

## The Tur Placed Shabbas HaGadol in Section 430 to Teach Us that in the Merit of Shabbas the 430 Years of Galus Were Completed

In honor of Shabbas HaGadol, it is fitting that we bring to your attention a fascinating oddity in the teachings of the great posek, Rabeinu Yaakov ben Asher, known as the Ba'al HaTurim. He designated an entire section in the Tur Orach Chaim, number 430, merely to inform us that the Shabbas preceding Pesach is referred to as Shabbas HaGadol—commemorating the great miracle performed on behalf of Yisrael on that historic day:

”שבת שלפני הפסח קורין אותו שבת הגדול, והטעם לפי שנעשה בו נס גדול, שפסח מצרים מקחו בעשור, כדכתיב (שמות יב-ג) בעשור לחודש הזה ויקחו להם שה לבית אבות שה לבית, ופסח שיצאו ישראל ממצרים היה ביום ה' כדאיתא בסדר עולם, ונמצא שעשרה בחודש היה שבת, ולקחו להם כל אחד שה לפסחו, וקשר אותו בכרעי מיטתו, ושאלום המצריים למה זה לכם, והשיבו לשחטו לשם פסח במצות השם עלינו, והיו שינייהם קהות על ששוחטין את אלהיהן, ולא היו רשאים לומר להם דבר, ועל שם אותו הנס קורין אותו שבת הגדול.”

The Tur attributes the appellation “**Shabbas HaGadol**” to the great miracle that occurred on the Shabbas prior to the exodus from Egypt—“*yetzias Mitzrayim*.” The exodus took place on a Thursday. On the preceding Shabbas, the tenth of Nissan, every Jew was commanded to take a lamb for his family as a Pesach offering and tie it to the foot of his bed. When the Egyptians would ask curiously about this strange ritual, they would respond that they planned to sacrifice these animals to their G-d. The Egyptians, who worshipped the lamb, were powerless to react and were forced to watch in silence.

The author of the Shulchan Aruch, the great posek Rabbi Yosef Caro, zy”a, follows suit. He also designates section 430 for this purpose; however, his comment is much briefer. He simply states: “**שבת שלפני הפסח קורין אותו שבת הגדול מפני הנס שנעשה בו**”—**the Shabbas preceding Pesach is referred to as Shabbas HaGadol, because of the miracle that was performed on it.** In his gloss, however, the Rama adds the following “*minhag*” related to Shabbas HaGadol: “**It is customary to recite the Haggadah at Minchah, from the beginning of**” *עבדים היינו*” until ... *”לכפר על כל עוונותינו”*

So, we must ask ourselves: What prompted the Ba'al HaTurim to designate an entire section to something that seemingly serves no practical purpose and has no halachic ramifications? It merely

informs us of the minhag to call this Shabbas “**Shabbas HaGadol**.” Seemingly, it would have been appropriate to include this information in the previous section, number 429, that discusses the practices customarily performed prior to Pesach: *“שואלין ודורשין: בהלכות פסח קודם הפסח שלשים יום.”* **“מראש חודש ניסן עד אחרי אסרו חג אין The laws pertinent to Pesach are studied and reviewed thirty days prior to the holiday; from Rosh Chodesh Nissan until the day after the holiday, Tachanun is not recited.** Then, it would have been appropriate to add that the Shabbas preceding Pesach is called Shabbas HaGadol.

### It Was Heavenly Ordained that the Tur Arrange the Halachos in Specific Sections

I was struck by a wonderful idea regarding this matter based on a tremendous insight found in the Siddur Beis Yaakov, authored by the great Rabbi Yaakov Emden, ztz”l, related to the blowing of the shofar. Here is what he writes:

”דבר נפלא קרה בטור אורח חיים בסימניו, שנזדמנו דיני שופר בסימן השוה עם גימטריא שלו [סימן תקפ”ו בגימטריא שופ”ד], ואף על פי שלא נתכוין המחבר לכך, מכל מקום נפל האמת באמת, להראות כי מן השמים הסכימו על ידו לפי שעשה חיבורו לשם שמים, וכל העוסקים במלאכת שמים לשמה, מראין להם סימן טוב מזה שלא עלה על דעתם.”

**An incredible thing occurred in the Tur Orach Chaim regarding his sections. The laws pertaining to the shofar appear in the section whose number possesses its numerical equivalent.** (They appear in section 686, which is the numerical equivalent of the word “שופ”.) **And even though the author did not do so on purpose, nevertheless they fell in their proper places—showing that he received divine approval for having compiled his work for the sake of Heaven (I’shem shamayim). Everyone who engages in heavenly acts for its sake are shown a favorable sign that did not occur to them.**

Following his lead, let us extol the virtues of the Ba'al HaTurim. Clearly, it was heavenly ordained that the Tur arranged for the sacred minhag to call the Shabbas prior to Pesach “**Shabbas**

**HaGadol**” to be placed in its own section, number 430. In this manner, he alludes to the fact that in the merit of Shabbas HaGadol, Yisrael completed the requisite 430 years that they were supposed to have been in galus in Mitzrayim. As the Torah states (Shemos 12, 40): “ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו במצרים שלשים שנה וארבע מאות שנה” -- **the habitation of Bnei Yisrael during which they dwelled in Mitzrayim was four hundred and thirty years.** Rashi and the other Rishonim struggle to reconcile this statement. For, in reality, Bnei Yisrael only dwelled in Mitzrayim a mere 210 years, counting from when Yaakov and his family went down to Mitzrayim.

Nevertheless, as we shall explain, HKB”H commanded that the animal for the the Korban Pesach be taken on Shabbas HaGadol, in order to complete the 430 years that Bnei Yisrael were supposed to be in galus in Mitzrayim. Thus, we can postulate that HKB”H arranged for the Tur to designate section 430 of his opus to the minhag of Shabbas HaGadol. Perhaps, he even intended to do so from the onset, seeing as he was a master of “gematriot”—allusions based on numerical equivalents. This acumen is evident in his commentary on the Torah, Ba’al HaTurim. Now, let us endeavor to demonstrate that Yisrael did indeed fulfill their 430-year quota in Mitzrayim in the merit of Shabbas HaGadol.

### Four Cups Corresponding to Four Expressions of Geulah

We will begin to shed some light on the matter by introducing the brilliant explanation of the great Rabbi Avraham Chaim Shor, ztz”l, in Toras Chaim on Maseches Chullin (92a). He endeavors to explain why HKB”H commanded that the animal for the Korban Pesach be taken four days prior to its slaughter. They were commanded to take the animal “בעשור לחודש”—**on the tenth of the month**—and to guard it until it was to be slaughtered on the fourteenth of the month, as it is written (Shemos 12, 6): “והיה לכם למשמרת עד ארבעה” — **it shall be unto you for safekeeping until the fourteenth day of this month.** We find an explanation provided by Rabbi Matya ben Charash in the Mechilta (ibid.):

“והיה לכם למשמרת. מפני מה הקדים לקיחתו של פסח לשחיטתו ד’ ימים. היה רבי מתיא בן חרש אומר (יחזקאל טז-ח) ואעבור עליך ואראך והנה עתך עת דודים, הגיע שבועה שנשבע הקב”ה לאברהם שיגאל את בניו, ולא היה בידם מצוות שיעסקו בהם כדי שיגאלו, שנאמר (שם ז) שדים נכונו ושערך צמח ואת ערום ועריה וגו’, ערום מכל מצוות, נתן להם הקב”ה שתי מצוות דם פסח ודם מילה שיתעסקו בהם כדי שיגאלו.”

The time had arrived for HKB”H to fulfill His oath to Avraham—to redeem his offspring; however, they lacked mitzvos, in whose merit they would be redeemed. They were naked in this sense. Therefore, HKB”H gave them two mitzvos to perform—the blood of the Pesach-offering and the blood of milah. By engaging in these mitzvos, they would merit redemption.

Nevertheless, this still doesn’t explain why HKB”H commanded them to take possession of the animals precisely four days prior to their actual slaughter. Hence, he provides an explanation based on the Talmud Yerushalmi’s explanation (Pesachim 68b) that Chazal instituted that we drink four cups of wine on the first night of Pesach corresponding to the four expressions of geulah mentioned in parshas Vaeira (Shemos 6, 6): “-- והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי” -- **I shall take you out, I shall rescue you, I shall redeem you, and I shall take you.** This itself deserves further explanation. Why in fact does the Torah mention four expressions of geulah when in actuality there was seemingly only one geulah from Mitzrayim?

Additionally, the Yerushalmi (ibid.) presents another explanation regarding the institution to drink four cups of wine. They correspond to the four times the word כוס (cup) is mentioned in the butler’s dream: “רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר, כנגד ארבעה כוסות של פרעה (בראשית מ-יא), וכוס פרעה בידי, ואשחט אותם אל כוס פרעה, ואתן את הכוס על כף פרעה, (שם יג) ונתת פרעה בידו, ואשחט אותם אל כוס פרעה, ואתן את הכוס על כף פרעה, (שם יג) ונתת פרעה בידו” — **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: They correspond to the four cups of Pharaoh . . .** It behooves us to explore the connection between the four mentions of the word כוס in the Sar HaMashkim’s dream and the geulah of Yisrael from Mitzrayim.

### The Difficult Slavery in Mitzrayim Lasted Only 86 Years

To explain all of these issues, the Toras Chaim relies on the passuk cited above: “ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו במצרים שלשים שנה וארבע” -- **the habitation of Bnei Yisrael during which they dwelled in Mitzrayim was four hundred and thirty years.** According to this passuk, Yisrael were supposed to be in exile in Mitzrayim 430 years. In reality, Yisrael were only in galus there for 210 years. According to the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Shemos), however, they only endured difficult labor in Mitzrayim for 86 years, beginning with the birth of Miriam. It was for this reason that her father Amram named her “מרים”, relating to the “bitter” conditions described in the passuk (Shemos 1, 14): “וימררו את חייהם -- **they embittered their lives with hard work.**”

Accordingly, they only endured bitter slavery in Mitzrayim for eighty-six years--one-fifth of the four hundred and thirty year sentence they were supposed to serve. As a consequence, they were still accountable for the other four-fifths of the sentence totaling four times eighty-six years. This explains why the ministering angel of Mitzrayim pursued Yisrael, as it is written (ibid. 14, 10): “והנה מצרים נוסע אחריהם” — **and behold! The ministering angel of Mitzrayim was coming after them.** For, he was of the opinion that Yisrael were departing Mitzrayim prior to completing the term that they were obligated to serve.

This is also the reason why the “meraglim”—after they returned from spying on the land—proclaimed (Bamidbar 13, 29): **“עמלק יושב בארץ הנגב—Amalek dwells in the land of the “negev”** (in the south)—prompting the people of Yisrael to say to one another (ibid. 14, 4): **“נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה”—let us appoint a leader and let us return to Mitzrayim.** The Toras Chaim is astounded by this sequence of events and suggests the following explanation:

“וכי שוטים היו לחזור ולהיות משועבדים לפרעה, אלא לפי שלא נשתעבדו שם כי אם חלק חמישית, היו מסופקים בו במשה שמא הוציאן מעצמו, שאילו הוציאן ברשותו של מקום, לא היו עמלק ושאר עובדי כוכבים יושבים ושומרים עליהם להורגם, וחששו שלא יגיע להן כאשר הגיע לבני אפרים שמיהרו את הקץ ונהרגו, לכך רצו לחזור למצרים ולהיות משועבדים עד תשלום ת”ל שנה.”

Were they really foolish enough to return and be enslaved by Pharaoh?! Rather, because they had only been enslaved there for one-fifth of the decree, they suspected that perhaps Moshe had taken them out of his own accord. For, had he taken them out with G-d’s permission, Amalek and the other idolaters would not have been sitting and waiting there to kill them. They feared lest what befell the members of Ephraim—who attempted to hasten the end of the exile and were killed -- would befall them. Therefore, they wanted to return to Mitzrayim and to remain enslaved until the debt of 430 years had been paid in full.

### The Four Cups Mentioned in the Sar HaMashkim’s Dream Allude to Yisrael’s Geulah

In truth, HKB”H performed a tremendous chesed on behalf of Yisrael, by taking them out of Mitzrayim before they completed the full contract of four hundred and thirty years necessary for the complete tikun. For, had they remained in Mitzrayim, they would have sunk to the fiftieth level of tumah and would never have left Mitzrayim. This is why Chazal instituted the practice of drinking four cups on the first night of Pesach; because four times the numerical value of כ”ס (cup) equals four times eighty-six — the number of years of strenuous labor in Mitzrayim that HKB”H waived for Yisrael, that they were not required to complete. To commemorate this grand miracle, we drink four glasses of wine at the Seder.

In this manner, the Toras Chaim proceeds to explain the correlation between the institution of the four cups and the four times the word כ”ס is mentioned in the dream of the Sar HaMashkim. Due to his interpretation of this dream, Yosef ultimately went on to reign over the entire land of Mitzrayim. In the process, he made preparations for Yisrael’s geulah from Mitzrayim. Therefore, HKB”H alluded to Yosef via this dream, that He was destined to redeem Yisrael before they would complete the sentence of hard labor equaling four times eighty-six years; and to commemorate this fact, on the first night of Pesach, Yisrael would drink four times כ”ס.

With this understanding, he explains the significance of the elucidation in the Gemara (Chullin, ibid.) and the lengthier explanation in the Midrash (B.R. 88, 5) regarding the dream that the Sar HaMashkim relates to Yosef (Bereishis 40, 9):

“ויספר שר המשקים והנה גפן לפני, אלו ישראל שנאמר (תהלים ב-ט) גפן ממצרים תסיע, ובגפן שלשה שריגים, משה אהרן ומרים, היא כפורחת, הפריחה גאולתן של ישראל, עלתה נצה, הנצה גאולתן של ישראל, הבשילו אשכולותיה ענבים, גפן שהפריחה מיד הנצה ענבים שהנצו מיד בשילו, וכוס פרעה בידי, מכאן קבעו חכמים ד’ כוסות של לילי פסח.”

The vine he describes represents Yisrael, as it states in Tehillim (80, 9): **“You transported a grapevine out of Mitzrayim.”** The vine contained three twigs, representing Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. The blossoming and budding represent Yisrael’s geulah. The vine immediately budded and blossomed; the clusters produced grapes which ripened immediately. **“And Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand.”** From this passuk our sages established the practice of drinking four cups on the first nights of Pesach.

Let us explain. With this dream, HKB”H alluded to Yosef that it was his sacred task to prepare for Yisrael’s speedy and early geulah from Mitzrayim — a geulah that would occur prior to the completion of the additional hard labor of four times eighty-six years. Therefore, he was shown Pharaoh’s cup (כ”ס) four times in the dream, alluding to the institution to drink four times כ”ס on the Seder night — corresponding to the four times eighty-six (the numerical value of כ”ס ) years, which HKB”H took Yisrael out of Mitzrayim prior to the designated time.

### Yosef’s Wisdom: He Instituted that Only One Fifth Would Be Given to Pharaoh

Based on this insight, the Toras Chaim enlightens us as to Yosef’s wisdom. Initially, he purchased all of the land in Mitzrayim for Pharaoh, as it is written (Bereishis 47, 20): **“ויקן יוסף את כל אדמת מצרים לפרעה כי מכרו מצרים איש שדהו כי חזק עליהם הרעב ותהי הארץ אדמת מצרים לפרעה — thus Yosef acquired all the land of Mitzrayim for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine overwhelmed them; thus the land became Pharaoh’s.** After acquiring all of the land for Pharaoh, he issued a law for all future generations, as it is written (ibid. 23):

“ויאמר יוסף אל העם, הן קניתי אתכם היום ואת אדמתכם לפרעה, הא לכם זרע וזרעתם את האדמה, והיה בתבואות ונתתם חמישית לפרעה וארבע הידות יהיה לכם לזרע השדה ולאכלכם ולאשר בבתכם ולאכול לטפכם... וישם אותה יוסף לחוק עד היום הזה על אדמת מצרים לפרעה לחומש.”

Yosef said to the people, **“Look, I have acquired you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh; here is seed for you; sow the**

land. And it will be at the ingatherings that you will give a fifth to Pharaoh; the other four parts shall be yours, as seed for the field, and for feeding yourselves and for those who are in your household, and to feed your young ones . . .” So Yosef imposed it as a law until this very day regarding the land of Mitzrayim; it was Pharaoh’s for the fifth.

It behooves us to explain why Yosef saw fit to implement a law that would be valid: “עד היום הזה”—until this very day. Seemingly, it would have sufficed for this law to be valid for the years of famine alone. Nevertheless, Yosef saw via “ruach hakodesh” that Yisrael would only endure the hardships of slavery in Mitzrayim for eighty-six years, which would leave them lacking four times eighty-six years. Therefore, he cleverly issued a law in Mitzrayim that if a person is obliged to pay back a debt to Pharaoh, he only need pay him back one-fifth of the debt; the other four-fifths he could keep for himself.

As we know, there is a set halachah (Nedarim 28a): “דינא דמלכותא — the law of the kingdom prevails. Therefore, this legislation remained in place for all times. So, even though Yisrael were obliged to sojourn in Mitzrayim for four hundred and thirty years, according to Egyptian law, they were only required to fulfill one-fifth of the obligation — namely eighty-six years. [This chiddush is also presented by the Gaon Chida in Rosh David (Shemos) and in his commentary on the Haggadah, Simchas HaRegel.]

This then is the interpretation of the Midrash Pliah presented in our sacred sefarim: “הים ראה ויגוס, מה ראה, ארונו של יוסף ראה”—the sea saw and it fled. What did it see? It saw the casket of Yosef. Upon seeing that Yisrael only endured eighty-six years of hard labor in Mitzrayim—a mere one-fifth of the 430 years they were supposed to endure—it did not want to split for them. However, when it saw Yosef’s casket, who had legislated the following: “You will give a fifth to Pharaoh; the other four parts shall be yours—it realized that according to the principle of דינא דמלכותא “דינא, they had already fulfilled their debt to Pharaoh. Therefore, it split on behalf of Yisrael.

In addition, the Toras Chaim explains why the institution specifies four cups of wine rather than any other type of beverage based on a teaching from the Arizal (Shaar HaPesukim Shemos). He states that these neshamot that descended into Mitzrayim and endured the difficult slavery, were obligated to make amends for their part in the sin of partaking from the Eitz HaDa’as, when they were part of Adam HaRishon.

Now, we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 40a): “תניא אילן שאכל ממנו אדם הראשון, רבי מאיר אומר גפן היה, שאין לך דבר שמביא יללה על האדם — it was taught in a Baraita concerning the tree from which Adam HaRishon ate: Rabbi Meir says it was a grapevine

— for there is nothing that brings wailing (misfortune) upon a man like wine does. Therefore, to commemorate the miracle of HKB”H taking Yisrael out of Mitzrayim four times eighty-six years before they completed the tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” — which involved wine — it was instituted to drink four cups (ס”כ=86) of wine. In this manner, we celebrate the fact that four times eighty-six years were waived for them by HKB”H.

### Rabeinu HaArizal: Four Hundred and Thirty Years Aimed at Rectifying Five Times Elokim

Let us now enjoy the wonders of the Torah! This grand idea presented by the Toras Chaim is also developed in the amazing sefer Lev Aryeh, authored by the great “darshan” (teacher and expounder), Rabbi Yehudah Leib Hashki (Vaeira 1), in the name of the great kabbalist, our master and teacher Rabbi Elchanan, z”l. The words of the Lev Aryeh complement and illuminate the words of the Toras Chaim. First, however, it is essential that we introduce a fundamental principle from the impressive and immaculate teachings of the Arizal.

In Shaar HaPesukim and in Likutei Torah (Bo), regarding the passuk (Shemos 12, 40): “ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו במצרים שלשים שנה” — the habitation of Bnei Yisrael during which they dwelled in Mitzrayim was four hundred and thirty years — the Arizal provides a rationale for the sum of four hundred and thirty years. During the galus in Mitzrayim, Yisrael were supposed to mitigate by means of their hard labor the five aspects of the name אלהים; for they are the source of the “dinim” — justice and severity; and five times אלהים (86) equals 430.

The Arizal adds that this is why the name אלהים is mentioned five times in three adjacent pesukim related to the bitter enslavement in Mitzrayim (Shemos 2, 23): “ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבודה. וישמע אלקים את נאקתם ויזכור אלקים את בריתו את אברהם את יצחק ואת יעקב וירא אלקים את בני ישראל וידע אלקים” — and it happened during those many days, that the king of Mitzrayim died, and the Bnei Yisrael groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to Elokim. Elokim heard their moaning, and Elokim remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov. Elokim saw the Bnei Yisrael, and Elokim knew.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to explain the Arizal’s statement that the four hundred and thirty years were necessary to mitigate the force of five times Elokim. As mentioned above, the Arizal himself explains (ibid. Shemos) that it was Yisrael’s task in Mitzrayim to achieve a tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” He explains in Shaar HaPesukim (Bereishis) that as

a consequence of that sin, Adam HaRishon triggered five types of “gevuros” — severity and restraint — that were not mollified.

Thus, the difficult 430-year enslavement of galus Mitzrayim was necessary to achieve a tikun for the five types of “gevuros” triggered by the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” represented by five times Elokim (5x86=430). I humbly submit that I found a pleasant allusion to substantiate this explanation in HKB”H’s rebuke of Adam and Chava in the aftermath of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” In HKB”H’s rebuke, the Torah mentions the name Elokim precisely five times, as we shall illustrate (Bereishis 3, 8-14):

‘וישמעו את קול ה' אלקים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום, ויתחבא האדם ואשתו מפני ה' אלקים בתוך עץ הגן, ויקרא ה' אלקים אל האדם ויאמר לו איכה... ויאמר ה' אלקים לאשה מה זאת עשית ותאמר האשה הנחש השיאני ואוכל, ויאמר ה' אלקים אל הנחש כי עשית זאת ארור אתה מכל הבהמה ומכל חית השדה.’

### The Incredible Insights of the Lev Aryeh

Let us now delight in the words of the Lev Aryeh presented in the name of the great kabbalist Rabbi Elchanan, z”l. HKB”H, Who sees all that is concealed, foresaw that Yisrael would not be able to withstand the difficult enslavement of galus Mitzrayim for the entirety of five times אלהים years; for, they would inevitably sink to the fiftieth level of tumah and never be able to leave Mitzrayim. Therefore, in His infinite mercy, He hastened the geulah. They only endured eighty-six years of difficult servitude corresponding to a single אלהים; the remaining four times אלהים were mollified for them without necessitating further servitude.

Then the Lev Aryeh adds an incredible insight. HKB”H mitigated the four remaining names of אלהים for Yisrael in the merit of their tefilot. This is alluded to by the three pesukim in which the Arizal notes that the name אלהים is mentioned five times. For, upon examination of those pesukim, we find the first passuk only mentions the name אלהים once; whereas the name אלהים appears four times in the remaining pesukim.

Thus, the single mention of אלהים in the first passuk corresponds to the actual suffering they endured in Mitzrayim during the eighty-six years of backbreaking labor. Correspondingly, it is written: “ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה.” In other words, as a result of their insufferable agony, they cried out to “האלקים” — five times Elokim. [The word “האלקים” breaks down to ה’ equaling five and אלקים.] They cried out to “האלקים”, because they knew that they were supposed to endure the difficult enslavement for four hundred and thirty years — a sum equal to five times אלקים. This prompted their outcry, because they felt that they could not endure that long a period of servitude.

As we know, HKB”H heard their cry of despair as it ascended heavenward. In this merit, he mitigated the force of the four mentions of אלקים in the remaining two pesukim: את וישמע אלקים את נאקתם ויזכור אלקים את בריתו את אברהם את יצחק ואת יעקב וירא אלקים את בני ישראל וידע אלקים — so that they would not have to accomplish this feat themselves by means of difficult labor. Rather, HKB”H, in His infinite mercy and kindness, performed this feat for them.

Later on, he presents in the name of the brilliant Rabbi Wolf of Pozna, z”l, how he applies this concept to explain why four expressions of geulah were necessary—even though it appears as if there was only one actual geulah. They convey the fact that HKB”H redeemed Yisrael four times—from the severe “din” of four times אלהים—so that they would not need to endure additional hard labor corresponding to these four names. Hence, it was established that we drink four times כו”ס on the night of Pesach, which possesses the same numerical value as four times אלהים.

### With His Kedushah Moshe Rabeinu Mitigated the Force of Four Times אלהים for Yisrael

In this manner, he interprets the cryptic dialogue that takes place between Moshe Rabeinu and HKB”H (Shemos 3, 11): “ויאמר משה אל האלקים מי אנכי כי אלך אל פרעה וכי אוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים, ויאמר כי אהיה עמו וזה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלקים עמוך וזה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את בני ישראל ממצרים — על ההר הזה” Moshe replied to Elokim, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim?” And He said, “For I shall be with you — and this is the sign for you that I have sent you: When you take the people out of Mitzrayim, you will worship Elokim on this mountain.”

Let us explain. Moshe was well aware of the fact that Yisrael were supposed to be in exile in Mitzrayim for 430 years, a number of years equal to five times the name אלהים. Upon realizing that HKB”H was sending him to take Yisrael out of Mitzrayim after a mere 86 years of taxing servitude, he expresses his astonishment to HKB”H: “ויאמר משה אל האלקים” — he specifically addresses “האלקים” (which breaks down to “ה’ אלקים”), alluding to five times אלהים; and he asks: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim?” After all, they have yet to complete the number of years of enslavement equal to four times אלהים.

In truth, however, this is precisely why HKB”H chose Moshe to redeem Yisrael from Mitzrayim. For, he possessed the necessary kedushah to mitigate the force of four times אלהים. The very name משה alludes to this fact. For, it possesses a numerical value of 345 — one more than the value of four times אלהים, which equals 344 — indicating that he possessed the power to overcome the gevuros of four times אלהים and diminish their force.

This is precisely what HKB”H was telling Moshe with the response: **“And He said, ‘For I shall be with you’”** — specifically **“with you”** as alluded to by your name **מש”ה**; and the proof confirming your worthiness for this task: **“זזה לך האות”** — for your name exceeds four times **אלהי”ם** by one. [Translator’s note: The word **האות** rather than meaning “the sign” can be interpreted as “the letter” — implying that Moshe’s name possesses one additional letter or for our purposes possesses a value of one greater than four times **אלהי”ם**.] This alludes to the fact that you have the power to mitigate their force with your kedushah. This is your proof **“that I have sent you.”**

Furthermore: **“When you take the people out of Mitzrayim, you will worship Elokim on this mountain.”** Rashi explains that Yisrael were destined to receive the Torah on Har Sinai. By toiling and laboring in the study of Torah, they would successfully mitigate the force of “din” and severity of all five names of **אלהי”ם**. Once again, this is alluded to by HKB”H’s statement: **“תעבדון את האלקים”** – **you will worship** **“האלקים”** -- employing the term **“האלקים”**, which breaks down to **ה’ אלקים** — five times **אלהי”ם**. This is what they would accomplish **“on this mountain.”** These are his incredible insights.

Let us add one more amazing allusion from the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, hy”d, in Likutei Shoshanim. He comments on the passuk (Shemos 19, 2): **“ויסעו מרפידים ויבואו מדבר סיני — they journeyed from Rephidim and they arrived at Midbar Sinai.** The numerical value of the name **רפידי”ם** equals 344 — the same as four times **אלהי”ם**. For, when they arrived from Rephidim, they had not yet achieved the tikun for the four times **אלהי”ם**, which they had failed to rectify in Mitzrayim. Subsequently, they arrived in Midbar Sinai to receive the Torah and accomplish the necessary tikun of these four names. This tikun is alluded to by the words of the passuk related to Matan Torah (Shemos 19, 3): **“וימשה ה’ אלקים — Moshe ascended to complete the tikun of ה’ אלקים — all five aspects of Elokim. This completes his sacred remarks.**

## The Four Days Prior to the Slaughter of the Pesach Correspond to Four Times 86 Years

We can now revisit the words of the Toras Chaim. HKB”H commanded Bnei Yisrael to take the animal for the Korban Pesach on the tenth of Nissan, four days before its actual slaughter, in order to compensate for the four periods of difficult servitude in Mitzrayim that they were lacking. By taking the lamb—an Egyptian god—for a Korban Pesach, Yisrael placed their lives in danger. Keeping those lambs in their possession for four days prior to their slaughter constituted an act of “mesiras nefesh”—self-sacrifice. For, they lived in fear, lest the Egyptians kill them for wanting to sacrifice their gods. In the merit

of these four days of “mesiras nefesh,” it was considered as if they had completed the remaining four times 86 years of galus Mitzrayim.

Then he goes on to explain why our blessed sages specifically chose Shabbas HaGadol—rather than one of the other of the four days—to commemorate the miracle. For, it was the first of the four days—the day on which Yisrael took possession of the lambs. On that day, they revealed to the Egyptians their intent to slaughter the animals for the sake of Hashem. Thus, it turns out that the greatest degree of “mesiras nefesh” was on that Shabbas. For, on the remaining three days, the Egyptians had gotten used to the new and inevitable reality. Therefore, they established Shabbas HaGadol as the day to commemorate the quintessence of the miracle.

Let us add a delightful embellishment. Rashi comments (Shemos 12, 11): **“The korban is called Pesach to signify the skipping and passing over (“pesichah”); for HKB”H skipped over the houses of Yisrael located amongst the houses of the Egyptians. He jumped from Egyptian to Egyptian, while the Yisrael in the middle was spared.** Therefore, on each one of these four days of “mesiras nefesh,” HKB”H passed over—in the merit of the Pesach (which connotes passing over)—one of the four periods of servitude that they had yet to complete in galus Mitzrayim.

We can now begin to appreciate why it was heavenly ordained that the Tur set aside an entire section, number 430, dedicated to the minhag of calling the Shabbas prior to Pesach **“Shabbas HaGadol.”** This designation alludes to the fact that in the merit of Shabbas HaGadol, Yisrael completed the 430 years remaining on their contract of servitude in galus Mitzrayim. In the merit of fulfilling their obligation, Hashem’s legions exited the land of Mitzrayim, from slavery to freedom and from servitude to redemption. Subsequently, they merited receiving the Torah on Har Sinai.

Let us conclude this essay with a pleasant tidbit. Based on what we have discussed, we can understand why they called the Shabbas prior to Pesach: **“Shabbas HaGadol”**—commemorating the miracle related to the taking of the lamb for the Korban Pesach. The first letters of the designation **“שבת הגדול”** spell **“שה”**, meaning **“lamb.”** The final letters are **ת”ל**, which equal **430**. Thus, we have an allusion to the fact that in the merit of the “mesiras nefesh” of taking the **“lamb”** for a Korban Pesach on the Shabbas prior to Pesach, the entire **430** years that they were still supposed to stay in Mitzrayim were completed. For this reason, it was heavenly ordained that the Tur would place the minhag of calling the Shabbas preceding Pesach **“Shabbas HaGadol”** in section **430**. As he explains, the reason for this designation is related to the taking of the **“שה”** for a Korban Pesach—a fact alluded to by the first and final letters of the name **“שבת הגדול”**.

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