

Insights from the Meshech Chochma  
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וְהָיָה לָךְ לְאֹת עַל יָדְךָ וּלְזִכָּרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ... כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה הוֹצֵאתָ אֶת מִצְרָיִם. (פרק יג' ט)  
*And (the tefillin) shall be for you a **sign** on your arm and a **reminder** between your eyes... that with a mighty hand Hashem freed you from Egypt.*

Rav Meir Simcha chooses this pasuk to present tenets regarding our status as Hashem's סְגֻלָּה but in fact, as will be shown, he combines earlier pasukim and later ones to formulate this important piece.

He begins by presenting his understanding of אֹת and זִכָּרוֹן, and with it is able to connect why specifically the hand tefillin are referred to as an אֹת while the forehead tefillin are called a זִכָּרוֹן. אֹת/*sign* in our verse is something which will help us reinforce our faith in our relationship with Hashem in the future. זִכָּרוֹן, on the other hand, looks at the past and with 20/20 hindsight lets us “see” how our special relationship with Hashem expressed itself.

וְיָצִיאתָ מִצְרָיִם uniquely brings these concepts to the forefront. The process revealed to the entire world Hashem's פְּרִטִית over הַשְּׂגָחָה בְּלֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל and furthermore that He will never forsake us. This is so beautifully presented in Midrash Vayikra Rabba with the exegesis of R' Elazar on the pasuk in ד' לַד in דְּבָרִים גוֹי מִקֶּרֶב גוֹי, דְּבָרִים ד' לַד *Or has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from amidst a nation-both the Egyptians and the Jewish people were sinners before Hashem and both were rock-bottom spiritually-גוֹי מִקֶּרֶב גוֹי-and yet the Jews were taken out of Egypt, as He promised. This is the most powerful sign of His deep love of יִשְׂרָאֵל! And for all future generations this will be a source of comfort that Hashem will ultimately bring the גְּאֻלָּה. וְיָצִיאתָ מִצְרָיִם and זִכָּרוֹן are aptly connected with וְיָצִיאתָ מִצְרָיִם.*

Later, the pasuk tells us לְאֹת עַל יָדְךָ *And (the tefillin) shall be for you a **sign** on your arm-* in חז"ל comment on the unusual spelling of יָדְךָ and explain that this is the source for placing the tefillin on the weak-הַבְּהָמָה-arm. Rav Meir Simcha sees in this חז"ל another application: Even at our weakest moments, in the despair of the Diaspora we have an אֹת that Hashem will eventually redeem us. Our hidden secret-תְּפִילֵינָּךְ נֶשֶׁל is an אֹת. תְּפִילֵינָּךְ נֶשֶׁל רַאשׁ, on the other hand, are for public display, for all to see. This reminds of our status in Egypt when everyone saw our unique link with HKBH. תְּפִילֵינָּךְ נֶשֶׁל רַאשׁ is an appropriate זִכָּרוֹן.

Rav Meir Simcha now applies this to the Yom Tov celebrating our freedom from Egypt, חג הפסח, and the two mitzvos most closely associated with it-the קרבן פסח and מצה. The קרבן is all about its past "history". Was it prepared with the proper intentions, were the sacrificial services appropriately done? Only then can one fulfill the mitzva of eating from the קרבן פסח. It certainly can serve as a זכרון, to remind and help us focus on the great miracles Hashem performed for us because of His love for us. Matza, on the other hand, is more similar to an אית. Its status as לחם עוני hearkens to a period when we are downtrodden. And once the wheat is harvested (or from the time the dough is kneaded) it is all about the future, it requires נשימור going forward-up until the time we are ready to partake of it as part of Mitzvas Matza. An appropriate אית.

So that Rav Meir Simcha sees in these series of pasukim, which focus on יציאת מצרים, a common theme of אית and זכרון which he applies both to our תפילין and to חג הפסח in a most ingenious way!

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ישראל מנחם בן ר' שלום ז"ל  
לזכר נשמת אמי מורתי רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדור ע"ה  
לזכר נשמת חמי מורי יעקב נתן בן ר' ישראל שלמה ז"ל  
ולזכר נשמת הרב יהודה בן ר' אברהם שמחה (קופרמן) זצ"ל  
מחבר הגהות על ספר משך חכמה