

Introduction

I was introduced to the sefer **לב השמים**, a book containing the teachings and stories of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach on the festival of **פסח** by an old friend, Avi Portnoy on the same festival around 6 years ago. I immediately acquired a copy, available from dshir.co.il, and proceeded to learn the first chapter every year since then.

Every year it's the same story, Purim finishes, there's a month till Pesach and you think you are going to get a head-start on preparing for the Seder, and you don't, family happens, work happens, everything happens until a few days before hand you finally get round to opening a Hagaddah and getting some new perspectives to share.

This year, thank God, I stuck with it and managed to do a bit every night, and went through the section in **לב השמים** on the four sons. Which I hope to share with you in the coming pages.

Here is the text in Hebrew taken from Sefaria

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא, בְּרוּךְ שְׁנַתן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבַּעַה בְּנִים דִּבְרָה תּוֹרָה: אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לְשִׁאֻל

חָכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְשָׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם. וְאִי אֶתָּה אָמַר לוֹ כְּהַלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוֹמָן

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵבֻדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם - וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֶּלֶל כְּפָר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִי אֶתָּה הַקָּהָה אֶת שְׁנָיו וְאָמַר לוֹ: "בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם". לִי וְלֹא-לוֹ. אֵלּוּ הֵיָה שָׂם, לֹא הֵיָה נִגְאָל

"תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת? וְאִמְרַת אֵלּוּ "בְּחֻזְקַי יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים

וְשְׂאִינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לְשִׁאֻל - אֶת פְּתַח לוֹ, שְׁנֵאֲמַר, וְהַגְדַּת לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם

Blessed is the Place [of all], Blessed is He; Blessed is the One who Gave the Torah to His people Israel, Blessed is He. Corresponding to four sons did the Torah speak; one [who is] wise, one [who is] evil, one who is innocent and one who doesn't know to ask.

What does the wise [son] say? "'What are these testimonies, statutes and judgments that the Lord our God commanded you?' And accordingly you will say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice, "We may not eat an afikoman after the Pesach sacrifice. "

What does the evil [son] say? "'What is this worship to you?' (Exodus 12:26)" 'To you' and not 'to him.' And since he excluded himself from the collective, he denied a principle [of the Jewish faith]. And accordingly, you will blunt his teeth and say to him, "'For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt' (Exodus 13:8)." 'For me' and not 'for him.' If he had been there, he would not have been saved.

What does the innocent [son] say? "'What is this?' (Exodus13:14)" And you will say to him, "'With the strength of [His] hand did the Lord take us out from Egypt, from the house of slaves' (Exodus 13:14)."

And [regarding] the one who doesn't know to ask, you will open [the conversation] for him. As it is stated (Exodus 13:8), "And you will speak to your your son on that day saying, for the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt."

R' Shlomo bases his approach to the four sons on the teachings of Rabbi Yaakov of Ishbitz and Rabbi Gershon Chanoch Heinech of Radzin, "The Radziner", and adds his own approach dotted with his famous stories.

I'll be honest with you, there are probably mistakes here, in how I've translated and interpreted things, so any errors are all mine.

I don't know if I agree with everything below to the last letter. I rarely agree with everything I read or learn nowadays but I always take something from it. And I took loads from this. At the very least I have taken what I like to think a new, mature approach to the Four Sons in the Hagaddah, and one that is significantly different to the picture painted in the Artscroll Children's Hagaddah. There are different ways to approach the Torah, don't stick with the first one you are taught.

There is no rhyme or reason as to why I choose to use the Hebrew word or the transliterated version of things. However some words can't be translated or transliterated as it would lose the effect.

I generally went for writing it directly but at times I write "R'Shlomo said/explains etc" as I felt awkward not doing so!

Wishing you a חג כשר ושמח a

Mord

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא

Before we read the questions the four sons ask and how we respond we read “ברוך המקום הוא ברוך...” “Blessed is the Place [of all], Blessed is He; Blessed is the One who Gave the Torah to His people Israel, Blessed is He. Corresponding to four sons did the Torah speak; one [who is] wise, one [who is] evil, one who is innocent and one who doesn't know to ask.”

What does this introduction mean?

The Ishbitzer says that each of the four mentions of the word “ברוך”, “Blessed” corresponds to each of the sons, each ברוך refers to the sons in order.

Before we answer and explain the questions of each of the 4 sons we are preparing the ground for the answer. In a deep way, we are already giving the answer. In one word. When we say ברוך המקום we are answering the question of the חכם, and after that we explain further. When we say הוא ברוך we are replying to the רשע. When we say ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל we are answering the תם, and further.

If ברוך המקום corresponds to the question of the חכם, what then is המקום and why do we call God by this name?

The world that we live in is קרוע, torn. Everything is divided, there is day and night, summer and winter, we have two hands, two feet, there is the sun and the moon, the sea and dry land. People too are like this, divided.

On the other hand, we know everything is one. We know that behind this doubled appearance, there is unity hidden away, and we yearn for it.

The world thirsts for this wonder, and yearns for love. Love is perplexing, but in this disunited world, a world filled with questions, wonder is revealed and love appears.

This yearning is for unity, the world is yearning for המקום. For המקום unites everything, He makes everything one.

Have you ever met that people who won't make room for you, so to speak? In their presence you feel shut off, that you have no place? These kind of people who remain closed do have a point, at the end of the day we are different creatures, I am me, you are you. We are two. But contrast is with those people who just opens up their world for you, you just know you have a place in their world, in their heart. Hopefully you do the same, you make room for people.

When you are welcomed into a house, when do you feel at comfortable, when do you feel like you are one with the people there? When they make room for you!

This comes from the secret of המקום. Our Rabbis teach that God is the מקום of the world, and the world is not his מקום. God makes a place for the world. He doesn't need this place. He transcends the world.

This will only become clear to you when you understand that God is the מקום of the world. When you see that the whole of creation is a מקום in the heart of God.

There are places, מקומות, for everyone, for every creation, for every person.

מקומות in Israel also have a unique place. The thing about our מקום is that it is also God's מקום.

The land of Israel is the place God chose for himself. כי בחר ה' בציון, אויה למושב לו - For God has chosen Zion, He desired it for his habitation (Tehillim 132:13) and because of our closeness with Him he wishes to dwell in the land with us as He says when you dwell in the land I too will be there together with you, and when you are not in the land, I too shall not be there. (See Yalkut Shmuel Aleph 247:92 and Ta'anit 5a).

R' Shlomo adds that he wants to tell us something deeper, and he says this having nothing to do with politics, but you see how the world wants to take the Jews out of ארץ ישראל? It's because they want drive God out of the world.

The fact that ארץ ישראל is the מקום of God means that in ארץ ישראל you can feel that God is the מקום of the world.

רגע לפני הפרידה

(A moment before the separation)

Where does this all begin? What is the root of this מקום?

Initially there was only God, everything was Godly, but that all changed the moment God began to create. Then there was two. God and world.

So when was God at one with the world. Where is this root of the unity in creation? It is found in the second before God created the world, in that moment of infinite depth in which God made a מקום for the world.

What happened in that second? There was the desire to create the world. Why did he do it? Why did He create us? Because he loves the world, right? Are you able describe how much love God had when he created the world?

That second reveals the depths of that elevated desire, the infinite love of God for the world. The moment He made a מקום, in the space He made the מקום, it came from His love.

Don't think this was a once only affair though, this creation is constantly renewed. Even after the initial creation God makes a מקום for us, as we say in tefillah המחדש בטובו בכל יום מעשה בראשית.

Let's say you meet a good friend and you spend time in conversation. You spend all day with them but at the end of the day it's time to go. As you turn to your friend and say "see you later" it's actually a deep moment, what's happening?

When we leave our friends, we are recognising that when we are together when we are one, now that we separate we are going to become two, and we wonder will we ever be together again?

When we are with friends we aren't aware of our togetherness, it is only at the moment of separation that we suddenly feel the bond, this deep connection. Then we actually understand that despite the fact that there are two of us, we are actually one.

This is the secret of the creation. Before creation we were together in the unity of God, but unaware. It was only in the second before we separate, before the creation, a deep moment in which the unique unity is revealed. Despite the fact that we are two, really we are one.

That moment is the moment God created a מקום for the world. Making a מקום in His heart for the world to be created.

When are you closest to the Kotel? When you are standing right at the wall or when you leave and are walking back? When you are standing at the wall you are next to one stone, one stone of many, but when you walk back, standing on the plaza, you take it all in. We experience that the most on Yom Kippur, when do we feel the closest with God on that holy day? At Neilah, one second before Yom Kippur concludes.

Why do I kiss my גמרא when I finish learning? When learning there's two of us. The גמרא and me. There is the "I" that is learning and the גמרא which is what I learn. But as I close the גמרא and kiss it that's when I see we aren't two, we are one.

There are some תורות and stories that are good to always have on hand. R' Carlebach's rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo Heiman told his there are תורות which is tin the bank so to speak and there is תורה which is cash, ready money. תורה that should be with you always, in your wallet, ready to spend. R' Carlebach calls this story cash.

There is a book "דור ישרים" about The Ishbitzer which tells over the story of the "בית יעקב" who would learn with his חסידים every night. He gave a shiur from midnight to 4am, and was totally dedicated to his חסידים. However the author writes that many of the חסידים who came to the shiur couldn't stick with it for longer than a 3 week stint. The shiur would last from 12 till 4, it's hard to sleep before 12 and after the wondrous shiur of the Rebbe it would be hard to come down to earth and sleep too. So instead everyone would rest and go to the Mikvah after which the Rebbe would daven שחרית. Now who would want to miss שחרית with the Rebbe? However this tefillah went on till 2pm, after with you would need to eat, but you're already finished! So you sleep a bit, but need to be back with the Rebbe for מעריב which meant you forced yourself out of bed at 6. One would carry on until 12 at which time the shiur would start, but after 3 week of this you collapse, so the חסידים would swap the whole time, every three weeks or so. But the Rebbe continued with this for many years. The author tells over that the lesson, the teaching of the Rebbe was ממש געוואלד, but the moment that was most elevated was when the Rebbe closed his גמרא and kissed it. How he kissed his גמרא, this was the deepest teaching, Everything was wrapped up in that one moment...

ישראל - מרכז העולם

Israel - The centre of the world

This מקום that God made has a centre. There is one point from which the מקום of creation spreads out from. The Radziner brings the verse וְשִׁמְתִי מְקוֹם לְעַמִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל (Shmuel 2 7:10)

In סוד ישראל we see written that this מקום teaches us about the beginning of the desire of the creation of the world. A feeling motivated by וְשִׁמְתִי מְקוֹם לְעַמִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל indicating that from then on the fundamental מקום of that desire will stream the main direction of God creating the world. The main focus being Israel. Israel is the centre and the pole on which the world would surround.

God created the whole world, He loves the whole world, but the world was also created בשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית, this מקום was created for ישראל.

Our Rabbis teach “The thought of ישראל preceded all else” which tells us the first thought of God in creating the world was of ישראל.

Let's say you are going to Paris, a beautiful city, and you want to take it all in. But there is another reason you are there, it happens to be there is someone there, someone you truly love who is also in Paris. You're whole trip has an underlying motivation to bump into that person.

For all that creation offers God wants the service of ישראל above all else.

We tend to think that things occur from the outside in. That initially there was the world, then the land of Israel, then Jerusalem. Inside Jerusalem you would find the Beit Mikdash, and inside there you would find the Kodesh Kodashim. However in reality it runs inside out. Initially, in the beginning there was the Kodesh Kodashim. The world began at the most holiest point in the cosmos, then there was the Bet Mikdash, then Jerusalem, the Land of Israel. The holiness of the entire world stems from everything that precedes it.

Everything begins from one small point. The Kodesh Kodashim is where the whole world spread out, ישראל too is the centre that give a מקום to all people.

We see this every day.

R'Shlomo tells a story of how he was in Russia for a week and every morning in his hotel he would get a delivery of an English language Russian newspaper. However the paper had nothing about Russia. It was all about Israel. Russia were complaining they were trying to bring peace to the world but Israel were preventing it. Without Zionists there would be peace in the world. You saw in Germany how the focus was on the Jew.

There are many issues in the world, famines, natural disaster, but every time anything happens in Israel it's front page news. Why? Because people know it's the centre of the world.

God is one. His name is one. He created the world. This is where it begins. Therefore the unity of God is illuminated from there.

שאלת הבן הכחם

The question of the wise son

חֲכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מֵה הַעֲדוֹת וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתֶכֶם. וְאַף אֶתָּה אָמַר לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת
הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפִיקוֹמָן:

What does the wise [son] say? "What are these testimonies, statutes and judgments that the Lord our God commanded you?" And accordingly you will say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice, "We may not eat an afikoman after the Pesach sacrifice."

The Ishbitzer says that ברוך המקום corresponds to the question of the חֲכָם.

What is he asking?

It is relating to the מקום, to the point that distinguishes between one and two. He sees a world filled with contradictions. One the one hand there is unity, on the other there isn't.

These are also found in the Torah. "עֲדוֹת" opposite "חֻקִּים" all which God commanded you.

On the one hand the Torah is engraved in the world as it says "God looked into the Torah and created the world" The Torah and the world are one.

It's not because there are oxen in the world that we have Bava Kamma that deals with the damages of the ox that gores. But really the other way round the Torah precedes the world. Because there is a Bava Kamma, God created oxen. On the one hand there are "חֻקִּים" (statutes) that are engraved in the world, no less a part of the world than the laws of nature. But we also have "עֲדוֹת" (testimonies), related to the idea of requiring witnesses. Alluding to the fact that we are in a world that is concealed and you need to reveal it. Reality is that the world is one it comes from a unity. But in a world of two, when you need to reveal the truth you need two witnesses. For in a world of two everything has two sides so you need two witnesses to sort the truth.

The חֲכָם is asking what is going on. On one hand we have חֻקִּים indicating the Torah is engraved in the world, not separate and on the other there are עֲדוֹת telling us we are in a world of lies, that the Torah comes from outside and is used to testify on the truth and unity.

There is always this conflict. One day you will really want to serve God and sense the whole world is geared towards helping you fulfill that aim. Another day you will feel the world is trying to stop you.

This is also felt in our relationship with the Torah, between us and God.

The דָּבָר asks, on the one hand “God is our Lord”, the Torah is etched into the fabric of the cosmos. Israel and the Torah are one. Yet on the other, “He commanded you” if the Torah is part of us, of creation why did it need to be commanded to us?

What is bothering the דָּבָר?

He wants to know why is God commanding us all the time? What does he want from me? Am I important? What does he think of me as, a son or a servant?

He wants to live a Jewish life, to learn and to do, but he wants to know his place next to God.

There are many people today who want to return to Judaism but there is something stopping them. They don't know where their place is. They want to know if they matter. Is God waiting for the,

The דָּבָר asks, why me? Why does he command me? What is our connection and why can't I feel it?

He just wants to feel the taste, just once, the feeling that God created the world for him and gave the Torah for him.

אָמַר לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח

“Say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice “We may not eat an afikoman after the Pesach sacrifice.”

We tell the דָּבָר, what are you looking for? This is the whole idea of Pesach. What becomes apparent on Seder night is that God has a special place for you. He is etched in you and you in Him.

On the night of Bedikat Chametz, “on the night of the 14th” God illuminates in me my roots. He really plants in me the knowledge that he needs me

So what are these Halachot of Pesach that we remind the דָּבָר? “One is not to eat any dessert after the Afikoman” so to speak after you eat from the meat of the pesach offering, or the matzah of the Afikoman, don't eat anything else. Why? So you keep the taste.

You may have thought, either the Torah is Edut, comes from outside to a world of duality, a world separate from God. Or it's Chukim, so to speak it reveals that God is etched in us and we are one with Him, and he doesn't need to command us.

It's worthwhile to note something about the Laws of Pesach. There is something unique on the night of Pesach in that the Mitzvot are the Mitzvot of eating, there is the commandment

to eat Pesach Matzah and Maror. God commands from above, from outside, but this takes root inside me, this is Edut and Chukim.

There is a verse King David says, ותורתך בתוך מעי "And your Torah is in my innards" The Ishbitzer says this refers to Matzah. When I eat Matzah I am bringing the Torah inside me, געוואלד.

We say to the נֶחֱם, it's not like you think, because the Torah is part of you, you are able to do it without command. Like a part of nature. Likes eating or sleeping. You don't need to prevail when you want to eat or sleep. The Chukim of the Torah are something else, they tell us that deep down there is the yearning to do them, it's engraved in me, but very deep down inside, so therefore I need Mitzvot, to prevail over these deep things in me.

The Torah is etched, when you love someone you tell them you are etched on my heart, this is saying it's deep in me.

The Chukim of the torah are etched in us deeper than the laws of nature. They are part of my nature, but on the other hand we're not forced to observe them, we have free will, we don't *need* to speak nicely to another person, but we do need to eat and sleep.

Of the Four Sons, intellectually speaking, the נֶחֱם is the highest, but we have to tell him, perhaps stop being so intellectual, do you know where your questions come from? You learn a lot, and you do, but you never taste, it doesn't go down into you. So you don't sense the place for you next to God.

Why is it forbidden to eat anything after the Afikoman? Because I want to keep the taste of this unbelievable light forever. I want to keep this in my innards, in my body. On seder night, on the night of eating the Korban Pesach this deep and awesome light is illuminated in me. It's really clear that God is one, everything is one, and I'm one with God. But after Pesach when I return to this world of duality, even after Seder night finishes, this light doesn't shine anymore, but in my insides through eating the Pesach, Matzah and Maror, I keep this taste of ברוך המקום ברוך הוא.

We say to the נֶחֱם, you should know this night is your night, and because of what is illuminated on this night you need to take in as much as you can.

This illumination is also that after Pesach passes, it doesn't fade away. It should be internalise, become a part of us. The like Matzah becomes a part of you.

When God gave us the Torah on Shavuot, this infinite light entered finite כלים, but before hand, on Pesach, this light is still out of the כלים.

What happens to the נֶחֱם? He jumps to Shavuot, he asks what are the Edut, Chukim and Laws, he wants to know what is going on in the torah.

But you tell him about the laws of Pesach, we don't have Dessert after Afikoman. We ask him why do you jump? Before the Torah is given you need Pesach, the taste of the Matzah. This taste needs to remain with you all this time. If you don't have the infinite taste you won't be able to understand the Torah when it is in finite כלים.

You won't be able to suddenly be a Jew of Shavuot or Yom Kippur, you need to be a Jew of Pesach.

What is this infinite taste of the Matzot? When the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe blew the Shofar it was awesome, on the level of the Shofar of the Mashiach. Towards the end of the life he was paralysed, unable to speak, but when he blew the shofar, you could hear it a block away, you would hear all of Israel crying inside.

One year a Misnaged came to be with the Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah. There were only 20 people allowed to pray with the Rebbe, under doctor's orders, yet this Misnaged was able to squeeze in and stand next to him. When the Rebbe blew the Shofar, the Rebbe cried, and the Misnaged asked, why is he crying? This is mitzvah!

His problem was that this is a Mitzvah and you should rejoice when doing a Mitzvah. But there is also something infinite there, something he missed. He missed the Shofar of the redeemer.

He was really asking how do we taste the infinite flavour of the "Edut, Chukim and Mishpatim."

This is what's going on at the Seder.

להרגיש בבית עם היהדות

To feel at home with Judaism.

This is the whole idea behind Seder night, this deep flavour that penetrates you. That you feel at home with your Judaism, with the Torah, with the Jewish people, with God.

Pesach is the festival of Avraham Avinu, the person who felt at home with God.

What was the home of Avraham like? It was a place where every stranger could come, everyone felt good, felt wanted in his house.

Why did Avraham accept strangers into his home? It was because this is what God did., He is a stranger in this world and he took Him in. So at the beginning of the seder, in **הא לחמא** we invite strangers into our homes.

Pesach has to be before shavuot, one can know the whole torah but if I'm a stranger to God, if I'm a stranger to Jews and to Judaism what good is there in that? Beforehand I need to feel this deep relationship and relevance.

This isn't about "knowing", you can know Japanese and be an expert but what is your relationship to it, it's not my culture, it's just a subject.

The Ishbitzer would say the biggest beracha he could give you would be that you feel at home with the Torah.

R' Shlomo was accustomed to say who is an assimilated Jew? One who is not at home with their Judaism.

This isn't about how many Mitzvot you keep, as sometimes you will meet a Jew who won't even go to Synagogue on Yom Kippur yet you can see when you talk about Judaism with them they feel at home. They are involved Jews!

ברוך המקום is about "מקום" I have a place next to God.

What is holy about the Kotel? There is a place there for every Jew, you see all kinds of Jews there.

When R'Shlomo was a young boy, just after the war he needed to be in Switzerland. He was on a train making it's way from Zurich to Geneva, a long journey, so he slept. When he woke up there was someone opposite him. This person was well dressed, he could see he was wealthy, but in his experience R'Shlomo tells over some people are broken no matter how rich or poor they are, and they need to speak to someone. This person began to speak to R'Shlomo, and he asked him about himself, to which he replied he was studying in Yeshiva in America. This fellow realised he was Jewish so began to spill out all his woes. He knew R'Shlomo didn't recognise him so he felt like he could tell him everything. He told him he was one of the wealthiest people in the world, and you would think that he had everything but that R'Shlomo was young, with much to learn about life. He said he had nothing, he has a house in Geneva next to the lake, a house in Rio next to the beach and a house in Paris too. His wife is busy dealing with all these houses, so he never sees her and his kids are busy spending all his money. He described himself as basically homeless. Nebach, R'Shlomo recalls, it went into his bones, it was then that he understood what a home was, to know that you have a place in this world.

הבן הרשע The Wicked Son

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם - וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֹּלל כָּפַר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאָרַף אֶתְהָ הַקֵּהָה אֶת שִׁנָּיו וְאָמַר לוֹ: "בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם". לִי וְלֹא-לוֹ. אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּה שָׁם, לֹא הַיָּה נִגְאָל

What does the evil [son] say? "'What is this worship to you?' (Exodus 12:26)" 'To you' and not 'to him.' And since he excluded himself from the collective, he denied a principle [of the Jewish faith]. And accordingly, you will blunt his teeth and say to him, "'For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt' (Exodus 13:8)." 'For me' and not 'for him.' If he had been there, he would not have been saved.

What's the רָשָׁע's problem, why is he a רָשָׁע?

הוא בָּרוּךְ corresponds to the רָשָׁע, God is called "הוא" when He is concealed, when you can't speak to Him directly and call Him אתה.

You think the רָשָׁע is wicked because he doesn't want to do good? No, he's wicked because he tried to do good but didn't feel God, the רָשָׁע says I didn't feel god was close.

And he sits at the seder table and says "what is this Avodah to you" why are you working so hard? As it appears to me God doesn't want to reveal himself. The Torah and Mitzvot won't bring Him closer to this world, so why do you bother?

According to the Sod yesharim: "בָּרוּךְ הוא" corresponds to the רָשָׁע's question, for he says since God is called "הוא" his name reveals that he is concealed in the upper worlds as we see in the Zohar, so we see from this that God doesn't want the Avodah we do in the lower worlds. This is what "What is this work to you" means. He is saying if God wanted your service He would have made it easier for man to do things, without problems, but since man suffers and the service is tedious, it proves God doesn't want this service. As it says in the Gemara "Our leaders are well laden.. Laden with mitzvot (Brachot 17a)

The רָשָׁע is saying if God wanted us to serve Him He would have made it easy! He is saying he sees people around him working hard to serve God, so what does this tell him?

Let's take an example if someone wants to come and meet me, but il don't want to meet them, what do I do? I say "when do you want to come?" he says 2, I reply 2 doesn't work for me, come at 3, 3 doesnt work for him, hows 8? 8 doesn't work for me, let's try next week... I don't want to meet this guy, I make it hard for him until he gives up.

The רש"י says if God wanted us to serve him why is it so hard? Why is he concealed so much? Why is he so far? In fact what's going on here is that the רש"י has tried already, and not just tried, but really tried.

R'Shlomo says, when he was in Torah v'Daat, around 15 or 16 and there was another kid must have been 20, he was gentle and serious. He learnt day and night, went to the mikvah many times a day, he was so committed that one Friday when he got out of the mikvah he touched this dirty rubbish bag by mistake and he got back in the mikvah to wash again. Many years later R'Shlomo met him again and he told me his story. He said do you know how much I tried, how much I invested? It was loads. But it didn't work, I left yeshiva and went down, left it all, didn't keep shabbat. He didn't descend on a Jewish level alone but on a human level too. I didn't work, did nothing. I met this woman and we lived in the Bronx, she worked and I lived off her, she wanted me to get up and leave the house, do some work, but what could I do? This is how I lived, I sat there watching TV, doing nothing.

Now the Rebbe from Cleveland took upon himself the Mitzvah of Mikvah, he cleaned and made Mikvaot across the world, these were known as "Clevelander Mikvaot", and the fellow continues the story that even after he left Yeshiva he would still go to the Mikvah, and near to where he lived there was a Clevelander Mikvah, but after a while even that stopped. Anyway one day he was out and about needed to buy something, it was a non Jewish neighbourhood, but there he stood on the corner of the road on a beautiful day, looking at the blue and suddenly he doesn't know what happened but it hit him, what kind of person did he want to be, what kind of servant of God did he want to be, but look at him now, at the end of the path. He thought to myself, gevalt I'm nothing. Suddenly a big truck appears next to him driven by a Chabad guy, and he asked him, are you Jewish so he said yes and he said get in, which he did. He drove to Brooklyn and when he got next to the Clevelander Mikvah he stopped and said to get out,

He tells over, when he saw how much God looked out for him, how he sent him Eliyahu HaNavi to take him from the Bronx and return him to the Mikvah, he couldn't return to rubbish, so he returned to Judaism.

The רש"י says he tried, he found it hard, God didn't give him a sign, he estranged me, ברוך הוא, hidden, so he asks "what is this avodah"

In comparison to the חכם who is connected to "ברוך המקום" he feels the presence of God but it's hard for him "What are the Edut, Chukim and Mishpatim which God commanded you" if the Torah is part of me why do you need to command me the whole time?

The חכם sees a conflict between the world of duality and the world of unity. On the one hand he feels himself standing before God but he also sees the world of duality, of two, of contrasts and separations

But the problem the רש"י has is completely different. Not a case of one or two but a case of why is God so distant?

This רש"י believes in God, if not why would he be there?

What's the difference between a חכם and the רשע, the רשע needs to feel more than the חכם, what the חכם considers closeness to God isn't enough for the רשע, and because he feels distant he rejects the avodah.

R'Shlomo says that he wouldn't dare say this off his own back but according to Ishbitzer and many Rebbes the רשע is more good than the חכם, his soul is greater, He misses the closeness to God more.

I'm always telling people that you think people who are divorcing love each other less than the ones who aren't divorcing. on the contrary, many times they are divorcing because they want to be closer but it's not working,

The רשע wants to be close to God so he says why are you making it hard? why do you remained hidden?

אף אתה הקהה את שיניו

You will blunt his teeth

What do we reply to the רשע? "You will blunt his teeth"

What are the teeth? They chew and grind the food so it is able to be digested in the stomach, only that way can it be absorbed by the body.

We tell the רשע, have you ever chewed Judaism, Ever chewed Torah? Have you ever taken the Torah into your heart? If you ever tried to take the torah into your heart you'd feel the closeness of God.

It's correct that God is hiding from you, but you're also hiding from Him. The truth is, as much as you open up to Him He'll open up to you, perhaps you've learnt Torah but you did so in a superficial way, you didn't chew it. You want to feel close with God but you didn't learn Torah in a way that it became part of you, you didn't search for God and yourself in Torah so he didn't find you.

And we say, you are right, we do struggle with the avodah, and it's trials and tribulations, but believe me, deep down it's not a problem at all.

When my kids ask for something and it's inconvenient for me to get it, I don't feel the inconvenience, because I'm happy to help them. If all you focus on is the effort and toil and trouble it won't ever become close to you.

The author of the Hagaddah is saying you blunt his teeth. We say why do you have teeth, you don't use them? You want to swallow without chewing, you want everything immediately.

We don't take out his teeth, we just say for what you are looking for you don't need your teeth.

But really the רַשָּׁע doesn't know where to look for God, this is Ishbitzer torah, there are two parts of the secret, there is the secret due to distance, that God is far, that I don't know where He is, but there is a secret from closeness, it's hidden, hidden in my heart.

We say to the רַשָּׁע it's true that God is concealed, but in truth Hee is hidden inside you, deep deep down, if you chew the Torah, chew your Judaism, you will feel God.

צור לבבי וחלקי

כישלון של האבא

The Failure of the Father

This is a Belzer Torah about the

There are three letters in the word רַשָּׁע, the external ones are ר and ע, making רע, the middle one is ש. The formation of the ש is three stalks that descend and join at one point, it reflects the ties of every Jew with the 3 Avot. At times it appears that a Jew is evil externally but inside he is still tied with the Avot. The Belzer rebbe says "blunt his teeth.. hit and shake the ש that is hidden inside him. Don't let his external elements prevent him from being all that he can be.

We also tell him because of this God took us out of Egypt, me and not you, had you been there you wouldn't have been redeemed.

Why do you say "אילו היה שם"? Is he not speaking to his son the רַשָּׁע right now, it should say "אילו היית שם לא היית נגאל"? Here's why, the way to speak to the רַשָּׁע is just to blunt his teeth. When it continues and says "אמור לו" that is directed to the father not the son. Say to the father had he been in Egypt he wouldn't have been redeemed, the redemption from Egypt was for the sake of the children, so they remain Jews after all the generations, and if your son is a רַשָּׁע it shows you didn't know how to deal with it, your son is looking for something deep but the way you presented it was that Judaism didn't come across as deep enough

R'Shlomo writes that in 1967 in an American magazine there was an article on hippies, and they wrote that there were young Jews who were off the path, not going to shul. He felt he had to respond. He wrote a letter, "Do you know why our kids aren't going to shul? Not because they aren't looking for God, but because they specifically are looking for God, with the ways things are going in our shuls they know they won't find God there, God created us in his image, but today parents degrade the image of God in their child when they shape them in their own image. Hippies are searching for God, they are looking for something to fill their hearts, and above all they want to return to be in the image of God, but they don't know how to, because nobody is showing them the way." They published the letter in the next edition, but nobody replied and he doesn't know if anyone read it, at least he read it himself...

The רַשָּׁע is in yeshiva, he's learning, on some level he serves God, but doesn't find him. We tell him, you know what you need, you need something deeper.

On the other hand we tell him, you also have a responsibility, this depth that you are able to reach, is only if you use your teeth, don't leave it to your Rosh Yeshiva, or your Rebbe. If you chew Judaism with your own teeth, and let it find a place in you, then you'll feel it.

קרוב יהיה, לכל-קראי, לכל אשר יקראהו באמת.

הלם בבית הכנסת

A Shock in Shul

Sometimes the רשע is right, you can't just keep on pushing him away and saying you have a problem.

R;Shlomo thought of another explanation of his question "what is this avodah to you". The רשע is sitting there, and he's listening to the חכם, who asks about the Edut the Chukim and the Mishpatim, and we tell him the mitzvot are little holy contractions, that make it possible for us to absorb the infinite light, and the רשע gets up and says "I see you, this is not Tziimtzum, this is darkness, what is left from the light? You are dark people, gloomy, and lacking love"

He says what is this service to you, what is this service of Judaism doing for you, I don't see that you are better people than anyone else, in fact the opposite I see that you are always angry.

You go to a religious area, and you see things that go on there, and then you say, this is Judaism? You shout at your wife, you shout at your kids, you hit your kids, one person cheats the other, what is this Judaism doing to you?

What is going on here? Sometimes you take these holy contractions, צמצומים הקדושים, of the Torah and then you hide them away, you think that just because you eat Glatt Kosher you can shout at people.

In 1976 in Vancouver, R'Shlomo was at a big convention of religious leaders, to bring peace to the world. He stayed there for a week, from wednesday to wednesday. There were some hippies there who came from California, they were very young, in their twenties and he asked them to go to shul with him on Shabbat.

Looking back on this event he was troubled and embarrassed by this idea, it was silly, he didn't know what was waiting for them.

They walked to shul for an hour, and R'Shlomo makes a point that he doesn't want to say anything bad but all the Jews there in the shul were kosher, including the Rabbi and Chazan, but the hippies who came with me, they were very distant, cut off from Judaism, but you know what, he felt that even their toe nails searched for God more than all these Jews. You see, during tefillah, all there was was loud noise of chatter, you wouldn't have know if it was Mussaf of Rosh Hashanah or Eichah of Tishah b'Av. But the nadir was at Mussaf. He didn't know there was a battle between the Rav and the Chazzan. It appears the Rabbi organised that the shul didn't renew the contract of the Chazzan, and the Chazzan tried to arrange it that they wouldn't renew the contract of the Rav. So in the middle of the Kedushah, there was a shout from the Ladies section. It was the wife of the Chazzan who screamed "Stop! Don't continue to daven for the Rabbi who wants to throw you out", and he

said to his wife, "Speak to the wife of Rav not me", it was like a Charlie Chaplin film. Amongst all that the Rav tried to calm everyone down saying "Quiet, kavod"

He looked at these hippies he brought with and died of embarrassment. this was tefillah?
this was serving God?

What is this service of God to you, right? What is it doing to you, for you? It breaks the heart.

R'Shlomo concludes that it's sad to tell you, but it's clear none of the youngsters who came with him wanted to learn more about Judaism, it's clear they thought if this is Judaism who needs it. However there was one kid who was 14 who came along, and he didn't really respond to this display in tefillah so negatively, perhaps because he knew somewhat more, luckily his parents sent him to a Jewish school, after that he stayed in touch for many years.

תם מה הוא אומר?

What does the Tam say?

We are starting to see a clearer picture now. The 4 sons are not like the world thinks, that the חכם is perfectly good, the רשע is fully evil, the תם is an idiot and the יודע לשאול has no hope.

Rather from son to son we are getting higher and higher, the חכם is good, the רשע is deeper, the תם is even higher and the highest is the יודע לשאול.

The רשע is searching for a light that is greater than the חכם and the תם for one that is greater still.

R'Shlomo tells a story that when the Yom Kippur war broke out, he was privileged enough to be invited to visit the Air Force. They asked him to sing for the pilots, the tzadikim, whose lights illuminated the sky.

He jumped on a plane, and behind him sat a priest. That night he couldn't sleep, and neither could the priest, he'd get up go for a walk and come back, so they began to speak. R'Shlomo said to him "believe me, I love everyone, and you are allowed to do what you want and believe in what you want to believe in, but let me ask you, out of curiosity, why are you going to Israel, to help or to do missionary work?" The priest could have told me he was going to help but he was honest and he told him that in truth he was going to do missionary work.

You know as much as we say to tolerant, sometimes you just can't and R'Shlomo said "Listen, if that's what you believe in, that's your prerogative, God isn't the police, but as a good friend, let me tell you something, if I was in your place I'd be a bit scared, you come to give us the light of Jesus right, and for a person in the complete dark, that's a small light, like a flashlight. I don't wish to be irreverent, but I want you to know, for us, for Israel even on Mondays and Thursdays, when we take the Sefer Torah out from the Aron Kodesh, this isn't a flashlight, this is a giant halogen torch, it's psychedelic, and the light that dwells in our hearts on Shabbat Kodesh? I have nothing to make a comparison to. And Yom Kippur? This is something that you can't imagine. So how are you going to come to us with a flashlight, how are you going to come to the Jews when we are filled with light?"

If you had an idea of what a soldier feels like when he is fighting for the Holy Land? You need to come and give us light? Go to Germany and give them some light, but to come to Israel? Especially now, when the light of Israel is lit from one end of the world to the other? If I was in your place I'd be worried."

The question is, what are you looking for? Are you looking for a flashlight? Are you looking for a massive electric light? Is the light of the sun good enough for you? Or are you searching for the biggest light in creation?

The חכם is a frummer, learns in yeshiva, not a simple guy, he has deep questions, ברוך המקום, he feels God, and he asks what are the Edut and Mishpatim. But the רשע needs to feel Godliness more. The רשע needs more from God than the חכם, so he therefore feels that God is hidden more deeply.

The רשע wants that he opens the Gemara and it would light up like a candle, but do you know how much you need to learn so that the Torah lights up in front of your eyes? You need to push yourself. You need to break every bone in your head until you get something, until you reach the "והאר עינינו בתורתך" the רשע says why has God made this so hard, it appears that he doesn't want or love my learning.

The תם is deeper, he asks "מה זאת?" What is this?

What is "מה?" מַה is the name God created the world through. It looks like the world is an entity in and of itself, but when you look at its essence you understand suddenly that it's all Godly, just God, then you can annul (Bittul (Self Abnegation; Selflessness): (lit. "self-nullification"); a commitment to G-d and divine service that transcends self-concern) yourself completely.

There is a knowledge of God that can bring you to complete Bittul, like Moshe who said "ונחנוּ מה", "We are nothing." Moshe's knowledge of God was that he felt he didn't exist.

The word אדם is gematria מַה, to say that this knowledge of God is being mevateil oneself totally, this is a complete person in essence.

And what is "זאת"?

When you say זאת, you point to something, refer to something, when you see something there, "זאת" is Torah, זאת התורה.

What does the Torah speak about? It's not the "מה" not the degree of attainment when there is no reality, just Godliness. Rather it's talking about the world that is, a world that you can point to and say "זאת" the Torah teaches how to operate in this world.

The מַה is something big, and it's the deep essence of a person, but on the other hand God wants you to live, if the whole time is spent thinking there is only God and I don't really exist, how can I do all that is needed to be done in this world?

These two sides are needed the “מָה” and the “זָאת”. In the Zohar this is called “יְחודה עילאה” and “יְחודא תתאה” the higher unity and lower unity.

יְחודא תתאה is where I know God is the Lord and it doesn't bother me to know that I also exist. I exist and I love Hashem and serve Him.

The יְחודה עילאה is knowing that there is only God and nothing else, and opposite this, my being is completely annulled I already don't exist. When we say Shema, this is the יְחודה עילאה, that's why we close our eyes, because at that moment I cease being, nothing exists, ה' אחד, this says there is nothing besides Him.

When I say ברוך שם.. This is the יְחודא תתאה, there is a world, and God reigns over this world

Even in relationships between people there are these two levels. I'm able to love someone tremendously, but there is still two of us, I acknowledge my existence and the other person's existence and he does the same too, and we love each other. But the power of children, specifically small children, is seen in what do they do to their parents. When it comes to your little children, you forget yourself, you blend in with them, like you don't exist יְחודה עילאה, When our kids grow up this יְחודה עילאה shrinks in our relationship and the יְחודא תתאה grows, I treat my child like myself, and before him I also acknowledge my own existence.

R'Shlomo tells a story to highlight the difference between יְחודה עילאה and יְחודא תתאה. In his shul there was a Mr Fritz. On Rosh Hashanah you need to bow on the floor, but Mr. Fritz would wear a clean and crisp new suit and was scared that he would dirty his trousers so he would bring newspapers, old copies of the New York Times. He would cover half the shul with them. When it came to bowing he would do so very quickly, supporting himself on two chairs to make sure he wouldn't dirty his clothes. R'Levi Yitzchak would have said “Mr Fritz bows before God, but doesn't stop being Mr Fritz.” This is יְחודא תתאה

On the other hand, when it came to the Modzhitzer Rebbe bow at this stage, at this stage he just fell to the floor, and his Chassidim who feared that he got hurt, brought loads of rugs and pillows. When he fell he truly annulled himself before God, as if he didn't exist, this is יְחודה עילאה.

Take The Amshinover, this man is always in יְחודה עילאה, it's like he's not here, not just when he is with God also when with people. When he speaks to people it's like he's not here, he really listens to the other people, complete bittul. It's a miracle how he's alive.

So when the תם says “מָה זָאת” what's he asking?

He's asking, how can you straddle these two worlds, without an internal contradiction.

The תם doesn't have the problems of the חכם and the רשע, he just wants to live in the higher spheres of judaism he wants to be a complete person, he wants to be “ונחנו מה” like Moshe. He also wants “זאת התורה”

Yaakov was called an איש תם, and it says that he lived in tents, he was a complete man, who live in the tents of Torah, and the Zohar adds, that at every moment in time he lived in two

tents, the tent of מַה, of יְחֻדָּה עֵילָאָה and the tent of זָאָת, the יְחֻדָּא תַתָּא, this is what the תַּם yearns for.

Sometimes I'm able to creep into the world of the יְחֻדָּה עֵילָאָה, but most of the time, I'm in the יְחֻדָּא תַתָּא, how is it possible to find time in both of them?

בְּחֻזֵק יָד הוּצֵאנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם

With a strong arm God took us out of Egypt

This is how we answer him. "With a strong arm God took us out of Egypt from the house of slaves."

We tell him, you are right, logically there is no way to condense these two approaches into one, only with בְּחֻזֵק יָד.

This is telling us that even from God's side of things, this is hard, so to speak, God invests all His effort into this.

The בְּחֻזֵק יָד is the source of all the wonder of the creation of the world, this world comes from a higher place, and it's only revealed in this lower, narrow, physical world. The Zohar compares this to a person with a small cup and he wants to put all the water from the oceans into it. It's hard! Even for God this is a problem so to speak, but with all this he created the world as it is, this is "בְּחֻזֵק יָד" this is the פְּלֵא of the connection of the soul to the body.

So too the exodus from Egypt was also with בְּחֻזֵק יָד, God took us out of Egypt, in a way that His infiniteness was revealed in a finite way. Eternity in time, a miracle in nature, "עֵינִן" in "יֵשׁ" and He gave us the כְּלִים, to achieve this. And the כְּלִי that He gave to us to be fully aware of this in a fixed way was the Torah "זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה"

The Torah is the gift of "בְּחֻזֵק יָד" I learn Torah, I know and understand and I'm one with it, I'm completely mevatef.

This is deep, what is the idea of the Oral Law? On the one hand, this is my Torah, I understand it, but on the other, it's really God's Torah.

When we learn Torah we really see this, I'm able to give myself over to God completely, and together with this, to not stop being an individual person, that's my head, that my logic. Take Abaye in the Gemara for example, he could have said, "don't record my name, I'm mevatef completely before God, but no, the Torah that he said, this is really the Torah of Abaye, his name is a part of Torah, and with this, this is God's Torah. Before Abaye sat down to learn he said "בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה"

Also with the Rishonim, each one has their own opinion, their own style, the Ramban, the Rashba, the Ran...

גם תפילה - חוזק יד

Prayer is also חוזק יד

The Radziner also adds a small idea, which is very deep

The Torah was given to us on Shavuot, but what was given to us on Pesach? On Pesach the power of tefillah was given to us. The stirrings of the redemption from Egypt came from our tefillah, “וַתַּעַל שְׁוַעְתְּם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים”

When was Isaac born? After Avraham renewed his prayer

וַיִּשְׁכַּח אַבְרָהָם בְּבִקְרָא אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־עָמַד שָׁם אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה

The Zohar asks, why did Noach not pray? Because he wasn't aware of the power of prayer. He wasn't able to believe in prayer, for how could a mere man tell God what to do? And logically he was 100% correct.

This is the what Avraham was mechadesh, that prayer has power. That prayer works. And Pesach, it's ענין is tefillah.

On seder night, as much as the Hagaddah is Torah, really, it's tefillah.

The secret of “חוזק יד” is tefillah, Avraham, and after him Israel revealed there is power in prayer. “Their power comes only from their mouths” (Yalkut Yeshayahu) people down here pray and God listens. This is the wonder of “חוזק יד” this is why Rabbi Nachman says you've got to put all your energies into prayer.

Also in learning Torah you need to invest energy, but this is energy of the head, of thinking, but prayer, this is “כל עצמותי תומרנה” with a חוזק יד.

You see how deep this is. The power that is invested into tefillah is the integration of מַה and זַאת, of the higher and lower worlds. On one hand I speak to God, there's me and there's God, I'm facing God, but in truth, it's not the regular “me” who is praying, it's not the “me” who talks on the phone or buys ice cream, this is the “מַה” that's in me, the true “me” that's in me, the me that is completely mevatel before God. Real prayer is when I feels in a very deep way, that God himself is praying in me.

שאינו יודע לשאול

The one who does not know how to ask.

וְשֹׂאֵינוּ יוֹדְעֵי לְשֹׂאוֹל - אֶת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שְׂנַאֲמֵר, וְהַגִּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם.

And the one who doesn't know to ask, you will open for him. As it is stated, "And you will speak to your your son on that day saying, for the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt."

The soul of the תם is wonderful. Could there be anything higher?

Yeah! The שאינו יודע לשאול is higher still.

He doesn't ask about the laws and the statues, and not about the עילאה or יחודה עילאה. He doesn't even want to be "complete person" he's not dealing with what he wants to be. He has a level of knowledge of God that completely fill him.

What is this awareness that fills the שאינו יודע לשאול?

It's hard to elucidate, but you need to see what happens if you really see miracles, when you rub your eyes in disbelief.

The שאינו יודע לשאול is in perpetual admiration. He admires the person who lives his whole life in the Godly realm, even in the natural world he lives miraculously.

Before you ask if is this comparable to the תם, the תם still has an awareness of himself.

There is a small crumb between him and God, so you have to ask "מֶה זֶאת" because you want to be mevatel before God.

But there is another level, where you don't have any questions, you live every second filled with God and all that exists.

Rabbi Levi of Berditchev was on this level, everyone that met him knew he truly was "שאינו יודע לשאול"

Every minute in life he was obsessed with the idea that God is one. He didn't stop admiring, in every big and small matter he saw God.

One Monday afternoon he said to his gabbai, "please rush out and call all the Jews in town, tell them to come to shul, I've got something unbelievable to tell them"

As you'd expect, when they heard R' Levi Yitzchak was going to tell them something unbelievable, they ran to shul, R' Levi Yitzchak went to the bimah and said "I want you to know, ה' אלקינו ה' אחד - אין עוד מלבדו, know,

He wasn't a fool, but you need to understand, he lived every minute with the idea that God is one, it wasn't a one off realisation, it was renewed every minute.

The deeper question is, how can one live like this, how did R'Levi live from day to day, because you need to know in truth there aren't any כלים to attain ה' ידיעת ה' like this. This is deeper than bittul, also the Torah on the level that we learn it, doesn't give us the כלים needed.

The Rebbes all say this is the level that King David lived on, this is the level of David Melech hamashiach.

King David used to say "כִּי אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי-גָדוֹל יְהוָה וְאֲדַבְּרֵנוּ מִכָּל-אֱלֹהִים:" (Tehillim 135:5) and everyone asks, was it just him and nobody else?

Yes! The knowledge that King David had was a different level, he was obsessed with it for every second, obsessed that the Lord is great. That's why King David was all about song and gratitude.

You must know that even in our lives we have these moments of "שאינו יודע לשאול" such as when your child is born.

It's unbelievable, suddenly a small child comes to the world, the cutest creature in the world, so small, everything is surprisingly small, fingers, nails, just something else!

Unbelievable, more than a miracle, even more than סוף ים קריעת ים סוף, these things are external, but these things are happening to you, this is your child, you don't stop obsessing.

You should know in every point of life and service of God, there is a level of שאינו יודע לשאול, you can learn Torah and you are able to obsess with all the admiration of every word in the Torah, I can know God gave us the Torah, and I can obsess over this, I can know I'm a Jew and obsess over it too.

On Seder night we are given the possibility to be on this level, we go from the חֶכֶם to the שאינו יודע לשאול, for on this night God really opens the lofty gates for us, Seder night is all singing and praise, the questions are only at the beginning, after that it transcends any question.

ר' לוי יצחק מתקן את החלב

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak fixes the milk

R'Shlomo tells over this story of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak that he heard from Bobov.

Sometimes there is someone who is truly געוואלד, the whole world has trouble relating to them. It's hard for people to swallow. So as you can understand there are many stories about Talmidei Chachamim who would come and visit Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to try and understand this phenomenon.

The Ba'a HaTanya was a tremendous Gao, and he made a point that specifically on Shavuot, the time of the giving of the Torah, he would endeavour to be with Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and when he would return he would speak of the "thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai were in Berditchev" so someone asked him "actual thunder and lightning?" And he would reply "Don't ask, it was good, it was very good"

It is told of one of the Rebbes who came to see Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to attest to his quality. In the middle of Shacharit, Rabbi LEvi Yitzchak got up, wrapped in his Tallit and Tefillin and went into the kitchen. The Rebbe followed him to see what he was doing. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak asked after the cook "What are we eating this afternoon, is it milky or meaty" he was told that it was milky. He then took a spoon, lifted off the cover of the pot and tasted a bit of the soup. He then exclaimed "What's going on here, the milk isn't good, it's weakened in the soup, I need a stronger milk" He then approached another pot and also said "The milk isn't good, it's not strong enough."

The guest couldn't believe his eyes. This was the middle of Tefillah, when it was forbidden to interrupt, he would get up and taste soup and complain about the milk?

Then, after tefillah he saw something unbelievable, a small broken woman, nebach, came to the door of the shul and she said to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak "Rabbi, I'm feeding my child, but I'm very poor, I don't have enough to eat in the house, and my milk is very weak so my child is always hungry" Rabbi Levi Yitzchak said to her "My dear lady, I've already remedied your milk during tefillah.."

This story is נורא ואיום. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was a walking miracle. He ate, he slept, he lived like any other human being, He had children, but combined with this every movement, everything he did was tied to heaven.

Truly בחזק יד

ה'אחד' שבארבעת הבנים

The "One" of the Four Sons.

R'Shlomo concludes the Four Sons with a story.

On every Seder night Rabbi Zvi Elimelech of Dinov would go and visit another Jewish household, so he would see how they would make the Seder.

One time he stopped by the house of one Jew and listened to the reading of the Hagaddah. The Jews was reading with a tune “אָהַד חֲכָם, וְאָהַד רֶשֶׁע, וְאָהַד תָּם, וְאָהַד לְשׂאֵל כְּנִגְדֵי אַרְבַּעַה בְּנֵי דְבָרָה תוֹרָה: אָהַד חֲכָם, וְאָהַד רֶשֶׁע, וְאָהַד תָּם, וְאָהַד לְשׂאֵל” and every time he read the word אָהַד he would cry it out, with a loud voice, like at the end of saying the Shema.

After a while when R' Zvi Elimelech told over this story he said that the way this person said “אָהַד” he transformed the “Four sons” into a holy prayer. That suddenly the most distant child would feel in the depths of their heart that God is one.

You know why some of our children stray from the path? Because we didn't believe in them enough