

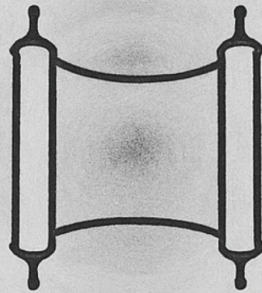
בס"ד

Alter Rebbe

Torah Ohr

Pesach

לְהַבִּין מִפְּנֵי מָה יוֹם-טוֹב דְּפֶסַח
הוּא בַּיּוֹם שֶׁנַּעֲשָׂה הַנֶּס



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Alter Rebbe

Parsha Tzav/ Pesach

להבין מפני מה יום-טוב דפסח הוא ביום שנעשה הנס

Introduction

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812), known as the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad Chassidus, reveals in his maamarim the inner structure of Divine revelation and its manifestation within creation. In this maamar, he addresses a fundamental question: why the miracle of Pesach is celebrated on the very day it occurred, unlike Purim and Chanukah, and uses this to uncover the deeper distinction between two modes of Divine light, Memalei Kol Almin and Sovev Kol Almin.

To understand why the Yom Tov of Pesach is on the very day the miracle occurred, whereas [the holidays of] Chanukah and Purim are on the day of rest [that followed the miracle]

(see also on Parshas Vayeishev, the maamar beginning Ko Amar... Venosati Lecha Mahalachim, etc.).

להבין מפני מה יום-טוב דפסח הוא ביום שנעשה הנס, משאין כן בחנוכה ופורים – שהן ביום המנוחה. וענין בפרשת וישב, סדרא דהתקלה "כה אמר כו' ונתתי לה מהלכים כו

And it will be understood by first explaining the concepts of memalei (filling) and sovev (encompassing).

וויבן בהקדים ענין ממלא וסובב

Memalei means the light and vitality that descends from level to level: from the world of souls, then to angels, until it is drawn into this physical world. For it is known that this world receives from the seventy ministering angels, and the angels receive from higher angels, "one above another."

ממלא – פירוש אור וחיית הנמשך ממדרגה למדרגה: עולם הנשמות ואחר-כך מלאכים, עד שנמשך בעולם הזה הנשמי. שהרי נודע שהעולם הזה מקבל מע"ע שרים, והשרים מקבלים מן (המלאכים – גבה מעל גבה שמר" (קהלת ה', ז

But sovev is the level of light and vitality that is not drawn down by gradation from one level to the next, but [is drawn] to all of them equally.

אבל סובב – הוא בחינת האור והחיית שאינו נמשך על-ידי הדרגה מזה לזה – אלא לכולם בשובה

An analogy: in the soul, too, there are two kinds of life-force transmission: (1) one that descends step-by-step from intellect to emotions, and from emotions to thought, and from thought to speech, etc.;

וכעין זה בנפש גם כן – יש שני מיני השפעות חיות: אחד – הנמשך ממדרגה למדרגה, משקל למדות, וממדות למחשבה, וממחשבה לדבור כו

(2) The second: a light that radiates upon them all equally, not through a drawn-out process from one to another.

הבית – המאיר על כלם בשובה – שלא על-ידי המושכה בהדרגה מזה לזה

As we observe, when a person desires in his mind to move his leg, the leg acts immediately instantly without any delay as though awaiting transmission of the signal from the brain through a cascading chain of steps.

שהרי אנו רואים – כשעולה ברצונו שבמוחו לפעול איזה דבר ברגלו, אז הרגל פועלת תיכף – כרגע ממש – בלי שיהא שם המתנה והעברה על-ידי השתלשלות כסדר המדרגות

[This is] because the brain's illumination also reaches there not through gradation, but directly.

הינו, מפני שהארת המוח מאירה שם גם כן – שלא על-ידי הדרגה זו כו

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Likewise, above [in the Divine realms] there are two types of influence: memalei kol almin which is a revealed illumination, drawn by order of gradation, and about this it is written: "The whole earth is filled with His glory" and His glory refers to radiance, etc.

But sovev is that which does not reveal itself fully only in an external manner and is not drawn by gradation. In its presence, all are equal: souls and angels, spiritual and physical beings, even the kelipos (husks of impurity), as it says: "I fill the heavens and the earth" I, the essence of G-dliness, fills both heavens and earth equally (see also maamar Vayikach Korach).

And behold, regarding Pesach it is written: "And Hashem passed over the entrance" (Pesach = Passover). Meaning, the miracle occurred through a revelation of light in a form of skipping not by descent from one level to another, but from above, in the manner of sovev kol almin, as it is written: "And I shall pass through I, not an angel," etc.

And the reason that it had to be this way, and not like with the camp of Sancheriv, where it is said: "And the angel of Hashem went out and struck in the camp of Ashur" (Melachim II 19:35), and similarly with Sisra etc. because there it was merely an emissary to a prepared matter: "Go and strike them."

But in Egypt, the plague of the firstborn "every firstborn" requires discernment to know who is the firstborn of the father, as they were steeped in promiscuity. And even the firstborn of the mother was difficult to identify, for some of them were old and it was not within the angel's power to distinguish.

And what is written in the sefarim that the reason is because the angel cannot descend so much into a place of impurity that is forced (i.e., not compelling), for the camp of Ashur disproves this.

However it may be the reason and the intention are one: that at that time there was a revelation from the level of "Sovev Kol Almin" (Surrounding All Worlds), and that is "Ani" (I) from the

וכן יש למעלה שני מיני השפעות: "ממלא כל עלמין" – היא ההארה שבבחינת גילוי, ונמשכת פסדר המדרגות. ועל-זוה פתוב: "מלא כל הארץ". "כבודו" (ישעיה ו', ג) – ו"כבודו" הנו זיו כו

אכל סובב – הוא שאינו מתגלה ממש – רק בבחינת חיצונית, ואינו נמשך על-ידי הדרגה. ובו – כלם שוין קמיה: נשמות ומלאכים, רוהניות וגשמיים, ואפילו קליפות. כמו שכתוב: "את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא" – "אני" מהוונתו יתברך ממלא שמים וארץ בשנה ממש. (ועין ("במאמר" ויקח קרח

והנה בפסח פתוב: "ופסח ה' על הפתח" – פירוש: שהיה הנס על-ידי גילוי הארה – בבחינת דילוג – שלא על-ידי השתלשלות ממדרגה למדרגה. והינו בחינת "סובב כל עלמין", כמו שכתוב: "ועברתי בארץ מצרים – אני, ולא מלאך" כו'. (שמות י"ב, י"ב)

והטעם שהיה צריך להיות פן ולא כמו במחנה סנחריב שצאמר (מלכים ב' י"ט ל"ה) "וצא מלאך ה' ויך במחנה אשור", וכן בסיסרא כו'. פי שם היתה רק שליחות בלבד לדבר מוכן – צא ופגע בהם

משאין פן במצרים – מפת בכורות – "כל בכור" – וצריך הבחנה לדעת מי הוא הבכור לאב שהיו שטופים בזמה, ואפלו בכור לאם גם פן קשה לדעת שהרי מהם שהיו זקנים – ואין זה בכח המלאך להבחין

ומה שכתוב בפסחים טעם משום שהמלאך אינו יכול לירד כף במקום טומאה – דחוק – שהרי מחנה אשור תוכיח

אבל איך שהיה – הטעם והפונה הכל אחד: שאז היה גילוי מבחינת סובב כל עלמין, וזהו "אני" מהוה יתברך – ולא מבחינת ממלא כל עלמין

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Essence of Hashem, and not from the level of "Memale Kol Almin" (Filling All Worlds).

And with this we can understand the above question: for the Yom Tov (Festival) is a matter of drawing down supernal holiness, and this revelation and indwelling cannot be until the external (forces) that prevent it are first removed.

ועם כל זה יובן הקשיא הנ"ל. כי הנה היום טוב – הוא ענין השפעת קדושה עליונה, ואי אפשר להיות גילוי זה והשפעה זו עד שיעבירו מתחלה החיצונים "המונעים – כמו שכתוב: "ובערת הרע כו".

Therefore, regarding Purim, first they killed their enemies may the name of the wicked rot thousands of them who were Amalekites, which is a powerful klipah (shell).

ולכן גבי פורים – מתחלה הרגו בשונאייהם עליהם השלום, אלפים שהיו עמלקים, שהיא קליפה עצומה, כדכתיב: "ראשית גוים עמלק ואחריתו עדי אובד", וכתיב: "מחה תמחה כו", ועשרת בני המן

And afterwards they made a day of feasting and joy and sending portions, i.e., the revelation of holiness.

ואחר כך עשו יום משתה ושמחה ומשלוח מנות כו – התגלות הקדושה

As a parable: when the king wishes to dwell in a new house, first it must be cleaned from all filth and dirt.

ועד דרף מלך: המלך, כשרוצה להיות לו דירה בבית חדש – אזי מתחילה צריך לנקותה מכל טיגוף וילכלוף כו

Therefore, it was over two days: one day for the removal (of evil), and then the next day for the revelation.

ולכן הנה זה בשני ימים – יום אחד: ההעברה, ואחר כך למחרתו הגילוי

And this is because the revelation was from the level of "Memale Kol Almin" which comes through a process of gradation; first removal, etc. and it is not possible for both (removal and revelation) to be at once.

והינו – לפי שהנה הגילוי מבחינת ממלא כל עלמין, שהוא על-ידי הדרגה – תחלה מעביר כו, ואי אפשר להיות שניהם בבת אחת

But the miracle of Pesach, which occurred through a revelation of the aspect of Sovev Kol Almin, which is not in a manner of division and illuminates all equally therefore, both of these could occur in one subject: plague to Egypt the plague of the firstborn and revelation of holiness to Israel, to the point that they said Hallel, etc.

אבל גם דפסח שהנה על-ידי גילוי בחינת סובב כל עלמין שאינו בבחינת התחלקות ומאיר לכולם כאחד – על-כן יכול להיות שני דברים אלו בנושא אחד: גוף למצרים מפת בכורות והתגלות הקדושה 'לישראל עד שאמרו הלל כו

And what is written in the sefarim that this was before midnight and this after midnight is only to say that it all occurred at one time.

ומה שכתוב בספרים שזה הנה קודם חצות וזה לאחר חצות – אינו אלא שהכל הנה בזמן אחד

(And see similarly regarding "Zachor" and "Shamor" said in one utterance, in the maamar beginning "Zachor es Yom HaShabbos," see there.)

ועין פהאי גוונא בענין "זכור" ו"שמור" בדבור) אחד נאמרו סדרא דהתחלה "זכור את יום השבת" (יעו"ש)

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But to understand: since Sovev is equal and makes equal, as said above, and before Him darkness is as light, and “if you are righteous, what do you give Him” then how from there itself can come plague to Egypt, etc.?

אבל להבין: מאחר שהסובב הוא השווה ומשווה כו' כפ"ל ולפניו פחשוכה כאורה ואם צדקת כו' – ואם "פן איך משם ממש יומשוף להיות נגוף למצרים כו'?

But the matter is as explained in Pri Etz Chaim on the explanation of “Avodim Hayinu” “and Hashem our G-d took us out” that the Partzufim of Abba and Ima clothed the arms of Arich Anpin.

אבל הענין על-פי מה שכתוב בפרי עץ חיים בפירוש "עבדים היינו כו'" "ויוציאנו ה' אלקינו" או"א שהקב"ה לזרעות דאריה אנפין.

That is: Israel's root is from the aspect of face, as it is written “Yaer Hashem Panav eilecha,” while Egypt's root is from the aspect of back “oref Pharaoh” is the same letters as “ha-oref.”

פירוש: כי הנה ישראל שרשם מבחינת פנים כמו שכתוב "יאר ה' פניו אליה", ומצרים שרשם מבחינת אחוריים – "ערף פרעה" אותיות הערף כו'.

And since they were in a state of hidden face because it is said: “Yosef died and all his brothers” the flow came from the back aspect, like one who throws behind his shoulder.

ולפי שהיו בבחינת הסתר פנים, לפי שנאמר "וימת יוסף וכל אחיו כו'" – וההשפעה נמשכה מבחינת אחוריים, כמאן דשדי בתר כתיפוי.

Therefore: “Avadim hayinu lePharaoh” because he too receives from the aspect of the back, etc.

על-כן "עבדים היינו לפרעה", המקבל גם כן מבחינת ערף כו'.

But afterward: “Vayotzianu Hashem Elokeinu” through Abba and Ima clothing [the arms of Arich] which draws down influence from the aspect of “Yaer Hashem Panav,” and through this: “Imanu Selah.”

אבל אחר כך: "ויוציאנו ה' אלקינו" או"א שהקב"ה לכו', שימשו השפעה מבחינת "יאר ה' פניו", ועל-ידי "וה": "אתנו סלה".

Even though regarding the level of **Sovev Kol Almin**, in and of itself, it is said “darkness is like light” (Tehillim 139:12), as above meaning there is no difference between good and evil.

אף-על-גב דבבחינת סובב כל עלמין מצד עצמו נאמר "פחשוכה כאורה" כפ"ל – דהינו שאין הבדל בין טוב לרע.

However, Sovev illuminates through the level of **Memale Kol Almin**, for from the Chalal (vacated space) was drawn the Kav (line), etc.

אבל הסובב מאיר על-ידי בחינת ממלא כל עלמין, "שהרי מן החלל נמשך הקו כו'".

And through this investment within **Memale** through Abba and Ima clothing [the arms of Arich] it was drawn that “He took us out from Egypt, from slavery to freedom.”

ומצד התלבשות זו בבחינת ממלא – או"א שהקב"ה לכו'. – נמשך שהוציאנו ממצרים מעבדות לחרות.

(And see what is written in Parshas Vayishlach in the Maamar beginning “Vaye’aveik ish imo,” regarding the verse “If you rise like an eagle, from there I will bring you down.”

ועין בפרשת וישלח בדברות המתחיל "ויאבק איש" ("עמו", גבי "אם תגביה כנשר – משם אוריך").

And in Parshas Miketz on the Maamar “Ki Imcha mekor chaim,” regarding the verse: “Hashkifah mime’on kodsh’cha min hashamayim...”

ובפרשת מקץ, בדברות המתחיל "כי עמה מקור חיים", בפירוש "השקיפה ממעון קדשך מן השמים, "ויברך את עמך את ישראל".

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And above, in the Maamar beginning “L’havin mah she’kasuv baHaggadah Matzah zu,” regarding “Ani Hu v’lo acher” (“I and not another”).

ולעיל, סדרא דהתחלה "להבין מה שפסח בהגדה –
"מצה זו", גבי "אני הוא ולא אחר

And in the Maamar “Va’achaltem achol,” regarding “Asher asah imachem l’hafli.”

ובדברות המתחיל "ואכלתם אכול", גבי "אשר עשה
"עמכם להפליא

And in the Maamar “Simeni kachotam,” and see what is written about Sovev shining through Memale in the Maamar beginning “Yavi’u levush malchus,” etc.

וסדרא דהתחלה "שימני כחותם", וענין מה שפסח
מענין שהסובב מאיר על-ידי בחינת ממלא בדברות
"המתחיל" "ביאו לבוש מלכות" כו

And see elsewhere on the Zohar at the beginning of Vayikra regarding the matter of “She’al lecha ot,” that miracles come in two levels:

וענין במקום אחר על-פי הזיהר ריש פרשת ויקרא,
בענין "שאל לה אות" כו – שהנסים באים בשני
מדרגות

The first: in a manner of “depth of question” the final hei of Havayah which becomes en clothed in garments of nature.

האחת: על דרך "העמק שאלה", והינינו אות ה'
תמאה, שמתלבשת בלבושי הטבע

The second: “raise upward” like the miracles of the Exodus and the splitting of the sea, which completely leave the ways of nature.

והבית: "הגבה למעלה" – פנסי יציאת מצרים
נקריעת ים-סוף שיוצאים לגמרי מדרך הטבע

And this is because they are drawn from revelation of the level of Sovev Kol Almin only that it shines via Memale.

והינינו לפי שהוא נמשך מגילוי בחינת סובב כל
עלמיו, רק שמאיר על-ידי בחינת ממלא

And this is “raise upward” the letter yud of the name Havayah and this is the matter of Abba and Ima clothing, as above.

ונהו "הגבה למעלה" – דהינינו אות יו"ד דשם הוי' –
והינינו ענין או"א שהלבישו כו כנ"ל

[NOTE Summary:

The Alter Rebbe begins by explaining two fundamental forms of Divine vitality: Memale Kol Almin and Sovev Kol Almin. Memale refers to a measured, פנימי revelation that descends gradually through levels, from higher worlds to lower ones, in an orderly השתלשלות. This is comparable to the way human faculties function in sequence, from intellect to emotion to action. In contrast, Sovev Kol Almin is an אור מקיף, a transcendent light that is not limited by gradation and shines equally upon all levels without distinction.

This distinction explains the nature of miracles. Miracles rooted in Memale operate within a structured process: first there must be a removal of concealment, and only afterward can there be revelation. This is why in Purim, the מלחמה and destruction of Amalek precede the טוב. The קליפה must first be eliminated before holiness can be revealed.

However, Pesach is fundamentally different. The Exodus was not a process that unfolded step by step, but a revelation of Sovev Kol Almin, expressed in the idea of פסיחה, a “skipping.” Hashem Himself revealed, “אני ולא אחר,” meaning the revelation came directly from the Essence, bypassing all intermediaries. Because Sovev is

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not bound by סדר והדרגה, it can accomplish opposite effects simultaneously: judgment upon Egypt and revelation to Israel in one moment.

This also explains why an angel could not carry out the plague of the firstborn. The task required absolute discernment beyond the capacity of a limited agent, especially in a מצב of profound impurity. Only the Essence, which transcends all limitation, could perform such an act.

Yet, this raises a deeper question: if Sovev is equally present everywhere and does not distinguish between light and darkness, how can it be the source of both punishment and redemption? The Alter Rebbe explains that although Sovev in itself is beyond differentiation, its revelation is channeled through Memale. Through this hislabshus, the transcendent light becomes expressed in a differentiated way.

This is expressed through the structure of Partzufim, where Abba and Ima draw down from Arich Anpin, channeling the transcendent into פנימיות. Israel, rooted in the פנים and פנימיות, receive this revelation as גילוי אלקות, while Egypt, rooted in אהוריים, experience it as דין and concealment. Thus, the same אור produces opposite outcomes depending on the כלי receiving it.

Therefore, Pesach uniquely combines ביטול הקליפה and גילוי הקדושה simultaneously, because its source is Sovev Kol Almin, which transcends division. This is why the festival itself is on the day of the miracle, as the revelation did not require a preliminary process of purification.

Practical Takeaway:

A person lives within both dimensions. There is the structured עבודת ה' of Memale, step-by-step growth through learning, refining character, and disciplined action. But there is also access to Sovev, a deeper נקודה of connection to Hashem that transcends limitation.

At times, a person feels stuck in process, needing gradual change. But Pesach teaches that there are moments of “skipping,” where a person can leap beyond their מצב entirely through connection to the Essence. True transformation is not only built, it is also revealed from a place beyond structure.

The avodah is therefore twofold: to work within the system with consistency, and at the same time to open oneself to moments of transcendence, where Hashem lifts a person beyond all constraints.

Chassidic Story:

It is told of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi that once a chassid came to him broken over his inability to change his habits despite years of effort. He described his avodah as slow and frustrating, feeling trapped in cycles of failure.

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Parsha Tzav/ Pesach

לְהִבִּין מִפְּנֵי מָה יוֹם-טוֹב דְּפֶסַח הוּא בַּיּוֹם שְׁנֹעֵשֶׂה הַגֹּס

The Alter Rebbe listened and then said: there is an avodah of סדר, and there is an avodah of סדר. יציאת מצרים means you build yourself step by step, like climbing a ladder. But יציאת מצרים is when the King Himself takes you out in one moment.

He then told him: you have worked enough in סדר. Now you must open yourself to the possibility that Hashem can take you out instantly. Stop defining yourself by your limitations.

The chassid later testified that this shift changed everything. Not because his habits disappeared overnight, but because he no longer saw himself as bound to them. That inner freedom allowed real change to begin.

Therapeutic Psychological Integration (TPX)

Two Ways Change Happens

The Alter Rebbe is describing two fundamentally different psychological systems that operate inside every human being. One is gradual change, what we might call developmental growth. The other is transformational breakthrough.

Memale Kol Almin is the structured system. This is how most therapy, habit-building, and self-development works. You build awareness, then emotional regulation, then behavioral change. Step by step. It is linear, predictable, and requires patience.

Sovev Kol Almin is something else entirely. It is not incremental. It is not logical. It is a sudden shift in identity, a leap beyond the current self. It is when something deep inside you reorganizes instantly.

Both are real. Both are necessary. But they operate on completely different rules.

Why We Get Stuck

Most people live only in Memale mode. They believe change must always be gradual. So when they struggle, they assume it just means more time, more effort, more discipline.

But there is a hidden trap here. When a person only uses step-by-step growth, they often reinforce their current identity. "This is who I am, slowly improving."

That belief can quietly lock a person into the very pattern they are trying to escape.

This is what Mitzrayim represents psychologically. Not just suffering, but constriction. The feeling that change must happen within the limits of who I currently am.

What a Breakthrough Actually Is

Pesach introduces a different mechanism. A "skip."

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A real breakthrough is not just doing better. It is becoming different. It bypasses the internal hierarchy. It does not wait for everything to line up.

Like the Alter Rebbe's analogy: when you decide to move your leg, it moves instantly. There is no felt delay, no step-by-step awareness. That is Sovev.

In modern terms, this is identity-level change. Not "I am trying to be disciplined," but "I am no longer that person."

Those moments feel disproportionate. They are. Because they are not coming from the same system.

Why Both Light and Darkness Can Exist Together

One of the deepest points here is paradox. The same light that freed the Jewish people destroyed Egypt.

Psychologically, this means that when a higher level of truth enters your life, it does not only feel uplifting. It also destabilizes parts of you that were built on limitation.

Growth can feel like loss.

Freedom can feel disorienting.

Clarity can break things.

That does not mean something is wrong. It means something real is happening.

Why Some Change Takes Time and Some Doesn't

Purim required first removing the problem and only then celebrating. That is Memale. Clean the system, then reveal something new.

Pesach didn't wait. The change and the release happened at once.

In psychological language:

Sometimes you need process work.

Sometimes you need a decisive break.

If you try to force breakthrough when you need process, it won't hold.

If you stay in process when you need breakthrough, you'll feel stuck.

Wisdom is knowing which mode you are in.

Practical Integration

There are two questions to ask yourself:

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1. Am I in a place where I need structured growth
If yes, lean into discipline, repetition, and patience. That is not failure, that is the correct system.
2. Or am I holding onto an identity that I've already outgrown
If yes, the work is not more effort. The work is letting go and allowing a leap.

A simple exercise:

Think of one area where you feel stuck.

Ask yourself honestly: am I trying to improve within the same identity, or am I ready to leave that identity entirely

Then act accordingly.

Modern Story

A high-performing executive had spent years trying to manage his anger. He read books, went to workshops, practiced techniques. He improved, but the anger was always there under the surface.

One day, after a particularly painful incident with his child, something shifted. Not gradually. Instantly.

He later described it like this: "I realized I'm not an angry person who needs tools. I'm a father who refuses to be that man anymore."

From that moment, the anger lost its identity anchor. It still showed up occasionally, but it no longer defined him.

All the tools he had learned finally started working.

Nothing new was added.

Something old was dropped.

That is the difference between building change and becoming free.

END NOTE]