surrounding light for the neshomeh.

The Chasam Sofer adds another tremendous insight concerning these erroneous elements of "pilpul haTorah": **כי היגיעה רבה בפלפולא דאורייתא מכפר עוונות ומסלק — the tremendous effort expended in "pilpul haTorah" atones for sins even more so than do korbanot.** He applies this idea to interpret the possuk (Shir HaShirim 4, 11): **וריח שלמותיך כריח — the scent of your garments resembles the scent of Levanon.** In other words, the scent arising from the "pilpul haTorah," which forms a surrounding light like a garment for the neshomeh — **כריח לבנון** — resembles the scent of the Beis HaMikdash, which is referred to as Levanon, because it cleanses Yisroel of their sins. (The word "levonon" comes from the word "lovon," meaning white; hence the allusion to the whitening and cleansing of sins.)

Thus, it is not difficult to comprehend Moshe Rabeinu's motivation in transferring the gift of "pilpul" that HKB"H gave him to Yisroel, despite the possibility of introducing erroneous reasoning and conclusions into their learning. Since the purpose of these erroneous elements was to arrive at the true meaning of the Torah-issue under debate, they ultimately formed a protective, surrounding light for the neshomeh. Furthermore, the effort exerted related to these elements atones for Yisroel's sins.

### "Is He Not the One You Went Down to Visit and Whose House You Dined at?"

We have now achieved a better understanding of the Midrash concerning Moshe's ascent to the heavens to receive the Torah: "באותה שעה בקשו מלאכי השרת לפגוע במשה, עשה בו הקב"ה קלסטירין של פניו של משה דומה לאברהם, אמר להם הקב"ה, אי אתם מתביישין — הימנו, לא זהו שירדתם אצלו ואכלתם בתוך ביתו" — at that moment, the ministering angels wished to harm Moshe; HKB"H transformed his facial appearance to resemble that of Avraham; then HKB"H said to them, "Are you not embarrassed to treat him this way? Is he not the one you went down to visit and whose house you dined at?" We raised the question as to why the malochim would want to harm Moshe, who was merely acting as HKB"H's loyal agent, sent to receive the Torah on Yisroel's behalf. Additionally, why were the malochim compelled to relinquish their claim and yet to receive the Torah on account of having eaten by Avraham?

Based on what we have learned, we can propose that the malochim longed to receive the Torah only because they intended to receive it in the form of "soles" — where everything is clear, precise and illuminated from above, without any ambiguities or disputes. Therefore, they claimed that they were worthier recipients for the Torah, since they were more capable of comprehending the Torah, on a deeper more precise level, than human beings.

Yet, had they realized that HKB"H intended to give Yisroel the Torah in the form of "kemach" — unrefined

meal, requiring Yisroel's laborious efforts to clarify all the ambiguities and search for the true meaning of the halachos — they would have also understood that they were not suitable to receive the Torah. After all, malochim have the status of "עומדים" — literally, those who always stand in the same place. They are static — incapable of rising above the level on which they were created; thus, they are incapable of comprehending issues to any greater degree than they did when they were created.

Proof of this fact is found in the prophet's statement (Zechariah 3, 7): "ונתתי לך מהלכים בין העומדים — האלה" — he refers to "mechalchim" and "omdim." The Shela hakadosh explains (Chullin): "מהלכים הן בני אדם שאינם נולדים בשלימות, רק צריך להיות מהלך משלימות לשלימות, והמלאכים נקראים עומדים, שמתחילת יצירתן — "Mehalchim" — literally, those who can move—refers to human beings, who are born imperfect and incomplete; they must move spiritually to achieve a greater level of perfection. "Omdim" refers to malochim; they cannot alter their spiritual level; they always remain as they were created. Therefore, since the Torah was given in the form of "kemach" — requiring exertion in order to clarify the details of a halachah and transform it into "soles" — malochim were unsuitable to receive the Torah. Their level of comprehension is static; they are incapable of changing and elevating to a higher level; they understand things as they were given — no more, no less.

The malochim saw that HKB"H endowed Moshe and not Yisroel with the gift of "pilpul." This led them to believe that HKB"H wanted Yisroel to receive the Torah in a refined, unambiguous form, with precise, clearly-defined halachos, so as to avoid the necessity of human reasoning which might be fraught with error. When they witnessed that Moshe generously bequeathed his gift of "pilpul" to Yisroel — forcing them to toil and exert themselves in their Torah studies — they attempted to harm him. For, they mistakenly believed that he had deviated from Hashem's will and intent, and, as a result, cost them the precious gift of Torah.

At that point, HKB"H devised to transform the appearance of Moshe's face to resemble that of

Avraham. This ploy was designed to convey the fact that Moshe Rabeinu had not, chas v'shalom, deviated in any which way from Hashem's will. In fact, he had done just the opposite; he had accurately perceived the true will of Heaven. This is the message inherent in Hashem's statement to the malochim: **”אי אתם מתביישין הימנו, לא זהו שירדתם אצלו ואכלתם בתוך ביתו”** — **“Are you not embarrassed to treat him this way? Is he not the one you went down to visit and whose house you dined at?”**

In other words, I sent you to visit Avraham, on the third day after his “bris milah,” intending that you would eat bread there in the form of “kemach,” in accordance with Sarah's point of view. This was meant to indicate that I concurred with her point of view to deliver the Torah in the form of “kemach.” Knowing this, aren't you embarrassed to request the Torah? After all, you do not possess the capacity to clarify ambiguous halachos as necessary.

### **Sarah Was Stingy with the Guests — the Angels Requesting to Receive the Torah**

Now, let us accept the noble task of deciphering the sages' enigmatic statement: **”כתיב קמח וכתיב סולת, אמר רבי יצחק, מכאן שהאשה צרה עיניה באורחים יותר מן האיש”** — both the word “kemach and the word “soles” appear in the possuk; **Rabbi Yitzchak said: From here we see that a woman is stingier than a man toward guests.** Rashi clarifies for us: **”היא אמרה”** **“קמח והוא סולת”** — in other words, Sarah instructed to give the guests “kemach,” which is coarse flour referred to as meal, whereas Avraham instructed to give them “soles,” which is fine flour that has been sifted thoroughly. It is astonishing to even consider that Sarah Imeinu treated guests stingily.

Based on what we have learned from the Chasam Sofer, however, we can propose a novel idea. Sarah's intention by giving the guests bread made out of “kemach” rather than “soles,” was to convey the following essential message: the guests must be taught Torah in the form of “kemach,” so that they will be forced to labor strenuously in their Torah study in order to refine each and every halachah until it is in

the form of pure “soles.”

We can develop this point one step further. Since Sarah Imeinu's gift of prophecy surpassed that of Avraham Avinu, she knew that HKB”H had sent the malochim to them as a preparation for Matan Torah. Thus, she concluded that the only way to thwart their claim to the Torah was if the Torah were to be given in the form of “kemach.” In this form, they are unable to process it fully, and clarify its ambiguities due to their static, limited natures. On the other hand, were the Torah to be given in the form of clear, refined “soles,” the malochim could present a valid claim that they were far better suited to understand this precise form of halachah, and, thus, they should be awarded the Torah.

This, then, is the message concealed in the sages' surprising statement: **”כתיב קמח וכתיב סולת, אמר רבי יצחק, מכאן שהאשה צרה עיניה באורחים יותר מן האיש”** — **it is written meal (kemach) and it is written fine flour (soles); Rabbi Yitzchak said: From here we see that a woman is stingier than a man toward guests.** Their intention was not to suggest, chas v'shalom, that Sarah Imeinu was stingy with regard to the mitzvah of hachnassat orchim. Rather, they were hinting at the fact that she was stingy regarding these particular guests, the malochim. For, she foresaw that they were destined to criticize and condemn the giving of the Torah to Yisroel.

Consequently, she cleverly cautioned Avraham not to present them with “soles” — a form of precise, unambiguous halachah. For, that would allow them the opportunity to claim that they were indeed better suited to receive the Torah. Instead, she instructed him that it was preferable to teach them Torah in the form of “kemach” — ambiguous and requiring clarification in order to ascertain its true meaning. This would successfully invalidate their future claim to the Torah, as reflected by HKB”H's reproach: **”אי אתם מתביישין הימנו, לא זהו שירדתם אצלו ואכלתם בתוך ביתו”** — **“Are you not embarrassed to treat him this way? Is he not the one you went down to visit and whose house you dined at?”**