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מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
בקשר עם יום הבהיר י"א ניסן
מאה ועשרים ושלוש שנה

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הת' השליח זאב יוסף הלוי שיחי'
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בקשר עם יום הולדתו כ"ד ניסן
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נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' ארי' הלוי וזוגתו מרת
דבורה לאה ומשפחתם שיחי'
לאנג

The Mitzvah of Emptying Mitzrayim



RABBI MORDECHAI SAVITSKY

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5734, the Rebbe discussed the story of *Krias Yam Suf*, how the Yidden were busy gathering spoils of the Mitzrim to the point that they did not want to leave and continue on their journey. Rashi points out that Moshe Rabbeinu had to force them on their way. The Rebbe explained that the Yidden weren't simply craving monetary gain; they were actually fulfilling a mitzvah given by Hashem to take as much as they could from Mitzrayim. Moreover, they were busy with the *avoda* of refining and elevating the sparks of holiness within the physical objects.¹

Shortly after the farbrengen, the Rebbe's *mazkir*, Rabbi Leibel Groner, wrote a note to the Rebbe, saying:

"My son Menachem Mendel *sheyichye*, a student at Tomchei Tmimim of Morristown, asked about what was spoken in the *sicha* regarding the spoils of the sea, that it was a mitzvah from Hashem... The Gemara in Sota 13a states that [at the time that they left Mitzrayim] Moshe was busy with a mitzvah (gathering the remains of Yosef), whereas the Jewish people (were busy with gathering spoils)."

The Gemara seems to imply that only what Moshe Rabbeinu did was a mitzvah, and what the rest of the nation was doing was for their own benefit. How does this fit with what was explained in the *sicha*, that gathering the spoils from Mitzrayim was actually a great mitzvah?

The Rebbe replied²:

אינו שייך להשיחה, כ"א לפשוטו ש"מ שמפורש:
דבר נא ובפרש"י: הזהירם ע"כ (יא, ב). ובתו"ש
(שמות ג ס"ק רמא) ממכ [ילתא] דרשב"י עשה
ול"ת.

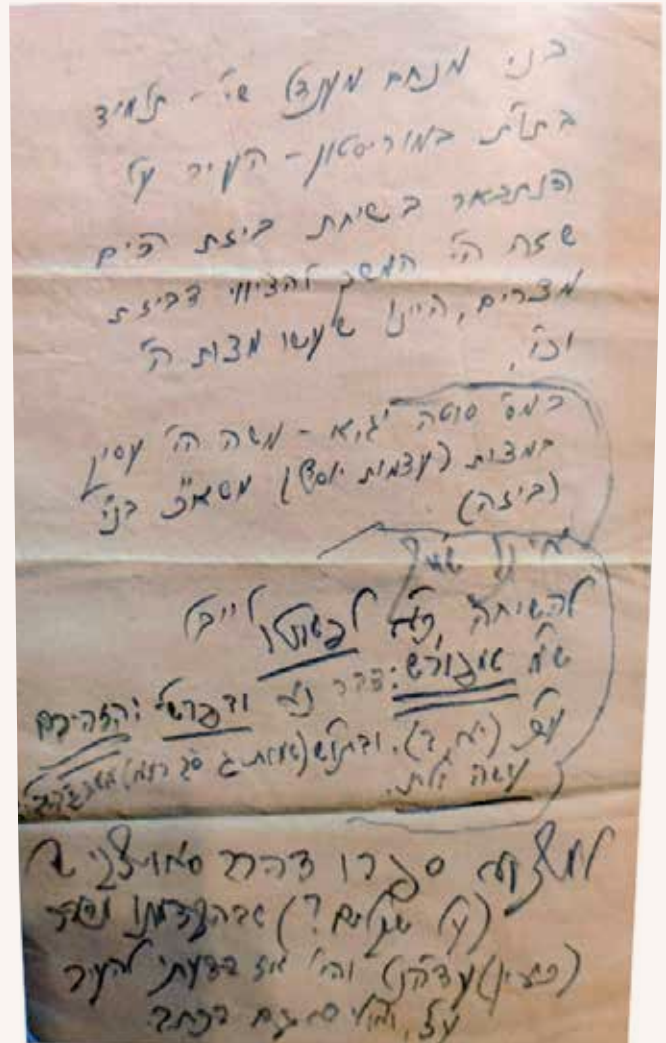
למצוא ספרו דהרב סאויצקי שי' (על שקלים?)
שבהקדמתו מדבר (כעין) עדהנ"ל והי' אז בדעתי
להעיר ע"ז, ואולי בא גם בכתב.

[This question] is not specifically
on [what was explained in] the *sicha*,
but actually on the **basic meaning** of
the *possuk*, where it states **explicitly**:
[Hashem told Moshe:] please speak [to
the Jewish people about taking spoils
from Mitzrayim]. **And Rashi** [who
always offers the simple meaning]
explains [these words to mean]
warn them about this [i.e. this is an
obligation that they **must** do] (11:2).

[In that case, the words of the
Gemara seem to contradict the simple
meaning of the Chumash; not just the
explanation from the *sicha*.]

In Torah Shleima (Shemos chapter
3, subsection 241) [the author cites]
Mechilta D'Rashbi [that gathering the
spoils from Mitzrayim constituted
both] a **positive** and **negative mitzvah**.

Find the sefer by Rabbi [Mordechai]
Savitsky *sheyichye* (on [Maseches]
Shekalim?).³ In the introduction [to
the *sefer*] he discusses a (somewhat)
similar idea to the one mentioned
above.⁴ At the time [when I received
the *sefer*], I had in mind to comment
on this [to the author], and it's possible
that [I indeed] wrote [to him about it].⁵



1. Sichos Kodesh 5734, vol. 2, p. 70. Likkutei Sichos vol. 21, Beshalach (1).
2. Published in B'chadrei Torasecha—preview (Teshura Yarchei Kallah Kfar Chabad 5784), p. 5.
3. Mayim Adirim on Bavli, Yerushalmi, and Rambam, Boston 5711.
4. Rabbi Savitsky asks the same question: Why does the Gemara imply that only Moshe was doing a mitzvah when all the Jews had a mitzvah to take spoils as well? He answers that a mitzvah done purely for its own sake is greater and more important than a mitzvah which brings physical benefit to the person.
5. As of now, a letter from the Rebbe has not been found on the subject.