

סימן ק"ט  
קיצור שולחן ערוך הארוך  
מאת הרב גבריאל גולדפדר

על עניני מים שלנו

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND NINE OF  
THE EXPANDED ABRIDGED SHULCHAN ARUCH  
BY RABBI GAVRIEL GOLDFEDER

ON THE TOPIC OF ALLOWING THE WATER USED TO  
MAKE MATZAH TO SIT AT REST

[א]

אין

לשין את המצות אלא במים שלנו הלילה, דהינו שישאב אותם בין השמשות ויעמדו בתלוש כל הלילה. ואפלו אם הלילה ארך יותר משתים עשרה שעות, אסור ללוש בהן עד אור היום. ואם הלילה קצר ואין שתים עשרה שעות עד אור היום, צריכין להמתין עד שיעברו שתים עשרה שעות משעה שנשאבו. ועמא דארעא נוהגין, שמיד באור היום לשין עם המים שלנו אף שעדין לא עברו שתים עשרה שעות. ואף שיש להם על מה שיסמכו, אבל רב הפוסקים מחמירים בזה, ועל כן צריך להזהר בדבר (עין פרי מגדים ומחצית השקל סימן תנ"ה):

*Kitzur 109:1: We only knead the matzah with water that has been at rest through the entire night – meaning, a person should draw the water at twilight, and the water should stand, detached, through the entire night. And even if the night is longer than twelve hours, it is forbidden to knead with them until daybreak. And if the night is short and there are not twelve hours until daybreak, one must wait for them to sit for twelve hours from the time that they were drawn. And folks are accustomed to knead with water at daybreak with water that has not passed twelve hours. And even though there are opinions that support that, most poskim are strict on this, and therefore a person must be careful with this.*

It would be perfectly understandable if there were a particular temperature at

which the water must be when it is mixed with flour – say, 278.7 degrees Kelvin.

This would fit well alongside other such parameters we have seen, like those concerning the flour, particularly in the prohibition against using recently-ground flour, and also against transporting the flour on the back of a sweaty animal, because they are likely to be warmed by those processes. A modern sensibility says that, if it is a question of temperature, then I should draw the water whenever I like, stick it in the fridge, wait until it reached 278.7 degrees Kelvin, and *dayenu*. Simple chemistry.

But the medieval understanding of “temperature” is based upon factors that seem to contradict modern common sense and modern science. That's because the medieval understanding of temperature has more to do with sun-exposure than it does with the degree or intensity of heat within the water. The assumption that sun exposure is determinative of temperature, and the assumptions around how sun exposure happens, are spelled out in this statement from the *Tur*:

We only make the dough with water that was at rest. For Rashi, this does not mean that the water specifically was at rest for one complete night, but rather that twelve hours have passed from when the water was drawn.

That's because, for Rashi, the sun is much closer to the earth in winter, and would therefore heat any open bodies of water. To remedy this, one would have to let the water sit for a prescribed period of time, regardless of when it was drawn.

And in the interpretation of the Rabbi Eliezer from Mitz, it must be that the water was not in contact

with ground at the point when night started, because at night, the springs are hot, and as for water drawn in the evening, after sunset, one is permitted to use this water immediately....

For Rabbi Eliezer of Mintz, since the sun is on the other side of the earth at night, it would therefore heat underground water, so water drawn before the sun goes underground would not be as hot.

More than enough ink has been spilled questioning the claims of Rashi and Rabbi Eliezer of Mintz as to the actual location of the sun, as well as the relationship between the location of the sun and the heat of the water. Rather than focus on the physics and the chemistry implicit in their claims, I choose to focus on the **meta-physics** and the **meta-chemistry** of their claims. Meaning, rather than focus on the sun's proximity to the water and its effects on the temperature of the water, I take very seriously Rashi and Rabbi Eliezer of Mintz's concerns about the **meta-physical** effects of the sun on water that will be used for *matzah*.

(Chemistry describes the desired physical conditions within which a desired chemical reaction would take place.

**Meta-chemistry** describes the rules and laws by which substances and materials interact on the level of soul. According to this principle, if I were to draw water from my tap, stick it in the fridge, and then make *matzah* with it, the *matzah* would be kosher on the chemical level but not on the **meta-chemical** level.)

Our tradition insists it is important that *matzah* be kosher on both levels. This is true because *matzah* is more than simply

the food we consume in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah*. It is the **fuel** for the journey of faith that begins at Pesach, through which one will truly leave all of one's slaveries, addictions, unhealthy connections, unnecessary influences, harmful thought patterns, fears of necessary conflict, unwillingness to engage with the Living God, inability to trust, elevation of all-too-human beings to some level of ultimacy, narrowness of thought, small-mindedness, lack of true embodied awareness, failures to communicate, isolation from family, community, and nation, etc. etc. Since it operates on the level of soul, it must be properly composed on the **meta-chemical** level.

In this passage, the first **meta-chemical** rule concerning what water may be used to make *matzah* is described: the water must have limited exposure to the effects of the sun. Specifically, the water has to have been “disconnected” from its original location below the earth long enough to have shed the effects of the sun's heat (Rashi) or been drawn at a

time when the water was not as subject to the sun's heat (R' Eliezer).

Sun/heat is antithetical to *matzah* on a **meta-chemical** level. Why? The story of Pesach includes the process whereby the Jews distinguished themselves from the sun-worshipping Egyptians. Their first *mitzvah* as a people was to adhere to a lunar calendar, and thereby to become “moon people.” By doing so, the Israelites express their willingness to be distinct from the dominant culture of the time, along with its culture and philosophies. We hope to continue that work.

Additionally, identification with moon indicates adherence to a sense of time that is more clearly cyclical. As the moon waxes and wanes we spiral through our own trajectories of fullness and emptiness, and even of freedom and slavery.

Matzah, freedom-fuel of proper meta-chemical composition because of the water that is used to make it, fuels our willingness and capacity to move according to our nation's rhythms.

[ב]

# אֵם

לא יוכל לשער את זמן בין השמשות, יקדים קצת, ובלבד שלא ישאב קדם שקיעת החמה. והמנהג לסנו את המים ולכסותו, וצריך להעמידם במקום קר. וכשהוא נושאם ביום לבית, יזהר שלא יבוא עליהם השמש

*If a person cannot measure the time of dusk, that person should [draw the water] a bit earlier, as long as they do not draw the water before sundown. And the custom is to filter the water and to cover it. And the water must be stored in a cold place. And when the person carries the water home during the day, they should be careful that the sun not shine upon it.*

Even after the water has been drawn, there is continued concern about the effects of the sun on the water. To this end, the water should not even be exposed to sunlight. Our **freedom-fuel** demands that we protect this water from exposure to the influence of the sun until the *matzah* is made.

It is essential to leave the influence of Egypt and its gods at least until we establish our national identity. Once we know who we are and what we are doing, we can interact with other influences and ideologies from a place of strength and clarity. During the sensitive initial stages of development, though, even small amounts of exposure will have detrimental effect. So, too, a tiny bit of sunlight in the water will have an outsized influence on our freedom-fuel.

In a similar vein, Rav Kook writes that, as the Jewish people left Egypt, it was essential for them to remain uninfluenced by foreign cultures and philosophies until they could get to Sinai and be fully influenced by the Torah. It is because *matzah* is flat and impressionable that we must be concerned.

In order to race to Sinai untainted, that first Pesach called for *speed*. "Thus shall you eat.... with your shoes on your feet.... with speed you shall eat it."

Our situation is similar and different. Similar because the Torah has already impressed itself upon us. Our flat *matzah* has been schmeared with Holy Guacamole. Different because we have a different task at hand: to build the strength and will to sustain our

engagement with the Torah as our culture and interface with the world.

The challenge of sustained effect is a real one. Any process that happens through time is susceptible to entropy, distraction, and second-guessing. We will need determination, intensity, focus, and commitment in order to counteract them.

To ensure that the food we eat on our way to freedom is actually helping us toward that freedom and not holding us back, we keep exposure to sunlight at a minimum. By protecting this water from exposure to the sun even after it is drawn, we are adding the element of *persisting* in establishing who we are and what we are doing. We are not just pointing ourselves in the right direction; we are staying the course.

# [ג]

# יכול

# ד

לִשְׁאֹב בַּפֶּעַם אַחַת לְכֶמָּה יָמִים, אֲבָל הַמִּצְוָה הִיא לִשְׁאֹב בְּשִׁבִּיל כָּל יוֹם וְיוֹם בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ וְנוֹהֲגִין  
שֶׁלֹא לִשְׁאֹב בְּכָלִי חֶרֶס יִשְׁוֹן אֶפְלוֹ הוּא שֶׁל פֶּסַח, אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן הוּא מִצְוָה (גְּלַזִּירֶט), דְּכָלִי חֶרֶס  
:יִשְׁוֹן שְׁאִינוֹ מִצְוָה אֵינוֹ הַדּוֹר מִצְוָה. וְאִין לְשִׁנוֹת הַמִּנְהָג

*A person may draw water one time to be used over several days, but the ideal fulfillment of the mitzvah is to draw for each day separately. And we are accustomed not to draw water in an old earthenware vessel, even if it is designated for Pesach, unless it is glazed, as an earthenware vessel that is not glazed does not sufficiently embellish the mitzvah. And one should not change the custom.*

In 2018, sales of craft beer rose 7% among all beer sales in the U.S. Part of the attraction and mystique of craft beer is that it (at least seems like it) was made on some day by some person. Someone went to some brewhouse, poured out the ingredients using some actual measuring cups and measuring spoons, put it all in some barrel, and sealed it up. Later, the barrel was opened, the beer was tasted and heartily approved, and then it was bottled and shipped. And on the right day (clearly not on Passover) if the wind is blowing right and your sinuses are in good shape, you can sort of taste the humanness of the person who made it. Did she have Thousand Island Dressing with her lunch? Was he having a bad hair day. Meanwhile, to the discerning nose, Budweiser tastes like robots.

Whether the above is true or not, many people like their pickles and their bread and their kombucha and their chocolate and their coffee to have been made with special attention to *this batch*. In fact, the relative variability – the fact that this batch might taste slightly different because a butterfly flapped its wings in Guam – is a feature and not a bug. The promise that a caramel macchiato latte that you buy at Starbucks at 331 Superior

St in Duluth will taste exactly like the caramel macchiato latte that you buy at Starbucks at 400 Civic Center in Tulsa is what makes Starbucks attractive to some, and it is exactly that which makes it unattractive to others.

Here, the *kitzur* is giving us the recipe for micro-*matzah*: draw the water every day. Make each batch like it is the only batch. Do not make the Budweiser of *matzah*; make the Yeti of *matzah*.

There may be no difference in taste between “artisan” *matzah* and *matzah* made from water drawn last week. But this is not about taste. It is about **meta-taste**. When we eat *matzah* that is made with water that was drawn only for this batch of *matzah*, we are **fueling** our freedom to focus on the task at hand as if it is the only instance of that task that I will ever face.

If I were living this way, I would not be praying the morning prayer as episode number 322 of season 44 of the morning prayer. That would be like opening a can of Bud. Rather, I'd be praying like this is the only time I will ever pray the morning prayer. This is all of Morning Prayer. This is it. How does that change things?

[ד]

# הנהרות

בימי ניסן על פי הרב הם יותר קרים מן הבארות, ועל כן ישאב מן הנהר. אך לפעמים הנהרות גדולים מהפשרת שלגים ואינם קרים כל כך, אז טוב יותר לשאב מן הבארות

*During the month of Nissan, the rivers are generally more cold than the wells, and therefore one should draw water from the rivers. But sometimes the rivers are swollen from snowmelt and are not so cold. Then it is better to draw water from the wells.*

Coors Light (which should NOT be purchased, owned, or drunk on Pesach) has had a rich history of clever tag lines and advertising motifs. We have been told that “the silver bullet won’t slow you down,” and that it comes from “the most refreshing place on earth.” Additionally, Coors has claimed to have the “world’s most refreshing can” that provided a “smoother, more refreshing pour.” Coors is “born in the Rockies,” and this mountain imagery is further invoked when

they tell us to “Climb On, Whatever Your Mountain.”

But Coors’ central claim is about its coldness. “The fact that Coors Light is cold lagered, cold filtered, and cold packaged to deliver Rocky mountain cold refreshment will continue to be core to the brand’s story,” says MillerCoors Chief Marketing Officer David Kroll.



In fact, according to an article on fastcompany.com, “over the past six years, the men and women behind Coors Light have staked the entire brand on the concept and image of cold.” Fine. You get it as an advertising campaign. Rockies = cold = refreshing. Sounds delightful on a hot summer night.

But what are we to do with Coors' claims that this beer is “colder”? As many a human of average intelligence, and even a brighter-than-average dolphin or monkey has realized, a beer's coldness is, and is only, a function of whether it's spent enough time in a cold place. And it turns out that Bud Lite and Coors Lite, starting off at the same temperature, and then spending the same amount of time in the fridge, are actually at the same temperature. The super-cool mountain logo that actually changes color when it is “cold” notwithstanding, Coors is simply not colder than other beers.

Don't tell that to the *kitzur*. Like Coors, he claims that water that emerges from rivers is simply colder than water that emerges from wells. He is staking the entire *matzah* brand on the concept and image of cold. His *matzah* is so cold.

(Keep in mind that snowmelt is assumed to be warmer than average river water

(because it has melted?) and is therefore not to be considered cold. (Having immersed in snowmelt water on occasion, I can testify, albeit anecdotally, that it is actually so cold.))

Yes, you want to tell the *kitzur* that, if the goal is to achieve some desired level of cold, then one could draw it directly from a volcano stream and store it somewhere that is that cold, and after 12 hours, it will be that cold, regardless of where you got it from.

And yet. And yet. We are not dealing with chemistry here. We are dealing with **meta-chemistry**. And in meta-chemistry, some water is just colder than other water, and water that comes from a mountain stream – particularly from the Rockies, though I imagine the Carpathians would also do the trick – is just plain colder.

And this coldness ensures that absolute minimum fermentation happens. There is no other factor that interferes in the process and wreaks havoc. Perhaps when such cold certainty is baked into our **freedom-fuel** we are able to invoke that same cold, down-to-business clarity (the same clarity one has when one jumps into a snowmelt river?) we need in order to act with full freedom.

[ה]

לא

יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל יְדֵי עוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים אֶלָּא עַל יְדֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

*A person should not have the water drawn by an idolator, but rather by a Jew*

In most cases, *kashrut* is *kashrut*. If something contains kosher ingredients and was prepared using *kosher* utensils, then it is kosher. Wine is one of exceptions to this rule. The ingredients of a wine could be completely *kosher* but the end product is not *kosher*. Why? If the wine was touched, carried, or even looked at by someone who worships idols, that wine would become unusable. It's like we're allergic to idolatry to the same degree that some people are allergic to peanuts.

This “allergy” is the genetic heritage of a Jew. The very word “Jew” - *yehudi* - connotes opposition to idolatry. The Talmud even wonders why Mordecai, who is from the tribe of Binyamin, and is therefore called *ish yemini*, is also associated with the tribe of Yehuda by being called a *yehudi*. The Talmud answers that anyone who is opposed to idolatry is a *yehudi*, a Jew.

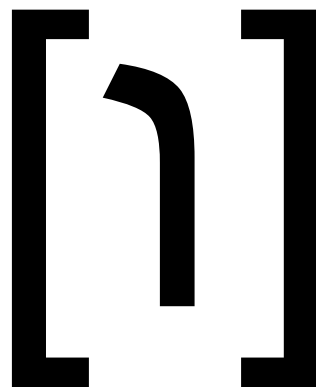
This identification with being anti-idolatry really begins in Egypt. As commentators point out, the act of sacrificing a lamb in Egypt for their first Passover (and then

applying the blood to the doorpost) was a flagrant, public act of rejecting the idolatry that was rampant in Egypt. Up until that moment, the Jewish people were still involved in that idolatry. The actions of sacrificing the Passover Lamb separated them from their idolatrous hosts.

As we relive the Exodus every year – לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים – we relive as many elements of it as we can – including this movement away from idolatry. We might consider: in what ways have I created or worshiped certain images of the Divine, imposing limits on the Divine based upon my own fears, blindspots, and desires? In what ways have I decided that God, or prayer, or Torah, or *mitzvah* is “only” this or that, thus severing its connection to the Infinite? All of these resemble the idolatries that we would be turning away from through the practice of Passover.

Thus, Passover contains a component of *teshuva*-repentance. Our journey to freedom begins with identifying where we have become stuck and gone astray, and turning away from those conceptions (of self, God, etc.), attitudes, and behaviors in favor of the kinds of conceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that bespeak true, deep, Divinely-guided freedom.

As we begin our journey to freedom, we will want our **freedom fuel** to support that move away from idolatry. Considering how sensitive we are at that time of emergence – like newborn babes! - it would be important that our **fuel**, our “mother’s milk,” be pure. If the *matzah* is made from water that carries an element of idolatry, then we our journey will be more cyclical, returning us to the exact place from whence we came. But if that *matzah* is pure, free of “allergens”, then we can surely move forward to freedom.



# לא

יתנם בכלי שהיה בו דבש או שאר מי פרות, אלא אם הגעילו קדם. מכל שכן שלא יתנם בכלי שהיה בו דבר חריף אפלו לא היה חמץ, משום דעל ידי דבר חריף ממהר להחמיץ, ואפלו הגעלה לא מהני לזה. גם לא יתנם בכלי נחשת, שאינו מצנן כמו שאר כלים:

*A person should not put this water into a vessel that held honey (mead?) or other kinds of fruits, unless they are boiled beforehand. And all the more so a person should not put this water in a vessel that contained something spicy, even if it wasn't chometz, since that spicy element catalyzes fermentation, and even boiling the vessel would not help for this. A person should also not put the water into a copper vessel, which does not cool down like other vessels.*

On the level of ordinary chemistry, there are some bold claims here! That something spicy or sharp would actually catalyze quicker fermentation. That water in a copper bowl does not cool like it cools in other vessels. (Is the assumption here that copper contains some element of heat, such that, regardless of where one places the vessel, water placed within it simply cannot reach the same low temperature, that, say a water placed in an empty, thoroughly washed and boiled Coors Lite can could reach?) That boiling a vessel that held something spicy or sharp will do nothing to remove that element from the body of the vessel.

And, there are a couple of surprising *halachic* claims here: that thoroughly washing out a bowl that once held

something sweet is insufficient in order to remove that substance, and therefore boiling is necessary. And that boiling a vessel is sufficient to remove any *chometz* element contained therein (the presence of which would possibly be a Torah-level violation) but insufficient to remove some sharp or spicy element from it.

It is also noticeable that the *kitzur* seems to be far stricter concerning the water-element of *matzah* than he is with the flour-element of the *matzah*. With the flour, if water dripped onto the sack, one could simply remove the wet clumps and move on with one's life. But if the water were stored in a vessel that once contained Dovid's Famous Hot Wings but

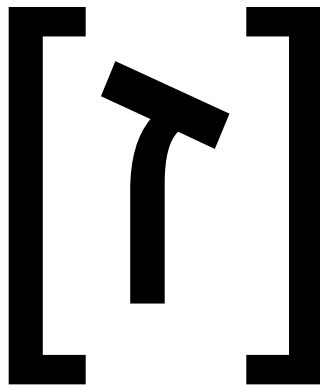
was subsequently boiled, one might as well eat a bagel?

Operating within a self-imposed, semi-permanent moratorium on questions and concerns that arise from the worlds of terrestrial physics and chemistry, we approach these passages with a view from **meta-chemistry** and **meta-physics**. And from there, let us then ask: what of sweet or spicy things? And what of copper?

If one were to read the expression of concern about copper as a coded, mystical text, one would notice that copper-*nechoshet* is quite related to the word *nachash*-serpent, our fruit dealer from the Garden. That serpent helped introduce us to our first exile out of the Garden by getting us fired up about being like gods. So it would make sense that

we'd be encouraged to avoid copper-serpent energy in this process of making **freedom fuel**, in order to not get fired up about distracting things. Copper just does not get cold (read: un-fired up) enough.

The same would apply to that bowl of sweet or spicy food. Those are things that people get excited about, but they are ultimately distractions. Most people don't get too fired up about *matzah*. That's because the **freedom fuel** that is *matzah* is free of bells and whistles, instead providing consistent day-to-day nourishment to support our ongoing, straight, no-frills, step-by-step journey to freedom. On such a journey our daily bread ought not consist of Dovid's Famous Hot Wings or Chunky Monkey ice cream. Bland and steady wins the race. Fired up about freedom.



# אם

רוּאָה שְׁלֹא יִסְפִּיקוּ לוֹ הַמַּיִם שְׁלָנוּ, מִתֵּר לְהוֹסִיף לְתוֹכוֹ שְׁאֵר מַיִם, וּבִלְבָּד שֶׁיְהִיָּה הָרֵב מִמֵּי שְׁלָנוּ, וּלְכַתְּחֵלָה טוֹב שֶׁיְהִי שְׁנֵי שְׁלִישִׁים מַיִם שְׁלָנוּ. וְיֵשׁ לְהִדָּר אִם אֲפָשָׁר לְשָׂאֵב אֶת הַמַּיִם שְׁמוֹסִיפִין מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁאֲבָה אוֹ שְׁאֵר בְּאֵר מְכֻסָּה שְׁאִין הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בָּאָה עַל הַמַּיִם:

*If a person sees that they will not have enough rested-water, it is permitted to add other water, as long as the majority will be rested-water. And, ideally, it is best that the water be two-thirds rested-water. And it is best, if possible, to draw that additional water from a pump or covered well where the sun does not directly affect the water.*

As we compose our **freedom fuel**, another element is added: In addition to avoiding sun-exposure, exposure to idolatry, a focus on specificity (**this water for this matzah**), a preference for coldness (in addition to avoiding sun-exposure), and avoidance of serpent-energy, we consider the question of purity. We would have thought that this water would have to consist of pure *mayim she'lanu*. After all, it is the **fuel of freedom**. But we would have thought wrong. The water used to make *matzah* may consist of up to 50% *mayim shelo lanu*.

This is important. If we require absolute perfection for our **freedom-fuel**, this might lead us to think that freedom is all-or-nothing, that the only way to attain freedom is through total commitment, totally being on board.

But the Torah suggests otherwise. The Torah writes that the Jews left Egypt *chamushim*. Rashi writes that the root *chamush* implies that only one fifth of all Jews left Egypt. The Midrash to which Rashi refers suggests that only one in 50, or even one in 500, Jews left Egypt. Rabbi Henschel Dov Hoffman interprets this to mean not that there were 600,000 X 500 Jews in Egypt, and only one in 500 left, but that  $1/500^{\text{th}}$  of every Jew left. Just that little piece inside of each Jew that was still connected to freedom, that still believed a different life was possible, that was not silenced by the grind of slavery, that remembered its root in the Divine – that piece led/dragged all the other pieces of us out of Egypt.

Lest we think that we may only move toward a higher state of freedom if we are 100% committed, and should only dare to leave if our **freedom-fuel** is absolutely

pure (and therefore will enable us to reach escape velocity), the *kitzur* tells us that the *mayim*-water in the *matzah* may include *mayim shelo lanu* – water that did not rest for the sufficient period of time.

So even if half the water has been touched by idolators, soaked in sunlight,

and stored with copper snakes, it can still be used. (Though let's try to at least get it from a well!) Similarly, if some parts of us are not yet ready to rise, to be elevated, to see freedom, and to experience what it means to live a life of soul – that does not mean we should not start putting one foot in front of the other.

[ח]

כֶּשֶׁשׂאֵב בַּיּוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי בְּעֶרְבֹה, כִּי בְּעֶרְבֹה שָׁבֵת אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְצַמֵּצֵם בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת. וּבְשַׁעַת הַדְּחָק אִם לֹא שָׁאֵב בַּיּוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי, יִשָּׂאֵב בְּעֶרְבֹה שָׁבֵת לְאַחֵר מִנְחָה, אוֹ בְּשַׁבֵּת עַל יְדֵי עוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים:

ביום ראשון, צריכין לשאב ביום חמישי בערב, כי בערב שבת אי אפשר לצמצם בין השמשות. ובשעת הדחק אם לא שאב ביום חמישי, ישאב בערב שבת לאחר מנחה, או בשבת על ידי עובד כוכבים:

*When we bake on Sunday, we must draw the water on Thursday evening, because on Friday it is impossible to draw the water specifically at dusk. And at a time of urgency, if a person did not draw water on Thursday, they should draw water on Friday after minchah, or on Shabbat by means of an idolator.*

The **meta-chemistry** of freedom, as discussed in 109:7, requires compromise.

Primary priorities yield to secondary ones when they must. But there are different

kinds of compromise and in certain scenarios we may be left with having to choose from among three less-than-ideal scenarios:

1. To draw the water before sundown
2. To draw the water farther in advance than we'd like
3. To draw the water by means of an idolator

These, as noted, represent three ideals concerning the **meta-chemistry** of the water:

1. Avoiding sun-exposure is about leaving Egypt's sun-orientation
2. Not drawing too far in advance is about making micro-matzah – engaging with each repeated activity as if this is the only opportunity to engage with it
3. Not drawing water by means of an idolator implies that the *matzah* will lead us away from idolatry

All of these concerns revolve around engaging positively with the Jewish Project with intensity and focus. So, is it better to compromise on one of them, or the other? Which component of the Project is less essential?

It may be that a person will choose one compromise over the other because they have to – maybe they cannot make time on Thursday to get the water. Maybe Friday afternoon they are busy mopping the floor for Shabbat or reading over the Parsha. Maybe the local idolators are too idolatrous for her taste.

Or, it could be that a person must identify which way they can afford to modify the **meta-chemistry** of their **freedom-fuel**. A person might feel pretty solid about their orientation toward idolatry and a bit iffy about their micro-*matzah* intensity. Or, they could feel fine about both of those, but still have a question about their sun-moon orientation.

Whatever the case may be, the *kitzur* leaves open the possibility for choosing which way to compromise. We are empowered to analyze our own situations, to make choices accordingly, and to follow through with confidence.



[ט]

אין

לשפך את המים מפני המת או מפני התקופה, שנאמר, שומר מצוה לא ידע דבר רע. ומכל מקום, לכתחלה, כשידע שהתקופה תפל, יניח בתוך המים חתיכת ברזל קטנה ונקיה כמו מחט ותהא תלויה בחוט, שלא יצטרך אחר כך להכניס את היד לתוך המים לקחת אותה אלא ימשכונו עם החוט

*One should not pour out water on account of a dead body or because of the equinox, as is written, "One who keeps a mitzvah need not fear anything bad." And anyway, ideally, when a person knows that the equinox is pending, that person should place a clean, small piece of iron, like a needle, into the water, and it should be hanging by a string, so the person will not need to put their hand in afterward to retrieve it, but can rather pull it out with the string.*

This from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia:

An ancient and widely believed superstition is connected with the *tekufot*-equinoxes/solstices. All water that may be in the house or stored away in vessels in the first

hour of the *tekufah* is thrown away in the belief that the water is then poisoned, and if drunk would cause swelling of the body, sickness, and sometimes death. Several reasons are advanced for this. Some say it is because the

angels who protect the water change guard at the *tekufah* and leave it unwatched for a short time. Others say that Cancer fights with Libra and drops blood into the water. Another authority accounts for the drops of blood in the water at *Tekufat* Nisan by pointing out that the waters in Egypt turned to blood at that particular moment. At *Tekufat* Tammuz, Moses smote the rock and caused drops of blood to flow from it. At *Tekufat* Tishri the knife which Abraham held to slay Isaac dropped blood. At *Tekufat* Tevet, Jephthah sacrificed his daughter (Abudarham, "Sha'ar ha-Tekufot," p. 122a, Venice, 1566).

The origin of the superstition can not be traced. Hai Gaon, in the tenth century, in reply to a question as to the prevalence of this custom in the "West" (i.e., west of Babylon), said it was followed only in order that the new season might be begun with a supply of fresh, sweet water. Ibn Ezra ridicules the fear that the *tekufah* water will cause swelling, and ascribes the belief to the "gossip of old women" (ib.). Hezekiah da Silva, however, warns his coreligionists to pay no

attention to Ibn Ezra's remarks, asserting that in his own times many persons who drank water when the *tekufah* occurred fell ill and died in consequence. Da Silva says the principal danger lies in the first *tekufah* (Nisan); and a special announcement of its occurrence was made by the beadle of the congregation ("Peri Haddash," on Orah Hayyim, 428, end 2). The danger lurks only in unused water, not in water that has been boiled or used in salting or pickling. The danger in unused water may be avoided by putting in it a piece of iron or an iron vessel ("Bet Yosef" on the "Tur," and Isserles' note to Shulhan 'Aruk, Orah Hayyim, 455, 1;)

Even **meta-chemistry** has its limits. Perhaps part of our freedom, as indicated by the composition of our **freedom-fuel**, is our ability to establish limits as to the effects of **meta-chemistry** on our lives and well-being. It is important to be concerned as to the many-layered composition of the water that makes our *matzah*. And the "gossip of old women" need not be a part of it. To be free, we must be free from superstitions and assumptions about the invisible world and its impact on our visible and tangible lives.