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Visualizing The Exodus: Two Methods

“One is obligated to see himself as if he [himself] had left Egypt.”^[1] In every generation, on Pesach, we have a *mitzvah* to feel like we are leaving Egypt – today, and now.

When Chazal said that we have this obligation, this doesn't mean in the sense that we need to imagine *then* what it must have been like. Rather, the intention of Chazal was that we need to imagine *now*, what it was like *then* [to attach the past to the present].

How can a person feel as if he left Egypt, though, when he doesn't remember what it was like? How can a person remember what it was like in his past *gilgul* (soul incarnation) when he left Egypt, if he doesn't remember his previous lifetime?

As time goes on and the generations continue, we are further from that time in history, and it becomes more concealed [and distant from us]. But through study and in-depth analysis of the Egyptian bondage, a person can come to visualize the terrible exile that Egypt was, and this will slowly but surely enable a person to feel, of what it was like to be exiled there - and in turn, what it was like to go free from there.

So by learning the words of Chazal in detail about the Egyptian bondage, we enable our mind to visualize what it was like to be there. That gets us to feel that we were actually there, and that draws us closer to feeling the exile that was Egypt. Only through feeling the exile – not simply through knowing about it intellectually – can a person feel what the redemption from it felt like.

This is the first method brought in our Chazal of how one can connect himself to the exile and to the redemption of Egypt: studying the words of Chazal about the Egyptian bondage. But there is also another method brought in Chazal: to connect ourselves with the present state of exile, which can get us to conceptualize what the meaning of exile is, and in turn, what it means to be redeemed from exile.

The gain of the second approach is that whereas we have never seen the past and we do not recognize it, the present is something we all recognize. The past is gone and we have a hard time relating to it, but in the present, we are still in exile, so the present is easier for us to relate to. By becoming aware of the current situation of our exile, that is how we can feel what exile was like in the past – the root of all exiles, which was Egypt.

So we have two methods of how we can visualize leaving Egypt.

The first way is to learn the words of Chazal about the Egyptian bondage, which in turn helps us visualize it. That enables us to then picture in our minds of what it was like to have actually been there, and that helps us feel the pain of the Egyptian exile. This causes us to wish to escape it, and to cry out to Hashem to be saved. This method, of visualizing the exile and redemption from Egypt, is an *avodah* on our part, which requires *hisbonenus* (deep reflection); it doesn't come to us so fast.

The second, alternative approach, is to think about the meaning of present exile, which can help us conceptualize exile of the past. By realizing what the current exile is, it can get us to feel pained from the exile we are in, and when we feel the depth of this exile, it is then much easier for us to connect ourselves with the exile of the past.

Reflecting Into The Current Exile

Using the second method will require us to think: Which exile are we in? According to the first method, all we have to be aware of is the Egyptian exile. According to the second method, we need to think into the current exile.

Here, we will elaborate upon the second method: visualizing the depth of the current exile. The purpose of this is so that we can cause ourselves to cry out to Hashem, from all the pain that we can feel from this exile - and in turn, so that we can connect ourselves to the exile that was in Egypt, the root exile of all exiles to come - including the present one.

The Six Exiles

The roots of these matters are stated in Chazal.

The Jewish people, ever since becoming a nation, have undergone four exiles, which really end up being five exiles; and in fact, there is a sixth exile^[2]. Chazal list four exiles^[3]: the first exile was Egypt, the second exile was Bavel (Babylonia), the third was Persia-Media, and the fourth was the Greek exile. The fifth exile is the exile of Edom. Within the exile of Edom, there is another exile: the exile of Yishmael. (We can all see in front of our eyes that we are in the exile of Yishmael; they surround us every day and at all times.)

Those are our exiles, ever since we have become a nation. The current exile we are in, Edom, includes in it "Yishmael". From the exile of Yishmael will sprout the light of the redemption, as our Chazal state. Chazal said that the nation of Yishmael will cause the nation of Yisrael to greatly suffer, which will cause the nation of Yisrael to cry out to Hashem from all of their suffering; and then Hashem will hear their prayers, and we will be redeemed. It will be "*shama keil*", "G-d will hear", which hints to the name of "Yishmael", for we will cry out to Hashem from the exile of Yishmael, just as we cried out in Egypt to Him, when our prayers were heard and we were redeemed.

We have gone through all the previous exiles. We've been through the exile of Egypt, and we've been through the exile of Bavel. The exile of Yavan (Greece) is also over, to a certain extent [see footnote]^[4]. The exile of Edom, though, is our current situation, and we have not come out of it yet. And more specifically, we currently face the exile of Yishmael.

Understanding The Depth of the Exile of Yishmael

To understand our current exile with greater clarity: If someone thinks that the exile of Yishmael is referring to the Arabs which surround us, he is mistaken. Although it is certainly true that we are surrounded by Arabs and we suffer from them, this is only the external layer of the exile. It is true that we are totally 'exiled' to Yishmael in the external sense, but there is a more inner layer to the exile taking place.

[The external aspect of the exile of Yishmael is that] there is a war of Yishmael against Yisrael, which takes place in Eretz Yisrael, concerning the ownership of Eretz Yisrael. The nation of Yishmael claims inheritance over Eretz Yisrael, for the *Zohar* states that Yishmael has a *zechus* (merit) over Eretz Yisrael, due to the *mitzvah* of *Bris Milah* which they keep[5]. Therefore, they fight Yisrael as they are in Eretz Yisrael.

But the inner layer of this exile is of a totally different nature. The Vilna Gaon[6] discusses at length, as well as Reb Elchonon Wasserman zt"l[7], that the final exile is called the exile of the "*Erev Rav*"[8].

Erev Rav - Then

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the Torah writes, "And the *Erev Rav* went up with them." Ever since we became a people, we have had an 'addition' that has been following us throughout: the '*Erev Rav*'.

They are the ones who were responsible for causing the Jewish people to sin. They gave the idea to make the Golden Calf, and they were the ones who kept causing trouble in the desert and influencing the generation to sin.

Back then, they were not the heads of the Jewish people, though; they were simply known as the '*Erev Rav*'. The leaders then were Moshe and Aharon. It was the *Erev Rav* who convinced everyone that Moshe was dead when he ascended to Heaven to receive the Torah; they thought of the idea to make the Golden Calf and convinced everyone else to do it. The souls of the Jewish people, by themselves, could never have conceived of such a false notion. It was entirely due to the persuasion and influence of the *Erev Rav*.

[Members of the] *Erev Rav* has been escorting us since we left Egypt, all the way until today. We left Egypt, but along with this, came another exile: the exile of the *Erev Rav*. We left Pharaoh, we left the Egyptians, but we weren't redeemed from the *Erev Rav*. They have been following us since we became a nation, until today.

Erev Rav - Now

However, they have gone through major changes since then. The Vilna Gaon writes that in the final generations, the *Erev Rav* are the "heads of the Jewish people, who are the 'leaders', and they have control over the "sons of Leah and Rachel".

They are also called '*sapachas*' by Chazal - a kind of leprosy that forms over the skin, embedded into the skin and atop it, but not a part of it. They came with us when we left Egypt and added themselves onto our nation, but they are not a part of our nation; thus they are called a *sapachas* \leprosy - a layer added onto the skin, which is not an actual part of the skin.

In the later generations, and especially in our current generation, the *Erev Rav* are wicked souls who lead the Jewish people towards evil. Their agenda is to lead the Jewish people astray from Torah, from all holiness, from *emunah*, and from *mitzvos*.

It doesn't matter if he [a member of *Erev Rav*] wears a *kippah* or if he doesn't have a *kippah*; whether he has a beard or whether he doesn't have a beard.

This is the exile we are in. The exile we are currently in is the exile of the *Erev Rav* - who exercise 'control' over the Jewish people. The 'heads of the *Erev Rav*' are the souls of Amalek; Chazal say that the *Erev Rav* is made up of five kinds of people, and at the head of all of them is Amalek[9].

This has been true about our current exile ever since it has begun, but it has particular relevance to today's times. We must understand the situation that we are found in. The exile we are in today is being headed by people who look like Jews - and they look like they are a part of the Jewish people.

This is in vast contrast to the exile of Egypt. In Egypt, when we were exiled by Pharaoh, it was clear to all of us that Pharaoh was not of the Jewish people. But in the current exile, we are exiled under the jurisdiction of people who look like they are one of us. But although they look like Jews, Chazal said that their souls are not of the *Bnei Yisrael*.[\[10\]](#)

They do not understand, and they can never understand, what Torah is. They cannot understand what *mitzvos* are. They cannot understand the nature of the true bond that is between the Jewish people and Hashem.

The Government's Decree On Bnei Torah To Join The Army

"In every generation, they [the nations] stand up to destroy us."[\[11\]](#) We must understand that in the exile we are in, the *Erev Rav* is also trying to destroy us, just as the nations of the past in each generation have sought to destroy us.

If we reflect on the situation, we can see the depth of our exile. In the situation we are in right now, according to the *Halachah*, it is a time of *shmad* (a decree of spiritual genocide)![\[12\]](#) If someone thinks that this is just another decree upon us, he doesn't understand! This is not merely another decree. We are in a time of *shmad*! They want to uproot the entire Torah, from the root!

In a time of *shmad*, there are *halachos* that apply. Every Jew must become familiar with the laws of *mesirus nefesh* - to be prepared to give up our life, if we must. There is a *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* during this time. These *halachos* are discussed in Rambam *Hilchos Kiddush Hashem* and *Sefer HaChinuch* by the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*. There is a *halachah* that during a time of *shmad*, one is not allowed to listen to the government even if they tell you to wear a certain kind of shoelace. A Jew has to let himself get killed rather than listen to them!

The Secular Influence On Our Names, Language, and Clothing

Let's think about this for a minute. Chazal said that in Egypt, the Jewish people did not change their names, their language, and their clothing. But look at what is going on today [with regards to changes in our names, language, and clothing].

With regards to names, in recent times, what kinds of names are people giving to their children? Are people always naming their children with names like Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid? All kinds of 'new names' are becoming popular now, which have entered us from the outside world. We can't even tell if certain names being given today are a boy's names or girl's names!

I was recently in America and I met someone with his little daughter. I asked him, "What's your daughter's name?" He said, "Her name is Eli."

I am not referring to people who don't keep Torah and mitzvos; I hope that Hashem merits them to do true *teshuvah*. I am referring even to people who keep Torah and mitzvos, who are finding it acceptable to give all kinds of new names to their children.

And what is the language that people speak today? *Lashon HaKodesh* has become a foreign language today. How many words being spoken each day are words that have no root in *Lashon HaKodesh*? How do conversations begin? It used to be that in the average conversation between two *frum* Jews,

the conversation began with “*Shalom*” and ended with “*Shalom*.” Today, how do conversations usually begin? I don’t have to mention examples. You already know.

A person might keep Torah and mitzvos, wear a *kippah*, and even have a beard, but the language he speaks is almost exactly like how they talk in the street (except with some minor differences).

In Egypt, our people didn’t change their style of clothing. But in today’s times, we all know that clothing 20 years ago looked very different than today’s styles.

In Egypt, we didn’t change our names, clothing, language. That was then. Today, we are in a different place than Egypt. Today, *frum* Jews are connected with the outside world, and this is has placed us into an exile that is total.

Avoiding Secular Influence

We must know that *Ahavas Yisrael* (love for other Jews) is not the same thing as *chibbur* (connection) to the ways of life all Jews. We must all have *Ahavas Yisrael*; we must burn with a love for other Jews, to love another Jew as you love yourself. But to become connected to the lifestyles of the secular world, and to what goes on outside the “four cubits of *Halacha*”, is to become connected to a world of heresy.

Now I will ask a very simple question. How could it be that a *frum* person keeps listening to the radio, where he hears and absorb a secular person’s views, who doesn’t believe in Hashem and who presents opinions which totally contradict the Torah? How can it be that a person keeps turning on the radio, morning afternoon and night, every half hour, to listen to the opinions of anyone who gets onto the radio to talk, to hear what one person says and what another person thinks?

Maybe a person justifies this by saying, “Don’t worry. I can always hold onto my inner fire of holiness. All of these things I’m listening to don’t affect me or influence me.”

We must understand what kind of situation we are in. If we would know, we wouldn’t be in this situation. It seems though that people have gotten used to it and that there’s nothing wrong. It has become acceptable even for *frum* people to be very connected to the world.

A Decree of the ‘Devil’ and Wicked People - Or A Decree of Hashem?

Last week, I met someone who is considered a Torah scholar. He remarked to me, “I just don’t know what Hashem wants from us. Since the times of Moshe, there was never as much Torah learning as there is today. What, then, does Hashem want from us??” He then said to me, “It must all be that it’s all “*maaseh satan*” (the work of the devil), which is trying to bring us down, from of all the increase in Torah and mitzvos that it sees, which hasn’t been here since the times of Moshe Rabbeinu”.

Such a conclusion shows what kind of deep exile we are in. All of the harsh judgments that are taking place today are not being caused by the ‘judgments’. Hashem is the Judge meting it out; He is behind it all. Yes, Hashem definitely wants something from us, in sending us all of the judgment we see. There are many messengers of Hashem who can mete out His judgment. There are plenty of people who act like scorpions and snakes to us; there is no shortage of them. But they are all messengers of Hashem!

What, indeed, does Hashem want from us? He is not ‘saying’ it to us or ‘telling’ it to us; He is not even yelling it to us anymore. He has given a decree upon us. It is Hashem who is behind the decree! No one else is behind the decree. It is Hashem talking to us, to all of us, to any Jew who has a soul. Hashem is speaking to every Jew who has a soul and sending a message.

If someone reacts to the decree by saying, "I'm fine. My children are too young [to get drafted], and I have plenty of money to move to a different place if I want" - he clearly does not realize the danger to his soul in having such an attitude. How many parents cannot sleep at night because they have children who are of age [to get drafted]! They have no idea what they will do about this!

Hashem is speaking to every Jew now. He is telling each and every one of us, "Enough! Put a stop to the entire way you have been living all these years!" The entire lifestyle that has become acceptable in recent years is a life of total *hefker* (carelessness). It is not a life in which people are seeking to become close to Hashem.

What is Hashem asking from us, in the situation we are in? The possuk in the Torah says, "*What does Hashem your G-d ask from you?*" How does this apply today? He is asking of us one thing alone, and it is the internal truth which applies to the soul deep within every Jew. We are in a time of *shmad*, and it means exactly what it means, with all its ramifications.

Living In A Time of 'Shmad'

The first thing Hashem wants from us is to be willing to give ourselves up for Him. This will require us to learn the *halachos* of *Kiddush Hashem*.

In this time of *shmad* we are in, we must all accept upon ourselves to avoid going to certain places that we were used to going to until now. Each person needs to have the *daas* to realize that he must resolve not to go to certain places that connect him to the outside world, places which he has been used to going to until now. This realization needs to be sealed upon the heart of any *frum* Jew today who fears the word of Hashem.

If someone thinks that this sounds too far-fetched, and that it's just another aspect of our exile, he is mistaken. They [the *Erev Rav*] make their appearance in several stages. They try to get involved in our Torah learning and make problems there, and at other times, they are behind pushing the seminaries to bring secular material into the Torah world.

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe zt"l said that even if they decree that we should learn Tractate Bava Basra, nobody should listen to the government and learn Bava Basra! This is because Torah cannot be nursed from the *Erev Rav*.

Most people don't see it this way, and they wonder, "What is so terrible? Most of what they [the government] seek is for our own good, with just a little bit of bad mixed in. It's mostly good with just a little bit of bad involved. All we have to do is collect a lot of money and pay them off, and then all the problems would go away...."

A person is slowly pulled after them and he becomes connected with them over the years. Chazal say that when you listen to the wicked government during a time of *shmad*, today they say "Do this", tomorrow they say, "Now do this", and in the end, they will tell the person to commit idol worship.

If someone doesn't know that he is in a time of *shmad*, he is totally blind!

The Brisker Rav zt"l expressed, "I see today what is going on in today's times, which almost no one else sees." This was said many years ago. We are in a time in which most people do not even realize that we are in a time of *shmad*! It appears like another decree. People think, "There was a Pharaoh, there was a Nevuchadezzar, and we got past all of them, and we will get by this one too." I hope we get through it, with Hashem's help; Moshiach should come. But in order to get past this decree we are in, that means we need to be prepared to give up our lives for Hashem!

This is reality now. If someone is clear about it, he can't fall asleep at night. It is hard to concentrate during these days for anyone who is clearly aware of the situation.

Imagine if a murderer is chasing somebody and he wants to follow him into his house so that he can kill him. If we see him running after the person, would we keep our doors open as he's running by our house? Taking this further, would we want to be in the same room with him? Would we be comfortable if he's near us? What if his hand is touching our body? And what if his hands are nearing our heart? What do we do if a murderer is right near our own heart?

If someone tends to live in denial, he will think that this kind of stuff only happens in nightmares, and that it cannot happen in reality. But the decree is pointing right at our heart! Our very heart is in danger, no less than a murderer placing his hand near our heart.

What more does Hashem want us to do, so that we understand that they [the Erev Rav] are coming to uproot the entire Torah...?

Pharoah made a decree to kill all Jewish boys. Lavan tried to destroy us entirely, in the attempt of trying to destroy Yaakov. What exactly did Lavan want to destroy? We will explain it clearly, for anyone who doesn't understand yet at this point:

If a *frum* Jew is drafted into the army these days, is there anyone who thinks that his *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of Heaven) won't be affected? Is he the same afterwards? By putting a *frum* Jew together with those who don't keep Torah and mitzvos, who act brazen and improper, will he be able to hold onto his *kedushah* (personal holiness)??

It's Not A Financial Issue of the Government

If someone thinks that they [the government] is trying to help us financially, and that the issue of the army is entirely a financial issue that the government is dealing with – he must know that this is all the '*Sitra Achara*' (the 'Other Side') being clothed in the garment of certain people who claim that they're out for our best interests.

In fact, those people [who are pushing for the draft] might not even be aware that the '*Sitra Achara*' is controlling them, and they might even be earnest in their intentions. Some of them actually are earnest, and they aren't trying to be wicked. They simply don't understand what they are doing to us.

But this is only concerning a certain amount of them. The rest of them simply have wicked intentions. And even those in the government who have earnest intentions to help us are accomplishing the same purpose as the totally wicked members, in spite of the fact that they don't realize what they are doing: they are coming to uproot all of the Torah!!

'Emunah' Is Not An Option Now

If we can remember that the government caused the closure of the yeshivah of Volozhin, can't we also understand that now that the government is trying to uproot the entire Torah?!

How can anyone sleep at night? How can anyone be so calm and serene these days? Why aren't we at least we crying out to Hashem to be saved? Instead, there is false and pseudo kind of '*emunah*' (faith in G-d) that people are having. If someone honestly believes that it's all fine, he would be correct if he indeed had total *emunah*. But the average person does not have such a high level of *emunah*. [If so, we must *daven*.]

Realizing The Situation

Before the Holocaust, the same thing happened. The *tzaddikim* of the generation were telling *Klal Yisrael* that they are seeing “black clouds” descending towards *Klal Yisrael*. There were many who heard their words, but they did not actually believe them. They didn’t believe that our enemies would reach the gates of Jerusalem. Nobody believed that the government would make decrees like this on us. Did anyone believe it would come to this?

How much longer can this go on for?? We must all know that Hashem is telling us one thing clearly: It is a time of *shmad*, and we must give up our life for Him; we must not listen to the government no matter what they tell us to do, even if it’s something minor, even if it is something permissible. Until we realize that we are actually in a time of *shmad*, we don’t realize and deal with the situation properly.

If someone would come and decree on us that we cannot keep the *mitzvos* of the Torah, we would all understand that it is a time of *shmad*. Our situation is a bit different than such a decree, but it is still the ‘Snake’ coming toward us with its ‘cleverness’. It’s the same kind of argument.

These words are not being said so that you should hear them and be inspired. It is so that you understand what is going on.

It is like living in the time of Haman’s decree. It can be said of today that Haman and Achashveirosh are sitting and drinking together, while “the city of Shushan is weeping”. Even if we succeed in removing part of the decrees of the government, we still remain in a time of *shmad*. Haman’s decree was to take effect at a later date, but in the interim, everyone was crying. Just because the decree of the government isn’t taking effect today doesn’t mean we can be calm today.

Every Jew must realize that we are in a time of *shmad*! If the government tells us to do anything, we must be ready to scream back at them, “I am a Jew! I am giving up my soul for my Creator. I believe only in Him!”

These words will eventually become clear to everyone in *Klal Yisrael*. The only question is how much time it will take. But this is our situation, this is reality, this is what we are in now.

How did we get to this point? It was because there were many steps in the process that took place until now. We were not being staunch enough in keeping the Torah until now, and all of this laxity happened slowly and in steps; now we have hit the last straw. This is the exile we are in.

Something To Think About By The Pesach Seder

Every Jew must realize the following. If the current situation does not bother him, he wouldn’t have been bothered either if he would be in Egypt. Had he been in Egypt, he would have said too, “It’s fine. It’ll pass. Pharaoh is killing all the Jewish baby boys? It will all be fine. This decree will pass too.”

If someone does not feel the depth of the current exile, he would have been complacent like this in Egypt as well. It can be said of him, “Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.”[\[13\]](#)

When a person is sitting at the *seder* this Pesach, and he’s doing his various *minhagim* (each to his own), if he doesn’t feel the situation of the present exile we are in, how can he feel the past?!

Hashem has sent us a decree this Erev Pesach. But it is really a gift that He has sent us. It enables us to feel the exile. It is easy for a person to sit by the *seder* and imagine the Egyptian exile, using his power of imagination; and that the present situation we are in is fine. But our inner *avodah* to prepare for the night of Pesach is to realize the current situation of our exile.

If someone isn't feeling sick in his heart over the situation of *Klal Yisrael* now, he must know that his soul is not connected to the situation now. When one has empathy with the pain that the young boys of *Klal Yisrael* now face, this is already enough of a reason to lose sleep at night. We must now join with the pain of others who are facing this predicament [of the government's decree to draft the boys into the army], just as Moshe Rabbeinu went out to join with the pain of his brethren.

What Hashem wants from us is not that we merely become inspired! If anyone here thinks that the words being said in this *shiur* are for the purpose of becoming inspired, he has totally missed the point.

Hashem has sent us a decree; this is one side of the coin. But the other side of the coin is that He has sent us a gift. The gift of it is that He is waking us up from our slumber. We are being woken up from the sleep we have been from all these years, having gotten used to a lifestyle that was a spiritual slumber.

Cellphones

I will now ask you a simple question, one of the simplest questions that can be asked in the world. For the last 10 years already, cellphones have been on the market. Is there anyone here who believes that a person can be a real *ben aliyah* (growing, spiritual person) if he has a cellphone and maintain a true kind of life? Did cellphones elevate anyone, or did they only bring people down? Gradually, it has brought a person's spiritual level down.

If you agree that it's bad for your *ruchniyus*, why didn't you get rid of it and throw it in the garbage?

I'm not talking about the "non-kosher" phones. There is actually no such thing as a 'kosher' phone; they are all bad devices. It is just an issue of how much it brings the person down - the non-kosher phones are worse, the kosher phones are not as bad, but they're all detrimental.

Don't we understand that the entire way we are living now is incorrect? How can we just continue peacefully, with all that is going on now? Hashem is coming to each of us and saying, "My son. You are my son, and I am Your Father. I love you, and I desire you. I have pain that your other holy brothers are captured by the materialism of This World, swayed by the *Erev Rav* on This World."

A person might be a *ben Torah* and look *frum*, but when he's walking in the street as he is talking and taking and talking [on a cellphone], this is all a lifestyle that is totally *hefker*.

Hashem is telling each of us, "Enough! You must put a halt to the kind of life you are living!" What should we search for, then, after we realize that? We must *daven* to Hashem and cry out to Him!

Being Prepared To Totally Change

If Moshe Rabbeinu would come to us today and tell us that we have to leave our current lifestyle and to go live in tents in the Negev desert, would anyone come with him? Would anyone leave behind his current lifestyle and go join Moshe Rabbeinu in the desert? Maybe a person would question if this is the real Moshe Rabbeinu, or if he just some impostor, and he would request a sign to see if he is a real prophet....

Hashem said, "*Follow after Me into the desert.*" It is very possible that the recent calling of Hashem is a message only to the holiest Jews, who are prepared to follow Him no matter what. But the truth is that all of us, deep down, want to follow Hashem and do His will. It is just that many of us, even if we would decide to follow Hashem into the desert, would probably get stuck along the way and give up in the middle. Even so, each Jew [no matter what his level is] must be able to put a halt on his current

lifestyle.

Obviously, we can't put a stop to our Pesach preparations on Erev Pesach, when we are busy. But we must be able to put a stop to our lifestyle and realize that if we are in a time of *shmad*. Hashem is telling us that if we need to change our life entirely.

In Conclusion

There will be those who will hear these words and mock them. Others will say, "It's an opinion of just one person." Others will say, "It's the truth, but it's too hard for me to accept". Others, though, after hearing these words, will realize that they need to seek the truth.

The words here were not said, *chas v'shalom*, out of hatred for any Jew. They are being said out of love. The words here were said out of a will that each Jew should search for Hashem, to disconnect from the whole way of life we are in, to leave the 50th Gate of Impurity which we have fallen into, and to reveal the depth of our bond with Hashem, His Torah, and His *Klal Yisrael*.

If we want to have true freedom on Pesach, we must go through a true process of freedom. If Hashem has sent us this decree before Pesach, it is not because we must go free from our enemies, but from the exile that has formed within ourselves, in which we have become enslaved [to the influences of society].

I am certain that all of you who listened to this will think that the words here are strange, and that they lacked *derech erez*. But my intention here is that I hope, from the depth of my soul, that you understand what kind of situation we are in. Instead of going home after this *shiur* and discussing if I was right or if I was wrong about what I said here, and that even if I am right there's nothing that can be done anyway, you should know that there is one thing you can do for sure: you can begin to learn the *halachos* of *Kiddush Hashem*.

When you learn the *halachos*, realize that they are very applicable now. Rabbi Akiva wondered his whole life if he will ever get to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*, and he awaited it. So too, we must realize that now is a time in which we might have to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*, because we are now in a time of *shmad*.

If one doesn't realize the situation we are in, the words here seemed strange. If one does realize the situation as it is, though, he knows that the words here are actually a softer description of what is really going on.

It is painful for me that the souls of the Jewish people are facing a predicament. I hope that all of us, together, will see the redemption, and to leave the exile with Hashem's wonders, just as when we left Egypt. Then, we can all merit to truly give ourselves up for Hashem, in sanctification of His Name.

Hashem is the One who saved us from the past exile, and Hashem is the One who will save us this time as well. But this time, when He saves us, He will save us with the coming of Mashiach, may he come speedily in our days. Amen.

[1] As we say in the Hagaddah shel Pesach.

[2] In another derashah, the Rav mentioned that this really adds up for a total of seven exiles: Egypt, Bavel, Persia-Media, Greece, Edom, Yishmael, and “Erev Rav.” See Chanukah #048 – Greek Exile Today.

[3] Beraishis Rabbah 1:1

[4] According to many opinions, we are still within the Greek exile today. See the derasha of Chanukah #048 – Greek Exile Today.

[5] And it is brought in many places in Chazal that there is a connection between Bris Milah and Eretz Yisrael; hence, the Arabs, who keep Bris Milah, have a stronger hold over Eretz Yisrael.

[6] See Even Shelaimah, chapter 11: 1-8

[7] In sefer Kovetz Maamarim

[8] “The Mixed Multitude.” For more background on the Erev Rav, see Erev Rav_05_Amalek Exposed.

[9] The source for this is Tikkunei HaZohar (41), brought in the words the Vilna Gaon in sefer Even Shelaimah (11). five groups are termed “Nega Ra” (Evil Affliction): Nefilim, Giborim, Anakim, Refaim, and Amalekim. Refer to the Rav’s five original Hebrew classes of “Erev Rav”, and to the English adaptation of “Erev Rav_005_Amalek Exposed”.

[10] For further research, see Tefillah #109

[11] Hagaddah shel Pesach

[12] This is in light of the Israeli government’s recent announcement to enforce the draft of yeshivah bochurim into the army, which our Gedolim have declared as an open attempt to wage war against the Torah world; thus it is being seen by our Gedolim as a “time of shmad” (genocide), in which the halacha is, “yaharog v’al yaavor”, “be killed rather than transgress.”

[13] This is said of the “wicked son” in the Hagaddah shel Pesach.