

## OHRNET

PARSHIOT TZAV-SHEMINI-TAZRIA-MEZORA · NISSAN 5775 / 2015 · VOL. 22 NO. 26

## You're as Great as the Challenge

BY RABBI DOVID WEINBERGER

G-d has provided leaders of the Jewish People throughout history with “great souls”. Souls that must bear the major brunt of the burden to lead the nation to follow G-d through “thick and thin”.

King David was one of these leaders with such a “great soul”. He required this depth of spiritual character since he was the first of the line of kings which will ultimately give birth to “King Mashiach”.

But accompanying this greatness is “another side”. In simplistic terms, this means that with a spiritual greatness also comes a parallel great “evil inclination”. As the story of King David unfolds, we see the development of a king whose descendants will bring us the final salvation. King David overcame every mighty challenge, which resulted in his starting an everlasting dynasty to lead the Jewish People.

Let us travel back in history for a moment to examine key events in the formation of our nation, and their meaning for us today as we too face our own challenges in life.

The Ten Plagues: The Jewish People in Egypt did not have the privilege of today’s Jewish education. No Hebrew schools, no *yeshivot*. Thus, the Ten Plagues, as well as being a punishment to the Egyptians, also served as a method of “schooling” the Jewish People. It helped them gain proper recognition and understanding of G-d’s Monarchy in the world — in “Ten (not so) Easy Lessons”.

The Exodus: G-d “invited” all of the Jews to join the great Exodus from Egypt. But as our Sages teach us, only one-fifth chose to follow to exit the land to which they had become accustomed. Those who did not choose to join in the Exodus — the other 80% — disappeared during the plague of darkness, the ninth plague.

One must be in awe of that “small” fifth that left Egypt. They were “great souls” who chose to follow G-d into the desert. They were so great that we find the prophet Jeremiah (2:2) extolling their virtue as he expresses G-d’s

praise of these people: “So says G-d, I will always remember the kindness of your youth; you followed me into a desert, a non-arable land.”

We see in this verse praise from G-d for the Jewish People for rising to the occasion and defeating a negative inclination to stay in Egypt. G-d was saying in effect, “You are the greatest of people on Earth. You have fulfilled the purpose for which I created the world. You have placed your entire being in My hands to accept the Torah.”

The challenge of the Exodus was the beginning of our national challenge, and no other nation had faced this challenge, nor will they ever face it. Meeting this challenge and “winning” by following the way of G-d, revealed the “Great Soul” that reverberates in the Jewish People until today. The soul that has sustained us through every challenge down through the ages. It has accompanied us and aided our survival through every “Exodus” we have encountered.

The Exodus was a one-time event. But this one-time challenge was soon followed by a new, *ongoing* challenge that has been with us until this very day: The challenge of the Jewish People and the Torah. The Jewish People and the Torah are the reasons for Creation. If the Jewish People adhere to the Torah, the reason for Creation is fulfilled.

And besides our national challenge, there is the “individual” challenge”. Each and every one of us has his “specially tailored” challenge.

There are many challenges in our lives to see if we will follow what G-d taught us, and what has been handed down throughout the generations — just as we hand down this rich history on Pesach to our children at the Seder. And when a person overcomes a challenge he is re-enacting the original Exodus, moving toward the original goal of receiving the Torah.

And moving one step closer to the final goal of “bringing” Mashiach, may it be speedily in our days. Amen.

## EDITOR’S NOTE

This issue of Ohrnet Magazine is intended to span a period of four weeks. The Torah portion for each week will not be identical in Israel and outside of Israel beginning with the end of Pesach. Pesach ends on Friday (Apr. 10) in Israel and on Shabbat (Apr. 11) outside of Israel. On that Shabbat the Torah reading will be Shemini in Israel, while a special Pesach Torah reading takes place outside of Israel. Subsequently, on the following Shabbat the Torah reading in Israel will be Tazria-Metzora, whereas it is Shemini elsewhere.

TZAV

## The Constant Fire

“A constant fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall never go out.” (6:6)

Throughout their journeys in the wilderness, the Jewish People carried with them the Mishkan. The word Mishkan comes from the word in Hebrew which means “to dwell.” Through the Mishkan, G-d caused the Divine Presence, the *Shechina*, to dwell amongst the Jewish People.

There was an altar in the courtyard of the Mishkan. On it burned three different fires. On the eastern side of the altar was the *maracha gadola*, the “large arrangement”. On this largest fire, the *korbanot* sacrifices were offered. On the southwestern corner there was another fire that was used solely to ignite the pyre of the golden altar inside the Mishkan on which the incense was burned.

And there was a third fire which had no fixed place, but could be made anywhere on the outside altar. This fire had one purpose and one purpose only. To fulfill the words of the Torah in this week’s portion, “A constant fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall never go out.” Come rain or shine, weekdays and Shabbat, this fire never went out. It burned all the forty years that the Jewish People were traveling in the desert. In fact, it burned without interruption for a total of over one hundred years: in the desert, fourteen years in the Mishkan at Gilgal, and fifty-seven years in the Mishkan at Nov and at Givon. Two pieces of wood had to be added to the fire twice a day, in the morning at the time of the morning offering, and in the afternoon at the time of the afternoon offering.

One might ask, “Why were three fires necessary? Wouldn’t one have sufficed?”

These three fires can be understood as three aspects of our relationship with G-d.

The large fire represents our external service — the performance of the *mitzvot* and our prayers to G-d at the established times throughout the day and throughout the year. Because it was the largest fire, it was the most visible, just as our external duties as Jews are the most visible, be they the giving of charity or the care of the orphan and the widow. These are things that are as visible as a large fire.

However, there was another fire whose function outside was for no other purpose than to kindle an internal fire. That fire teaches us that we must take our exterior service and use it to kindle the interior fire. That internal fire represents the duties of the heart — our belief and trust in G-d and our constant striving to be better people. That’s something you can’t see from the outside, but like the incense that is burned on the golden altar, it emerges from within a person with a scent that is unmistakable.

The third fire can be moved anywhere, but it must never go out. This represents the undying fidelity of the Jewish People to G-d throughout our long and difficult Diaspora. Even though we have had to move from one corner of the world to another, our devotion to G-d has never been extinguished by an unkind world. Whether in the light of morning, or the impending darkness of approaching night, throughout our long history the Jewish People have always been dedicated to the kindling on the altar of our devotion to G-d.

SHEMINI

## Chant of Love

“Aharon raised his hands toward the people and blessed them” (9:22)

One of the most awe-inspiring experiences is the “*Birkat Kohanim*”, when thousands of *kohanim* bless the many thousands of people at the Western Wall in Jerusalem during the Festivals.

Most of the time, prayer at the Wall is a segmented affair. This group starts as that one finishes, while yet another group is somewhere in the middle.

Apart from the daily moments of silence at sunrise when everyone begins together the Silent Prayer of eighteen blessings, I can think of no other time when the whole of the Kotel is as unified as it is by *Birkat Kohanim*.

The haunting chant of the Kohanic blessing evokes deep and powerful feelings in the heart of every Jew, however religious he may be. It is a chant that echoes down the years. It is a living witness to the unbroken chain of Jewish tradition that links us to Sinai.

The first appearance of that chant is in this week’s Torah portion. Aharon completed his first day of service in the Sanctuary and he then blessed the people with great joy. Such was his desire to bless the people that G-d rewarded him and his descendents that they should bless

the Jewish People throughout the generations.

The word for blessing in Hebrew, *beracha*, is connected to *bereicha*, which means a “pool.” Blessing is an overflowing pool that enriches and fills our lives.

In the time of the Holy Temple, when the *kohanim* would bless the people, they would raise their hands over their heads and make a space between the third and fourth fingers of hands. When they recited the blessings using the ineffable Name of G-d, the *Shechina*, the Divine Presence, would rest upon their hands. Even nowadays they cover their heads and hands with their prayer shawls when they recite the blessings.

But perhaps we could also understand a different symbolism behind the covering of the hands of the *kohen*.

Our Sages teach us that blessing only descends on things that are hidden from the eye, that the eye doesn’t see. For example, a farmer who starts to weigh his grain may pray that his crop will be large, but if he has already weighed it he may no longer make such a request — for the size of the crop is already revealed to the eye. When the *kohanim* cover their hands they symbolize this idea that blessing descends only on that which is hidden from the eye.

• Sources: Talmud Bava Metzia 42a, Mishna Berura 128:98

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TAZRIA

## So Far Away

“The Kohen shall look, and behold! The affliction has covered the person’s entire body; then he will declare the affliction to be pure.” (13:13)

**T***zara’at*, frequently mistranslated as leprosy, was a disease that was a result of spiritual defects, such as speaking *lashon hara* (slander).

The verse here is puzzling, for if “the affliction has covered the person’s entire body”, that must mean that he is far from pure, and yet the Torah tells us that the *Kohen* shall “declare the affliction pure”. How can he be pure if the affliction covers his whole body?

The answer is that he is so far from being cured, having ignored all the warnings to do *teshuva* (repentance), that the disease ceases to perform any further purpose. Therefore, the Torah specifically does *not* say that the *Kohen* shall declare *him* pure, rather that “the affliction is pure”. *He*, on the other hand, is as far from purity as is possible.

Nowadays, it seems as well that we are not on a high enough spiritual level to merit this reminder to correct a spiritual defect, and our bodies do not reflect the state of our spiritual health in this way.

- Sources: based on the *Ha’amek Davar* and Rabbi S. R. Hirsch

METZORA

## Boomerang

“...and he shall be brought to the Kohen.” (14:3)

**W**hen a person speaks *lashon hara* (slander) it indicates that he has no concept of the power of speech; that he considers words to be insignificant in comparison to actions. As the nursery rhyme says, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. When a person speaks evil, he awakes a “prosecutor” in Heaven, not only against the target of his speech, but also against himself. An angel stands by the side of each of us, recording our every word. In order to teach those who speak slander the power of just one word, the Torah instructs that the offender be brought to the *Kohen*. But, even as he is on his way to the *Kohen*, his body covered with *tzara’at* for all to see, and until the *Kohen* actually pronounces the word “Impure!” he is still considered totally pure. Similarly, he cannot regain his former status, although his disease has healed completely, until the *Kohen* again pronounces him to be spiritually pure. From this, the speaker of *lashon hara* is taught to reflect on the power of each and every word. For with one word he can be made an outcast, and with one word he can be redeemed.

- Source: based on *Ohel Yaakov*

# PARSHA Overview

TZAV

**T**he Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burnt on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *Kohen Gadol* each day, and by Aharon’s sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat

a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the *Mishkan* and all of its vessels is detailed.

SHEMINI

**O**n the eighth day of the dedication of the *Mishkan*, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various *korbanot* (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. G-d allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the *Mishkan*. Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by G-d. A fire comes from before G-d and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the *Mishkan*. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of

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## TALMUD Tips

### Ketuvot 58 - 85

*“Rav bar Shilat had sufficient food, drink and housing, and the king’s agent never passed by his house to demand anything from him.”*

The commentaries explain that he merited this special Divine protection due to his great dedication to Torah — especially his teaching Torah to the youth. (See Bava Batra 21a where Rav praises him as an extraordinary teacher of Torah to young children. This Divine protection enabled him to pursue his efforts unhindered by hunger, thirst, tiredness or obligations to the Persian king.

• Ketuvot 62a

*“Let her come forward – all of my Torah learning and all of your Torah learning is due to her.”*

\ Rabbi Akiva stated this to make everyone aware of the great honor due his wife, Rachel. He made this announcement to his 24,000 Torah students when he returned home after twenty four years of learning and teaching Torah.

• Ketuvot 63a

*“Fortunate is the Jewish People! When they do the will of G-d, no foreign nation can rule over them, and when they are not doing the will of G-d, they are ruled over by the lowliest of nations...”*

This exclamation of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai expresses the fortune of the Jewish People whether or not they are ruled over. The Maharsha explains that this special treatment of the Jewish People is a sign of their loftiness as the nation of G-d. As such, we are under the *direct* providence and protection of G-d, unlike all other nations who are ruled from Above by a Divinely appointed intermediary for each nation. Therefore, when the Jewish People do the will of G-d, they are about the nature of all other nations. But when they fail to obey G-d, His Divine Presence is removed from them and they are even “lower”, in a sense, than other nations which always have their intermediary guardians from G-d. However, even this points to the loftiness of the Jewish People, that they are “G-d’s portion”, and not under the influence of any other go-between from Above.

• Ketuvot 66b

*“Do you think I’m taking their food? I eat from what G-d provides.”*

This rhetorical question was the response of a needy person who approached the Sage Rava for charity in order to buy food. When Rava learned that the beggar had expensive “tastes”, Rava expressed concern that granting funds for the man’s exorbitant culinary practice would strain the public charity resources. The beggar argued that G-d is the true source of his nourishment and would not drain the public resources, based on the Psalm 145:15: “The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food at his time.” The beggar explained that this teaches that G-d provides each *individual* with his needs.

Just then, Rava’s sister whom he hadn’t seen in 13 years came to visit him with the exact “first-class” meal that the beggar requested. Rava saw this as a sign from Above that the beggar was correct, and instructed that the meal his sister brought for him be given to the beggar instead.

• Ketuvot 67b

*“The living will take to heart matters pertaining to death: one who eulogizes another will be eulogized by others; one who buries another will be buried by others; one who cries bitterly for another will be wept for by others; one who escorts another to the grave will be escorted by others; and one who carries another to his burial place will be carried by others.”*

Our *gemara* explains in this manner the teaching of Rabbi Meir in a *beraita* regarding the enigmatic words “and the living will take it to heart” in Kohelet 7:1.

Rashi sees this as a lesson in human behavior. Interaction requires give-and-take and is not one-sided. The Maharsha, however, suggests that the lesson is that a person should engage in activities that will make him aware of his own mortality.

• Ketuvot 72a

*“Fortunate is the person who arrives here (the World-to-Come) with his Torah learning in his hand.”*

This reason is stated on our *daf* by Rabbi Chanina bar Papa to explain his request from the angel of death (who was his “friend” — Rashi) to not “take him” immediately

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Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## Gilgal – The First Korban Pesach in the Land We Love

Although you will find nothing on the map or in geography books about this place, it was the most important site in the first years of the Nation of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*. Here is where the Israelites under Yehoshua camped after their miraculous crossing of the Jordan River, and here is where they placed the twelve large stones that they had removed from the river bed to serve as a remembrance for generations of that miracle. (*Yehoshua 4:20-24*)

The name Gilgal comes from the Hebrew word for “removing.” Gilgal became the name for this site because here is where Yehoshua carried out a mass circumcision for all those who had been born during the 40



years in the wilderness, where the climate had made such an operation too dangerous to life. “Today I have removed from you the shame of Egypt,” said G-d, “and the place shall be called Gilgal.” (*Yehoshua 5:9*)

This removal of the foreskin which distinguished them from their former masters made the entire nation eligible to offer a *Korban Pesach*, the first one in forty years.

The Mishkan (Sanctuary) which the Israelites had carried with them throughout their wandering in the wilderness stood in Gilgal for 14 years, until the Land was conquered and divided amongst the tribes, after the Mishkan was transferred to Shiloh where it remained for 369 years.

### TALMUD TIPS *continued from page four*

but rather only after another thirty days. During these thirty days Rabbi Chanina bar Papa reviewed his entire Torah learning, the best preparation for the World-to-Come.

• *Ketuvot 77b*

“*Rav Nachman tore up her document.*”

The document involved was one written by a widow to her daughter prior to the mother’s remarriage. The mother had property from before, and did not want her new husband to have any rights of usage or ownership in them. When it transpired that the mother’s new marriage ended in divorce, the mother asked her daughter to return her property. The daughter refused and presented the document of acquisition as proof that she was the true owner. Rav Nachman, however, understood that the document was only written in order to prevent the mother’s husband from having rights, and not with complete intent to give the property to her daughter. He therefore tore up the daughter’s document, returning the property to the mother. Rashi explains that when the document was written the mother had informed witnesses that she did not really mean to give her daughter a gift, but rather to prevent her new husband from rights to her property. (This explanation makes Rav Nachman’s ruling appear obviously correct and begs explanation for the opinion of Rava in the *gemara* who

argues with Rav Nachman’s ruling. Tosefot, therefore, explains that the mother didn’t actually *inform* witnesses of her intent, but that it was clear from the situation that she did not have proper intent to give away her property as a gift.)

• *Ketuvot 79a*

“*Since he (the lender) could have said ‘I bought the item’, he’s believed when he says ‘I grabbed it while he (the father) was still alive’.*”

This is the ruling of Rav Nachman in our *gemara* in a case presented on our *daf*. A father who had borrowed money died, leaving behind orphans and a lender. The lender claimed that he took the father’s ox while the father was still alive (to ensure repayment of the debt) and should be allowed to keep it as payment for the loan. The orphans had a guard for their animals who claimed that the lender grabbed the ox “too late” — only after the death of the father — and must return it. Rav Nachman asked the guard if he could present witnesses to prove that the lender had *taken* the ox. His answer was “No”. Based on this lack of evidence, Rav Nachman issued his ruling that the lender was to be believed, on the basis that he could have easily denied ever taking it.

• *Ketuvot 84b*

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# THE STORY OF OUR FAITH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

## “I Will Show You Wonders”

**G**-d saved the Jewish People from their suffering in Egypt by turning the world upside down, showing all mankind His “mighty hand”, meaning His total reign over nature. During the first plague, for example, when a thirsty Egyptian saw a Jewish person drinking water and tried to take it from him without paying, the water turned to blood. During the seventh plague, icy hail turned to fire in mid-air. At the Sea of Reeds, too, G-d reversed the laws of nature, causing water to stand as a solid wall, enabling the Jewish People to pass through on dry land.

At the splitting of the sea all proclaimed, “This is my G-d and I will glorify Him.” The commentaries remark that even a simple maidservant perceived Divinity more clearly than Yechezkel, one of the greatest of all prophets. At Mount Sinai, the Jewish People reached even a higher level, where even the “angel of death” was powerless over them.

## The Sin of the Spies

There is one problem with all the above. After a year in the desert surrounded by constant wonders, when the time finally arrives for the Jewish People to enter the Land of Israel, instead of showing their anticipation and joy, they ask Moshe to send spies to scout out the Land. And so, although warned of the grave danger inherent in questioning the Land that G-d promised to be good, twelve leaders are chosen for this sleuth task of checking out the Land.

The story gets worse when all but two of the spies return with an evil report. The people lose faith and cry the entire night, “Why is G-d bringing us to this Land to die by the sword? Our wives and young children will be taken captive! Is it not better for us to return to Egypt?” In response, G-d swears that none of the people who succumbed to the false report about the Land would merit entering it. Instead they would die wandering in the desert over a span of forty years.

How could a nation that witnessed G-d’s greatness and constant presence so easily lose their faith? To answer this question, we must examine the most shocking detail of this entire incident.

## The Spies’ Report

*“But, the people who dwell in the land are powerful; the cities are fortified and very great; and we also saw there the offspring of the giant. Amalek dwells in the south; the Hittite, the Jebusite, and the Emorite dwell in the mountain; and the Canaanite dwells by the sea and on the bank of the Jordan.” Caleb silenced the people towards Moshe and said, “We shall surely ascend and conquer (the Land and its inhabitants) for we can surely do it!” But the men that ascended with him said, “We cannot ascend to that people, for they are stronger than us*

*(Hebrew: “mimenu”)!” (Bamidbar 13:28-31)*

Our Sages explain that when the spies said “the people are stronger *“mimenu — than us”*, what they really meant was that “they are stronger *“mimenu — than Him”*, stronger than G-d, because the Hebrew word “*mimenu*” has both connotations.

On a deeper level: When we are told to substitute one meaning of a word for another, the intent is not to entirely replace the first word, but rather to add to it the meaning of the second word. In this case the spies were saying that the inhabitants of the Land were stronger than “us” and “G-d” together. In order to understand precisely what this means, further explanation is needed.

## Two Types of Miracles

The Jewish People who left Egypt were used to seeing “open” miracles on a daily basis. Their food descended from Heaven every morning, and they were surrounded by constant clouds protecting them from the harsh desert conditions. But now, nearing what was to be the end of their desert journey, the Jewish People faced a new challenge, and they would be commanded to invade nations that were well-fortified. They felt as though they would have to go in and conquer the enemy themselves. Even with the promise of G-d’s help, they still needed to plan military strategies and battle armies both stronger and more numerous. This type of confrontation was unlike anything they had experienced before. Instead of standing back and watching G-d kill off their enemies with a wall of water or a Heavenly fire, this time they would personally need to wield the sword that would kill any person who stood in their way.

With the above, we can now have a glimpse of understanding how the Jewish People could have possibly lacked the necessary faith to overcome their fears of battle despite all the miracles they had witnessed. Until now, all they had seen was G-d breaking the laws of nature, not working within nature. They failed to realize that, even though they would be doing the actual fighting, G-d’s presence would be with them in battle to shield them from harm. They were perhaps not ready to believe that G-d’s infinite power would be “channeled” through them. By failing to realize that G-d can work within nature, utilizing even human decisions and actions to do His ultimate will, that generation proved unworthy to enter the Land. They were sentenced to forty years in the desert, not just as a punishment, but as a period of transition to strengthen their faith and gain a deeper understanding of G-d’s providence over the world. Their children, having been raised on this belief, would then have the necessary confidence and courage to battle the Land’s inhabitants with total faith in G-d’s ability to bring victory to the Jewish People.

# Nissan, the Month of Freedom

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

*Rabbi Yehoshua says: In Nissan we were redeemed (from Egypt) and in Nissan we will again be redeemed (Rosh Hashana 11a)*

The special energy of the month of Nissan — and more specifically the holiday of Pesach — is freedom. As we say in the prayers, Pesach is “*zman cheruteinu*” (the time of our freedom). Our national freedom though is not the entire picture. On the night of Pesach, our Sages demand of every individual to personally view himself as if he actually left Egypt (Pesachim 116a). In light of the fact that we are not presently enslaved, however, how are we to relate to this obligation?

To place our freedom in proper perspective, the Gemara tells us to contrast it with the past slavery by starting the Pesach Seder with our history of bondage. There is a disagreement between the Talmudic Sages Rav and Shmuel about exactly how to relate the story of slavery. As the Gemara says:

*Start with shame and end with praise. What is shame? Rav says [to start relating the story from] “in the beginning our forefathers were idol worshippers” and Shmuel says [to start relating the story from] “we were slaves [in Egypt]”. (Pesachim 116a)*

The Maharal explains that both Rav and Shmuel agree that the exodus from Egypt had an aspect of both physical and spiritual freedom. They only differ in which of these freedoms to emphasize on the night of the Seder. Shmuel holds that since physical freedom is more tangible, we should begin the Seder from when we were physically enslaved in Egypt. Rav on the other hand maintains that since spiritual freedom is more primary we should begin from when we were spiritually enslaved to worshipping idols. Based on this we can say that in addition to the physical freedom, it is also the spiritual freedom that is demanded of us to personally relive on Pesach.

Based on the above it is incumbent upon us to delve into the nature of spiritual slavery. Names in Judaism always express essence. Therefore, by studying the depth behind names we are able to get an understanding of the spiritual nature of the person, object etc. bearing that name. The root of the name “Mitzrayim” (Egypt) is “*meitzar*” (constraints). Rabbi Dessler explains that just like the physical Mitzrayim constricted us physically, our inner Mitzrayim, namely the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination), constricts and enslaves us spiritually. Based on this idea the commentaries suggest that though the story of coming out of Mitzrayim is obviously true on a literal physical level, it is also an allusion to a person’s own individual freedom from his spiritual exile. In this parallel Pharaoh represents the evil inclination, Moshe Rabbeinu represents the good inclination, while the Jewish People represent the soul that is essentially exiled from its spiritual source. Building on this theme the Siftei Chaim explains that if we delve deeper into how Pharaoh enslaved the Jewish People, we will have a better understanding of how to overcome our evil inclination. The following is one example of how this is so.

The Midrash tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu convinced

Pharaoh to allow the Jewish People to rest on the day of Shabbat. Following Moshe’s plea to free the Jewish People, however, Pharaoh not only took away this privilege but also increased their workload. What can we learn about the inner battle between the forces of good and evil from the actions of Moshe and Pharaoh? The Gemara tells us that when a person repeats a transgression he gets so used to it that he no longer views it as a sin (Yoma 86b). Therefore, the Mesillat Yesharim says, the first step in spiritual growth is to designate a time to contemplate one’s actions in order to determine which areas need improvement. This time for introspection, also called “*cheshbon hanefesh*” (spiritual accounting of the soul), is meant to prevent sins from becoming instinctual habits.

Though ideally one is supposed to set aside time everyday for contemplation, Shabbat is the most opportune time for it. How is this so? Just like on Shabbat we can only enjoy what we prepared during the week, so too in the World-to-Come we can only bask in the things we accomplished in this world. In this sense, on Shabbat we get a glimpse of what our future *olam haba* will be like. When a person feels good and happy on Shabbat it is a sign that he has had a productive and creative week. If a person feels uneasy or despondent on Shabbat it is an allusion to the fact that he has not truly utilized his potential during the week. This is why Shabbat is known as *m’ein olam haba* (like the World-to-Come). Through experiencing Shabbat correctly we are able to see if we are spiritually on the right track.

Perhaps now we can understand the lesson behind the clash between Moshe and Pharaoh over the day of Shabbat. As mentioned above, taking time for introspection is the first step to spiritual freedom. For Moshe, who is the representative of the good inclination, the institution of Shabbat as the day of rest was the first step to freedom. On the other hand, for Pharaoh, who is the representative of the evil inclination, getting rid of the Shabbat and increasing the workload was the perfect way to combat any thought of autonomy. In a practical sense our evil inclination uses the same tactic as Pharaoh, through busying our own lives with trivial things to such a degree that we barely have time to ask if what we are doing is right or wrong. It makes us live our lives through habit, doing today what we did yesterday, leaving us little opportunity for change. The challenge is to combat this onslaught through constant self-evaluation and introspection. This is the main inner battle between good and evil.

In one way or another every person is spiritually enslaved. From laziness to pride, from laxity in keeping *mitzvot* to submitting to our desires, we all have spiritual weaknesses we struggle with. Pesach — “the time of our freedom” — is the auspicious time to overcome our spiritual weaknesses and leave the bondage of our inner Mitzrayim. Through introspection and proper utilization of the spiritual opportunities of this time, we defeat the “Pharaoh” within and leave behind our internal “Mitzrayim”. This is one way we can literally fulfill the requirement of seeing ourselves as if we left Mitzrayim. May we all merit making the most of this most propitious time and thereby merit seeing the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.

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# Abarbanel

## ON THE PARSHA

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

### Shemini

This Parsha describes the basic laws of *kashrut*. Abarbanel attempts to unravel the mystery of why certain animals, birds and fish are permitted while others are prohibited. He also analyzes the different approaches that the Torah takes towards identifying what is permitted and what is not.

In regard to land-dwelling animals the Torah specifies that they must have a split hoof and be classified as a ruminant — meaning an animal with several stomachs that chews, swallows and regurgitates its food several times at the beginning of the digestive process. Abarbanel emphasizes that these physical characteristics are not the *reason* that they are permitted. Rather, they are the *characteristics* that enable us to identify them as permitted animals. These animals are purely vegetarian and lack the teeth and claws that characterize carnivorous species. Abarbanel invokes the concept of “you are what you eat” in that these animals are generally placid and gentle. Carnivores, on the other hand, by necessity have a violent, cruel and cunning nature. Eating such an animal would transfer that very nature to us. Even though this distinction is blurred in regard to the four prohibited species that the Torah identifies as having one of the two characteristics but not the other — i.e. the pig, camel, hare and hyrax — Abarbanel points out that G-d in His infinite wisdom is the ultimate arbiter of what is best to ingest in order to maintain the purity of our souls.

Similarly, kosher birds have two characteristics which parallel those of the land-dwelling animals. Just like kosher animals have a unique foot structure, the claws of kosher birds have a unique structure which allows them to walk on land in order to find food. Parallel to ruminants, these birds have a crop and a gizzard that grinds up their food. Additionally, kosher birds are not predatory. Just as in the case of carnivorous animals, G-d is preventing us from absorbing a violent and cruel nature. However, the Torah does not mention these two characteristics. It only mentions a specific list of non-kosher birds. There are two reasons for this. First of all, there are a large number of kosher species. Secondly, the internal characteristics of crop and gizzard have no external manifestations, unlike land-based animals whose diet, dental and jaw structure is a clear indication of their status as ruminants.

Kosher fish also have two identifying characteristics — fins and scales. Although some other commentators point out that fish lacking fins and scales are prohibited because they are bottom-feeders, living not in clear water but in murky, dirty water, Abarbanel rejects this idea and instead points to fins and scales as being indicative of a purer, less grossly physical creature.

Finally, Abarbanel rejects the idea that the main reason for the various prohibitions is to protect our physical well-being. He points out that gentiles eat these animals without any detrimental effects whatsoever. Additionally, there are numerous plant species that are exceedingly harmful which the Torah does not mention at all. The only reason for these prohibitions is to enhance our spiritual well-being by limiting our physical desires and curbing our animalistic nature. Prohibited species are never referred to in the Torah as ‘dangerous’ or ‘unhealthy’. Rather, they are referred to as ‘impure’ or ‘abominable’. Both of these terms refer purely to spiritual rather than physical consequences. G-d is concerned about the effect of the foods that we eat on our true essence, our character and our behavior.

### Tazria

In this week’s portion the Torah teaches us that a woman is required to bring two sacrificial offerings after childbirth — an elevation offering, which is totally consumed on the altar, and a sin offering to atone for her transgressions. Abarbanel questions why she has to bring an elevation offering at all, and also asks what her sin was, which required atonement after childbirth. In terms of the sin offering, Abarbanel mentions first the *gemara* in Tractate Niddah which explains that the pain of childbirth causes a woman to swear to abstain from relations with her husband in the future. Such an oath is considered to be taken in vain since a woman is prohibited from voluntarily abstaining from relations.

Abarbanel then offers a different insight. Although a sin offering normally precedes an elevation offering, the order is reversed here as a result of the unique experience of childbirth. An elevation offering expresses an individual’s desire to come closer to G-d, to elevate oneself spiritually. A woman who has experienced childbirth recognizes that her Creator has wondrously saved her from the enormous danger of the experience. She naturally wants to express her total gratitude by drawing nearer to G-d with an offering which is totally consumed. On the other hand, we are taught clearly that no one experiences any pain or suffering in this world unless he has in some way transgressed. Abarbanel posits that even if the woman does not transgress blatantly by swearing never to have relations with her husband again, the sin offering still functions as atonement for transgressions of which she is not aware. The difference between the two offerings is indicated by the language of the Torah. In reference to the elevation offering the Torah states, “...and he (the *kohen*) shall offer it up (bring it near) before G-d...” — whereas in reference to the sin offering the Torah states “...and it will atone for her.”

*Continued on page nine*

### Metzora

In his discussion of the *tumah*, or spiritual impurity, which is imparted to males as a result of various bodily excretions, Abarbanel is puzzled by the fact that the concept of *tumah* is also associated with the emission of semen. The Torah tells us that when a man and woman have marital relations they must immerse in a *mikveh*, or ritual bath, and remain in a state of *tumah* until evening. How can it be that an act which is one of the most important *mitzvot* of the Torah — both from the perspective of reproduction and the perspective of man's responsibility to fulfill the needs of his wife — result in a state of spiritual impurity?

Abarbanel answers that, in general, bodily secretions whose elimination is not necessary for the health of the individual create a state of *tumah*. This explains why the elimination of feces, urine, mucus and saliva does not cre-

ate a state of *tumah*. The elimination of seminal fluid, however, is not necessary for bodily health, and as a result does result in a form of spiritual impurity. In this case, the state of *tumah* is also a result of the Torah's desire to establish reasonable parameters for marital activity. As holy, natural and important as this activity is, we must always be reminded that we must be the masters of our physical desires rather than being slaves to them. Abarbanel is saying that by imposing this limitation the Torah is preventing us from engaging in the kind of activity that characterizes the immoral behavior of people like adulterers who give themselves over totally to their physical desires. However, because of this importance, the duration of the state of *tumah* is limited to one day, and there is no required sacrificial offering, unlike other situations where the duration of *tumah* is seven days with a required sacrificial offering.

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### PARSHA OVERVIEW *continued from page three*

forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to be separate and holy — like G-d.

### TAZRIA

The Torah commands a woman to bring a *korban* after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of *tzara'at* (often mistranslated as leprosy) — a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A *kohen* must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is *tzara'at* or not. The *kohen* isolates the sufferer for a week. If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the *kohen* decides the person's status. The Torah describes the different forms of *tzara'at*. One whose *tzara'at* is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is

ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of *tzara'at* on clothing is described in detail.

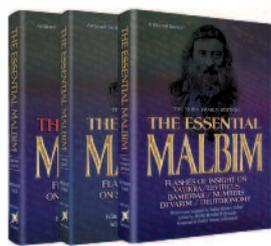
### METZORA

The Torah describes the procedure for a *metzora* (a person afflicted with *tzara'at*) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week and involves *korbanot* and immersions in the *mikveh*. Then, a *kohen* must pronounce the *metzora* pure. A *metzora* of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals. Before a *kohen* diagnoses that a house has *tzara'at*, household possessions are removed to prevent them from also being declared ritually impure. The *tzara'at* is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house. If it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

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# PARSHA Q&A

## TZAV

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they completely removed from the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?
10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?
11. How does an *asham* differ from all other *korbanot*?
12. Unlike all other *korbanot*, what part of the ram or sheep may be placed on the *mizbe'ach*?
13. What three types of *kohanim* may not eat from the *asham*?
14. In which four instances is a *korban todah* brought?
15. Until when may a *todah* be eaten according to the Torah? Until when according to Rabbinic decree?
16. How does a *korban* become *pigul*?
17. Who may eat from a *shelamim*?
18. What miracle happened at the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*?
19. Other than *Yom Kippur*, what other service requires that the *kohen* separate from his family?
20. What are the 5 categories of *korbanot* listed in this *Parsha*?

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## Answers to Tzav's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

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1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 -A) Every day. B) Whenever there was a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban mincha* — A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burnt completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burnt, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.
11. 7:3 - It can only be brought from a ram or sheep.
12. 7:3 - The tail.
13. 7:7 - A *t'vul yom* (a *tamei kohen* who immersed in a *mikveh* yet awaits sunset to become *tahor*); a *mechusar kipurim* (a *tamei* person who has gone to the *mikveh* but has yet to bring his required offering); an *onan* (a mourner on the day of death of a close relative).
14. 7:12 - Upon safe arrival from an ocean voyage; upon safe arrival from a desert journey; upon being freed from prison; upon recovering from illness.
15. 7:15 - a) Until the morning. b) Until midnight.
16. 7:18 - The person slaughters the animal with the intention that it be eaten after the prescribed time.
17. 7:19 - Any uncontaminated person (not only the owner).
18. 8:3 - The entire nation was able to fit in this very small area.
19. 8:34 - The burning of the *parah adumah* (red heifer).
20. *Olah* (6:2); *mincha* (6:7); *chatat* (6:18); *asham* (7:1); *shelamim* (7:11).

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# PARSHA Q&A

## SHEMINI

1. What date was “*yom hashemini*”?
2. Which of Aharon’s *korbanot* atoned for the Golden Calf?
3. What *korbanot* did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
4. What was unique about the *chatat* offered during the induction of the *Mishkan*?
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the *birkat kohanim*?
6. Why did Moshe go into the *Ohel Mo’ed* with Aharon?
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons’ death. What reward did he receive for this?
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated?
10. Name the three *chatat* goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.
11. Which he-goat *chatat* did Aharon burn completely and why?
12. Why did Moshe direct his harsh words at Aharon’s sons?
13. Moshe was upset that Aharon and his sons did not eat the *chatat*. Why?
14. Why did G-d choose Moshe, Aharon, Elazar and Itamar as His messengers to tell the Jewish People the laws of *kashrut*?
15. What are the signs of a kosher land animal?
16. How many non-kosher animals display only one sign of *kashrut*? What are they?
17. If a fish sheds its fins and scales when out of the water, is it kosher?
18. Why is a stork called *chasida* in Hebrew?
19. The *chagav* is a kosher insect. Why don’t we eat it?
20. What requirements must be met in order for water to maintain its status of purity?

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## Answers to Shemini’s Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 9:1 - First of Nissan.
2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a *korban chatat*.
3. 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a *chatat*, a calf and a lamb for an *olah*, an ox and a ram for *shelamim*, and a *mincha*.
4. 9:11 - It’s the only example of a *chatat* offered on the courtyard *mizbe’ach* that was burned.
5. 9:22 - When he finished offering the *korbanot*, before descending from the *mizbe’ach*.
6. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the *Shechina* to dwell with Israel.
7. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe’s presence, or because they entered the *Mishkan* after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. 10:9-11 - He may not give a *halachic* ruling. Also, a *kohen* is forbidden to enter the *Ohel Mo’ed*, approach the *mizbe’ach*, or perform the *avoda*.
10. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of *Rosh Chodesh*, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.
11. 10:16 - The *Rosh Chodesh chatat*: Either because it became *tamei*, or because the *kohanim* were forbidden to eat from it while in the state of *aninut* (mourning).
12. 10:16 - Out of respect for Aharon, Moshe directed his anger at his sons and not directly at Aharon.
13. 10:17 - Because only when the *kohanim* eat the *chatat* are the sins of the owners atoned.
14. 11:2 - Because they accepted the deaths of Nadav and Avihu in silence.
15. 11:3 - An animal whose hooves are completely split and who chews its cud.
16. 11:4,5,6,7 - Four: Camel, *shafan*, hare and pig.
17. 11:12 - Yes.
18. 11:19 - Because it acts with *chesed* (kindness) toward other storks.
19. 11:21 - We have lost the tradition and are not able to identify the kosher *chagav*.
20. 11:36 - It must be connected to the ground (i.e., a spring or a cistern).

# ASK! the Jewish Information Service

BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

## Hiding to Find

**From: Brian**

*Dear Rabbi,  
It seems to me that the reason we search for bread is to remove it from the house. So I'm a bit perplexed as to why we intentionally hide pieces of bread around the house before the search. Any insights?*

Dear Brian,

The purpose of the search is certainly to find and remove chametz from the house before Pesach.

However, since nearly most, if not all, of the chametz has already been removed from around the house before the actual search, it is customary to hide pieces of bread in places where chametz is usually found in order to add importance and relevance to the search, as well as to create an incentive to search properly and thoroughly.

It's a good idea to use only small pieces, and write down where each has been hidden in case they are not all found during the search.

On a more symbolic level, the search for chametz is a warning against the evil inclination. It teaches us to seek for it in hidden places in order to get rid of it and thereby become liberated from its grasps, as the Jews were liberated from the clutches of Egypt.

According to this understanding, the reason we put down pieces of bread while searching for the chametz is to indicate that even if a person has cleansed himself from sin to the best of his ability, he should not boast, "I am purged of sin", since if he were to continue his search he would surely find more "spiritual chametz" of iniquity and pride.

"There is no person so righteous in this world that does only good and never sins." One who deludingly prides himself that he has corrected all his faults can be certain that he's only just begun to uncover his hidden spiritual chametz.

## Passover Immersion

**From: Nate**

*Dear Rabbi,  
I am familiar with the custom to immerse in a mikveh for Shabbat, and also for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. But is there such a custom for Pesach?*

Dear Nate,

The requirement to immerse in a mikveh (ritual bath) in preparation for the festivals is actually stronger than that for Shabbat.

The Sages thus taught (Rosh Hashanah 16), "A person is required to purify himself for the pilgrimage festivals".

The reason for this special requirement of immersion for the festivals is that during the pilgrim festivals, every Jew had to go

up to Jerusalem to appear before G-d in the Holy Temple and partake of the sacrifices. This mitzvah could only take place if a person was in a state of ritual purity.

Even nowadays when we do not bring sacrifices, the Sages still required immersion before the festivals so that we should imagine and desire that the Temple be rebuilt and feel ourselves prepared to fulfill the mitzvah in purity. In fact, doing so is viewed as part of catalyzing the process. When G-d sees our desire and anticipation to fulfill His will as in the Torah, He will hasten the redemption and the rebuilding of His Glorious Abode.

Immersion in preparation for Pesach is particularly apropos. Just as vessels are boiled, purged and purified in the mikveh for use on this holiday of redemption, so too a person prepares himself for redemption on Pesach by perspiring in performance of the *mitzvot*, purging himself of sin and shedding tears through *teshuva* and then immersing himself in the purifying waters of the mikveh.

## Seder White

**From: Harry**

*Dear Rabbi,  
What is the reason for wearing the white kittel at the Seder table on Pesach night? Since we wear our festive best during the prayers, what's the reason for changing into this relatively simple garment for the Seder?*

Dear Harry,

Although it is a mitzvah to adorn oneself on this night with costly garments to demonstrate our liberty, according to the Ashkenazic custom, at the meal it is customary for adult males to wear the simple white robe-like garment called a *kittel* in Yiddish.

One of the reasons for this is that since the dead are buried in white shrouds, wearing this robe reminds one of his mortality and curtails any excessive pride that might result from one's newly-gained "liberty". We find a similar idea regarding eating the hard-boiled egg at the Seder, which is a symbol of mourning and thus a warning against forbidden pride.

Alternatively, these symbols of mourning are related to the fact that Tisha b'Av, the day of mourning over the destruction of the Temple, always occurs on the same day of the week as Pesach.

However, other commentators explain the custom of wearing the *kittel* in a different light. They maintain that there is nothing finer than a plain white garment, for it was thus that the Kohen Gadol, or High Priest, entered the innermost sanctuary on the holiest of days for the most elevated of services – the offering of incense before the holy Ark of the Covenant. On this night, each head of family who celebrates the sacred Seder is like the Kohen Gadol performing the service of G-d in the Holy of Holies!

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

## Jonathan Lenn

Age 35 - Sydney, Australia

University of New South Wales, BA Media Studies; LLb Law

Jonathan's grandparents, after leaving various communities in the Pale of Settlement and then sojourning in Scotland, eventually emigrated to Sydney, Australia. His was a typical Australian traditional Jewish upbringing – Shabbat dinner with the family; kosher-style home; Bar Mitzvah in an Orthodox shul; Jewish primary and secondary schools. But with no compelling spiritual reason to observe the *mitzvot*.

After completing his law degree, Jonathan travelled for two years in Europe and Morocco, ending his trip with a six-month stint in a kibbutz in Israel. Because of his traditional background he sought out Jewish communities wherever he travelled – even in Morocco, where he got invitations for many Shabbat meals from local families. This Shabbat hospitality was a source of fond memories for many years to come.

Back “down under” he got a job as a law clerk for a judge, and then worked for a year as a public defender of Aboriginal People in the Northern Territory of Australia – the Outback — where miles of empty desert seldom saw a white man and probably never a pair of *tefillin* before Jonathan arrived.

The Aboriginal People, former hunters and gatherers living

in a hostile physical environment, developed a highly intricate spiritual life. Perhaps this impelled Jonathan to turn back to his roots and seek out *his* spiritual destiny. He quit his job and came to Israel and yeshiva for a few months, but wasn't yet ready to make a serious commitment. He returned again to Australia and worked in Aboriginal Legal Aid, and later as a criminal lawyer in a private law firm and a lecturer at local universities.

In 2011 he made a decision to change his life and keep the *mitzvot*. He moved back to Israel and entered Ohr Somayach and has been learning ever since. In 2013 he married a young lady from Oklahoma who was studying at a seminary in Jerusalem. In 2014 their daughter Chana Esther was born. The family lives in Har Nof.

He has been in Rabbi Yitzchak Dalah's *shiur* since after Pesach of last year. “I find the *shiur* very challenging, very dynamic and with huge room for growth,” says Jonathan. “I came to Ohr Somayach because of the high quality of the *rebbeim*, the guys and the mix of the “ffbs” and *ba'alei teshuva* – each side has something to learn from the other. I had high expectations that have happily been met.”



## PRAYER Essentials

### Shemoneh Esrei — The Twelfth Blessing

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

*“And for (the heretics and) the slanderers let there be no hope...”*

This blessing was instituted by the Sage Shmuel Hakatan at the time of Rabban Gamliel after the destruction of the Second Temple (Berachot 28a). Including it, there are a total of nineteen blessings, though the official name of this collection of blessings remains “Shemoneh Esrei”, meaning “eighteen”. In this most difficult period after the Temple's destruction Rabban Gamliel was compelled to add this blessing due to the grave danger posed by the heretics and slanderers from among the Jewish People. They were reporting their fellow Jews to the Roman authorities in order to find favor in their eyes, thus risking the lives of many.

Rabbi Yonatan Eibeischutz explains that one should also have in mind the spiritual concept of the destruction of Amalek, thereby fulfilling a positive command to remember what Amalek did as the Jews passed through the desert. They are considered to be the enemies of G-d. And accordingly, it is taught that G-d's Holy Name and Divine throne are incomplete as long as Amalek remains in existence.

#### *An Eternal Truth*

This blessing also addresses those among us who do not believe properly in the Divinity of the Torah, namely, that it is an expression of G-d's wisdom, given to us in the presence of

over three million people directly by G-d. It also includes those that do not believe in the authority given by G-d to the Rabbis to enact rabbinic decrees and interpret the Torah in accordance with the principles by which it is expounded.

There are those among us who rise up and falsely claim authority as so-called “rabbis”, while in the same breath they attempt to uproot all rabbinical authority in order to virtually start a new religion. In the days of old they were called Sadducees and Boethusians, members of Jewish sects that denied the validity of the Oral Law, emphasizing acceptance of only the Written Law.

Today they may call themselves “enlightened Jews” and explain that the Torah is not actually the word of God, but rather the expression of the wise men of old. Likewise, they claim, we are to listen to today's wise men, namely themselves.

We pray that G-d will protect us from the enemies within, that their evil schemes be thwarted, and that G-d will shield us from our external enemies. Our greatest weapon against them, whether they wear a smile or military gear, is our heartfelt prayers to the Almighty. It is taught in the Midrash, in connection with the verse, “The voice is the voice of Yaakov...,” that when we, Yaakov, raise our voices to Heaven, then the sword of Esav becomes powerless.

# Jewish Gastronomy

## *There's Nothing Quite Like It...*

Ask any chef and they will tell you that as far as ingredients go, flour and water may be the basics but they are not exactly the most exciting options around. And yet in the Jewish world, flour and water are perhaps the most anticipated ingredients in the whole year. Why? Because they are the sole components from which matzah is made. Matzah is the special “bread” that is not allowed to rise and leaven, and is eaten throughout Pesach. There are many details that have to be fulfilled so that the matzah that makes it to our Pesach tables is kosher, but the most fundamental feature is that it can only be made with flour and water. Nothing else.

Why just flour and water? Rabbi Moshe Sofer, known by the seminal work that he authored called the “Chatam Sofer” (1762-1839), explains that the importance of matzah is found in the fact that it is completely “spiritual”. No additives. Just pure flour and water that — when mixed together in the correct way — elevates us and draws us upwards to G-d. It is not coincidental that the Sages teach us that both flour and water are essential to our existence. But, if that is case, asks the Chatam Sofer, why don't we eat matzah all year long? If it is so powerful and has the ability to connect us to G-d, surely it would make sense to eat it every single day.

The Chatam Sofer answers that as human beings we are comprised of two disparate parts — a physical part and a spiritual one. On Pesach, which is the beginning of Jewish nationhood and the beginning of our eternal connection to G-d, we eat matzah so that we can internalize what it means to be spiritual and what it means to be the “chosen nation”. But G-d does not want us to remain detached from the physical world, so we prepare ourselves by eating matzah on Pesach so that we will be able to eat regular leavened bread for the rest of the year. Because Pesach is not just about connecting to G-d for a week — it is about remaining connected afterward as well.

But it does not happen by magic. It doesn't just take place without preparation. I remember as a child waiting with the most incredible anticipation for the *matzot* to be delivered to the house a few weeks before Pesach and, after

they arrived, going to look at them constantly, wishing that it was already Pesach so that I could eat them. Even today, many years later, that aura in my mind still exists. The *matzot* arrive and I wait (and wait!) to be able to eat them. I know that flour and water is not normally a very tantalizing combination, but on Pesach it takes on mythological proportions. There really isn't anything that comes close to the taste...and the anticipation. And I truly hope that my children and grandchildren feel that frisson of excitement that I experience each time I look at the boxes of matzah, waiting patiently for Pesach to begin. Why? Because, perhaps the most important dimension of Pesach is passing that incredible sense of anticipation and excitement to the next generations.

Unbelievably, in the impenetrable darkness of the Holocaust in Bergen-Belsen the saintly Rabbi from Bluzhov, Rabbi Yisrael Spira, managed to bake *matzot*. After having managed to grind the wheat and bake the *matzot* without being discovered, he then had to hide them away in a place that they would not be found. And then the Rebbe had to make Solomonic decisions as to whom would get the *matzot* (possibly the most difficult part of the whole process). Logic dictated that they should go to as many of the adults as possible because eating matzah is a Torah obligation and that is what the Bluzhover Rebbe thought to do. Everyone concurred with the Rebbe except for a certain widow. She argued that the children should receive the matzah because they are the future. “If we ever get out of this ‘Egypt’ the children need to have tasted what it means to be a proper Jew!”

The Rebbe was swayed by her eloquence and ruled that, due to their unique situation, the children should be given the matzah.

Who would have thought that two such simple ingredients could have such everlasting repercussions? And yet they do. And that should serve as an impetus to us when we sit at our royal tables this Seder night to try to project to everyone present (yes, ourselves as well) just how excited we are to be eating unadorned, simple flour and water because, as we do so, we are really internalizing the ultimate sign of Jewish spiritual gastronomy!

# Abarbanel

## ON PESACH

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

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### Symbolic Meaning of the Mitzvot of Pesach

The root of the symbolic meaning of the Pesach *mitzvot*, and indeed of all the *mitzvot* in the Torah, lies in the fact that it is the duty of all G-d-fearing individuals to strive to use their time wisely to do what it is good and right. Everyone should understand that the seven decades of the average individual's lifetime are analogous to the seven days of Creation. Just as G-d was engaged for the first six days in creative activity, Man should also use the first six decades of his life for creative and productive interaction with the world. Just as G-d 'rested' on the seventh day, so too should Man withdraw from material pursuits and connect with higher spiritual pursuits in the last decade of his life.

G-d's removal of the Jewish People from Egypt is comparable to childbirth. Just as the fetus emerges from the darkness of the womb into the light of the world at the cost of the severe pains of childbirth, so too the Jewish People had to suffer the tribulations of servitude before emerging as G-d's chosen people. This emergence took place in the springtime, for just as there are four seasons in the natural world, there are four stages in a man's lifetime; our springtime is a time of emergence, growth and maturation into young adulthood, when knowledge, wisdom and understanding sprouts forth.

Unfortunately, this maturation is paralleled by the emergence of our physical and material desires. The prohibition against eating leavened foods (*chametz*) symbolizes our requirement to distance ourselves from these material temptations. For this reason when we bring a sacrificial offering to G-d we may not add leavening or honey, as the leavening represents succumbing to excessive physical temptation, and honey represents the sweetness and pleasure that follows. One is not punished for giving in to negative physical temptation until the age of 13, or the beginning of his fourteenth year. This is symbolized by the total prohibition against eating, owning, or deriving any benefit from leavening which begins on the fourteenth day of the month of Nissan.

The *Mishna* tells us that we are to search for leavened food on the fourteenth of Nissan by the light of a candle, which represents the soul of Mankind, as the verse in Proverbs (20, 27) states, "A man's soul is the candle of G-d." It is our duty to use this candle to search out and eliminate this leavening which symbolizes our negative actions and motivations. However, the flame cannot be so strong as to injure us or burn our homes, nor too weak which would prevent us from finding the leavening in the first place. Our job is to control our relationship with the physical world, not to withdraw from or destroy it. At the same time we must be able to recognize our failings and correct them. The *mitzvah* is to refrain from eating leavening for the entire seven days of the holiday, symbolic of our requirement to control our physical existence for our entire lifespan of seven decades. It is no coincidence that the number seven appears in regard to a wide variety of *mitzvot*:

seven days of wedding celebration, seven days of ritual impurity, seven days of mourning, the seven-year agricultural cycle, and others as well.

On the first and last days of Pesach, *melacha*, or creative activity, is prohibited. The first day represents the beginning of one's life, before he is capable of creative interaction with the world, and the last day represents the last decade of one's life, when one tends to withdraw from the material world and focus on fulfilling one's spiritual goals. However, the middle decades, like the middle days of the holidays, connect us actively to the material world, and refraining from leavening reminds us to take care to manage our relationship with the physical world properly.

The matzah that we eat must be completely pure and free of any trace of leavening. Furthermore, we must guard the flour from any contact with moisture which might result in leavening from the time that the wheat is ground. This symbolizes that Man must protect his spiritual essence from the time that he begins to surround himself with the 'daily grind' of worldly affairs and the quest for his daily sustenance. We are also commanded to eat the matzah with bitter herbs in order to symbolize that for the sake of our spiritual essence we may have to endure a measure of bitterness and pain in our physical existence.

The Pesach sacrifice also represents the triumph of Man's spiritual essence over the physical, as eating it at night, which symbolizes death, alludes to the freeing of the soul from the body. Eating it with a group alludes to the groups of friends and relatives who come to mourn the deceased. Finally, it can only be eaten roasted, since the aroma of roasted meat is swiftly dispersed, which alludes to the transient nature of physical existence.

What is clearly apparent is that the holiday of Pesach hints at Man's creation, his lifespan, the conquest of his evil inclination, the pain associated with his physical existence and the eventual fulfillment of his goal of spiritual connection to G-d. This is why the holiday is described as applying to all generations. We are taught in the Talmud that everyone at the Pesach Seder should view himself as if he were actually part of the Exodus from Egypt. This means much more than imagining oneself to be present at an historical event. Rather, it is the root of all the holidays and *mitzvot* of the entire Torah, as this injunction refers to the struggles and obligations over the entire lifespan of an individual.

After Pesach we are commanded to count seven weeks, culminating in the giving of the Torah at the holiday of Shavout. This is another reference to the seven decades of Man's life, all of which should be directed to attaining the spiritual perfection which the nation experienced at the giving of the Torah at Sinai. It was fitting that G-d arranged this when the Jews shed the shackles of Egyptian idolatry and were thus prepared to receive the truth of the Torah at Sinai.

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# PARSHA Q&A

## TAZRIA

1. When does a woman who has given birth to a son go to the *mikveh*?
2. After a woman gives birth, she is required to offer two types of offerings. Which are they?
3. What animal does the woman offer as a *chatat*?
4. Which of these offerings makes her *tahor* (ritual purity)?
5. Which of the sacrifices does the woman offer first, the *olah* or the *chatat*?
6. Who determines whether a person is a *metzora tamei* (person with ritually impure *tzara'at*) or is *tahor*?
7. If the *kohen* sees that the *tzara'at* has spread after one week, how does he rule?
8. What disqualifies a *kohen* from being able to give a ruling in a case of *tzara'at*?
9. Why is the appearance of *tzara'at* on the tip of one of the 24 "limbs" that project from the body usually unable to be examined?
10. On which days is a *kohen* not permitted to give a ruling on *tzara'at*?

## METZORA

1. When may a *metzora* not be pronounced *tahor*?
2. In the *midbar*, where did a *metzora* dwell while he was *tamei*?
3. Why does the *metzora* require birds in the purification process?
4. In the purification process of a *metzora*, what does the cedar wood symbolize?
5. During the purification process, the *metzora* is required to shave his hair. Which hair must he shave?
6. What is unique about the *chatat* and the *asham* offered by the *metzora*?
7. In the *Beit Hamikdash*, when the *metzora* was presented "before G-d" (14:11), where did he stand?
8. Where was the *asham* of the *metzora* slaughtered?
9. How was having *tzara'at* in one's house sometimes advantageous?
10. When a house is suspected as having *tzara'at*, what is its status prior to the inspection by a *kohen*?

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## Answers to Tazria and Metzora's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

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## TAZRIA

1. 12:2 - At the end of seven days.
2. 12:6 - An *olah* and a *chatat*.
3. 12:6 - A *tor* (turtle dove) or a *ben yona* (young pigeon).
4. 12:7 - The *chatat*.
5. 12:8 - The *chatat*.
6. 13:2 - A *kohen*.
7. 13:5 - The person is *tamei*.
8. 13:12 - Poor vision.
9. 13:14 - The *tzara'at* as a whole must be seen at one time. Since these parts are angular, they cannot be seen at one time.
10. 13:14 - During the festivals; and ruling on a groom during the seven days of feasting after the marriage.

## METZORA

1. 14:2 - At night.
2. 14:3 - Outside the three camps.
3. 14:4 - *Tzara'at* comes as a punishment for *lashon hara*. Therefore, the Torah requires the *metzora* to offer birds, who chatter constantly, to atone for his sin of chattering.
4. 14:4 - The cedar is a lofty tree. It alludes to the fact that *tzara'at* comes as a punishment for haughtiness.
5. 14:9 - Any visible collection of hair on the body.
6. 14:10 - They require *n'sachim* (drink offerings).
7. 14:11 - At the gate of Nikanor.
8. 14:13 - On the northern side of the *mizbe'ach*.
9. 14:34 - The Amorites concealed treasures in the walls of their houses. After the conquest of the Land, *tzara'at* would afflict these houses. The Jewish owner would tear down the house and find the treasures.
10. 14:36 - It is *tahor*.

## The Ten Plagues

*It is a positive mitzva from the Torah to speak about the miracles and wonders that were done to our ancestors in Mitzrayim on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan.*

- Rambam, Hilchot Chametz U'matzah 7:1

It is incumbent on the leader of the Seder to discuss the miracles that G-d performed for us in Mitzrayim. Since the retelling of the ten plagues is perhaps an appropriate way to fulfill this mitzvah, it would be suitable to study the deeper ideas behind their essence. While there are many questions behind the nature of the ten plagues, there are two fundamental questions that need clarification. Firstly, why did G-d bring exactly *ten* plagues? After all, once Pharaoh refused to let the Jewish People go, G-d could have flattened Mitzrayim with one mighty blow. What then is the rationale behind ten different plagues? Furthermore, even if we comprehend the motive behind the number of plagues, we still need to understand the reason behind G-d's choice of bringing these specific plagues. After all, G-d had many forces at His disposal to destroy Mitzrayim. What made these specific ten plagues most fitting for destroying Mitzrayim?

The Mishna in Avot says that G-d created the natural world through ten sayings (Avot 5:1). The Ohr Gedalyahu explains that with each saying of creation, G-d, so to speak, created a mask for Himself. Each saying gave another layer to the natural laws of the world that hide G-d. However, each of the ten plagues, by altering that part of nature, removed one of these masks and showed that G-d is behind each and every one. Through the ten plagues G-d wanted to show the world once and for all that He is the driving force behind everything. This is the reason why the ten sayings of creation parallel the ten plagues exactly.

ii The following is the breakdown according to the Maharal:iii

SAYINGS OF CREATION IN THE BOOK OF BERESHET	THE TEN PLAGUES IN THE BOOK OF SHEMOT	CONNECTION
1:1 In the beginning	12:29 Death of firstborn	There is a parallel theme of beginning.
1:3 G-d said, 'Let there be light'	10:22 Darkness	The opposite of light is darkness.
1:26 G-d said, 'Let there be Firmament'	9:23 Hail	G-d made the firmament and now commanded unnatural hail (mix of fire and ice) to rain down from it.
1:9 G-d said, 'Let the waters gather and let the earth appear'	8:13 Lice	G-d revealed the earth and now the dust of earth transformed into lice, as it says: <i>G-d said to Moshe, 'Tell Aharon, stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land and it shall become lice throughout the land of Egypt.'</i> (Shemot 8:12)
1:11 G-d said, 'Let the earth bring forth vegetation'	10:13 Locust	The locusts ate the vegetation. (Even though the plague of hail also destroyed vegetation, locusts <i>only</i> destroyed vegetation, while hail also killed animals.)
1:14 G-d said, 'Let there be luminaries'	9:6 Epidemic	The luminaries affect the state of the air that we breathe which can cause an epidemic. (See Maharal)
1:20 G-d said, 'Let the water sprout forth living creatures'	8:2 Frogs	G-d created creatures that came from water; now frogs came in excess out of water

*Continued on page eighteen*

# OHRNET Pesach Special

The Ten Plagues continued from page seventeen

SAYINGS OF CREATION IN THE BOOK OF BERESHET	THE TEN PLAGUES IN THE BOOK OF SHEMOT	CONNECTION
1:24 G-d said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures'	8:20 Wild animals	G-d created living creatures on earth and now those animals came in excess and attacked in an unnatural manner.
1:26 G-d said, 'Let us make man'	9:10 Boils	The plague of boils was the only one that affected man's body so directly. Also man was made in the image of G-d and the boils tainted that spiritual idea.
1:29 G-d said, 'Behold I have given vegetation... for food to eat'	7:20 Transformation of water to blood	Food of Egypt depended on the Nile and nutrients of food are transported through blood.

Based on the above we can answer the questions with which we began. The purpose of the ten plagues was to show that G-d is the One Who is behind every force of nature. For this reason the plagues paralleled the ten sayings of creation that created the mask of nature. This is precisely why *ten* plagues were necessary. Additionally, this is why these specific plagues were chosen. Each plague was another glimpse behind the mask of nature, ultimately demonstrating G-d's providence behind every part of creation.

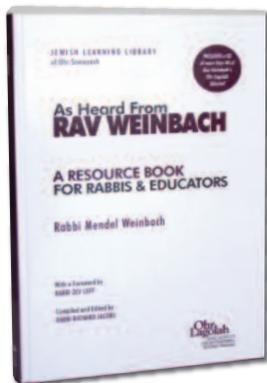
<sup>i</sup> See Shem M'Shmuel, Va'era 5678

<sup>ii</sup> Ohr Gedalyahu, Parshat Bo

<sup>iii</sup> Maharal, Gevurot Hashem, 57, the reason why they don't match up in order is because the plagues had to be in order of intensity, going from lowest to highest. See Ohr Gedalyahu to Parshat Bo for a different reason for the difference in order. See also the Haggadah called 'Ma'aseh Nissim' that similarly points out the parallel between the plagues and "the sayings of creation".

<sup>iv</sup> See the Gemara in Rosh Hashana 32a that says that "Bereishet" is one of the sayings of creation.

<sup>v</sup> The Alshich (Torat Moshe to Shemot 34:17-18) points out further that the plague of the firstborn was done directly through G-d as opposed to intermediaries. As it says in the Haggadah: *I (G-d) will pass through the land of Egypt, I and not an angel; I will smite all the firstborn, I and not a seraph; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments I and not a messenger; I am G-d, it is I and no other.* This parallels the first saying of creation when there was nothing besides G-d, as angels were only created on the second day. (Rashi to Ber. 1:5 quoting Ber. Rabbah 3:8)



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BY RABBI CHAIM GROSS

# GREAT WEALTH

**B**efore leaving Egypt, Moshe was instructed by G-d to tell the Children of Israel to request silver and gold vessels from the Egyptians (Ex. 11:2). Miraculously, the Egyptians agreed to this. The Jews took these riches with them when they eventually departed.

This was not a new idea, since more than 400 years earlier G-d had promised Avraham this in the “Covenant of Parts” (*brit ben habetarim*). Avraham’s offspring would be enslaved for hundreds of years by another nation, and when the servitude would be over, Avraham’s offspring would leave with “great wealth” (Gen. 15:14).

In fact the Talmud (Ber. 9a) adds that when Moshe was asked by G-d to tell the nation to request riches from the Egyptians, he did so in a manner of “pleading”, lest Avraham (in the Heavenly realm) say to G-d that “You fulfilled Your promise of enslaving them, but You did not fulfill Your promise that they would leave with riches and wealth”. Why was this *material* acquisition such an important element of the Exodus that it was guaranteed from the original prophecy and so insisted upon at the end?

There was a possibility that leaving Egypt would be taken by the people to be a new start, a new dawn, a wiping clean of the old slate. The countless years of servitude were painful and perhaps best forgotten. Now they could forward to a better, brighter future. Look ahead, no need to look back.

However, to have adopted such an attitude would have been a travesty, for invaluable lessons were learned from

the experience in Egypt. The nation saw that however bad circumstances could get, the nation would still survive. They clung onto a promise of redemption, which was ultimately fulfilled with an entrenched national *emuna* (faith) in G-d. They saw that the Egyptians were eventually punished with the miraculous Ten Plagues, which showed G-d’s mastery over the world. They learned the benefit of hanging onto key facets of their Jewish identity, which the Midrash relates was the merit in which they were redeemed.

In fact, the Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehuda Loew) writes that the Egyptian experience was far from a dispensable obstruction. On the contrary, it was the necessary backdrop for the birth of the nation.

Hundreds of years earlier, Avraham was concerned that the “Egyptian experience” would be only negative for his descendants. A forecast of slavery and suffering with no clear purpose would have been without meaning. He hoped that the bitter experiences would ultimately be productive.

G-d was actually promising Avraham that the Jews would leave Egypt with a national experience that they could build on for the rest of time, a promise that He eventually carried out. That was a great spiritual inheritance. The physical wealth was not an end in itself. It was actually a physical reminder of the fact that they were not leaving either physically or spiritually empty-handed. It had not been a pointless experience. It was in fact the unforgettable circumstances in which a nation was born.

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Rav Bulman *zt'l*  
on the  
Torah Portion of the Week

# Just Kidding?

One of the main purposes of Seder night is to learn the depths of the miracles that G-d did for us when He took us out of Egypt – G-d’s strength, His ability to change nature at will, and His eternal love for the Jewish People. These themes resonate throughout the entire Hagadah, including the songs at the very end.

At first, “*Chad Gadya*” seems reminiscent of a nursery rhyme. But if we reflect on its meaning for a few moments we can see hidden depths.

The Midrash at the end of Parshat Noach quotes a fascinating conversation between Avraham and Nimrod. When initially challenged to worship fire, Avraham responds that it would be better to worship water that extinguishes fire. Nimrod then invites Avraham to worship water, and Avraham counters that it would make more sense to worship the clouds that bring the water. When subsequently requested to worship the clouds, Avraham’s rejoinder is that really the wind which carries the clouds would be more worthy. The discussion continues in this vein until, having had enough, Nimrod has Avraham cast into a burning furnace.

*Chad Gadya* follows a similar pattern.

*One kid (goat).* One kid. That daddy bought for two zuzim. One kid. One kid.

And came *the cat* and ate the kid that daddy bought for two zuzim. One kid. One kid.

And came *the dog* and bit the cat that ate the kid etc. etc. until...

... And came *The Holy One Blessed be He* and killed the angel of death that killed the slaughterer that killed the ox that drank the water that doused the fire that hit the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that daddy bought for two

zuzim. One kid. One kid.

Except that this time the conversation is between the Egyptians and Jewish People.

The Egyptians worshipped the lamb and the goat. This is one of the reasons why the *Korban Pesach* had to be one of these two animals. In the year of the Exodus, when the Jewish People set aside the animals for the offering, they tied them to their bedsteads and left them there for several days in order to check for blemishes. Passing Egyptians would ask what the bleating sound was, and they would be informed that the kid (their deity) had been set aside as an offering. When the actual offering was made it had to be roasted. This rich succulent aroma would spread through the town, pervading the Egyptians’ homes. There was no avoiding the fact that the animal the Egyptians served was being offered to the Hebrews’ G-d.

Instead of succumbing to the Egyptian pressure to serve their idols, the Jewish People pointed out that the cat was their predator and as such it was more worthy of service. The cat itself was another Egyptian deity, and the Jewish People were invited to worship it. The discussion repeated itself, passing through dog, fire, water, ox, man (slaughterer) — finally reaching the *malach hamavet* (angel of death). At this point the Jewish People argued that if the Egyptians were going to worship the angel of death, it was more fitting to serve G-d. It was more fitting to believe that “He does, has done and will do”, and that He rewards those who keep His commandments and punishes those who transgress.

*Chad Gadya.* This song too commemorates that on Seder night, the night of the Exodus, G-d took His people out from the servitude of the most powerful nation on Earth and elevated them to receive the Torah.

The Ohr Somayach family wishes  
you a Chag Kasher v’Somayach.

מַנְעִי נֶסֶךְ עֵין

# Pesach Q&A

## Q

1. What is the holiday of Pesach called in the Torah?
2. Why did our ancestors carry dough when they left Egypt?
3. Where is there a hint in the Torah to the four cups of wine we drink at the Seder?
4. What do we do on Pesach Eve to remember the Korban Pesach?
5. What do these numbers represent – 10, 50 / 40, 200 / 50, 250?
6. How many mornings on Pesach do we say the entire Hallel?
7. How do we refer to Pesach in our *kiddush* and in our *tefillot*?
8. What are the three prohibitions regarding *chametz*?
9. When is the eating of matza obligatory according to the Torah?
10. What was the date of the crossing of Yam Suf?
11. How many days of Chol Hamo'ed are there in Eretz Israel and elsewhere?
12. Is there any limit to what may be done during Chol Hamo'ed?
13. How many times do we wash our hands during the Seder?
14. What cannot be done after eating the *afikomen*?
15. Why do we recline when drinking wine and eating matza?
16. What unusual thing do we do to stimulate children to ask questions?
17. What is the meaning of *datzach, adash, beachav*?
18. Who are the four sons alluded to in the Torah as requiring us to inform them regarding Pesach?
19. What is the meaning of *Dayenu* that we sing?
20. What is the Torah term on which the word Haggadah is based?

## A

1. *Chag Hamatzot* (The Festival of Matzot).
2. They left in such a hurry that there was no time for the dough to rise.
3. The four expressions of redemption found in *Shemot* / Exodus 6:6-7.
4. Place a shankbone or other piece of meat on the Seder plate.
5. The number of plagues with which the Egyptians were smitten in Egypt and at the Sea according to three different Sages.
6. One morning in Eretz Israel and two everywhere else.
7. *Zman Cheiruteinu* (The Season of Our Freedom).
8. To eat, to benefit from and to possess.
9. On the first night of the holiday at the Seder.
10. The seventh day of Pesach – the 21st day of the month of Nisan.
11. In Eretz Israel 5 days and elsewhere only 4.
12. Definitely! Study the laws or consult a rabbi.
13. Twice - once before dipping *karpas* into salt water and once before eating matza. (A third time is *mayim achronim* before saying *birkat hamazon* – Grace after meals.)
14. We cannot eat nor drink wine.
15. In order to express our sense of nobility as free men.
16. We dip a vegetable in salt water before saying the Haggadah.
17. These are acronyms formed by the first letters of the ten plagues.
18. The wise son, the wicked one, the simple one and the one who does not know how to ask.
19. "It would have sufficed for us" – a reference to all the stages of benevolence which G-d granted us.
20. "*Vehegadeta levincha* – And you shall relate to your child" (*Shemot* 13:8).

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