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From all of us at TAL, CHAG KASHER VESAMEACH!!

This special edition is dedicated Lehatlachat Raya Bat Liora Yehudit Vechol Mishpachta

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



BRING ON THE QUESTIONS!

A little boy once returned home from Cheder and his father asked, "What did you learn today?"

He answered, "The Rabbi told us how Moshe led the children of Israel out of Egypt."

"Excellent, tell me how?" asked the father.

The boy said "Moshe was a big strong man and he beat Pharaoh up. Then while he was down, he got all the people together and ran towards the sea. When he got there, he has the Corps of Engineers build a huge pontoon bridge. Once they got on the other side, they blew up the bridge while the Egyptians were trying to cross."

The father was shocked. "Is that what the Rabbi taught you?"

The boy replied, "No. But you'd never believe the story he DID tell us!"

It seems that the younger generation are getting more intelligent in this technological age.

Do you remember when you were a child at home?

Were you the inquisitive type? Most of us as kids loved to ask questions. Sometimes in the most awkward of situations we would approach our parents and stump them. At others we would repeat the same question the whole week, seemingly oblivious to our parents answer.

Times have moved on and recently research has termed our children's generation as having a 'Creativity Crisis'. Research showed that preschool kids ask their parents an average of 100 questions a day! By middle school, they've basically stopped asking questions. It is at this point in life that, student motivation and engagement plummets. Which raises an interesting question: Have the kids stopped asking questions because they've lost interest? Or have they lost interest because the rote answers-driven school system doesn't allow them to ask enough questions

In school, we're rewarded for having the answer, not for asking a good question. Which may explain why kids—who start off asking endless "why" and "what if" questions—gradually ask fewer and fewer of them as they progress through grade school. ►

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THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The single greatest thing you can do to change your life right now would be to start being grateful for what you have today."



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It is important for children to ask questions, offer ideas and suggestions because it gives them a feeling of belonging and responsibility. It also helps them to learn and be independent and confident in what they are doing or saying. The children are also given a chance to give their own opinions and views.

Which brings us on to Pesach – the festival of freedom andquestions!?!

At the Seder night we celebrate like Kings and Queens with the best dining set, most lavish meal and wine, all in honour of our G-d given freedom. Yet it seems that if you are the inquisitive type then Pesach is the festival for you! The whole evening is surrounded by unusual actions and encouragement towards the children to ask questions. Why is this so?

The Torah states: “And when your children ask you, “what do you mean by this rite (Pesach)?” you shall say, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.” (Shemot 12:26-27)

During the very first Pesach, as the Israelites were about to leave Egypt, Hashem commanded that certain symbolic rituals be performed year after year. The Torah imagines that these symbols - the Matza, Bitter Herbs, and Paschal offering - will pique the curiosity of children, who will ask about their meaning and provide occasion for the telling of the Jewish Master Story.

It would appear that, in the Torah’s view, the child’s questioning is secondary and the telling of the Exodus story is primary. But the Rabbis later elevated the questioning itself to a level of primary importance (Pesachim 117a). Anyone who has attended a Seder knows this.

Consider: We begin the Seder as we do all Jewish festive meals with Kiddush. We then wash our hands, again as traditional Jews commonly do. But next, instead of reciting Hamotzi and breaking bread, we dip greens (Karpas), we break the Matza without a blessing and without eating, and we pour another cup of wine - as though we are about to recite Kiddush again! All this time, the child is gazing on, inquisitively thinking; What’s happening here? Why is everything out of its normal order? Ma Nishtana - Why is this night different?

People may not realise, but the child sees everything. They are watching us 24/7. They see our discrepancies and bring them out into the open.

The Rabbis instituted several ‘out of the norm’ practices in order to teach us two things.

1. Action speaks louder than words. The best way to teach a child is through your own actions. Telling a child to behave is one thing, but when the child sees his/her parents behaving, then they have a role model to follow.

2. Encourage wisdom through questioning. Motivate the child’s imagination and encourage them to ask. This will only make them wiser.

There is a further importance to the question at Seder night.

The question itself highlights an important point of the Seder.

Picture being a slave in Egypt. It’s tough times, there is no coming home at 6pm to your children and asking them about their day and homework. There are no choices when it comes to different dinners and vacations. Every choice is made by the Egyptian King, whatever he says must go. Days are long and hard, and there is no room for questioning and understanding.

Slaves are not permitted to ask questions.

Freedom, on the other hand is distinguished by one’s ability to question. Without questions, what is called freedom would be meaningless.

Thus, at the Seder, we live our freedom by doing what free people must do - ask questions!

Indeed, the Jewish sense of the centrality of questioning to a free people extends far beyond its symbolic presence at the Seder. The Talmud, the greatest of all classical rabbinic works, is distinguished, above all, by its commitment to questions and challenges. The Mishnah gives the law; the Talmud asks, “Why?” “For what reason?” “Maybe there is an alternative?”

These questions challenge. We are a people of questions. By continuing to ask questions, we guarantee our freedom.

This Seder Night, let’s make an effort to boost our children’s participation, wet their taste buds through encouraging questioning.

Remember: He who has a why to live for, can bear almost any how.

Chag Sameach! ■

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THE DIPPING ON SEDER NIGHT

We are accustomed to the child asking why we dip twice on Seder night, but we need to look at this from a deeper perspective.

Rabbeinu Monoach on the Rambam in Hilchos Chometz uMatzoh, compares the word Karpas to the word Pasim, which alludes to the beautiful coat of Yosef that was taken from him when he was sold to Mitzrayim.

As an aside, we know that the Gematriyo of the word Pasim is 190, which outlines how much pain Yosef suffered which eventually relieved us of the 190 years in mitzrayim.

The shevotim took off his coat and dipped it into the blood of a goat ... an act of undefined and unimaginable separation. Brothers acting as unbrotherly as possible

This was remedied on Seder night in mitzrayim while eating the Morning Pesach in families and groups of friends and they dipped the hyssop grass into the blood and smeared it onto their door posts...

We dip twice to remind ourselves of how we got ourselves into the exiles of mitzrayim and how we left our troubles behind.

In one word. Achdus.

We left mitzrayim when they were acting as one family

That is why we dip our food twice on Seder night. Once, as it took us down and once as it took us out.

In fact, Reb Elchonon Wasserman hy'd writes that if not for this act of dipping Yosefs cost into

the blood, then we wouldn't have suffered with the blood libels throughout the generations ...

There is an amazing story that illustrates the power of family unity.

Napoleon once approached Reb Chaim of Volizhin and asked whether he would succeed against the Russian army.

Reb Chaim replied with a story.

A wealthy man was once driving his wagon pulled by six strong horses when they got stuck in mud. As much as he whipped them, they couldn't move. In the distance he saw an old rickety wagon with two things horses, and to his amazement when the owner hit them, they pulled their wagon out of the mud.

The poor man explained.

My horses are brothers and care for each other so they pull together, while the other horses were six individuals and didn't work as a team.

Reb Chaim explained that Napoleon's men were individuals who would not win against the Russians.

So too, in order for us to understand that we are also going out from mitzrayim we need to learn the secret and the way we did it then.

By acting as one family and one team together. ■

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TEN PLAGUES OR TEN LESSONS?

The ten plagues. Hashem's way of executing the justified punishment for the Egyptians. The several hundred years of intense and barbaric treatment that the Egyptian nation delivered unto the Jewish people would not go unnoticed. But why is it that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had to conduct his judgement in the way he chose to? 10 separate and some rather unusual ways of making the Egyptians suffer. Why couldn't Hashem just rid the nation in one swipe?

Egypt, being the most powerful nation, both economically and socially, installed into society the phenomenon that there are multiple G-ds: the G-d of the moon, the G-d of sun, the G-d of the water etc. There was no such thing as one omnipotent being that rules over everything, one ruler that decides the fate of every living thing that will ever exist. The idea that 'One G-d is the proprietor of the world' was a fairytale.

In Parashat Vaera, Hashem tells Moshe that he is going to harden Pharaoh's heart and deliver his wonders in Egypt. Rashi explains that Hashem wanted Pharaoh to stand his ground and not free the Jewish people causing Hashem to bring more plagues, so that everyone should see the oneness of G-d. Hashem wanted to show that He is the power that rules and dominates the entire world. That every organism in this world answers to him. The sun, moon, and waters are puppets in the hand of G-d.

If one were to take a deeper look into the plagues, it is evident that no force could have conjured up the power to perform these wonders other than Hashem. The hail that fell onto the

Egyptians causing havoc to property, fields and inhabitants was a phenomenal paradox. Fire and ice danced together until it crashed to the ground. The darkness that invaded the land of Egypt was not the darkness that we know of. During this plague the Egyptians were frozen still, they choked on the mere presence of the darkness and fear would tremble through their bones. The darkness was a new creation.

The death of the firstborn seems like any severe epidemic. However, with a moment's thought, this plague is by far the biggest revelation of Hashem. The death of the firstborn was the only plague that Hashem himself descended to Egypt and executed the plague as opposed to using angels to carry out the plague. The Or HaChaim says this is because not even angels know who a firstborn is. For example, take a set of triplets that were separated from their mother from birth. There is no way of knowing who the firstborn is, even the triplets themselves don't know. So Hashem gives the final blow to the Egyptians by showing them "I know what no one can ever know".

We sit at our Seder table telling of the 'beating' that the Egyptians succumbed to as a result of their cruelty. Little do we know it's a fundamental lesson even for us that there are no other powers or strengths besides those of our father in heaven. ■



IT TAKES ALL SORTS

I always find the month of Nissan a very frantic time. Have you ever experienced this? Or is it just me?

I kid you not. There's a lot flying around [for once, I'm not referring to drones]. Pesach is a time of furious work. It's almost like we are still enslaved in Egypt – what with all that forced labour, in the house and in the car. Especially the car.

But during all the tussles and skirmishes, we can find comfort in the fact that for every drop of sweat we put into cleaning for Pesach, we will get a tremendous reward. Every drop!

Maybe go easy on the Lynx and the Sure this year – its perspiration we want!!!

But on a serious note, we may find bad habits coming to the fore in Nissan. This is because Hashem is showing us that these bad habits need correction. Nissan – the month where Pesach falls – is the beginning of the year. It is the month that crowns all the other months. There is a tremendous energy which accompanies this month. It is the energy that was prevalent when we left Egypt almost 3300 years ago. It is the energy of freedom. Hashem is stretching out to us with this energy, and it will help us in many ways. We must grasp this freedom energy and use it to do teshuva.

Hashem comes to our seder with His angels. Not just two or three. I'm talking billions. More even. They are called the Pamalia Shel Ma'alah. They bear witness when we talk about the Hagadah at our Seder. Hashem can then say to these billions of witnesses "I was right in taking this people out of Egypt and forming them into My Nation. I was right". These angels will then submit in conformity. They ratify Hashem's decision in liberating the slave nation. But if, at our Seder, we are talking about sports, politics, Come Dancing or Twitter, then Hashem cannot 'claim' that He was right, as it were. This will cause Hashem 'embarrassment', as it were.

So let's give the Pamalia Shel Ma'alah some proof that G-d was in fact right. We deserve to serve Him.

Well, if you're in the mood, I have a few questions for you. About the four sons. Follow with me.

The Chacham. Why is he not called The Tzaddik? That would surely be more appropriate – to call him the Righteous Son instead of the Smart Son. The answer is that he is the son who makes rationalizations for everything. Whatever the question, the Wise Son has to have an answer. Now, this is not always a bad thing. But we tell this son, don't be such a wise Alec. Not every question has an answer. At least, not that we know of (see the concept of the Red Cow). We tell the Wise Son 'do not eat after afikoman'. Once we eat it, we are done. There's nothing left. No dessert. No baklava or nana tea. We are at the end of our tether. Mr Wise Son – you don't know it all. You don't need, or are even able, to have all the answers. Don't try and add anything.

The Rasha. Now this guy is something else. He is the one who does not 'agree' with certain things in Judaism. He takes himself out of the picture. Judaism? Ha. Lol. That's for frummers. Not me. No way. Not now. Not ever. What shall we do with this guy? Well, we start by blunting his teeth. Taking the sting out of his tail. But wait – is that kiruv? He asks a few questions, and we smash his face in?? No of course not. We are passing on a message in a form of a very excellent hint. Because the thing about teeth, is that teeth all work together, for the benefit of the body. Ever heard of a tooth going on strike? "I'm out here – the other 31 of you can carry on, I'm going to the Bahamas". Nah. They all work in unison. So we are hinting to the Rasha – you need us. And what's more – we need you. We're all in this together.

The Tam. He's the Simple Minded Son. He gets stuck on one question, and he can't seem to see past it. Whether its 'Where was G-d in the Holocaust?' or 'Why do we have to wipe out Amalek, men women and children?' 'Burning sheitels?' Yes, he gets stuck alright. He says 'If only I had the answer to that question, I would believe'. So we say to this Son – 'Hey, hold on. Do you know everything? No. Then why does your belief in Hashem hinge on that one

question? There's lots you don't know!' And we tell him that the things you don't know – and even the things you do know – it's all Hashem. And you know what? Feel free to ask questions, but be prepared for the answer. And it doesn't have to make sense. It really doesn't.

And what about the Eino yodeah lishol? The Son who just can't manage to put his hand up. Maybe he is shy. Maybe he doesn't have anything useful to say. Or perhaps he's apathetic. Too lazy to ask. But the worst thing is, even if he does ask a question, he's not interested in an answer. After the achievement of finally piping up, he looks blankly at you, or his eyes wander around the room. This is the lowest category. What do we say to this fellow? 'At petach lo' – we make an opening for him. We draw him in to the conversation. The word 'at' contains the first and last letters of the aleph bet. We reel him in with every means at our disposal. But we never let go.

Surprisingly, the four sons all have something in common. Apart from being Jewish. The four sons are all blessed because at least they all came to the Seder. But wait. We have forgotten someone. There is one more – a fifth son. "What? That's not in my Hagaddah!" – I can almost hear you say..."Who is he?" Well, let's just call him 'The Disaffected Son'. His clarion call is "...whatever..." Dsepondent, disinterested – he is the son who didn't even turn up. He seems to be on an even lower level than the 'eyno yodeya lishol'. How are his needs addressed?

I would humbly like to suggest that he is in fact addressed before any of the four other sons. We say in ha lachma anya: 'Kol ditzrich yeytei veyeichol, dol dichfin yeytei veyifsach'. This is addressing the fifth son. Don't stay outside! Come in! Be a part of it!

Yes indeed. It takes all sorts to make a Seder! ■

Questions? I can be contacted at rabbikelaty@gmail.com Just be prepared for an answer. Please check out my shiurim on Torah Anytime!

<http://www.torahanytime.com/speakers-list/rabbi-mashiach-kelaty/>



THE SEDER OF CHAIM PORTER

Looking back over the Seder he had just completed, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev noted with satisfaction that he had succeeded in suffusing each of its successive stages with the light of kabbalistic meditation.

But at that moment a voice from heaven intimated to him: “Don’t proud of the manner in which you conducted your Seder. In this town there lives a Jew called Chaim the Porter: his Seder is loftier than yours.”

Reb Levi Yitzchak turned to address his Chassidim who were with him at his Seder: “Do any of you know Reb Chaim the Porter?” he asked.

One of them knew him but did not know where he lived.

“If it were possible to call him here I would be most pleased.” Said the Tzaddik.

The Chassidim immediately searched the town and brought him to their Rebbe. Reb Levi Yitzchak offered him a chair, and said: How did you conduct your Seder last night?”

Flushed and flustered, the poor man unburdened himself: “Rebbe, I’ll tell you the truth. I heard that a man’s not allowed to drink vodka

throughout Pesach. So this morning I drank enough to last me for eight days. So of course I was sleep and I went to bed. When it was night-time my wife wakes me and says: ‘Chaim, wake up, Its Pesach!’ I get out of bed feeling all groggy and let me tell you Rebbe, I haven’t got a clue what Pesach is all about. The only thing I know is this – our ancestors were in exile. But we’ve got Hashem who took us out of there and made us free and now we are all in exile again. But Hashem will bring us out again for sure! Then I took the wine, the Matzah and the egg, mixed it all into a ball, poured its contents down my throat and I went back to sleep.”

The Rebbe thanked Chaim and sent him home. Reb Levi Yitzchak then turned to his Chassidim and said: “Heaven was exceedingly pleased with this man’s words, because he said them with all his heart and with true sincerity – for he knows nothing more than what he said.”

As we go into Pesach this year and delve into its deep meaning until the early hours of the morning. Let us not forget the sincere words of Chaim the Porter – that we had Hashem who took us out of Egypt and He will surely take us out of this exile too, **לשנה הבאה בירושלים**. ■



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI ABDALLAH SOMECH

Enormously knowledgeable, never compromising, and conducting himself with humility that was proverbial, Rabbi Abdallah Somech was the teacher of the Ben Ish Hai. He was also the teacher of Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, the author of the famous work Kaf HaChayim, that monumental Shulchan Aruch and necessary reference book in all yeshivas and sacred study centers in Israel and throughout the world.

Rabbi Abdallah Somech was, without doubt, a Torah giant that the Jewish people can be proud of. The teacher of the Ben Ish Hai, he is part of the inestimable and everlasting dynasty of Babylonian Sages, whose wisdom clarifies every page of the Talmud.

Rabbi Abdallah Somech -"7" was born in Baghdad in 1813. He was the son of Rabbi Abraham Somech, himself a descendant of Rabbi Nissim Gaon, head of the famous Babylonian yeshiva at Nehardea, as well as the author of the Vidui (confessional) prayers for Yom Kippur. The sons of Rabbi Nissim Gaon were Yehoshua, Yosef, and Yehezkel. Yehoshua named his first and second sons Abraham and Abdallah, respectively, names that one finds in the family from generation to generation, including today. As for the family name Somech, in Hebrew it means "support", "backing", and it probably comes from the fact that one member of the family, Yehezkel, was a Somech (assistant) of the synagogue's Chazan (Cantor) during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

From his earliest youth, Rabbi Abdallah Somech had been entrusted by his father to one of the greatest teachers of the era, namely Rabbi Yaakov Harofeh. He therefore didn't stop studying Torah day and night, year after year, until he himself became an uncontested teacher for generations of students. One among them, Rabbi Shlomo Bechor Chotsin, wrote as follows: "If I were to praise him, even just the slightest bit, all the pages in the world would be insufficient. What's more, this would no doubt displease him, for he was extremely humble and wanted nothing less than fame."

Besides the Shulchan Aruch of his student, Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, we owe to Rabbi Abdallah Somech a great number of rulings, particularly in matters of Shechita (ritual slaughter) and Treifot. All these rulings have been published in the work Zivchei Tzedek. As soon as they were disseminated, no one dared to turn aside from them by one iota, exactly as if they had come from Mount Sinai.

As we have seen above, Rabbi Abdallah Somech was the teacher of Rabbi Yosef Haim, the Ben Ish Hai. When the latter began to give public lessons in the great synagogue of Baghdad, Rabbi Abdallah Somech would come and attend, each time that he could, specifically to hear his student. Another mark of this Torah giant was that when his student, the Ben Ish Hai, made his entry into the synagogue,

he would rise before him, just as all present would. Because of the manner of the teacher, everyone understood the greatness of the student.

One day, policemen came to bring him to the walli (governor), who desired to speak with him after he had dismissed a dayan (rabbinic judge) who had proven to be unsuitable for his position. Yet when the policemen had hardly entered Rabbi Somech's home, they froze in seeing him seated among bearded scholars who were listening to his teachings. He himself appeared to them like an incarnation of an angel come from heaven, and this sight impressed them so much that they hastened to turn around and leave the premises. To the governor who asked them why they had not brought Rabbi Somech, the policemen replied, "Do you know who you sent us to get? The prophet Moses himself!"

The governor therefore dispatched persons of honor to Rabbi Abdallah to persuade him to go back on his decision. Rabbi Abdallah replied, "My decision was made in accordance with the Torah of Moses. I therefore cannot change it."

The governor perfectly understood this point of view and agreed. It goes without saying that this incident only added to Rabbi Abdallah's prestige.

It was on the eve of Shabbat on the 18th of Elul, 1889 that Rabbi Abdallah Somech left this world. However, astonishing events weren't late in occurring around his tomb, events whose echoes rang out not only in Iraq, but all the way to Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) and even to London and Paris. For example, following an outbreak of leprosy, the mayor of El Krach decided to forbid the burial of Rabbi Abdallah next to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Yehotzedek, who had been a Kohen Gadol (High Priest). Infuriated, the Jewish community (who, naturally, disregarded the prohibition) requested the help of Baghdad's mayor, a man who didn't hide his sympathy for the Jews. This had the result of dividing the population into two camps: Jewish and Arab. Certain Muslims had, in fact, falsely accused the Jews of having struck them. The anti-Semitic mayor of El Krach took advantage of the situation to imprison several Chachamim (Sages), and the local Jewish community therefore sent delegations to influential people in Constantinople (to the Sassoon family), to London, and to the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris. At the end of it all, the anti-Semitic mayor was fired from his position. All this took about a month. Nevertheless, in order to ease people's nerves, the Jewish community resigned itself to exhuming the remains of the deceased illustrious Rabbi. Several Rabbis descended into the tomb and asked mechila (forgiveness) from Rabbi Abdallah. However, they were utterly astonished when they noticed that the body of their revered teacher had remained completely intact, exactly as on the day he died. ■

His Hilloula is Elul 18.



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

PESAH - BREAKING OFF UNDESIRABLE PIECES OF MATZA

It occasionally happens that as the Masa bakes in the oven, parts of the Masa fold and do not remain flat. This phenomenon is called in Halacha "Masa Kefula" ("folded Masa"). Some people make a point not to eat the folded parts of the Masa, given the concern that the dough in those areas did not fully bake, and thus became Hametz. Those who follow this practice break off the folded pieces of Masa from the rest of the Masa.

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (contemporary) rules that breaking off a folded piece of Masa is forbidden on Shabbat. The Shabbat prohibition of "Borer" ("selecting") forbids separating "Pesoleit" (undesirable matter) from "Ochel" (desirable matter). Breaking off a folded part of the Masa constitutes separating "Pesoleit" from "Ochel," which transgresses the Shabbat prohibition of "Borer."

The prohibition of "Borer" applies on Yom Tob, as well, though in more lenient fashion. It is permissible to separate "Pesoleit" from "Ochel" on Yom Tob (when it does not fall on Shabbat) if this can be done easily, without too much effort or exertion. Therefore, breaking off a piece of folded Masa, which entails one quick and simple motion, is permissible on Yom Tob. On Shabbat, however, "Borer" is forbidden regardless of the amount of exertion entailed, and therefore on Shabbat it is forbidden to break off a piece of folded Masa.

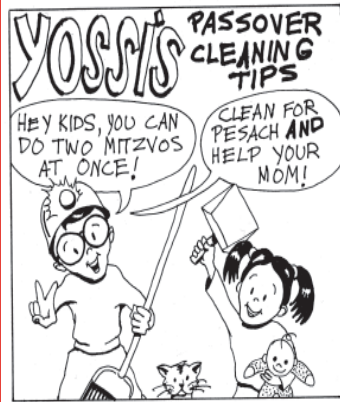
This would apply as well to breaking off burnt pieces of Masa. If a person does not want to eat part of the piece of Masa which was burnt, he may not break off that part of the Masa on Shabbat. Once again, this would be permissible on Yom Tob, since little effort is entailed, but on Shabbat one may not break off a piece of undesirable Masa.

Rav Elyashiv notes that it is permissible - even on Shabbat - to remove broken pieces of Masa from the box as one searches for whole pieces. For the Shabbat and Yom Tob meals, one is required to use only whole Masot, and often the box of Masa contains both broken and whole pieces of Masa. Rav Elyashiv writes that one may separate the broken pieces from the whole pieces, as this is not considered removing "Pesoleit" from "Ochel." All the Masa is edible, and one removes the broken pieces not because they are undesirable, but rather because he is searching for a whole Masa as required by Halacha. Therefore, he may separate the broken pieces from the whole pieces, even on Shabbat, and this does not violate the prohibition of "Borer."

Summary: It is forbidden on Shabbat to break off from a piece of Masa part of the Masa which one deems undesirable, such as parts that have been folded or have been burnt. This is permissible on Yom Tob. It is permissible - even on Shabbat - to separate broken pieces of Masa from whole pieces of Masa. ■



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STORIES

SLAVERY

Here I am in Egypt, facing another day of slavery. I did not even sleep in my house last night. Paroh made me sleep in the field so I could begin to work gathering the straw as soon as I woke up. No matter how much straw I gather I still cannot make enough bricks. One of my own fellow Jews watches over me, counting the bricks I make. If there are not enough bricks, they hit me. Ouch,

stop beating me, it really hurts. Worse than that, I have seen them put a baby in the wall that we are building in place of the missing bricks. We do not even have any satisfaction from our work. As soon as we build something, it falls down. I am so tired; I need to take a break. However, I am a slave, and a slave never gets a break. I want to be home tending to the children, instead

of out here making bricks. My husband is taking care of the home. Yesterday, my friend gave birth to a baby boy and they threw him in the Nile River. They say that Paroh has a skin disease and needs to bathe in blood twice each day. They kill 150 of our children to make a bath of blood for him. This slavery is terrible. How can we ever escape?

FREEDOM

Those cruel Egyptians have no water to drink. The entire Nile River turned to blood. They are so thirsty. I saw them trying to draw water from a barrel. It had also turned to blood. We, the Jews, are the only ones who have water here in Egypt. An Egyptian tried to take water from my barrel. For me it was water but

for him it was blood. They have no power over us. We control all of the water. If they buy water from us, it does not turn to blood. We can ask whatever price we want for the water. They have no choice but to pay it. They are at our mercy.

There they are, washed up on the shores of the Red Sea. All of those Egyptians who oppressed us are now dead. I see the one who used to beat me so cruelly. He died a terrible death. He was tossed up and down in the water many times before he drowned. We are free from their oppression at last.