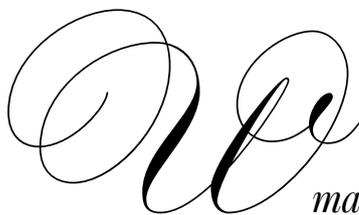


# Bo

Perceptions • Shevat 6, 5786 • January 24, 2026 • Issue #2132



e're not allowed to eat *chometz* for the seven days of Pesach, but you can eat *matzah*. The technical difference between the two is really just time, because dough becomes *chometz* and an *issur kares* (punishable with excision) if it remains unworked for eighteen minutes before baking. Bake it before eighteen minutes and you have *matzah*, and a *mitzvah*.

The spelling difference between the two words is even smaller. They both have the letters *Mem* and *Tzaddi*, but "*matzah*" ends with the letter *Heh*, and "*chometz*" begins with a *Ches*. And the difference between a *Ches* and a *Heh* is even smaller, just a little air gap between the roof of the letter and the left leg.

As for the *kabbalistic* difference, it's as vast as the difference between oppressive slavery and joyful redemption, as the GR"A explained:

This is the *sod* of *chometz* that turned into *matzah* during the exodus from Egypt. While the *Heh* was closed, the *klipah* of *chometz* had control, but when the *Heh* opened, *chometz* was broken and became *matzah*... (*Biur HaGR"A, Sifra D'Tzniusa, Ch. 1, 26a*)

It sounds really interesting, actually *kabbalistic*, but what does it mean?

It means that whatever happens down here in the physical world is the end result of something that happens “up there” in the spiritual world. The connection between the physical world and the spiritual is not visible to us, but we know and believe that if you impact one it will impact the other, hopefully for the good. And if you’re a capable *kabbalist*, you might even know what to do down here to affect the upper world to your benefit in the lower world.

It also means that Hebrew words are not mere conventions, but representations of the concepts they express. They are even considered “vessels” for the spiritual light they allude to and even contain. This is why meditating on specific words in specific ways can yield incredible results in both the spiritual and physical worlds.

And it also means that negative ideas can be the flip side of positive ones. Both *matzah* and *chometz* are flour and water, but the circumstances of how they are made determine if the end result is one or the other.

We find this idea elsewhere in the *parsha*. Rashi quotes the *midrash* that says:

Pharaoh said to them, “With my astrology I see that star ascending toward you in the desert [where you would like to go], and that is a sign of blood and slaughter.” When the Jewish People sinned with the calf, and The Holy One, Blessed is He, wanted to kill them, Moshe said in his prayer, “*Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With Ra’ah He took them out...?’*” (*Shemos*, 32:12). This is what he [Pharaoh] said to them, “*See that Ra’ah [evil] is opposite your faces,*” [implying that their blood would be shed in the desert]. Immediately, “*God repented of the Ra’ah [the*

*sign of the star],” and He turned the bloodshed [symbolized by this star] into the blood of the circumcision, for Yehoshua [later] circumcised them. (Rashi, Shemos 10:10)*

In this case the bad was turned into good. In the Holocaust, the good was turned into bad, and the *koach of kibbutz golios* that God put into the world for the sake of redemption was used instead for a cross-European ingathering of Jews to concentration camps. The *achdus* (unity) we should have worked on while free was imposed upon us as slaves.

So, if we don't like what is happening to the Jewish People at any time, and find that the *Klipos* are gaining the upper hand, we have to take note of how it is working. Then we can figure out the positive aspect and use it as God intended, shutting down the *Klipos* from doing any further damage. Perhaps if we took the gift of our Jewish homeland as seriously as our detractors who try to undermine it, we would become more worthy of it while the rest of the world would lose its ability to deny us what is Biblically ours.

Newest Book: ***Da'as: The Only Frontier*** - *Da'as* means "knowledge," but as everyone knows, there are many levels of knowledge. Since knowledge is the basis of all we are and do, it is really important to know what you know, how you know it, and if it is "good" or "bad" knowledge. Then you can go the next crucial stage of turning your knowledge into *Da'as*, giving you wisdom and a higher purpose in life...and at the End of Days, the necessary perspective to survive what is destined to occur. Available through Amazon and Thirtysix.org.

Have a great Shabbos,

Pinchas Winston