

Torah Tidbits

י' ניסן תש"פ 20 APR 4TH '20 ISSUE 1366

פרשת צו - שבת הגדול / פסח

PARSHAT TZAV - SHABBAT HAGADOL
PESACH



**PESACH:
FOR THE
FIRST TIME**
By Rabbi Judah
Mischel
see page 56



**SPECIAL: 27TH
Yahrzeit of
Rabbi Joseph B.
Soloveitchik
ZT"l**
Rabbi Aharon Rakeffet,
Rabbi Azarya Berzon
& Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider
see page 68

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CANDLES	EARLIEST	TZAV - HAGADOL	HAVDALA	FIRST DAY PESACH	
				CANDLES	HAVDALA
6:25	5:42	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:38	6:28	7:42
6:42	5:44	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot et al)	7:40	6:45	7:44
6:41	5:43	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:39	6:44	7:43
6:40	5:42	Gush Etzion	7:38	6:43	7:42
6:41	5:44	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	7:40	6:45	7:44
6:41	5:43	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:39	6:44	7:43
6:42	5:44	Netanya	7:40	6:45	7:44
6:39	5:43	Be'er Sheva	7:39	6:42	7:43
6:41	5:44	Rehovot	7:40	6:44	7:43
6:25	5:44	Petach Tikva	7:40	6:28	7:43
6:40	5:43	Ginot Shomron	7:39	6:43	7:43
6:31	5:43	Haifa / Zichron	7:40	6:35	7:44
6:40	5:42	Gush Shiloh	7:38	6:43	7:43
6:40	5:44	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:40	6:43	7:44
6:40	5:42	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:38	6:43	7:42
6:40	5:42	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:38	6:43	7:42
6:42	5:45	Ashkelon	7:41	6:46	7:44
6:41	5:44	Yad Binyamin	7:40	6:45	7:43
6:29	5:41	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:38	6:33	7:42
6:38	5:40	Golan	7:37	6:42	7:41

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:13pm • next week - 8:18pm

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Torah Tidbits and many of the projects of OU Israel are assisted by grants from **MISRAD HACHINUCH**- Dept of Tarbut Yehudit



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Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt"l

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PARSHAT TZAV

06 Aliya by Aliya Sedra Summary
and Pesach Readings

14 Increasing Gratitude
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

18 Left- and Right- Brain Judaism
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

24 Probing The Prophets
Rabbi Nachman Winkler

26 The Inside Story
Rabbi Shalom Rosner

30 Kitniyot Part II
Rabbi Ezra Friedman

32 Non-Jew Who Buys Chametz
Rabbi Daniel Mann

34 Corona and Fertility Treatment
Rabbi Gideon Weitzman

40 OU Israel
Virtual Schedule

42 Torah Tidbits This 'n That
Phil Chernofsky

44 Matzah From Other Grains
Rabbi Moshe Bloom

46 The Mitzvah of Settling in the Land
Rabbi Shimshon Hakohen Nadel

50 Taking Out the Trash
Rabbi Benji Levy

52 Torah 4 Teens By Teens
Hillel Kreif // Moshe Domnitch

54 Morid Hatal & V'tein B'racha
Phil Chernofsky

PESACH

56 Seder Secrets
Rebbetzin Shira Smiles

58 Pesach: For the First Time
Rabbi Judah Mischel

60 Simchat Shmuel
Rabbi Sam Shor

64 On Pesach and Chesed
Menachem Persoff

66 Haggadah Thoughts for Seder
Sivan Rahav Meir

SPECIAL: 27TH Yahrzeit of Rabbi Joseph B. SOLOVEITCHIK ZT"l

68 Recreating the Destroyed World
Rabbi Aharon Rakeffet

70 The Rav as *Melamed*
Rabbi Azarya Berzon

74 Pesach's Perfect Pairing
Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider



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TZAV



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



STATS

Sources say that TZAV has TZAV (96) p'sukim. Our Chumashim have 97. Either one-off is acceptable for Gimatriya purposes, or there was a slightly different p'sukim-division way back.



MITZVOT

18 mitzvot; 9 pos. and 9 prohibitions

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[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the Parsha's beginning;

(Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

KOHEN FIRST ALIYA 11 P'SUKIM - 6:1-11

[P> 6:1 (6)] After the preliminary descriptions of the different korbanot in last week's sedra, we now find the description of the daily service in the Mikdash.

After burning all night, the fires of the Mizbei'ach are tended first thing in the morning (before sunrise). This first task of the day is relatively less important than other tasks, although it was enthusiastically sought after by young kohanim who vied for the honor of performing this mitzva of "T'rumat HaDeshen" [131, A30 6:3].

The fire of the Mizbei'ach was to burn always [132,A29 6:6] and was not allowed to be extinguished ever [133, L81 6:6]. (Another opposite-sides-of-the-same-coin mitzva.)

[P> 6:7 (5)] The Torah next returns to the

topic of the "meal-offerings", the MINCHA. A small amount of the flour-oil mixture and all of the L'vona (frankincense) was scooped up and placed on the Mizbei'ach to burn. The "mincha" was not to be made Chametz [135, L124 6:10] (there are exceptions) The rest of the "mincha" is eaten by male kohanim on duty in the Beit HaMikdash at the time of the offering [134, A88 6:9].

LEVI SECOND ALIYA 22 P'SUKIM - 6:12-7:10

[P> 6:12 (5)] Each day, the Kohen Gadol is to bring a meal-offering of a tenth of an eifa of flour (plus oil & spice) - half in the morning and half before evening [136,A40 6:13]. This mincha was not to be eaten [137,L138 6:16], but rather was completely consumed on the Mizbei'ach.

[P> 6:17 (7)] The CHATAT [138,A64 6:18] was slaughtered in the same place as the "Olah" (viz. the north side of the Mizbei'ach). An integral part of a sin-offering is the eating of its meat by the kohen (kohanim) who brought it on behalf of the sinners.

Certain chata'ot, the blood of which was brought into the Mikdash, were not to be eaten [139, L139 6:23], but rather completely consumed on the Mizbei'ach.

SHLISHI THIRD ALIYA 28 P'SUKIM - 7:11-38

[P> 7:11 (17)] The Torah next discusses the Sh'lammim [141, A66 7:11], beginning



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specifically with the "Toda". The animal sacrifice is accompanied by various types of wafers and cakes. Parts of the animal are burned on the Altar, parts are given to the kohen, and the remainder is to be eaten by the bringer of the korban (and his invitees). The korban must be eaten by midnight (actual deadline is dawn; midnight is required as a precaution). It is forbidden to leave over any of the korban until morning [142, L120 7:15]; that which is left over must be burned [143, A91 7:17]. If the Sh'lamim is in fulfillment of a vow, its meat may be eaten for two days, becoming "Notar" on the 3rd day.

It is forbidden to eat "Pigul" [144, L132 7:18]. Pigul is a type of invalid korban, where that which rendered the korban invalid was not something physical nor a mistake in the kohen's action, but rather an incorrect thought (kavana), of certain types, on the part of the kohein. It is significant that improper thoughts alone can effect the status of a korban.

It is forbidden to eat of a korban that is tamei (ritually unclean) [145, L130 7:19]. This is punishable by makot. It is required to burn tamei korbanot [146, A90 7:19]. A person who is tamei who intentionally eats of a korban is liable to "koreit" ("cut off" by G-d).

Certain fats of kosher animals are forbidden to eat [147,L185 7:23]. This is

the prohibition of "cheilev". There are differences between the cheilev of a korban and that of a regular CHULIN (non-sacred) animal.

Eating blood of a bird or mammal is a capital offense (from Heaven) [147, L185 7:26]. Eating meat with blood still in it is a lesser offense, but nonetheless forbidden. This is why meat has to be "kashered", not just kosher.

[P> 7:28 (11)] What follows are more details of the SH'LAMIM: what parts go on the Altar, what parts go to the kohen, etc.

R'VI' FOURTH ALIYA

13 P'SUKIM - 8:1-13

[P> 8:1 (36)] Having set down the rules, G-d now commands Moshe to take Aharon and his sons, the garments of the kohanim, the sacrificial animals, and the anointing oil, and perform the inaugural ceremonies for the Mishkan in the presence of the People, as Moshe was commanded to gather them. Moshe dresses Aharon in the garb of the Kohen Gadol, anoints him, the Altar, and the vessels of the Mishkan. He also dresses Aharon's sons.

CHAMISHI 5TH ALIYA

8 P'SUKIM - 8:14-21

A bull as a sin-offering is brought and Aharon and his sons "lean" on it. (This is a vital element of most personal korbanot. It facilitates a psychological identification with the animal and adds meaning to the act of the sacrifice.) Leaning (s'micha)



is accompanied by confession (vidui) or words of praise to G-d, depending upon the type of korban.

The first of two rams was next offered, as an OLAH.

It is very important for us to understand that Korbanot were not "hocus-pocus, we're forgiven" offerings. It doesn't work like that. Never did. A Sin Offering had to be accompanied by real T'shuva and Vidui. Without the heart in the korban-formula, the people were continually castigated by G-d for hollow meaningless acts and lip service. The ceremonies have deep significance and meaning, but the heart and soul of a person must truly be involved, otherwise the korban is (less than) nothing.

SHISHI SIXTH ALIYA 8 P'SUKIM - 8:22-29

The second ram was then offered (as a SH'LAMIM called EIL HAMILU'IM) and several procedures, as specified in the Torah, were followed. Note: Moshe Rabeinu was an active participant in the 7-day inauguration period for the Mishkan. Thereafter, Aharon and his sons (and all kohanim) are the ones who perform the sacred service of the Mikdash.

SH'VII SEVENTH ALIYA 7 P'SUKIM - 8:30-36

Further anointing of Aharon, his sons, and their garments. Then Moshe told them to prepare part of the meat for eating with



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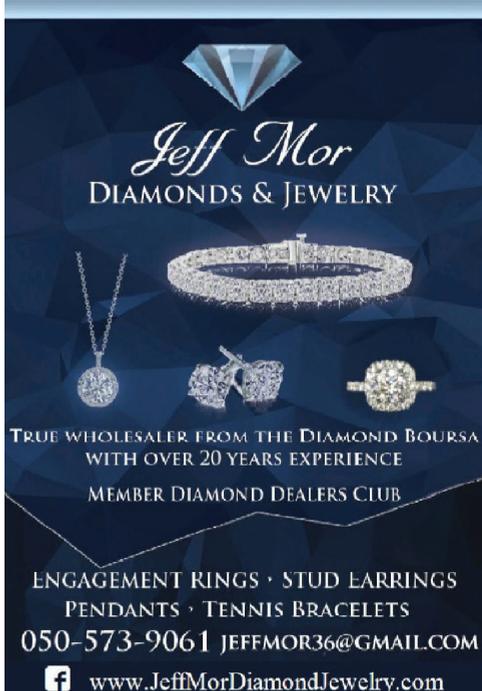
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the accompanying cakes and wafers. That which was left over was to be burned. During the 7 inaugural days, the kohanim were not to leave the Mishkan; they remained there as honor-guards.

Aharon and his sons did all that G-d had commanded via Moshe. The last 4 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir. (No special Maftir for HaGadol. Only Haftara.)

HAFTARA 21+1 P'SUKIM MAL'ACHI 3:4-24

The haftara speaks of faithfulness to Torah and the promise of the coming of Eliyahu HaNavi as the harbinger of the Complete Redemption. That the second, to some extent, depends on the first can be seen in the closeness of the following two phrases: ZICHRU TORAT MOSHE... (remember the Torah, and keep it), and HINEI ANOCHI SHOLEI'ACH LACHEM and if you do, then I will send Eliyahu... ■

PESACH READINGS

FIRST DAY OF PESACH (15 NISAN - THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH)

First Torah - five people, 31 p'sukim Sh'mot 12:21-51 (Parshat BO)

This portion is the continuation of what we read on Shabbat HaChodesh. It contains the actual procedures to be followed in the bringing of the Korban Pesach, the account of the night of the 10th

plague, the Exodus, the Exodus-Matza connection, reference to Leil Shimurim, and mitzvot related to K.P.

Second Torah - Maftir, 10 p'sukim Bamidbar 28:16-25 (in Parshat Pinchas)

Contains the Korban Musaf of Pesach. Begins with Korban Pesach on the 14th and repetition of the "comand" to eat matza for seven days.

Haftara: 15 p'sukim • Yehoshua 5:2-6:1

The Torah tells us of Pesach Mitzrayim, and then of the first annual Pesach. After that, KP was not brought for the duration of the time in the Midbar. The haftara tells of the mass circumcision at Gilgal of the males who were below military age when we came out of Egypt and those born in the Midbar. Following the Mila, a prerequisite for KP, the first Pesach in Eretz Yisrael was observed. The Manna ceased and the new People of Israel ate from the harvest of the Land for the first time. Yehoshua meets an angel and is about to begin preparations for battle against Yericho, the first step in conquering the Land.

2ND DAY OF PESACH (1ST DAY OF CHOL HAMOED, FRI, APRIL 10)

Day 1 of the Omer

First Torah - 3 people, 52 p'sukim Vayikra 22:26-23:44 (from Parshat Emor)

The Festival Portion, chapter 23 in Vayikra. It deals with the entire cycle of holidays, all of which revolve around

Pesach, all of which in some way commemorate the Exodus. The reading contains the mitzva of the Omer. Perfect timing. The Festival Portion is preceded by several p'sukim that deal with sacrifices and with the mitzvot of Kiddush HaShem. Reference is made to G-d's taking us out of Egypt - definitely part of the reason for "adding" this to the Festival portion.

Second Torah - 4th Aliya, 7 p'sukim Bamidbar 28:19-25 (Pinchas)

Contains just the Musaf of Pesach, without the first 3 p'sukim read on the first day only.

3RD DAY OF PESACH (SHABBAT CHOL HAMOED, APRIL 11TH)

Day 2 of the Omer

Many shuls have the custom of reading Shir HaShirim before Torah reading on Shabbat Chol HaMoed. When it is read from a kosher megila scroll, AL MIKRA MEGILA and SHE'HE'CHE'YANU are said. The love between G-d and Israel is the theme of Shir HaShirim. That love was forged in Egypt (and earlier, from the time of the Avot & Imahot).

First Torah - 7 people, 38 p'sukim Sh'mot 33:12-34:26 (from Ki Tisa)

Who knows 13? - Thirteen are the MIDOT of HaShem. This is the main theme of the reading of Shabbat Chol HaMoed. In the aftermath of the Sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe Rabeinu asks G-d to allow



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him to know Him (G-d) more intimately. G-d will not allow this completely, for it is impossible for any human being, but He will show Moshe more of Himself (so to speak) than anyone else would ever see. G-d then commands Moshe to cut new LUCHOT and write upon them that which was written on the first set, "that you broke". G-d forgives the People, sends Moshe back to them with the new LUCHOT, and with the special knowledge of the YUD-GIMEL MIDOT, which the people of Israel are to use in prayer, and some of whose traits, we are to emulate.

This is followed by a review of the three major Chagim, including mitzvot related to Pesach.

2nd Torah - MAFTIR, same as day 2

Haftara: 14 p'sukim • Yechezkeil 37:1-14

The famous prophecy of the Valley of the Dry Bones. The NAVI sees bones gradually get covered with sinew, flesh, and skin. Then G-d tells Yechezkeil to prophesy in His name to the inert bodies that G-d will bring to them the breath of life and they will live. The message to Yechezkeil (and all of us) is that the Jewish Nation, scattered in Exile among the nations of the world, are like those dry bones. But they are not gone and forgotten. They will have the breath of G-d breathed into them and they will return to life - active spiritual, religious life. This prophecy is also about T'CHIYAT HAMEITIM.

Shabbat Mincha - 3 people

16 p'sukim from the beginning of Parshat Sh'mini, as usual for Shabbat Mincha.

4TH DAY OF PESACH (3RD DAY OF CHOL HAMOED, SUN, APR 12)

Day 3 of the Omer

First Torah - 3 people, 16 p'sukim

Sh'mot 13:1-16 (from Parshat BO)

Continuation of the reading of the first day of Pesach. It consists of the two parshiyot known as KADEISH and V'HAYA KI Y'VI'ACHA, which join the first two portions of the Sh'ma as the four parshiyot in T'filin. The reading contains the mitzvot of the sanctity of firstborns, which derives from the events in Mitzrayim. Extensive reference to Pesach is also found here.

2nd Torah - 4th Aliya, same as day 2

5TH DAY OF PESACH (4TH DAY OF CHOL HAMOED, MON, APR 13)

Day 4 of the Omer

First Torah - 3 people, 26 p'sukim Sh'mot 22:24-23:19 (from Mishpatim)

Many mitzvot including those related to the Three Festivals. The opening mitzvot deal with Tzedaka, appropriate in light of the practice of KIMCHA D'PISCHA, providing for the Pesach needs of the poor.

2nd Torah - 4th Aliya, same as day 2

*Happy 2 decades to the
former teenager!*

6TH DAY OF PESACH
(5TH DAY OF CHOL
HAMOED, TUE, APRIL 14)

Day 5 of the Omer

First Torah - 3 people, 14 p'sukim
Bamidbar 9:1-14 (from B'haalot'cha)

This portion deals with the first (and only) Korban Pesach brought in the Wilderness. It also contains the mitzvot of Pesach Sheni.

2nd Torah - 4th Aliya, same as day 2

7TH DAY OF PESACH
(WEDNESDAY, APR 15)

Day 6 of the Omer

First Torah - 5 people, 63 p'sukim Sh'mot
13:17-15:26 (from B'shalach)

Continuation of the reading from the fourth day... contains the events immediately following Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim, mainly the Splitting of the Sea the drowning of the Egyptians, and the Song of the Sea - AZ YASHIR. Our tradition is that it was on the seventh day of Pesach that we crossed Yam Suf.

2nd Torah - Maftir, same as day 2

Haftara: 51 p'sukim • 2 Shmuel 22:1-51

Song of King David... an exultant hymn of thanksgiving to G-d. One gets the sense, when following Torah with this Haftara, of B'CHOL DOR VADOR - in every generation... ■

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THE PERSON

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IN THE PARSHA

Increasing Gratitude

There are certain phrases or expressions that many of us find hard to say. “I love you” is one of them. Another such phrase is “thank you”.

Although these words are difficult for us to pronounce, they each reflect powerful emotions and, when finally uttered, have an unbelievable impact upon the person to whom they are addressed. It is wonderful to hear that one is loved, and it is also wonderful to learn that another person is grateful and appreciative of what one has done for him or her.

In our tradition, gratitude is a primary value. Bachya ibn Pakuda, in his renowned medieval book *Duties of the Heart*, stresses the centrality of gratitude in the religious experience. For him, the worship of God begins with a sense of gratitude for being alive, for being healthy, for having one’s needs met.

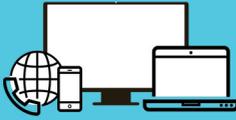
It is no wonder, then, that as the book

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of *Leviticus* enumerates the many types of sacrificial offerings which comprise the ancient Temple service, the *korban todah*, or thanksgiving offering, is prominently included. In this week’s Torah portion, *Tzav*, in *Leviticus* 7:11-18, the sacrifice known as the *korban shelamim*, or peace offering, is described in detail. Generally speaking, when a person makes a vow to offer such a sacrifice, whether in a time of distress or when remembering God’s tender mercies, he must bring an animal offering. He brings it to the Temple, the *kohen* (priest) performs various ritual procedures, and then most of the meat can be consumed by the individual who donated the offering, as long as he finishes it all during the day he brings it, and the following night and day, providing the individual with much more than 24 hours within which to consume the meat.

But the passage which deals with this offering begins with a subtype of the *shelamim* – the *todah*. In this instance, besides bringing an animal sacrifice, the donor must also bring four types of bread, and ten breads of each type, totaling forty loaves. The meat and the accompanying loaves of bread must be consumed by daybreak after the night following the preparation of the sacrifice.

The late 19th century commentator known as the *Netziv* suggests that the



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thanksgiving offering, or *todah*, must be accompanied by a public celebration with many guests invited. Therefore, unlike the ordinary *shelamim*, the numerous loaves of bread are prescribed so that all the guests can partake of the meal. The time within which the meat and breads can be consumed is limited to much less than 24 hours, necessitating the invitation of numerous guests to share in the thanksgiving celebration.

The Netziv teaches us here that expressions of gratitude should ideally not be kept private. Thankfulness is an emotion to share with others in a public celebration.

Not long ago, I came across an article in an academic journal of psychology. The article was entitled *Can Prayer Increase Gratitude?* The authors quote numerous research studies which correlate gratitude with mental health. They therefore seek ways to promote the feeling of gratitude to foster increased mental health. One way they tried to instill gratitude in their subjects was to encourage them to engage in prayer.

How consistent their findings were to the teachings of Judaism! They found that when people engaged in prayer, they became more aware not of what they were lacking, but of the blessings they had to be thankful for. The very act of prayer inculcated an attitude of gratitude.

The sacrifices offered in our ancient Temple were forcibly discontinued two millennia ago. Our sages teach us that our prayers, although they are mere words, substitute for the sacrifices of old. Whereas once upon a time a Jew would express his gratitude by bringing a thanksgiving offering, today he recites a prayer instead.

The article in the psychology journal teaches us that the relationship between prayer and gratitude is a mutual one. Not only does gratitude lead to thankful prayer, but prayer leads to increased thankfulness. Thus, for those of us who come by our sense of gratitude naturally and with ease, these sacrificial offerings, or these days, the appropriate prayers, can help us express that gratitude.

But for those of us whose sense of gratitude is numbed, prayer is one way



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to free feelings of thankfulness which are otherwise locked up within us. It allows those feelings to well up and to be effectively expressed.

We often hear the admonition to “count our blessings”. Many of us, either because of our inborn pessimism, or because of the difficulties of life which seem to overshadow our blessings, find it difficult to acknowledge the positives of our life. Without such acknowledgment, gratitude is impossible.

In this week’s Torah portion, we learn not only that gratitude deserves celebration in the holy Temple, but that temple worship can help us feel grateful for what we do have. And we also learn, following the Netziv, of how worthwhile it is to express gratitude in a circle of family and friends.

That gratitude is the most pleasant of human emotions is so well expressed in these lines from the poet Thomas Gray’s *Ode for Music*:

Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bees collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music’s melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of gratitude.

The sage advice we can derive from this week’s Torah portion is: Express gratitude, and not in a “still small voice”, but in a resounding and booming voice for others to hear so that they can share in the emotions of the grateful person, and so that the grateful person can feel those emotions in every fiber of his being. ■

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Left- and Right- Brain Judaism

The institution of the Haftarah – reading a passage from the prophetic literature alongside the Torah portion – is an ancient one, dating back at least 2000 years. Scholars are not sure when, where, and why it was instituted. Some say that it began when Antiochus IV's attempt to eliminate Jewish practice in the second century BCE sparked the revolt we celebrate on Chanukah. At that time, so the tradition goes, public reading from the Torah was forbidden. So the Sages instituted that we should read a prophetic passage whose theme would *remind* people of the subject of the weekly Torah portion.

Another view is that it was introduced to protest the views of the Samaritans, and later the Sadducees, who denied the authority of the prophetic books except

the book of Joshua.

The existence of haftarat in the early centuries CE is, however, well attested. Early Christian texts, when relating to Jewish practice, speak of “the Law and the Prophets,” implying that the Torah (Law) and Haftarah (Prophets) went hand-in-hand and were read together. Many early midrashim connect verses from the Torah with those from the haftarah. So the pairing is ancient.

Often the connection between the parsha and the haftarah is straightforward and self-explanatory. Sometimes, though, the choice of prophetic passage is instructive, telling us what the Sages understood as the key message of the parsha.

Consider the case of Beshallah. At the heart of the parsha is the story of the division of the Red Sea and the passage of the Israelites through the sea on dry land. This is the greatest miracle in the Torah. There is an obvious historical parallel. It appears in the book of Joshua. The river Jordan divided allowing the Israelites to pass over on dry land: “The water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away ... The Priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had

completed the crossing on dry ground.” (Josh. ch. 3).

This, seemingly, should have been the obvious choice as haftarah. But it was not chosen. Instead, the Sages chose the song of Devorah from the book of Judges. This tells us something exceptionally significant: that tradition judged the most important event in Beshallah to be not the division of the sea but rather the song the Israelites sang on that occasion: their collective song of faith and joy.

This suggests strongly that *the Torah is not humanity's book of God but God's book of humankind*. Had the Torah been the our book of God, the focus would have been on the Divine miracle. Instead, it is on the human response to the miracle.

So the choice of haftarah tells us much about what the Sages took to be the parsha's main theme. But there are some haftarot that are so strange that they deserve to be called paradoxical, since their message seems to challenge rather than reinforce that of the parsha. One classic example is the haftarah for the morning of Yom Kippur, from the 58th chapter of Isaiah, one of the most astonishing passages in the prophetic literature:

Is this the fast I have chosen – a day when a man will oppress himself? ... Is this what you call a fast, “a day for the Lord's favour”? No: this is the fast I choose. Loosen the bindings of evil and break the slavery chain. Those who were crushed, release to freedom; shatter every yoke of slavery. Break your bread for the starving and bring dispossessed wanderers home.

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When you see a person naked, clothe them: do not avert your eyes from your own flesh. (Is. 58:5-7)

The message is unmistakable. We spoke of it in last week's *Covenant and Conversation*. The commands between us and God and those between us and our fellows are inseparable. Fasting is of no use if at the same time you do not act justly and compassionately to your fellow human beings. You cannot expect God to love you if you do not act lovingly to others. That much is clear.

But to read this in public on Yom Kippur, immediately after having read the Torah portion describing the service of the High Priest on that day, together with the command to "afflict yourselves," is jarring to the point of discord. Here is the Torah telling us to fast, atone and purify ourselves, and here is the Prophet telling us that none of this will work unless we engage in some kind of social action, or at the very least behave honourably toward others. Torah and haftarah are two voices that do not sound as if they are singing in harmony.

The other extreme example is the haftarah for today's parsha. Tzav is about the various kinds of sacrifices. Then comes the haftarah, with Jeremiah's almost incomprehensible remark:

For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey Me, and I will be your God and you will be My people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. (Jer. 7:22-23)

This seems to suggest that sacrifices were not part of God's original intention for the Israelites. It seems to negate the very substance of the parsha.

What does it mean? The simplest interpretation is that it means "I did not *only* give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices." I commanded them but they were not the whole of the law, nor were they even its primary purpose.

A second interpretation is the famously controversial view of Maimonides that the sacrifices were not what God would have wanted in an ideal world. What He wanted was *avodah*: He wanted the Israelites to worship Him. But they, accustomed to religious practices in the ancient world, could not yet conceive of *avodah shebalev*, the "service of the heart," namely prayer. They were accustomed to the way things were done in Egypt (and virtually everywhere else at that time), where worship meant sacrifice. On this reading, Jeremiah meant that from a Divine

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perspective sacrifices were *bedi'avad* not *lechatchilah*, an after-the-fact concession not something desired at the outset.

A third interpretation is that the entire sequence of events from Exodus 25 to Leviticus 25 was a response to the episode of the Golden Calf. This, I have argued elsewhere, represented a passionate need on the part of the people to have God close not distant, in the camp not at the top of the mountain, accessible to everyone not just Moses, and on a daily basis not just at rare moments of miracle. That is what the Tabernacle, its service and its sacrifices represented. It was the home of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, from the same root as *sh-ch-n*, “neighbour.” Every sacrifice – in Hebrew *korban*, meaning “that which is brought near” – was an act of coming close. So in the Tabernacle, God came close to the people, and in bringing sacrifices, the people came close to God.

This was not God’s original plan. As is evident from Jeremiah here and the covenant ceremony in Exodus 19-24, the intention was that God would be the people’s sovereign and lawmaker. He would be their king, not their neighbour. He would be distant, not close (see Ex. 33:3). The people would obey His laws; they would not bring Him sacrifices on a regular basis. God does not need sacrifices. But God responded to the people’s wish, much as He did when they said they could not continue to hear His overwhelming voice at Sinai: “I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good” (Deut. 5:25). *What brings people close to God has to do with people, not God.*

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That is why sacrifices were not God's initial intent but rather the Israelites' spiritual-psychological need: a need for closeness to the Divine at regular and predictable times.

What connects these two haftarot is their insistence on the moral dimension of Judaism. As Jeremiah puts it in the closing verse of the haftarah, "I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," (Jer. 9:23). That much is clear. What is genuinely unexpected is that the Sages joined sections of the Torah and passages from the prophetic literature so different from one another that they sound as if coming from different universes with different laws of gravity.

That is the greatness of Judaism. It is a choral symphony scored for many voices. It is an ongoing argument between different points of view. Without detailed laws, no sacrifices. Without sacrifices in the biblical age, no coming close to God. But if there are only sacrifices with no prophetic voice, then people may serve God while abusing their fellow humans. They may think themselves righteous while they are, in fact, merely self-righteous.

The Priestly voice we hear in the Torah readings for Yom Kippur and Tzav tells

us *what* and *how*. The Prophetic voice tells us *why*. They are like the left and right hemispheres of the brain; or like hearing in stereo, or seeing in 3D. That is the complexity and richness of Judaism, and it was continued in the post-biblical era in the different voices of halachah and Aggadah.

Put Priestly and Prophetic voices together and we see that ritual is a training in ethics. Repeated performance of sacred acts reconfigures the brain, reconstitutes the personality, reshapes our sensibilities. The commandments were given, said the Sages, to refine people.¹ The external act influences inner feeling. "The heart follows the deed," as the Sefer ha-Chinnuch puts it.²

I believe that this fugue between Torah and Haftarah, Priestly and Prophetic voices, is one of Judaism's great glories. We hear both how to act and why. Without the how, action is lame; without the why, behaviour is blind. Combine Priestly detail and Prophetic vision and you have spiritual greatness. ■

Covenant and Conversation 5780 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l.

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks are part of the 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on www.rabbisacks.org.

1 Tanhuma, Shemini, 12.
2 Sefer ha-Chinnuch, Bo, Mitzvah 16.

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THE PROPHETS

“Shabbat HaGadol”, “The GREAT Shabbat”. Or is it?

There is no mention of the Shabbat before Pesach being called “HaGadol” anywhere in the Mishna or the G’mara. Additionally, there is no special Maftir, i.e. no specific Torah portion that we are required to read, as we have on the previous four special Shabbatot-which is why we cannot look for a connection between the Maftir and our special haftarah this week.

Along with the uniqueness of this Shabbat-that is, that it is not so unique, its very name causes puzzlement and disagreement. This most common translation, “The Great Shabbat” conflicts with simple Hebrew grammar. Were it to be understood as the great Shabbat, the adjective “great” would be in the feminine form, “gedolAH”, as Shabbat is a feminine noun (yes, I know that it is treated as a masculine noun at times, as in “v’yanuchu VO Yisrael”, but this is not the place to discuss the exception).

The “Mateh Moshe” suggests that, much like Shabbat Chazon, Shabbat Nachamu and Shabbat Shuva, the name is taken from the special haftarah that is chanted on this day. There, we find the final words of Malachi to include the phrase “lifnei bo yom Hashem HAGADOL v’hanorah”. The

word hagadol, therefore, is not an adjective modifying Shabbat but rather modifying “yom” that is called the great day because it will precede the final redemption. Furthermore, this approach explains the Rabbis reasoning, for it stresses the future redemption, a theme we highlight on Pesach, the “Chag HaGeulah”. The difficulty with that approach is simply that these other haftarot are identified by the first word of the haftarah while this haftarah is identified by one of the last words and, truthfully, a rather random word (why not call it “V’arva” or HaNorah?)

HaRav Yissachar Jacobson brings down a number of other possibilities suggested by different rabbinic scholars. A popular reason (shared by the Shiboiei Leket) is that the Shabbat before Pesach was one of the two Shabbatot of the year when the Rabbi would deliver a major address to the community, an address that would last until midday, causing people to feel that it is a very LONG (“Gadol”) day.

Tosafot comments (Shabbat 87b:) that, as the exodus took place on a Thursday, the tenth of the month, the day when B’nei Yisra’el were to slaughter the paschal lamb, was on Shabbat. And a GREAT (Gadol) miracle took place that day as the Egyptians saw their object of worship being slaughtered but did not attack the Israelites.

And the Rambam and others tie the importance of this Shabbat to the fact that it was the final Shabbat before Pesach and it was meant to remind the people that the final day of Pesach (of the fourth and seventh year in the Shmita count) was the last opportunity to bring the stored up ma'aser (tithe) of the previous years and recite the "vidui ma'aser" (D'varim 26: 12-16). Given the fact that the haftarah condemns Israel for failing to properly observe the mitzvah of ma'aser, the Rabbis saw it proper to have it read before this IMPORTANT (Gadol) time.

Before closing the prophetic era, Hashem prepares us for a future galut

I would like to suggest perhaps another reason for the greatness of the haftarah's message. We often fail to realize that Malachi who delivered these words to the Jews during the time of Bayit Sheni, was the last of the prophets. The final words of this haftarah, therefore, are the final words of prophecy that we are left with. It is for this reason that they are so important to us-as they were for all previous generations-and why our Rabbis insisted that it be read out to all on the Shabbat before the Chag HaGeulah. Before closing the prophetic era, Hashem prepares us for a future galut. How, after all, could we survive centuries and centuries of Diaspora life? How could we hope to endure the expulsions, the inquisitions, the ghettos, the pogroms and the Shoah? How could such a small

minority population hope to persist throughout the persecutions of the great majority of nations, persist, so that they would ultimately reach that GREAT day of redemption that the nevi'im promised?

"Zichru Torah Moshe avdi", "Remember the Torah of My servant, Moshe!" When there will be no Land to unite you, when there will be no Beit Mikdash to inspire you, when there will be no prophet to direct you-you will have the Torah. And THAT is how you will survive!

Twenty-five hundred years have passed since those words were spoken and we stand today as witnesses to their truth. Yisrael v'Orayta v'Kudsha Brich Hu-chad hu-Israel, the Torah and Hashem are all ONE! Holy, Eternal and awaiting the ultimate redemption. ■



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The Inside Story

And you shall not leave the entrance of the Ohel Mo'ed for seven days, until the day of the completion of your investiture days (*miluim*), he will inaugurate you for seven days. (*Vayikra* 8:33)

The *kohanim* had to remain in the Ohel Mo'ed for a full week prior to initiating the service in the *Mishkan*. The Gemara derives from this verse additional laws, including that the *kohen gadol* had to remain within the Mikdash for the seven days prior to Yom Kippur in the chamber known as "*lishkas parhedrin*" in order to properly prepare himself for the holiest day of the year.

As is known, each room in a house that serves as a residence requires that a mezuzah be affixed to the doorpost. Rooms located in the Mikdash, however, were exempt from this requirement and therefore did not require a mezuzah. The Gemara in Yoma (10b), however, cites the opinion of Rav Yehuda, who agreed that technically, the *lishkas parhedrin* did not require a mezuzah. Nevertheless, he instructed that a mezuzah should be

affixed to the doorpost of the *lishkas parhedrin*. The reason for his decree is "so people will not say that the *kohen gadol* is imprisoned in the Mikdash." In other words, the rabbis feared that as people gathered around the Mikdash the week prior to Yom Kippur and witnessed the *kohen gadol* entering or exiting the Mikdash, noticing that there was no mezuzah on the door of his room, they would postulate that he was imprisoned in the *Beis HaMikdash*. Placing a mezuzah on the doorpost of that room would indicate that it was indeed his "residence" for the week and that he was not at all imprisoned. In a sense, the decree was to safeguard the "image" of the *kohen gadol*.

This is a remarkable and rare example of the concern for the opinion of the uneducated masses and their distorted impressions. Here, the *kohen gadol* is engaged in spiritual exercises to prepare himself for the holiest day of the year and to be able to properly seek atonement for these very individuals who might misinterpret the scene and view him as being imprisoned in the Mikdash.

How does such a discrepancy come about – that someone could consider the *kohen gadol* as being in jail when he was in fact engaged in holy spiritual rituals?

Rabbi Norman Lamm (Drashot L'Dorot), suggests that it depends on how you view the Mikdash of Judaism – as an insider or as an outsider. If you are an outsider or spectator looking in, you cannot comprehend or appreciate that which an insider experiences – the subtle joys and the inspirational moments that a practicing Jew experiences. To borrow a parable from the Baal Shem Tov, when someone unfamiliar with music looks through the window of a sound-proof room and witnesses an orchestra playing or sees people dancing, without hearing the music, the movements of the musicians and dancers seem absurd. Only someone in the room who hears the music can appreciate the harmonious sounds and precise movements of the

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dancers in sync with the music.

When it comes to Judaism, unobservant people look from the outside and express sympathy for people who live such a restrictive and limited life. To undertake the burden of limiting the world of delicacies to the few kosher eateries. To imprison oneself to his neighborhood, unable to drive or travel on Shabbat. Rabbi Lamm recalls that when a stranger found out he was orthodox, the response he received was “Orthodox – and you are so young.” As if Torah was an affliction brought on by old age, a kind of spiritual geriatrics. We as observant Jews, on the “inside,” cherish Shabbat as a day of rest, *oneg*, and liberation from the stress of our working week.

What are we to do as insiders in order to prevent outsiders from thinking that we are prisoners in a jail called Judaism? We must affix a mezuzah to the *lishkas parhedrin*. That is, we must do all we can to inform those outsiders of the beauty of the Torah and of Jewish practice and present it in a dignified fashion. We cannot be apologetic for any

of our practices. Lastly, we can invite the outsiders in. A wine connoisseur cannot judge the quality of wine by the shape of the bottle or the print on the label. He must taste it. The outsider is not fit to judge until he “tastes.” He has to experience and live life in accordance with the principles of the Torah in order to truly appreciate its richness.

In Rabbi Lamm’s words, “being *frum* is not a fossil and to be religious is not a relic.” May we take pride in our practices and cherish our customs. The story from the inside is no mystery or tragedy but one in which we live “happily ever after.” May we embrace and appreciate not the prison but rather the palace of spiritual pleasures with which we have been provided at Mount Sinai.

This Pesach, while we may feel imprisoned in our homes due to the COVID-19 global crisis, may we successfully transmit to our children the feeling of freedom that we experience daily, not just due to our geula from Mitzrayim, but our choice to observe the precious practices and meaningful mitzvot *from the inside*. ■



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Kitniyot Part II: Extensions of the Minhag

The previous article discussed the basics of the prohibition of consuming *kitniyot* on Pesach. The current article will examine areas pertaining to *kitniyot* that remain permissible, such as for sick individuals and young children. Derivatives and mixtures will be discussed as well.

Owning and benefiting from Kitniyot, Kitniyot for children and the ill:

The prohibition of *chametz* (leavened wheat) on Pesach includes consuming, owning, and benefiting from *chametz*. The custom of prohibiting *kitniyot*, on the other hand, does not have the same level of stringency. One may benefit from and own *kitniyot* (as long as there is no *chametz* mixed in) during Pesach (*Rema* 453:1 based on *Terumat Hadeshen* 113).

Someone who is sick but not extremely ill and is in need of different foods may consume *kitniyot* (*Mishna Berura* 453:7). People with certain chronic medical condi-

tions may also be permitted to eat *kitniyot*. For specific cases, one should consult with both their doctor and a competent halachic figure.

Regarding children, there is a biblical prohibition of feeding children non-kosher food (see *Yevamot* 114:A). Similarly, feeding a young child or even a baby, *chametz* is certainly prohibited (unless there is a dire medical need). Regarding the consumption of *kitniyot* for children, according to certain opinions, one may feed young children (up to age four) *kitniyot* if there is a strong need (*Chayei Adam* 127:6). The prohibition of directly feeding non-kosher food to a child extends to Biblical and Rabbinic prohibitions. However, since *kitniyot* is a *Minhag* (custom), there is room to be lenient for young children (see *Shem Aryeh* EH:95). For example, baby formula and porridge mixes containing *kitniyot* may be given to babies. If the child is accustomed to a certain variety which contains *kitniyot*, it is permitted. Regarding baby formulas, almost all Israeli formulas contain *kitniyot*.

Derivatives of Kitniyot and Mixtures Containing Kitniyot:

Derivatives of *kitniyot* include liquids and oils. Many responsa have been written regarding oils made from *kitniyot* (see *Orach Mishpat* OH:111-114, *Maharshag* 2:43). Some authorities felt that the *min-*



hag does not extend to oils (*Maharsham* 1:183). Some allowed oils made from *kitniyot* especially when the *kitniyot* had no contact with water during the processing (*Marcheshet* 3). However, many authorities disagree, and it has become accepted custom to be stringent, even with oils and other derivatives (Responsa *Maharil* 25, *Minchat Yitzchak* 4:114).

Regarding mixtures of *kitniyot* in the food preparation process, the *Rema* (Ibid) holds that if *kitniyot* were to accidentally fall into the food but there is a majority of non-*kitniyot* food, the *kitniyot* is nullified. Even though in regular circumstances halacha requires sixty times the amount of kosher food against the non-kosher food (see *Mishna Berura* 453:1), since *kitniyot* is a *minhag* there is room to be lenient. For example, if mayonnaise-containing *kitniyot* was accidentally used in a pesach dish, according to the law recorded above, the dish would be permitted at the seder table as the mayo is nullified. However, the following exceptions apply: One may not apply the *Rema's* ruling regarding mixtures to products that have *kitniyot* added for the specific intention of giving flavor. In addition, regarding the laws of nullification, if an ingredient is very substantial to the food, such as enabling the food to stick together (*ma'amid*), it may not be nullified even if there is a majority or even

sixty times more kosher than non-kosher food. This halacha is relevant to foods and condiments that have *kitniyot* ingredients. Sometimes, it is prohibited to eat these foods even if the amount of *kitniyot* remains relatively small. Since the *kitniyot* additive is essential to the food, it does not become nullified despite being a mixture, and therefore may not be consumed (See *Sidur Pesach Kehilchato* 16:9).

Kitniyot she'nishtaneh (*kitniyot* that has changed) refers to a category of *kitniyot* that went through a fundamental change during food production. According to OU policy, if *kitniyot* went through an intense process, they are permitted for Pesach use (under supervision to insure *chametz*-free status). The basis for this ruling is similar to a reponsa written by the *Chatam Sofer* (YD:117) who permitted grape seed oil even though the seeds did not dry for twelve months. Even though the oil in the seeds originated as liquid, this process of becoming oil is a complete transformation and the oil in the seed is therefore permitted. Examples of *kitniyot she'nishtanu* are ascorbic acid and aspartame made from *chametz*-free corn. ■

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FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

RAV DANIEL MANN



Key Accessibility for Non-Jew Who Buys *Chametz*

Question: *Mechirat chametz* forms ask me to identify someone with access to our key to the *chametz's* location if we are away. Is this necessary considering the non-Jew never comes to get the *chametz*?

Answer: *Mechirat chametz* has developed over the centuries. In the time of the *Rishonim*, it started to be used as an arguably fictitious sale, i.e., it was clear the sale would be reversed after Pesach (see *Terumat Hadeshen* I:120; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 448:3). However, it was expected that the non-Jew would physically remove the *chametz* from the Jew's house (*Shulchan Aruch* *ibid.*). The current situation in which *chametz* remains within our homes raises technical problems regarding the laws of *kinyan* and heightens the *ha'arama* (deception) issue.

The concern that *ha'arama* disqualifies the sale is one of the major reasons behind a

requirement raised by several *Acharonim* (including the *Bach*, OC 448 and *Shulchan Aruch Harav*, OC 448:13) to give the buyer the key to the room that holds the *chametz*. The *Taz* (OC 448:4) rules that if the non-Jewish buyer lacks independent access to the room and certainly if the seller has kept the key to a locked room with the *chametz* within, the sale is invalid. This is likely because of concern about *ha'arama* (see *Noda B'yehuda* I, OC 18), but there are other explanations for some *poskim's* requirement of giving the key to the buyer: It might be a requirement of the *kinyan* process or it may remove financial responsibility for the *chametz* from the seller to avoid *bal yeirae'h* (prohibition on possession of the *chametz* he is essentially guarding in his home – see *Shevet Halevi* VII:55).

The consensus among contemporary *poskim* is to not require giving the key. The *Noda B'yehuda* (*ibid.*) posited that the *Taz's* concern that *ha'arama* could disqualify the sale was overblown because proper actions and words of sale are not undone by unspoken questionable intentions.

Furthermore, many say that giving over of a key is less important than it once was. The *Biur Halacha* (to OC 448:3) says that when a significant amount of *chametz* is sold and the non-Jew has not yet paid for

it, the seller can monitor what is being taken and therefore need not provide free access. Several *poskim* (including B'tzel Hachochma VI:34) quote the Maharash Engel as saying that when the sale is done through an agent (e.g., the rabbi), not giving the key is not problematic. The Aruch Hashulchan (OC 448:23) and Divrei Malkiel (IV:22) argue that now that one non-Jew buys a whole community's *chametz*, it is no longer feasible to give him everyone's key. Therefore, not doing so is not a sign of *ha'arama*.

One person buys a huge amount of random *chametz*, which remains in the buyers' homes, and the sale will be reversed right after Pesach

However, most of the *poskim* who do not require giving a key, do require close to instant access to the *chametz*. Some of them mention allowing the non-Jew to enter the house without permission. Some mention letting the buyer know where he can get to the keys promptly.

There is no requirement regarding a standard, financially based sale in which the object remains for a while at the seller's place, that the buyer must have

instant access. If one buys a car from a dealer, must he make the car available 24/7?! As long as the seller does nothing artificial to delay the process there is no legal problem. So too, presumably if there were a legitimate reason that the seller could not leave access to the *chametz*, the sale would still be halachically effective. Apparently, the sensitivity which caused the requirement of quick access that we find in most contemporary sales forms stems from the general concern that the whole sale is suspect to claims of *ha'arama*. Let us review – one person buys a huge amount of random *chametz*, which remains in the buyers' homes, and the sale will be reversed right after Pesach. So it is logical that if classical *poskim* required giving the key, that nowadays we should at least give him the ability to get to the key promptly; this easy step gives the sale a more practical feel. Therefore, we should keep the *minhag* to write a contact person even if it is not fundamentally required. ■

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RABBI GIDEON

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Corona and Fertility Treatment

The horrific and unprecedented COVID 19 pandemic has hit the entire world and changed our perspective in so many ways. The effects of the Coronavirus have been very deeply felt in PUAH as well with a myriad number of questions that we have been asked. Many of these are novel and require a sensitive and often creative understanding of the situation and the halachic ramifications.

One of the common questions regards undergoing fertility treatment during this time. As the virus quickly spread throughout the world, health organizations started warning about the

danger of being in the vicinity of crowds. While people who need to seek medical treatment must go to clinics and hospitals, when dealing with elective treatments the situation is different.

However there were no clear instructions in the initial stages as to whether couples should continue to pursue fertility treatments or not. And so most couples, and most clinics, continued as normal, scheduling and starting treatments.

IVF treatments usually start with a couple of weeks of ovulation induction; a woman receives hormonal shots and is monitored to ensure that follicles are developing. It is essential to make sure there is no ovarian hyperstimulation which has serious negative ramifications for the woman's health. Once the process has been initiated it is not a simple matter to stop in the middle.

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Often there are financial considerations as well; a couple has already paid a considerable amount of money for the treatment and no one can assure them that the money will be refunded. Obviously, health takes precedent over any fiscal consideration, but it was clear that there was a real danger, at least at the beginning of this crisis.

More on this next time. ■

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems.

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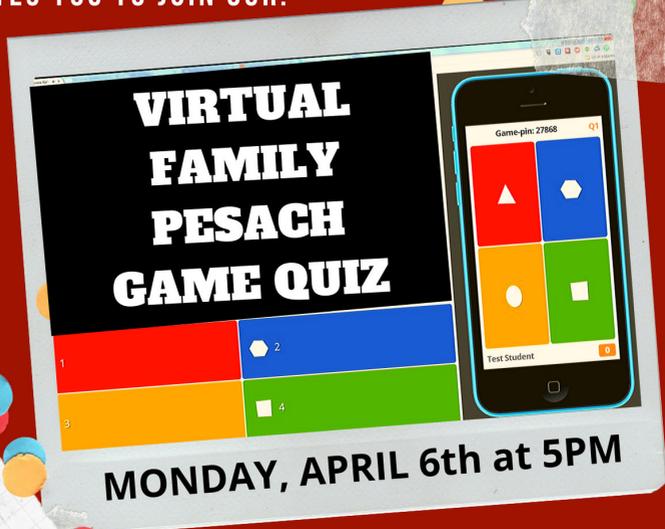
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8:30 PM

Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski

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(L'Ayla)

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MON, MARCH 30

9:15 AM

Mrs. Pearl Borow

Sefer Daniel (L'Ayla)

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7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua

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Rabbi Ezra Friedman

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Israel Kashrut Pesach Q&A (Part 2)

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TUES, MARCH 31

10:15 AM

Rabbi Shmuel

Goldin

Parshat HaShavua

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9:00 PM

Rabbi Sam Shor

Shabbat HaGadol: The

Promise of the Great

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WED, APRIL 1

9:15 AM
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

Medina and Halacha
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10:15 AM
Rabbi Anthony Manning

Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa
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11:30 AM
Rabbi Alan Kimche

Great Jewish Thinkers
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THURS, APRIL 2

10:15 AM
Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua
[Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/615813416](https://zoom.us/j/615813416)
Zoom ID: 615813416

11:30 AM
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein
Unlocking the Messages of Chazal [Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/488542635](https://zoom.us/j/488542635)
Zoom ID: 488542635

7:30 PM
Rabbi Baruch Taub
Annual Shabbat HaGadol Drasha - Yachatz: The Great Divide
[Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/634147222](https://zoom.us/j/634147222)
Zoom ID: 634147222

8:00 PM
Rabbi Ari Kahn
Parshat HaShavua
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Zoom ID: 2624570009



Torah Tidbits This 'n That

Phil's page



Because of the Coronavirus situation, TT 1364 was only partially successful in reaching our loyal TTreaders. Last week (1365) was not printed at all and was available on our websites ttidbits.com and torahtidbits.com - we suggest checking them both out since they are different from each other as to style and content.

This week - TT 1366 - is for Shabbat HaGadol, Tzav and Pesach, and a bit for Sh'mini. It is printed but distribution is as an insert in the Jerusalem Post (not in all copies). The hard copy is very tight space-wise and the overflow of Pesach material and articles suffered. However, much more can be found on both websites - including the Seder of the Seder 4-pager and the Omer chart. Online you can find all that was bumped or shortened from the hard copy.

Ma Nishtana HaPesach HazeH...?

אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה. הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי, שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות. עד שדדשה בן זומא. שנאמר: למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, כל ימי חייך. ימי חייך הימים. כל ימי חייך הלילות...

Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said: "I am like a 70-year old man and I have not succeeded in understanding why the Exodus should be mentioned at night, until Ben Zoma explained it by quoting: "In order that you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life." The Torah adds the word "all" to the phrase "the days of your life" to indicate that the nights are meant as well...

This passage in the Hagada is borrowed from Mishna (B'rachot 1:5), where it has nothing to do with Pesach or the mitzva of telling the story of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim. It deals with the third passage of the Sh'ma, its main theme being Tzitzit, which is a daytime mitzva. The last pasuk in the passage mentions G-d's having taken us out of Egypt. Ben Zoma explains that the third part of Sh'ma must also be said at night.

Besides daytime and nighttime in their literal sense, the drash of Ben Zoma can be applied to the daytime of life - good times, and the night of life, the dark, hard times.

To rephrase R' Elazar ben Azarya's question in today's context: I understand celebrating Pesach and commemorating the Exodus in good times. Times when we are living the freedom that G-d gave us way back then. But what's the idea of celebrating the emergence from slavery to freedom and from darkness to light, when we are currently slaves to the Coronavirus? When people will be having Seder without their families for the first time in their memories.

Comes Ben Zoma and points out the word KOL, all the days of your life - in good times and bad.

Okay, we get that. But how come?

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BY RABBI MOSHE BLOOM

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Matzah From Other Grains Than Wheat

In recent years, bakeries started selling matzah from various types of flour, such as oats and rye. Do they have the same halachic status, or should one try to eat wheat matzah?

In the late 1980s, bakeries in England began producing kosher-for-Pesach *matzah* from oats (*Avena*), specifically for celiac patients. Today oats are cultivated in England under the supervision of the Badatz of Manchester.

What are the halachic discussions connected to non-wheat matzah?

The status of grains that cannot become leavened

The oats cultivated in England are a unique strain with especially low gluten content, more so than other oat strains. While oats are considered one of the

five types of grains which can become leavened, due to the unique characteristics of this strain, the dough does not become leavened. What is the halachic status of such wheat? For a dough to be considered *kosher matzah*, does the actual dough have to be capable of leavening or is it sufficient that the general species it belongs to can become leavened?

Identification of the five grains

Another reason for the doubt regarding whether one can fulfil the obligation of eating *matzah* on the *Avena* oats produced in England is the question whether they, indeed, are considered one of the five grains. Most rabbis think *Shibolet Shu'al is Avena*, but some identify it with *dura*, *sorghum flour*; double-columned barley, or other identifications.

Other types of grain that leaven quickly

The Maharil holds that the

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primary *mitzvah* involves taking wheat, since it is the only grain whose identity the Sages did not dispute. His opinion is quoted by the Rama (OC §453) as follows: “These are what one may fulfill the obligation of *matzah*: with wheat, barley, spelt, oats, and rye, **and the custom is to optimally take wheat** (Maharil).” Some say that other grains besides wheat become chametz in less than 18 minutes, and some say that wheat which is listed first in the Mishna, is preferable for the *mitzvah*.

Conclusion

The *heter* for those with Celiac to eat oat *matzah* (for *matzat mitzvah* on seder night) should not be seen as *heter* for the general public. For the full article with all sources, see www.toraland.org.il ■

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BY RABBI SHIMSHON HAKOHEN NADEL

Mara D'atra, Kehilat Zichron Yosef, Har Nof
OU Israel Faculty

The Mitzvah of Settling in the Land of Israel – Part 6

The Unique Nature of the Mitzvah

While many Torah authorities conclude that settling in the Land of Israel is a Torah commandment, some question the nature of the mitzvah. Rav Moshe Feinstein considers Aliyah to be the fulfillment of a mitzvah, but not an “obligatory mitzvah” (Igrot Moshe, EH 1:102). Comparing Aliyah to the mitzvah of Tzitzit, he argues that while wearing Tzitzit fulfills a mitzvah, it is not an obligation unless one is wearing a four-cornered garment. Similarly, writes Rav Moshe, one who makes Aliyah fulfills a mitzvah, but those who do not are not in violation of failure to perform a positive command.

The point has been made, however, that while many authorities over the centuries have discussed the mitzvah of Aliyah, none have made the distinction between it being an ‘obligatory’ mitzvah or a ‘voluntary’ mitzvah. This would indicate that they indeed believe Aliyah is a requirement, just

like any other mitzvah (See Tzvi Glatt hy”d, Me’afar Kumi, p. 84).

The Centrality of Eretz Yisrael

Even one who does not consider the mitzvah of Aliyah to be a formal ‘obligation,’ must admit the importance and significance of living in Israel. According to our Sages it is a mitzvah “equal to all of the mitzvot of the Torah” (Sifrei, Re’eh 80).

As we discussed at length in Part 2, much ink has been spilled in trying to explain why Rambam does not include this mitzvah as one of the 613 mitzvot in his Sefer HaMitzvot. One explanation is that this mitzvah is so fundamental - so basic - it need not be included. It is a mitzvah, which includes many other mitzvot. And per the introduction to his Sefer HaMitzvot, Rambam does not count mitzvot “which encompass the entire Torah or [include] many mitzvot.” This mitzvah need not be stated explicitly, as all of the other mitzvot in the Torah are predicated upon it (See the opinion of Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook, cited in Rav Shlomo Goren, Torat HaMoadim, pp. 40-42. See also Tzitz Eliezer 7:48:12).

The Land of Israel is central to Torah observance. Hashem placed us on this land to fulfill His will. The Chafetz Chaim wrote, “The soul of Israel is the Holy Torah but

the Land is her body” (Chafetz Chaim al HaTorah to Shemot 13:8). Two-hundred two of our six-hundred thirteen mitzvot can only be performed on her soil! Two-thirds of the Talmud is intimately tied to this land! Tradition teaches that Moshe longed to enter the Land of Israel because, “the People of Israel were commanded with many mitzvot that can only be observed in the Land of Israel” (Sotah 14a).

Aliyah today is a reality. And it is easier to make Aliyah today than it was even ten years ago

According to the Midrash, the sole purpose for observing mitzvot in the Exile is practice, “so that when you will return [to the Land], they will not be new to you.” The Midrash provides a parable:

“A king of flesh and blood grew angry with his wife and sent her back to her father’s home, saying to her, ‘Be sure to continue to wear your jewelry so that when you return, they will not be new to you.’ Thus the Holy One Blessed Be He said to Israel: ‘My children, continue to be marked by the commandments, so that when you return they will not be new to you.’ Hence Jeremiah says, ‘Set up road marks.’ These are the mitzvot by which Israel is marked” (Sifrei, Eikev 43).

The true place for the performance of mitzvot is the Land of Israel. Here the Torah lives and breathes in its natural habitat.

A Unique Moment in History

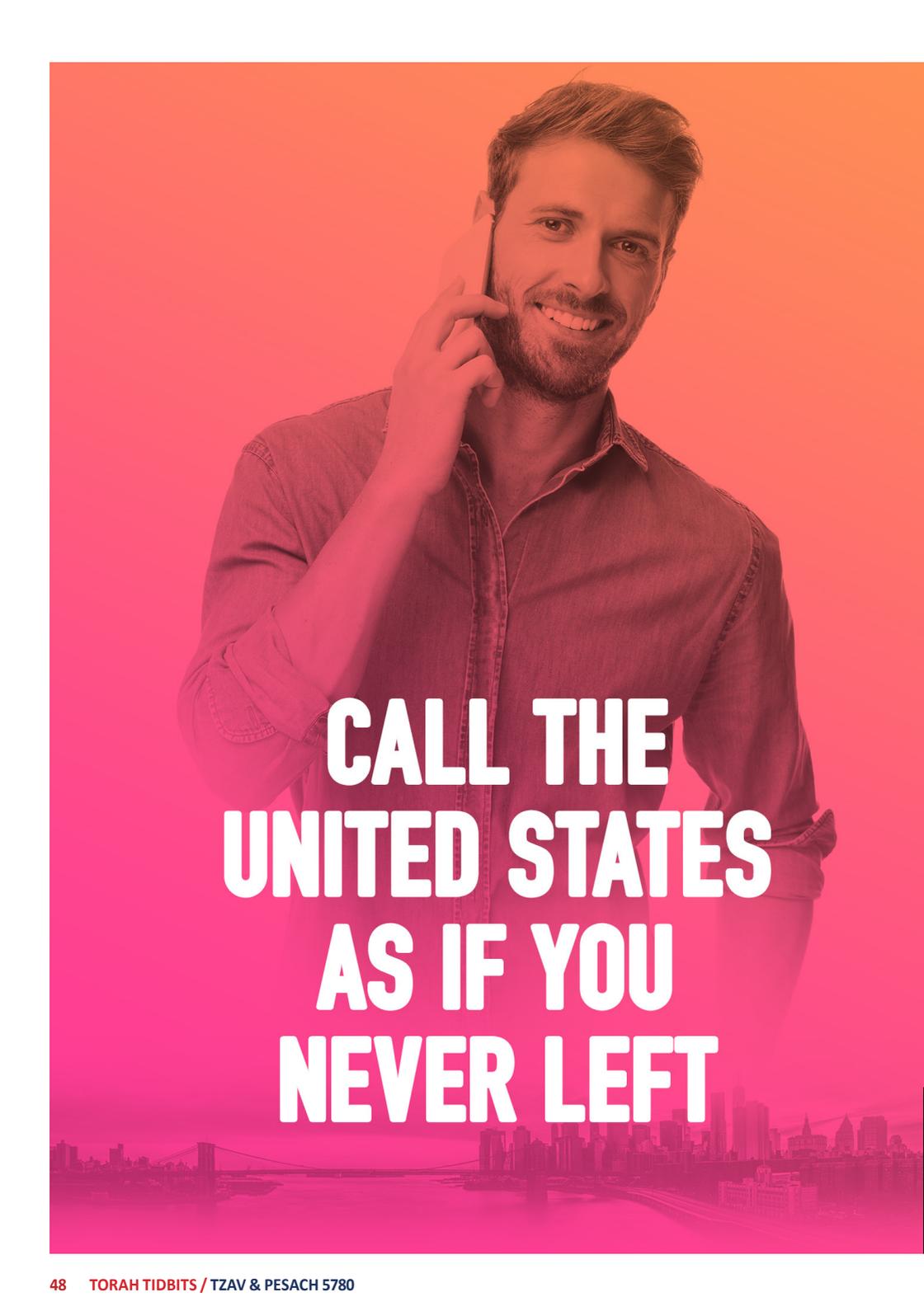
In considering the mitzvah of living in the Land of Israel, one must also consider the unique time in history in which we live. For almost two-thousand years it was nearly impossible to live in the Land of Israel. Even visiting was fraught with challenges. Writing two hundred years ago, the Chatam Sofer felt that “one has more of an obligation to make Aliyah in our times,” given the change in circumstances (Yoreh De’ah, no. 233). With the establishment of the State of Israel, the obligation of Aliyah, has only intensified (See Tzitz Eliezer 7:48:12).

Aliyah today is a reality. And it is easier to make Aliyah today than it was even ten years ago. This new reality must also be a factor in the ‘halachic debate.’ Aliyah is a mitzvah that is especially relevant to this generation, given the unprecedented opportunity we have.

Appreciating the importance of the mitzvah of dwelling in the Land of Israel, Rav Ya’akov Emden asks a difficult question:

“In truth, it is astounding how Holy Israel, who are so stringent upon themselves in the observance of the many detailed mitzvot, to perform them with much exactingness, who spend so much money and effort in order to perform them in the most complete way - why with irreverence and negligence do they fail to perform this beloved mitzvah, a peg upon which the whole Torah hangs?” (Siddur Beit Ya’akov, Sulam Beit El, no. 6).

This, indeed, is a question that needs to be answered. ■

A man with a beard and short brown hair is smiling while talking on a mobile phone. He is wearing a denim shirt. The background is a city skyline with a bridge, all overlaid with a semi-transparent orange and pink gradient. The text is in large, bold, white capital letters.

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THE NEW OLD PATH

BY RABBI BENJI LEVY
CEO Of Mosaic United

Taking Out the Trash

How do you begin your day? Some people start with a cup of coffee, and others with a brisk walk. In Temple times, the priests would begin their day in an entirely different and unexpected way. After getting dressed, the priest would ‘raise the ash of the elevation offering that the fire consumed on the altar and place it next to the altar’ (Lev. 6:3). Essentially, the priest began his day by literally shovelling all the ash from the previous day off the altar and placing it outside of the Sanctuary (Rashi ad loc). It would seem this tedious task was below such venerable individuals, and that someone else should be dispatched to carry it out. Why is it necessary for the person who spends his day immersed in lofty and holy endeavours to carry out this mundane chore?

Perhaps the Torah is teaching that even the most menial of tasks, such as ‘taking out the trash’, can be imbued with implicit holiness. Whilst many religions define that which is holy and spiritual by its distance from the material world, and by maintaining a clear separation between the spiritual and the material,

here the Torah is sanctifying the material by synthesising it with the holy. Through taking this most physical of actions – clearing the ash – and imbuing it with spirituality, the Torah is demonstrating that holiness is not only achieved through separation and abstinence, but rather it can be reached through harmony between the material and the spiritual, and through an acknowledgement of the material as essentially spiritual. Indeed, this idea is so important that it is taught through the first task of the priest’s day, which remains the first part of the ‘sacrifices’ section read in Shacharit, the morning prayer service, and thus establishes our perspective on spirituality for the entire day. This approach to achieving holiness through the elevation and sanctification of the mundane generates a significantly wider array of possibilities for achieving spirituality than the approach that requires separation from the ordinary in order to become holy.

The requirement that the priests start each day by clearing the ash from the previous day before embarking on their

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holy service in the Temple, presents an additional insight into the ‘celebrity status’ of the priests. As stated in the Jerusalem Talmud: ‘There is no greatness in the palace of the King’ (Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate *Shabbat* 10:3). That is to say, relative to the greatness of the Creator, we are all mere mortals, regardless of our social status. Celebrities in almost every arena are often put on pedestals by other humans. For this reason, we do not think of famous movie stars, rabbis and politicians as engaging in basic everyday errands such as washing the dishes or sweeping the floor. This in turn can very easily affect the self-image of those individuals, who begin to believe that they are above being involved in the everyday trivialities of life. This law requiring the priests to sweep up the previous day’s ash, equalises all humans in relation to God and serves as a reminder of the humanity of the saintly priests despite their elevated status.

That said, the question still stands as to why the priest should begin his day with it. Why does it come before all the other tasks?

Not only do the masses need to understand the humanity of those with elevated status, but perhaps of greater importance is the need for the spiritual leaders themselves to appreciate their own normality and their place in the material world. It is easy for people with great fame or fortune to let their status and their material riches define who they are to the extent that they think themselves above basic responsibilities.

By beginning the day with such a menial task, the priest is forced, on a daily basis, to absorb tremendous humility in view of his own position relative to the King of Kings.

This powerful lesson has long outlived the Temples and, as mentioned, is still positioned right at the start of the daily morning prayers. Perhaps, hidden beneath the surface of this fascinating requirement for the priests to clean up yesterday’s mess before starting their daily Temple service, is a metaphor for us all in the way we are meant to start each day. Every day, the first prayer we say upon waking up is *Modeh Ani*, a prayer of thanks to God for restoring our souls to our bodies and offering us the gift of a new day. ‘I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great’ (Rabbi Moshe Ben Machir, *Seder Hayom*). If God with His ultimate faith in His beings, can restore our souls to us each morning, granting us the gift of a new day, it is incumbent upon us, before even starting our day, to set aside the ‘ashes’ of the previous day, to clear our slate, to set aside grievances and to start each day with a renewed and fresh perspective. Approaching each new day through this lens will help us appreciate the greatness of God and His mercy. It will help us maintain a humble perspective and remember the value and hidden sanctity in seemingly inferior tasks. ■

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**Hillel Kreif
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Let The World Know About G-d

How do we give thanks to people? Usually by saying thank you. How do we give thanks to G-d? Our Parsha tells us that we must bring a *Korban Todah*. *Korbanot* makes sense because it seems like Hashem appreciates them (these days making a blessing). But we can thank Hashem literally every time we breathe. What qualifies as something so great that requires us to bring a sacrifice?

Rashi in our Parsha points us to a gemara in Berachot:

Rabbi Yehuda said in the name of Rav: Four must offer thanks to G-d Seafarers, those who walk in the desert, and one who was ill and recovered, and one who was incarcerated in prison and went out (Brachot 54b)

Many Rishonim explain that it's not only in these four situations that we say the blessing of Hagomel rather any situation where one was saved from danger to one's life. The gemara goes on to say that one may only say this blessing when there are 10 people around as it needs to be

done with a crowd. And that when the *Todah* offering was brought there had to be 40 *Chalot* to share with everyone who was present. Why does one need a crowd to thank G-d? Isn't praying *Modim* and adding a few thank you's good enough?

If we think about it, *parsumei Nissah*/publicizing miracles is a huge theme in Judaism. When we celebrate *chanukah* we want to make sure everyone knows that Hashem saved us from the Greeks. When *Purim* rolls around, we read the *megillah* twice so everyone can hear the miracles that G-d performed for the Jews. On *Pesach*, we spend the whole night raving about our miracle filled exit from Egypt. When we thank Hashem, we want everyone to know about it.

In *Tehillim* Chapter 67 we say "*Peoples will thank You, O God; peoples will thank You, yea, all of them*" because when something good happens we want everyone to know that it comes from G-d. We want the world to know how incredible G-d is, and that when one was in a dangerous situation and got out of it alive- it was at the hands of G-d that he survived.

Accomplishing that goal starts with you! Let everyone know about what Hashem did for you. Let the world know, all of them. ■



Moshe Domnitch
10th Grade, Efrat

Shabbat Is Gadol!

This Shabbat is Shabbat Hagadol. It was on this Shabbat before Yetziat Mitzrayim that the Jews took the lamb for the Korban Pesach into their houses. Because this took place on Shabbat, the Egyptians knew something was going on. The Egyptians could tell something was up because they knew we keep Shabbat. We told them our plans with the sheep and a miracle happened that they didn't retaliate. The Jews deserved this miracle for keeping Shabbat.

Ahad Ha'Am (Asher Ginsberg, poet and Zionist ideologue: 1856-1927) is quoted as saying, "More than Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews." Shabbat is said to be Hashem's gift to his people. It helps us reconnect to him at the end of every week. In addition, in Shemot Rabba 25:12, Yerushalami, Ta'anit 1:1, it states, "the descendant of David (Mashiach) will come if they keep just one Shabbat."

A few weeks ago busses were ordered to stop running on Shabbat. Combined with the entire country on lock down, no Jew in Israel can be machalel Shabbat, at least in public. This is a huge step forward in all Jews, at least in Israel, keeping Shabbat. This will hopefully lead to the

coming of Mashiach.

In Parshat Bo when Moshe gave over the commandment of Korban Pesach he said eat it with "your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand." In other words, it means all packed up and ready to go. They were prepared to go even though they wouldn't actually leave Egypt until the next day. So to, we should always be ready for Mashiach and the coming of the Geula. ■

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PHIL CHERNOFSKY

Editor Emeritus, Torah Tidbits

MORID HATAL & V'TEIN B'RACHA

We stop asking for TAL U'MATAR after Mincha on Erev Pesach.

We continue to say MASHIV HARU'ACH U'MORID HAGESHEM in Maariv and Shacharit of the first day of Pesach. Then we say T'FILAT TAL and from Musaf of the first day of Pesach, we will be saying MORID HATAL. And at Maariv following Yom Tov, we will begin saying V'TEIN BRACHA in the weekday (and Chol HaMoed) Amida.

Note that many congregations in Israel say "TAL" when they finish putting away the Torahs right before closing the Aron. Others follow the common practice of Chutz LaAretz and say TAL as part of the beginning of the Chazzan's repetition of Musaf. When TAL is said before the silent Amida of Musaf, then it - meaning the prayer for TAL, constitutes the announcement to the congregation to stop saying Mashiv HaRu'ach and to commence saying Morid HaTal. However, when TAL is said after the silent Amida, an announcement - in the form of a gabbai "kopping" on the shulchan and stating aloud "Morid HaTal" is required. Technically, if no one announces Morid HaTal, then we should continue saying Mashiv HaRu'ach one more Amida (Musaf) and begin Morid HaTal at Mincha

(which, of course, is after T'filat Tal). This will not usually happen in large congregations with knowledgeable members, but it can happen in a small minyan with a gabbai that falls asleep at the switch. Anyone can call out Morid HaTal (and usually, several people do) and that "authorizes" the switch for the congregation.

If one mistakenly says MASHIV HARU'ACH U'MORID HAGASHEM [G] once we stop saying it, the Amida is considered invalid and must be repeated. Catching oneself within the second bracha of the Amida, requires backtracking to the beginning of that bracha and saying from there - ATA GIBOR...

Forgetting MORID HATAL (but not saying [G] either) does not require repeating or even returning to say it.

Asking for TAL UMATAR once we stop, also invalidates the Amida and requires repeating it. Catching the error while still in the Amida requires going back to BAREICH ALEINU and repeating from that bracha.

SHABBAT HAGADOL

- The date of the first Shabbat HaGadol was 10 Nissan (as it is this year). And that is particularly significant, because one of the reasons we call it Shabbat HaGadol, has to do with events of the 10th of Nissan

2448. The Jews in Egypt were commanded - not a mitzva for the generations, but rather a one-time commandment - to take a lamb (or young goat) into their homes on the 10th of Nissan, four days before they were to slaughter it as the Korban Pesach. (In future years, halacha allows one to acquire his animal for K.P. even on his way to Har HaBayit on the afternoon of Erev Pesach. In practice, however, people did designate the lamb or goat as early as the 10th of Nissan, so it could be properly inspected for blemishes for the four days before its being brought to the Mizbei'ach. But it was required to take the animal on the 10th, only during that first, original Nissan.)

- The Midrash tells us of the unusual miracle that occurred on the original Shabbat HaGadol. The Egyptians asked the Jews what they were doing with the lambs. When the Jews told them that they were going to sacrifice them to G-d, the Egyptians would have been expected to react with outrage and anger at the "desecration" of their deity. But they didn't. They took the news calmly. This is considered one of the miracles of the whole Exodus experience, in addition to other miracles of that Shabbat day; this led to identify the day throughout the generations as Shabbat HaGadol.

- Since the People entered into the realm of mitzvot by fulfilling the command to take the KP into their homes, they changed their status from KATAN to GADOL, much like a Bar Mitzva boy does when he receives upon his shoulders the yoke of mitzvot. Hence, Shabbat HaGadol.

- Even after Moshe got Shabbat from Par'o for the people as a day of rest, when Shabbat ended, it saw the Jews back into slavery and oppression. Not so the Shabbat prior to the Exodus. That was truly a Shabbat HaGadol.

- The Torah calls the first day of Pesach, Shabbat (because of the forbidden activities on Yom Tov, it too is a day of rest), as in, "on the morrow of the Shabbat you shall begin counting". The Tz'dokim claimed that Shabbat refers only to Saturday. Traditional Judaism claims that there is a "minor" or small Shabbat (Yom Tov) in contrast with Shabbat HaGadol, when more Melachot are prohibited. It is the Shabbat right before the Yom Tov day in question that got the name Shabbat HaGadol - because of its closeness to the first day of Pesach, the contrast between the two Shabbats is highlighted.

- Of course, the famous pasuk in the Haftara, telling us that G-d will send Eliya(hu) HaNavi before the coming of G-d's Day, the great (haGadol) and terrifying one.

- Until this pre-Exodus Shabbat, Shabbat only possessed the aspect of acknowledging G-d for His Creation. With the preparation for KP and for leaving Mitzrayim, Shabbat took on the extra dimension of commemorating the Egyptian experience and the Exodus. Shabbat increased in significance and scope and became then a Shabbat HaGadol.

Riddle: Besides the Shabbat before Pesach, what other Shabbat is called Shabbat HaGadol? Look in R'TZEI for the answer. ■

Seder Secrets

Seder night, the night we anticipate and prepare for, for weeks beforehand. Has one ever wondered why this night is called “seder”? Would not the night of redemption be more appropriate?

Rabbi Rice in Paamei Moed quoting the Sefas Emes, notes that this is a night wherein we enter into a new world order, or seder in the world. When the Jews leave Mitzrayim they begin a relationship with Hashem, that nature will vary based on the actions of the Jews. Rain will fall or be withheld depending on the Jews adherence to Torah and mitzvot. Pesach is a time wherein we mark, the new ‘seder’ that has entered the world with the redemption of the Jews, and the formation as a nation; an intimate

relationship with Hashem, and the world of the miraculous.

Rabbi Schorr in Lekach Vehalebuv cites the Gra that there are 18 brachot in total that we say during the course of the night. This number parallels the number of brachot that we have in our Amidah. As we sit at the seder night, we are really involved in ‘seder hatfilla.’ Indeed, we use the phrase ‘seder’ in connection with Tefilla, as ‘*seder malchoutenu*’. Really, the essence of ‘seder’ night, is one of Tefilla in front of Hashem. Hence, the Shelah Hakodesh enjoins one to sit with fear, and reverence throughout the night, and to be careful not to speak unnecessary words throughout the evening. After all, no one would dare speak in the middle of *shemone esre*.

Lekav Vahaebuv notes, that this is one of the deeper explanations of washing one’s hands by Urchatz. Just as one washes their hands before beginning to daven, likewise, we wash our hands before we begin reciting the Haggadah, and entering into the domain of Tefilla this evening.

There are specific places, that R. Meizlish in Sichos B’avodat Hashem notes that are auspicious times to daven. In all Haggadot we find in small print before *Mah Nishtanah*, ‘*kan haben shoel*’, this

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is a reminder to all of us, the *'banim'* of Hashem, that we need to ask 'our Father' for our needs. We can take a few minutes at this time to quietly ask Hashem for both physical and spiritual needs. The final bracha in Maggid, *'gal yisrael'* is another time, wherein we can ask Hashem to redeem us from all the challenges that may be plaguing us. After eating the matzah mitzvah is another time, that has special energy for our tellilot to ascend to *shamayim*. Indeed, matzah is called, *lechem oni*, the 'bread of response,' it is the bread that Hashem responds to our tefillot.

Rabbi Biderman, in Beer Hachayim Haggadah, adds, that when saying the Passuk *'vanitzak el Hashem'*, how the Jews cried out to Hashem, is a time of tremendous power, for us to also cry out to Hashem, and make specific requests. Seder night, is a time that Hashem and His entourage from Above are found in each of our homes, according to the Zohar, and therefore, this time of intense closeness is a zechus that our Tefillot will be heard.

Rav Avraham Mordechai of Gur explains that we conclude the night with the song of Chad Gadya. The song, wherein life looks chaotic, and there is no rhyme or reason for things that occur. The last stanza of Hashem Himself revealing Himself, is the message of the night. We need to remind ourselves that all that transpires in this world, all the suffering, challenges, and the tumultuous life of the Jews, everything has a 'seder', Hashem is the master maestro leading the world to the ultimate redemption. ■

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Pesach: For the First Time

Rebbe Shlomo Halberstam zy'a, the Bobover Rebbe of the post-Holocaust era, was a *tzadik* and leader who revived his community with his resilience and faith. He restored *kavod*, dignity, to thousands of survivors and helped them rebuild their lives, expressing the paradigm of fatherly love, *chein v'chesed*, grace and righteousness.

Seder night in Bobov was majestic; thousands joined the Rebbe in the main Beis Medrash to share the *mitzvos halayla*, the unique Mitzvos of the night. They would sing songs of praise into the wee hours of the morning. For all the survivors and their families, this night truly shone like the day, uplifting them with its sense of gratitude, celebration, and *malchus*, royalty. All felt certain that *Netzach Yisrael Lo Yishaker*, 'the promise of the eternity of Kelal Yisrael is true.'

...Until the last year of the Rebbe's life. In his frailty and ailing health, their beloved leader was now humbly confined to a wheelchair. As he was nourished via a feeding tube, unable to drink or eat on his own, it would be impossible for him to fulfill the *Mitzvos* of Seder Night.

The Rebbe's family gathered for a quiet, private seder in his home, anxious, uncertain, and pained over their Zeide's condition. Haunted by glorious memories of Seders past, some felt this was all too much to bear, and began to cry.

Slowly looking up from his wheelchair into the eyes of his children, grandchildren and extended family, the Rebbe finally spoke: "*Kinderlach, hehr tzu*, listen well. It's true, I can't make Kiddush tonight, drink the *arba kosos* (four cups) eat *matzah*, the *seudas Yom Tov*, or the *afikoman*. Nonetheless, *ich dank der Aibishter*, I thank Hashem that He has granted me another year to experience the freedom and joy of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. *Teiyereh kinderlach*, dear children, let us begin the Seder!"

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SEDER

Unless Moshiach arrives before Yom Tov begins, no doubt our Pesach experience this year will be very different than ever

before. So many are suffering, and what we are facing often feels like it is just too much to bear.

Pesach is our opportunity to formally restore the main thing, as the main thing

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt'l writes with incredible emotion of his “experiential, not intellectual memory” of the Pesach Seder, that royal night where every one of us is charged with the obligation and opportunity to see ourselves as having been freed from bondage. For Rav Soloveitchik, the Seder was “singular...endowed with a unique and fascinating quality... exalted in holiness and shining with dazzling beauty”, where as a child he “surrendered to a stream of inflowing joy and ecstasy”:

“On the night of the Exodus, the People met G-d, had a rendezvous with Him, and made His acquaintance for the first time. On Pesach night, man, free, hopeful, and courageous, enhanced by fulfillment, exalted by his independence, surges forward, expands, grows, ready to accomplish all that is related to his blessedness and freedom....” (*Festival of Freedom*, 7)

So often, with all the preparations, cleaning, and holiday expenses, the

Haggadah *vortlach*, plastic frogs, Chol Hamoed plans - even the mitzvos (!) of Pesach- we can get distracted with the externals of the holiday, and forget the actual goal and real purpose of this exalted Chag: “meeting G-d, and making His acquaintance”. Beyond a new pair of Yom Tov shoes and special treats, even more than the company of our loved ones, *Pesach* is a “rendezvous” between each of us and Hashem, a time to affirm our *Emunah* and celebrate Hashem’s unconditional love for us.

The experience of the Seder, feeling the joy of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in recounting our origin story, is itself the essence of Pesach. It is central to Jewish life, identity and practice, and refocuses us on that which is absolutely core to our *Emunah*. Descent to the lowest places of constriction and slavery is followed by our being lovingly rescued, elevated, and dramatically redeemed. Pesach is our opportunity to formally restore the main thing, as the main thing.

With all of the challenges and heaviness of these days, let us “*dank der Aibishter*”, and thank Hashem for granting us another year of “making His acquaintance for the first time”, and be *zocheh* to draw close and experience the freedom and joy of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Teiyereh Yiden, dear Jews, wherever we are, let us begin the Seder! ■

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

One of the many interesting segments of the *Hagada* text is the story of the Sages who gathered together in *Bnai Brak* and spent the entire evening discussing the Exodus from Egypt.

“It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon gathered together (for the Seder) in Bnai Brak. They spoke and elucidated regarding the departure from Egypt for that entire night, until their students announced: ‘Masters, it is time to recite the morning Shema’ ...”

The most familiar lesson drawn from this well known text is that the *mitzva* of retelling and recalling the Exodus is so vital, that these great Sages literally stayed awake until daybreak deep in their discussion!

However there are actually many other lessons to be drawn from this intriguing paragraph! Why were these Sages, each a great scholar and leader of their own community, gathered together? Why specifically these leaders and not others? Why did they come together specifically in *Bnai Brak*?

According to tradition, Rabbi Akiva lived in *Bnai Brak*, thus it seems Rabbi Akiva was the host of this momentous

Seder. Rabbi Akiva was also the spiritual mentor of *Simon Bar Kochba*, the great warrior who organized a failed revolt against the Roman Empire. It is Rabbi Akiva who gives an encouraging religious perspective, who offers hope during this dark period of Jewish history.

There is a very interesting story that concludes the Talmudic tractate of *Makkot*. Rabbi Akiva, together with a small group of some of those same important rabbinic luminaries mentioned in our *Hagada* text, has traveled to Jerusalem to gaze upon the ruins following the Roman conquest of the Holy City. The Talmud describes that as the Rabbis began to gaze out over Mount Scopus, they collectively ripped their garments to mourn the destruction they now witnessed first hand. When they continued on to look at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox wandering in the area that once was the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Holy Temple. The sages began to cry, while Rabbi Akiva began to laugh. The other sages of course were dumbfounded; how could Rabbi Akiva laugh when foxes are running wild on the holiest space on the Temple Mount?

Rabbi Akiva’s reply is both fascinating and challenging. Rabbi Akiva cites a verse from the book of Isaiah (Chapter 8, verse 2):

“Va'eeda li eidim neemanim et Uria HaKohein, v'et Zecharia ben Yeverechayu.”

“And I took for myself as faithful witnesses, Uria the Priest, and the prophet Zecharia.”

The Talmud asks the question- what is the connection between Uria, who lived during the First Temple Period, and Zecharia, who lived during the Second Temple Period?

Regarding the time period of Uria, the Talmud suggests, it is written:

“And Zion shall be plowed as a field, Jerusalem should become a heap of ruins, and Jerusalem a shrine in the wilderness” (Micha, 3:12).

While in Zecharia it is written: *“Thus said the Lord of Hosts:*

“Old men and women shall again dwell in the broad corridors of Jerusalem.” (Zecharia, 8:4)

The Talmud then continues with Rabbi Akiva's answer to the other Sages:

“Until Uria's dire prediction of Jerusalem's destruction had been fulfilled, I was afraid that we might never again see the vision of Zecharia's prophecy (of men and women growing old in the streets of Jerusalem). Now that I have seen with my own eyes the destruction prophesied by Uria, I know for a fact that Zecharia's vision will one day come true as well...”

And the tractate of *Makkot*, concludes with this last line:

“They (the other Sages) replied to him:

“Akiva, you have comforted us, Akiva you have comforted us...”

Rabbi Akiva, upon seeing the ruins of the Second Temple, and the city of Jerusalem left decimated by the Romans, was able to laugh, to see that destruction as a step in the fulfillment of subsequent prophecies predicting the redemption of the Jewish people, and the building of the Third Temple .

Perhaps, it is Rabbi Akiva's unique capacity to see the decimation levied by the Roman legionnaires as a necessary step in the process of redemption, to offer hope and a perspective of light shining just beyond the darkness, which serves as the impetus for these same Sages gathering together on the night of Pesach. During a time of much despair, even these great luminaries needed to come together with Rabbi Akiva, who through his inspired visionary perspective could remind them just what the celebratory nature of this night of freedom was truly all about.

Rabbi Avigdor HaLevi Nebentzahl, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem's Old City, offers another interesting perspective on this *Hagada* segment. In his work *Yerushalayim B'Moadeha*, he writes:

“We must examine why the names of the Sages are recalled in such detail. And there



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are those who explain that Rabbi Akiva was the son of converts and Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua were Leviim; while Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya were Kohanim. One might think that converts, Leviim and Kohanim would not be required to tell and relive the Exodus, since we might think they did not experience enslavement in Egypt (According to Rashi the entire tribe of Levi was exempted from the rigors of slavery, while converts were not part of the Jewish people at all until the time of the conversion...). Therefore we recall, that even those who would not have been enslaved in Egypt, are still required to tell of the Exodus from Egypt, because the entire Jewish People are required to fulfill this mitzva. It is for this purpose that even though there might very well have been additional Sages present, they are not recalled here, they are not recalled since this section is trying to emphasize that even those who might think the Exodus story would not be relevant to them, very well must recall the Exodus, that it is indeed relevant to each and every Jew..."

From Rav Nebentzahl's words, one might infer that redemption, the freedom we embrace and celebrate on the Seder night, is not solely the freedom from physical slave labor, but perhaps equally profound- the freedom to become who each of us as individuals are truly destined to be, no matter our background or life experiences until this point.

Yet another beautiful interpretation of this rabbinic teaching was offered by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook. Rav Kook saw it significant that these rabbis had

gathered in Bnai Brak, citing a Talmudic entry from Tractate *Ketubot* (111b):

"Rami bar Yechezkel came to visit Bnai Brak where he saw goats grazing under fig-trees while honey was flowing from the figs, and milk ran forth from the goats, and these mingled with each other.'This is indeed', he remarked, '[a land] flowing with milk and honey'..."

Rav Kook explained the gathering of Sages on the Seder night based on this Talmudic teaching- the Sages chose to gather to celebrate the redemption from Egypt, not solely as a means to recall the bondage left behind, but as a reminder of the destination, the ultimate goal to live in freedom in the Land of Israel. During this very dark period of Jewish History, these sages convened specifically in *Bnai Brak*, and all it represents based on this Talmudic teaching, to remind us for all posterity the goodness that is personified by the '*land flowing with milk and honey...*'

The story of the Sages conducting the Seder in *Bnai Brak* really helps to define the many facets of freedom and redemption which are part and parcel of the very essence of Pesach as Zman Cheiruteinu- the season of our freedom.

'Hashata Hacha, L'shana HaBa'a B'Arat D'Yisrael. Hashata Avdei, L'Shana Ha Ba'a bnai chorin...'

'Presently we are here, but next year may we be in the land of Israel. Now, we remain in servitude, but next year may we truly be free...'

Chag Kasher V'Sameach... ■



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BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

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On Pesach and Chesed

Once, I was asked to write an article on “Pesach and Chesed,” and my first reaction was “What’s the connection?” And then, in the same fleeting moment, it became clear to me that that is what Pesach is all about. For, after all, our rabbis tell us that Bnei Yisrael had sunk in Egypt to the lowest levels of Tum’ah, spiritual impurity: One rung lower on that ladder and the Jewish slaves would no longer have deserved to be released from the snares of their Egyptian taskmasters and their evil mores.

So, despite the people’s extremely lowly state, Hashem in His mercy, and in his love for His “first-born son,” redeemed us from the shackles of misery in a miraculous and wondrous way, the ripples of which reverberate until this day.

But Chesed does not end there. I recall

as a youngster sitting around the large family Pesach table (in London) surrounded by my family and some acquaintances. The latter were two or three individuals who had no Seder to attend and would come, year after year, to our family Seder. For, after all, Rambam tells us in “*Sefer Hamitzvot*” that the Torah requires us to include in our rejoicing of the festivals the needy, the poor and the converts. That is Chesed.

In truth, however, we do not need to look far in the Haggadah to recall that as part of the Seder ceremony, we pick up a piece of Matza in front of all those present and proclaim (in Aramaic), “Ha Lachma Anya...!” – ‘This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are in need come and join us for the Pesach.’

Yes, there is a reason why the invitation is expressed in terms of both “those who are hungry” and “those in need.” Rav Y. B. Soloveitchik observes that it is not just a matter of providing a meal to the poor; it is about attending to the needy, the people who are alone and have no family to support them. It is an invitation to celebrate with us and, in the rabbi’s words, “It is a pledge of solidarity among Jewish people... it is a proclamation that we are one people

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and are ready to help each other,” something, of course, that as slaves we were unable to do, but as a free people is surely one of the most sublime ways of demonstrating that freedom.

It may seem strange that having invited the needy to our festive table to celebrate, we then declare that this Matza we hold in our hands is a bread of affliction. Why bring a reminiscence of misery into the proceedings? The Talmud (Pesachim 115b) provides us with an explanation: “Lechem Oni,” the Hebrew equivalent of “Lachma Anya,” can also be translated as “bread about which we utter [or answer with] many words.”

The Sefas Emes posits that the “many words” relates to the fact that the deliverance from Egypt redeemed our speech which had been incapacitated and restricted when we were slaves. Now, as a result of Hashem’s chesed, we are a redeemed nation free to speak and to offer praise for the miracles of the Exodus with song and celebration. Now we can answer the questions of the Seder to our hearts’ content for, “He who elaborates upon the story of the departure from Egypt is worthy of praise”. Now we can with alacrity ask, for instance, what does it mean to be a Jewish nation, what is G-d’s role in history, and what do we understand about Ge’ulah?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks reminds us that the Matza we hold in our hands represents two antithetical ideas: Matza is the food of

slaves and Matza is also the bread of freedom that we are willing to share with others. The rabbi, in his profound style, recalls Primo Levy’s account of how when the Nazis fled the Russian advance in January 1945 and left behind the camp inmates too sick to join the brutal death marches, that Levy and two other inmates managed to light a fire to bring a little warmth to the dying prisoners. In response the weak and famished survivors did something previously unheard of in the death camps: They offered a slice of bread to the three who had prepared the fire.

Levi recalls in his book, *“If this is a Man,”* that that human gesture, that moment, “can be dated as the beginning of the change by which we who had not died slowly changed from prisoners to men again.” Says Rabbi Sacks: “One who is willing to divide his food with a stranger has already shown himself capable of [hope], fellowship, and faith...That is why we begin the Seder by inviting others to join us. By reaching out to others, giving help to the needy and companionship to those who are alone, we bring freedom into the world, and with freedom, G-d”.

This year, we may not be able to invite guests and to share our “bread” with others... but let us imagine that we did so and do what we can to help others in distress in these trying times. ■

Shabbat Shalom!

Menachem Pessoff



Haggadah Thoughts for Your Seder

הָא לַחֲמַא עֵינְיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהִתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם.
כָּל דְכָפְיוּ יֵיתִי וְיֵיכֵל, כָּל דְצָרִיךְ יֵיתִי וְיִפְסַח

We open the proceedings with a declaration: this is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in Egypt. Anyone who is hungry and needy, should come in and eat, come and join us at our Seder table.

In other words, the first thing we do as free people is to care for the needs of others.

When man first set foot on the moon, Rav Yosef Kahaneman smiled, moved the curtain on his window aside, looked up at the moon and then down on the people on the street outside. He said, “Man may have reached the moon but he still has yet to reach his fellow man.”

In other words, it's easier to achieve scientific breakthroughs than to create deep and caring relationships with each other.

Seder Night is our chance to correct that.

צָא וְלִמַּד מַה בְּקִשׁ לָבוֹן הָאֲרַמִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לִיעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ.
שְׁפָרְעָה לֹא גָזַר אֱלֹא עַל הַזְּכָרִים וְלָבוֹן בְּקִשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת
הַכֹּל

Go out and learn – who is more of a danger to us today? Lavan or Pharaoh? Lavan is an inveterate trickster, switching Rachel and Leah, and swindling Ya'akov at every turn. He wanted to gain control of Ya'akov's family – “The daughters are my daughters and the sons are my sons and the flock my flock and everything you see belongs to me,” when in fact they all belonged to Ya'akov.

Lavan wanted Ya'akov's family to become Aramean and integrate with his family, hence Lavan's decree is far more serious than Pharaoh's. Pharaoh was very clear and direct. His was a physical attack against the Jewish males. In contrast, Lavan tried to uproot us all, to upset the root of our identity and existence, and that is a far greater and more elusive danger.

We can stand up to a physical fight, and thank G-d we have overcome many horrific struggles in our history. But total spiritual assimilation? Much harder to withstand. If another nation controls us

socially and culturally, we are in grave danger. Hence the remedy tonight is צא ולמד – go out and learn what it means to be a Jew.

שִׁפְךָ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ

To ask G-d to pour out His anger against the non-Jews is not exactly politically correct, so it is important to be clear. There are no private revenge missions. We are fighting our enemies while upholding our ethics and the fact we are created “in the image of G-d.” Having said that, we can certainly pray – that the good will vanquish the evil, and that those who are out to destroy us will themselves be destroyed.

We pray for Divine justice.

אָחַד מִי יוֹדֵעַ, אָחַד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ

Who Knows One? seems like a cute children’s song and a useful tool to keep the children up and alert till the end of Seder. According to one explanation though, this song is a type of association game, a test of where we’re holding. We’ve been through a process tonight and now we check ourselves to see if we’ve absorbed the messages.

When asking “Who Knows One?” what do we think of? The 1st of the month? Payday? “Who Knows Two?” - #2 in the primaries perhaps? Four? The latest 4x4 SUV? 12? The 12-month warranty on the new washing machine?

This song is a raincheck on where our minds are after a night of intense education. Are our priorities straight? Two are the two tablets, four are our four mothers, 12 are the 12 tribes, and – after such a wonderful night – these are the elements of our identity, our most natural world of content, that we ought to be thinking of.

Chag Kasher VeSameach! ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is an Israeli journalist, currently on shlichut of World Mizrahi movement to the US. She is the author of #Parasha (Menorah Press) and Reaching to Heaven (Artscroll). To receive her daily insight on the portion of the week, text your name to: 972-58-679-9000



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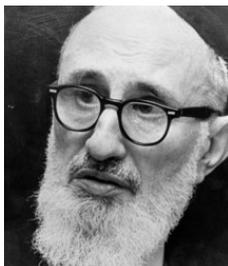
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Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt'l passed away twenty seven years ago. The Jewish world will mark his yahrzeit in the coming week, over Chol

Hamoed Pesach, on the 18th of Nissan. The Rav's influence was enormous on our community, and the way we live our Jewish lives today, in many ways, reflect his teachings and unique derech. He was fiercely dedicated to Torah learning and adherence to the Halacha. He called out to the Jewish world to hear the 'knock on the door' in which God was calling the Jewish people to return home to the Holy Land.

The OU Torah Tidbits is proud to share words of Torah in the Rav's zt"l memory. We continue to pour over his remarkable insights and be inspired and uplifted by his personality. We endeavour to carry on his legacy.

Torah Tidbits turned to one of the foremost talmidim of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt"l and requested to share one of his translations from Yiddish, from the Rav's vast teachings. Rabbi Aharon Rakeffet shared the following passage with us; one that is pertinent to the challenging situation we are facing today.

Recreating the Destroyed World

Related by the Rav in his annual yahrzeit shiur in memory of his father Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik zt"l, Yeshiva University, January 6, 1957 (Yiddish)

The Midrash relates that God created and destroyed many worlds before he allowed this world to remain in existence (Midrash Rabbah Genesis 3:9). Some of the earlier worlds were even more beautiful than the present one, but the Creator eliminated them. He then went ahead and created this world, which has endured.

What are the rabbis teaching us? What does it mean that God created and destroyed worlds? After all, He could have made this world to begin with, so why did G-d experiment with the earlier creations?

The Midrash conveys a very important

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concept to us. A person must know how to continue building and creating in life, even if his previous efforts are demolished. He can not lose hope and must not give up. He must go ahead and build again. Perhaps the new world created will not be as beautiful as the earlier one; nevertheless, he must continue to rebuild. God was able to say about His final world: "Behold it was very good" [Genesis 1:31]. That is, that the final, permanent world is very good, even though some of the earlier ones may have been even more beautiful. They are gone, and we must maximize what we have now....

This is the message of the re-creation of destroyed worlds. A Jew has to know how to emulate God, and, like God, to continue to create even after his former world has been eradicated. True, what I have in Boston may not be as beautiful as the European Torah world before the Holocaust. Nevertheless, it is the world we now have. We have to continue to build it and not look back. We must not be cynical, and we should direct our attention and efforts to the future. We must look ahead! ■

Reflections of the Rav, P. 15 vol 2

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RABBI AZARYA BERZON

To honor Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik's zt"l memory on his upcoming yahrzeit, Torah Tidbits asked one of Rav's exceptional talmidim to share memories of his days in the shiur. Rabbi Azarya Berzon, who serves as a Rosh Kollel and Rav in Yerushalayim, and regularly lectures at the OU Israel Center, was so kind as to share the following thoughts and vignettes.

The Rav as Melamed

I was privileged to learn under Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik for close to five years. Those were the five most special years of my life. During that period, the Rav, was the focal point of my life. The preparation for *shiur*, the participation in the *shiur* itself, the reviewing of the *shiur*—all this took up more than just time—it was also a psychologically and emotionally profound experience. During that time, I was trying to understand the Rav's way of thinking, how he would analyze a *sugya*, his *hashkafah* about the Jewish world and the world of Torah study. In general, my dream was to create a relationship with my *rebbe* that would sustain me throughout my life.

When I first joined the *shiur*, the Rav

was teaching tractate *Hulin*. It was very difficult for me. The *sugya* was about *melika b'chatos ha'of*, a complex topic from the world of *kadshim*. I had just returned from three years of learning in Israel. My English was not up to par as far as the Rav's was concerned. I also had trouble understanding his German accent. The style and approach were unlike anything I had been exposed to. I had never been in a *shiur* where the *rebbe* expected his students to analyze the various opinions of the *Tannaim* in a *Mishnah* or a dispute amongst the *Amoraim* in the *Gemara* conceptually, i.e. to come up with the underlying *lomdus* that would explain the root of the halakhic issue. The Rav would sometimes use words that were five syllables long. A close friend of mine was eager to ask a question, and the Rav responded, "Would you quell your curiosity for just one moment!" These were the elegant statements that used to come out of his mouth just in passing. It was difficult for me to be in a *shiur* made up of more than a hundred brilliant students who were far more used to the Rav's *derekh* than I was; I was used to being amongst the top *talmidim*, but all of a sudden I was almost a nonentity. It took me some six months to adjust to the *shiur*, but as a result my learning changed for the rest of my life.

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By the time I had completed my third year in the *shiur* I had achieved seniority rights and was able to sit literally next to the Rav at his table. It was exciting to watch the Rav. I would watch his forehead, his hands, and his legs while he was teaching; his legs used to move under the table in sync with the rest of his body. Every ounce of energy and every part of his intellect and his body was involved in the learning. It was *khol atzmosei tomarna* ["all my bones shall say." Psalm 35.10], the physical and intellectual aspects of the Rav's teaching integrated to form one harmonious entity which was alive and vibrant. Often I wondered what the Rav's performance in *shiur* would look like if played back on a video screen with background musical attachment.

I appreciated the Rav's precise definition of the discipline of philosophy

The Rav could not tolerate anything that was old or stale, even if he himself had said it. When a brilliant student once commented while the Rav was trying to work out *p'shat*, "*Rebbe*, this is what you said when we learned this *sugya* five years ago..." the Rav didn't allow the *talmid* to conclude his sentence. Instead he slammed his hand on his desk and exclaimed, "Forget about what I said five years ago! Pay attention to what I am saying now!"

The Rav always taught us that just as

God is unique as the Creator, man too must be unique. He must be original. In his writings and essays the Rav went to great lengths to emphasize the centrality and significance of being original, especially in Torah learning.

On more than one occasion I had the privilege to be the Rav's driver. On Thursday afternoon after a busy work week the Rav returned to Boston on the shuttle from LaGuardia Airport. My claim to this honor of driving the Rav was based on the fact that I was going to Queens anyway (I was taking courses at Queens College). Once the Rav asked me what I was studying in college. When I told him I was taking philosophy, he responded, "The science of *chakiros* [investigations; searching]." As a student of the *derekh ha'chakiros* I appreciated the Rav's precise definition of the discipline of philosophy. When we got off the Harlem River Drive and approached the bridge, the Rav insisted on paying the seventy-five cent toll over the Tri-Borough Bridge despite my objections that I was driving to Queens anyway.

When I got engaged, I brought my fiance to meet the Rav. Despite the fact that the Chief Rabbi of Israel was waiting outside, the Rav spent time with us. He was charming. When we left, my wife commented that the Rav was like a *zady* [grandfather]. She couldn't believe that this was the man whom I feared so much.

When the time for our wedding came, I asked the Rav to officiate. He agreed to come in for the wedding. Afterward,

my father sent two checks to the Rav as a thank-you for officiating, one for the Rav and one as a contribution to the Maimonides School in Boston. When the checks were returned from the bank, both were cashed in the name of Maimonides. The Rav did not take any of the money for himself.

This is an aspect of the Rav that is not well known. The Rav was a great *ba'al tzedakah* [giver of charity]. On a bus trip from Boston to New York, I met two students from the Lakewood Yeshiva. To start a conversation I asked them, "What brought you to Boston?" They told me that they volunteered to go on a fundraising trip between school terms. When I asked them, "How did it go?" they responded, "Not too well, except for one nice check that we received." I asked if they would share with me the details behind that one success story.

They began telling me that they went to the Twersky home to see the Rav. Rabbi Twersky *zt'l* answered the door and told them that the Rav was resting and that he couldn't be disturbed. But as they were leaving a voice from upstairs called, "Who's there?" Rabbi Twersky answered, "Two students from Lakewood Yeshiva." The Rav said, "Let them stay!" He came downstairs to ask how his friend Rabbi Shneur Kotler was doing. The *talmidim* left the house with the best check they picked up in the city of Boston. ■

Rabbi Azarya Berzon is the Rosh Kollel and Rav of the Emek Learning Center, 64 Emek Refaim St, Jerusalem.

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RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

Pesach's Perfect Pairing

Insights from the 'Meshech Chochmah' and Rabbi Yosef Soloveitchik zt"l

A surprising parallelism exists between Shabbat and Pesach. The Torah itself spotlights this resemblance. This interrelationship is prominently featured in the Ten Commandments. The mitzvah of the Shabbat is linked with our slavery and the Exodus from Egypt: "The seventh day is Shabbat to Hashem...and you shall remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and, your God has taken you out from there...therefore Hashem, your God, has commanded you to make the Shabbat day (Devarim 5; 12-15)."

The *Meshech Chochmah*, Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk (1843-1926), one of the most unique Torah giants in Eastern Europe in the 20th century, further highlights a fascinating example in which Pesach and Shabbat share commonalities. (*Meshech Chochmah*, *Shemot 12:17*)

Rabbi Meir Simcha indicates that the Torah employs the distinctive term 'shomer' regarding both Pesach and

Shabbat. We find numerous examples of this. Regarding Pesach: "*U'shemartem et Ha'avodah ha'zot*" - "...you shall watch over this service (Shemot 12:25), "*Chag Hamatzot Tishmor*", "You shall watch over the Festival of Matzot' (Shemot 23:15)." Sh'mor Chodesh Ha'Aviv", "Watch over the month of springtime." (Devarim 16:1).

Regarding Shabbat we also find numerous examples: "*Shamor et Yom HaShabbat Lekadsho*", "Watch over the Shabbat day (*Devarim 5:12*). '*Ve'shamru Bnei Yisrael et HaShabbat*', *And the Jewish people shall watch over the Shabbat (Shemot 31:16)*. *U'shemartem et HaShabbat*, *And you shall watch over the Shabbat (Shemot 31:14)*.

Perhaps the most striking example is the fact that Pesach is actually referred to as 'Shabbat': "*Me'macharat HaShabbat*" "You shall count for yourselves from the morrow of the Shabbat." (*Vayikra 23:15*). This verse obligates the 'Counting of the Omer' which begins immediately after the first day of Pesach. Remarkably, the Torah uses the term *Shabbat* to refer to Pesach.

The numerous examples cited above beg the obvious question: How do we conceptualize the close connection between Pesach and Shabbat?

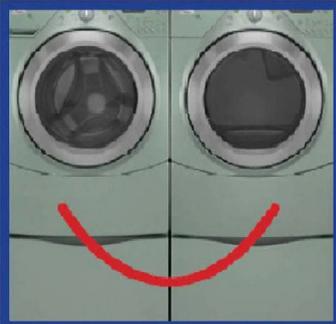
The *Meshech Chochmah* makes reference to the special relationship with Hashem that was forged on these days. Both Shabbat and Pesach are emblematic of the Jew's faith in the Almighty. Shabbat affirms God as the Creator. Pesach serves as a perfect partner with Shabbat in that it proclaims Hashem's providence and intimate relationship with mankind. When the Jew 'watches over' or observes Shabbat and Pesach, we are proudly and passionately giving testimony to these foundational principles.

Rabbi Norman Lamm, a close student of Rabbi Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik zt"l (1903- 1993), quoted his master, the Rav, "The word Haggadah is not merely the name of the Passover booklet, or the commandment to repeat the story of salvation and redemption. The word 'Haggadah' is similar to the word *Haggadat Edut*, the giving of evidence at a trial," The night of Pesach we act as witnesses giving testimony to God's providence and protection. (Rabbi Lamm Reviews OU Haggadah', OU.org)

Indeed, with the arrival of Shabbat we do the same. We serve as witnesses when we

recite the passage *Va'yechulu*; Friday night following the Maariv amidah this passage is recited standing, out loud, and in unison with the rest of the congregation (*Shluchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 268:7). The purpose of this recitation of *Vayechulu*, is to serve as a form of testimony, proclaiming our belief that God created the world. As such, some authorities require that it must be recited with at least one other person, which symbolizes the need for two witnesses in a court of law to give testimony together (*Mishna Berurah* 268:19).

Another remarkable correlation exists between Shabbat and Pesach. It is well known that Shabbat is poetically depicted as a bride. We find this symbolism characterized in a Midrashic teaching: When God created the world, Shabbat pleaded with God, saying, "Everyone else has a mate [e.g. Sunday has Monday as a partner, Tuesday has Wednesday etc.], but I have no one!" God answered, "The community of Israel will be your mate" (*Midrash Bereshit Raba* 11:8). Based on this idea the 16th century hymn *Lecha Dodi*, famously adopts this enchanting theme: "Welcome the Shabbat bride."

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Strikingly, the symbol of a bride is also associated with Pesach. Rabbi Soloveitchik zt'l identified two sources that express how this unique symbolism is hinted to in the halacha and even encoded in the Haggadah itself. The Sages (*Talmud Yerushalmi Pesachim* 10:1) liken a person who eats matzah on the eve of Pesach, prior to the festival, to a person who has intimate relations with his bride without completing the *nissuin* part of the marriage ceremony.

Amazingly, the *Or Zaru'a* (c.1180-1250), (2:256) points out that just as there are seven blessings in the marriage ceremony, there are seven blessings recited at the seder prior to eating the matzah.¹ Seven blessings escort us to reach the moment in which we, so to speak, consummate the marriage with the Almighty. (Haggadah, 'An Exalted Evening', Rabbi Genack, p114).

Undoubtedly, we have now discovered the distinctive pairing of Shabbat with Pesach. These two auspicious observanc-

1 *There are various ways of counting these seven. The Rav shares the teachings of the Menorat Ha'meor (chap. 2), an important work from the end of the 14th century, lists 'ha-gefen, she-hecheyanu, al netilat yadayim, prior to the first dipping (in accordance with those who say a blessing for that washing), bore peri ha'adamah on the Karpas, asher ge'alenu, not ha'gefen on the second cup (following those who do not say a blessing on the second and fourth cup), al netilat yadayim prior to the meal, and al achilat matzah. Others present a different reckoning of the seven blessings.*

es are distinguished as being the most significant moments in our lives in which we fully express our faith in God's omnipotence and omniscience. Even more deeply, Shabbat and Pesach offer the Jew a window in time to experience the feeling that one is standing, as it were, under the chuppah with their Beloved.

On these sacred days we reach out to the Almighty with renewed love and passion. Rabbi Soloveitchik explained that we are only able to give testimony, '*Haggadat edut*,' regarding the Exodus because we feel as if we were there and experienced salvation first hand. This is the meaning of the Haggada's declaration; "*Chayav adam lirot et atzmo ke'ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim*"; One is to feel as if they themselves had just left Egypt.'

Feeling God's warmth and loving embrace on these sacred nights explains the unique custom on both Shabbat eve and following the Seder to recite the book of Song of Songs. It is the most beautiful love poem ever written, speaking of the love between God and his people. Rabbi Soloveitick relays his own personal affinity for the night of the Seder. He said:"It is a night of great romance between the Almighty and the Jewish people."

May we merit, even in these challenging days we are now facing, to find the beauty and ecstasy embedded in each Shabbat and as we gather, b'ezrat Hashem, in joy around the Seder table. We fervently pray for the '*geulah shleimah*' to arrive soon.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Kasher Ve'Sameach. ■

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