



The Amazing Connection between Shabbas HaGadol and Parshas Metzora On Shabbas HaGadol the Internal Jewish Focus Was Revealed-- the Treasure the Emorim Hid in the Walls of Their Houses

In honor of the auspiciously approaching Shabbas Kodesh, known as **"Shabbas HaGadol,"** it is fitting that we examine the following ruling of the "michaber" of the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 430): **"שבת שלפני הפסח קורין אותו שבת הגדול מפני הנס שנעשה בו"**—**the Shabbas prior to Pesach is called Shabbas HaGadol, because of the miracle that occurred on it.** The source for this ruling is the Tur; he describes the miracle that occurred on this historic day:

"שבת שלפני הפסח קורין אותו שבת הגדול, והטעם לפי שנעשה בו נס גדול, שפסח מצרים מקחו בעשור, כדכתיב (שמות יב-ג) בעשור לחודש הזה ויקחו להם איש שה לבית אבותו שבת, ופסח שיצאו ישראל ממצרים היה ביום ה' כדאיתא בסדר עולם, ונמצא שעשרה בחודש היה שבת, ולקחו להם כל אחד שה לפסחו וקשר אותו בכרעי מיטתו, ושאלום המצריים למה זה לכם, והשיבו לשחטו לשם פסח במצות השם עלינו, והיו שינייהם קהות על ששוחטין אלוהיהם, ולא היו רשאים לומר להם דבר, ועל שם אותו הנס קורין אותו שבת הגדול."

The Tur attributes the appellation **"Shabbas HaGadol"** to the great miracle that occurred on the Shabbas prior to the exodus from Egypt—**"yetzias Mitzrayim."** The exodus took place on a Thursday. On the preceding Shabbas, the tenth of Nissan, every Jew was commanded to take a lamb for his family as a Pesach offering and tie it to the foot of his bed. When the Egyptians would ask curiously about this peculiar ritual, they would respond that they planned to sacrifice these animals to their G-d. The Egyptians, who worshipped the lamb, were powerless to react and were forced to stand by and observe in silence.

The commentaries throughout the generations strived to explain why this Shabbas was named **Shabbas HaGadol.** We will begin with the reason suggested by the Chiddushei HaRim. Avraham Avinu longed throughout his life for children that would follow in his footsteps—children that would be devoted to Hashem and accept upon themselves the obligations of the Torah and its mitzvos. Now, the taking of an animal for the korban Pesach was the first mitzvah Yisrael were commanded to perform during the exodus. Hence, this Shabbas represents Avraham Avinu, who was

called **"gadol,"** as we find in the following passuk (Yehoshua 14, 15): **"וְשֵׁם חֶבְרוֹן לְפָנִים קָרִית אַרְבַּע הָאָדָם הַגָּדוֹל בְּעַנְקִים הוּא."** **The name Chevron was formerly Kiryas Arba, who was the biggest ("hagadol") among the Anakim.** Expounding on this passuk, the Midrash states (B.R.): **The biggest ("hagadol") man among the Anakim refers to Avraham.**

The Study of House Afflictions Is for the Sake of Reward

As it is the nature of Torah to be elucidated from seventy different aspects, we will propose a connection between **Shabbas HaGadol** and Avraham Avinu, who is called **"hagadol."** We will begin by examining the passage in this week's parsha, parshas Metzora, related to the afflictions of houses (Vayikra 14, 34): **"כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל אֶרֶץ—when you arrive in the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I will place a "tzara'at" affliction upon a house in the land of your possession.**

We learn a tremendous chiddush in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 71a): **"בית המנוגע לא היה ולא עתיד להיות, ולמה נכתב דרוש וקבל שכר"—an afflicted house never was and never will be. So, why was it written? Expound it and be rewarded.** In reality, it is very unlikely for the conditions required to declare an afflicted house **"tamei"** to exist. Perforce, the Gemara concludes that the passage is present in the Torah solely for the purpose of: **"דרוש וקבל שכר"—expound it and be rewarded.**

This allows us to suggest a fascinating idea. Based on a teaching of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the Midrash, Rashi comments: **"And I will place a 'tzara'at' affliction"—this is to inform them (Yisrael) that afflictions come upon them (the houses), because the Emorim hid treasures of gold in the walls of their houses throughout the forty years that Yisrael were in the midbar. As a result of the affliction, he (the Yisrael) will break down the house and find them.**

Yet, according to the Gemara: **“An afflicted house never was and never will be.”** Seemingly, then, there was no way to expose the treasures hid by the Emorim in the walls of their houses. Therefore, our blessed sages wisely taught us how to find those treasures. As we have learned in the Gemara (Menachos 110a): **“כל העוסק בתורת חטאת כאילו: — anyone who studies the Torah of the Chatas, it is considered as if he actually brought a Chatas-offering; and anyone who studies the Torah of the Asham, it is considered as if he actually brought an Asham-offering.”**

Accordingly, anyone who studies the laws pertaining to house afflictions, it is as if he fulfilled all of the laws written in the Torah pertaining to afflictions. Therefore, if the Emorim hid treasures in the walls of their houses, HKB”H arranged for them to be found by someone who studied the laws of afflictions, just as if all the house’s stones were torn down. This then is the implication of the Gemara’s conclusion that the passage of afflicted houses was included in the Torah solely for the purpose of: **“דרוש וקבל שכר”**. In other words, **“study”** the passage in the Torah pertaining to house afflictions in depth; **“and be rewarded”**—and HKB”H will reward you by exposing the treasures the Emorim hid within their walls.

Let us add an important point based on what we have learned in the Mishnah (Kiddushin 82a):

“רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר, ראית מימיך היה ועוף שיש להם אומנות והן מתפרנסין שלא בצער, והלא לא נבראו אלא לשמשני ואני נבראתי לשמש את קוני, אינו דין שאתפרנס שלא בצער, אלא שהורעתי מעשי וקפחתי את פרנסתי.”

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Have you ever seen a wild animal or a bird that has a trade? Yet, they sustain themselves without travail, though they were created only to serve me; whereas, I was created to serve my Master. Does it not follow that I certainly should be able to sustain myself without difficulty? However, I have corrupted my deeds and thereby forfeited my sustenance.

We can provide an explanation based on another Mishnah (Avos 4, 11): **“העושה מצוה אחת קונה לו פרקליט אחד, והעובר עבירה אחת קונה”**—a person who performs one mitzvah acquires for himself one advocate; while a person who commits one aveirah acquires for himself one accuser. The Bartenura explains that an **“advocate”** is a malach that speaks well on one’s behalf; while an **“accuser”** is a malach that speaks ill of the person. Now, the bad malachim generated by a person’s transgressions hide his sustenance from him in various ways. This is what Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar meant when he said: **“However, I have corrupted my deeds and thereby forfeited my sustenance.”**

Thus, it is evident that Emorim exist in every generation. They are the forces of tumah that conceal from a person the golden treasures

that lie within the walls of his house, preventing him from finding the livelihood that HKB”H has prepared for him. Nevertheless, there is a remedy: **“Expound it and be rewarded.”** A person should study the laws of house afflictions and entertain thoughts of teshuvah regarding all of his iniquities. It will then be considered as if he fulfilled all that is written in the Torah with regards to house afflictions that ruined the stones of his house. In this manner, the golden treasures that HKB”H has in store for him will be revealed.

Every Nation Conceals Sparks of Kedushah

It is with great pleasure that we will now fulfill the insightful words of Chazal, who said: **“An afflicted house never was and never will be. So, why was it written? Expound it and be rewarded.”** Let us consider the difficult predicament encountered by the meraglim, who Moshe Rabeinu sent to scout out the land. The commentaries find the episode perplexing. After all, the meraglim were not ordinary men. In fact, they were princes of Yisrael, who were chosen because of their outstanding merit. That being the case, how did they fail so miserably—speaking ill of the promised land?

Let us propose an explanation based on the Agra D’Kallah’s lengthy analysis of the matter of Balak and Bilam. They opposed Yisrael with their forces of tumah; their sole aim was to prevent Yisrael from extracting the holy nitzotz of David HaMelech that was concealed in their midst. Here are his sacred words:

“דהנה ידוע חיות אומה היא מחמת איזה ניצוצות מהקדושה השקועים בתוכה, וכשישראל מבררים הניצוצות אזי נשארים האומות פגרים ותתבטל אותה האומה, כאשר כתבנו כמה פעמים מעניני מצרים. והנה הקליפה אשר יש בתוכה ניצוצ קדוש גדול בערך, ומתייראת הקליפה פן יבוא איזה צדיק בקדושתו ויוצא בלעם מפייהם, אזי הקליפה ההיא מיראתה פן יולקח חיותה, משקעת הניצוצין ההוא מאד מאד בתוך עמקי טומאת הקליפות, כמו שאדם מטמין אוצר נחמד במחבואות לכל ישלטו בו זרים, עיין כל זה בגלגולים להאריז”ל.”

It is a known fact that the life-force of a nation is due to sparks of kedushah stuck in their midst. When Yisrael successfully clarify the sparks, those nations are left as corpses and that nation ceases to exist . . . So, a klipah that has in its midst a valuable, holy “nitzotz,” and the klipah fears that a tzaddik may come along with his kedushah and remove that swallowed item from its mouth, that klipah—fearing that its life-force will be confiscated—buries that “nitzotz” very deep within its tumah; just like a person buries a coveted treasure in various hiding places, so that outsiders will not be able to access it . . .

Based on this concept, the Agra D’Kallah, interprets the passuk (Bamidbar 22, 3): **“ויגר מואב מפני העם מאד כי רב הוא ויקץ מואב מפני בני ישראל.”** He explains that Moav was sustained by the holy “nitzotz” of David HaMelech, who descended from Ruth the Moabite; that “nitzotz” was still mired within Moav. Therefore: **“Moav was very**

frightened of the people—lest they come to extract the holy “nitzotz” of David HaMelech; **“because it was formidable”**—it was extremely valuable and holy; consequently, **“Moav was disgusted on account of Bnei Yisrael.”**

He explains the nuances of the passuk as follows: **“נראה לי לפרש ויקץ, מלשון קוצים וסייג שעושיין גדר לכרם, היינו שעשו קוצים וסייג מטומאת קליפת מואב סביב להניצוץ, מפני בני ישראל, לכל יוכלו בני ישראל ליגע בהניצוץ המוגיע להם. לקדושה.** He suggests that the term **“ויקץ”** is related to the Hebrew word for thorns, **“קוצים”**, implying that the klipah of Moav surrounded the precious **“nitzotz”** with a protective barrier of thorns, like a fence around a vineyard, to safeguard it from Bnei Yisrael.

The Meraglim Did Not Sense the Kedushah that the Emorim Had Hidden in Eretz Yisrael

Now, we can suggest that when the meraglim entered Eretz Yisrael, they did not sense the sparks of kedushah located there. This led them to believe that the power of tumah of the Canaanim and the Emorim was so great that it had overwhelmed the kedushah and forced it out of the land. This is the implication of their declaration (ibid. 13, 28): **“אפס כי עז העם היושב בארץ והערים בצורות: גדולת מאד וגם ילידי הענק ראינו שם—but the people that dwell in the land are powerful, the cities are very fortified and large, and we also saw there the offspring of the giant.** They erred, however, because they should have known that this is the tactic of the forces of tumah; they hide the sparks of kedushah inside the walls of their houses, because they fear that Yisrael will extract them.

This explains very nicely how Moshe Rabeinu provided them with the remedy prior to the arrival of the injury. He said to them (ibid. 13, 20): **“והתחזקתם ולקחתם מפרי הארץ והימים ימי ביכורי ענבים:—you shall strengthen yourselves and take from the fruit of the land; the days were the days of the first ripening of the grapes.** We must endeavor to explain why the Torah informs us that it was the time of the ripening of the grapes. Yet, based on what we have just learned, we can suggest that Moshe Rabeinu was hinting to them that they should learn a lesson from the grapes, whose precious wine is stored and guarded inside the grapes; it is not visible outwardly. In the words of the Gemara (Berachos 34b): **“יין המשומר בענביו”—wine preserved in its grapes.** Thus, they would understand that the kedushah is concealed within the walls of the houses.

This is what Moshe hinted to them with his profound wisdom. Even if they do not see or sense any signs of kedushah, nevertheless: **“You shall strengthen yourselves and take from the fruit of the land”**—remain steadfast and learn a lesson from the fruits of the land. Then the passuk specifies from which fruit specifically they were to learn a lesson: **“The days were the days of the first ripening of the grapes”**—Moshe wanted them to learn from the grapes, who guard

and conceal their precious wine within. Similarly, in Eretz Yisrael, the kedushah is concealed like the hidden treasures of the Emorim.

Thus, we can explain the matter as follows: **The Emorim hid golden treasures in the walls of their houses.** In other words, they hid the sparks of kedushah in the walls of the houses that they built with the forces of tumah; so that they could derive life and sustenance from them. Therefore, HKB”H subjects the walls of their houses to afflictions and plagues to demolish the strongholds of the forces of tumah. Thus, the sparks of kedushah concealed in their midst will be exposed, and Yisrael will come and return them to the realm of kedushah.

This explains very nicely the profound words of our sages: **“An afflicted house never was and never will be. So, why was it written? Expound it and be rewarded.”** It is incumbent upon Yisrael to study the passage related to house afflictions in the Torah. Then they will realize that the goal is to extract the sparks of kedushah that the Emorim concealed inside the walls, as Rashbi taught us. It will then be considered as if HKB”H demolished the walls of the klipot, and all the **“nitzotzei kedushah”** will be returned to their proper place within the realm of kedushah.

The Internal Focus Concealed within Every Jew

It is well-known that a wonderful connection exists between the people of Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. As we learn in the Mishnah (Keilim 1, 1), Eretz Yisrael is holier than any other place on earth: **“ארץ ישראל—מקודשת מכל הארצות—Eretz Yisrael is more sanctified than any of the other lands.** Similarly, the people of Yisrael are holier and more sanctified than any other nation. As it is written (Vayikra 20, 26): **“והייתם לי קדושים כי קדוש אני ה' ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי”—you shall be holy for Me, for I, Hashem, am holy; and I have separated you from among the peoples to be Mine.** Thus, we can conclude that just as the Emorim hid **“nitzotzei kedushah”** in the walls of their houses in Eretz Yisrael; so, too, do the forces of tumah endeavor to conceal the kedushah contained within every Jew, so that it will not be revealed.

To explain the matter, we will introduce a valuable idea from the incredible teachings of our brilliant luminary, the Ba'al Shem Tov hakadosh, zy”a. Every Jew—no matter who he is or what his spiritual level is, even if he has sinned repeatedly, chas v'shalom—possesses an internal focus in his heart that was implanted in him by HKB”H. This divine spark is the root of his neshamah; it is unaffected by sin and iniquity; it remains pure and untainted.

Applying this concept, the great Rabbi Baruch of Medzhybizh, zy”a, interprets the following passuk (Tehillim 37, 10) in the sefer Butzina D’Nehora: **“ועוד מעט ואין רשע והתבוננת על מקומו ואיננו”— just a little longer and there will be no wicked one; you will look carefully at his place and he will not be there.** In other words, even a Jew who has

sinned to the point that he is considered a “rasha,” nevertheless: **זעוד מעט** — there remains within him a small focus within the innermost aspects of his heart; **ואין רשע** — where he is not considered a “rasha,” because the blemish does not reach that point. Regarding this focus, David HaMelech beseeches Hashem: **“והתבוננת על מקומו”** — please examine this inner focus in the heart; **“ואיננו”** — and You will see that in that particular spot, he is not a “rasha,” and all of the sins he committed were only external and not from the depths of his heart.

The Yismach Moshe (Chanukah 13) explains that of this internal focus, which is a portion of G-d from above, it says (Vayikra 16, 16): **“השוכן אתם בתוך טומאותם”**—**that dwells with them amidst their tumah**. In other words, amidst the tumah of their iniquities and transgressions, there lies this inner focus, a portion of G-d from above, that remains totally unsullied. There HKB”H rests His Shechinah—**“amidst their tumah”**—in their innermost place, beyond the reach of any tumah.

This is the message conveyed by Chazal with the statement (Sanhedrin 44a): **“אף על פי שחטא ישראל הוא”**—although he has transgressed, he still has within him an internal, Jewish focal point that remains untainted, on account of which he maintains his kedushah as a Jew. It is for this very reason that we occasionally witness even total “reshaim” performing righteous acts and teshuvah. This surprising phenomenon is attributable to the internal focus that has not been tarnished; it arouses them to perform teshuvah. In the words of Chazal: **“רשעים מלאים חרטה”**—**the wicked are full of remorse**.

The Yismach Yisrael (Noach) elaborates further on the fact that this internal, Jewish focus arouses even total “reshaim” to perform teshuvah. He applies this concept to interpret the passuk (Yeshayah 6, 10): **“ולבבו יבין ושב ורפא לו”**—**and its heart will understand, so that it will repent and be healed**. Teshuvah begins when the sinner searches deep within himself and connects with the internal point in his heart where the divine spark is concealed. That fiery spark is never extinguished. It enables a Jew to ignite an intense fire in his heart that will extend kedushah and taharah to all of his 248 bodily limbs and 365 sinews. This is the implication of the passuk: **“ולבבו יבין”**—if he truly comprehends the significance of the inner focus in his heart; **“ושב ורפא לו”**—he will be inspired to perform teshuvah and will be healed.

The Key Is in Your Heart

It is fitting at this point to add what the author of the Tanya writes in Likutei Amarim (Chapters 18-19) regarding the passuk (Devarim 30, 14): **“כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיך ובלבבך לעשותו”**—**for the matter is extremely close to you, in your mouth and your heart, to perform it**. Every Jew has at his disposal a tactic to defeat the yetzer. As we have seen, during the most trying episodes in

our history, even the simplest of Jews and sinners were willing to sacrifice their lives and endure torture and suffering to sanctify His name. This is indeed curious! Where did they find the courage and determination to endure this suffering, especially since they were unable to withstand the temptations of Olam HaZeh, which does not involve much conviction or suffering.

Yet, as we have learned, every Jew, even the simplest among us, possesses a deep love for Hashem, concealed within the innermost chambers of his heart, which he has inherited from our holy forefathers. When we see Jewish sinners, however, who neglect to observe Hashem’s mitzvos, it is because that love is in a state of slumber and concealment, since it is covered in the cloak of Olam HaZeh’s nonsense. Yet, when that Jew is subjected to a test, denying Hashem’s sovereignty and existence, which constitutes avodah-zarah, his deep-seated love is awakened from its slumber. It bursts forth with a passion that cannot be extinguished. Consequently, even the simplest of Jews are willing to sacrifice their lives for the kedushah of Hashem.

Accordingly, every Jew is capable of overcoming the yetzer of desire easily. He need merely consider how much suffering he is willing to tolerate not to deny the oneness of the Almighty. With that knowledge, he will realize how capable he is of withstanding the temptations of the yetzer, which does not involve much suffering at all. This is the implication of the passuk: **“For the matter is extremely close to you, in your mouth and your heart, to perform it.”**

Upon careful consideration, it is evident that the author of the Tanya is talking about the inner focus that cannot be sullied. Even a rasha, whose entire being and kedushah have been corrupted, nevertheless, this innermost focal point remains intact. Therefore, when this rasha, who is incapable of overcoming his heart’s desires, is subjected to the difficult test of avodah zarah and the disavowal of Hashem, his inner, Jewish focus awakens with a passion. He zealously defends Hashem and sacrifices his life for the kedushah of Hashem.

We now have an amazing comparison. The Emorim, the forces of tumah, hid golden treasures—the nitzotzei kedushah—in the walls of the houses in Eretz Yisrael. In similar fashion, they conceal the inner focal point of a holy Jew inside the person himself. They do so by mirroring a person in the senseless persuasions of Olam HaZeh, which act as a barrier between the person’s internal focus and his external self; because their sole purpose is to prevent the kedushah of that internal focus from spreading outwards. They want it to remain buried and dormant inside a person just like it is in Jewish sinners, who are unable to overcome their yetzer hara.

As we’ve learned, the passage of house afflictions was written in the Torah solely for the purpose of: **“דרוש וקבל שכר”**. If one studies the laws of afflictions, it is viewed as if he actually fulfilled them. This prompts HKB”H to demolish the strongholds of tumah, exposing

all the “nitzotzei kedushah,” so that they can be returned to their proper place. Similarly, studying this passage prompts HKB”H to demolish all the barriers of the “sitra achra”—the forces of tumah and evil—aimed at preventing the internal focus of a Jew from being revealed. Thus, it is revealed in its full splendor and glory, and spreads throughout the Jew’s 248 limbs and 365 sinews, enabling him to serve Hashem with a holy, passionate fire.

The Berachah “מגן אברהם” Relates to the Inner Focal Point

Following this enlightening path, we will proceed to explain why the Shabbas prior to Pesach is called **Shabbas HaGadol**. As mentioned previously, it alludes to Avraham, who is referred to as a giant among men: “האדם הגדול בענקים”. In Sefer HaZakut (Sazria), the Chiddushei HaRim, zy”a, teaches us that the internal focus within every Jew in every generation is inherited from Avraham Avinu.

He adds that this is the implication of HKB”H’s statement to Avraham (Bereishis 15, 1): “אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך”—**fear not, Avram, I am a shield for you!** Avraham feared that perhaps a Jew’s internal focal point would become tarnished and blemished. Hence, HKB”H assured him that it would not. We acknowledge this promise in the first berachah of Shemoneh Esreh: “ברוך אתה ה’ מגן אברהם”—blessed is Hashem, Who safeguards the internal focus within every Jew, inherited from Avraham. For this reason: **“A Jew, even though he sinned, he is still a Jew.”**

Let us now introduce the incredible words of the Sefas Emes (Chanukah 5633; third night), who cites his elder, the Chiddushei HaRim, zy”a, regarding what we have learned in the Gemara in relation to the Chanukah miracle (Shabbas 21b):

“כשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל”—**when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they contaminated all of the oil in the Sanctuary**—this alludes to the fact that they corrupted all of the Jews; “וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן”—**when the royal house of the Chashmonaim gained the upper hand and defeated them, they searched and found only one flask of oil**—namely, the internal focus hidden within every Jew that remains untainted; “שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול”—**that was lying with the Kohen Gadol’s seal**—the internal focus is embossed with the seal of Avraham Avinu, who was a Kohen Gadol, as per the Midrash (B.R. 46, 5): “אברהם כהן גדול היה”.

Due to Heresy and Disavowal even the Inner Focus Is Damaged

Let us expand on this noble idea. Why was Avraham Avinu so worried that the inner focus would be damaged? Now, our

sacred sefarim claim that this focus is not affected even by sins and transgressions. Hence, **“even if he sinned, he is still considered a Jew.”** Yet, when a Jew combines avodah-zarah with heresy and disavowal of Hashem, the blemish reaches even the root of his Jewish soul—the internal focus. At that point, there is no remedy.

This is evident from the following Gemara (A.Z. 17a): “כל הפורש ממינות—**everyone who separates from heresy dies.** The Gemara brings its proof from the passuk (Mishlei 2, 19): “כל באיה לא”—**all who come to her (avodah-zarah) do not return (do not perform teshuvah), and they will not attain the paths of life.** Rashi comments that once they are lost to avodah-zarah, after wrestling with heresy, it is nearly impossible for them to abandon it and perform teshuvah. If they do perform teshuvah, they die shortly thereafter, due to their anguish and their ongoing struggle to overpower their yetzer. It is G-d’s decree that they die.

Now, we learn in the Zohar hakadosh (Behar 111b) that Avraham Avinu rectified the cheit of Adam HaRishon, who ate from the Eitz HaDa’as. That cheit involved avodah-zarah, seeing as they were persuaded by the nachash’s argument (Bereishis 3, 5): “כי יודע אלקים כי—**for G-d knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like G-d, knowing good and bad.** Rashi explains: **Every craftsman hates others of his craft; G-d ate from the tree and created the world.** There is no greater heresy and denial of G-d than to believe such a thing. To rectify Adam HaRishon’s sin of avodah-zarah, Avraham Avinu shattered all of Terach’s idols and popularized the name of Hashem throughout the world, as it is written (ibid. 21, 33): “ויטע אשל בבאר שבע: **he planted an “eshel” in Be’er Sheva, and there he proclaimed the name of Hashem, G-d of the Universe.**

It should now be quite clear why Avraham was so concerned that a Jew’s internal focal point remains unblemished. It was his sacred mission to combat the yetzer of avodah-zarah. As we have learned, due to avodah-zarah, even the internal focal point of a Jew is blemished. Therefore, he feared that his descendants would fall prey to the yetzer of avodah-zarah and their internal focal points would be blemished. To console him, HKB”H assured him: **“Fear not, Avram, I am your shield!”**

HKB”H’s Response to the “Samech Mem”

Based on what we have learned, we can better comprehend the dispute between the “samech-mem” and HKB”H at Krias Yam Suf. We learn in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Beshalach, 234):

“והמים להם חומה. שירד סמאל ואמר לפניו, רבוננו של עולם לא עבדו ישראל עבודה זרה במצרים [בלשון פליאה], ואתה עושה להם ניסים, והיה משמייע קולו לשר של ים, ונתמלא עליהם חימה וביקש לטבען. מיד השיב לו הקב”ה, שוטה שבעולם, וכי לדעתם עבודה, והלא לא עבדו אלא מתוך שיעבוד ומתוך טירוף דעת, ואתה דן שוגג כמזיד ואונס כרצון.”

