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Freedom Food

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

In the Seder, at the beginning of Magid we lift up the matzah and say: “*Hah lachma anya*” “This is the ___ that we ate in Egypt.” If you were asked to fill in the blank, what would you say? Most likely you would say “the bread of affliction”. This is the translation given in most English *Haggadot*, from Maxwell House to ArtScroll. However, according to the Maharal in his commentary on the Haggada this could not be more mistaken. He explains it to mean: “poor bread”. What’s the difference? Everything.

“*Lechem oni*”, “poor bread”, is in contrast to *matzah ashira*, or “rich matzah”. *Matzah ashira* has additives such as oil, honey, eggs or fruit juice, or, as I remember as a youngster, even a chocolate glaze. *Lechem oni* has no added ingredients. It is only flour and water. It is “essential bread”.

The Maharal explains that Pesach is the holiday that celebrates our freedom from slavery, and that matzah is symbolic of this progression which we relive on Seder night. Why, asks the Maharal, would the Festival of our Freedom, which the Torah calls *Chag Hamatzot*, celebrate the bread of slavery? Why would we be commanded to eat the bread of slavery for seven days? Why would the holiday that celebrates the emancipation of the Jewish People from Egyptian bondage and is a paradigm for all future redemptions be symbolized by the bread of slaves? The answer according to the Maharal is that it doesn’t. Matzah is not the “bread of slavery”. Rather, it is the symbol of our *freedom* from slavery.

He proves this point by noting that there is nothing in the Written Torah, Midrash, Mishna, Gemara or any Tanaitic or Amoritic source that says that we ate *matzah* in Egypt, except on the day on which G-d commanded us to — the day we left Egypt. Any commentary about

our Egyptian overlords feeding us matzah because it takes a long time to digest, thereby saving them money, is a much later invention without any textual support.

Why is matzah the symbol of freedom? Like the matzah, which has no additives, the person who is freest is the one who has no material possessions weighing him down. He can go where he wants, when he wants. He is, in a sense, footloose and fancy free. The rich man is weighed down by his possessions. They restrict his freedom of movement since he has to protect and care for them. They cause him worry. As our Sages teach, “*Marbeh nechasim, marbeh da’agah*” — the more property that a person has, his level of worry increases.” (*Pirkei Avot* 2:8)

There are different levels of poverty. There is the needy man (*dal*), and there is the poor man (*oni*), who, while he has no material possessions, is not needy. G-d provided our food in the desert. We didn’t have to worry about preparing it every day or night. We had no need to build homes in the desert. G-d provided *succot* (booths) for us to dwell in, which were sufficient because the temperature and the weather were always favorable. We had no need to pack suitcases full of clothing — our clothing never needed laundering. One change of clothes and one pair of shoes were enough for 40 years. They grew with us and stayed fresh and laundered.

The matzah was also baked and commanded to be eaten *b’chipazon* — quickly. According to the Maharal this means “in no time”. Thus, the matzah represents our freedom not just from materiality, but also from time itself. Matzah set the Jewish Nation on its path to eternity. Being outside of time. Ultimate freedom.

TZAV

A Burning Sensation

“...Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the Torah of the Olah: it is the elevation-offering that stays on the flame... and the flame of the Altar should be kept aflame on it.” (13:17)

Korbanot — animal sacrifices — don’t make sense. How can the offering of an animal on the Altar be atonement for our wrongdoing?

The Ramban explains that the essence of a *korban* is that the offender should watch the *shechita* of the *korban* and think: “That should be me!”

It is his neck that really should be feeling the slaughterer’s knife, and only through G-d’s great mercy is the wrongdoer allowed to substitute the body of an animal for that of his own.

But it doesn’t stop there. This feeling must also lead the offender to repentance, to turn aside from his wrongdoing and mend his ways.

This idea is hinted to in the Torah text:

...Command Aharon and his sons, saying,” — meaning that they should say to every Jew who brings a *korban*, “This is the Torah of the elevation-offering...” — this is the essence and the purpose of the *korban* — that “it (*can also be translated as ‘he’*) is the elevation-offering” — he should see himself as though everything being done to the *korban* should really be done to him.

“And the flame of the Altar should be kept aflame on it (*him*).” In other words, the flame should be kept burning his body, but G-d in His Mercy accepts the *korban* as a substitute.

• Sources: HaDrash V’ha’Iyun in Mayana shel Torah

SHEMINI

No Partnership

“And Aharon was silent...” (10:3)

Every silence says something. When the Torah says that “Aharon was silent” after his two sons were consumed by fire for bringing a *korban* that was not instructed by G-d, it implies that he had something to say, but restrained himself.

What could Aharon have said in defense of his sons’ flagrant breach of the Torah?

The Midrash Pliah remarks, “What could he (Aharon) have said? ‘And on the eighth day he shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin.’”

How would have *brit mila* been a defense?

The spiritual masters teach that Man was born uncircumcised to emphasize that just as Man must complete his body, to finish the work of Heaven and circumcise himself, so too must Man partner with G-d and use his own initiative to raise the world to perfection.

Nadav and Aviahu, Aharon’s sons, thought that they

should use their own input in the service of G-d, and believed that it was right to bring a human fire on the altar, even though fire descended from Heaven.

And strictly speaking they were correct, as it says: “And the sons of Aharon the priest shall put fire on the altar” (Vayikra 1:7) — even though fire descends from Heaven there is a *mitzvah* to bring a man-made fire.” (Yoma 21b)

Thus, Aharon could have claimed that just as *brit mila* is given for us to partner with Heaven, so too the fire from Heaven needed a human counterpart.

In reality though, the claim does not hold water.

Even though, on a regular basis, there is a *mitzvah* to bring man-made fire, on this day, the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan, where the descent of Heavenly fire was to indicate the resting of the Divine Presence on the Mishkan, there was no place for man’s participation. Therefore, the fire was called “a strange fire”, since the resting of the Divine Presence tolerates no partnership.

• Sources: Yeshu’ut Malko by the Kutna Rebbe as seen in Mayana shel Torah

TAZRIA-METZORA

Foggy Spectacles

“When a leprous blemish will be in a person he shall be brought to the kohen” (13:9)

A well-known *ba’al mussar* (ethics master) once began a *shiur* thus: “I was seventeen the first time I learned *Orchot Tzadikim*. The first two chapters of *Orchot Tzadikim* deal with the negative aspects of the character trait known as “pride”. I thought to myself, ‘Well, I don’t have that problem. I can skip to chapter three.’ It took me until I was twenty-three to realize what a true *ba’al ga’avah* (haughty person) I was.”

Truth be told, we are all legends in our own lunchtimes, so to speak. “The world is full of flawed individuals — but I’m not one of them. It’s true I’m not perfect, but there’s

really nothing wrong with me.”

And it’s not because we are lying to ourselves. We genuinely believe that we’re okay. It’s just that our eyesight fails when turned inward. Thus, if we really want to know what’s wrong with us we have to trust constructive criticism from those who know and care for us.

“When a leprous blemish will be in a person, he shall be brought to the kohen.”

The verse doesn’t specify what kind of “person” we are referring to here. Meaning, when a leprous blemish will be in a person — even if that person himself is a *kohen* — it shall be brought to the *kohen*, for he himself will never see the blemish.

• Source: Talelei Orot continued on page three

ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM

Doing and Guarding

“...My judgments you shall do, and My decrees you shall guard.” (13:17)

When speaking about judgments (*mishpatim*), the Torah says, “you shall do,” but when referring to the decrees (*chukim*) it says “you shall guard”.

Why does the Torah change the verb?

The Rambam in chapter six of “*Shmoneh Perakim*” says that Sages of the Talmud consider that someone whose personality inclines him to sin, and yet he controls his urge, is on a higher level than someone who tends to the good, whereas “philosophers” maintain that someone who is naturally disposed to the good is on a higher than someone whose nature is drawn to sin but refrains from doing so.

He goes on to say that *both* are true.

When it comes to the commandments of Torah that one’s intellect would anyway oblige, such as stealing and murder, it’s true that a person who has no negative tendency is on a higher level. However, when it comes to the Torah’s supra-logical commandments — the *chukim* — then someone who would like to transgress, but doesn’t, is on a higher level.

We see this in the words of the Sages: Don’t say “I can’t stand pork,” rather say, “I could certainly eat it, but what can I do? My Father in Heaven forbids it.”

“My judgments,” the ‘logical’ commandments “*you shall do*,” even though you would instinctively do them anyway, “*and My decrees you will guard*,” merely because of the Torah’s command.

• Sources: *Ba’al Kitzur Shuchan Aruch*, *Aperion*, as seen in *Talelei Orot*

PARSHA Overview

TZAV

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burned 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

On 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 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

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TALMUD Tips

Bava Batra 74 - 108

Fire Insurance

Rav Yehuda said: All who separate from the words of the Torah are consumed by fire, as is written (in Yechezkel 15:7): And I shall set My countenance against them; from the fire they have emerged, and the fire will devour them.

When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Bavel he said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Anyone who separates himself from the words of Torah falls into gehinnom, as it is written (in Mishlei 21:): A person who strays from the path of understanding (the Torah) will rest in the congregation of 'refaim' (gehinnom).

Although these two statements sound virtually identical, the Maharsha explains that they refer to two completely different situations, and convey separate messages.

The first teaching refers to two people who were learning together, but then inexplicably ceased learning Torah. At first they were "heating each other up with the fire of Torah" and "no other fire can consume fire". But if they neglect the importance of Torah study, and interrupt each other from their Torah study, they lose the special protective nature of their Torah study. This will result in their likely falling victim to their inclinations that entice them to transgress the Torah, and be subject to punishment (being consumed by fire of idolatry and the like). The plural wording of the verse in Yechezkel indicates that this message refers to a situation of (at least) two people.

The second teaching, however, is stated in the singular, and is also based on a verse that is in the singular. It refers to an individual who is learning Torah and teaches the effect that his separation from Torah study has on his nature. In this case he separates from Torah study on his own initiative, and not as the result of being persuaded by another Torah student, as in the first case. This case is worse. And as an immediate result of this decision, he is not merely tempted to transgress, but has already substantially lowered his spiritual stature to the point that he has "fallen into gehinnom."

• Bava Batra 79a

Which Theft is Worse?

Rabbi Levi said, "Stealing from a person is worse than stealing from 'Gevoha' (from G-d, meaning stealing property that was sanctified and dedicated for the use and needs of the Beit Hamikdash), because in former case chet (sin) precedes me'ilah (theft via benefit), whereas in the latter case me'ilah precedes chet."

The Rashbam cites the verses in the Torah that relate to theft from a person and to theft from *hekdesh*, showing that the order of the words *chet* and *me'ilah* are switched in the two cases. He states that *chet* appears first in a "personal" case, indicating that the thief is called a "*choteh*" (sinner) as soon as he denies the act of unlawful taking of personal property. When it comes to *hekdesh*, however, the word *chet* is mentioned in the verse only after the word *me'ilah*, indicating that the person is not called a *choteh* even after taking the *hekdesh* and denying having taken it — until he uses it and receives benefit from it.

A somewhat different explanation, based on an established Torah principle, can be applied to account for the difference in these two cases in the following manner. Taking the property of another person is considered as theft from that person as soon as the stolen object is removed by the thief from the domain of the victim. However, if one steals property that is *hekdesh*, it is considered as still being "in the domain of *hekdesh*", since "it is in the treasury of G-d wherever it may be". Therefore, it is not viewed as a true act of theft when it is taken. Rather, it is only truly considered "stolen" after it is taken, when the thief actually uses it to receive benefit. (Maharsha)

Calibrating the Scale

Rav Yehuda said in the name of the Sage Rav, "It is forbidden for one to have in his home a dishonest weight, even if he is only using it for personal use."

This statement is cited as halacha in Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 231:3 & 4. Please see there for the details regarding this halacha, especially the exceptions to the rule, which are also taught in our *sugya*. The basic principle for these teachings is the Torah verse that enlightens us to be careful to use only correct mea-

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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 which 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, whose climate 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 which it was transferred to Shiloh.

TALMUD TIPS *continued from page four*

asures: You shall not commit a perversion of justice with measures, weights or liquid measures. You shall have true scales, true weights; a true *ephah*, and a true *hin*. I am the L-rd, your G-d, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (*Vayikra 19:35-6*)

• *Bava Batra 89b*

Which Wine is Better — Red or White?

“If you offered such to your supervisor, would he be pleased and would he show favor to you?” (*Prophet Malachi 1:8*)

This verse is cited on our *daf* as the reason why certain types of wines are unfit to be used as *nesachim* — wine libations that were poured into the Altar as part of certain communal services in the Beit Hamikdash. We are taught that anything unfit as a gift to a human ruler is considered unfit as an offering to Heaven.

Examples of an unfit wine are one with a bad odor, or wine that was left uncovered, thereby presenting a concern that a snake may have put its venom into it.

Another wine disqualified for use in *nesachim* is white

wine. This is based on a passage in Proverbs (23:31), where King Solomon offers advice for avoid the danger of intoxication, “Look not upon the wine when it is red.” This implies that red wine is generally of better quality than white wine, and is more likely to have a greater intoxicating impact. This makes it more suitable as *nesachim*.

This is one of the reasons why red wine is preferred for the four cups of the Pesach Seder unless white wine of better quality is available. (Other reasons can be found in “Red Wine” by Rabbi Yirmiyahu Ullman at ohr.edu/holidays/pesach/laws_and_customs/5123)

• *Bava Batra 97b*

A Fair Division

Shmuel says, “They must be ‘*metzamzem*’ (lit., withdraw from what they have).”

Our *sugya* deals with a case where two brothers divided their father’s estate which they inherited. After the division, if a third brother shows up and claims his fair share, what is done?

Whereas Rav rules to redo the lottery, and ignore the original division between the two brothers, Shmuel rules in a different manner. He says to be “*metzamtzem*”, meaning that the first two brothers should be “frugal” and withdraw

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BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Tzav

The Purpose of the Peace-Offerings

“This is the law of the feast peace-offering...If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering, he shall offer with the feast thanksgiving offering unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil. With loaves of leavened bread he shall bring his offering, with his feast thanksgiving peace-offering. From it he shall offer one from each kind of offering, a portion to G-d; it shall belong to the *kohen* who throws the blood of the peace-offering. And the meat...must be eaten on the day of its offering...If his feast-offering is for a vow or a donation, it must be eaten on the day he offered his feast-offering; and on the next day, what is left over may be eaten... (Leviticus 7:11-16)

There are two types of peace-offerings. The first is referred to as the thanksgiving-offering. Here, individuals are thanking G-d for what He has done for the Jewish nation, such as giving us the Land of Israel and intervening miraculously throughout our history. The other is referred to as a vow, or a donation. Here, G-d is being asked to intervene on one's behalf for his benefit. The first type refers to gratitude for the past while the second refers to asking G-d for His assistance and blessings in the future.

To express gratitude, the individual prepares a festive meal along with the offering. The animal's innards are burnt on the altar and are considered symbolic of the individual's thoughts. A portion is then given to the *kohanim*, who also thank G-d for the blessings that they have received as well. If it is an offering as a prayer for future blessings, the *kohanim* also participate in asking for future blessings. Once the *kohanim* have received their share, those who brought the offering have a right to their share.

The peace-offerings are comprised of cattle, sheep or goats, as well as the finest wheat flour, olive oil and wine, which are the finest of the liquids. All of these are connected to the special bounty of the Land of Israel which is dependent on G-d's blessing.

The priests receive the meat from the chest and legs, which are considered the choicest parts of the animal. The joyous nature of these offerings is also indicated by the other foods that accompany them, such as the loaves of leavened bread. These additional items are not mentioned in regard to the vow or donation offerings, which were intended to beseech G-d for future blessings, as rejoicing over past blessings is very different from requesting the continuation of these blessings in the future.

Shemini

Kosher Foods

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.

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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

Post-Birth Offerings

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.”

Metzora

A Spiritual Disease with a Spiritual Cure

In Parshas Tazria Abarbanel emphasized that the affliction of *tzara’at* was the physical manifestation of a spiritual imbalance in the individual which resulted from his transgressions. These physical symptoms create a state of *tumah*, or ritual contamination, which can be “transmitted” to others. It is nothing like a natural infectious disease where the physical symptoms are transmitted to others. Rather, what is transmitted is not a physical disease, but, rather, a state of ritual contamination. We are warned not to come in contact with such an individual, as the Torah warns us, “...you shall not contaminate your soul, your inner essence...” (Leviticus 11:44) Normal infectious diseases harm the body but not our inner essence.

This explains why an individual afflicted with *tzara’at* does not consult a physician. He deals only with the *kohanim*, who are the experts in dealing with ritual contamination. Only they are entrusted with the ability to declare an object or a person ritually contaminated or ritually pure.

Parshat Metzora begins with a detailed description of the ritual purification process required to restore the individual to a state of spiritual balance. Since his condition of *tzara’at* resulted from transgressions, one dimension of the process was to bring sacrificial offerings to atone for them, whether they were accidental or purposeful transgressions. This is necessary since the foundation of our religious faith and understanding is that everything that happens to a member of the Jewish nation is a result of Divine Providence, in order “...to grant to each man according to his ways and the consequences of his deeds.” (Jeremiah 32:19) Thus, each afflicted individual will understand that his behavior was the source of his affliction. After having brought the offerings for the intentional and unintentional transgressions, whether or not he was aware of them, he then brings the elevation-offering, which was totally consumed on the Altar, to demonstrate his renewed connection to G-d.

The Torah then describes in detail how the *kohen* applies blood from the guilt-offering to the right ear, the right thumb and the right big toe of the afflicted individual. He then places oil on the same areas, and applies oil to the head as well. Abarbanel explains that the main reason for this ritual was to impress upon us that the true cure was Divine; purely the result of repentance and proper performance of the commandments. The individual had no need whatsoever for natural medical interventions and treatments. Actually, in order to emphasize the purely Divine nature of the cure, the “treatments” of the *kohen* were exactly the opposite of what doctors would normally do. Normal medical practices involved blood-letting. Here the *kohen* does not extract any blood. Rather, he ritually places blood on those areas where the symptoms first appeared. Similarly, the oil teaches us that, unlike accepted medical practice, it is not necessary to empty excess fluid. Rather, we place oil on the individual to emphasize again the miraculous nature of the cure. Finally, whatever oil remains is

Continued on page sixteen

Remembering Yetziat Mitzrayim

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

The Torah commands us to remember *yetziat Mitzrayim* every day and night. Additionally we see many *mitzvot* such as Shabbat and the *Mo'adim* that are in remembrance of *yetziat Mitzrayim*. Finally, more specifically, on the night of Pesach we are told to expound on the miracles that G-d performed as He took us out of Mitzrayim. It is incumbent upon us to try to understand why remembering *yetziat Mitzrayim* and its miracles play such an important role in Judaism.

To begin, we need to delve deeper into the lessons behind the ten plagues. The Torah tells us that G-d created the world with ten sayings. With each of these sayings, G-d, so to speak, created another mask for Himself. Each of these expressions added a layer to nature and its consistent laws that make it very difficult to see how G-d is behind it all. However, each of the ten plagues altered a piece of nature, thereby removing one of these masks, revealing G-d behind everything. For example, on “Day One” G-d created light, and in the ninth plague He brought darkness throughout Mitzrayim. On the sixth day G-d created the wild creatures, and in the plague of wild animals G-d caused them to unnaturally attack the Egyptians while leaving the Jews alone (see the Maharal’s *Gevurot Hashem 57* for a detailed analysis of how each plague parallels one of the sayings of creation). Through the ten plagues G-d wanted to proclaim, once and for all, that He created the world, and continues to be the driving force behind it. This is exactly why the ten sayings of creation perfectly parallel the ten plagues (See the Maharal’s *Gevurot Hashem 57* and *Ohr Gedalyahu, Parshat Bo*).

However, this knowledge is not enough, since at the time there were those who believed that G-d created the world but did not personally involve Himself with the pitiful actions of man. Thus, they refused to believe in the concept of reward and punishment. To combat this crooked ideology, G-d brought the plagues in such a fashion that they would correspond exactly to the evil that the Egyptians perpetrated against the Jewish People. For example, the plague of water turning to blood was brought on the Egyptians because they killed the Jewish babies by throwing them in the water. The plague of wild animals was brought upon them because they forced the Jewish people to go the jungle and capture wild animals for them. The plague of the epidemic killed their animals because they often forced the Jewish people to do the work of their

animals in order to not fatigue their own animals (see *Tanchuma, Vaera 14* and *Me’am Lo’ez*). Through bringing the plagues measure for measure, G-d declared that while man has free-will to act wickedly, no evil is forgotten, and G-d Himself brings justice at the end.

Furthermore, to combat the ideology that G-d does not care to differentiate between the acts of the righteous and the wicked, the plagues were miraculously brought in such a way that they affected only the Egyptians and not the Jews. For example, the Midrash explains that during the plague of blood, when water was in the hands of a Jew it would remain water, whereas the same water in the hands of an Egyptian would be blood. However, even if an Egyptian would try to drink the water while it was being held by a Jew it would turn to blood as the Egyptian would try to drink it. Even if a Jew and an Egyptian would drink through two straws from the same cup it would be water for the Jew and blood for the Egyptian. The only way the Egyptians could obtain water was through paying the Jews for the water. That was the only way the water would not turn to blood. In this way G-d made the Egyptians partially repay the Jews for the work that they did under slavery for free. By protecting the Jewish People from the plagues, and even allowing them to benefit from them, G-d revealed that He distinguishes between good and evil.

We can now begin to understand the importance behind the *mitzvah* of remembering the miracles of *yetziat Mitzrayim*. The constant laws of nature that man is subject to detracts from the reality that G-d is the One Who created the world, and continues to run it. Therefore, we need a constant reminder of these miracles that proved G-d’s ultimate dominance in every part of nature. As the Ramban says, the “open miracles”, like those found in *yetziat Mitzrayim*, teach us about the “hidden miracles” that are with us every day. Furthermore, at times it is hard to see justice in the world, especially when it may seem that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. This, however, is only because we lack the knowledge of a full picture, either because we are unaware of previous reincarnations or because we don’t take the World-to-Come into account. Nevertheless, the Torah requires us to remember *yetziat Mitzrayim* to strengthen our belief that G-d brings justice, and differentiates between the righteous and the wicked. This is a major reason why we are commanded to constantly remember *yetziat Mitzrayim* (based on Ramban at the end of *Parshat Bo*).

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

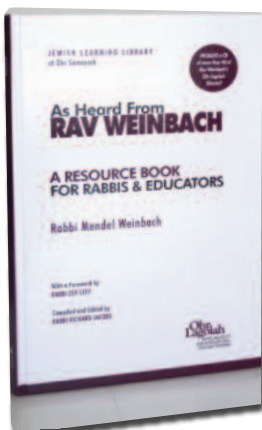
The Torah describes the procedure for a *metzora* (a person afflicted with *tzara'at*) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week and involves *korbanot* and immersions in the *mikveh*. Then, a *kohen* must pronounce the *metzora* pure. A *metzora* of limited financial means may 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.

ACHAREI MOT

G-d instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On Yom Kippur, the *Kohen Gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is "for G-d" and is offered in the Temple, while the other is "for Azazel" in the desert. The Torah states the individual's obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations. Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman's monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

KEDOSHIM

The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught. *Prohibitions:* Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone's property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one's parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; tattooing. *Positive:* Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree's fourth year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf. Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrut*, thus maintaining our unique and separate status.



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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*?

Answers to Tzav's Questions

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

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 burned completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burned, 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).

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?

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).

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 of having *tzara'at*, what is its status prior to the inspection by a *kohen*?

Answers to Tazria & Metzora's Questions

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

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*.

PARSHA Q&A

ACHREI MOT

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshat Acharei Mot* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beit Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *kohen gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *kohen gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *azazel*. What is *azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *kohen gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *karet*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

KEDOSHIM

1. Why was *Parshat Kedoshim* said in front of all the

Jewish People?

2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbat?
4. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. In *Shemot* 20:13, the Torah commands, "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11 "Do not steal"?
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not wrong your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

Answers to Acharei Mot & Kedoshim's Questions

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

ACHREI MOT

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's life is shortened and his offspring die.
8. 17:13 - Non-domestic kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.
9. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as G-d's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during his wife's lifetime.

KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because it contains the fundamental teachings of the Torah.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemot* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting them.
9. 20:3 - "*Karet*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - "*Chenek*" (strangulation).

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

Rabbi Noson Sachs

Age 61 - Fairfield, Connecticut - Jerusalem, Israel
Ohr Somayach 1979-1980 - Yeshiva University, BA Psychology, MA Human Resources
Semicha, Yeshiva University - Ohr Somayach, 2014 to present

Some of our students like Ohr Somayach so much that when they retire they return to the *Beit Midrash* they left when they were in their early 20's. One might call them "double *ba'alei teshuva*" (masters of return). One of these returnees is Colonel Noson Sachs, US Army.

Noson grew up in Fairfield, CT, in a non-observant home. His family belonged to a Conservative *shul*, and his Jewish education ended when he was *bar mitzva*h. He went to public school, and when he graduated from high school he went to college in Ames, Iowa — Iowa State University. He did not choose the college because of its proximity to a large and impressive Jewish community. He was planning to be a veterinarian, and Iowa has lots of farm animals and a vet school. There were also quite a few religious Christians in the college who read the Bible every day. Not wishing to be ignorant of the text that his own Jewish People gave to the world, Noson also started to read the Bible. A rabbi he knew directed him to Morristown, New Jersey, the home of a Chabad yeshiva, where he studied for a few months. His growing interest in Torah study compelled him to leave Iowa and come to New York where he enrolled in Yeshiva University. After graduation he decided that he needed more time involved in Torah study, and came to Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem where he joined Rabbi Moshe Pindrus' *shiur* for a year. He loved it. He returned to New York and enrolled in Ohr Somayach in Monsey where he stayed for a year, and then got married to a young lady who had recently graduated from Stern College. The next three years were spent in the *kollel* of YU in Washington Heights, from which he received *semicha*, rabbinical ordination.

He heard that the US Army Reserves was looking for chaplains and decided to apply. He joined the Army as a lieutenant and was sent for training. He loved it. He decided to take an active duty commission, and was posted to the large US Army base in Frankfurt, Germany. He spent three-and-a-half years in Germany doing *kiruv* (outreach). He and his wife hosted large Shabbat and Yom Tov meals. He also established a Talmud Torah

there for 30 children. When his posting to Germany ended he left active duty and returned to the States. There he received a Master's degree in Human Resources, and went to work for the Council of Jewish Federations in New York. He soon realized that being a chaplain suited him better than corporate-style work. His next job was as a chaplain in a large hospital in Pittsburgh, PA. He enjoyed his work there and stayed for 21 years.



All this time he was still in the Army Reserves and received regular promotions. In 2005 he was mobilized and sent to, among other places, Afghanistan and Iraq. He was on active duty until 2010. During this time he was involved in a new Army program called "Strong Bonds". The Army had noticed a high degree of marital discord and divorce within families of its soldiers, especially the ones who were on active duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. They developed the Strong Bonds program to teach conflict resolution skills to soldiers and their spouses. It was very successful, leading to Noson's promotion to full colonel and being put in charge

of the program in 13 states.

Highlights of his Army career include conducting services for the High Holidays and Succot at the Bagram US Air Force Base near Kabul, Afghanistan, learning Talmud Bavli in Bavel (Iraq), and eating "*shalosh seudahs*" on Shabbat in Saddam Hussein's Boardroom in his Palace in Bagdad.

Noson retired in 2014 and moved with his family to Israel, returning to the Ohr Somayach Beit Midrash to learn Torah.

"I feel such *hakaras hatov* (gratitude) to Ohr Somayach. When I first came I had no money. They understood this and didn't ask me for anything. I'm happy that I can now pay tuition through my GI Bill."

We are also grateful that Rabbi Colonel Sachs and his family have returned "home" to the Ohr Somayach family in Jerusalem to continue Torah study (and pay tuition as well, of course.) May they enjoy many more years of happiness and success.

BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Prophets of Passover

From: Felice

*Dear Rabbi,
Moses, Aaron and Miriam play such a central role in the Exodus. Are they featured in any way in the Haggada?*

Dear Felice,

You are correct that all three siblings — Moses, Aaron and Miriam — brought about the Redemption from Egypt, as in the verse, “For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam” (Micah 6:4).

In addition, the Talmud teaches (Ta’anit 9a) that in the merit of these three righteous prophets, G-d gave three wondrous gifts to the Jewish People, which accompanied them throughout their wanderings in the Wilderness. The manna, which was miraculously delivered to and preserved within dew on the ground, was in the merit of Moses. The Clouds of Glory, which protected overhead and hovered in the sky, were in the merit of Aaron. And a well, which miraculously provided sustaining water for their various encampments, was in the merit of Miriam.

Accordingly, these three prophets who led the liberation of the Jews from servitude to freedom, and in whose merit the Jews were miraculously sustained, correspond to the central items on the Seder Plate, and to the main foods eaten during the Passover meal. The roasted lamb, which is a land animal, corresponds to Moses and the manna which was collected from the ground. The boiled egg of a bird, which inhabits the air, corresponds to Aaron and the Clouds of Glory. In addition, the Talmud says (Pesachim 144b) that one of the cooked items on the Seder Plate is fish. Since fish live in water, this would correspond to Miriam and the Well.

Even though it is not the custom to use fish as one of

the cooked items on the Seder Plate, fish is certainly an important part of the festive Passover meal, and, at least in this context, would correspond to Miriam. That being said, it is noteworthy that Rav Sherira Gaon (c. 900-940) in his Laws of the Seder Night commends adding a piece of fish to the Seder Plate in honor of Miriam because of her association with water (cited by Rabbi Elazar of Worms, c. 1176-1238, in Ma’aseh Rokeach ch. 19).

Interestingly, Rav Sherira Gaon adds that the lamb, egg and fish also allude to the three mythical creatures in Jewish tradition: the land beast Behemot, the bird Ziz, and the sea-creature Leviatan, respectively. In fact, Rabbi Chaim Palaggi (1788-1869) in “Mo’ed l’Khol Chai” (Izmir, 1861, Chapter 4, sec. 23, p. 24b) specifically mentions placing fish on the Seder table and reciting, “May it be Your will that You merit us to eat from the banquet of Leviatan.”

According to the Midrash, the Leviatan and Behemot (Bava Batra 74b) as well as the Ziz (Yalkut Shimoni 1:94; see also Maharal, Gur Aryeh 21:1) are to be served at the *Seudat Techiyat HaMetim* (Pesachim 119b and Eitz Yosef), the feast for the righteous following the Resurrection of the Dead, to which the Passover Seder alludes, insofar as it commemorates the past Redemption together with the Cup of Elijah’s heralding the future, Final Redemption.

Sources:

- *References for the mythical creatures are: Behemot (Ps. 50:10; Bava Batra 74b); Ziz (Ps. 50:11, 80:13-14; Bava Batra 73b); Leviatan (Gen. 1:21, see Rashi; Is. 27:1; Bava Batra 74b).*
- *Dr. Yael Levine, “Where is Miriam on the Seder plate?”, “Placing a Cooked Food on the Seder Table in Commemoration of Miriam”, “All the Women Followed Her: A Collection of Writings on Miriam the Prophet & The Women of Exodus” pp. 235-251.*

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placed on the head. As it says in Ecclesiastes: "...let your head never lack oil". (Ecclesiastes 9:8) The oil is a metaphor for the wisdom which, hopefully, has been imparted to the afflicted individual as a result of his experience.

Acharei Mot

Prohibition against Eating Blood

The prohibition against eating an animal's blood is explained by Abarbanel in the context of the subtle differences in the relevant verses in the Torah:

Parshat Noach 9:4: "But flesh, with its *nefesh* (soul or life essence) — its blood — you shall not eat."

Parshat Acharei Mot 17:11: "For the *nefesh* of the flesh is in the blood..."

Parshat Acharei Mot 17:11: "...for it is the blood in the *nefesh* that will atone."

Acharei Mot 17:14: "You shall not consume the blood of any creature, for the *nefesh* of any creature is its blood."

Parshat Re'eh 12:23: "For the blood, it is the *nefesh*, and you shall not eat the *nefesh* with the meat."

Abarbanel begins by explaining that this prohibition is based on the principle that we are enjoined to strive to maintain the spiritual purity of the *nefesh*, or life essence, of every individual. For this reason the Torah in this Parsha states (Acharei Mot 17:12) "Any *nefesh* among you may not consume blood". Normally the Torah would have stated, "Any person among you..." Clearly the Torah is telling us that blood has a direct negative effect on our very spiritual essence.

Beginning from the juxtaposition of the relationship between blood and *nefesh* in the above verses, the Torah is telling us that an animal's blood, although it is obviously technically a physical entity, is synonymous on a very real level with the non-physical life essence of the animal itself, unlike the other parts of the animal's body. Abarbanel explains that when someone ingests the other parts of an animal, those parts are broken down and completely transformed by the digestive process. Blood, on the other hand, is essentially already "digested" and retains its original nature when eaten. Thus, some aspect of animal nature is incorporated into the consumer of the blood. Even though the animals that are permitted for our consumption are not violent, cunning, or predatory, their spiritual essence is far below that of man, who is the unique pinnacle of G-d's creation. From the verses above we see that the blood is *in* the *nefesh*, the *nefesh* is *in* the blood and finally, the blood *is* the *nefesh*.

Because of the severity of this prohibition the Torah emphasizes that it applies to converts as well, an emphasis which is generally not found in regard to other *mitzvot*. Even though in regard to certain situations a convert is considered on a slightly different halachic plane (such as for marriage eligibility), here we are specifically told that every Jew must be vigilant.

The significance of animal blood also explains its importance in the procedures of the sacrificial offerings. An offering expresses man's desire to give himself over completely to G-d. The animal takes the place of the individual, since human sacrifice is obviously prohibited. Since we want to dedicate our very essence to the service of G-d, the blood of the animal, which is its very essence, becomes an essential component of the service.

Based on this analysis, Abarbanel offers a final unique perspective on the rationale for the prohibition. He compares

eating an animal's blood to eating the limb of a live animal, a prohibition which applies not only to Jews, but to all of Mankind as well, as one of the seven Noachide Laws. Since blood retains the life force and essence of the animal at all times, it is no different than actually eating any other portion of the live animal itself.

Kedoshim

Moral Obligations

In this Torah portion (Vayikra 19:16-18) there are three apparently unconnected verses describing our obligations to our fellow Jews. Abarbanel ties these verses together and provides interesting insights into the nature of these obligations:

"You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people; you shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed — I am G-d. You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall reprove your fellow and do not bear a sin because of him. You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your fellow as yourself — I am G-d."

One who spreads gossip will almost certainly create contention between his fellows. In some cases this contention may even turn violent and may result in the spilling of blood. The command to not stand idly by while blood is being shed adjures us to do our utmost to prevent such an occurrence. The Torah places the two *mitzvot* together to remind us of the possible dire consequences of malicious gossip. The addition of the words 'I am G-d' reminds us that even though the connection between slander and bloodshed is not always readily apparent, it is certainly known to G-d.

The next verse is a continuation of the subject of slander. Abarbanel explains that the Torah now tells us that when one hears that he has been slandered by another individual he should not let it fester, but should rather approach that individual in order to ascertain the truth. Reproof here means first finding out if reproof is even required. Unlike other commentators, Abarbanel explains that the expression "do not bear a sin because of him" does not refer to a transgression for not reproofing someone's behavior. Rather it refers to the individual who supposedly slandered. Perhaps there was no slander at all and he should not bear any sin due to the false reports of the spreader of gossip.

Another dimension of the commandment not to hate is based on our obligation to imitate G-d's ways. Just as the 'heart of G-d' is one and has no place for hatred, only love, our hearts should be the same. The commandments not to take revenge or bear a grudge are exemplified by the following scenario: If your fellow refuses to do you a favor you cannot retaliate in kind. Likewise, if you do decide to do him a favor you cannot do so in a begrudging manner by telling him that you are doing so even though he refused to come to your assistance previously. The verse ends with the words, "You shall love your fellow as yourself — I am G-d" to point out to us that avoiding the negative behavior of taking revenge and bearing a grudge is not sufficient. We cannot say, "I will avoid taking revenge and bearing a grudge against my fellow, but I don't have to love him as myself." Rather, we must make every effort to create a positive connection with our fellow Jews, just as G-d has created the ultimate positive connection with His creations.

BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Symbolic Meanings 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.

Pesach Questions & Answers

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Why is Tachanun not said during the month of Nisan?

During the entire month of Nisan we do not say *Tachanun* or *Tzidduk HaDin* (burial service prayer), and we do not say *Tzidkatcha* on Shabbat Mincha (Shulchan Aruch 429; and Rema). The reason for this is that during the first twelve days of Nisan the leader (*Nasi*) from each of the Twelve Tribes offered a special sacrifice in the Mishkan, and each day was considered a holiday for him (Beit Yosef 429 cited in Mishneh Berurah). When adding those days with the days connected with Pesach, the majority of days of the month of Nisan have a holy status. Therefore, the entire month is exempted from *Tachanun* and other matters of a similar nature.

Why is the language of the blessing we recite on bedikat chametz (checking for chametz) “To destroy chametz” and not “To search for chametz”? And why do we place ten pieces of bread around the house before searching?

We say “to destroy” and not “to search” because the search is only the first part in fulfilling the command to destroy the chametz. We search in order to be sure we’ve found and destroyed all the chametz (Levush 432, cited in Ta’amei HaMinhagim). There are several reasons given for the custom of placing pieces of bread to find during the search. Some write that it should be specifically ten. Here is a sampling of the reasons given: 1) The Rema explains that the reason for the *minhag* to place pieces of chametz before the search is in order for the blessing not to be in vein in case no chametz is found. However, he concludes that even in the event that no chametz is found (if one did not place pieces of bread), the blessing is still not in vein since the intent of all peo-

ple is to destroy chametz if any chametz is found (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 431:2). 2) It is explained in the name of the Arizal that one should place exactly ten pieces of bread, and that this custom is based on a Kabbilistic concepts. The Kaf HaChaim explains that the ten pieces correspond to ten crowns of impurity (Pri Eitz Chaim).

Why do we dip a vegetable in water before the meal?

The Shulchan Aruch writes that one should take *Karpas* (generally parsley since some explain *Karpas* to be celery) and dip it into vinegar (473:7). However, the Rema writes that one may use vinegar or salt water instead (473:4). Though today many people use salt water for the dipping, vinegar or wine can also be used (Mishneh Berurah). The reason for the dipping is in order to do something different than at meals on other nights so that children will be interested in what is happening and will ask about it. According to this reason, any vegetable will do. In fact there are various customs regarding which vegetable to use, such as potatoes, celery, parsley and onions. According to the writings of the Arizal one should specifically use *Karpas* (celery) according to Kabbalah. The *Dorshei Reshimot* (cited in countless commentaries on the Haggadah and in halachic writings) explains that the word *karpas* contains within it a hint to the extreme suffering the Jewish People were subjected to during their Egyptian bondage. Each of the Hebrew letters of the word *karpas* are used to make up the phrase “*Parech Shishim*”, a reference to the crushing labor of six-hundred thousand, a number representing the Jewish People who were enslaved in Egypt.

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ANET RES CH

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Jumping for Passover — Part 2

We mentioned in Part 1 that the Hebrew name for the holiday of Passover is *Pesach* and the sacrifice associated with that holiday is likewise known as the *Korban Pesach* (*Pesach* Sacrifice). We cited Rashi's explanation (to Exodus 12:11; 12:13; and Isaiah 31:5) that the word *pesach* is an expression of *dilug* and *kefitzah*, both of which are words for jumping. Indeed, the Paschal Sacrifice is called the *Korban Pesach* because it commemorates G-d "passing over" or "jumping over" the houses of the Jews when He struck the Egyptians with the Plague of the Firstborn. The holiday is accordingly named after the sacrifice associated with it. In the following paragraphs we will demonstrate exactly how the word *pesach* means "jumping", but is not fully synonymous with the words *dilug* and *kefitzah*.

In Part 1 we explained the major difference between the two words for "jumping" by noting that the word *dilug* focuses on one who "jumps" as a means of skipping over something, and the word *kefitzah* focuses on one who "jumps" as a means of travelling faster. Rashi's comment that the word *Pesach* is an expression of both *dilug* and *kefitzah* means that the word *Pesach* has both of these elements, especially in regard to G-d passing over the houses of the Jews in anticipation of the Exodus from Egypt.

Rabbi Avigdor Neventzhal (Chief Rabbi Emeritus of the Old City of Jerusalem) points out the obvious: When we speak of G-d "jumping" over the Jews in order to afflict the Egyptians with the Plague of the Firstborn, this cannot mean that He literally "jumped" over them, because He does not possess any physical body with which to perform such an action. Rather, the Torah speaks from the *post facto* perspective in which the Egyptian firstborns died, and the Jewish ones did not. In hindsight, it seemed *as if* G-d "jumped" over the Jews and smote only the Egyptians. In what way can this be called a *dilug*? Rabbi Neventzhal explains that just as the idea of *dilug* is to "skip over" something which has been deemed unnecessary, so too did G-d "skip over" His general requirement that one perform some act of commitment to seal his connection to G-d before G-d will allow that person to come close to Him. However, at that the Exodus, though the Jews had not yet exhibited that desire to connect to G-d, He nonetheless performed miracles on their behalf and took them out of Egypt.

In a similar vein, Rabbi Nachshon Schiller focuses on the haste with which the Exodus from Egypt occurred. Kabbalistic sources assert that during their stay in Egypt,

the Jews had alarmingly fallen to the forty-ninth level of impurity and seriously required the Divine intervention of the Exodus. The urgency of the matter is highlighted by the Jews' descent to the depths of impurity. Had the Jews remained in that land for an extra moment they would have plunged to the fiftieth level of impurity, from whence it would be impossible to recover. Therefore, G-d hastily redeemed the Jews before it was too late. Rabbi Schiller explains that for this reason G-d commanded that the Paschal Offering be eaten "in haste" (Exodus 12:11); eating from that sacrifice should be done quickly in imitation of G-d's fast-acting miracles that brought the Exodus. In this way, the word *Pesach* is related to the word *kefitzah*, which denotes the speed of the jumper.

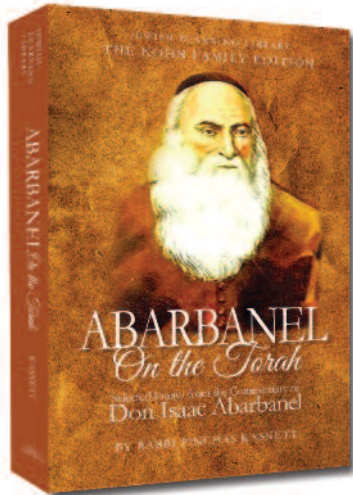
To summarize, the Exodus from Egypt has both an element of "skipping" and an element of "speed", concepts which shed light on Rashi's comment that *Pesach* is related to *dilug* and *kefitzah*. In redeeming the Jews, G-d waived the usual requirement that the recipient of Divine assistance actively show his commitment to Above. In essence, the Exodus basically "skipped over" (*dilug*) that general prerequisite for a miracle, a favor celebrated in the name *Pesach*. At the same time, the urgency and gravity of the dire situation demanded that G-d redeem the Jews immediately, and the speed (*kefitzah*) with which He did so is also immortalized in the very name of the Holiday of the Exodus — *Pesach*.

Before concluding I would like to point out another insight related to the Hebrew word *pesach* — and its verb form *poseach*. Those words share their etymological root with the Hebrew word *piseach* (lame or immobile). The root of both words is the letter combination *peh-samech-chet*. This occurrence is a poignant example of a common phenomenon in the Hebrew language whereby words whose meanings are conceptually diametric opposite are sometimes phonetically/orthographically similar (i.e. they are spelled or pronounced the same). This phenomenon illustrates the notion that words in the Hebrew language are not mere happenstance based on human whims, but possess inherent meanings and follow a Divine intuition not found in other languages. Therefore, a paralyzed person or an amputee who has been rendered immobile is known as a *piseach*, a word which resembles the very mobile act of "jumping" (*poseach*).

Author's note:

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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).

in some manner from the property they originally took in order to share with the third brother.

One explanation of this new manner of division is the following: If each brother had originally taken three fields, each one should give the third brother one field. This results with each of the three brothers ending up with two fields apiece. (See Tosefot who disagrees with this explanation, and offers an alternative view of the *gemara*.)

This *gemara* reminds me of the following true case that occurred in Europe, which deals with division of property, and was resolved with what might appear to be a “surprising” ruling.

There were two travelers, Reuven and Shimon, who had stopped to eat their meal. Reuven had three portions of food with him, while Shimon had two portions. Before they began to eat, a stranger came by and told them he had no food at all, and asked if they would share their food with him. They agreed. After the meal, the stranger told them that he had five coins with him, which he would give them

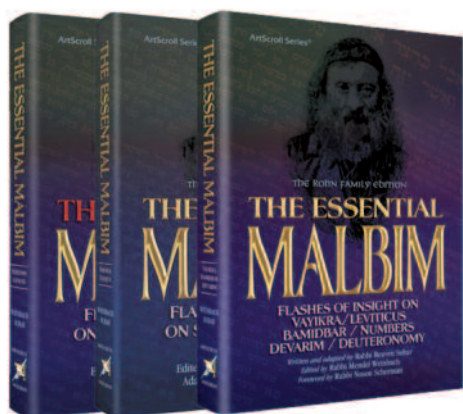
in payment. Of course, Reuven felt that he was entitled to three of the five coins, since he had contributed three portions, while Shimon had contributed only two. Shimon, on the other hand, argued that they had agreed to share with the stranger, and therefore they should split the five coins. They brought the case to the local Rav, who ruled that Reuven should get *four* of the coins!

The Rav’s decision was based on the following reasoning. For ease of calculation, divide each of the five portions into thirds, so altogether, between Reuven and Shimon, there were fifteen thirds in the collective pot. Reuven contributed three portions (nine thirds), and Shimon contributed two portions (six thirds). Since the three men shared the pot, each man actually ate five thirds. Therefore, Reuven ate five thirds, and donated four thirds to the stranger, while Shimon also ate five thirds, but donated only one third to the stranger.

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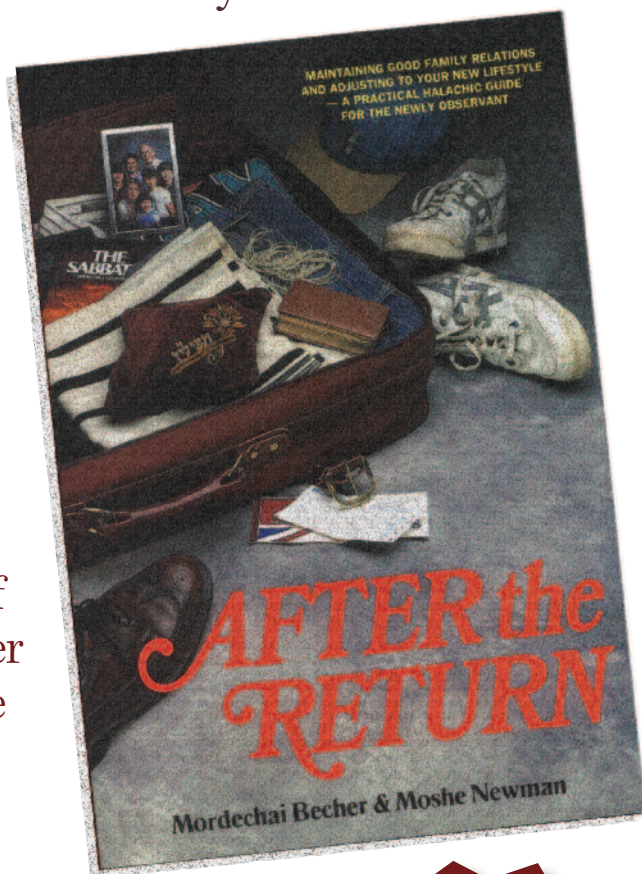
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RABBI DR. DOVID
GOTTLIEB

Senior Lecturer Ohr Somayach Jerusalem

2017 NATIONAL YOM IYUN

LAKESIDE	BALTIMORE	PASSAIC	FIVE TOWNS	BROOKLYN	TORONTO	CHICAGO	DETROIT
▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
TUE MAY 2	WED MAY 3	THU MAY 4	SUN A.M. MAY 7	SUN P.M. MAY 7	MON MAY 8	TUE MAY 9	WED MAY 10

FOR INFORMATION: OHR.EDU • 718-677-6200