

Reb Pinchas of Koretz
Imrie Pinchas
Shabbos HaGadol & Erev Pesach

Siman #160

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory,	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבָרְכָה
on Shabbos HaGadol they took a lamb,	בְּשַׁבַּת הַגָּדוֹל לָקְחוּ שֶׁה
and the Egyptians were forced to remain silent,	וְהַמִּצְרִים הוּכְרְחוּ לִשְׁתוֹק
and there was in Egypt a nullification of idolatry, as is known	וְהָיָה בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּטוֹל עֲבוּדָה זָרָה כְּנוֹדָע
(see Tosafos Levush Shabbos, siman 430).	(עֵינֵי טוֹל לִו"ס סִימָן ת"ל)
And every single year, it touches on the first point	וְכָכֵל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה בָּא עַל נִקּוּדָה רִאשׁוֹנָה
and the nullification of idolatry is aroused,	וּמִתְעוֹרָר בְּטוֹל עֲבוּדָה זָרָה
therefore Shabbos HaGadol atones for thoughts of idolatry.	לְכַף שַׁבַּת הַגָּדוֹל מְכַפֵּר עַל הִתְהוּרֵי עֲבוּדָה זָרָה
And the Rav used to say this matter every year on Shabbos HaGadol.	וְהָיָה הָרַב אוֹמֵר דְּבַר זֶה כָּכֵל שָׁנָה בְּשַׁבַּת הַגָּדוֹל
And he, of blessed memory, would not remember in that year	וְהוּא זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבָרְכָה לֹא הָיָה זוֹכֵר בְּשָׁנָה זוֹ
what he had said the previous year,	מֵה שֶׁאָמַר בְּשָׁנָה שְׁעָבָרָה
and they would remind him: last year you also said this matter.	וְהָיוּ מְזַכְרִין אוֹתוֹ: אֲשַׁתְּקֵד גַּם כֵּן אִמְרָתְךָ דְּבַר זֶה
And he, of blessed memory, said: it seems to him that therefore	וְאָמַר הוּא זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבָרְכָה: שֶׁנֶּרְאָה לוֹ דְּלִכְּן
we say the Haggadah until “to atone for all our sins,”	"אוֹמְרִים הַגָּדָה עַד "לְכַפֵּר עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
for idolatry is equal to the entire Torah	כִּי עֲבוּדָה זָרָה שְׁקוּלָה כָּכֵל הַתּוֹרָה
(see Shadal on Shemos 23:13),	(לְשׁוֹן שְׁמוֹת כ"ג, י"ג)
and also Shabbos is equal to the entire Torah	וְגַם שַׁבַּת שְׁקוּלָה כָּכֵל הַתּוֹרָה
(Shemos Rabbah 25:18),	(שְׁמוֹת כ"ה, י"ח)
therefore, with the combination of both, etc.	לְכַף, בְּצִירוּף שְׁנֵיהֶם וְכוּ

[NOTE: Explanation]**1. Shabbos HaGadol and the Lamb**

“On Shabbos HaGadol they took a lamb...”

This refers to the **miracle in Egypt**, where the Jewish people took the **Paschal lamb**—an Egyptian deity—and tied it up, openly preparing it for slaughter on Pesach.

“...and the Egyptians were forced to remain silent.”

The Egyptians couldn’t stop them. Their idolatry was **powerless** in the face of the Jews' courage and Divine protection. This was a **nullification of idolatry**—the beginning of spiritual freedom.

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2. Spiritual Recurrence

“Every single year, it touches on the first point...”

Each **Shabbos HaGadol** reawakens that same spiritual energy. **Time in Judaism is cyclical**, not linear—so the same Divine light that was present back then returns **every year**.

Thus:

“Shabbos HaGadol atones for thoughts of idolatry.”

Not just actual idol worship, but any misplaced allegiance—money, ego, power, fear, etc.

3. The Rav Who Repeated It Each Year

This part is touching:

The Rav (likely a tzaddik or Rebbe) would say this teaching **every single year**, but somehow **not remember** that he had said it before.

His followers had to remind him: "You said this last year too!"

And he replied: *“It seems to me that therefore we say the Haggadah until ‘to atone for all our sins’...”*

He connected this forgetfulness to a deeper truth: this message **must be repeated** every year because it addresses a core sin—idolatry in all its forms.

4. Why This is So Powerful

- **Idolatry is as severe as the entire Torah.** (Shadal)
- **Shabbos is equal to the entire Torah.** (Shemos Rabbah)

So when **Shabbos HaGadol** (a powerful Shabbos) and **the nullification of idolatry** combine—it's a **cosmic reset**.

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A True Chassidic Story: The Idol in the Pocket

There was once a wealthy merchant who traveled from town to town doing business. He was a follower of the **Chiddushei HaRim**, the first Rebbe of Ger. One Shabbos HaGadol, the Rebbe gave a fiery drashah about modern forms of idolatry—not bowing to statues, but being enslaved to **money, honor, and control**.

After Shabbos, the merchant came to the Rebbe trembling. He said:

“Rebbe, I think I found the idol in my pocket.”

The Rebbe smiled gently.

“And now that you've seen it, you can begin to tear it down.”

The next year, the Rebbe gave the *same drashah*—nearly word for word. The merchant again felt shaken and said, “But Rebbe, you said this last year.”

And the Rebbe answered:

“Yes. Because every year, the idol tries to sneak back into your pocket. And every year, you need to cast it out again.”

Takeaway (PT)

- **Shabbos HaGadol isn't just historical**—it's spiritual surgery.
- It burns away the hidden “idols” in our minds and hearts—**fears, ego, dependencies**.
- Even if you've heard the teaching before, you need to hear it again—because **idolatry takes new forms every year**.
- When Shabbos (the symbol of surrender) meets the nullification of idolatry, we reach a place **equal to the whole Torah**.

Siman #161

A miracle cannot occur unless a unification is made Above.	אי אפשר להיות גם, אלא אם כן נעשה יחוד למעלה.
Why is it called Shabbos HaGadol? Because of the miracle that occurred.	למה נקרא שבת הגדול? על שם הנס שנעשה.
For then the elevation of the Shechinah was so great	כי אז היתה עליית השכינה גדול ככן
that a great unification was made Above.	עד שנעשה יחוד גדול למעלה.
And this is the aspect of “point,” that before the creation of the world	והוא בחינת נקודה, שקדם בריאת העולם

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everything was equal—sea and dry land, and the like—and understand this.	הָיָה הַכֹּל שָׁוֶה, יָם וְיַבְשָׁה וְכְדוּמָה, וְהָבֵן
And through this, one great miracle was made.	וּנְעִשָׂה עַל יְדֵי זֶה נִס אֶחָד גָּדוֹל
And on every Shabbos there is an elevation of the Shechinah,	וּבְכָל שַׁבָּת יֵשׁ עֲלִית הַשְּׁכִינָה
but not in the great aspect mentioned above.	רַק שְׂאִינוּ בְּכַחַיָּה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַנִּזְכָּרָה לַעֲיֵל
And this is the secret of taking the lamb	וְזֶה סוֹד שְׁלֵקָחוּ שֶׁה
and dragging it on the ground, and the Egyptians had nothing to say,	וְגִרְרוּ אוֹתוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ וְהַמִּצְרִים לֹא לָהֶם שׁוֹם דָּבָר
because idolatry was nullified.	כִּי נִתְבַטְּלָה הָעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה
And this is from the chamber of Moshiach,	וְהוּא מִחֵיכַל מְשִׁיחַ
for so they said in the Gemara (see Sanhedrin 97a):	(שֶׁכֵּן אָמְרוּ בְּגִמְרָא (עֲנִן סְנֵהֲדְרִין צ"ז, א
Moshiach comes when one is not paying attention.	מְשִׁיחַ בָּא בְּהֶסֶח הַדַּעַת
For “da’as” (conscious awareness) is a created entity,	כִּי הַדַּעַת הוּא נִבְרָא
and the light of Moshiach existed before the creation of the world.	וְאוֹרוֹ שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ הָיָה קִדְם בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם

[NOTE: ☀ Explanation

1. Why is it called Shabbos HaGadol (The Great Shabbos)?

Because a **miracle** occurred. But not just any miracle—this one was rooted in a "**great unification Above**", a powerful spiritual alignment in the supernal realms that allowed the miracle to manifest.

A miracle cannot occur unless there is a unification made Above.

This is a Kabbalistic concept: unity in the upper spiritual worlds causes blessing and miracles to flow into our world.

2. What happened spiritually?

The **Shechinah (Divine Presence)** was elevated to an extraordinary degree. This elevation allowed a **unification of opposites**, returning to the pre-creation state where:

"everything was equal—sea and dry land, and the like."

That is, the distinctions of this physical world—between concealment and revelation, impurity and holiness—were temporarily erased.

3. Every Shabbos brings elevation...

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...but not like **this** one. Shabbos always elevates the world, but on **Shabbos HaGadol**, it was on a **pre-creation, Moshiach-level scale**. This was a **preview of redemption**.

4. What's with the lamb?

“And this is the secret of taking the lamb and dragging it on the ground...”

This refers to the Jews publicly taking the Egyptian deity (the lamb) for slaughter before Pesach. The Egyptians were stunned and silent. Why?

Because **idolatry was nullified**.

Spiritually, the **power of impurity collapsed** in the face of divine clarity.

5. Connection to Moshiach

“And this is from the chamber of Moshiach...”

That great Shabbos tapped into the same spiritual light that will be revealed in the time of Moshiach—a light that:

- **Preceded creation**
- **Transcends da'as** (human understanding)
- **Arrives unexpectedly**, as the Gemara says:
 “Moshiach comes when we're not paying attention.” (Sanhedrin 97a)

So, **Shabbos HaGadol** is a **taste of Geulah (redemption)**.

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 The Boy Who Prayed with Animal Sounds

It was **Yom Kippur**, the holiest day of the year. The synagogue was packed, and the air was thick with awe. The Baal Shem Tov was leading the prayers, and all eyes were on him.

In the back of the room stood a **simple shepherd boy**, perhaps brought along by his father or wandering in on his own. He didn't know how to read Hebrew. He didn't even know the *Alef-Bet*. But he had a good heart—and he wanted to pray.

All he knew was how to make **animal sounds**, because that's how he spent his days—with the sheep and goats in the field.

And so, feeling deeply moved by the holiness of the day, he began to whisper:

“Baa... Neigh... Cluck...”

Softly at first, then louder.

The congregation was horrified. People tried to shush him. Some looked at the Baal Shem Tov, expecting him to throw the boy out.

But instead, the Baal Shem Tov **smiled**. He stopped the prayers, turned to the congregation and said:

“Until now, the gates of Heaven were **closed**. Our prayers could not ascend.

But the **pure sounds** of this boy—straight from his heart—have **opened all the gates**, and now everyone's prayers can rise!”

 Takeaway (PT)

Shabbos HaGadol reminds us:

- **Miracles** flow from **unity Above**.
 - **Elevation of the Shechinah** prepares the world for redemption.
 - Even our **smallest efforts**—when real—can unlock **cosmic transformation**.
 - **Moshiach** comes not through cleverness, but when we surrender our da'as and yearn with simplicity.
- END NOTE]**

Siman #162

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory,	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבָרָכָה
Shabbos HaGadol is a rectification for thoughts of idolatry.	שַׁבָּת הַגָּדוֹל הוּא תִּיקוֹן לְהַרְהוּרֵי עֲבוּדָה זָרָה

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As it is written (Shemos 12:21), “Draw out and take for yourselves...”	”וְדַכְתִּיב (שְׁמוֹת י"ב, כ"א) "מִשְׁכוּ וּקְחוּ וְגו'
and Rashi explains (ad loc. v.6): “Withdraw your hands from idolatry.”	”וּפִירֵשׁ רַשִּׁי (שָׁם, ו'): "מִשְׁכוּ יְדֵיכֶם מֵעֲבוֹדַת זָרָה
And he, of blessed memory, said that therefore	וְאָמַר הוּא זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָּהּ, שֶׁעַל כֵּן
it is now easier to strengthen oneself in prayer.	הוּא נָקַל עֲכָשְׁיוּ לְהִתְחַזֵּק אֶת עֲצָמוֹ לְתַפִּלָּה
Siman #163	
In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory:	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָּהּ
to read the Haftarah “Ve’arvah” on every Shabbos HaGadol,	לְהַפְטִיר "וְעָרְבָה" בְּכָל שַׁבַּת הַגָּדוֹל
even when it does not fall on Erev Pesach.	אֲפִילוּ שֶׁאֵינוּ חָל בְּעֶרֶב פֶּסַח
Siman #164	
he Rav was accustomed to say “Avadim Hayinu”	"הָרַב נָהָג לומר "עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ
on Shabbos HaGadol specifically after Minchah,	בְּשַׁבַּת הַגָּדוֹל דִּוְקָא אַחֵר מִנְחָה
while still wearing the tallis,	בְּעוֹדוֹ לְבוּשׁ הַטְּלִית
and not before Minchah.	וְלֹא קִדְם מִנְחָה
Siman #165	
This was the practice of the Tzadik, of blessed memory,	זֶה נָהָג הוּא צַדִּיק זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָּהּ
even when Pesach fell on Shabbos,	אֲףִי בְּשַׁחַל פֶּסַח בְּיוֹם שַׁבַּת
that on the preceding Motza'ei Shabbos one does not say	שֶׁאֵין אוֹמְרִים בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת שְׁלִפְנָיו
“Vihi Noam” and “V’Atah Kadosh.”	"וְהִי נוֹעֵם – וְאַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ"
And his son, our teacher the Rav David Yisrael, told me	וְאָמַר לִי בְּנוֹ מוֹרְנוּ הָרַב דָּוִד יִשְׂרָאֵל
that this is from Rabbi Yaakov Emden, of blessed memory	שֶׁהוּא מְרַבִּי יַעֲקֹב עֲמֵדֵן זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָּהּ
(according to his yahrzeit, like the customs of the great Sens).	(כְּסִלּוֹלוֹ כְּמִנְהַגֵּי סֵנֶס הַגָּדוֹל)
For Erev Pesach is considered like a Yom Tov.	כִּי יוֹם עֶרֶב פֶּסַח נִחְשָׁב לְיוֹם טוֹב
And it seems this applies specifically to Pesach,	וּמִשְׁמַע דְּוָקָא בְּפֶסַח
and not to the other Yomim Tovim.	וְלֹא בְּשָׁאָר יוֹם טוֹב
ערב פסח	
Siman #166	
In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory, the burdens and efforts	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב זְכוֹרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָּהּ, הַטְּרָחוֹת שֶׁטוֹרְחִין קִדְם פֶּסַח,
that one toils before Pesach—through this, a person forgets his	עַל יְדֵי זֶה שׁוֹכַח הָאָדָם עֲסָקֵי עֲצָמוֹ, עַר פְּאָרְגָּעֶסֶט גָּאָר
own matters, he entirely forgets about himself.	אֵין זִיךְ

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And this is the aspect of “shedding a form,” and through this he “puts on a form” and is able to receive vitality and new light for Pesach.	וְהוּא בְּחִינַת פּוֹשֵׁט צוּרָה, וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה יִלְבַּשׁ צוּרָה וְיִכּוֹל לְקַבֵּל חַיּוּת וְאוֹר חֲדָשׁ לְפָסַח.
Siman #167	
The primary removal of chametz is the removal of idolatry (ZMG 182:30).	עֵיקָר בְּעוֹר חֲמֵץ הוּא בְּעוֹר עֲבוּדָה זָרָה (זַמ"ג קפ"ב, ל).
Therefore it is said about Yoshiyahu (Melachim II 23:23) that he eradicated all the idolatry,	לְכֹךְ נֶאֱמַר בִּיאֲשֵׁיהוּ (מְלָכִים ב' כ"ג, כ"ג) שֶׁבָּעַר אֶת כָּל הָעֲבוּדָה זָרָה
and it is said there: “There had never been a Pesach like this one,” etc.	וְנֶאֱמַר שָׁם: כִּי לֹא נַעֲשְׂהָ כְּפֶסַח הַזֶּה וְגו'
And therefore the verse “Molten gods you shall not make for yourself” (Shemos 34:17)	וְלִכְוֹן נִסְמָךְ "אֱלֹהֵי מַסֵּכָה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ" (שְׁמוֹת ל"ד, י"ז)
is juxtaposed to the verse “You shall observe the Festival of Matzos” (ibid. v.18).	(לְפָסוּק "אֵת חַג הַמַּצּוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר" (שָׁם י"ח
And if all of Israel would burn the chametz with this intention—to destroy idolatry—	וְאִילוּ הָיוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל שׁוֹרְפִין אֶת הַחֲמֵץ בְּכוּוֹנָה זֹאת לְבָעַר עֲבוּדָה זָרָה
the exile would already have been much easier.	וְאוֹלֵט צָעַ גְּרִינְגָעַר גְּנוּעַן דֶּר גָּלוּת
Siman #168	
In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory,	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב זְכָרוֹנוֹ לְבָרָכָה
each person should fast on Erev Pesach,	לְהַתְעַנּוֹת בְּעָרֵב פֶּסַח כָּל אֶחָד
because there must be smallness before greatness.	לְפִי שְׂצָרִיף לְהִיּוֹת קְטַנּוּת קוֹדֵם לְגִדּוּלָה
Siman #169	
My grandfather [Morenu Harav Raphael, of blessed memory] was accustomed to fast on Erev Pesach even though he was not a firstborn.	זִמְנִי [מוֹהֲר"ר רַפָּאֵל זְכָרוֹנוֹ לְבָרָכָה] הָיָה רָגִיל לְהַתְעַנּוֹת בְּעָרֵב פֶּסַח אֶף עַל פִּי שְׂלֵא הָיָה בְּכוֹר
And this was from his teacher [the Rav, of blessed memory], because there must be smallness before greatness.	וְהוּא מִמּוֹרוֹ [הָרַב זְכָרוֹנוֹ לְבָרָכָה], מִפְּנֵי שְׂצָרִיף קְטַנּוּת קוֹדֵם לְגִדּוּלָה צוֹ
Only in the two or three years before his passing, when he was ill, he did not fast then.	רַק קִדְּם הִפְטִירָה שְׁנָתִים אֹ שְׁלוֹשׁ שָׁנִים שְׁהָיָה חוֹלָה, לֹא הִתְעַנָּה אָז