

## Potomac Torah Study Center

Vol. 13 #24, March 27-28, 2026; 10 Nisan 5786; Tzav 5786; Shabbat HaGadol/Pesach  
Pesach April 1-9; First Seder April 1; Count Omer starting night of second Seder

**Note: I shall not post again until after Pesach, perhaps not until Tazria/Metzora (April 17)**

**NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.**

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**Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) at [www.PotomacTorah.org](http://www.PotomacTorah.org). Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.**

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**May Hashem protect Israel and Jews everywhere. May Hashem's protection shine on all of Israel, the IDF, and Jews throughout the world. We mourn those of our people who have perished since attacks have resumed. May the IDF and the U.S. soon force Iran to seek peace, and may a new era bring security and rebuilding for both Israel and all others who genuinely seek peace.**

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During a non-leap year, we read Tzav the Shabbat before Pesach and resume with Shemini the first Shabbat after Pesach ends. Parashat Vayikra presents korbanot from the point of view of a person bringing the sacrifice. The presentation goes over the reasons why a person might bring a korban and explains which korban to bring for each situation. Tzav, in contrast, presents korbanot from the point of view of the Kohanim – instructions of what the Kohen does to perform each type of sacrifice. The parsha concludes with chapter 8, the seven day dedication ceremony consecrating Aharon and his sons as Kohanim (23-29 Adar of the second year after leaving Egypt). Shemini continues the next day, Rosh Hodesh Nisan, the day of the dedication of the Mishkan, the first day that Aharon (rather than Moshe) presents the korbanot.

Coming to Tzav right before Pesach is an appropriate juxtaposition, because the two types of korbanot in which the family bringing the sacrifice eat part of the korban are Shelamim and Korban Pesach, which is a special type of Shelamim. The toda (thanksgiving) korban, a type of Shelamim, includes 40 loaves of matzah and bread. The Shelamim, toda, and Korban Pesach usually include a large animal (lamb, goat, or cow) and many loafs of matzah and (for some) bread. One point of these korbanot is that they consist of very large amounts of food – and they must be consumed in one or two days (depending on type). The result of these constraints is that these korbanot require large parties – numerous guests to help consume the food. The Korban Pesach is to be eaten by one extended family, all together at the same meal. Should one family be too small to consume the entire Korban Pesach, the usual policy was to invite extended family members. [Note: although a Shelamim korban could contain loaves of leavened bread, only matzah could be brought to the alter for any korban.]

This Shabbat is 10 Nisan, the day when the Jews in Egypt were to bring a lamb, tie it to their bed, and keep it ready for the tenth plague (killing of the first born of Egypt). Since Egyptians worshiped sheep as gods, bringing and sacrificing sheep was a major attack on Egyptian religion. One interpretation of the meaning of Shabbat HaGadol is that the miracle of Egyptians not objecting to this attack on one of their cherished gods is what made it gadol (see Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander below). For my family, 10 Nisan is the yahrzeit of my beloved sister Maureen, Miriam bat Shlomo v'Hannah, 33 years ago.

Pesach is the most widely celebrated Jewish holiday. Many Jews who observe almost no other rituals still attend one or two Seders on Pesach. Pesach reminds us of our history, obtaining our freedom in the year 2448 (3338 years ago). Although the Romans destroyed the Mishkan (Temple in Jerusalem) nearly 2000 years ago, for the past 78 years, we have had the modern state of Israel as our homeland and the one place in the world where Jews are always welcome. This

year, with Iran threatening our country with daily attacks, our fellow Jews in Israel must rush to secure shelters, sometimes several times a day. Indeed, only today falling shrapnel from an Iranian missile damaged parts of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology campus in Haifa, and cluster munition fragments injured six Israelis in central Israel (Jerusalem Post). AIPAC summarized the situation:

Israelis across the country faced near-constant salvos of indiscriminate rocket and missile fire today, with ten Iranian missile salvos forcing millions into bomb shelters and more than 100 rockets fired at Israel by Hezbollah in the past 24 hours. . . . The regime (Iran) continues to launch cluster warhead munitions at Israel's most populated cities.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, reminds us that Iranian brutality goes way back in history, as his moving prayer meeting from April 11, 2000 reports (see below). Rabbi Brander reminds us weekly that the vicious attacks on Israel have brought diverse segments of Israel closer together and encouraged many previously secular Israelis to include more religious mitzvot in their lives. My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahon, z"l, started me exploring my Jewish heritage and mitzvot more than 55 years ago, and I am still learning. Hannah and I hope that our grandchildren will start their learning at earlier ages, and we look forward to reinforcing their exploration with a two week trip to Israel in the late summer.

Shabbat Shalom,

Alan & Hannah

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**Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at [www.alephbeta.org](http://www.alephbeta.org). Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during and since the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.**

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**Please daven for a Refuah Shleimah for Velvel David ben Sarah Rachel; Moshe Aaron ben Leah Beilah (badly wounded in battle in Gaza but slowly recovering), Daniel Yitzchak Meir HaLevy ben Ruth; Avram David ben Zeezl Esther, Avraham Dov ben Blimah; Ariah Ben Sarah, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Reuven ben Basha Chaya Zlata Lana, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Miriam Bat Leah; Rena Michal bat Sara, Yehudit Leah bas Hannah Feiga; Miriam bat Esha, Chana bat Sarah; Raizel bat Rut; Rena bat Ilsa, Riva Golda bat Leah, Sharon bat Sarah, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, and all our fellow Jews in danger in and near Israel.** Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

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## **Haftarat Parshat Tzav/Shabbat Hagadol: Redemption Begins at Home**

By Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander \*  
President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone

*Rabbi Brander dedicates his Dvar Haftorah this week to the heroic soldiers, security forces and first responders of the IDF, defenders of the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and the United States Armed Forces, defenders of liberty and justice for all. May Hashem protect them and bring them all home speedily and safely.*

In the liturgical cycle, special Shabbatot surrounding the holidays are typically named after the unique passages read on them. Even Shabbatot that have no special Torah reading, but do have a unique haftarah, take their name from the first line of that haftarah. This is the case with Shabbat Chazon, which immediately precedes Tisha Be'av; Shabbat Nachamu, which follows it; and Shabbat Shuva, which comes before Yom Kippur.

Why then do we call this Shabbat "Hagadol"? The word "Hagadol," meaning "the great," does not appear in the opening of the haftarah, whose first verse is: "*Then the offering of Yehuda and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and years past*" (Malachi 3:4).

Commentaries have offered different answers to this question. The Tosafot (Shabbat 87b, s.v. דְּבִי וְתוֹא) explains that in fact, the appellation “Hagadol” has nothing to do with the haftarah at all. Instead, it is called “*the great*” Shabbat because of the great miracle that took place on this Shabbat when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. God commanded them to designate lambs for the first Pesach offering five days in advance of the exodus. Because the exodus occurred on a Thursday, the animals were collected on the preceding Shabbat. The Israelites were meant to keep these animals in their homes in preparation for sacrifice, fully aware that sheep and goats were worshiped by the Egyptians. Yet God struck fear into the hearts of their Egyptian neighbors, and none dared to interfere. This explanation is cited by the Tur and later codified in the *Shulchan Arukh (Orach Chayim 430)*, which links the name of this Shabbat to that “*great,*” miraculous moment.

However, in his sefer *Chazon Hamikra* (vol.II, p. 251), Rabbi Yissachar Yaakovson (1901-1972) suggests that the name Shabbat Hagadol may in fact emerge from the haftarah, whose penultimate verse reads: “*Behold, I will send you Eliyya the prophet before the coming of the great [לְיוֹגֵה] and dreadful day of the Lord*” (Malachi 3:23). The verse’s use of the word “*great*” in reference to Israel’s final redemption at the end of days which is meant to mirror our initial redemption from Egypt so many years ago.

In this vein, the prophet Malakhi teaches us an important lesson about the nature of redemption. The prophecy continues (v.24): “*And he will return the hearts of the parents back to the children, and the hearts of the children back to their parents.*” Here, Malakhi points out that the final redemption has a prerequisite: the capacity of families to reunite in a common sense of spiritual purpose and meaning. Division and discord, along with the inability of our nation’s youth to value its past, and of the old guard to embrace the future, are the greatest obstacles to redemption.

When we think about the themes and rituals of the Pesach holiday, we see that this time, more than any other, celebrates the ability of Jewish families to come together. The command of the Korban Pesach (Pascal Sacrifice) established three thousand years ago specified that **offering was to be acquired per family (Exodus 12:3) – and not per individual**. Each family was instructed to both offer and consume the sacrifice together, in anticipation of the coming salvation. [emphasis added]

Today, the annual Pesach Seder commemorates that original Pascal Sacrifice meal and the family gathering that accompanied it in the times of the Beit Hamikdash. This is the Jewish family event par excellence. Every year, members of immediate and extended families sit down together for a long evening and engage in the discussion of redemption, then and now.

When we refer to this Shabbat as “*Hagadol,*” we invoke both Malakhi’s vision of future redemption, as well as the Torah’s depiction of the exodus from Egypt. Past and future mirror one another, each rooted in familial unity and shared purpose. If we can internalize this message, that redemption is only possible when we are ready to be redeemed together, perhaps we will merit to see the arrival of Eliyahu and the dawn of a renewed world.

Shabbat Shalom.

\* Ohr Torah Stone is a modern Orthodox group of 32 institutions and programs. Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin is the Founding Director, and Rabbi Dr. Brander is President and Rosh HaYeshiva. For more information or to support Ohr Torah Stone, contact [ohrtorahstone@otsyny.org](mailto:ohrtorahstone@otsyny.org) or 212-935-8672. **Donations to 49 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street #701, New York, NY 10036.**

<https://ots.org.il/haftarat-parshat-tzav-shabbat-hagadol-rabbi-brander-5786/>

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## **Pesach: Symbolism Over Substance**

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky \* © 5757

The entire Seder ceremony is replete with symbolic gestures. We drink four cups of wine to represent four Biblical expressions of redemption. We dip and lean like kings to represent freedom, and we eat bitter herbs to remind us about the bitter slavery. We also eat other symbolic foods that portray our Egyptian bondage: salt water to remember tears, and charoses, a mixture of apples, nuts and wine that looks like mortar, to remind us of the laborious years in Egypt.

The service is truly filled with symbolism – some direct, and some seemingly far-fetched – and all the symbols are meant to remind us of the slavery we endured centuries ago. But, why not take a direct approach? There are overt ways to declare our gratitude, and there are more immediate ways to mark the celebration. Why don't we just recite the four expressions of redemption as part of the liturgy instead of drinking four cups of wine to symbolize them? Why don't we actually place mortar on the table (problem of muktzeh notwithstanding) instead of making a concoction to represent it? And instead of reminding ourselves of backbreaking work by eating horseradish, why not lift heavy boxes?

**A Jewish intellectual in post-war England approached Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, who headed the London Beth Din, with a cynical question: "In reviewing our Hagadah service," he sniped, "I was shocked at the insertion of , 'Who Knows One', a childish nursery rhyme, at the end. Why would the sages put a silly rhyme – 'One is Hashem, two are the Tablets, three are the fathers,' and so on, at the end of the solemn, intellectual Seder night service? It is very unbecoming!"**

Rabbi Abramsky was not shaken. *"If you really want to understand the depth of that song, then you must travel north to the town of Gateshead. There you will find a saintly Jew, Reb Elya Lopian. I want you to discuss the meaning of every aspect of life with him. Ask him what are the meaning of the sea and fish, ask him what is the meaning of the sun and the moon. Then ask him what is the meaning of one, of six, of eleven and so on."*

The philosopher was very intrigued. He traveled to Gateshead and located the Yeshiva at which Reb Elya served as the Mashgiach (spiritual advisor). He was led into the room where a saintly looking man greeted him warmly.

*"Rabbi, I have many questions,"* the skeptical philosopher began. *"What is the meaning of life?" "What is the essence of the stars?"*

Rabbi Lopian dealt with each question with patience, depth, and a remarkable clarity. Then the man threw out the baited question. *"What is the meaning of the number one?"*

Rabbi Lopian's face brightened, his eyes widened, and a broad smile spread across his face. *"The meaning of one?"* he repeated. *"You would like to know the meaning of one? One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth!"*

The man was shocked. *"What about the depth of the numeral five?"*

*"Five?"* repeated the sage. *"Why five has tremendous symbolism! It represents the foundation of Judaism – the Five Books of Moses!"* The rabbi then went on to explain the mystical connotations that are represented by the number five, and exactly how each Book of the Torah symbolizes a component of the sum.

The man left with a new approach and attitude toward the most simple of our rituals.

At the Seder, we train ourselves to find new meaning in the simple things in life. We teach ourselves to view the seemingly mundane with historical and even spiritual significance. We should remember that when Moshe saw a burning yet non-consumed bush, he realized that his nation is similar – constantly persecuted and harassed, yet never consumed. At our Seder, we view horseradish not as a condiment for gefilte fish, but as representative of our suffering. The Matzoh is no longer a low-fat cracker, but symbolizes the hardships of exile and the speed of our redemption. In addition, we finish the Seder with a simple song that reminds everyone at the Seder, next time you ask, *"who's number one?"* don't accept the answer: the New York Yankees or the Chicago Bulls – think on a higher plane! One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth!

## **A Zissen [Sweet] Pesach**

\* Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore

<https://torah.org/torah-portion/drasha-5757-pesach/>

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## **Kashering Countertops for Pesach and Year-round**

By Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh Yeshiva & President, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2026

Can porcelain or marble countertops be kashered, and if so how? This question comes up regularly when people move into a previously-owned house, or on an annual basis when it is time to kasher the kitchen for Pesach.

This is not a trivial question. I have heard multiple stories of cases where someone has moved into a new house that had non-Jewish or non-observant owners and were instructed by their rabbis that the only way to kasher a marble countertop would be to pour boiling hot water on it straight from the kettle, or to place an iron over a thin layer of water on the countertop's surface, either one of which would likely crack and damage the countertop's surface. As a result, people have had to rip out their countertops and replace them with new ones at the cost of tens of thousands of dollars.

And when it comes to Pesach, the only option for someone who is afraid that boiling water will damage their marble countertop is to completely cover it with contact paper or tinfoil.

In the case of a porcelain countertop, the psak that most people hear is that pouring boiling water (or using an iron!) is not even an option, as porcelain cannot be kashered. Only a countertop fully covered with contact paper or tinfoil will be acceptable.

For many people, even when we are not talking about serious financial loss, such demands can be a serious compromise in what it means to have a beautiful home for the chag, especially when one wants to invite family and friends and feel good about the home into which they will be welcoming their guests.

In my view, these stringent rulings are fundamentally mistaken and can cause unnecessary hardship to Jewish families. Both underlying assumptions — (1) that porcelain cannot be kashered and (2) that countertops even require kashering in the first place — deserve serious reconsideration.

### **Kashering of Different Materials**

#### **Granite and marble**

All authorities agree that granite and marble can be kashered (SA, OH 451:8). Thus, when possible, a person should kasher her granite countertop for Pesach. This would be done by pouring boiling water from a kettle over the entire surface. Due to the extra stringencies required for Pesach, some poskim even require, as noted above, that one run an iron over a film of water on top of the countertop (see SA OH 451:6) — an extreme recourse which may cause cracking and other damage, especially in the case of marble surfaces. As a result, kashrut authorities advise people that their only option is to cover the countertops and not place anything directly on their surface.

In my opinion, when it is not possible to kasher a countertop without damage, one can use the countertop without any kashering, provided that the surface is vigorously cleaned to remove any food residue that might be on it, because, stated simply, countertops are not pots. We will return to this after first addressing the question of the kasherability of porcelain countertops altogether.

#### **Porcelain**

Porcelain is a type of pottery made from clay and fired in a kiln. As a rule, halakha (Avoda Zara 34a, SAOH 451:1) assumes that pottery vessels (klei cheres) absorb the taste of things that are cooked in them, and that these tastes will remain stuck in the pottery, with no way to extract them. This is based on Lev. 6:21, which dictates that pottery vessels that were used to cook a sin offering sacrifice must be shattered.

Many poskim in the past have applied this principle to porcelain, ruling that it is a pottery vessel that can thus not be kashered.

However, porcelain differs significantly from traditional pottery. It is fired at much higher temperatures and undergoes multiple firings specifically to make it non-porous and non-absorbent. The question then becomes: should porcelain be subject to the same laws as traditional pottery?

Radbaz (Rabbi David ben Solomon ibn Avi Zimra, 1479-1573, born in Spain and later Chief Rabbi of the Jews of Egypt) conducted an experiment to test whether porcelain is absorbent. He weighed a porcelain vessel before use, cooked with it, then weighed it again. Finding that it weighed slightly more after use, he concluded that porcelain is indeed absorbent and must therefore be treated with the same stringency as other pottery.

Nevertheless, a significant number of contemporary authorities disagree. They argue that modern porcelain does not follow the Talmudic laws of pottery for the simple reason that unlike pottery, it doesn't absorb moisture! Porcelain is made from highly refined clay and minerals, pressed tightly and fired at extremely high temperatures (a process called vitrification), all specifically to make it non-absorbent and resistant to stains. Many porcelain products are also often glazed, which adds another non-porous, impervious layer of glass to the surface.

The question of how we treat porcelain boils down to whether a posek adopts a formalist or realist approach when it comes to categorizing for kashrut purposes new materials not addressed in the Talmud. A formalist approach would simply state that since porcelain is made of the same material as pottery, and since pottery is defined in the Talmud as absorbent and not kasherable, the same would be true of porcelain. A realist approach, by contrast, would ask whether porcelain is in fact absorbent or not.

Already in the Talmud (Pesachim 30b), when discussing how to categorize different types of pottery vessels, the Rabbis based their determinations on an empirical assessment of whether liquids actually absorb in these materials and not on a formalistic, categorical approach. Similarly, Radbaz, in basing his ruling on the experiment that he conducted, made clear that it is the practical reality of absorption that matters.

While Radbaz concluded from his experiments that the porcelain he was using was absorbent, that is not the reality with porcelain nowadays. In Radbaz's time, the coating used for porcelain was often imperfect and contained cracks, and the manufacturing process was less rigorous than it is today. Thanks to advancements in manufacturing technology and industry standards, porcelain manufactured today is, by contrast, completely non-absorbent.

Following this, not only would it be possible according to halakha to kasher modern porcelain, but kashering may not even be necessary because these materials are entirely non-absorbent. This position is adopted by a number of poskim, including the author of the *Knesset HaGedolah* (R. Chaim Benveniste, 1603-1673) who writes that the widespread practice was to use the same porcelain vessels — provided they had no cracks in the glaze — for meat and milk, for chametz and year-round, and even to repurpose non-kosher ones, without any kashering required. While he himself did use different dishes for Pesach, he regarded this as a personal stringency, and believed that as a matter of halakha, no kashering is required (*Shiyarei K'nesset HaGedolah* on Beit Yosef OH 451 no. 30; cf. Peninei Halakha, *Laws of Pesach*, 11.11).

Despite the fact that the lenient position is the most logical one, there is no question that the widespread practice remains to be strict regarding porcelain, following the position adopted by many poskim — despite the fact that their porcelain was likely different than ours. This is certainly the *li'chatchila* position that we should adopt year-round, and even more so when it comes to Pesach, when we are generally more strict in matters of kashering than we are year-round (see SA OH 451:6).

However, when the question is one not of pots and pans, but of countertops, there is an additional strong reason to be lenient, beyond the question of the absorbency and kasherability of porcelain.

### **Must Countertops Be Kashered?**

As a matter of strict halakha, countertops that have absorbed non-kosher tastes may not require kashering at all. In general, the halakha is that if a person cooked in a pot that was used to cook non-kosher food over 24 hours ago (an *eino ben yomo*), the food that was cooked now is nonetheless kosher. This is based on the principle that after 24 hours any taste of non-kosher food transferring from the pot to the food will make the food being cooked taste worse (*notein taam lifgam*), and therefore of no halakhic significance.

Despite this, the Rabbis prohibited the use of such a day-old pot lest one come to use it when it is less than a day old, in which case it would make the food cooked in it forbidden. This is why we have to kasher non-kosher pots and pans even after we have waited 24 hours from their last use (*Avoda Zara* 76a, SA YD 122:2).

Countertops, however, are fundamentally different from pots, and for one simple reason: we do not cook food on them! They are used, rather, as a place on which to set other things such as pots, plates, (cold) food, etc. A countertop never, under normal use, comes in direct contact with boiling hot (*yad soledet bo*) food. Even if a pot is put on it immediately after being removed from the fire, no taste will transfer from the pot to the surface of the countertop, based on the principle that *eyn balua yotzei me'chaticha li'chaticha b'lo rotev* — taste does not transfer between two solid non-food items, such as a countertop and a pot, unless there is hot liquid between them.

The only way that, under normal use, the taste of food can transfer to the countertop is if an accident occurs — that is, when there is spillage directly from a pot onto the countertop while the food is still boiling hot.

As such, the use of countertops would never have been part of the rabbinic requirement of kashering to begin with! When it comes to a pot, one can say that it can't be used (i.e., to cook something in it), even if it has been more than 24 hours since last use, because it might be used (i.e., to cook something in it) within the first 24 hours. When it comes to a countertop, however, it makes no sense to say that it can't be used (i.e., to place something on it), even if it's been more than 24 hours since last accidental spillage, because it might be used (i.e., to put something on it) within 24 hours of last accidental spillage! Using it within 24 hours — placing things on it — is not a problem!

In short, the rabbis did not forbid use of something lest an accident would occur. They only forbade normal use, such as cooking, which transfers taste, lest such normal use would transfer taste when the taste was still forbidden. This is completely irrelevant to the use of a countertop.

What arises from this is that once it has been 24 hours since the last time hot food has come directly in contact with the countertop, one may use it *li'chatchilah* with any other kind of food because it falls entirely outside the requirement to be kashered.

Even were one to disagree with the above, and put countertops in the same category as pots, no kashering would be needed after 24 hours for another reason. The laws of kashering are based on the item's standard use. If something is generally used directly on the fire, then it has to be kashered directly on the fire. If it is generally used, like a soup tureen, by having hot liquid poured into it, then it can likewise be kashered by pouring hot liquid into it. And — most importantly — if it is generally used in a way such that taste doesn't transfer, then it doesn't require kashering at all.

When it comes to Pesach, we are generally stricter and require that one kasher something based on its less common use (see Rema, SA OH 451:6). Spillage, however, is not a "less common" use — it is an accident, not an intentional use at all, and thus one might logically conclude that it would fall outside this stringency. Nevertheless, *Shulkhan Arukh* (OH 451:20) explicitly states that when it comes to tables, even though hot food is never intentionally placed directly on them, the practice is still to kasher them for Pesach by pouring boiling water on them. This is out of a concern that there might have been some accidental spillage of hot chametz at some earlier point during the year. This is a specific Pesach stringency, as the standard halakha, as we have seen, is that kashering follows the normal use of the vessel.

## Conclusion

For year-round use, such as when renting an Airbnb or buying a house that has had previous owners, then, once it is 24 hours from the last time it came in direct contact with hot food:

For marble countertops that will be damaged with kashering, one should clean the surface thoroughly — ideally with a cleanser that will not only remove any film or food residue, but will also make it inedible. No additional kashering is required.

Porcelain countertops and other countertops about which there is no concern for damage should be kashered by pouring boiling water on them from a kettle.

The reason that no kashering is required in the case of marble countertops is that, as laid out above, a strong argument can be made that countertops fall totally outside of the rabbinic requirement to kasher cookware once more than 24 hours has transpired. Furthermore, normal kashering follows the regular use of the item being kashered, which in this case is use that transfers no taste.

When it comes to porcelain countertops, where kashering can be done without concern for damage to the countertop, then when dealing with one's own home, one should follow the general practice and kasher them as normal. As we have seen, against the general approach that porcelain cannot be kashered at all, it is quite possible — indeed, likely — that it can be kashered or that it might not require kashering altogether. The need to kasher at all in this case comes out of deference to common practice. In the case of a short-term rental, such as an Airbnb or the like, one need not kasher the countertops at all if it presents any difficulty..

For Pesach, because of the standard stringency to kasher based even on non-regular use, including for items like tables where the only concern is accidental spillage:

One should kasher or cover countertops when this is possible and will not be a hardship.

In cases where kashering would damage the countertop, and it would be felt as a hardship to make their countertops ugly by covering them at a time when one wants them to look particularly beautiful, there is room to be lenient and not require kashering. It is sufficient for a person to clean the countertop surface well with a cleansing agent that would render any food residue inedible. Although there is a general practice to kasher tables, this is a stringency that goes well beyond what would normally be required and in a case of hardship or difficulty, it is sufficient to follow standard halakha and forgo this step.

It is my tefillah that we are able give proper attention to all of the demands and stringencies of Pesach and, at the same time, to celebrate it with true joy and simchat ha'chag. May it truly be a chag of freedom and rejoicing for us all.

<https://library.yctorah.org/2026/03/kashering-countertops-for-pesach-and-year-round/>

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## **Silence Is Not Always Golden: The Pathway to a Robust Inner Life**

By Rabbi Ysoscher Katz \*

For this week, Parshat Tzav, I would like to share a Chassidic thought (a “*vort*”) on the Haftorah traditionally read with this Parsha, which is from the book of Jeremiah, rather than the special Haftorah read this year for Shabbat HaGadol.

First, however, a quick word about Chassidic divrei Torah.

Classically, Torah hermeneutics consists of four pillars: *p'shat* (literal meaning), *remez* (allegory, hint, or allusion), *drash* (homiletic interpretation), and *sod* (mystical or hidden meaning). These four elements are traditionally referred to as *Pardes* (סדרפ), the Hebrew acronym for מן טשפ זמר, שורד, דוס. While Chassidic thinkers utilized all four of these pillars in their expositions, *remez* disproportionately dominated their discourses. The claim was not that their *remez*-informed interpretation was necessarily the *p'shat* of the pasuk. Rather, the verse served as a hook for a spiritual idea they sought to convey. Albeit, given their expansive application of the principle of the theological view that the infinitely interpretable words of God yield seventy different ways of reading the text, their *remez* exposition thus becomes one of the pasuk's many legitimate meanings. Nevertheless, it was clear to everybody, Rebbe and chasidim alike, that the primary goal was to convey a spiritual message and not to provide interpretive commentary.

With that in mind, let's explore a Chassidic, *remez*-style dvar Torah.

In this week's Haftorah, the prophet Yermiyahu attributes to God a litany of complaints about the Jewish people. Among them is the critique that [Hebrew below]. The *p'shat* meaning is that this is a single lament repeated twice for emphasis: God bemoans that the Jews lost their faith (“הדבא הנומאה”) AND it has been severed from their mouth (“התרכנו מהיפמ”). In

short: they lost their faith in Me, and they no longer express belief in Me.

Reb Mordechai of Lechovitch z"l (1742-1810), a prominent Rebbe who originally emerged from the Karlin Chassidut, offers an alternative reading. For him, the second clause (התרכנו מהיפמ) is not a mere repeat of the first, but an explanation. He reads the verse as follows: In the first clause, God complains that the Jews in Yermiyahu's time lost their faith. Then, in the second clause, God answers an implicit question His audience would naturally wonder about: Why did that happen? What caused their loss of faith? To that implicit question, God answers the loss of faith came about because their beliefs were cut off from their mouths; they stopped expressing and articulating their faith.

Reb Mordechai of Lechovitch z"l thus interprets God as articulating a foundational spiritual principle, one that is frequently emphasized and oft-repeated in Chassidic thought. This core tenet is that to cultivate a life of emunah and deep faith, mere belief in our minds and hearts is insufficient. For faith to be fortified, it must be actively verbalized. The logic is rooted in the classical halakhic adage, מירבד בלבש מניא מירבד — mere thoughts are fleeting and insubstantial; they carry no significant weight. If we want our interior world to be substantive and permanent, we need to articulate it, and to do so often. This is the process by which we internalize our beliefs and inculcate them into our very being. If we fail to give them voice, we will eventually lose them, resulting in הדבא הנומאה: our faith will wither.

To cultivate a life of deep and robust faith, it is not enough to harbor it in silence; one must be actively talking about it. If we fail to give vocal expression to our rich and cherished convictions, they become passive and untested, destined to atrophy. Our values cannot just be held in abstraction as theoretical concepts; they must be articulated and lived perpetually, giving them shape and actualizing them.

And while the pasuk primarily addresses the individual's loss of faith due to a lack of expressiveness, this lesson is all the more urgent when raising children or teaching students. If we want to grant our charges the immense gift of a rich inner life of faith and deep emunah, we need to verbalize and share it with explicit intention and regularity. We can't expect them to infer it through osmosis by watching us; we need to actively transmit it through spoken word and open dialogue.

Finally, while Reb Mordechai z"l was primarily discussing the realm of the relationship between a person and God, the same spiritual dynamic is undoubtedly true in the realm of our interpersonal interactions, specifically with our family, friends, and loved ones. If we want the love in our hearts to flourish, it must be actively cultivated; it is not enough to simply feel affection in silence. We must explicitly voice our love and the value our loved ones bring to us. As R. Mordechai z"l teaches us, this cultivation can only happen if we give constant, audible expression to our interiority, turning abstract feelings into concrete affirmations of their worth.

Beliefs and convictions are not static states of being but dynamic processes that require constant cultivation through expression. When we give vocal and tangible form to our inner world, we bridge the gap between abstract thought and lived reality. Conversely, if we fail to externalize our internal commitments, they inevitably begin to wane. This is because silence often leads to a slow detachment; without the reinforcing power of speech, even our deepest passions can become passive and untested. As the legal maxim suggests, *Devarim sheb'lev einam devarim*: if our internal reality is not made external, it remains fleeting and impermanent. To maintain the integrity of our soul, we must ensure that *Avdah Emunah* never becomes our story because our deepest commitments were *Nichretah MiPihem*.

Shabbat Shalom.

[note: because of problems formatting across different word processing problems, I had to omit some Hebrew text]

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<https://library.yctorah.org/2026/03/silence-is-not-always-golden-the-pathway-to-a-robust-inner-life/>

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## **The Paradox of Tzav**

By Rabbanit Yaffa Aranoff \*

Rashi explains: “*Ain tzav ela lashon zeruz, miyad u-ledorot.*” The word *tzav* denotes *zeruz* — an alacrity that applies both to the immediate moment (*miyad*) and to all future generations (*ledorot*).

Why does the Torah use *tzav* here? Why not simply say, “*daber,*” “Speak to Aharon”?

To understand this, we need to look back at the first time this root appears: “*Vayetzav Hashem Elokim al ha-adam...*” (Bereishit 2:16), in which God commands Adam in Gan Eden and tells him which fruit to eat and which are forbidden. However, when we look at our parsha, we notice a significant shift. In Gan Eden, God is the *Metzaveh* (the Commander). Here, God tells Moshe: you be the *metzaveh*.

By asking a human being to take on the role of *metzaveh*, a paradox emerges: the only way to be an effective *metzaveh* is to feel and model that you are a *metzuveh* (commanded) as well.

We see this modeled by Moshe after he descends from Har Sinai. The Torah says “*Vayetzavem*” — he commanded them (Shemot 34:32). Remember that Moshe’s face was radiant with the intensity of his recent encounter with God. He was in a moment of *miyad*, and at the same time, he was able, as Rashi describes, to patiently teach Bnei Yisrael what Hashem had taught him: first to Aharon, then his sons, then the elders, and finally the whole nation.

Moshe modeled *zeruz miyad u-ledorot*. It is not just “*hurrying.*” It is what it looks like when someone is so deeply engaged that his immediate experience can be carried over into something that will last. Moshe was a *metzaveh* only because he was the ultimate *metzuveh*.

We have seen this paradox in action over the last two years. Since October 7th, we have been humbled by a generation of young people who have stepped forward with a powerful sense of *zeruz*. They responded to the *miyad*, the immediate, terrifying need of the hour with an awareness that their actions mattered *ledorot*.

Our soldiers remind us that to be a *metzaveh* translates as much more than giving out instructions. It means to live and transmit something that others can carry forward as their own. It is a reminder that we are all *metzavim* and *metzuvim*, simultaneously *miyad u-ledorot*.

At the Seder, we step into this exact role. We aren’t just reciting a history; we are commanded to see ourselves as if we were there *miyad*, so that our children can carry that radiance *ledorot*.

\* Director of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Israel.

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## **Angel for Shabbat HaGadol**

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel \*

“*And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians...*” (Shemot 12:36).

For centuries, the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites with malice and cruelty. But when the Israelites were about to gain their freedom, the attitude of the Egyptians changed dramatically. The Israelites now “*found favor in the sight of the Egyptians,*” who showered gold, silver and garments on their erstwhile slaves. Last year they hated us; today they love us; is this for real?

This strange phenomenon came to mind when I re-read an article I wrote in 2017, reporting on the results of a survey by the Pew Research Center. The survey showed that Americans expressed more positive feelings toward Jews than any other group! “*Warmer feelings are expressed by people in all the major religious groups analyzed, as well as by both Democrats and Republicans, men and women, and younger and older adults.*” They loved us!

But the situation today seems so radically different. We are constantly barraged by statements and surveys that point to increased rates of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Anti-Semitic violence is on the rise. Did all the goodwill cited in earlier polls simply evaporate?

The bad news: people are fickle. Attitudes can — and do — change due to media bias, publicity campaigns, statements by celebrities etc. Public opinion can be — and is — manipulated through many sources. Not everyone has the clarity of mind or solid facts to make informed judgments. The crowd moves with the crowd. Demagogues know this and depend on this. By generating a non-stop flow of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel propaganda, they insidiously infect public opinion.

The good news: people can change for the better. They are able to overcome past negative stereotypes and come to see things more realistically. Most Americans, as reflected in earlier polls, admire the Jewish community as a highly educated, idealistic, charitable and constructive group. They respect the dynamic democracy of Israel and its amazing creativity and strength. When the anti-Jewish/anti-Israel fulminations die down, so will public opinion veer back in a positive and honest direction.

The haftara for Shabbat HaGadol is drawn from the prophecies of Malachi. He foresaw a day when righteousness will prevail over wickedness, when goodness will be rewarded and evil will be overcome. *"But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and you shall go forth and gambol as calves of the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I do make, says the Lord of hosts"* (Malachi 3:20-21).

During this season, the ancient Israelites were freed from bondage. During this season, may our generation be saved from haters, oppressors and perpetrators of violence against us. *"In Nisan the Israelites were redeemed; in Nisan the Israelites will be redeemed."*

\* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. and rabbi emeritus of the historic Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York City.

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## When Sunni Muslims pray for Israel

By Rabbi Michael Freund \*

In an era when social media often amplifies hatred and outrage, something remarkable happened recently on X (formerly Twitter). It began with a simple post I wrote on March 12. I mentioned that my sons, along with thousands of other young Israelis, are serving in the Israel Defense Forces as the Jewish state confronts Iran and its proxies. Like any father, I worry for their safety. So I ended the post with a request directed to the people of Somaliland, a state that declared independence from Somalia in the early 1990s.

Over the years, I've met many Somalilanders online and been struck by their open admiration for Israel – its resilience, democracy, and ability to thrive despite hardship. Because of that, I asked them to do something unusual: pray for the IDF.

Even so, I never expected what happened next. Replies poured in – warm, heartfelt, and sincere.

*"I pray to Allah to stand with the people of Israel and protect them against Iran and all enemies who wish them harm." – Rakad Sultan, businessman connected to Somaliland's Ministry of Labor"*

*"We pray a lot for the sons of Israel who are fighting the enemy. May they be victorious!" – Amin Ismail*

*"Our prayers are with you. May G-d protect and watch over you. Long live Israel."*

The messages just kept coming. Again and again, religious Sunni Muslims from Somaliland expressed their willingness to pray for Jewish soldiers. Pause and consider that. In much of the Muslim world, public support for Israel is rare. Political rhetoric and decades of propaganda have fostered hostility toward the Jewish state. Yet here were Muslims openly praying for IDF soldiers – publicly, on a global platform. Even more striking, it happened during Ramadan, a time of devotion and compassion. As Muslims worldwide turned to G-d, Somalilanders included Jewish soldiers in their prayers. That is extraordinary – and deeply telling.

Located in the Horn of Africa along the Gulf of Aden, Somaliland declared independence in 1991. In three decades, it has built democratic institutions, held elections, and maintained stability in a turbulent region. Despite this, it remains unrecognized internationally. Israel, however, became the first to recognize it in December 2025. Both societies share similarities: they arose from difficulty, were built under pressure, and survive in tough neighborhoods. But beyond geopolitics lies something more important – mutual respect between people. The responses to my post weren't official statements. They were simple prayers from ordinary Somalilanders. And that's why they matter.

Even among Arab countries that have peace with Israel, few citizens would so openly pray for its soldiers. For decades, hostility between Israel and the Muslim world was seen as inevitable. But Somaliland offers another model – a Muslim-majority society that is pragmatic, outward-looking and open to cooperation. Here were individuals who answered a Jewish father's plea by asking Allah to protect his sons. That is more than a gesture. It's a glimpse of what relations between Israel and the Muslim world could one day become.

Sometimes diplomacy doesn't begin with treaties or official visits. Sometimes it begins somewhere far simpler: with a Jewish father asking for prayers, and Muslims answering that call.

\* Has served as Deputy Communications Director under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; veteran Jerusalem Post columnist and author of a weekly article for Arutz Sheva's Judaism section. [ed. note: I combined some paragraphs to conserve space.]

<https://www.jewishideas.org/node/3422>

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**Shabbos HaGadol Drasha 5781**  
**Simple Answers to Difficult Questions**  
by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine\* © 2021 Teach 613

As I was preparing for a recent parenting workshop, one request that was repeated by the parents was that I address the question: *"What messages would we like our children to walk away from the Seder with?"* I would like to adapt that question for the Drasha. *"What messages would we like—ourselves—to walk away from the Seder with?"* Indeed, sometimes we can

do all the Halachos correctly, know all the Midrashim perfectly, and still miss the point.

There are certainly many messages and lessons to be learned from Yetzias Mitzrayim, the story of the Exodus. I would like to focus on the three themes that are our Shul's slogan: Torah, Tefilla, and the Interpersonal.

### **TEFILLA (PRAYER):**

One of the most important principles of Judaism is the belief in a personal G-d. Not only is G-d the creator of heaven and earth; He also takes a personal interest in our lives. When we are in crisis, there is a specific mandate — a Mitzva — to turn to Hashem in prayer. Indeed, a significant lesson of Yetzias Mitzrayim is that eventually the enslavement was so unbearable that the Jews cried out in prayer. From that moment on, the Divine intervention begins towards redemption, first with charging Moshe with the mission to redeem the people, and then followed quickly by the plagues and actual redemption.

As Jews, we believe not only in national redemption, but in personal redemption as well. When the individual is in crisis there is a mandate — a Mitzvah — to call to Hashem in heartfelt prayer. Hashem hears our prayers and responds, sometimes in open, and sometimes in hidden ways. In fact, in our time of exile, the deliverance will often be couched in natural means. This only makes the miracle of intervention so much greater, as Hashem — master of all — is able to turn difficult situations around with ease, due to His mastery over everything.

I have often observed that the very founding of this country, the United States of America, required many such subtle, miraculous interventions. For example, when General Washington needed to evacuate his troops over muddy terrain to save them from a British ambush, Hashem sent great gusts of frigid weather to freeze the muddy paths and enable the fledgling Continental army to escape, regroup, and eventually win the war.

Rabbeinu Yona (Mishlei 3:6) writes that some people only pray when they are dealing with something that they consider “*really big*.” Otherwise, they are willing to leave things to “*chance*.” Rabbeinu Yona points out that this is a great mistake. Even if things turn out as they hoped, they have missed an opportunity to bond with Hashem through prayer.

### **INTERPERSONAL:**

It has often been noted that success and failure of the Jewish people is largely dependent on our unity. Our greatest moment, connecting to Hashem at Sinai, is prefaced with the message that the Jewish people encamped at the mountain, “*Like one*.” Similarly, in the story of the Exodus, the rise and fall rhythm of the Exodus depended on the Jewish people's interpersonal relationships.

When Moshe, a prince in the house of Paroh, first tried to reach out to the Jews and help them, he was rebuffed. Two men were quarreling; one of them lifted his hand to hit this fellow, and Moshe attempted to intervene and deescalate the conflict. These quarreling men respond to Moshe's overtures by reporting him to Paroh. Moshe exclaimed, “*Now I understand why we are in exile*.” When Moshe witnessed Jews ready to escalate conflicts and bad-mouth each other, He felt that he now understood the fall of the people into these intense afflictions.

The key to blessing and salvation depends on interpersonal relationships. The turning point was when Moshe was appointed to lead and redeem the people, and Ahron, his older brother, would go out to greet him with joy. The statement, “*He will see you, and he will rejoice*,” is the turning point in the story. Aharon, almost as a *Shaliach Tzibbur* representing the nation, will experience joy instead of jealousy in Moshe's prestigious appointment.

Aharon would be rewarded to wear the *Choshen Mishpat* adornment as a result of this experience. He became a prototype of what we hope Jews to be, as the Mishna in Avos states, “*Be a student of Aharon; pursue peace*.” This would set a new precedent for the Jewish people, quite different than the one Moshe encountered with the escalating conflict of the two men Moshe encountered, and the bad-mouthing that they did against him.

Interestingly, in describing the conflict of the two men, the Torah terms the one who raised his hand to strike his fellow, a “*Rasha*,” a wicked person. We wonder, what did the person do wrong? Are we not judged in this world by the actual deed, and not for merely contemplating doing a bad deed? Why is he already deemed wicked if all he did was lift his hand?

We suggest that just raising a hand to hit, already did much damage, damage enough to warrant the term “*Rasha*.” By lifting a hand to hit, this man had publicly expressed a standard to settle disputes, a standard of violence. This contributed to Moshe’s expression, “*Now I understand why we are in a bitter exile.*” Aharon, in contrast, would be rewarded with the Choshen Hamishpat breastplate. This is the same term “*Choshen Mishpat*” which is the section of *Shulchan Aruch* dealing with financial law and dispute resolution. Aside from reconciling who owes money to whom, the goal of Jewish law is that there should be peace and resolution between the litigants. In fact, the Rambam (*Introduction to Mishna*) writes that if a judge could fairly mediate a settlement without imposing “*The Law*” upon one litigant, the judge should indeed opt for the mediated settlement. Settlement is the highest form of resolving the interpersonal conflict.

The rhythm of rise and fall of the Jewish people in the years of the exile in Mitzrayim, is the same rhythm in the life of the Jewish people to our day. It has been said that communities do not succeed or fail based on financial wherewithal. Communities succeed or fail based on *Machlokes* and interpersonal relationships. Too often communities fall into the depths of attempting to settle differences through blame and bad-mouthing. Too often *Machlokes* rears its ugly head when individuals act on their hurt for not having been chosen. “*Notice me,*” the ego declares. Notice my wealth, my stature. Notice that I am a great Talmid Chochom. Aharon was all of these, but he rejoiced in Moshe’s appointment, and through that joy paved the way for the redemption of his day and eternal blessing.

## **TORAH:**

One of the primary features of the Seder is asking questions. Questions are so fundamental to the Pesach experience that the Talmud recommends doing many unusual things on Seder night, just to prompt questions. Questions, even without answers, are enormously valuable. In Torah study we sometimes find that a topic ends off with the term, “*Teiku,*” meaning, “*Let the matter stand as a question.*” A well formulated question quantifies and clarifies the matter to a great degree, even if we do not have an answer.

In fact, the Izbiter Rebbe (Parshas Yisro) indicates that the ability to ask questions highlights the difference between the idol worshipping religions and Judaism. The idol worshipping religions can hold everything – literally and figuratively — in their hands. In an idol worshipping religion everything is meant to be well crafted, understood, and manipulated by the human being. In contrast, Judaism acknowledges that we are mortal, finite and we will never truly understand Hashem; as He is immortal and infinite. Asking questions, and sometimes leaving questions unanswered if we do not have a good answer, is the mark of true human wisdom.

A classic example of this is the question, “*How could G-d have let the Holocaust happen?*” The question itself bespeaks great understanding. The question takes as a given that there is a G-d, and that He is benevolent and all powerful. The question also appreciates the concept of free choice, and that sometimes mankind makes bad decisions. The question that remains is, “*Why didn’t G-d intervene?*”

On Seder night in particular, but really throughout the Jewish experience, we see questions as the building block to wisdom. This is true even regarding questions that we cannot answer. The ability to articulate a question with wisdom is itself greatness. The ability to live with a question is also greatness, as it affirms our understanding of ourselves as mortal creatures standing before G-d, the Infinite.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

One of the greatest questions which the Hagadah prompts is from the words, “*Next Year in Jerusalem!*” words that we recite with great anticipation each year. These words prompt the question, “*When will it actually happen? When will the redemption of our times occur?*” The Mesilas Yesharim explains that although we do not know the answer to that question, the very fact that we ask the question is itself a bonding experience with Hashem, as we yearn to return to the beloved

relationship that once was. The Beis Hamikdash was a love palace between us and Hashem, and when we earnestly ask, “*When will we return?*” it is itself powerful, even as an unanswered question.

The themes of Torah, Prayer, and Interpersonal relationships are pillars of our lives, and are also good starting points to explore the themes of the Seder, of Pesach, and of national and personal redemption. May we merit to share good tidings with one another.

Wishing everyone a happy, Kosher, safe, and meaningful Pesach!

From my archives.

\* Rabbi Mordechai Rhine is a certified mediator and coach with Rabbinic experience of more than 20 years. Based in Maryland, he provides services internationally via Zoom. He is the Director of TEACH613: Building Torah Communities, One family at a Time, and the founder of CARE Mediation, focused on Marriage/ Shalom Bayis and personal coaching. To reach Rabbi Rhine, his websites are [www.care-mediation.com](http://www.care-mediation.com) and [www.teach613.org](http://www.teach613.org); his email is [RMRhine@gmail.com](mailto:RMRhine@gmail.com).  
**For information or to join any Torah613 classes, or to help sponsor his Torah insights, contact Rabbi Rhine.**

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## **Pesach – The Wisdom To Appreciate**

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer \* (5782)

The four sons, their questions and the scripted responses take a place of prominence in the Haggadah. Before we even begin discussing the details of the story, we are instructed that the Seder night is for each and every Jew. We are guided on how to best respond to each Jew according to their individual needs and how best to connect them with the message of the evening.

There are many nuances to their questions and the responses, and many lessons to be learned. One point of much discussion is the inference in the question of the wicked son. He asks “*What is this service to you?*” The author of the Haggadah tells us that since he has worded his question in the second person, he has excluded himself from the service of the Seder. He is clearly stating that the service is “for you” and not for him. If we consider the question of the wise son he appears to be guilty of the same error. He asks “*What are these testimonies, statutes and laws that Hashem, our G-d, has commanded you?*” He too states clearly that the commandments were directed to you. Why don’t we say that he too is excluding himself from the Seder?

The Kli Yakar, in his commentary on the Chumash (Shemos 13:14), offers an answer to this question, which I believe defines for us the essence of the message of the Pesach Seder, and what we can take away from the evening. The Kli Yakar notes that the Torah introduces the wise son’s question differently from the wicked son’s. The Torah introduces the wise son’s question by saying “*And it will be when your son will ask you tomorrow*” (Devarim 6:20). This phrase is absent when discussing the wicked son.

The Kli Yakar explains that herein lies the difference between the two questioners. The wicked son is not wrong in recognizing that his parents understand the meaning of the Seder in a way that he does not. He is correct in asking his parents what meaning they find in the service. However, his timing shows that his intent is evil. He is sitting there at the Seder, while everyone is preparing to engage in the mitzvos of the evening, and he stops. Right then and there he turns to his parents and says, why is this important to you? His wording as he is sitting at the Seder clearly states that despite knowing how important this evening is to his family and to Hashem, it is of no importance to him. He cannot accept to do something because it is important to someone else. The action must be inherently important to him, or he wants no part of it. He cannot act for the sake of the relationship – neither with G-d nor with his parents. For this selfish, short-sighted attitude we tell him that he is on the wrong track in life. So much so, that had he been in Egypt, he would not have been redeemed.

The wise son, however, asks his question tomorrow. At the Seder, he was ready to engage in the experience of the evening because he knows that it is important to Hashem. However, once he has experienced it and still does not understand it, he wisely seeks to understand. With humility and faith, he comes to his parents and asks to understand why this is important to G-d. He wants to better understand his relationship with G-d and how to connect with G-d.

I heard said in the name of the Dubno Maggid that we see this distinction from the phrasing of their questions, as well. The wicked son asks *“What is this service to you?”* The wise son, however, asks *“What are these testimonies, statutes and laws that Hashem our G-d has commanded you?”* The wise son understands what the service is to his parents. It is the service that G- has commanded. His question is a deeper one – he seeks to understand what meaning it has that G-d should command it.

I believe this message is the core of the Pesach Seder. We gather every year, reviewing the story of our slavery and redemption, to understand that we have a relationship with G-d. This is the initial answer we give to the four questions. We respond saying that we were slaves in Egypt, and had G-d not redeemed us, then we BS”D today would still be slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Therefore, we are gathering here tonight and doing things differently from other nights. No matter how well we know the story, we need to stop and review every year, to recognize that we ourselves were destined to be slaves, and we ourselves were redeemed with the Exodus.

After the four sons, as we resume the story of our history going back now to the very beginning with Avrohom, we state this message clearly with *“And this is that which stood.”* We have been persecuted and challenged in every generation. Yet, this message of the Pesach Seder is what has stood by us and given us strength throughout each and every generation. The purpose of redemption from Egypt was not only that we should leave Egyptian bondage. G-d was displaying his commitment to our physical and spiritual salvation. He ensured that we survived and thrived, becoming a vast and mighty people even while enslaved in Egypt, and then freed us, carried us, raised us and taught us to become His nation. G-d did this for us then, and He does it for us in every generation. *“In every generation they stand upon us to annihilate us, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, saves us from their hands.”*

The message is clear. G-d loves us and cares about us. Even before we accepted the Torah, G-d is showing His love, care and concern for us, and committing Himself to a relationship with us. The message of the Seder is to recognize and appreciate that love and commitment. A love and commitment which is not only for our ancestors, but is for us, as well. The importance of our mitzvos is far beyond what they accomplish. The importance of our mitzvos is, as the wise son understands, that they fulfill G-d’s purpose in His world. How and why they are important to G-d are details. The accomplishment for me is not what my actions achieve, but that I displayed my love and respect for G-d, as He has done for us.

This idea is further illustrated in the verses we expound upon detailing the story of the Exodus. The verses are from the service of the Bikkurim – the first fruits of the harvest which a farmer brings to the Temple. When the farmer arrives and presents his produce, he is instructed to recite these verses. Each year, after harvesting his crop, he brings the first to the Temple and declares aloud how his ancestors were slaves, G-d redeemed them and now he instead finds himself a landowner working his own field. He concludes his declaration saying *“And now behold I have brought the first fruits of the land that You have given me, G-d.”* These verses we are reading at the Seder are verses intended to describe an individual’s understanding of G-d’s involvement in their personal life and that any and all successes are direct gifts from G-d. An understanding stemming from the recognition that we would be slaves, if not for the fact that G-d wants us to be here. We express this again with *“Dayeinu.”* We begin with the Exodus and culminate with the Temple, recognizing that each step was a gift which was already enough for us to recognize G-d’s love for us and kindness to us. We then reiterate and repeat how much more we need to recognize G-d’s kindness and love now that G-d has indeed done all of these for us. After explaining the messages of the mitzvos of the evening we then conclude the Maggid section of the Haggadah by stating this principle explicitly. The Seder is not a commemoration of national history. Rather, in each and every generation, no matter how far removed that generation may be from the original event, every Jew is obligated to see themselves as if they left Egypt. Each and every one of us must recognize and appreciate that G-d saved our ancestors from Egyptian slavery in order that we should be free from Egypt today. This is the essence of the Seder – to recognize G-d’s relationship with us today.

As the Kli Yakar says of the wise son, our entire understanding of and commitment to Torah and mitzvos is built upon this foundation. We are Jews, committed to G-d and His Torah, because G-d loves us and we love Him and care about what's important to Him – simply because we know it is important to Him. May we all merit to learn the message of the Seder, and thereby merit to bring joy and nachas to our Father in Heaven.

\* Co-founder of the Rhode Island Torah Network in Providence, RI. Until recently, Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD., and then associated with the Savannah Kollel.

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## Starting Seder Early

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia \* (5783)

[ed. note: Rabbi Ovadia presents an analysis according to Sephardic tradition. An Ashkenazi family should consult or verify with their Rabbi for a young child friendly opinion consistent with Ashkenazi tradition. From Rabbi Dov Linzer: <https://library.yctora.org/2026/03/preparing-for-the-second-seder-on-the-first-day-of-yom-tov/> ]

Q: As much as I have tried, I cannot keep my kids from falling asleep halfway through the Seder. Is there an opinion which allows starting the Seder early?

A: This is a common problem, and since the whole idea of the Seder is to convey the message of the Exodus to the children, it is a shame that they would be the ones to miss that experience.

There is indeed a tendency to start the Seder late and stretch it almost indefinitely. If not for the requirement to eat the Afikomen before midnight (to be discussed in a future post), I believe people would have carried on with the Haggadah until dawn. Some people enjoy this kind of Seder and they are entitled to it, but when the participants at a Seder, whether they are children or adults, are at risk of losing the whole experience because of fatigue, a solution should be presented. That solution exists, and it appears in none other than the Tur Orah Hayyim (472), the Halakhic compilation by Rabbenu Yaakov ben Rabbenu Asher:

*One should have the table set in advance in order to eat at nightfall... since it is a Mitzvah to eat as soon as possible so the children will not fall asleep... one cannot eat before darkness because the time for eating Matzah is at night.*

It is true that some commentators did not feel comfortable with the Tur's ruling that the Seder could start that early. They have interpreted his statement as referring to the first eating of the night, which is the dipping of the celery, or karpas. However, it is clear from the phrasing of the Tur that he refers to the eating of the matzah itself. First, he says that the reason for starting early is that the children will not fall asleep, and if we wait for darkness to start the Kiddush, we have gained nothing. Secondly, and more importantly, he says: "one cannot eat Matzah before darkness", meaning that other things, such as Kiddush and karpas, could be consumed before darkness.

The definition of darkness is contested in Halakah and it varies between 50 and 72 minutes after sunset. However, the simplest tool to measure darkness is our eyesight.

Conclusion: The earliest you could eat Matzah is after darkness. Calculate the time of darkness in your area, either by adding 50-72 minutes to sunset, or by going outside the night before Pesah to see when it gets dark. Then figure out how much time you need to get from the Kiddush to איצום הצמ – the point in the Haggadah where we eat the Matzah and start your Seder so you will be able to eat Matzah after it gets dark.

Shabbat Shalom.

\* Judaic faculty, Ramaz High School, New York; also Torah VeAhava. Until recently, Rabbi, Beth Sholom Sephardic Minyan (Potomac, MD). Faculty member, AJRCA non-denominational rabbinical school). **Many of Rabbi Ovadia's Devrei Torah are now available on Sefaria: <https://www.sefaria.org/profile/haim-ovadia?tab=sheets>** . The Sefaria

articles include Hebrew text, which I must delete because of issues changing software formats. Rabbi Ovadia retains all rights (copyright) to this and all other Devrei Torah that he permits me to share.

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## **The Great Night Cometh** by Rabbi Moshe Rube\* (5781)

Seder night with all its promises and potentials soon will be upon us. I'm sure you're excited.

But maybe you're also a tad nervous. There's still so much to do, so much to clean, so much to organize. And what of the Seder itself? Some people at the Seder will want to talk about the philosophy of freedom and the making of the Jewish people, while others will be salivating at the thought of the matzah. (The round ones can be quite tasty!)

To lead a Seder is more art than science. To be at a seder is to be a color in the painting. How will it unfold? It depends on the dynamic interplay between everyone. You have to believe that you'll know what to do. When to dwell on a passage, when to ask a question, when to acknowledge everyone's hunger and MOVE. It's not about having a set of things that you have to say. That's already taken care of with our standard haggadah. It's about being a dynamic part of the give and take that's being created on this unique night.

So in that spirit allow me to contribute not with a set Dvar Torah, but with questions you can dwell on if you so choose. After all, questions is how we're supposed to learn on Seder night. The Talmud states that even a great Torah scholar must go through the Exodus with questions.

- 1) If Chametz is such a bad thing, why do we only get rid of it this time of year?
- 2) How can the Haggadah call Matzah both the "bread of affliction" and "Bread of redemption" (when it says it's a symbol of how we were rushed out of Egypt so fast)? How can it be both?
- 3) How do we attain freedom of the spirit? Through rituals? Through our power of speech? How does our speaking at the Seder help transform us into free people? Could this be the key to the Matzah's transformation?

The Arizal says that questions humble us making it the best way to learn new things. If we believe we know everything already, how can we learn anything? So feel free to think about these questions and add a few of your own. As you let them sit, new insights may pop into your head which will make you that much more of a contributing artist on Saturday night.

May your Seder be transformative for you and for all of Israel. Chag Kosher Visameach!

\* Rabbi Rube wrote this Dvar when he was Rabbi at Knesseth Israel in Birmingham, AL. He then served as Senior Rabbi at the Auckland (New Zealand) Hebrew Congregation for three years. He has accepted a new position at a shul in Australia and is waiting for a visa so he can move to Australia and start that position. I am reprinting this Dvar from my archives.

\* Rabbi Kaszovitz is now posting his Devrei Torah and classes on You Tube: <https://youtube.com/c/TheNairobiShul> .

[Editor's note: If you became Rabbi of the only synagogue in a small, isolated Jewish community, at what level would you direct your Shabbat message for the congregation?]

\*\* Rabbi Kaszovitz, an Israeli ordained at Ohr Torah Stone, previously served as Rabbi in Nairobi, Kenya. He became Rabbi of Auckland Hebrew Congregation in September 2025. Rabbi Moshe Rube, whose remarks I previously posted in this space, is in the process of starting a new Rabbinic position in Australia. Rabbi Rube is waiting for his visa to enter

Australia, when he will be able to start his new position. I plan to use this space to include messages from Rabbi Kaszovitz and Rabbi Rube going forward.

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## **Rav Kook Torah**

### **Passover: The Second Seder in Jerusalem**

In the spring of 1934, many Jewish tourists from Europe and the United States traveled to Eretz Yisrael for the Passover holiday. Hundreds ascended to Jerusalem, excited to celebrate the festival in the holy city.

The Jewish National Fund, wishing to properly welcome these guests — and potential donors — decided to organize a Seder for them on the second day (Yom Tov Sheini) of Passover. In order to attract religious Jews, the JNF approached the Chief Rabbi, requesting that he sponsor the event and supervise the kashruth of the festive meal.

Ordinarily, Rav Kook was only too happy to help the JNF and promote the redemption of land in Eretz Yisrael. On this occasion, however, he refused. He was not willing to take part in organizing a second Seder in Jerusalem. Observing the holiday for an additional day — that is for Jews residing in the Diaspora, he explained. We who live in the Land of Israel must protect the honor of Eretz Yisrael. Why did Rav Kook oppose a public second Seder so vehemently?

Like many other Halakhic authorities in Jerusalem, he favored the opinion of the Hakham Tzvi,<sup>1</sup> who ruled that tourists visiting in Eretz Yisrael should conduct themselves like local residents and observe only one day of Yom Tov. In practice, he would tell visitors from outside of Israel that they should recite the regular weekday prayers on the second day of Yom Tov, and observe Yom Tov Sheini only by avoiding forbidden work and not eating hametz (leavened bread) on the eighth day of Passover.

Yet this ruling was difficult for many religious Jews to accept. They were accustomed to attending the holiday services on the second day of Yom Tov. And the second Passover Seder was particularly important to them. How could they skip one year, knowing that the following festival they would once again be observing two days of Yom Tov?

Once, a visiting rabbi from Pressburg arrived in Jerusalem and sought Rav Kook's counsel as to what he should do on the second day of Yom Tov. When Rav Kook heard the question, he gave a pained look. *"Most tourists don't even ask. And the few who do ask do not abide by my ruling. So why should I give a ruling?"* It was only after the visitor persisted, promising to follow the Chief Rabbi's decision, that Rav Kook gave his ruling, as described above.

*"Imagine,"* Rav Kook noted, *"if ten Jews from Israel were to walk into a synagogue in a city in the Diaspora on the second day of Yom Tov and publicly don tefillin and pray the weekday service. Would there not be an uproar?"*

The rule in such a case is that a Jew from Israel should pray the weekday prayers and don tefillin in private. Publicly, he should wear holiday attire and outwardly observe the holiday. Why then do the Jews of Diaspora fail to understand, even if they choose not to follow the ruling of the Hakham Tzvi, that the honor of Eretz Yisrael requires them to observe the second day of Yom Tov in private? Yet they insist on organizing public festival prayers on the second day — even at the Kotel!

#### **Rav Kook's Condition**

The JNF representatives, who realized that the Chief Rabbi's participation was critical for the success of their Seder, deliberated how to overcome his opposition to the plan. In the end they approached one of the older students in his yeshiva with the proposal: for a substantial fee, the student would supervise the Seder. They stipulated, however, that he must secure Rav Kook's approval for the event.

The young scholar, unaware of Rav Kook's previous refusal, happily accepted the proposition. The amount offered was sufficient to provide for his family's needs for several months. He hurried to the Rav to gain his approval. Rav Kook now

faced a difficult dilemma. Always sensitive to the needs of others, he knew how important this extra income was to the young scholar and his family. But what about the honor of Eretz Yisrael?

After considering the matter for a few moments, Rav Kook's face lit up. "Please tell the JNF," he replied, "that I too have a condition. If they are willing to accede, I will give my hechsher and authorize the event." The rabbi continued: "My condition is that they invite the band of the Jerusalem Institute for the Blind to play music at the Seder. Any publicity for the JNF Seder must prominently advertise the band's participation." "After all," he beamed, "everyone knows that musical instruments are not played on a Jewish holiday. A Passover Seder with a band playing in the background — that is not a real Seder!"

(*Stories from the Land of Israel*. Adapted from *Mo'adei HaRe'iyah*, pp. 143-145, 324-325.

1 Rabbi Tzvi Ashkenazi (1656-1718), known as the Hakham Tzvi, served as the Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam and authored a celebrated collection of legal responsa.

[Ed. note: to conserve space, I combined some paragraphs]

<https://ravkooktorah.org/passover-72>

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**Pesach: A Prayer for the Thirteen Imprisoned Iranian Jews**  
**Address at the Prayer Meeting held in Bevis Marks Synagogue**  
By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, Former UK Chief Rabbi\* (April 11, 2000)

*[In April 2000 Rabbi Sacks delivered an address at an emergency Prayer Meeting, held in Bevis Marks while news of the Iranian Jewish prisoners filled worldwide Jewry with grave concern for these thirteen people. Here is the transcript of the address that Rabbi Sacks gave to the congregation, before leading them in prayer.]*

It is with a sense of deep foreboding that we join our prayers tonight with those of many others throughout the world, on behalf of the 13 members of the Jewish community of Iran facing trial under circumstances that cry out for protest in the name of justice and human rights.

On their behalf and yours, I thank the convenors of this evening's service, Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy and the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Community, together with the Board of Deputies of British Jews, not only for this gathering but also for their constant efforts, no less forceful for being often behind the scenes, throughout the past year. I welcome also the members of the Christian community who are with us tonight, among them Rev. Canon Colin Fletcher, representing the Archbishop of Canterbury. We thank you for adding your voice to ours as we pray *mi-ma'amakim* - "from the depths" - of our distress.

Our concern is simple. Thirteen members of the Iranian Jewish community, teachers, community workers, and religious leaders, have been accused of spying for the State of Israel; for a year ten of them have been in prison; and now they face trial and a possible sentence of death.

These charges are groundless and unsubstantiated. Indeed, after a year of imprisonment, still no formal charges have been brought. Until days ago, the individuals concerned were denied the freedom to appoint their own lawyers. There are still no guarantees that independent observers, whether from the media or human rights organisations, will be allowed access to the proceedings when they take place.

The entire process has been a travesty of all we know by the name of justice - impartiality, fairness, transparency. We must say, candidly and categorically, that any judicial proceeding that hides itself from the light of day does not deserve the name of justice.

None of us can be unaware of the terrible historical resonances of this case. We are within days of the Jewish festival of Pesach. For centuries, at this time of the year, Jews lived in fear of the appalling accusation known to history as the “Blood Libel,” as a result of which Jews were tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death on a charge which we now know – indeed, which most people knew even then – to be wholly fictitious.

And which of us can forget that it was another trial – another false accusation of espionage – that signalled to Jews, just over a hundred years ago – that they were no longer safe even in modern Europe. I refer, of course, to the Dreyfus trial, that shameful episode in French history and one of the turning-points in the tragic tale of antisemitism.

What was common to these and other such accusations over the course of almost a thousand years was that the accused were tried and found guilty – not for any crime, nor for any wrongdoing, but solely and simply because they were Jews; they were different; they belonged to a powerless minority. Heaven forbid that it should happen again as we begin the twenty-first century.

Today, therefore, I call on religious leaders of all faiths, in all countries, to speak out and intercede in the name of justice and human rights – because all it takes for evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing.

There is a line from the Bible and our prayers that has long puzzled thoughtful minds. *Naar hayiti gam zakanti velo raiti tzaddik ne'ezav. “I was young, and now am old, and I have not seen the righteous forsaken.”* How can that be so, given the many injustices of history?

The answer lies in a book we read just three weeks ago on the festival of Purim – the book of Esther, set in ancient Persia, in the land that is now Iran. Pleading on behalf of her people, Esther says: *Eichachah uchal veraiti bera'ah asher yimtza et ami.* This means not, “How can I see the evil that is about to befall my people?” but rather, “How can I stand still and watch?”

The phrase *lo raiti* does not mean, “I have not seen.” It means that when the righteous were in danger of being forsaken, “I never stood by and just watched. I was never a mere silent witness.” That is our declaration tonight.

For a year, political leaders and statesmen throughout the world have engaged in diplomatic efforts on behalf of the thirteen; so far, sadly, to little avail. Therefore tonight we turn our eyes to Heaven; we lift our voices in prayer. We say:

*Ribbono Shel Olam, Sovereign of the world, You who taught us to pursue justice and fight for freedom, grant justice to the thirteen young men who are being denied both. For their sake, for ours, and for Yours, as we approach zeman cheruteinu, the Festival of Freedom, may they, at last, go free.*

<https://rabbisacks.org/archive/a-prayer-for-the-thirteen-imprisoned-iranian-jews/> Note: because Likutei Torah and the Internet Parsha Sheet, both attached by E-mail, normally include the two most recent Devrei Torah by Rabbi Sacks, I normally select an earlier Devar. This week, as we prepare for Pesach, I decided to select a Pesach message from Rabbi Sacks rather than a Devar Torah on Tzav.

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## What Is the Key to a Good Life?

By Aharon Loschak \*

“*Money doesn't buy happiness,*” someone told me the other day, as I rolled my eyes and internally chuckled at one of the oldest clichés in the book. But then he added, “*But money does buy a jet ski. And have you ever seen anyone not smiling on a jet ski?*”

So does that mean it's not true? Of course not. It's just hard to keep front and center of our consciousness. And the more successful we are (thank G d), the harder it becomes to not get carried away with the satisfaction and perceived security that financial stability can bring.

It's specifically at those times that it's most important to remember the truth: there is more to life than financial success. How do we keep that in mind? By keeping conscious of where the money really comes from.

### **A Flour Offering that Doesn't Rise**

Parshat Tzav contains many details about sacrifices. Most of them were animals, but one type of sacrifice described in our parshah was the minchah offering, made of flour and oil. And like many animal sacrifices, the entire flour offering wasn't consumed on the altar; much of it was left behind for the priests to eat.

The way it worked was the priest would take out a fistful of flour that was then offered on the altar. One unique feature of this flour offering was that much like the matzah we eat on Passover, it wasn't allowed to become chametz — leaven.

The portion of flour not offered on the altar was left for the priest and his family, who would eat it. They were required to handle the holy flour mixture with the reverence afforded to all sacrificial food (e.g., not eating it while ritually impure). In other words, even the part eaten at home was a sort of quasi-sacrifice.

It is in this context that the Torah warns that just like the offering burned on the altar, the portion eaten at home couldn't become chametz:

*And Aaron and his sons shall eat whatever is left from it. It shall be eaten as unleavened bread in a holy place . . . It is a holy of holies, like the sin offering and like the guilt offering.<sup>1</sup>*

What is the significance of this detail? Why was the part consumed by the priests given the same status as the part burned on the altar? They're not the same thing — one was to G d, the other was eaten by humans?

### **Holy Life and Regular Life**

The simple answer is because they should be the same: The part we eat should absolutely be the same as the part offered to G d. To explain, we must understand this entire story of flour offering as a metaphor for Jewish life in general. You see, there are those times akin to the small fistful burned on the altar to G d. These are the times when we pray, do a mitzvah, give money to charity, or do a favor for someone.

And as it worked in the Temple, so it does in our lives. As you recall, once the portion was offered to G d, the priests were allowed to eat the rest of the flour offering in their private homes in a state of quasi-sanctity. So it is with us: when we take the time to engage in those holier, spiritually charged moments, it gives a stamp of approval for the rest of our private day.

In other words — when done properly — the more spiritually attuned times of our day influences the rest of the day and render it as part of a broader picture of a person whose life is devoted to G d.

### **Private Life Shan't Become Chametz**

It is here the notion that the portion eaten at home cannot become chametz is important:

When life is such that there are parts offered to G d and other parts only “eaten in sanctity” but still largely “regular” and “me-time,” it's easy to fall into the “*chametz trap*.” What's the “chametz trap?” Chametz is famously puffed up, a fully risen loaf of bread — representing ego and self-reliance.

So, when you're doing spiritual stuff, it's relatively easy to avoid chametz. When contemplating G d, it's not so difficult to avoid ego and that sense of "I'm in charge, and I'm the product of my own success." But when you're going about your regular day, well, that's you. You're making it all happen, and it's easy to forget G d and let the ego come roaring in. You've fallen into the chametz trap.

The Torah reminds us that even the part the priests ate on their own must not become chametz. The private "me moments" of life are also ultimately part of a wholesome life dedicated to something higher, and they should be conducted with humility and G dly awareness.

### **Money Doesn't Buy Happiness. G d Does**

Should a person sit at home and pray all day, waiting for G d to shower you with goodness? Of course not.

Work hard, and absolutely make a broad, wide-open receptacle through which you can receive G d's blessing. Like the flour sacrifice, only a portion of it was actually consumed on the altar for G d, so don't get carried away turning into a secluded saint or an ascetic who needs nothing. There was a whole portion eaten at home, in the priest's private dining room. So you do the same. But remember not to let it become chametz. Retain the humility that comes with being devoted to G d the entire day. Render your entire day an act of divine service. Yes, as you close that multi-million dollar deal you've been working on for three years, you remember that it's G d who's guiding you here, not just your own brilliance.

And then, your entire day is holy, free of any trace of chametz.<sup>2</sup>

### **FOOTNOTES:**

1. Leviticus 6:9-10.
2. Inspired by a teaching of the Rebbe, recorded in Reshimot vol. 13.

[Note: some paragraphs combined to conserve space.]

\* Writer, editor, and rabbi; also editor of JLI's popular Torah Studies program.

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/5427164/jewish/What-Is-the-Key-to-a-Good-Life.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5427164/jewish/What-Is-the-Key-to-a-Good-Life.htm)

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## **Tzav: Heavenly Salt** By Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky

*G-d instructed Moses regarding the sin-offerings, guilt-offerings, and ascent-offerings. All of them must be offered up with salt.*

The fact that offerings were accompanied by salt teaches us that our approach to G-d must incorporate the various properties of salt:

- Taste: Salt brings out the taste in foods. Thus, salt is compared to the inner dimension of the Torah, the study of which adds vitality and "taste" to our observance of the Torah's laws.

- Permanence: Salt is a preservative; it itself never decays. Similarly, our approach to G-d must be consistent and persistent. This is achieved when we stir the essence of our soul and reveal our super-rational love for G-d.

• Cleansing: Salt is a cleanser and disinfectant. Similarly, our approach to G-d must be accompanied by an attempt to purge our lives of all negative forces.

• Healing: The prophet Elisha healed the poison water of Jericho with salt. Similarly, our approach to G-d must serve to “heal” our animal drives, by eliminating their materialistic orientation and directing them toward Divinity.

--From Kehot's *Daily Wisdom* Vol. 3

\* Insights by **the Lubavitcher Rebbe** on the weekly parashat from Chabad's *Daily Wisdom* 3 by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky.

Gut Shabbos,

Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman  
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Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah  
via the Internet

Shabbat Shalom

Volume 32, Issue 24

Shabbat HaGadol Parashat Tzav

5786 B"H

## Covenant and Conversation

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

### Violence and the Sacred

Why sacrifices? To be sure, they have not been part of the life of Judaism since the destruction of the Second Temple, almost two thousand years ago. But why, if they are a means to an end, did God choose this end? This is, of course, one of the deepest questions in Judaism, and there are many answers. Here I want to explore just one, first given by the early fifteenth-century Jewish thinker, Rabbi Joseph Albo, in his *Sefer HaIkkarim*.

Albo's theory took as its starting point not sacrifices but two other questions. The first: Why after the Flood did God permit human beings to eat meat? (Gen. 9:3–5). Initially, neither human beings nor animals had been meat-eaters (Gen. 1:29–30). What caused God to, as it were, change His mind? The second: What was wrong with the first act of sacrifice, Cain's offering of "some of the fruits of the soil" (Gen. 4:3–5)? God's rejection of that offering led directly to the first murder, when Cain killed Abel. What was at stake in the difference between the offerings Cain and Abel each brought to God?

Albo believed that killing animals for food is inherently wrong. It involves taking the life of a sentient being to satisfy our needs. Cain also knew this to be true. He believed there was a strong kinship between humans and other animals. That is why he offered not an animal sacrifice, but a vegetable one. His error, according to Albo, is that he should have brought fruit, not vegetables – the highest, not the lowest, of non-meat produce. Abel, by contrast, believed that there was a qualitative difference between people and animals. Had God not told the first humans: "Rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28)? That is why Abel brought an animal sacrifice.

Once Cain saw that Abel's sacrifice had been accepted while his own was not, he reasoned thus: if God, who forbids us to kill animals for food, permits and even favours killing an animal as a sacrifice, and if, as Cain believed, there is no ultimate difference between human beings and animals, then I shall offer the

highest living being as a sacrifice to God, namely my brother Abel. According to this reasoning, says Rabbi Albo, Cain killed Abel as a human sacrifice.

That is why God permitted meat-eating after the Flood. Before the Flood, the world had been "filled with violence." Perhaps violence is an inherent part of human nature. If humanity were to be allowed to exist at all, God would have to lower His demands. Let humans kill animals, He said, rather than killing human beings – the one form of life that is not only God's creation but also in God's image. Hence the otherwise almost unintelligible sequence of verses after Noah and his family emerge on dry land:

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings upon it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart, "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood..." Gen. 8:20–21

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them...

"Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything... Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made humanity."

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; I allow them all to you, like green plants. But... one who sheds the blood of man – by man shall his blood be shed, for in God's image man was made. Gen. 9:1–6

According to Albo, the logic of the passage is clear. Noah offers an animal sacrifice in thanksgiving for having survived the Flood. God sees that human beings need this way of expressing themselves. They are genetically predisposed to violence ("every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood"). If society is to survive, humans will need to be able to direct their violence towards non-human animals, whether as food or sacrificial offerings. The crucial line to be drawn is between human and non-human. The permission to kill animals is accompanied by an absolute prohibition against killing human beings, "for in the image of God has God made humanity."

It is not that God approves of killing animals, whether for sacrifice or food, but that to forbid this to human beings, given their genetic predisposition to bloodshed, is utopian. It is not for now but for the end of days. Until then, the least bad solution is to let people kill animals rather than murder their fellow humans. Animal sacrifices are a concession to human nature.[1] Sacrifices are a substitute for violence directed against humankind.

The contemporary thinker who has done most to revive this understanding is French-American literary critic and philosophical anthropologist René Girard, in such books as *Violence and the Sacred*, *The Scapegoat*, and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. The common denominator in sacrifices, he argues, is:

...internal violence – all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric. Everything else derives from that.[2]

The worst form of violence within and between societies is vengeance, "an interminable, infinitely repetitive process." This is in line with Hillel's saying, on seeing a human skull floating on water: "Because you drowned others, they drowned you, and those who drowned you will in the end themselves be drowned." Mishnah Avot 2:7

There is no natural end to the cycle of retaliation and revenge. The Montagues keep killing and being killed by the Capulets. So do the Tattaglias and the Corleones, and the other feuding groups in fiction and history. It is a destructive cycle that has devastated whole communities. According to Girard, this was the problem that religious ritual was developed

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to resolve. The primary religious act, he says, is the sacrifice, and the primary sacrifice is the scapegoat. If tribes A and B, who have been fighting, can sacrifice a member of tribe C, then both will have sated their desire for bloodshed without inviting revenge, especially if tribe C is in no position to retaliate. Sacrifices divert the destructive energy of violent reciprocity.

Why then, if violence is embedded in human nature, are sacrifices a feature of ancient rather than modern societies? Because, argues Girard, there is another and more effective way of ending vengeance:

Vengeance is a vicious circle whose effect on primitive societies can only be surmised. For us the circle has been broken. We owe our good fortune to one of our social institutions above all: our judicial system, which serves to deflect the menace of vengeance. The system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it effectively limits itself to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority specialising in this particular function. The decisions of the judiciary are invariably presented as the final word on vengeance.[3]

Girard's terminology here is not one to which we can subscribe. Justice is not vengeance. Retribution is not revenge. Revenge is inherently I-Thou, or We-Them. It is personal. Retribution is impersonal. It is no longer the Montagues versus the Capulets, but both under the impartial judgement of the law. But Girard's substantive point is correct and essential. The only effective antidote to violence is the rule of law.

Girard's theory confirms the view of Albo. Sacrifice (as with meat-eating) entered Judaism as a substitute for violence. It also helps us understand the profound insight of the Prophets that sacrifices are not ends in themselves, but part of the Torah's programme to create a world redeemed from the otherwise interminable cycle of revenge. The other part of that programme, and God's greatest desire, is a world governed by justice. That, we recall, was His first charge to Abraham, to "instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just" (Gen. 18:19).

Have we therefore moved beyond that stage in human history in which animal sacrifices have a point? Has justice become a powerful enough reality that we no longer need religious rituals to divert the violence between human beings? Sadly, the answer is no. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Cold War, led some thinkers to argue that we had reached "the end of history." There would be no more ideologically driven wars. Instead, the world

would turn to the market economy and liberal democracy.[4]

The reality was radically different. There were waves of ethnic conflict and violence in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, and Rwanda, followed by even bloodier conflicts throughout the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia. In his book *The Warrior's Honour*, Michael Ignatieff offered the following explanation of why this happened:

The chief moral obstacle in the path of reconciliation is the desire for revenge. Now, revenge is commonly regarded as a low and unworthy emotion, and because it is regarded as such, its deep moral hold on people is rarely understood. But revenge – morally considered – is a desire to keep faith with the dead, to honour their memory by taking up their cause where they left off. Revenge keeps faith between generations...

This cycle of intergenerational recrimination has no logical end... But it is the very impossibility of intergenerational vengeance that locks communities into the compulsion to repeat... Reconciliation has no chance against vengeance unless it respects the emotions that sustain vengeance, unless it can replace the respect entailed in vengeance with rituals in which communities once at war learn to mourn their dead together.

Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honour: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience* (Toronto: Penguin, 2006), pp. 188–190.

Far from speaking to an age long gone and forgotten, the laws of sacrifice tell us three things as important now as then: First, violence is still part of human nature, never more dangerous than when combined with an ethic of revenge. Second, rather than denying its existence, we must find ways of redirecting it so that it does not claim yet more human sacrifices. Third, the only ultimate alternative to sacrifices, animal or human, is the one first propounded millennia ago by the Prophets of ancient Israel, few more powerfully than Amos:

Even though you bring Me burnt offerings and offerings of grain,

I will not accept them...

But let justice roll down like a river,

And righteousness like a never-failing stream. Amos 5:23–24

[1] *On why God never chooses to change human nature*, see Rambam, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, III:32.

[2] *Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 8.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[4] *Francis Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

### Some Pre- Pesach Thoughts of Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

#### Chametz & Matzah, Overcoming Evil Inclinations [Excerpt]

The first Mishnah of Tractate Pesachim begins: On the evening of the 14th of Nissan, we search for chametz by candlelight. Rashi says that the search for chametz is carried out in order to prevent us from transgressing two commandments: that we should not see chametz or find it in our domain, which would imply that the command to destroy the chametz is Biblical. We know however that this is not the case. The Torah says:

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; but on the previous day you shall put away (tashbitu) leaven out of your houses; for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day you shall have a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be done in them, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for on that day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall you observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner or one that is born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations you shall eat unleavened bread (Exodus 12:15-20).

The word tashbitu is usually understood to mean "to destroy". The Targum Onkelos (Third Century translation of the Bible into Aramaic) translates it as "you must nullify in your hearts". This is done by making a declaration nullifying our chametz and pronouncing it to be ownerless like the dust of the earth.

The Talmud (Pesachim 4b) states that bitul be'alma sagei – a declaration of nullification of the chametz stating that it has no value for you is sufficient. So why do we go through the whole process of cleaning the house for Pesach, concluding with the destruction of the chametz?

The Ran (Rabbi Nissim ben Reuven 1320-1380) says if you nullify the chametz, that is sufficient to fulfill your Biblical obligation, but if you do not nullify it, then you have to make the search for chametz and you have to destroy it the following day. The Ri (Rashi's grandson,

Rabbi Isaac ben Shmuel) agrees, but he says that because the laws of chametz are so stringent – even the tiniest quantity of chametz will render any dish forbidden for Pesach and since for the rest of the year chametz is permitted – so we do not spontaneously recoil from it as we do with other forbidden substances – in addition to the biblical requirement to nullify it, there is a rabbinical command to search for it and destroy it. This is the mainstream approach, which is also taken by the Rambam.

But this approach raises two important questions:

If the search for and destruction of the chametz is not a Biblical command, but only a rabbinical requirement, why does the first Mishnah in Pesachim start with it instead of with the Biblical prohibitions as is the pattern in most Talmudic tractates?

Why should the laws of chametz be so strict? We understand that when the Jews left Egypt there was little time to bake bread and so their dough did not have time to rise. But why should this lead to such stringent laws about chametz and such compulsive behavior in removing it from our homes when even objects of idolatry are not treated with such stringency?

The Source for Destroying Chametz - The Gemara (Pesachim 7b-8a) asks for the source of the idea that we have to seek out the chametz. In response it quotes a series of prooftexts. The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: On the night of the fourteenth one searches for leavened bread by the light of the lamp. Although there is no absolute proof for this matter, there is an allusion to this matter, as it is stated: "Seven days leaven shall not be found in your houses," (Exodus 12:19) and it says: "And he searched, starting with the eldest, and ending with the youngest; and the goblet was found" (Genesis 44:12). And it says: "At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps" (Zephaniah 1:12), and it says: "The spirit of man is the lamp of God, searching all the inward parts" (Proverbs 20:27). While these sources are presented as "an allusion to this matter," the teaching that brings these verses are repeated no less than three times in the Gemara.

Chametz and Sin - Chametz is associated with Egypt which subjugated and enslaved human beings. In so doing, they were pitting themselves against God who created every human being in the Divine Image. In contrast, Israel at its inception is told to eschew, deny and destroy all the chametz and all the sin, because our calling is to be "A nation of Priest-teachers and a holy people" who are to teach the world compassionate righteousness and moral justice, which is a sacred way of life and the antithesis of sin.

The external cleaning which we do before Pesach is meant to arouse within each of us a desire for internal cleansing. The search for chametz symbolizes the search in which each one of us looks into their soul for an extirpation of sin.

What is the relationship between chametz and sin? Chametz is puffed up bread, so it clearly symbolizes excessive materialism, pride and hubris, perhaps even immoral sexual excitement and the swelling of the sexual organs. It pits the hedonism and crass materialism of Egypt represented by the massive pyramids against the much more modest two tablets of stone on which were written our fundamental laws of morality. This is strongly stressed by our sources.

Here are two examples: After Rabbi Alexandri prayed, he would say the following: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that our will is to perform Your will, and what prevents us? The yeast in the dough, (i.e., the evil inclination that is within every person) and the subjugation to the kingdoms on the other. May it be Your will that You will deliver us from their hands so that we may return to perform the edicts of Your will with a perfect heart (Berachot 17a).

The same thing is said in the fourth chapter of Tractate Berachot in the Jerusalem Talmud (2:6) in the name of Rabbi Tanchum: Rabbi Tanḥum the scholar prayed: May it please You, O Eternal, my God and God of my fathers, that You may break and remove the yoke of evil inclinations from our hearts since so You created us to do Your will, and we are required to do Your will. You desire it and we desire it, who obstructs? The yeast in the dough! It is obvious and known that we have no power to resist. But may it be Your pleasure, O Eternal, my God and God of my fathers, that You may remove it from us and destroy it (tashbitehu) so that we may do Your will as our own with a willing heart.

Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin a great student of Ishbitzer Rebbe says that the Pesach Seder is a tikkun – a repair – for the first sin when Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Eating is a metaphor for physical pleasure. And eating refers to food and to money. Lechem is bread, but war, milchama, which is certainly evil, is built around the root word lechem. People go to war to win booty and take all sorts of spoils to enable them to become more financially solvent. And eating is also a metaphor for the immoral sexual act. Such is the way of an adulteress: She eats, wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wrong." (Mishle 30:20).

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In other words, eating represents either ill begotten gains of material sustenance or sexually immoral acts.

Pesach as a Time of Repentance - Rabbi Tzadok notes that although we frequently thank God for enabling us to benefit from food and although at times we are commanded to eat certain foods, the only time when we make a blessing to God "Who commanded us to eat" something specific is on Seder night, because eating the matzah is a tikkun for the primordial sin.

The search and destruction of chametz is the search for and destruction of sin and that is what the cleaning is all about, because the external cleaning must lead to internal cleansing.

And the analogy goes much deeper. Sin in Jewish law and in Jewish life creates two fundamental obligations: First of all it obligates us to repay any debts that we may have incurred whether by stealing, damaging someone else's property or not repaying a debt. The second obligation is to apologize (see Mishneh Torah Hilchot TesuVa 1:1). Teshuvah (repentance) requires confession – a statement to the effect that I have done something wrong and I won't do it again.

On Yom Kippur we say the Biblical verse: For on this day, He will atone for you, to purify you from all your sins, before God you shall stand purified (Vayikra 16: 29).

There seem to be several stages to repentance: Kapparah – Usually related to monetary payment. Like kofer, you pay a certain amount of money for damages done. Making up for whatever loss one has have been responsible for.

Vidui – Because as well as having created a loss, I have also sullied my soul and that requires confession – a verbal statement.

These are the two things that we do with confession and with chametz.

The Hebrew calendar contains two central periods. The first is from Nissan to Sivan, including the spring festivals of Pesach and Shavuot – Spring. The second is in Tishri (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succot). These holidays are a period of repentance, but the Pesach and Shavuot are periods of repentance, too. We begin our journey as a nation with the necessity of Teshuvah – nullifying the chametz the sin that we experienced in Egypt, to say that we have no desire for it, for us it is like the dust of the earth and we will get rid of it. This corresponds to vidui.

The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 24b) teaches: And these on the following list are the ones who are disqualified: One who plays with dice for money, and one who lends money with interest, and those who fly pigeons, and merchants who trade in the produce of the Sabbatical Year, which may be eaten but may not be sold as an object of commerce... Rabbi Yehuda said: When are the people listed above disqualified from bearing witness? It is when they have no occupation but this one. But if they have an occupation other than this one, although they also make money by these inappropriate means, they are fit to bear witness.

The Gemara explains that you are only invalidated as a judge or a witness if you gamble for a living and do not do any productive work. Such a person is considered a thief because the unsuspecting gamblers expect to win. Living off their money is considered ill-gotten gains.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 25b) asks at what stage can we accept a repentant gambler as an honorable, trustworthy citizen who may serve as a judge or a witness? It answers that from the time that he breaks the chips that he used to gamble with and throws away the roulette table and he does not even play these games without money changing hands. Likewise, if he tears up his debtors notes so as not to collect money for interest and does not even lend money to gentiles for interest even though it is normally permitted.

The Gemara is defining the two stages of repentance: You have to give back whatever you did wrong and confess and perform an act which shows that you are leaving the path that led to your evil ways. The Rambam says that the individual who truly repents has to change the ways that led him to sin. Rather like Alcoholics Anonymous which demands that someone who wishes to stay dry abandons drink altogether, not even drinking in an innocent setting.

Similarly, we destroy the chametz and we nullify it which is our vidui. So, in effect, we go through exactly these processes with it, declaring that we enter the world of Pesach as a new nation, extirpating as far as possible the evil that we may have picked up in Egypt.

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#### **Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

**Double Entendre In the Word "Hoda'ah"**  
Among the sacrifices mentioned in this weeks parsha is the Thanksgiving Offering. The Medrash tells us that in the future all the sacrifices will be nullified, except the Thanksgiving Offering — for there is always need to give thanks.

Rav Hutner z"tl, makes a very interesting point. "Todah" (thanks) comes from the word "Hoda'ah", meaning giving thanks. However, the word "Hoda'ah" also means to admit (as in the expression Hoda'as ba'al din k'meah edim dami).

Rav Hutner says that it is no coincidence that the word for thanking and the word for admitting are one and the same. In order for a person to give thanks, he has to be able to admit that he needed help. The first step in being grateful to someone for doing something for you is the admission that you needed help and that you are not all powerful. Therefore the Hebrew word for thanks and for admission are the same.

How do we know whether the word "Hoda'ah" means admission or thanks? Rav Hutner says that we need to look at the preposition that comes after the word. The word "Hoda'ah" — meaning admission — is always followed by the Hebrew preposition "sheh..." (that). The word "Hoda'ah" — meaning thanks — is always followed by the Hebrew word "al..." (for).

In davening [prayers] we have a Blessing of Modim, called the Blessing of "Hoda'ah". How does it read? "Modim anachnu lach sheh..." This indicates, that the first thing we have to do is not thank G-d, but admit to G-d that we are dependent on Him. Once we come to that understanding, then we can come to the end of the blessing where we say "Nodeh lecha... al..." — We thank You for... Birkas HaHoda'ah is thus a two-stage blessing. It is a Hoda'ah of admission at the beginning which climaxes with a Hoda'ah of thanking at the end.

We Can't Appoint an Agent to Say 'Thank-You' - I recently saw a beautiful insight in the Avudraham. When the Chazan says Modim, the congregation recites a prayer known as "The Rabbis 'Modim". Why is that? The Avudraham says that for all blessings in the Shmoneh Esrei we can have an agent. For 'Heal Us', for 'Bless Us with a Good Year', and so forth we can have a messenger — the Shliach Tzibbur can say the blessing for us. However, there is one thing that no else one can say for us. We must say it for ourselves. That one thing is "Thank You". Hoda'ah has to come from ourselves. No one can be our agent to say 'Thank You'.

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#### **Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org**

##### **Torah and Nevuah**

##### **Rabbi Herschel Schachter**

In his commentary on the opening possuk in Parshas Tzav, Rashi quotes from the Toras Kohanim that the term "mitzvah" has a technical connotation. It refers specifically to an obligation which is binding throughout all

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generations. From time to time in the past we had nevi'im who would instruct our people to perform specific horo'as sha'ah which were not intended to be of a lasting nature. These were never considered "mitzvos", technically speaking. Our tradition has it (Megilla 2b) that the only prophet who gave over "mitzvos", i.e. obligations which are binding throughout all generations, was Moshe Rabbeinu.

This does not mean to imply that every instruction of Moshe Rabbeinu was a "mitzvah". Many of his prophecies were also only intended as horo'as sha'ah. The instruction to knock on the next door neighbor's door on erev Pesach of the exodus and to ask for gifts was an obligation only once in the history of the world. The instructions regarding not leaving over the mohn only applied during those forty years while traveling in the midbor.

The Rambam (Yesodei HaTorah 9:2) understands the mishna in Sanhedrin (89a) as saying that one who violates the instructions of a novi deserves misa beyedei shomayim. The Minchas Chinuch (#516) is bothered with a most obvious problem: wasn't Moshe Rabbeinu a novi? It should therefore follow that anyone who violates any Biblical law given by Moshe Rabbeinu ought to deserve this punishment of misa beyedei shomayim! How can that be? The list of aveiros which warrant this punishment appears in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 83a), and is very brief. Why should Moshe Rabbeinu be inferior to other prophets, that "over al divrei navi" should apply only to the other prophets, and bedavka not to Moshe?

Various suggestions were offered over the years in response to this issue. (see shaylus u'teshuvos Tzafnas Paneach, by Rav Yosef Rozen, 138:5.) The generally accepted approach today is that which was offered by Rav Soloveitchik over sixty years ago (see Divrei Hagos V'Ha'aracha, pg. 66. See Minchas Yisroel, by Rav Yisroel Shurun, pg. 22). "Ho'over al divrei novi" only applies to one who violates a hora'as sha'ah. One who would leave over some mohn until the morning, in violation of the instructions of Moshe Rabbeinu, would indeed deserve misa beyedei shomayim. But the "mitzvos", with a binding force for all generations, and which were only given by Moshe Rabbeinu, are not included in this category. They have their own system which has its own hierarchy of punishments. "Over al divrei novi" applies only to one who violates a "dvar nevuah". Some of Moshe Rabbeinu's instructions were "divrei nevuah", while most were elevated to the level of "divrei Torah" and "mitzvah" because of their binding force for all generations.

In the first half of the Sefer Hamitzvos, Rambam postulates what he considers the

fourteen principles which he feels determine whether any given commandment deserves to be included in the list of the 613 mitzvos. His third guideline is that only obligations which apply throughout all the generations are considered mitzvos. This principle is rooted in the passage of the Toras Kohanim cited in the Rashi mentioned above.

In his commentary to the mishnayos (end of Sanhedrin), Rambam lists what he considers are the thirteen principles of our faith. We believe in prophecy. It is possible for G-d to communicate with man[1]. We also believe that the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu was on a higher level than that of any of the other prophets. What does this mean? Is Rambam grading the prophets? If Moshe Rabbeinu gets an A+, what does Micha get? And what grade does Chavakuk deserve?

No, this is not a matter of grading Moshe's prophecy. What Rambam means to say is that the only prophet who was ever given mitzvos (with a binding force for all future generations) was Moshe Rabbeinu. His was the only prophecy that was on the level of Torah.

This point is spelled out explicitly in Rambam's commentary to mishnayos Chulin at the end of Gid Hanoshe. Even the mitzvos of milah and gid hanoshe which were given to Avraham Avinu and to Yaakov Avinu are not binding today because of Avraham's prophecy, or that of Yaakov; but rather because these commandments were given again later on to Moshe Rabbeinu. Only then did they acquire the status of "mitzvos". Before ma'amad har Sinai, milah was only a "dvar nevuah", and one who would not fulfill this obligation would deserve misa beydei shomayim. This explains the incident recorded in Parshas Shmos, where the angel came to kill Moshe for neglecting to perform the milah of his son. At that time milah was not yet (strictly speaking) a mitzvah, and as a "dvar nevuah" one who would violate it would have the status of "over al divrei navi".

Another one of the Rambam's thirteen principles of faith is that the laws of the Torah are immutable. In recent years this has been a fundamental point of distinction between Orthodoxy and other groups.

This principle requires a bit of elaboration. Just because we believe in Torah min hashomayim, why does it necessarily follow that all the Torah laws are immutable? What would be so bad if G-d would notify us, by way of His prophets, that due to changing circumstances some of the mitzvos no longer apply? Why do we assume that any prophet who would deliver such a prophecy is automatically labeled as a navi sheker and deserves the death penalty (Rambam Yesodei HaTorah 9:4)? Why such

an obstinate insistence on the part of the Orthodox that all the Torah laws are immutable?

The explanation is given by the author of the Tanya as well as Rav Chayim of Volozhin who both develop the identical theme. The Torah is not merely a collection of laws. In its entirety it constitutes a description of G-d's essence. Of course we can't really comprehend His essence. One of the Jewish philosophers of the middle ages commented that, "if I would understand Him, I would be Him." The only one who can understand Elokus is G-d Himself. Nonetheless, He gave us the Torah which by way of moshol (analogy) constitutes a description of Elokus. It is for this reason that the Torah is described as "The Moshol HaKadmoni", the moshol of Hakadosh Baruch Hu (see Rashi to Parshas Mishpatim 21:13). Rav Chaim of Volozhin comments, it would probably be better to say that the Torah is a moshol of a moshol of Elokus, as opposed to assuming that it has a direct moshol.

The prophet Malachi (3:6) tells us that G-d's essence never changes. Everything in the creation is subject to change, but G-d the Creator never changes.

Since our tradition has it that the Torah is a description (even if only by way of moshol) of Elokus, and the prophet Malachi tells us that G-d's essence can not be affected by change, it therefore follows that the laws of the Torah can never change. The Torah (Beha'aloscha 12:8) distinguishes between the level of prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu and that of the other prophets. Moshe was the only prophet "who was shown the image of G-d." What can this possibly be referring to? We believe that G-d has no body - there is no "image of G-d"!

What the possuk is driving at is exactly the principle we developed above. Moshe Rabbeinu was the only prophet who was given what we technically refer to as "mitzvos", commandments which are binding throughout all the future generations, because they constitute the description of G-d's essence, which is not subject to change. None of the prophets were ever shown "the image of G-d", i.e., were never given "mitzvos". They were only given a "hora'as sha'ah", of a temporary nature only.

The concept of "continuing revelation" developed by certain members of the Conservative movement is totally unacceptable. It is in clear contradiction to the Rambam's thirteen principles of faith which have been accepted. There certainly is a concept of "lifnim mishuras hadin", that one goes further than the halacha requires, all in the same direction as indicated by the Torah. But one cannot go contrary to the halacha and

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consider that lifnim mishuras hadin. The concept of "lifnim mishuras hadin" only applies when one is going in the same direction as the halacha requires, but even past the point of requirement. When one acts contrary to the din, this does not constitute chassidus.

There will always be instances where there will be a clash between two contradictory mitzvos. Life is always full of conflict! The world is always full of contradictions! Much of the halachic literature deals with how to resolve halachic conflicts. We must follow halacha even when it appears to us to be unethical or immoral. The Holy One who implanted within us the sense of ethics and morality is the same One who commanded us to follow His halachos, even if we don't understand them.

[1] Man's ability to communicate with G-d (by way of prayer) is also included in this principle: There is communication between G-d and man.

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## Torah.Org Dvar Torah

### Separation and Preparation by Rabbi Berel Wein

Moshe installs his brother, Aharon, and his nephews, the sons of Aharon as the priests – the kohanim – of Israel. Though there is no truly elaborate installation ceremony for the kohanim, there is a week-long period of preparation and purification that precedes their actual entry into their holy service. Why the delay? What does the week-long period of preparation accomplish? And, we see that this period of preparation is a matter of pattern and not simply a one-time event. For the Talmud in Yoma teaches us that the High Priest – the Kohen Gadol – was "separated" for the week before Yom Kippur in order to prepare himself for the service in the Temple that he would perform on Yom Kippur. So separation and preparation are apparently hallmarks for entry into Godly service.

The service of the Lord is not something that one can enter haphazardly. It requires thought, dedication, knowledge and deep commitment. It is not an easy task. Just as one cannot wake up one morning and suddenly say "today I am going to be a brain surgeon," so too one cannot automatically walk in to the synagogue or the study hall and enter positions of leadership overnight. Only by preparation – which invariably means years of intensive Torah study, self-recognition and improvement of personal behavior and attitudes, and a true willingness to serve God and Israel – is one allowed the exalted privilege of being a kohain, metaphorically speaking. The Jewish world suffers today from too many self-appointed, ill-prepared, self-righteous and pompous pseudo-kohanim.

Aside from preparation to serve as a kohain, there is also present the aspect of separation.

Even though we all live in the general society and social environment that surrounds us, to be a steadfast Jew requires the ability to separate one's self from society, albeit, even slightly. It means not following every fad of correctness of thought and sociability of behavior, of distancing one's self from the corrosive elements of impurity that abound in every human society and generation, of being able to stand even alone for what is right and moral and proven over the generations. The Jew may be in society but he or she must also be separate from society. The Haskala formulated that one should be Jew at home but just like everyone else in the street of general society. That false notion led to the disappearance of countless "home" Jews who were unable to make that separation once they had compromised their identity in the public arena of life. Without separation there can be no kohain.

The task of a kohain is not to be only a mere functionary in the Temple service. It is rather a challenge to be the guardian of wisdom and holiness, the one who maintains standards and counsels others in the way of the Torah and Jewish tradition. The kohain is held to a high standard. He may not defile himself or come in contact with what is impure. He must prepare himself constantly for his role in Jewish life and for the task assigned to him. Therefore, his preparation and separation are the first steps that he takes in embarking on the road to his ultimate task of daily service to God and man.

### Doing a Mitzvah by Rabbi Label Lam

And HASHEM spoke to Moshe, saying, (TZAV) Command Aaron and his sons, saying, "This is the law of the burnt offering: That is the burnt offering which burns on the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall burn with it."

Command Aaron: (Hebrew)צו. The expression צו- TZAV always denotes urging for the "now" (present) and also for future generations. Rabbi Shimon taught: Scripture especially needs to urge where monetary loss is involved. – Rashi

What is a Mitzvah? When I went to "Hebrew School" we were taught generically that it was a good deed. I also did some time in the Boy Scouts. There the aphorism, "Do a good deed daily" was a scout motto. I was confused. Is being a Boy Scout the same as being a Bar Mitzvah? What is a Mitzvah? Here the title TZAV צו is the made up of the two letter root, the essence of the word Mitzvah.

Original Hebrew is a Holy Language. Although western letters and characters are ideographic, that is they are merely signals or triggers for certain sounds, their shapes and the names of letters are arbitrary.

The eastern languages are pictographic. The word for a house is a picture of a house but how to pronounce it is a matter of oral

tradition. In Loshon HaKodesh, the Holy Language, each letter has a pronunciation but the names of the letters mean something, and the shapes are telling too. The first time a letter is used not as a prefix in Chumash is also an indication of the meaning of the letter.

The letter VUV is used more often than any other letter at the beginning of a word but it is almost always employed as a prefix. We have to travel to the middle of Shemos and the construction of the Mishkan to find a word that begins with the letter VUV.

There the Torah tells us of the VUV'ey HaAmudim, the hooks that held the curtains in the Temple. The letter VUV" looks like a hook. It means a hook. It is used grammatically to connect ideas and tenses just like a hook.

The Zohar calls it the letter of DAAS – Knowledge because it joins together, just as one who knows a thing, is intimate with that which he knows. The letter TZADI implies a Tzadik, a righteous person. It also means to trap, to bend the will, to exercise self- control. It is comprised of a NUN- which stands for NEFESH – Soul and a VUV. It is representative of a soul which is connected and humbly submitted to a higher will.

Now we're getting a picture of what the essence of a mitzvah is all about. We are redirecting our appetites and attitudes and connecting them to Hashem. It's not just a good deed like a Boy Scout and you get a badge on your uniform. The word TZAV means a commandment but it also means to connect and to be in the company of, as in the Aramaic Tzavsa. It makes sense that when, for example, a parent commands his child to do something, they now have an opportunity to connect with that parent and they are actually being invited to be in his or her company.

The Mishne in Pirke Avos tells us that the reward of a Mitzvah is a Mitzvah. Virtue is its own reward. It connects you with HASHEM! That is the reward. It's not a currency that is later to be cashed in and translated into some other value. That is the value itself. The ultimate value and the most sublime reward is to be that close to and in the company of HASHEM. Rav Kook writes that it is also the deepest desire of the human soul!

Now Rashi peppers in a few other ingredients of a TZAV. It must be done presently and for generations. It is not, "at my earliest convenience". It is calling for immediate attention. It is also a long-term commitment. We have a natural resistance to both of these factors. They push us way out of our comfort zone. In this particular case, the sacrifice was completely consumed and the Kohen would have no personal benefit from the animal that was to be brought. I have heard it said, "life only begins when you exit your comfort zone.", and so, these challenges make the action even greater and they deepen the

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supernal relationship that is forged by doing a Mitzvah.

### Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash

#### The Sale of Chametz

##### Harav Aharon Lichtenstein\*

The sale of *chametz* comes to deal with two different problems, the two stemming from one source: the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* – owning *chametz* on Pesach; and the prohibition of deriving benefit even after Pesach from *chametz* that had been owned by a Jew on Pesach.

The simple solution to the first problem – the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* – is *bi'ur chametz*, the removal and destruction of *chametz*. Sometimes it is difficult to destroy one's *chametz*, whether for economic reasons, or because a person is not sure that he has destroyed all the *chametz* in his possession. In such cases, we sell the *chametz*.

*In order to overcome the aforementioned problems, the sale of chametz was developed until it reached the institutionalized form familiar to us today.*

#### THE CHAMETZ OF A NON-JEW

The idea of the sale of *chametz* is based on the Gemara in *Pesachim* 5b: It is said: "Neither shall there be leaven seen unto you" (*Shmeot* 13:7) – your own you must not see, but you may see that belonging to others and to the Most High.

This passage implies that the Torah did not forbid the physical presence of *chametz* in a Jew's home, but rather the possession of *chametz* belonging to him. The Gemara continues: One might think that one may hide [*chametz*] or accept bailments [*of chametz*] from a non-Jew? Therefore the verse states: "It shall not be found [in your houses]" (*Shemot* 12:19)

The Gemara's implication is that a Jew is permitted to have in his house *chametz* belonging to a non-Jew, but he is forbidden to accept responsibility for its safekeeping, such that the *chametz* would be in his possession as a deposit. According to the Gemara's conclusion, if a Jew accepted responsibility for a non-Jew's *chametz*, he violates the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*, but if he did not accept such responsibility, he may leave the *chametz* in his house. Thus, if a person sells his *chametz* to a non-Jew before Pesach, he does not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* on Pesach.

The Mishna in *Pesachim* 28a also deals with the sale of *chametz* to a non-Jew: *Chametz* belonging to a non-Jew which had been kept over Pesach is permitted for use; but that of a Jew is forbidden for use. Because it is said: "Neither shall there be leaven seen with you."

According to most Rishonim, *chametz* belonging to a non-Jew which had been kept over Pesach is permitted even to be eaten, and not just for use. Therefore, *chametz* that was sold to a non-Jew before Pesach is permitted after Pesach.

We do not find that the Gemara relates to the sale of *chametz* as an instrument through which to allow the use of the *chametz* after Pesach. The Gemara relates to the sale of *chametz* in an entirely different context. The Gemara in *Pesachim* 13a deals with a Jewish bailee who had received a deposit of *chametz* from another Jew, and the time of the prohibition of *chametz* is slowly approaching: It once happened that a certain man deposited a saddle-bag full of *chametz* with Yochanan of Chukok, and mice made holes in it, and the *chametz* was bursting out. He then went before Rabbi [Yehuda Hanasi]. The first hour he said to him: "Wait"; the second, he said to him: "Wait"; the third, he said to him: "Wait"; the

fourth, he said to him: "Wait"; at the fifth he said to him: "Go out and sell it in the market."

In the continuation, the Gemara explains that the bailee sold the *chametz* to a non-Jew, in order not to violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*. This then would seem to be a source for the sale of *chametz*. But there is no hint in the Gemara that the Jew repurchased the *chametz* from the non-Jew after Pesach.

The sale of *chametz* is mentioned a second time in the Gemara in a different context. The Mishna at the beginning of the second chapter states: The whole time that one is permitted to eat [*chametz*], one may feed it to cattle, beasts and birds. And he may sell it to a non-Jew, and benefit thereof.

The Gemara (21a) raises an objection against the words of the Mishna, "and he sells it to a non-Jew": This is obvious! It is to reject [the view of] this Tanna. For it was taught: Bet Shammai maintain: A man must not sell his *chametz* to a non-Jew, unless he knows thereof that it will be consumed before Pesach. But Bet Hillel say: As long as he [the Jew] may eat it, he may sell it.

According to Bet Shammai, the obligation to destroy *chametz* begins thirty days before Pesach, and so a person is only permitted to sell *chametz* to a non-Jew during this period if he knows that the *chametz* will be consumed before Pesach. The Halakha has been decided in accordance with the position of Bet Hillel, who permit the sale of *chametz* for as long as benefit may be derived from *chametz*. Here too, however, there is no hint of repurchase of the *chametz* at the conclusion of Pesach.

**THE SOURCE OF THE LAW** The sale of *chametz* with the intention of repurchasing it after Pesach is explicitly mentioned in the Tosefta (*Pesachim* 2:6): A Jew and a non-Jew who were traveling together by ship, and the Jew has *chametz* on hand – he may sell it to the non-Jew, or give it to him as a gift, and then repurchase it from him after Pesach, provided that he gives it to him as an absolute gift.

This Tosefta requires discussion on two different levels: on the level of understanding the Tosefta, and on the level of the practical Halakha with respect to the case discussed therein. On the exegetical level, we shall deal here with two questions:

1. The Tosefta deals with the case of "a Jew and a non-Jew who were traveling together by ship." Does the Tosefta mean to limit the sale of *chametz* to such a case? Perhaps *chametz* may only be sold in a situation that does not involve any planning from the outset.

2. It is difficult to answer this question based on the wording of the Tosefta. There are *Rishonim* who state explicitly that it is only the incidental sale of *chametz* that is permitted, but selling *chametz* in a fixed and institutionalized manner is forbidden (*Talmid ha-Ritva*[1] and R. Amram Gaon]. Most *Rishonim*, however, do not limit the sale of *chametz* in any manner. Many *Rishonim* cite the Tosefta as is, and it is difficult to draw any conclusions as to whether the sale of *chametz* is limited to the case mentioned in the Tosefta or whether this case is only an example. The Rambam, for example, rules in *Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza* 4:6:

If a Jew and a non-Jew are traveling together by ship, and the Jew has on hand some *chametz*, and the fifth hour arrives, he may sell it to the non-Jew or give it to him as a gift, and may then repurchase it from him after Pesach, provided that he gives it to him as an absolute gift.

1) What does the Tosefta mean when it says "absolute gift"? What is a gift that is not "absolute"? Two answers may be given to this question:

2) a) "An absolute gift" is one that involves no legal problems. According to this explanation, the Tosefta means to exclude, for example, a gift given with the stipulation that it be returned. The law is in accordance with the position that such a gift is indeed a gift, but the Tosefta may disagree or perhaps it maintains that such a gift – despite the fact that it takes effect in the context of civil law – does not remove the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*.

b) "An absolute gift" refers to a complete sale with respect to the consciousness of the seller and purchaser. According to this explanation, the Tosefta comes to exclude the case where a sale is executed in the formal sense, but the two parties understand that the gift will not take effect in actual practice.

According to the first understanding, it is very easy to satisfy the requirement of "absolute gift." According to the second understanding, the matter is much more complicated, for today the sale is totally fictional.

What is the law governing a person who sold his *chametz* to a non-Jew in a manner that was not "absolute"? The Tosefta's ruling may have been intended only *lekhatchila*, but if a person sold his *chametz* with the intention of repurchasing it after Pesach, perhaps the sale is valid, the *chametz* belongs to the non-Jew, and thus he does not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*, and he may derive benefit from the *chametz* after Pesach. Alternatively, the Tosefta's ruling may apply even *bedi'aved*, and if the *chametz* was sold in such a manner that is not "absolute," it is forbidden after Pesach. Even according to this understanding, it is possible that the person does not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* (for the bottom line is that the *chametz* was not in his possession over Pesach), but he is nevertheless forbidden to derive benefit from the *chametz* after Pesach.[2]

#### WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS WITH THE SALE OF CHAMETZ?

What is the problem with selling *chametz*? The discussion regarding the validity of the sale of *chametz* necessitates an analysis of three separate questions:

- 1) Does a person who sold his *chametz* not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*?
- 2) Is it permissible to sell *chametz*, and is it permissible to derive benefit from the *chametz* after Pesach?
- 3) Practically speaking, how is the sale of *chametz* executed?

I. **BAL YERA'E AND BAL YIMATZE** It would seem that since the sale of *chametz* is legally valid, the seller relinquishes ownership over the *chametz*, and thus does not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*. We find a discussion of the parameters of ownership regarding the prohibition of *chametz* in *Pesachim* 6a:

Our Rabbis taught: If a non-Jew enters a Jew's courtyard with *chametz* dough in his hand, he [the Jew] is not obliged to remove it. If he deposits it with him, he is obliged to remove it. If he assigns a room to him [for the dough], he is not obliged to remove it. For it is stated: "[Leaven] shall not be found."

The Gemara explicitly states that a Jew who assigned a specific place in his house for the *chametz* belonging to a non-Jew, he is not required to destroy it. Most of the *Rishonim* understand that we are

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dealing with a case where the Jew accepted responsibility for the non-Jew's *chametz*, but nevertheless, if he assigned a specific place for it, he does not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*. According to them, if the Jew did not accept upon himself responsibility for the *chametz* – there is clearly no problem whatsoever. Rashi disagrees with this understanding, and he explains that we are dealing with a case where the Jew did not accept upon himself responsibility for the *chametz*. But even according to him, if the Jew assigned a specific place for the non-Jew's *chametz*, he does not violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*.

*What is the significance of this law? One possible understanding is that this law defines the forbidden act: Chazal established that even if a person has chametz in his possession, he only violates the prohibitions of bal yera'e and bal yimatze if he is the owner of that chametz. Therefore, when the chametz belongs to a non-Jew, he does not violate the prohibitions. According to this understanding, when the chametz belongs to a non-Jew, there is no act of transgression whatsoever, for the Jew is not in possession of chametz belonging to him.*

A second possible understanding is that this law does not define the forbidden act, but teaches us a law regarding the object of the transgression: *chametz* belonging to a non-Jew is not included in the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*. According to this understanding, a person violates the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* with any *chametz* that is found in his possession, even if he is not the owner, but the *chametz* of a non-Jew was excluded from these prohibitions.

According to the first understanding, there is room to discuss whether it is only ownership of *chametz* that is forbidden, or perhaps even some other relationship to the *chametz* suffices. What is the law, for example, if a person has *chametz* in his possession, and he has an interest in its continued existence? Formally, he is not the owner of the *chametz*, but there exists a certain relationship between them based on the fact that he is interested in its existence.

It is not difficult to find practical differences between the two understandings that we have proposed. There are a number of cases in which a person violates the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* even with *chametz* that does not belong to him. The most striking case is that of a bailee – a person who accepts responsibility for *chametz* belonging to a non-Jew. According to the second understanding, it is difficult to understand why such a person violates the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*, for in the final analysis the *chametz* belongs to a non-Jew and should therefore be excluded from these prohibitions. According to this understanding, we must say that the bailee is not a simple bailee, but rather a hirer or a borrower, who is permitted to use the *chametz* as he desires, and therefore enjoys partial ownership – "ownership of use" – over the *chametz*, and the *chametz* is regarded (at least in part) as the *chametz* of a Jew. In contrast, according to the first understanding, we can understand that the bailee is an unpaid or a paid bailee (as is the view of some *Rishonim*). While this bailee has no ownership whatsoever of the *chametz*, and the *chametz* is regarded as "the *chametz* of a non-Jew," there is no doubt that the Jewish bailee is interested in its existence, for he has accepted responsibility for it. Thus, there exists a certain relationship of ownership between the Jew and the *chametz* ("interest in its existence"). Therefore, according to this understanding, the bailee is liable

to violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*.

Another case in which a person violates the prohibitions of *chametz* with *chametz* that does not belong to him is brought by the Rambam. He goes much further than mere acceptance of responsibility. The Gemara in *Pesachim* 5b relates about the residents of Mechoza:

Just as Rava said to the residents of Mechoza: Remove the *chametz* belonging to the troops from your houses: since it stands in your possession if lost or stolen, and you must requite [the loss], it is as yours and is forbidden.

What was the situation in Mechoza? Most of the *Rishonim* understood that the residents of Mechoza accepted responsibility for this *chametz*, and therefore it was necessary for them to remove it from their homes. The Rambam in *Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza* 4:4 rules:

If a powerful non-Jew deposits *chametz* with a Jew, and the Jew knows that although he has accepted no responsibility for it, the non-Jew will nevertheless hold him liable for it if it is lost or stolen, and will use force to make him pay for it, the Jew must nevertheless destroy it before Pesach. For the fact that its powerful owner will hold the Jew responsible for it causes the *chametz* to be regarded as if it belonged to the Jew.

*When a person is responsible for chametz (even if he did not accept such responsibility upon himself), he is interested in its continued existence, and therefore he is obligated to destroy it. A similar case is brought in the Yerushalmi, Pesachim 2:2: "Neither shall there be leaven seen unto you" (Shmeot 13:7). There are Tannaim who teach: Your own you must not see, but you may see on the street. There are [other] Tannaim who teach: Even on the street... He who said: Your own you must not see, but you may see on the street - where he renounced ownership prior to its removal. He who said: Even on the street - where he renounced ownership after its removal.*

It is not clear from the *Yerushalmi* what is the law regarding a person who renounced ownership of his *chametz* after having removed it, but before the end of the time to remove *chametz* – does he violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*?

Nevertheless, it follows from the *Yerushalmi* that a person can violate these prohibitions even with *chametz*, the ownership of which he had renounced, since he retains a certain relationship to the *chametz*. In the continuation of the *Yerushalmi* passage, this is stated explicitly:

If a person renounced ownership of his *chametz* on the thirteenth [of Nisan], what is the law after Pesach? R. Yochanan said: It is forbidden. R. Shimon ben Lakish said: It is permitted.

The *Yerushalmi* explains that the position of R. Yochanan, that a person can violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* even with *chametz*, the ownership of which he has renounced, may stem from his position regarding the laws of renunciation or from concern about circumvention.[3]

If, indeed, it is possible to transgress the prohibitions of *chametz* even with *chametz* with which a person has a certain connection, and not just with *chametz* that fully belongs to him, then a difficulty arises regarding the sale of *chametz* that is customary today: Does a person retain some connection to the *chametz* that he has sold to a non-Jew? If he retains a connection, he should violate the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*.

Another problem regarding the sale of *chametz* arises from the Mishna in *Pesachim* 30b: If a non-Jew lent [money] to a Jew on his *chametz*, after

Pesach it is permitted for use. While if a Jew lent [money] to a non-Jew on his *chametz*, after Pesach it is prohibited for use.

If a non-Jew lent money to a Jew, and the Jew gave him *chametz* as a pledge, he is permitted to derive benefit from the pledge after Pesach. Why is this so? Surely the pledge is the property of the borrower and belongs to him? The Gemara discusses this question, and the Rambam in *Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza* 4:5 rules: If a Jew gives *chametz* to a non-Jew as a pledge and says: "If I do not bring the money due to you between now and a specified date, you are to acquire ownership of the pledged bread as of now," the *chametz* is regarded as under the authority of the non-Jew and use may be made of it after Pesach, provided that the date specified is prior to Pesach. If, however, the Jew does not say: "You are to acquire ownership of the pledged *chametz* as of now," the *chametz* is regarded as if it were a mere deposit with the non-Jew, and no benefit may be had from it after Pesach.

Why does the Rambam require that the date of payment be prior to Pesach? Surely the Jew said "Acquire ownership of the *chametz* as of now," so that even if the date of payment is after Pesach, the acquisition takes effect before Pesach! Indeed, the Ra'avad disagrees and says:

This is not clear and not lucid. For even if the time [of payment] only arrives after Pesach – he does not transgress. And if the time [of payment] arrives before Pesach, then even if he did not say "As of now," he has acquired it, for there is no law of *asmakhta* with respect to a non-Jew.

It seems that according to the Rambam, if Pesach arrives and the person does not know with certainty to whom the *chametz* belongs – that suffices to create a relationship of ownership between him and the *chametz*, at least on the level of "interested in its existence." In other words, even a conditional connection constitutes a transgression of the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*. Similarly, the validity of the sale of *chametz* in our time depends upon developments after Pesach, and during Pesach a person is in a state of lack of certainty regarding the ownership of the *chametz*.

## II. IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO CIRCUMVENT THE PROHIBITION OF CHAMETZ?

The question of *ha'arama* - utilizing a mechanism the sole purpose of which is circumventing a biblical law – rises in various areas of Halakha. There are prohibitions regarding which the Mishna and Gemara explicitly instruct us how to circumvent them, and there are other prohibitions regarding which circumvention is problematic, both on grounds of Halakha and on grounds of general outlook.

If we assume that *ha'arama* is permitted wherever there exists a legitimate need, we must consider whether financial loss is regarded as a legitimate need that permits circumvention of the prohibition of deriving benefit from *chametz* that was owned by a Jew on Pesach. The author of *Tevu'ot Shor* maintains that this indeed is the case, and he adduces proof from the Gemara in *Shabbat* 139b: He said to them: You speak of *ha'arama*: It is *ha'arama* [in connection with] a rabbinical [interdict], and a disciple of the Rabbis will not come to do this at the very outset.

Rashi there explains: This circumvention does not involve a biblical prohibition, but only a rabbinic prohibition. For even if he did it without circumvention, he [only] transgresses a rabbinic prohibition. Therefore, since he is a disciple of the Rabbis, they were not stringent with him, for he will

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not come to do it *lekhatchila* without the circumvention.

From the words of Rashi, two points emerge that must be examined before permitting *ha'arama*: the identity of the circumventer (a Torah scholar or a regular person), and the stringency of the law being circumvented (Torah law or rabbinic decree). The Ra'avya writes that only a Torah scholar is permitted to circumvent prohibitions, but the author of *Tevu'ot Shor* disagrees and rules that circumvention is permitted to all, but only with respect to rabbinic prohibitions.

According to the criteria of the *Tevu'ot Shor*, the allowance to sell *chametz* is limited to *chametz nukshé* or other types of *chametz* that are forbidden only by rabbinic decree. It is, however, forbidden to sell *chametz* that is forbidden by Torah law. The way to get around this limitation is through *bittul chametz* – nullification of the *chametz*: Following *bittul*, the *chametz* is forbidden only by rabbinic decree, and thus one should be permitted to circumvent the prohibition and sell *chametz* even according to the *Tevu'ot Shor*.

The combination of *bittul* and sale raises another problem: After a person has sold his *chametz* to a non-Jew, how can he then go ahead and nullify it? If the *bittul* has no validity, we come back to our original question, namely that the *chametz* is forbidden by Torah law, and as such, circumvention should be forbidden!

It may be possible to overcome this difficulty, for the *Tevu'ot Shor* means that one is forbidden to utilize *ha'arama* in a situation where without the circumvention he would violate a Torah prohibition. In our case, if the person would not sell his *chametz* to the non-Jew, he would nullify it, and thus violate only a rabbinic prohibition. Thus, this circumvention should be regarded as *ha'arama* relating to a rabbinic decree, and not *ha'arama* relating to a Torah prohibition.

This, however, depends on another question: Is *bittul chametz* effect with respect to known *chametz*? The *Rishonim* discuss this issue, and it depends on variant readings of the Rambam. The standard editions of *Hilkhot Chametz u-Matzah* 2:2 read: What does the term "putting away" (*hashbata*), as used by Scripture, mean? That one should count the *chametz* as nought, regarding it in his mind as if it were earth, and implant in his mind the thought that he has no *chametz* in his possession, and that all the *chametz* that may be in his possession is to be considered equivalent to earth, or to something of no use whatsoever.

The *Kesef Mishne* cites another reading, which leads to a different ruling: What does the term "putting away" (*hashbata*), as used by Scripture, mean? That one should remove the *chametz* that is known to him from his possession, and that which is not known, he should nullify in his heart and consider as equivalent to earth.

If this is the correct reading, then *bittul* should be ineffective with respect to known *chametz*, and thus once again the prohibition is by Torah law and *ha'arama* should be forbidden.

## III. THE VALIDITY OF THE SALE ITSELF

How is the sale of *chametz* executed? This question belongs to the world of modes of transaction. When it is possible to physically transfer the *chametz* from one hand to another – there is obviously no problem. A problem arises as a result of contemporary reality, which makes the actual transfer of *chametz* impossible. How then must the sale of *chametz* be executed?

There are two separate problems associated with the sale of *chametz*. First, how can ownership of the

*chametz* be transferred to the non-Jew? And second, how can the *chametz* be sold to the non-Jew by way of an agent? Theoretically, it is possible to avoid the second problem by selling the *chametz* to the local rabbi who will then sell it to the non-Jew. In practice, however, the rabbis are not interested in such a solution, for a problem may arise in connection with the sale, and they would then violate the prohibitions of *chametz* over the *chametz* of the entire congregation. Thus, the rabbis prefer to serve as agents for the sale of the *chametz* to a non-Jew, rather than buying the *chametz* themselves and then selling it to the non-Jew.

In general, there are a number of valid modes of transaction regarding movables: *keseif* (money), *chalifin* (barter, kerchief), *agav* (acquisition of movables incidental to land), and *siumta* (usage and custom among local merchants).

*Keseif* – The Gemara in *Bava Metzi'a* 48b records a dispute whether movables may be acquired with money. The Gemara in *Bekhorot* notes that this dispute applies to a sale between one Jew and another, but a sale to a non-Jew is governed by the opposite law. If money is effective with regard to a Jew, it is ineffective with regard to a non-Jew. And if money is ineffective with regard to a Jew, it is effective with regard to a non-Jew. Most Rishonim have ruled in accordance with the position of R. Yochanan that money effects a sale by Torah law, and therefore, money is ineffective regarding a sale to a non-Jew. Rashi rules in accordance with Resh Lakish that money does not effect a sale by Torah law, and according to him, a non-Jew can acquire the *chametz* with money. The Rambam has an interesting position on the matter. He rules in accordance with R. Yochanan, but it would appear that he maintains that money effects a sale with respect to a non-Jew as well.

Even according to those Rishonim who maintain that money can effect a sale to a non-Jew, in order to execute the sale, the non-Jew must pay the money. Obviously, it is unrealistic for the non-Jew to pay the Chief Rabbi in full for all the *chametz* in the country. The solution to this problem is by settling the purchase price as a loan. The non-Jew pays a small amount of money, and the remainder is converted into an ordinary loan – as if the Rabbi had loaned him the balance. Thus, the non-Jew pays the entire purchase price, but assumes responsibility for a different debt. It should be noted that some authorities raised questions about this solution, arguing that settling the purchase price as a loan does not always work. Furthermore, as has been shown, most *Rishonim* maintain that money is not an effective mode of transaction with respect to a non-Jew.

*Chalifin* – It is not clear whether or not *chalifin* is a valid mode of transaction with respect to a non-Jew. Rabbenu Tam in *Tosafot, Kiddushin* 3, maintains that it is effective, but there are *Rishonim* who disagree.

*Agav* – Movables may be sold incidental to the sale of land, and even incidental to the lease of land. This solution raises two problems:

- 1) How is land sold to a non-Jew? It follows from *Tosafot* that land cannot be sold to a non-Jew by way of a deed, and we have already noted the problem regarding sale by way of money.
- 2) *Tosafot* maintain, in contrast to most *Rishonim*, that *agav* is effective only by rabbinic decree. According to them, relying on *agav* to cancel the Torah prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze* is problematic.

FOOTNOTES:

*\*This is a summary of a shi'ur kelali delivered in the Yeshiva in 1983. It was not reviewed by Harav Aharon Lichtenstein.*

[1] Printed at the end of *Chiddushei ha-Ritva on Pesachim*.

[2] *The Halakhot Gedolot* cites a different reading of the *Tosefta*: Instead of "provided that he gives it to him as an absolute gift," there appears "provided that he not circumvent." There exists also a reading which combines both limitations, "absolute gift" and the prohibition of *ha'arama*. According to the second possibility suggested above, "absolute gift" implies a prohibition of *ha'arama*.

[3] *The Ramban at the beginning of Pesachim* cites the *Yerushalmi*, and writes that he is in doubt as to whether renunciation of ownership is effective with regard to the prohibitions of *bal yera'e* and *bal yimatze*. (Translated by David Strauss)



in the hectic days just before Pesach. - It may be difficult for one person to perform all the steps needed to prepare for Pesach. Of course, there are tasks that family members, even small children, can help to accomplish, but those who can afford extra help in the house should take advantage of that opportunity.

B. Clean the house - We can avoid owning chametz on Pesach by selling our chametz to someone who is not Jewish; this is known as mechiras chametz and can be arranged with your local Rabbi. If we are home on Pesach, then we must also clean our houses to ensure we do not accidentally eat any chametz on Pesach. We identify all chametz and either destroy it or put it into a closet, cabinet, or room that will be closed for Yom Tov and sold to a non-Jew. [1]

Which foods are chametz and must be removed? The letter of the law is that only items which meet these three requirements must be removed: - It is chametz Chametz includes just about everything made with wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt.

Ashkenazim do not eat kitnios (corn, rice, soy, beans, et al) on Pesach, but do not have to remove them from their homes.

Many medicines, cosmetics and toiletries are free of chametz or deemed inedible and are, therefore, "not chametz". Others should only be kept if they are known to be chametz-free. Similar rules apply to cleaning products and certain other non-foods.

Pet foods are considered edible, and if they contain chametz they (a) cannot be served to pets on Pesach, and (b) must be put aside with the "sold" chametz. In this context, all of the following are acceptable for Pesach:

Ammonia, baby oil, bleach, blush, body wash, candles, detergent, dishwashing soap, eye drops, eye liner, eye shadow, furniture polish, hair gel, hairspray, isopropyl alcohol, liquid dish soap, lotions, mascara, mineral oil, nail polish, nail polish remover, ointments, oven cleaner, petroleum jelly, sanitizers (e.g. Purell), shampoo, shaving lotion, silver polish, soaps, and sponges. Further listings are available on ASKcRc.org.

It is either larger than an olive (kezayis) or in a form that someone might eat it For example, there is no need to get rid of one solitary Cheerio or chametz crumbs (because they are smaller than an olive), or a dirty pretzel underneath a bed (since no one would eat that, even if it is technically edible). [2]

It is reasonably accessible For example, you must remove chametz which is in the folds of a couch, under a bed or dresser, or in one's office, but not if it is behind a refrigerator or underneath the washing machine.

The above reflects the letter of the law and is appropriate for situations when one has no other choice. But the longstanding minhag is to thoroughly clean one's home and remove even the smallest bits of chametz. Those who have questions as to how this applies to their situation, should discuss their family dynamics with their local Rabbi.

Basic Cleaning Guide - Sweep, vacuum, or mop the entire house, and empty vacuum cleaner bags. - Collect all chametz into 1 or 2 places. - Empty and wipe all areas that hold food, such as pantries, shelves, refrigerators, and freezers. - Thoroughly clean all parts of the kitchen, dining room, family room, and other rooms where food is eaten. - Vacuum all parts of the car and couches, including in "folds" of the seats, and check the trunk and glove compartment. - Empty and wipe all purses, briefcases, knapsacks, and school bags, and check pockets. - Check/clean drawers (especially in children's rooms) at home and in the office. - Check medicine cabinet for sprays, toiletries, and cosmetics that are not recommended for Pesach. - Thoroughly clean and wash crib and Pack 'N Play (including padding), and highchair, stroller, and toy boxes.

C. Shopping - The second part of preparing for Pesach is shopping for an entire pantry worth of food. The simplest reason for this is that many foods require special hashgacha for Pesach. But the truth is that even if a particular product does not need special hashgacha, it is prudent to purchase a new package or container to ensure that there are no crumbs or other residue of chametz in the package which was used before Pesach.

Meat, poultry, fish, wine, and grape juice are typically available as kosher for Pesach well before Yom Tov. After Purim, one can also purchase most dry

goods, spices, frozen foods beverages, Pesach matzah, and many other staples. If those are bought in advance, the only shopping needed just before Pesach will be fresh fruits and vegetables, and (fresh) prepared foods.

In shopping for food, keep in mind the needs of infants, children, pets, and those who are ill. Which type of formula, pet food, nutritional supplement, and medicinal items might be needed? What about toothpaste, mouthwash, and other toiletries for the rest of the family? Which ones are suitable for Pesach, and if the regular choice is not acceptable, which substitute is available? Getting answers to these questions early, will avoid a last-minute emergency.

A related issue is to consider other Yom Tov shopping needs such as for clothing, shoes, shaitels (and haircuts), paper goods, presents, and Hagaddos, and plan for them accordingly.

D. Kasherung - Whenever hot food comes into contact with a pot, dish, counter, sink, oven, dishwasher, piece of silverware, or anything else, some of the food's taste/flavor is absorbed into the pot etc. Accordingly, if these items were used with chametz during the year, we cannot use them for Pesach, unless they undergo a process known as hechsher keilim or "kasherung".

Items made of ceramic or glass cannot be kashered, and for this reason China, Corelle, mugs, and drinking glasses must be replaced for Pesach. In addition, dishwashers, colanders, and other items with small crevices or holes where food might be trapped, also cannot be kashered. One other basic rule of kasherung is that nothing can be kashered unless it first is thoroughly cleaned and left unused for 24 consecutive hours. Lastly, as a rule, kasherung cannot be performed on Pesach. Based on these considerations, most people will: - Kasher their oven, stovetop, and kitchen sink a few days before Pesach. [See below in Section E.] Countertops are either kashered and/or covered depending on whether they are made a material which is suitable for kasherung.

Purchase pots, pans, oven mitts, and sponges for Pesach, and never use them during the year.

Kasher tablecloths and dishtowels. - In general, flatware generally can be kashered, but dishes cannot be. Accordingly, many have silverware and dishes which are used only on Pesach, and others use disposables.

Details of how to kasher the kitchen can be found in the cRc Pesach Guide and are demonstrated in the video available at <https://kshr.us/KasherKitchen>. Those who will be purchasing new pots, dishes, flatware, peelers, and other kitchen utensils for Pesach should remember that generally, they must undergo tevillah before they are used.

E. Switching Over - In the final days leading up to Pesach, the house must be converted from one where people are eating and using chametz, to one which is going to be used for Pesach. Most people want to be able to eat chametz until the "last minute", but at the same time the house must be cleaned, the kitchen kashered, and cooking must begin so there will be something to eat once Yom Tov starts. - There are different ways to deal with this logistical issue. Some pointers include:

Kitnios - One may own kitnios on Pesach, such that even after a room has been cleaned for Pesach it is perfectly fine to eat rice, corn, beans or other kitnios foods there. The same applies to "egg matzah"; Ashkenazim do not eat egg matzah on Pesach, but it is permitted to own it. Therefore, it may be eaten in a room after it has been cleaned for Pesach.

Timing the kasherung - The choice of when to kasher the kitchen is a balance between people wanting to continue eating chametz as long as possible, the need to cook food for Pesach in advance, and technical issues, such as that one can only kasher if the item has not been used for the previous 24 hours. One way to resolve this issue is to kasher one part of the kitchen (e.g., the meat side) a few days before the rest.

Erev Pesach can occur on four days of the week - Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Shabbos - and the day to kasher depends somewhat on that. When Erev Pesach is on Monday, most families will kasher their kitchen some time before Shabbos Hagadol (e.g., Wednesday night), and basically

eat Pesach food for that Shabbos. Any chametz food, such as challah, will be carefully controlled and kept away from Pesach pots, dishes, etc.

In contrast, when Erev Pesach is on Friday or Shabbos, most families will eat chametz food for the Shabbos before Pesach, and then kosher after Shabbos.

An advantage to kashering just after Shabbos is that no one cooks etc. on Shabbos such that (just about) everything has not been used for 24 hours and is ready for kashering. When Erev Pesach is on Wednesday, some will kasher before Shabbos and others will wait until afterwards.

F. Erev Pesach - On the night before Pesach, we must search for chametz in all parts of the house where food is ever brought. The mitzvah, called *bedikas chametz*, is to use a candle or flashlight to look for the types of chametz which one cannot own on Pesach, as defined above in Section B. The halacha states that this must (a) be performed in homes, offices, dormitory rooms, summer homes, and all areas where chametz might have been eaten, and (b) include a thorough check of all “cracks and crevices”, which would include under beds, the folds of a couch, clothing pockets, pantry shelves, etc. There is a difference of opinion as to whether this type of “full” *bedikas chametz* is required if the house has already been thoroughly cleaned, and one should consult with their Rabbi on this issue. Bear in mind that when Erev Pesach is on Wednesday, one must create an Eruv Tavshilin on Erev Pesach. When Erev Pesach is on Friday, an Eruv Tavshilin is needed on Thursday of Chol HaMoed (the day before the second days of Yom Tov). On the morning of Erev Pesach, one may only eat chametz (and kitnios and egg matzos) until a given time called *sof zman achilas chametz*, and all chametz must be destroyed/burned or sold by a somewhat later time. These times vary based on the day of the year, and the location.

G. Seder Preparations - There are many items to purchase and prepare for the Seder. Some of these tasks can be taken care of a few days before Pesach, and others will have to happen on Erev Pesach, as follows:

Have Available - Wine, grape juice, shemurah matzah, marror, and karpas vegetable for each participant. Haggadah, kos (cup), and pillow for each participant. Kittel and k'arah (Seder plate) for leader of the Seder.

Prepare - If using romaine lettuce for marror, check it for infestation (or buy pre-checked lettuce). If using horseradish, grate before Yom Tov.

Saltwater for karpas (and for beginning of festive meal)

Zeroah (meat on bone), beitzah (egg), and charoses for Seder

Details of how to prepare the Seder plate can be found in the cRc Pesach [www.kshr.us/SederPlate](http://www.kshr.us/SederPlate).

In addition to the physical items needed for the Seder, it is important that everyone be well rested and that the participants give thought to the ideas and ideals they will share at this important time.

H. Chametz After Pesach - Chametz which was owned by a Jewish person over Pesach, may not be eaten or used by anyone, even after Pesach ends. Towards this end one must ascertain that any Jewish-owned grocers have sold their chametz.

Endnotes - 1 There are two reasons one must clean their home for Pesach: Firstly, the Torah forbids us from owning chametz on Pesach. Secondly, we are accustomed to eating chametz all year round, and getting rid of it ensures no one will mistakenly eat it on Pesach. We can satisfy the first reason by selling our chametz, but that will not help for the second one. - 2 It is forbidden to eat even the tiniest bit of chametz, but assuming one performs *bitul chametz* (recited after “*bedikas chametz*”), they may keep it in their possession if it is very small or so undesirable that no one would want to eat it. - This article first appeared in the cRc Pesach Guide 2021 and was updated in January 2026.

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to: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org) date: Mar 26, 2026, 9:50 AM

Parshas Tzav - **The Korbon Olah - Hints at the Fate of a Baal Gayva**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: # 499, Davening Quietly. Good Shabbos!

The Korbon Olah Hints at the Fate of a Baal Gayva

The parsha begins with the mitzva of the Korban Olah: Hashem spoke to Moshe: Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering. It is the olah-offering that stays on the flame, on the Mizbayach (Altar), all night until the morning, and the fire of the Mizbayach shall be kept aflame on it. (Vayikra 6:1-2)

The Medrash finds an allusion within this pasuk to a person who is a baal gayvah (haughty person). The Medrash interprets the word “olah” (literally “that which goes up”) as a person who holds himself on high, deriving from this that such a person eventually inherits *gehinom* (hell), meaning he will remain on the flames all night.

The Chassidic work *Vayedaber Moshe* gives a further insight into this pasuk. If the word “olah” refers to a “baal gayvah,” the pasuk is hinting at the downfall of every baal gayvah. “Zos (this) is the Torah of the ‘baal gayvah.’” The word “zos” (meaning “this is the way it needs to be”) is the downfall of every baal gayvah. He is never willing to compromise. He is never willing to give in. It is always *zo, s – my way, or the highway!*

Unfortunately, so many times this is a cause of friction in marriages. People are unbending and unyielding. This stems from an underlying gayvah. Success in many of life's endeavors and particularly in life's relationships, boils down to *midos* (character traits). The Baalei Mussar, in effect, said: A man's character is his fate. However we formulate this idea, it is a fact. A person's *midos* determine how he is going to do on the job, how he will do in marriage, and how he will do with raising children.

“Zos” – always insisting on this way, is *Toras ha'olah*, the practice of someone who holds himself on high. Unfortunately, as the Medrash points out, such a person does not wind up in a positive fashion in the world of truth.

The Kohen Is Always a Rookie

The next pesukim in the parsha teach the halacha of the removal of the ashes: “The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic, and he shall don linen pants on his flesh; he shall raise the ashes which the fire will consume of the olah-offering on the Mizbayach, and place it next to the Mizbayach. He shall remove his garments and shall wear other garments, and shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp, to a pure place.” (Vayikra 1:3-4)

The Beis Hamikdash was a very busy place. Starting with the offering of the morning Tamid sacrifice, and throughout the day, there was constant activity on the Mizbayach, as the various private and communal offerings were brought. People who own their own business or manage an office know that there is always a set routine at the beginning of each business day. Whether it involves turning on the heat or the air-conditioning or turning on the computer or other equipment, there is always a standard procedure that is the first thing that is done to begin the daily cycle of any busy operation. The first thing that they did in the Beis Hamikdash was to remove the previous day's ashes to outside the camp.

This was not just a matter of practicality – that if they did not remove the ashes each day, the Mizbayach would get stuffed up. There may well have been room to accumulate several days' worth of ashes before cleaning out the Mizbayach. Nevertheless, this service of “*terumas hadeshen*” (Literally, ‘the offering of the ashes’) was the first thing that the Kohen did in the Beis Hamikdash every single morning.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch sees great symbolism in this. The message of the *terumas hadeshen*, he says, is that every day is a fresh beginning. A person must begin anew, as it were, every single day. In matters of spirituality, there is no resting on one's laurels. There is no such thing as saying, “yesterday we had a banner day in the Beis Hamikdash.” Yesterday is gone. Today is a new beginning. There is no concept of relaxing – of being able to “take it a little easy today” because I accomplished so much yesterday. Each day, we wipe the slate clean and start over.

Rav Hirsch explains that the thought of what has already been accomplished can ruin that which is still to be accomplished. Woe unto him who, with smug self-complacency, thinks he can rest on his laurels, on what he has already achieved, and who does not meet the task of every fresh day with full

fresh devotion, as if it were the first day of his life's work! Every trace of yesterday's sacrifice is to be removed from the hearth on the Mizbayach so that the service of the new day can be started on completely fresh ground. This is a powerful statement.

This is the message of the terumas hadeshen: "A new day, a new beginning. Today you are a rookie again. You must prove yourself again." This is why the daily service that symbolically represents all Divine service always begins with taking out yesterday's ashes.

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. ... A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Rav Frand © by Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org

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## PARSHA WEEKLY PARSHAT TZAV SHABBAT HAGADOL 2026

### The Difference between Tzav and Vayikra

#### Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

At first glance, Parshat Tzav appears to simply repeat Parshat Vayikra. Both parshiot present the detailed laws concerning the five basic categories of korbanot: Olah, Mincha, Chatat, Asham and Shlamim. A more careful examination reveals that these parshiot differ not only regarding the order of their presentation of the korbanot, but also with respect to their detail. Would it not have been more logical for the Torah to include all the laws and details concerning the korbanot in one parsha?

A Key Phrase The key to understanding Parshat Tzav is the single phrase that introduces each category of korbanot: "Zot torat ha-... – These are the laws of the ..." (see 6:2–7:11). This very same phrase appears one last time in the Torah's summary of all the korbanot at the conclusion of the parsha: "Zot ha'torah – la'olah la'mincha, v'la'chatat..." (7:37). In effect, this expression sets the structure for the entire parsha, as it both opens and closes each section therein. Therefore, a clear understanding of the word "torah" will help us determine what Parshat Tzav is all about. "Torah" is only one of the various categories of laws found in Chumash. We also find "Chukim," "Mishpatim," "Mitzvot," etc. For our purposes here, suffice it to say that the specific meaning of "torah" is a procedural law – a series of actions necessary for the completion of a given process. For example, the pasuk in Parshat Tzav, "zot torat ha'mincha..." (6:7–10), should be translated as, "This is the procedure for offering the korban Mincha." This pasuk introduces the details regarding how the kohanim offer the Mincha, namely, the procedure of:

(a) taking it to the Mizbayach;  
(b) offering a kometz from its flour and oil;  
(c) eating the leftovers as matza in the courtyard. Similarly, Parshat Tzav details the procedures regarding how each korban is offered. Herein lies the basic difference between Parshat Tzav and Parshat Vayikra. Whereas Parshat Tzav deals primarily with the procedures for offering the various korbanot, Parshat Vayikra focuses on which korban is to be offered under which circumstances. Parshat Vayikra details the various korbanot that the individual can (nedava) or must (chova) bring. It focuses not on the technical details of how to prepare each korban, but rather on what type of korban is to be offered in any given situation. Thus, Parshat Vayikra serves as a "halachic catalogue" – guiding the individual as to which korban to bring, while Parshat Tzav serves as an "instruction manual" – teaching the kohen how to offer each type of korban. Chumash presents each "manual" independently because each serves a different purpose. This is why the Torah divides the details of each korban between two separate parshiot.

In fact, the opening pasuk of each parsha reflects this distinction: Parshat Vayikra begins with:

"Speak to Bnei Yisrael and tell them: if an individual among you wishes to offer a korban to G-d..." (1:1–2). Parshat Tzav begins with: "Command Aharon and his sons, saying: this is the procedure for bringing the olah..." (6:1–2). Parshat Tzav is addressed specifically to the kohanim, instructing them how to offer the korbanot. Parshat Vayikra, by contrast, directs itself toward all Bnei Yisrael, since everyone must know which specific korban he can or must bring in any given situation. Since many of the details concerning korbanot must be known to both the kohanim and the individual, we find that some details are repeated in both parshiot. The "New Order" With this background, we can better understand the difference in the order of presentation of each parsha. Parshat Vayikra discusses the categories of korban yachid, beginning with the voluntary nedava korbanot – Olah and Shlamim – and then continuing with the obligatory chova korbanot – Chatat and Asham. Tzav makes no distinction between nedava and chova. Once the korban comes to the Mikdash, the kohen needs to know only the category to which it belongs, not the circumstances surrounding the owner's decision or requirement to bring a korban. Therefore, the order in Tzav follows the level of kedusha of the various korbanot: Olah, Mincha, Chatat, Asham and Shlamim.

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## PARSHA WEEKLY SHABBAT HAGADOL 5786

### TORAT MIZRACHI

#### RAV AND RABBANIT RIMON

#### Halachic Q&A

##### Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

[Nasi, World Mizrachi | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council | Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek]

Adapted from Rav Rimon's "A Guide to Kashering the Kitchen for Pesach" published by Sulamot.

**Which materials can be kashered for use on Pesach?** In the days leading up to Pesach, we are occupied with cleaning our homes and kashering our utensils and kitchens. Today, many people do not kasher their chametz utensils for Pesach, since they own a separate set of utensils designated specifically for Pesach. Nevertheless, there are situations in which certain utensils need to be kashered. In addition, the kitchen itself needs to be kashered, including the countertops, sinks, and the like. We will outline here the basic principles for kashering various materials for Pesach.

**Glass:** The Rishonim disagree as to whether glass utensils can be kashered. (1) Some maintain that glass utensils do not absorb at all; therefore, one may use them for meat and then for milk, with rinsing the utensil in between being sufficient (Rabbeinu Tam, Tosafot, Avoda Zara 33b, s.v. kunia, and others). (2) Some maintain that glass is comparable to metal, which does absorb but can be kashered through hagala (Or Zarua 2:256, citing Rabbi Shmuel of Falaise, and others). (3) Others maintain that glass utensils are comparable to earthenware (since their initial formation is from sand, like earthenware vessels), and therefore hagala is ineffective for them (Hagahot Maimoniyot, end of Hilchot Chametz UMatza, citing Rabbi Yechiel of Paris). In practice, Sephardim follow the first approach, maintaining that glass utensils do not absorb; therefore, they require no kashering, and rinsing alone suffices (Shulchan Aruch, OC 451:26; YD 135:8; Yechaveh Daat 1:12; Chazon Ovadia, Pesach 1, p. 152). However, some Sephardic authorities are stringent and kasher glass utensils for Pesach. Ashkenazim customarily follow the second approach throughout the year, treating glass utensils like metal. However, on Pesach, Ashkenazim customarily follow the third approach and do not kasher chametz glass utensils for Pesach, and the Rema (OC 451:26) rules accordingly: "There are those who are stringent and maintain that for glass utensils even hagala is ineffective, and this is the custom in Ashkenaz and in these lands."

**Pyrex and Duralux:** The commonly accepted view is that these materials are comparable to glass. Accordingly, Ashkenazim should be stringent and

not kasher them for Pesach,<sup>3</sup> whereas throughout the year they may be kashered through hagala. For Sephardim, even if these utensils are used in an oven, if they are mostly used with cold foods, rinsing suffices in order to kasher them. However, some Sephardim are stringent and require hagala.

**Earthenware:** The Gemara (Pesachim 30b) establishes that earthenware utensils cannot be kashered.<sup>4</sup> Concerning earthenware utensils used as or within a kli sheni (a “second vessel”), or even where only the majority of their use is in a kli sheni, the Darchei Teshuva rules that they may be kashered by performing hagala three times,<sup>5</sup> and the Chazon Ish and Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank write similarly.<sup>6</sup> With respect to Pesach, the Mishna Berura allows leniency only in cases of significant financial loss and where the joy of Yom Tov would otherwise be compromised.

**Plastic, rubber, nylon, and Formica:** These materials did not exist in the time of Chazal. In the past, such utensils were not resistant to hagala, and therefore there was discussion as to whether they could be kashered at all. Today, these materials can withstand hagala, and therefore they may be kashered through hagala, especially after waiting twenty-four hours.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, if these utensils have crevices, it is best to avoid kashering them. Similarly, it is preferable to kasher only plastic utensils that are not used directly on the fire, whereas plastic items that are placed directly in the oven (such as silicone baking trays) should not be kashered.<sup>8</sup>

**Wood:** The Rishonim determine that wood has the same status as metal (Rif; Rambam; Shulchan Aruch, OC 451:8).

**China, ceramics (even when coated), porcelain:** Their status is the same as earthenware.<sup>9</sup>

**Enamel:** Enamel utensils are metal utensils which are coated, and it is unclear whether this coating is considered earthenware. The accepted practice is to be stringent and not to kasher enamel utensils for Pesach; however, with respect to the rest of the year, one may be lenient.<sup>10</sup>

**A pleasant effort:** Kashering the kitchen is the most important part of cleaning the home for Pesach. Nevertheless, it can be done with manageable effort. Family members should make a concerted effort to bring joy to one another during these days, and to cultivate a pleasant and positive atmosphere that enables preparation for Pesach to be carried out in a constructive and pleasant manner.

**Endnotes:** 1. However, an Ashkenazi whose parents use the same glass utensils for (hot) meat and milk may certainly eat in their home, for several reasons: (i) It is possible that the Rema agrees with the Shulchan Aruch with regard to the rest of the year; (ii) some maintain that Ashkenazim are stringent lechatchila only out of concern that the utensil may not be rinsed thoroughly; (iii) some maintain that the entire stringency applies only lechatchila. 2. Nevertheless, some Ashkenazim are at times lenient to kasher glass utensils for Pesach, particularly those not used directly on a flame or mostly used with cold foods. 3. Some are lenient to kasher these utensils through hagala even for Pesach, especially since Pyrex withstands hagala well; some recommend performing hagala three times. 4. There is extensive discussion whether earthenware can be kashered through three hagala; many limit any leniency to non-Pesach contexts or rabbinic prohibitions. 5. When performing hagala three times, the water should be changed between each immersion. 6. Some Rishonim maintain kli sheni earthenware may not absorb significantly, allowing leniency in limited circumstances. 7. If used only with irui, kashering may be done via pouring boiling water or immersion off the fire. 8. Rav Moshe Feinstein is stringent regarding synthetic materials, but many are lenient, especially after 24 hours when ta'am is pagum. 9. See Mishna Berura and related sources regarding ceramics and porcelain.

10. See Mishna Berura and Shevet HaLevi; some permit triple hagala, though standard practice is stringency.

from: **Rav Immanuel Bernstein** <ravbernstein@journeysintorah.com>  
date: Mar 26, 2026, 7:00 AM subject: Morals and Meanings in Pesach  
Leil HaSeder - A Night to Remember

חכם מה הוא אומר: מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלקינו אתכם. ואף אתה אמר:  
לו כהלכות הפסח, אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן

What does the wise son say? “What are the testimonies and the statutes and the laws that Hashem, our God, has commanded you?” You, in turn, should tell him like the laws of the Pesach offering: “One may not eat any dessert after the meat of the Pesach offering.”

This section of the Haggadah, dealing with the first of the four sons, raises a few questions: It is interesting to consider why this son is called wise. If he is so wise, why is he asking? Perhaps we will say that it is the question that is wise, thus showing that he is indeed wise himself. But is the question so wise? Granted he has mentioned the various types of commandments by name, but ultimately he seems to be just as uninformed as the simple son! What is the meaning behind the answer that we give the wise son: ‘One does not eat dessert after the meat of the Pesach offering’? How does this address his question? The Haggadah instructs us to tell him כהלכות הפסח, which literally means ‘like the laws of the Pesach’, for the letter כ at the beginning of a word connotes similarity. This seems very strange, as the law of not eating dessert after the Pesach offering is not ‘like the laws of Pesach’, it is one of the laws of Pesach!

Rav Kook[1] explains that this son is indeed asking a wise and important question. The goal of Seder is more or less self-understood: it is very important to remember our roots and the defining national experience of subjugation in and redemption from Egypt. The question of the wise son, however, is: Why are there so many different types of laws which are essentially coming to achieve the same goal? One or two mitzvos would certainly have sufficed to commemorate the Exodus!

The answer to this question is that the goal of Seder night is not merely to commemorate the Exodus. Rather, it is to renew and refresh the connection made at the time of the original Pesach, in a way that will inspire us for the rest of the year.

It is for this reason that one has to see himself as if he personally came out of Egypt; for Seder night is not just about looking backwards to the historical event of leaving Egypt. It is about looking forward to the year ahead, with our connection to Hashem and commitment to His Torah energized and invigorated by the experience of leaving Egypt.

If someone wishes to ensure that the impact of an event will endure, he plans it down to the smallest detail, with a variety of different means focusing on the theme of the event.

Consider the way a wedding is planned. In principle, the goal of the evening is for the young couple to get married, and this alone should not require such extravagant arrangements. The choice of color scheme between the flowers and the napkins will not make them any more or less married. However, all of those involved wish to make it a night to remember, and that involves extensive planning, from the band to the flower arrangements and everything else in between.

A meaningful Seder is one whose message will remain for the weeks and months to come. To that end, the Torah has mandated many different types of mitzvos, each one in its own way expressing the theme of the Seder, in order to make it ‘a night to remember’.

Interestingly, we can see this concept embodied in one of the laws of the Pesach offering: ‘One does not eat dessert after the meat of the Pesach offering’. The Talmud Yerushalmi explains the reason for this law: in order that the taste of the Pesach should remain in his mouth. When we think about it, this is essentially the message that we are looking to impart to the wise son. This is what the Haggadah means when it says to tell him ‘like the halachos of Pesach’, for the answer to his question about the numerous types of mitzvos on Seder night is just like that halacha of Afikoman – that the taste of the Pesach should stay with us.

May we merit to taste true freedom this coming Seder Night, and may it herald the full redemption of the Jewish People, speedily in our days.  
Chag kasher ve'sameach.

from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <iraz@klalgovoah.org>

date: Mar 26, 2026, 7:02 PM

subject: **Tidbits Parashas Tzav** 5786 in memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz ztl  
Parashas Tzav - Shabbos HaGadol • March 28th • 10 Nissan 5786  
This Shabbos is Shabbos HaGadol, the Shabbos before Pesach. Many congregations say yotzros during shacharis • The haftarah for Shabbos HaGadol is read. Av Harachamim and Tzidkoscha are omitted, the Kel Malei

is also not said, and Vih Noam is omitted Motzaei Shabbos ... The final opportunity for Kiddush Levanah is in the early morning after the first Leil Haseder, April 2nd at 4:35 AM EDT. One must donate money for Maos Chittin, money which will be used to provide the needy with food during Pesach. The donation may be given from maaser funds.

Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Menachos 75

Leil Bedikas Chametz is on Tuesday evening, March 31st

Pesach begins on the evening of Wednesday, April 1st.

In a Paragraph:

TZAV: (Daily) Terumas and (occasional) Hotzoas HaDeshen (removal of the ashes) • The Mizbeiach fires • Laws of the Korban Minchah • The daily Korban Minchah of the Kohen Gadol; inauguration Minchah of regular Kohen • More laws of the Korban Chatas, Korban Asham, Korban Todah, and Korban Shelamim • Laws of nosar and piggul • Prohibition of eating fats and blood • The breast and thigh portions of the Korban Todah are given to the Kohen • The anointing of Aharon and his sons • The seven days of Mishkan inauguration

Haftarah: The Haftarah (Malachi 3:4-24) encourages our belief in Hashem and the Torah. The Tur says that Shabbos HaGadol (the "Great Shabbos") earned its name on account of the great miracle wherein the Egyptians could not react when Bnei Yisrael prepared sheep of Korban Pesach for slaughter. Sheep were among the idols of Egypt, but the Egyptians could not prevent the Jews from doing so. Taking the sheep was an act of faith and its success strengthened their emunah further by proving that the Mitzriyim were powerless to stop them. Additionally, some point to the Haftarah's concluding words, "Yom HaGadol v'ha'Nora", the Great and Awesome day (of redemption), to explain why this Shabbos is called "Shabbos HaGadol". The haftarah also includes the verse that promises wealth to one who sets aside funds for maaser and even allows one to "test" the validity of Hashem's promise. This timely message encourages us to fulfill our obligation to help our fellow Jews with Maos Chittin.

Mitzvos: Parashas Tzav • 97 Pesukim • 9 Obligations • 9 Prohibitions 1) Remove ashes from the Mizbeiach daily. 2) Ignite the Mizbeiach fires. 3) Do not extinguish the Mizbeiach fires. 4) The Kohanim shall eat the remainder of the Menachos. 5) Do not allow these remainders to become chametz. 6) The Kohen Gadol's daily Minchah offering. 7) Do not eat any of a Kohen's Korban Minchah. 8) Laws of Korban Chatas. 9) Do not eat the Chataos Penimios. 10) Laws of Korban Asham. 11) Laws of Korban Shelamim. 12) Do not leave over meat from korbanos. 13) Burn any nosar (leftover) meat from a korban. 14) Do not eat piggul (a korban sacrificed with nullifying thoughts). 15) Do not eat kodoshim that became impure. 16) Burn kodoshim that became impure. 17) Do not eat cheilev (fats) of kosher domesticated animals. 18) Do not eat blood from any animal or bird.

For the Shabbos Table

A fire shall continually remain aflame on the Mizbeiach; it shall not be extinguished (Vayikra 6:6)

The Mishnah in Avos (5:5) lists ten miracles that occurred in the Beis Hamikdash, among them that despite any rainfall, the fires on the Mizbeiach were never extinguished. Additionally, smoke rose from the Mizbeiach fires in a straight column, unaffected by windy conditions on the Har Habayis.

One may ask, why did Hashem not simply arrange for no rain or wind to be present in this area?

Rav Chaim Volozhiner (Ruach Chaim) answers that rainfall symbolizes parnassah, while fire symbolizes the aish of Torah. This miracle teaches us that despite the strains of earning a livelihood, one must 'keep the fire going' in his commitment to Torah study. Furthermore, one who remains steadfast in his resolve will be able to remain firm despite any winds which threaten to disrupt his focus.

## Excerpt from A Summary of Halachos of Pesach

By Rabbi Shimon D. Eider <https://feldheim.com/halachos-of-pesach>  
On the Mitzvos, Minhagim and Shiurim of the Pesach Seder

### I. The Mitzvos of the Seder

#### A. INTRODUCTION

**Five Mitzvos.** On the first night of Pesach, the performance of five mitzvos is incumbent upon every Jew. Two of these mitzvos are required by the Torah (מדאורייתא), three are required by our sages (מדרבנן). Outside of Eretz Yisroel performance of these five mitzvos is also required on the second night of Pesach. During the time of the Beis Hamikdash, there were sixteen additional mitzvos associated with the Korban Pesach (the Passover sacrifice).

**Two Mitzvos d'Oraisa.** The two mitzvos required by the Torah are: a) אכילת מצה - the eating of matzah on the night of Pesach, as it says "בערב תאכלו מצות" - "in the evening you shall eat unleavened bread" (שמות י"ב:י"ח) b) סיפור יציאת מצרים - relating the story of the exodus from Egypt, as it says "והגדת לבנך" - "you should relate to your son [the story of Pesach] on this day" (שמות י"ג:ה).

**Three Mitzvos d'Rabbonon.** The three mitzvos required by the rabbanim are: a) ארבע כוסות - drinking four cups of wine; b) אכילת מרור - eating maror (bitter herbs); and c) הלל - reciting the Hallel (Psalms of praise)

**The Seder** The procedure for the performance of these mitzvos on the first night of Pesach in Eretz Yisroel and on the first two nights of Pesach outside of Eretz Yisroel is called the Seder (literally, procedure). We will now discuss, in detail, the mitzvos which are required by the Torah.

#### B. MATZAH

**The mitzvah of eating matzah.** Eating matzah on the first night of Pesach is a מצות עשה (a positive commandment) as it says in the Torah (שמות י"ב:י"ח) "בערב תאכלו מצות". This mitzvah applies in all places and in every generation. Therefore, this requirement does not depend on the presence of the Korban Pesach\* but is an independent mitzvah

**How much matzah must one eat?** Once a person has eaten a כזית (the size of an olive) of matzah he has fulfilled the Torah requirement (ע"י פסחים קכ"א ע"א). However, there are additional requirements מדרבנן. These additional requirements and the measurement of a כזית will be discussed later

**Who is required to eat matzah?** Although women are usually exempt from a מצות עשה (a positive mitzvah whose observance depends upon a specific season or time of day) (ע"י קידושין ל"ד ע"א), their requirement for eating matzah on Pesach is similar to that of men (ע"י פסחים מג ע"ב). The reason is that the Torah says "לא תאכל עליו" (ע"י פסחים מג ע"ב) "you shall not eat with it [i.e., the Korban Pesach] chametz, seven days you shall eat with it matzos." Since the Torah equated the prohibition against eating chametz with the mitzvah of eating matzah, Chazal tell us that the Torah is saying whoever is prohibited from eating chametz on Pesach is required to eat matzah. Since women are prohibited from eating chametz on Pesach similar to men, they are therefore required to eat matzah like men. Fathers are required to see that their children who have reached the age of חינוך eat a כזית matzah. Even young children who are able to eat matzah should also be encouraged to do so.

**Matzos must be from the five types of grain.** One may fulfill his requirement for eating matzah only with matzah made from the five types of grain, which are wheat (חטה), spelt (בוסמין), barley (שעורה), oats (שיבולה שעל), and rye (שיפון).

The reason (as in) is that the Torah says "לא תאכל עליו" (ע"י פסחים מג ע"ב) "the Torah equated the prohibition against eating chametz with the mitzvah of eating matzah. The Torah is saying one can fulfill his requirement for eating matzah only with a substance which had the intrinsic potential of becoming chametz (but the process was impeded). Only the five types of grain have this intrinsic potential. Therefore, one may fulfill his requirement for eating matzah only with matzah made from these five types of grain.

**With what fluids may matzah be made?** Matzah must be made exclusively from flour of the five types of grain and water. Nothing else may be added, because this may cause the process of grain and water (becoming chametz) to be more rapid. In addition, certain fluids (e.g., wine, oil, honey, milk, fruit juice, eggs) make the matzah into מצה מצה (enriched unleavened bread) and the Torah requires that matzah eaten on the night of Pesach be לחם עוני (bread of poverty).

Even the water used for making matzos (מים שלנו) has specific requirements. The entire process of matzah production for Pesach has stringent regulations. The specifics are discussed in detail in the Shulchan Aruch.

**Matzah Shmurah** The Torah says (שמות י"ב:י"ז) "ושמרתם את המצות", you shall guard the matzos. This is the source for the requirement of eating, on the Seder nights, "matzah shmurah," guarded or specifically supervised matzah. What is matzah shmurah? We know that all foods used on Pesach require supervision to guarantee that they do not contain chametz. This is especially crucial for matzos used on Pesach, because of the potential of the five types of grain to become chametz-if proper care is

not given. Therefore, when the Torah says “you shall guard the matzos,” it is not merely requiring preventative supervision; it is not only requiring us to prevent the matzah from becoming chametz. In addition to preventative supervision, the Torah is also requiring positive supervision. That is, matzos must be supervised during the various stages of the manufacturing process מצה לשם מצה - specifically for the purpose of being used for the mitzvah of מצה אכילת מצה. This is matzah shmurah-matzos guarded and protected from becoming chametz and specifically manufactured and supervised for the mitzvah of מצה אכילת מצה.

**When is matzah shmurah required?** Matzah shmurah is required on the first two nights of Pesach for the fulfillment of the mitzvah of מצה אכילת מצה. Matzos used for the fulfillment of this mitzvah are called מצה שמוּרה.

**From when is this supervision required?** There are various opinions among the Poskim concerning the time when the need for this supervision begins. Some Poskim hold that it is sufficient to begin this supervision from the time the grain is ground into flour (shmurah mi'sha'as tchina). These are the usual matzos which are available for Pesach. Many Poskim hold that supervision of the matzah from the time the grain is ground is insufficient. These Poskim hold that matzos must be supervised from the time of harvesting (shmura mishas kitzira). These are the matzos which are commonly known as “Shmurah Matzos.” One should conduct himself like these Poskim and use matzah shmurah from the time of harvesting, for the Seder nights.

**Matzah shmurah for the entire Pesach** This positive supervision is required for מצה אכילת מצה. Is there a requirement or an advantage in eating matzah shmurah-from the time of harvesting-the entire Pesach? Why should there be such a requirement or advantage? Firstly, many Poskim prefer this matzah because there is less of a chance of it becoming chametz. Secondly, although a person is not required to eat matzah-except for the nights required at the Sedorim-since some Poskim hold that by eating matzah the entire Pesach one fulfills a mitzvah, it should have the same characteristics as the matzah required at the Sedorim. Therefore, although eating matzah shmurah the entire Pesach is not mandatory, many Poskim hold that, wherever possible, one should eat only matzah shmurah the entire Pesach.

**Hand matzah and machine matzah** Should one use hand matzah shmurah or machine matzah shmurah? Assuming that both were baked with proper supervision, “18 minute” machine matzah shmurah may be used for the Sedorim. Many have a preference for hand matzah shmurah because there are Poskim who hold that the requirement for positive supervision cannot be properly fulfilled where the entire process is produced by machine. Wherever possible, one should try to be present at the baking of the matzos (עיי' מ"ב תס"א ס"ק ל"ו).

### C. סיפור יציאת מצרים

**The mitzvah is on the fifteenth of Nissan** Relating the story of the Exodus from Egypt on the first night of Pesach is a positive commandment as it says in the Torah (זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים) (שמות י"ג:ג). How do we know that this requirement is to be fulfilled on the fifteenth night of Nissan? The Torah says “ והגדת ” (שמות י"ג:ה) - “because of this” - this implies that the mitzvah should be fulfilled at a time when one is able to point to matzah and maror before him-which is at the Seder on the fifteenth night of Nissan. Outside of Eretz Yisroel-where a second day of Yom Tov is required-the mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים at the second Seder is required מוציא מצה.

**Who is required to perform this mitzvah?** Although the Torah established the requirement of this mitzvah for a father telling the story to his son, fulfillment of this mitzvah is not limited only to parents. Even one who has no children must also fulfill this mitzvah. Even great Torah scholars, who are fully aware of the story of יציאת מצרים, are also required to review this story on the nights of Pesach. Whoever elaborates in relating the story of יציאת מצרים is praiseworthy.

**Men and women** Both men and women are required to perform this mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים as well as the other mitzvos required at the Sedorim. This is important to keep in mind, because since women should be preoccupied with other responsibilities (e.g., tending to an infant, preparing the meal) they are obligated to be present at least for Kiddush and from “רבן גמליאל אומר” until after the second cup. [Because whoever did not say as a minimum the words and reasons of “פסה מצה ומרור” has not fulfilled his or her requirement.] The minhag is also to call women in to be present for the reading of the Ten Plagues in order to declare how many miracles הקבי"ה performed for the Jewish people.

**Children** We have learned that the Torah required a father to relate the story of the Exodus to his son. Therefore, there is an obligation upon a father to see that his child, who is capable of understanding the story of יציאת מצרים, should hear the Haggadah (עיי' שם). The minimum age of such a child will depend upon the level of his development and understanding. Normally a child of five or six should be capable, to some degree, of understanding the story of (עיי' שם) יציאת מצרים. Concerning this and the other mitzvos which apply on the Seder nights, the obligation applies equally for boys and girls (עיי' שם).

*Note:* Many parents keep their children up at the Seder only until they have recited מה נשתנה. They send them off to sleep right after that, before the children have heard an answer to their questions (עיי' שם). The mitzvah of “והגדת לבנך”-relating the story of the Exodus-which should be done as an answer to the questions of (עיי' שם) מה נשתנה. With the children not hearing [nor understanding] the answer to the questions of מה נשתנה, the father has not fulfilled properly the mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים. The Talmud relates (עיי' שם) that Rabbi Akiva would never say that it is time to leave the Beis Medrash, except for Erev Pesach, in order to see that the children would go to sleep by day, to prepare to be up at night during the Haggadah. This emphasizes the importance of the children being present at the Seder [and understanding] at least for the minimal requirement.

**Understanding the Haggadah** The mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים is not only saying the Haggadah, but understanding its contents. Therefore, it is essential that at least the minimal parts should be translated and explained for any who may not understand the contents of the Haggadah (עיי' שם).

The reason for the importance of understanding the story of the Exodus from Egypt is because מצרים teaches that הקב"ה not only created the world but constantly directs and supervises every aspect of its development. Therefore, יציאת מצרים is one of the foundations and pillars of our Eemunah. This completes our discussion of the two mitzvos required by the Torah nowadays on the Seder nights. We will now begin our discussion of the three mitzvos required by the רבנו.

## II. ד' כוסות - The Four Cups of Wine

### A. INTRODUCTION

**Reason for the Four Cups** On the first two nights of Pesach there is a mitzvah לרבוץ לשתות ארבע כוסות (עיי' פסחים ק"ט ע"א). חז"ל established this requirement to drink them דרך חירות (literally, the manner of freedom) because wine is the drink of free men (עיי' שם). The reason for four cups is that we see that Hashem used four terms of redemption\* in the Torah (ארבע לשונות של גאולה) to promise the Jewish people their redemption. forthcoming deliverance from slavery במצרים) for this reason, Chazal ordained four cups of wine to recall these four promises of redemption. The Four Terms of Redemption are: a) והוצאתי אתכם - I shall take you out b) והצילתי אתכם - I shall save you c) והאלתי אתכם - I shall redeem you d) ולקחתי אתכם - I shall take you

**When do we drink these four cups?** We are required to perform four mitzvos with these cups before us and to drink the cups after the completion of each of these mitzvos. The mitzvos are: a) Kiddush b) Reciting the Haggadah c) Birkas Hamazon d) Hallel (עיי' פסחים ק"ט ע"ב; רמב"ם פי"ז מהל' חמץ ומצה) If a person drinks the Four Cups consecutively-without reciting the Haggadah between them-he has not fulfilled the mitzvah and must drink three additional cups in their proper places ( רמב"ם פי"ז הי"ט).

**How much of the cup must one drink?** We will learn that the cup must contain a minimum of a Revi'is (which is the volume of an egg and a half), yet one is not obligated to complete all the wine in the cup. A person fulfills the mitzvah if he drinks most of a Revi'is-for each of the Four Cups. We will discuss later how much this amounts to in ounces and liters (see D5) and in how short a duration of time this must be completed.

### B. MAY OTHER BEVERAGES BE USED INSTEAD OF WINE?

**Wine is the preferred drink** The preferred drink for the Four Cups is grape wine (יין). Even if one is not accustomed to drink wine because he does not enjoy it, he is still required to drink these Four Cups.

**If it causes him discomfort** If one finds wine discomforting or even if it causes him a headache or the like, he is still required to strain himself to drink these four cups. The Talmud relates how Rabbi Yonah would drink the Four Cups and would have a headache which lasted until Shavuot (ירושלמי פסחים פ"י ה"א). One may, however, dilute the wine with water-as long as he may properly recite upon it the ברכה בורא פרי הגפן.

**One who may become ill** We have learned that even one who finds wine discomforting, nevertheless, is required to drink the Four Cups. However, one who may become ill from drinking wine-even if diluted with water-should not drink wine. This rule will apply even if it would not cause him to become seriously ill-but would cause him to become bedridden. He is, however, required to drink grape juice or חמר - if it would not cause him to become bedridden.

**Red wine** The Talmud says שיראה כדם “צריך שיראה כדם” (פסחים ק"ה ע"ב) - Rabbi Yehuda says that [the wine used for the Four Cups] should have the taste and appearance of wine. The Talmud says that the basis for the preference of wine with a specific appearance is that it says (משלי כ"ג:ל"א): “אל תרא יין כי יתאדם” - look not after wine when it is red, indicating that a red wine is a desirable quality in wine. In addition, red wine reminds us of the shedding of innocent blood which flowed when Pharaoh slaughtered the Jews (עיי' שמות רבה). Therefore, red wine is preferred for the Four Cups-unless the white

wine available is of a better quality. Tokay wine is also considered as red for this preference.

**הירוש - Grape juice** We mentioned that Rabbi Yehuda said that the wine used for the Four Cups should also have the taste of wine, that is, the alcoholic taste of wine. The Rashbam explains that this we learn from the fact that we are cautioned not to become intoxicated. This would indicate that, although grape juice is considered like wine for the ברכה of בורא פרי הגפן and is suitable for use for Kiddush on Shabbos and Yom Tov, one should preferably not use grape juice for the Four Cups. This we see further from the fact that the Talmud (עירובין ס"ה ע"א) says that one who drinks wine of the time of the Talmud without diluting it fulfills the mitzvah of drinking wine, but does not fulfill his requirement for the drink of free men. Similarly, many Poskim hold that one who drinks grape juice fulfills the requirement of the Four Cups but does not fulfill the preferred requirement of הירוש. Therefore, one who is able to drink wine without becoming ill should drink only wine for the Four Cups. He may mix the wine with grape juice-as long as the alcoholic taste of the wine can still be detected. If he is unable to drink wine even mixed with grape juice (or water), grape juice alone would be the next preference. If drinking grape juice undiluted is prohibited to him, water may be added. If any of these are impossible, raisin wine or חמר מדינה may be substituted.

**Diluting** We have learned that the preferred beverage is wine. We have also learned that one may mix the wine with grape juice or water to reduce its strength. In the time of Chazal wines were strong and were difficult to drink without diluting. Therefore, it was customary to mix it in a ratio of one part wine to three parts water (1:3). One is permitted to recite a ברכה of בורא פרי הגפן on diluted wine as long as the ratio of wine to water is less than one part wine to six parts water (1:6). This applies to the wines during the time of Chazal. Modern wines, however, are not as strong as theirs were. In addition, many wines in the United States and in other countries have already been diluted. For example, New York State wines may contain as much as twenty to thirty percent liquid sugar (ע"י ספר קול דור דורי). This must be kept in mind when determining how much water may be added. Application: Assuming wine contains 30% liquid sugar and the diluted mixture must contain less than six parts water to one part wine, therefore, one may add up to 3.8 cups water to one cup of wine. When diluting is necessary, as explained earlier, adding grape juice in place of water is preferable-where this is feasible.

**Raisin wine - חמר מדינה** If one is unable to drink wine or grape juice-even diluted, raisin wine or חמר מדינה (literally, the wine or beverage of the country) may be used (ע"י פסחים ק"ז ע"א). What is חמר מדינה? חמר מדינה is a beverage which a person drinks or serves to a guest even when he is not thirsty. That is, a person drinks this beverage because of its importance or preference (ע"י א"ח סימן רס"ב). This may vary from country to country. חמר מדינה in the United States would include alcoholic beverages [it goes without saying that those used on Pesach must be kosher for Pesach] and coffee (ע"י שם). Milk is questionable (ע"י מ"ב ס"ק ס"ד). Water (ע"י שם), soda (ע"י שם), and borscht (ע"י שם) cannot be used.

**Summary of beverages to be used for the Four Cups** We will now list the beverages which may be used for the Four Cups in their order of preferability: a) wine, b) wine with grape juice added, c) wine with water added, d) grape juice, e) grape juice and water and f) raisin wine, חמר מדינה

**One who does not have sufficient wine** One who has only enough wine for four cups on one of the two nights, should use it all for the first night of Pesach (ע"י פסחים ק"ט ע"א).

### C. WHO IS REQUIRED TO DRINK THE FOUR CUPS?

**Men, Women** Who is required to drink the Four Cups? Men are required (רמב"ם פ"ז ה"ז). Women are also required to drink the Four Cups (ע"י פסחים ק"ח ע"ב). Although this is a mitzvah whose observance depends upon a specific time- a mitzvah whose observance depends upon a specific time-from which women are usually exempt, women are required to fulfill this mitzvah because they also experienced the miracle of the Exodus (ע"י פסחים ק"ח ע"ב). Since their requirement in this mitzvah is similar to that of men, they also must drink a רביעיית of wine or the other beverages discussed earlier (see B) in the same manner as men are required (ע"י שם). We discussed earlier that one who may become ill should drink grape juice or חמר מדינה-if it would not cause him to become bedridden.

**Poor** Even a pauper, who is maintained by public support must be furnished with the Four Cups for each of the Sedorim (ע"י פסחים צ"ט ע"ב). If this was not given to him, he is required to sell even his garment to obtain the Four Cups (ע"י שם).

**Children** Fathers are obligated to see that their children also should drink the Four Cups at the proper places in the Haggadah (see A) (ע"י שם). This halacha applies only for children who have reached the age of חינוך (age of training for mitzvos). When is a child considered, in halacha, as having reached the age of חינוך? If he is able to understand the concept of קדושת יום טוב (the sanctity of the festival), he should drink the cup of Kiddush; if he is capable of understanding the story of the Exodus, he should drink the second cup upon which the Haggadah is said. The same approach

applies to the other two cups as well (ע"י שם). The age when a child may be considered as having reached the age of חינוך may be as young as five or six (ע"י שם). Girls also have the same requirements as boys for the Four Cups and the other mitzvos which apply on the Seder nights (ע"י שם) (see B).

**How much should children drink?** Although fathers are obligated to see that their children drink the Four Cups, and their cup should contain a רביעיית (ע"י שם), they are not required to drink most of the רביעיית-as adults are (see A). If they are capable of drinking an amount which would fill one side of their mouth, they should do so; if not, they may drink even a small amount (ע"י שם). For this reason, it is recommended that grape juice should be used for a child (ע"י שם).

### D. HOW LARGE IS A רביעיית?

**How large must the cup be?** We have learned that the cup used for the Four Cups must contain a minimum of a רביעיית of wine (ע"י שם). A רביעיית (literally, a quarter) is a quarter of the measurement of a שם (ע"י שם). How large is a רביעיית?

**Determining the size of a רביעיית** According to חז"ל there are two methods of determining the shiur (measurement) of a רביעיית (ע"י שם). The Talmud says (פסחים ק"ט ע"א) that where the Torah requires a רביעיית it is the combined volume of the width of two thumbs by the width of two thumbs by the height of 2.7 thumbs ( $2 \times 2 \times 2.7$ ) (ע"י שם). We are told of a second method to determine the volume of a Revi'is. A Revi'is contains the volume of an egg and a half (ביצה ומחצה).

The **נודע ביהודה** (צ"ח פסחים קט"ז ע"א) points out that these two methods do not concur. He found that the measurement according to thumbs is double that of eggs. Since we cannot assume that our thumbs are twice the size of the time of Chazal, he concludes that our eggs are half the size of the eggs of the time of the Talmud. Therefore, he says, where the Torah requires a כזית (the size of an olive) [which we consider half the volume of an egg] as in the case of matzah, we should take double the volume of a כזית-which is the volume of an egg. This is to compensate for eggs having been reduced to half their original size. Similarly, where a Revi'is is required by the Torah, we should take double the egg and a half-or the volume of three eggs. Although there are Poskim who agree with this opinion, there are Poskim who disagree and refute his proof. The משנה ברורה concludes that one should conduct himself like the stringent opinion-to double the measurement-where we are dealing with a mitzvah of the Torah (e.g., eating matzah), and for a mitzvah דרבנן (e.g., the Four Cups, maror) we may assume that the measurements have not changed. In case of illness or if one cannot eat or drink the larger amount, one may rely even for Torah mitzvos on the Poskim who hold that our measurements have not changed.

**Size of cup to be used for the Four Cups** Therefore, since the mitzvah of the Four Cups is מדרבנן, one may use the smaller measurement-which is an egg and a half. However, when Pesach falls on Shabbos, since Kiddush of the evening is required by the Torah, one should preferably use the larger measurement for the first cup.

**Revi'is in ounces and liters** In determining the measurements of a Revi'is in ounces and grams (based upon the measurements of the נודע ביהודה), he says that the Revi'is should contain 150 ml of water (5.07 fluid ounces). The Chofetz Chaim says that one should preferably use a cup which holds the volume of **two eggs** (approximately 4 fluid ounces). Based upon the measurements using thumbs are determined as **4.42 fluid ounces** and using eggs at **3.3 fluid ounces** (97.6 ml). **Except for the first cup (when Pesach occurs on Shabbos)** if one has a difficulty drinking wine, he should take a smaller cup of wine [3 ounces (88.7 ml)], which is equal to 1½ eggs and exceeds the measurement of 86 ml. rather than using grape juice and losing the advantage of חירות. For the first cup (when Pesach occurs on Shabbos) one should preferably take the larger amount (4–5.07 fluid ounces).

### E. HOW TO DRINK THE FOUR CUPS

**Introduction** We have learned (see A, D) that the cup used for the ארבע כוסות must contain a Revi'is. We have also learned that one is not required to complete all the wine in the cup. We will now explain the halachos of drinking the wine in detail.

**If the cup contains only a Revi'is** If the cup contains only a Revi'is, he should preferably complete the entire cup. However, if he is unable to finish the cup, but has completed most of the Revi'is, he has fulfilled the mitzvah. This שיעור (for most of the Revi'is) is equivalent to כוס-literally, a quantity of liquid which fills one cheek of an average person.

**רוב כוס** If the cup is larger than a Revi'is, the רמב"ם holds that one must drink most of the contents of the cup. The ר"ן, however, holds that it is sufficient to drink most of a Revi'is. One should preferably conduct himself like the רמב"ם and drink most of the cup-even if larger than a Revi'is. Therefore, it would be advisable to use a smaller cup containing just a Revi'is and complete it. However, the halacha is like the ר"ן, that even if one drank most of a Revi'is of a large cup he has fulfilled his requirement. If the cup contains only a Revi'is, one must drink it in its entirety for the fourth cup. This is required, because a ברכה אחרונה is recited after the fourth cup and may be said only after one has completed a Revi'is.

**In how short a period should one drink the cup?** We will learn (see Chapter III D) that one must complete the כזית of matzah within a time period called פרס-כדי

which one should consider as no longer than 9 minutes and preferably within 2 minutes. Concerning maror, we will learn that since it is nowdays, if he completed it within 9 minutes he has fulfilled his mitzvah. The reason there is a required time limit is that eating a כזית in a longer period of time is comparable to eating part of the כזית one day and finishing it another day, that is, the entire כזית is not joined together. Similarly, when drinking each of the Four Cups, there is a time limit. Within how short a period of time must one complete each of the Four Cups? Preferably, one should drink most of the רביעיית [or most of the cup] at one time-without pausing (ע"י שם). However, if he paused while drinking the required amount of wine, he has fulfilled his requirement if he completes the shiur in a certain time limit. Some Poskim hold that this time limit is כדי שתיית רביעיית (literally, the time it would take a person to complete a רביעיית). The רביעיית explains that since the proper manner of drinking a רביעיית of wine is in two swallows, one should complete the רביעיית in two swallows with a minimum pause between them (ע"י שם). Most Poskim hold that the shiur for completing the drinking of liquids is the same as eating matzah and maror, namely כדי אכילת פרס. Therefore, although the preferred manner of drinking the רביעיית is by drinking most of the רביעיית in one swallow and completing the רביעיית in the second swallow, if he sips the wine or paused more than כדי שתיית רביעיית he is, nevertheless, not required to drink the cup again. However, if completing the רביעיית took longer than nine minutes, he must drink the cup again (ע"י שם) and recite a new ברכה if required.

**Reclining, Drinking between the cups** We will learn later that one must recline while drinking each of the cups. We will discuss by each cup what one should do if he drank the cup without reclining (see Chapter VI) and when one is permitted to drink between cups.

**What kind of cup may be used?** Although there is no requirement concerning from which material the cup used for the Four Cups should be constructed, however, a paper cup should not be used except in case of great necessity (ע"י שם). A plastic cup may be used (ע"י שם). One should use an elegant vessel (within his means) for the cup used for the Four Cups.

**Who should pour the wine?** It is preferable, where this is possible, that the master of the house should not pour his own cup but another should pour for him (ע"י שם). In this manner it appears that he is being served as a free man and one of nobility, thereby recalling the Exodus from Egypt.

### III. מרור - The Bitter Herbs

#### A. INTRODUCTION

**The mitzvah of eating Maror** Eating maror on the Seder nights is a mitzvah. This mitzvah differs from that of eating matzah. We have learned (see Chapter I B) that eating matzah on the first night of Pesach is a מצות עשה (a positive commandment) required by the Torah-which applies in all places and at all times. We have also learned that it is an independent mitzvah and does not depend upon the presence of the Korbon Pesach (the Passover sacrifice). This is not the case with maror.

The mitzvah of the Torah of eating maror is not an independent mitzvah (ע"י פסחים ק"כ) (ע"י שם). The Torah says "על מצות ומרורים יאכלוהו" (במדבר ט"ז:א) "you should eat it [referring to the Korbon Pesach] with matzah and maror. Therefore, the mitzvah of the Torah of eating maror is dependent upon eating the Korbon Pesach; one cannot fulfill the Torah commandment of eating maror without matzah and the Korbon Pesach.

However, חז"ל required the eating of maror on the Seder nights even without the Korbon Pesach, and this requirement is a mitzvah ע"י פסחים ק"כ ע"א; רמב"ם פ"ז דרבנן (ע"י שם). We learned earlier (see Chapter I B) that there is a second mitzvah of eating matzah which applies nowadays. This is derived from "שמות י"ב:י"ח" (במדרש ט"ז:א) "שמות י"ב:י"ח" (ע"י שם).

**The reason for this requirement** The reason for the requirement of eating maror is to remind us how the Egyptians embittered the lives of our forefathers in Egypt, as it says "שמות א"י:ד" (ע"י שם).

**How much maror must one eat?** How much maror must a person eat on Pesach? A person is required to eat a כזית (the size of an olive) of maror (ע"י פסחים ק"כ ע"א).

#### B. SPECIES TO BE USED FOR MARROR

**What species are called maror?** With which species does a person fulfill his mitzvah of eating maror? The Mishnah (פסחים ל"ט ע"א) lists five types which are considered maror. They are: a) חזרת b) עולשין c) תמכא d) הרחבינה e) מרור. Chazal have determined that no other species is called maror except for these five species (ע"י שם). Although various opinions have been offered to define these five species, we may only use those species which are known by tradition to be maror (ע"י שם). What are these species?

**Romaine lettuce, Lettuce** The first species, חזרת, the Talmud (פסחים ל"ט ע"א) defines as חסא. The Poskim call it "חסא" or "ע"י חוסי (שם)", which is a type of lettuce. Most Poskim consider the "סאלאט" as the leafy [or cos] variety known as romaine lettuce. Some Poskim hold that the head variety (Lactuca sativa) known as crisp head or iceberg lettuce may be used for maror.

**Why is lettuce "bitter" herbs?** Why can lettuce or romaine lettuce be used for maror-it is not bitter? The Talmud Yerushalmi explains that the development of the חזרת

simulates the situation of our forefathers in Egypt: "כך היתה חזרת תחילה רכה וסופה קשה" - "in the same manner as the חזרת is at first sweet and then later becomes bitter [when it is left in the earth for a long period of time] so was the situation of our forefathers in Egypt." At first they were treated royally and settled in the best of the land of Egypt. Later they were encouraged to work for the Egyptians and paid for their work until gradually they were enslaved and their lives were made bitter from the forced and backbreaking toil (ירושלמי פסחים פ"י ה"ה). According to the Chazon Ish זצ"ל, romaine lettuce must contain some bitterness in taste (ע"י שם). Other Poskim disagree (ע"י שם). The minhag is to use the lettuce even if it is still sweet-tasting.

**The problem with lettuce** The problem with romaine lettuce is that frequently there are small bugs present which blend into the color of the leaf or are camouflaged by the folds of the leaf. These are not readily discernible to inexperienced people or those with poor eyesight (ע"י שם). Therefore, although this species of maror is the most preferred of the five species, unless the leaves are inspected carefully by a meticulous person who is a ירא שמים (G-d fearing), one should rather use the third species, תמכא, horseradish. Eating insects is prohibited by the Torah, and Torah law cannot be violated to fulfill a mitzvah דרבנן-especially when one can fulfill the mitzvah of maror and not violate any Torah law by eating horseradish (ע"י שם).

**The other four species** What are the other four species? The second species, עולשין, is considered by some Poskim to be endives or escarole (ע"י שם). The third species, תמכא, we learned is horseradish (חזרת). The last two species, מרור and הרחבינה, most Poskim hold that their definition is no longer known to us through tradition.

**The most preferred of the five species** Although all five species may be used for maror, the most preferred is the חזרת, because (as explained in) it recalls the situation of our forefathers in Egypt. Therefore, even if it is more expensive than the other species it is preferred (ע"י שם). If חזרת is not available, the species should be used in the order listed.

If none of these species is available, one should use any bitter vegetable to recall the bitterness of Egypt. However, the ברכה "על אכילת מרור" is not recited (ע"י שם).

**Which portion of the vegetable may be used?** Which portion of the vegetable may be used to fulfill the mitzvah of maror? One may use the leaves and the stalk but not the roots (ע"י שם). There is, however, a difference between using the leaves and the stalk. The leaves may be used only if they are fresh and moist, while the stalk may be used even if it is dry (ע"י שם).

The reason for this difference is that when the leaves dry they lose the taste of the maror while the stalk-because it is thick-still retains its taste (ע"י שם).

**Chopped, ground and grated maror** The maror need not be eaten whole. It may be chopped, ground or grated. When using horseradish for maror, care should be taken not to eat it whole-because its use in this form is dangerous and therefore not a mitzvah. For this reason, it should be grated (or otherwise broken down) and left uncovered until used-in order to release some of its strength (ע"י שם). According to the Vilna Gaon the horseradish should not be grated until returning home from Shul and then it should be kept covered until the beginning of the Seder, when it should be spread on a plate to weaken its strength (ע"י שם). Other Poskim hold that it may be ground and uncovered earlier, because it will still retain sufficient strength of maror (ע"י שם).

**Maror which has been cooked or preserved** One does not fulfill his obligation with maror which has been cooked or preserved-because its taste is weakened and is no longer considered as maror (ע"י שם). Therefore, one should not keep the maror soaked in water for 24 hours or longer (כבוש). However, horseradish kept in water 24 hours or longer may be used if no other maror is available, while leaves of lettuce in water for that same period may not be used (ע"י שם).

For this reason, commercially produced grated horseradish may not be used. Since vinegar is added, it is considered preserved (ע"י שם).

**All species, leaves and stalks may be joined** We have learned (see A) that the minimum amount of maror to be eaten is a כזית. One is not required to use all of one species for this כזית. One may join all species of maror for this requirement (ע"י שם). Similarly, one may join both leaves and stalks together (ע"י שם).

#### C. WHO IS REQUIRED TO EAT MARROR?

**Men, women, children** Both men and women are required to eat marror (ע"י פסחים ק"כ) (ע"י שם). Fathers are also obligated to see that their children eat a כזית of marror-if they have reached the age of חינוך (see Chapter II C). For children, especially, it is recommended that lettuce or romaine lettuce should be used.

**One who is weak, ill, or has a sensitivity to food** One who is weak or ill should not force himself to use horseradish stalks-even if he has a minhag to use only horseradish and no other species is available. He may use the horseradish leaves-if they are fresh (ע"י שם). One who is ill or has a sensitivity to one of the species (see B), may use whichever species is pleasant to him or agrees with him (ע"י שם). He may also eat the marror slowly, as long as it is within the time limit of כדי אכילת פרס (see D).

If eating marror will not affect a person's health, he should force himself to eat a כזית of marror-although it is difficult-in order to fulfill the mitzvah of eating marror (ע"י שם).

שם). If a person-because of illness-is unable to eat any marror, he should attempt, at least, to eat or chew some bitter vegetable-in order to recall the bitterness of Egypt. A brocho, however, may not be recited (ע"י שם).

#### D. GENERAL HALACHOS OF EATING MATZAH AND MARROR

**Shiur of matzah and marror** We have learned (see A and Chapter I B) that the shiur of matzah and marror is a כזית (the size of an olive). We have also learned (see Chapter II D) that a כזית is half the volume of an egg. Although the Rambam holds that a כזית is a third of an egg (ע"י שם), we may not rely on the view of the Rambam except in case of illness [or for a mitzvah דרבנן].

**How much matzah and marror must one eat?** We explained earlier (see Chapter II D) that the רבנן holds that our eggs are half the size of those of the time of the Talmud. We said that the שערי תשובה and the משנה ברורה say that when we are dealing with a mitzvah דאורייתא (e.g., matzah) we should double the measurement (that is, eat twice the size of a כזית-which would then be the size of an egg) and for a mitzvah דרבנן (e.g., marror) it is sufficient to eat only a כזית (half the size of an egg). In case of illness, we have learned that one may rely on the Rambam and even eat only a third the volume of an egg.

**Determining the size of a כזית of ground horseradish** We explained earlier (see Chapter II D 5) that a רביעית is the displacement of two fluid ounces. Therefore, the amount of ground horseradish required for a כזית would be half of that, or one fluid ounce;\* in case of illness 2/3\* of an ounce (19.7 ml) is sufficient.

*Note:* According to ספר קול דור, the measurements are 1.1 fluid ounces (32.5 ml) and .7 of an ounce (20.7 ml) in case of illness.

**Determining the size of the כזית of romaine lettuce** In order to determine the size of a כזית of leaves of romaine lettuce, the leaves must be measured compacted together, because the spaces between the leaves cannot be considered towards the כזית (ע"י שם). Therefore, [considering the כזית as 1 fluid ounce] the amount of leaves required is a quantity sufficient to fill a one ounce glass. According to ספר קול דור, the leaves should cover an area of 8 x 10 inches (20.3 cm x 25.4 cm).

**Do air spaces count?** In determining the size of the matzah required, we should note that many matzos contain air spaces. Those air spaces which create a cavity in the matzah cannot be included in the shiur of כזית. However, if there is no cavity but the matzah is elevated in many places like a sponge [as are many machine matzos and to a smaller degree hand matzos] these may be included in the shiur of כזית.

**Matzah is eaten three times** In determining the size of the matzah required we should note that there are three times matzah is eaten at the Seder: a) מוציא מצה (ע) כורך ב) מוציא מצה (ע) דאורייתא mitzvah מצה [מוציא מצה] it is to fulfill a mitzvah דאורייתא אפיקומן (see Chapter I B). The second time matzah is eaten [for כורך] to recall the manner in which the mitzvah of eating matzah and marror was fulfilled during the time of the Bais Hamikdash (ע"י שם). The third time matzah is eaten [for Afikoman] is מדרבנן to recall the Korbon Pesach (the Passover sacrifice) which was eaten at the end of the meal (ע"י שם), or the matzah which was eaten with the Korbon Pesach (ע"י שם). Some Poskim hold that this is the main fulfillment of the mitzvah דאורייתא of eating matzah (ע"י שם). Therefore, in determining how much matzah is required we should keep in mind that the first time matzah is eaten it is required by the Torah, the second time it is a mitzvah דרבנן. For Afikoman, most Poskim hold that it is מדרבנן; some Poskim hold that it is דאורייתא (ע"י שם).

**Determining the shiur of matzah** We learned earlier that for a דאורייתא mitzvah we should double the size of a כזית to the size of our eggs-and for a mitzvah דרבנן we may consider the כזית as half the size of our eggs. How much does this amount to in our matzos? According to the משנה ברורה [based upon the measurements of the חתם סופר] half of a machine matzah\* contains a כזית of matzah. [This is not meant to indicate a preference for machine matzah, this is only used to indicate a standard size.] Note that Machine matzos vary in size. Therefore, the author was unable to determine whether the size matzah measured by the חתם סופר זצ"ל was the same as our machine matzah. According to ספר קול דור, for מוציא מצה the size of the matza should be 6 1/4 x 7 inches (15.9 cm x 17.8 cm). For כורך the matzah should be 4 x 7 inches (10.2 cm x 17.8 cm). For Afikoman, the matzah should be 6 1/4 x 7 inches (15.9 cm x 17.8 cm). [6 1/4 x 7 inches is about the size of a machine matzah.]

According to our measurements the following chart represents the shiur of matzah. According to these measurements, a person may fulfill all the required shiurim for כורך and מוציא מצה, and Afikoman by eating a total of 1 1/2 hand matzos or 1 2/3 machine matzos.

Hand matzah (approx. 10 1/4") [in diameter]	Machine matzah (6 1/8" x 7")	Hand matzah (approx. 10 1/4") [in diameter]	machine matzah (6 1/8" x 7")	
1/2	2/3	1/4	1/3	מוציא מצה
1/4	1/3	1/4	1/3	כורך
1/2	2/3	1/4	1/3	אפיקומן

*Note:* Although we have offered minimum amounts for eating matzah and marror and for drinking the Four Cups, with time limits in which this is required, this does not mean that one is required to eat or drink an abnormal amount or in an unusually rapid manner. The shiurim of the Torah and חז"ל represent a normal manner of eating for the average person.

It should also be noted that the shiur of פרס כדי אכילת פרס will depend upon the size of the כזית. The larger one assumes as the size of the כזית, the larger the פרס כדי אכילת פרס will be. **In how short a period should one eat the כזית?** Although it is preferable that each of the כזיתים of matzah and marror should be swallowed at one time (ע"י פסחים ק"כ ע"א), it must be completed within a time period called כדי אכילת פרס (ע"י שם). We learned earlier (see Chapter II E) that for marror-which is a mitzvah דרבנן-if one completed the כזית within 9 minutes he has fulfilled his requirement. Similarly, כורך-which is also מדרבנן-should be completed within 9 minutes.

Concerning the כזית of matzah which is eaten for מוציא מצה, since this is a mitzvah דאורייתא, we have learned that one should preferably complete it within two minutes. Since we mentioned that one should preferably eat two כזיתים for Afikoman, therefore, these two כזיתים [i.e., according to our measurements, 1/2 of a hand matzah or 2/3 of a machine matzah] should preferably be completed within four minutes but not more than 18 minutes for both combined. One should preferably conduct himself in the same manner for the two כזיתים eaten for Afikoman (ע"י פסחים ק"כ ע"א).

**One who is ill** One who is ill and cannot eat the larger shiur of matzah [according to the רמ"א] may rely on the Poskim who hold that our measurements have not changed and may eat the smaller shiur of matzah (e.g., 1/4 of a hand matzah for a כזית). The matzah may be broken down into matzah farfel or ground into matzah meal. He may even soak it in water to soften it (ע"י שם).

**Swallowing matzah and marror** A person should chew the matzah and marror (ע"י פסחים ק"כ ע"א). If a person swallowed matzah-without chewing it-he has fulfilled the mitzvah-although he does not taste the matzah (ע"י שם). But if he swallowed marror without discerning its taste, he has not fulfilled his requirement, because he must feel the taste of the marror in his mouth (ע"י שם).

## IV. הסיבה - Reclining

### A. INTRODUCTION

**Reason for reclining** In each and every generation a person is required to act as if he himself had just been freed from Egyptian bondage as it says "דברים" (דברים) "וְאֵתְּנוּנוּ מֵעֶבְרֵי מִצְרַיִם" and he took us out from there [Egypt]. For this reason הקב"ה commanded us in the Torah (ע"י שם) "וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ" (דברים ה' ט"ו) "and you shall remember that you were a slave, that is, as if you yourself were a slave and had been freed and redeemed (ע"י שם). Therefore, when a person dines on this night he is required to eat and drink in a reclining position (הסיבה)-in the manner of free men (ע"י שם) and royalty (ע"י שם).

**When is reclining required?** When is reclining required? One is required to recline while eating מצה, מוציא מצה, כורך מצה, Afikoman, and while drinking the Four Cups (ע"י פסחים ק"כ ע"א). It is preferable to recline while eating and drinking the entire Seder meal (ע"י שם). Concerning כורך, there are various opinions among the Poskim (ע"י שם). Unless one has a minhag to the contrary, it is preferable to recline (ע"י שם). One is not required to recline while eating the marror-since it recalls the bitterness of bondage (ע"י שם).

**The view of the ראב"י** There is a view which holds that since nowadays it is not the custom of free men or nobility to recline, reclining is not required nowadays (ראב"י). Most Poskim disagree with this view and hold that where reclining is required (e.g., eating matzah, drinking the Four Cups) if one ate or drank without reclining he has not fulfilled his requirement and must eat or drink again (ע"י שם). We will discuss by each individual mitzvah how one should conduct himself if he ate or drank without reclining.

### B. WHAT IS CONSIDERED AS הסיבה?

**Preferred position** What is הסיבה? The preferred position for reclining is that while seated near the table on a couch, bed or chair, he leans to the left with a pillow or cushion to support his head (ע"י שם).

**If he has no pillow or cushion** Even if he has no pillow or cushion for support, he should recline on a bench or chair (ע"י שם), placing a garment or some other object under his head (ע"י שם).

**If he has no bench or chair** Even if he has no bench or chair and is forced to sit on the floor, he must still recline (ע"י שם). In case of necessity, he may even support himself by leaning on his friend's leg (ע"י שם). Supporting himself on his own leg is not considered reclining, because it appears that he is worried-and this is not the manner of free men (ע"י שם).

**Lying on one's back or face** We explained that the position of reclining is leaning to the left. Leaning on his right side is not considered as reclining nor is lying on one's back or on one's face (ע"י שם), since this is not the manner free men eat or drink (ע"י שם).

**Reasons for reclining on left side** There are two reasons why leaning on one's left side is considered as reclining, but not on one's right side: a) It is not the manner of

reclining-because the right hand generally is used for eating (ע"י שם) b) "שמה יקדים קנה" (ע"י שם) the food may enter the windpipe instead of the esophagus (ע"י שם).

**Left-handed person** Since the second reason (שמה יקדים קנה לוושט) is of greater significance [because it involves danger] even a left-handed person should eat and drink while reclining on the left side as everyone else (ע"י שם). However, if he mistakenly ate or drank while reclining on the right side, many Poskim hold that he has fulfilled his requirement (ע"י שם).

### C. WHO IS REQUIRED TO RECLINE?

**Even the poor** On the Seder nights all men are required to eat and drink while reclining (ע"י שם). Even the poorest Jew may not fulfill his obligations of eating and drinking unless he is reclining (ע"י שם).

**Are women required to recline?** Although we have learned (see Chapter I C) that women are required to perform all the mitzvos at the Sederim like men, the minhag is that women are not required to recline (ע"י שם). The reason is that it never was the manner for the average woman to recline (ע"י שם).

3. **A son in his father's presence** A son who is at the Seder with his father is required to recline even if his father is רבו מובהק (the Rebbe from whom he has learned most of his Torah) (ע"י שם). Although a son is required to honor and respect his father [and reclining is not a position one assumes in the presence of one to whom he should show respect], nevertheless, we assume that a father, in this instance, foregoes on this outward sign of respect (ע"י שם).

**A talmid in the presence of his Rebbe** A student in the presence of his Rebbe may not recline even if he is not רבו מובהק, unless his Rebbe expressly permitted him to (ע"י שם). The reason is that "מורה רבך כמורה שמים"-the respect one is required to give to his Rebbe is comparable to the fear of Hashem (ע"י שם). If his Rebbe permitted him to recline many Poskim hold that he is required to recline (ע"י שם). One who is present at the Seder of a Gadol (an eminent Torah sage) may not recline. Even if he had not learned anything from him he is considered his Rebbe and may not recline-unless expressly permitted to (ע"י שם).

**Apprentice or student of a profession** An apprentice or student of a profession or trade at the Seder of his master or instructor is required to recline (ע"י שם).

**Waiter or servant** Similarly, a waiter or servant is also required to recline. Even though he may be constantly occupied with the needs of the meal or the house, nevertheless, he also is required to act as a free man and at the least eat the כזיתים of matzah and Afikoman and drink the Four Cups while reclining (ע"י שם).

**One who is in mourning** One who is in mourning (e.g., within the twelve month mourning period for his father or mother or Shloshim of other relatives-i.e., Yom Tov interrupted the Shivah) (ע"י שם), although he is required to recline he should not recline in splendor, but should recline simply (e.g., on a couch with one pillow under his head or on his friend's lap) (ע"י שם).

## V. Preparation for the Seder

### A. GENERAL PREPARATIONS

**Seder table should be prepared before Yom Tov** The Seder table should be prepared before Yom Tov in order to facilitate commencing the Seder immediately upon returning home from Shul after nightfall (ע"י שם). The reason we are concerned with beginning the Seder promptly is in order that the children should be awake (ע"י שם). The Torah stresses the child in the mitzvah of "והגדת לבנך"- "you will relate to your son on that day" (ע"י שם). Therefore, if the Seder begins early the child will ask מה נשתנה, the father will then be able to respond to his questions and properly fulfill the mitzvah of יציאת מצרים (ע"י שם) סיפור יציאת מצרים.

**Using elegant vessels** Although during the entire year it is best to minimize use at the table of elegant vessels (e.g., exquisite silver, china and linen) in order to recall the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh, on the Seder nights it is a mitzvah to set the table with the finest vessels (ע"י שם)-even borrowed (ע"י שם)-in the manner of free men and royalty (ע"י שם).

**Prepare for reclining** One's seat should be prepared so that he would be able to recline in the manner of free men and royalty (ע"י שם). The halachos of reclining were discussed in detail previously (see Chapter IV).

**The Kittel** There is a minhag for men to wear a Kittel (i.e., a white robe) at the Seder (ע"י שם). There are two reasons for this minhag: a) The Kittel resembles the garments of מלאכים (angels). According to this reason the Kittel is worn for simcha (ע"י שם). b) The Kittel resembles shrouds. Since at the Seder we conduct ourselves like free men and royalty, we are afraid that a person may tend to become overbearing and haughty. Therefore, the Kittel reminds him of the day of his demise (ע"י שם).

**Does a mourner wear a kittel?** Does the mourner wear a Kittel? According to the first reason (in 4, because of simcha) a mourner should not wear the Kittel. According to the second reason (he should not become overbearing and haughty) the mourner may wear a Kittel. Although many Poskim hold that the minhag is for a mourner not to wear a Kittel, however, one who desires to wear it is not rebuked (ע"י שם).

### B. THE SEDER PLATE

**Seder plate is placed before master of house** The Seder plate is placed before the master of the house (ע"י שם). Other members of the household do not require individual Seder plates but will obtain their Seder foods from the master of the house (ע"י שם). When should the Seder plate be brought to the table? Some have a minhag to bring it before Kiddush (ע"י שם). Others have a minhag to bring it after Kiddush (ע"י שם). One should conduct himself according to his minhag.

**Items on the Seder plate** The Seder plate consists of three matzos, marror, Charoses, Karpas, and two cooked (or roasted) foods. Salt water is also required to be used with the Karpas (see Chapter VI D). According to the אר"י it is also on the Seder plate (ע"י שם). Most people conduct themselves like the רמ"א who does not place the salt water on the Seder plate (ע"י שם).

**Reason for three matzos** Every Shabbos and Yom Tov meal requires two loaves of either bread or matzah for לחם משנה. Why are three matzos required for the Seder? Two matzos are for לחם משנה-as every Yom Tov meal; one matzah is broken in two at יחז (see Chapter VI E)-with the larger portion hidden for Afikoman (see Chapter VI L). The top matzah and the smaller portion of the middle matzah is used for מציאת מצה (see Chapter VI H). The bottom matzah is used for כורך (see Chapter VI J).

**Marror** We discussed earlier (see Chapter II B) which species of vegetables may be used for marror. The minhag of most people is to place the marror to be used for the mitzvah of marror and the marror to be used for כורך (see Chapter VI J) separately on the Seder plate (ע"י שם).

**Charoses** The Charoses is a mixture which should be made from fruit mentioned in Tanach symbolizing the Jewish people (e.g., apples, figs, walnuts, almonds and pomegranates) (ע"י שם). These are chopped up or ground and wine or wine vinegar is added (ע"י שם). The mixture should have a thick consistency to recall the mortar from which our forefathers were compelled to make bricks in Egypt (ע"י שם). Spices, such as cinnamon and ginger, should be used-they are in strandlike form-recalling the straw which was mixed with the mortar (ע"י שם). When Pesach falls on Shabbos, see C.

**Karpas** For Karpas we use a vegetable upon which the ברוך פרי האדמה שחוcho Karpas is recited (ע"י שם). The reason for Karpas is that since it is eaten before the meal the child will notice the difference from other nights of the year and will be stimulated to ask "מה נשתנה?" (ע"י שם). Why was the species כרפס (see further) selected? Because by reversing the letters it reads כרך, referring to the 600,000 Jews who toiled in bondage in Egypt (ע"י שם). Although there is a preference for the species Karpas [parsley] (ע"י שם) or celery (ע"י שם) any vegetable may be used (ע"י שם) raw or cooked (ע"י שם). Its brocho, however, should be ברוך פרי האדמה (ע"י שם). A vegetable which is to be used for marror (see Chapter III B) should not be used as Karpas (ע"י שם).

**Two cooked foods are required on the Seder plate (ע"י שם): זרוע (the shankbone) and an egg.** The זרוע recalls the Korbon Pesach (Passover sacrifice). The egg recalls the Korbon Chagigah (the festival sacrifice). The reason the זרוע is used is, aside from recalling the Korbon Pesach it also recalls the outstretched arm with which Hashem displayed to the Jewish people in Egypt (ע"י שם). If a זרוע is not available, another piece of meat-even without a bone-may be used (ע"י שם). However, if a bone is used, there should be some meat on it, since its purpose is also to recall the meat of the Korbon Pesach (ע"י שם). In addition, since a זרוע (a cooked food) is required, a bone without meat is not called a זרוע (ע"י שם). (Roasting the זרוע and בריצה, see 9.)

**The egg** Various reasons are given why the egg was chosen for the cooked food to represent the Korbon Chagigah:

a) In Aramaic [the language of the Talmud] the egg is called בריצה. Therefore, the egg is used to symbolize בריצה במע למיפרק יתנא- "הקב"ה" desired to liberate us (ע"י שם).

b) The egg is a mourner's food. The egg is used to remind us of the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh, therefore, we are unable to offer sacrifices (ע"י שם).

**Roasting the זרוע and the egg** The minhag is to roast the זרוע over the fire-similar to the Korbon Pesach (ע"י שם). Although the egg may be either roasted or cooked (ע"י שם), the minhag is to roast it too (ע"י שם).

Since the זרוע is roasted and the minhag is not to eat roasted meat on the nights of the Seder (see Chapter VI), unless one expects to eat the זרוע on Yom Tov by day one may not roast the זרוע on Yom Tov-but should do it before Yom Tov (ע"י שם). It is not proper to throw away the זרוע; it should be eaten on Yom Tov by day (ע"י שם).

**The order on the Seder Plate**

10. There are two principal minhagim for arranging these articles on the Seder plate:

a) According to the רמב"א, the Seder plate should be arranged so that a person should not pass over one mitzvah in order to fulfill another (על מעבירין על המצות). In addition, the more important should be on his right (דורי). Therefore, the following is the arrangement of the Seder plate according to the רמב"א:

זרוע	ביצה
מרור	חרוסת
מצות	
כרפס	מי מלח

b) According to the אר"י ז"ל, the Seder plate is placed above the three matzos. The order is based upon principles of Kabbalah (מ"ב). The following is the arrangement of the Seder plate according to the אר"י ז"ל:

זרוע	ביצה
מרור	
חרוסת	כרפס
הדרת	

The אר"י ז"ל (ס' תע"ג סי' י"א) עורך השלחן says that this second order is our minhag.

**C. WHEN PESACH FALLS ON SHABBOS**

**Introduction** When Pesach falls on Shabbos, certain Seder preparations must be made before Shabbos, so as not to violate any of the prohibitions of Shabbos.

**Roasting the זרוע and egg** The זרוע (shankbone) and egg must be roasted before Shabbos. If one forgot to roast them, one should use other cooked food instead (see B 9 about Yom Tov).

**Grinding the horseradish** If using horseradish for maror, it must be ground or grated before Shabbos and covered with a vessel until the Seder begins (ע"י שם). If one forgot to grind or grate the horseradish before Shabbos, grinding or grating on Shabbos is prohibited. One may, however, cut the horseradish into large stalks (ע"י שם).

Even when grating horseradish on Yom Tov (not on Shabbos) a slight deviation should be used [e.g., turn the grater upside down or grate onto pieces of paper rather than onto a plate] (ע"י שם).

**Selecting leaves of lettuce** If using lettuce or romaine lettuce, one should preferably select the leaves before Shabbos (ע"י שם). If he did not select them before Shabbos, on Shabbos the exterior leaves may be removed (see ibid.). Where good and bad leaves are removed from the head and are mixed together, he may select only the good leaves from the inferior ones-and not vice versa and only for immediate use (see ibid.).

If finding insects in the leaves on Shabbos or Yom Tov, one may wash off or even pull off the insects (ע"י שם), but should be careful not to intentionally kill them [because of איסור נטילת נשמה].

**Prepare salt water** The salt water should be prepared before Shabbos. If he forgot to prepare it and no vinegar is available, he may make a small amount of salt water (ע"י שם), that is, a minimal amount sufficient for the Seder (ע"י שם).

**Prepare the Charoses** The Charoses-which is ground or chopped up (טחון) and then wine or vinegar\* is added (ע"י שם)-must be done before Shabbos. If one forgot to prepare it before Shabbos, he should cut up the fruit into large pieces just before the Seder (see HALACHOS OF SHABBOS, Chapter XII C). Concerning adding the wine or vinegar, these should first be placed into the vessel and then the fruits added; he should then mix it by using his finger or by shaking the vessel (ע"י שם).

[The halachos of Hallel are discussed in Chapter VI N.] It goes without saying that the vinegar must be suitable for Passover use. We have learned that vinegar is usually made from grain. Passover vinegar is prepared from other sources.

This completes our discussion of the mitzvos required by the Torah and by חז"ל on the first two nights of Pesach. We will now discuss the Seder, that is, the order and procedure of performing these mitzvos.

**VI . The Seder**

**A. BEGINNING THE SEDER**

**Introduction** We have learned (see Chapter V A) that the Seder table should be prepared before Yom Tov in order to facilitate beginning the Seder promptly upon returning home from Shul after nightfall. We have also learned (ibid) that the table should be set with the finest silver, china and linen and that the seat should be prepared for reclining (ibid). The Kittel is worn (ibid). The Seder plate is brought to the table with the matzos and other items (ibid B) and is placed before the master of the house\* [some bring the Seder plate after Kiddush, ibid B 1].

**B. קידוש - RECITE THE KIDDUSH**

**Each person should have his own cup** The Kiddush (literally, sanctification) is the first of the Four Cups (see Chapter II). Normally on Shabbos or Yom Tov there is no obligation for each person to have his own cup for Kiddush, nor is there a requirement for him to drink from the cup. He may fulfill his obligation by hearing Kiddush from someone else (ע"י שם). At the Seder, however, each of the participants-man, woman or

child-should have before him his own cup (ע"י שם) and is required to drink of this cup (see Chapter II C).

**Kiddush should not be recited before dark** Although on Shabbos and Yom Tov one may recite Kiddush before nightfall (ע"י שם), on the Seder nights Kiddush may be recited only after nightfall, that is, after stars are visible (ע"י שם). The reason for this difference is that by reciting Kiddush on Shabbos or Yom Tov before nightfall he ushers in sanctity earlier [which is permissible]. Kiddush on the Seder nights, however, is recited on the first of the Four Cups, and as all the required mitzvos of the Seder may be performed only at night-in a time suitable for the Korbon Pesach-the Kiddush must also be at night (ע"י שם).

**Rinsing, pouring and filling the cup** The cup should be rinsed prior to use (ע"י שם). The wine is poured, preferably by someone other than the master of the house (see Chapter II E). This and the other cups should be filled to capacity (ע"י שם).

**One should intend for two mitzvos** Since with this cup of wine a person fulfills both his obligation for Kiddush and the first of the Four Cups, one should intend before reciting the Kiddush to perform these two mitzvos (ע"י שם). Some have a minhag to recite before Kiddush: "הריני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות קידוש ומצות ארבע כוסות". If this is said, it must be added before Kiddush and not afterwards [before drinking] so that it is not a הפסק (interruption) between the brocho and drinking of the wine (ע"י שם).

**The Order of Kiddush** Kiddush is recited (ע"י שם). When Pesach falls on a weekday the order of the brochos is: a) בורא פרי הגפן c) קידוש b) בורא פרי הגפן

**When the Seder occurs on Shabbos** When the Seder occurs on Shabbos (Friday night), the Kiddush is said in the following order: a) ויכולו b) בורא פרי הגפן c) קידוש. In the midst of the Kiddush, the additional words and phrases for Shabbos [which are found in the Haggadah] are said and one concludes "מקדש השבת וישראל" d) שהחיינו e) "והזמנים".

**When the Seder occurs on שבת מוצאי שבת** When the Seder occurs on שבת מוצאי שבת (Saturday night) two additional brochos are added. The order is: a) בורא פרי הגפן b) בורא פרי הגפן c) קידוש d) המבדיל בין קודש לקודש e) מאורי האש (the brocho over the candles) f) המבדיל בין קודש לקודש g) שהחיינו

**If one forgot Havdallah** If one inadvertently omitted Havdallah whether he reminded himself before or after beginning the Haggadah, Havdallah should be recited over the second cup. That is, after saying the brocho "בורא מאורי האש" and "המבדיל" are said (ע"י שם). If he first reminded himself during the meal (שלחן ערוך), he must stop eating and make Havdallah. He takes a cup of wine and says האש (over the burning candles) and המבדיל. The brocho בורא פרי הגפן is not to be said [because the brocho already recited on the second cup immediately before the meal exempts it].

If one has forgotten until the very end of the meal or during the Birchah Hamazone, Havdallah is then to be said over the third cup. If one remembers after the third cup, Havdallah is said over the fourth cup. If he remembers after the fourth cup, a fifth cup is used for Havdallah and the brochos (המבדיל and בורא פרי הגפן) are recited.

**If he forgot שהחיינו** The brocho שהחיינו is recited on both nights of Pesach. If one forgot to say שהחיינו after Kiddush on the first night of Pesach he may recite it at any time he may recall-either at night or during all of the first day. Even should he recall while walking in the street that he omitted שהחיינו, as long as it is still the first day of Pesach it should be recited then.

If the entire first day of Yom Tov passed without saying שהחיינו, the recitation at Kiddush on the second night has fulfilled his requirement. If שהחיינו was omitted on the second night (even if he had said it on the first night) it is to be said during the second day or at any other time he may recall until the end of Pesach.

**Drink the cup while reclining** One must recline while drinking the first cup [and all the other cups] (ע"י שם). If one did not recline while drinking the first cup, and realized after its completion, he should not drink it again. The reason is that since he would be required to recite another brocho it appears like he is adding a fifth cup to the Four Cups (ע"י שם). In this instance we rely on the view of the ראב"י (see Chapter IVA) who says that reclining is not required. For this reason, it is preferable to have in mind before reciting the brocho on this cup the possibility of having to drink again. This will allow drinking another cup without a brocho-in the event the first is consumed without reclining. Some have a minhag to hold together two of the lit candles when reciting this brocho and to look at their fingernails by the light of the candles-as is done every מצאי שבת. Others look at their fingernails by the light of the candles but do not put them together on Yom Tov.

A ברכה אחרונה (a brocho recited after eating or drinking) is not recited after this cup. It is recited only after the fourth cup (ע"י שם).

**Drinking between the first two cups** The minhag is not to drink wine or any other intoxicating beverage between the first and second cups (ע"י שם). Drinking other beverages is permissible (ע"י שם)-if they are not מדינה (see Chapter II B).

**C. ורחץ - WASH THE HANDS**

**Hands are washed without a brocho** The hands are washed before partaking of the Karpas (ע"י שם) in the same manner as is done before eating bread or matzah, except that the brocho על נטילת ידים is not recited (ע"י שם).

**Reason for washing** Since the matzah is not eaten until later (see G), what's the reason for washing here?

There is a halacha of במשקה דבר שטיבולו, that is, prior to eating a food which has been washed or dipped in a liquid and is still moist, the hands should be washed beforehand but no brocho is recited (ע"י שם). Some Poskim hold that this was required only during the time of the Bais Hamikdash when the highest standards of purity were in force. Nowadays, since we are unable to reach this level of purity, we are required to wash in this manner only before eating bread or matzah (ע"י שם). Even according to these Poskim, on Pesach it is specifically done to arouse the curiosity of children to motivate them to ask "מה נשתנה". Since during the year after Kiddush we normally wash for bread, when eating the Karpas the child will notice something unusual and ask. This would lead to a full explanation of the story of the Exodus (ע"י שם).

#### D. כרפס - EAT THE KARPAS

**Vegetable is dipped in salt water** A vegetable of the Karpas category (see Chapter V B) (e.g., celery, parsley, potato) should be dipped in salt water, vinegar or wine (ע"י שם) and distributed to all participants. The brocho פרי האדמה is recited and less than the size of an olive is eaten (ע"י שם). We have learned (see Chapter IV A) that there are various opinions among Poskim as to whether reclining is required. Unless one has a minhag to the contrary, it is preferable to recline.

**Keep in mind the Marror.** When reciting the brocho on the Karpas one should keep in mind that the brocho should also exempt the marror which will be eaten later during the meal (ע"י שם) (see I). This is to avoid the problem of whether a separate brocho on the marror is required since it is eaten during the meal (ע"י שם).

**Reason for the Karpas** We have learned (see Chapter V B) that the reason the Karpas is eaten here is to stimulate the child to ask "מה נשתנה". We also learned that the reason the species "כרפס" was chosen is that by reversing its letters it reads פרך, referring to the 600,000 Jews who toiled in bondage in Egypt.

**Reason for salt water** The reason the Karpas is dipped in salt water is that it symbolically represents the tears of the Jewish people in their suffering.

#### E. יחץ - BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH

**Middle matzah is broken** The middle matzah is broken into two parts (ע"י שם). The larger portion is wrapped in a cloth, napkin or the like and is placed aside for use later as the Afikoman (see L) (ע"י שם). It is a minhag for the children to "steal" the Afikoman and hide it (ע"י שם). The reason for this is to keep them awake until the end of the meal when the Afikoman is "redeemed" and eaten (ע"י שם).

**Minhag of putting on shoulder** Some have a minhag to place this portion of the matzah on their shoulders before putting it away for Afikoman. The reason for this is to recall the exodus when the Jews carried the dough on their shoulders (ל"ד: י"ב: שמות).

**Reason matzah is broken** Why is the matzah broken at this point in the Seder? The Torah (דברים ט"ז:ג) calls matzah "לחם עוני". One of the ways the Talmud (פסחים קטו ע"ב) explains (פסחים קטו ע"ב) explains "מה עני דרכו בפרוסה אף כאן בפרוסה" is לחם עוני (ע"י שם). The reason the middle matzah is selected is that the brocho "על אכילת מצה" applies principally to the middle matzah (ע"י שם). The reason the matzah is broken at this point of the Seder is that the Haggadah must be recited on matzah which is fit to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah, and we are now prepared to begin (ע"י שם).

#### F. מגיד - RECITE THE HAGGADAH

**Intending to perform the mitzvah** Before beginning the Haggadah one should have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah of the Torah of סיפור יציאת מצרים. Some say "הנני מוכן" ["I am ready to perform the mitzvah of relating the story of the Exodus"] (ע"י שם).

**Lift the Seder Plate and say "הא לחמא עניא"** The matzos are uncovered and the plate containing the matzos is lifted for all to see (ע"י שם). The other items on the Seder plate need not be removed לחמא עניא (ע"י שם). "הא לחמא עניא" is said aloud. Some say "כהא לחמא עניא" (ע"י שם).

**Seder plate is removed** The Seder plate containing the matzos is removed from before the master of the house and is placed at the other end of the table, to appear as if the meal has been finished (ע"י שם). This is done in order for the child to ask "why are the matzos being removed, we haven't eaten yet?" (ע"י שם). The answer which would then be given is that we are not permitted to eat until we relate the story of the Exodus (ע"י שם).

**Fill the second cup.** After the Seder plate is removed, the second cup is filled (ע"י שם). The reason the cup is filled here is that, as we learned earlier, (see Chapter II A) the Haggadah is recited on the second cup. Another reason the cup is filled here is to motivate the child to ask "why are we drinking again before the meal?" (ע"י שם). This will further stimulate him to ask about the other unusual procedures of the Seder (ע"י שם). There is no need to rinse the cup now, since it was rinsed for the first cup (ע"י שם) (see B).

**מה נשתנה is asked** The Four Questions (מה נשתנה) are asked by the child (הקטן). If the child does not know the questions, his father may aid him (ע"י שם). If there are no children or others present, his wife asks the Four Questions or he may even ask them himself (ע"י שם). Even if the only ones present are Torah scholars, מה נשתנה must be asked (ע"י שם).

The master of the house need not repeat מה נשתנה before responding (ע"י שם). Some have a minhag that מה נשתנה is repeated [עבדים היינו]. Some say that "מה נשתנה" is read as "שאל אביו הקורא מה נשתנה".

**Seder plate is returned, Say the Haggadah** The Seder plate containing the matzos (which was removed previously) is returned to its proper position before the master of the house (ע"י שם). The Haggadah is read beginning with "עבדים היינו" (ע"י שם) and is not said while reclining (ע"י שם). Some have a minhag that the master of the house says the Haggadah while the assembled follow and listen (ע"י שם). Others say along with the master of the house. One should conduct himself according to his minhag.

**Understanding the Haggadah** We have learned (see Chapter I C) that the mitzvah is not only saying the Haggadah but understanding its contents. Therefore, at least the minimal parts of the Haggadah (ibid) should be translated and explained for any who may not understand its contents.

**Matzos are uncovered** The matzos are uncovered before beginning "עבדים היינו" and are kept in this manner throughout (ע"י שם). However, wherever the cup of wine is lifted, [e.g., "והיה שעמדה"] the matzah is covered (ע"י שם). The matzah is again uncovered until "לפיכך" where again the cup is lifted (ע"י שם).

**Spill out drops of wine** When saying the words "ואש, ותמרור עשן" the minhag is to spill out three drops of wine either with a finger or by pouring from the cup (ע"י שם). This is repeated when enumerating each of the Ten Plagues and again for its abbreviations (דצ"ד עדי"ש באה"ב) for a total of sixteen times (ע"י שם). The reason for this is to recall the admission of Pharaoh's sorcerers that this was the finger of Elokim (ע"י שם). The minhag is to add wine to the cup to replace the wine which was spilled out. Some fill it before "רבן גמליאל". Others fill it before the brocho "אשר גאלנו". "רבן גמליאל" We learned earlier (see Chapter I C) that all are obligated to be present and to understand from "רבן גמליאל".

When saying "מצה זו", the broken middle matzah is lifted for all present to see (ע"י שם). Similarly, when saying "מרור זה", the marror is raised (ע"י שם). When saying "פסח שהיה", however, one should not point or raise the shankbone (ע"י שם), although one should look in its direction (ע"י שם). The reason this is not done for the shankbone is that it is as if he was dedicating it for a sacrifice-which is only permitted in Jerusalem when the Bais Hamikdash existed (ע"י שם).

**"לפיכך"** When reaching "לפיכך", the matzah is covered (ע"י שם) and is kept covered until the brochos on the matzah (ibid G). The cup is raised and is held until the end of the brocho "אשר גאלנו". One who finds holding it this long difficult can wait until the beginning of Hallel (i.e. הללויה). The reason the cup is lifted is that we are beginning to say shira (song of praise) which is to be said over a cup of wine (ע"י שם). In most Haggados it reads "ונאמר לפניו שירה חדשה". Some Poskim say that it should read "שיר חדש", because it refers to the redemption from Egypt (ע"י שם).

**The brocho "אשר גאלנו"** The brocho "אשר גאלנו" is said. When the Seder occurs on Saturday (Saturday night) some substitute the words "מן הפסחים ומן הנובחים".

**The second cup** The brocho בורא פרי הגפן is recited on the second cup (ע"י שם). One must drink the cup while reclining. If he drank the cup without reclining he must drink another cup, but no brocho is recited (ע"י שם). We have learned (see B 11) that a ברכה is not recited (ע"י שם).

#### G. רחצה - WASH THE HANDS

**Wash the hands with a brocho** The hands are washed and the brocho "על נטילת ידים" is recited (ע"י שם). Although the hands were washed before Karpas (see C) they must be washed again (ע"י שם). The reason this is required is that since the Haggadah and Hallel were said we are afraid that during all this time he may have touched something which would require a new נטילת ידים (ע"י שם).

#### H. מוציא מצה - THE BROCHOS ON THE MATZAH ARE RECITED

**Reciting the brochos** The master of the house takes all three matzos (i.e. the two whole matzos and the broken middle matzah between them) in his hands (ע"י שם). The brocho "המוציא" is said (ע"י שם). The bottom matzah is released [it will be used for Korech, see J] and the brocho על אכילת מצה is recited on the top matzah and the broken middle matzah (ע"י שם). The matzos are not broken nor eaten until both brochos are recited (ע"י שם). The brochos are recited for himself and for the other participants.

**Reason for this procedure** The reason for this procedure is that every Yom Tov requires לחם משנה (double loaves). In addition, there is a question whether the brocho לחם המוציא at the Seder is over the broken matzah [since there is a requirement for לחם, poor man's bread, see E 3] and the brocho על אכילת מצה is on the whole matzah or vice versa (ע"י שם). Therefore, to accommodate these considerations all the matzos are held for the המוציא and the top whole matzah and broken middle matzah alone are held for the על אכילת מצה brocho.

**Breaking and eating the matzos** After the brochos, the two matzos, that is, the top whole matzah and the middle broken matzah should preferably be broken simultaneously (ע"י שם) and a כזית from each should be eaten\* (ע"י שם). *Note:* Since the matzos are not large enough to obtain a complete כזית for all the participants, additional matzos should be added to achieve two כזיתים for each of the participants. The size of a כזית was discussed in detail earlier (see Chapter III D).

**Why should two כזיתים be eaten?** The reason two כזיתים should be eaten is that there is a question whether the brocho of המוציא at the Seder for the broken matzah and על אכילת מצה on the whole matzah or vice versa. Therefore, a כזית should be eaten from each (ע"י שם). We will learn that both כזיתים should be placed in the mouth simultaneously. Therefore, they should preferably be broken simultaneously-so that there should not be an interruption between breaking and eating the matzos (ע"י שם). We discussed earlier (see Chapter III D) the shiur of a כזית in our matzos and in how short a period of time it must be eaten (ibid). We have also learned that the matzah used on the Seder nights must be matzah shmurah (see Chapter I B 6-8).

**How to eat the matzah** Most Poskim hold that the matzah is not dipped in salt (ע"י שם).

The manner in which the two כזיתים of matzah are eaten is as follows. Both כזיתים are placed into his mouth and chewed simultaneously (ע"י שם). He should attempt to swallow first one כזית of the matzah and then the second (ע"י שם). If this is difficult, he fulfills his mitzvah as long as he swallows a כזית within a span of פרס [not longer than nine minutes, see Chapter III D 8].

**Reclining** The matzah must be eaten while reclining (ע"י שם). If he ate the matzah without reclining, another כזית must be eaten while reclining (ע"י שם).

**Should not speak** One should not speak from the time the brochos are recited on the matzah until after כורך (see J), unless related to the meal (ע"י שם). The reason for this is that according to Hillel, the main fulfillment of the mitzvah of matzah and marror is at כורך. Therefore, by not speaking, the brochos on the matzah and the marror could apply also for the (ע"י שם) כורך.

**Eaten before midnight** The first כזית upon which the brocho "על אכילת מצה" is recited must be eaten before midnight (ע"י שם). If one was delayed and was unable to eat the first כזית until after midnight it is questionable whether he can fulfill the mitzvah; therefore, it is eaten, but the brocho "על אכילת מצה" is not recited (ע"י שם).

**If one started the Seder close to midnight** If one was delayed in beginning the Seder until close to midnight, he should recite Kiddush, drink the first cup, wash his hands, recite the המוציא and על אכילת מצה, eat the matzah, recite אכילת מרור, eat the marror, recite the Haggadah and then eat his meal (ע"י שם).

#### I. מרור - THE BITTER HERBS ARE EATEN

**Dip the marror into הרוסת** After eating the matzah he takes a כזית of marror (see Chapter III D) and dips it into הרוסת (see Chapter V B) (ע"י שם). It should not be held in too long so as not to lose the taste of the marror (שם). Therefore, he should shake off any excess (ע"י שם). הרוסת (ע"י שם) The purpose of dipping the marror into the הרוסת was to neutralize the poisonous bitter taste [or an insect (?)] which was present in the marror (ע"י שם). Although this problem is not present in our marror, the הרוסת is used to remind us of the mortar from which our forefathers were compelled to make bricks in Egypt (ibid).

#### Recite the brocho and eat a כזית

2. The brocho "על אכילת מרור" is recited and a כזית is eaten without reclining (ע"י שם). We have learned (see Chapter III D) that the כזית of marror must be completed within the time span of פרס (not longer than 9 minutes).

**Swallowing marror** We have learned (see Chapter III D 10) that a person should chew the marror. If one swallowed marror without discerning its taste he has not fulfilled the mitzvah (ע"י שם).

**Eaten before midnight** We have learned (see H) that the matzah must be eaten before midnight. The marror must also be eaten before midnight. If one was delayed and unable to eat the marror until after midnight, the brocho "על אכילת מרור" is not recited (ע"י שם).

#### J. כורך - EAT THE MATZAH AND MARROR COMBINATION

**Introduction** The Talmud (פסחים קטו ע"א) relates that there is a dispute between Hillel and רבנן concerning the fulfillment of the mitzvah of "על מצות ומרורים" - you should eat it with matzah and marror (במדבר ט"ז:יא). Hillel holds that the mitzvah is to eat the matzah and the marror together. רבנן hold that the mitzvah is to eat them separately. Therefore, we first fulfill the mitzvot according to רבנן and then we eat the matzah and marror together (כורך), as required by Hillel (ע"י שם).

**A sandwich is made** Therefore, using the bottom matzah, a sandwich is made consisting of a כזית of matzah and a כזית of marror (ע"י שם). Concerning the size of the matzah, see Chapter III D. When using horseradish for marror, it will suffice to use 2/3 fluid ounces (19.7 ml) for korech.

**Should it be dipped in הרוסת?** There are various opinions among the Poskim whether the sandwich of korech should also be dipped in (ע"י שם) הרוסת. One should conduct himself according to his minhag.

**Say זכר למקדש כהלל** Before eating korech the minhag is to recite "ע"י שם" "זכר למקדש כהלל" (ע"י שם). Some Poskim hold that it should be recited after eating the korech, because as we learned (see H) one should not speak from the time the brochos are recited on the matzah until completing the korech. Many say "זכר למקדש כהלל היה אוכל מצה ומרור", while others say "זכר למקדש כהלל".

**Eating while reclining** The korech sandwich is eaten while reclining (ע"י שם), because this combination represents, according to Hillel, the first time matzah was eaten at the Seder. However, if one forgot and ate korech without reclining, he is not required to repeat it (ע"י שם).

**Swallow the combination** The matzah and marror in this combination should be swallowed together. Although the full amount of the matzah and marror need not be swallowed at one time, one should place both in the mouth and chew them together (ע"י שם). It must be completed within פרס כדי אכילת פרס (not longer than 9 minutes) (see Chapter III D).

#### K. שלוק עורך - EAT THE SEDER MEAL

**Eat the Seder meal while reclining** The Seder meal is eaten. It is preferable that one should recline while eating and drinking the entire meal (ע"י שם).

**Eating or drinking excessively** During the meal one should not eat or drink an excessive amount (ע"י שם). Two reasons are mentioned by the Poskim: a) He should have an appetite left to eat the Afikoman at the end of the meal, so that eating the Afikoman should not be considered to him as a burden (ע"י שם). b) He should not become tired and drowsy for the rest of the evening and not be able to say the Hallel and the rest of the requirements of the evening (ע"י שם).

**Eating eggs** Many begin the Seder meal by eating a hard boiled egg (ע"י שם). Various explanations are given for this minhag: a) Tisha B'Av always occurs on the same day of the week as the first night of Pesach (ע"י שם), and we have learned that the egg is a mourner's food. b) The egg, being a mourner's food, reminds us of the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. Therefore, we are unable to offer the Korbon Pesach (ע"י שם). c) We have learned (see Chapter V B) that the egg on the Seder plate represents the Korbon Chagigah-it should therefore be eaten (ע"י שם). The reason the shankbone which represents the Korbon Pesach is not also eaten is that we do not eat roasted meat at the Seder. This minhag of eating an egg should not be misconstrued as a mitzvah. Some people erroneously eat excessively and have no appetite left for the Afikoman (ע"י שם).

**Minhag of not eating roasted meat** The minhag is not to eat roasted meat on the Seder nights (ע"י שם). The reason for this minhag is that one should not assume in error that he is eating the Korbon Pesach (ע"י שם). This minhag includes not eating poultry or anything else roasted which requires shechitah (ע"י שם). Roasted fish and eggs may be eaten (ע"י שם).

This minhag includes not eating meat whether roasted, barbecued or broiled over an open fire. Most Poskim prohibit eating pot roast [that is, meat roasted in a pot without any liquid added] (ע"י שם). Even meat which was cooked and then roasted should not be eaten except in case of illness (ע"י שם). Meat which was roasted and then cooked is permissible (ע"י שם).

**Minhag not to dip food** Some have a minhag not to eat any food dipped in liquid-except for the two required dipped foods (i.e. the Karpas and Marror) (ע"י שם). The reason for this minhag is that the two required dipped foods should stand out prominently as mitzvos (ע"י שם).

**Complete meal before midnight** The meal should be completed early enough to allow the Afikoman to be eaten before midnight (ע"י שם) (see L).

#### L. צפון - EAT THE AFIKOMAN

**Introduction** After completing the meal, the portion of the broken middle matzah which was hidden earlier in the Seder is brought to the table and is eaten as a dessert. Each of the participants is given a כזית of matzah (ע"י שם). It is preferable to eat two כזיתים of matzah (ע"י שם). The reason for the preference here of eating the equivalent of two olives of matzah is that one כזית would serve to remind us of the Korbon Pesach and the other כזית recalls the matzah which was eaten with it.

**What is the Afikoman?** This matzah is called the Afikoman-which was the term used for dessert eaten at the end of a meal (ע"י שם). On the Seder night, however, the last thing which was eaten during the time of the Bais Hamikdash was the Korbon Pesach. Since the Afikoman is the last item of food eaten at the Seder, it represents the Korbon Pesach or the matzah which was eaten with the Korbon Pesach (ע"י שם). We will learn that after the Afikoman one may not eat anything.

**Eat the Afikoman while reclining** The Afikoman should be eaten while reclining (ע"י שם). If one forgot and ate the Afikoman without reclining, if he did not recite Birkas Hamazone [nor did he wash אחרונים or say זכור ונברך], another Afikoman should be eaten if it is not too difficult. However, if he has already recited Birkas Hamazone or said "הב לך ונברך", we rely on those Poskim who say that eating the Afikoman while reclining is not required (ע"י שם).

**If he forgot to eat the Afikoman** These halachos apply if he ate the Afikoman but did not recline. If the Afikoman was forgotten even if one washed אחרונים or said "הב

”לן ונברך”, the Afikoman is eaten without any additional brochos (ע”י שם). If he forgot to eat the Afikoman and said Birkas Hamazone, but reminded himself before reciting the brocho on the third cup, he washes again, says המוציא, eats the Afikoman and recites Birkas Hamazone again (ע”י שם), then recites the brocho on the third cup and drinks it (ע”י שם). If he reminded himself after the brocho was recited on the third cup, he washes again, says המוציא, eats the Afikoman and recites Birkas Hamazone again-but without a cup of wine (ע”י שם).

**If the Afikoman was lost** If the Afikoman was lost, other matzah shmurah may be substituted and eaten instead (ע”י שם).

**Should be eaten before midnight** The Afikoman should be eaten before midnight, because the Afikoman recalls the Korbon Pesach which was eaten before midnight. However, even if it was delayed beyond midnight it should nevertheless be eaten (ע”י שם).

**Eat in one place** We have learned that the Afikoman recalls the Korbon Pesach. There is a halacha that the Korbon Pesach must be eaten completely in one place, as it says in the Torah “בבית אחד יאכלו”. Therefore, the Afikoman also should not be eaten in two places (ע”י שם). It is even prohibited to be eaten in two separate places in one room (e.g. part on one table, part on another table) (ע”י שם).

**If someone fell asleep** If a person fell asleep in the middle of eating the Afikoman, he may not continue eating it upon awakening (ע”י שם). The reason this is not permitted is that Halacha considered this comparable to eating in two places (ע”י שם).

However, if there are other participants at the Seder and some fell asleep after beginning the Afikoman, as long as some members are still awake they may continue eating the Afikoman upon awakening (ע”י שם).

**Eating or drinking after Afikoman** There is a requirement that the taste of the Afikoman should remain in his mouth (ע”י שם). Therefore, one may not eat anything after the Afikoman (ע”י שם). If one did eat after the Afikoman, he is required to eat another matzah for Afikoman (ע”י שם). Concerning drinking after the Afikoman [aside from the two remaining cups of wine], there are various opinions among the Poskim (ע”י שם). One may not drink an intoxicating beverage (ע”י שם). One should preferably not drink any beverage except for water and the like (ע”י שם) except in case of great necessity (ע”י שם). Some Poskim allow tea, apple drink, lemonade and seltzer (ע”י שם).

#### M. ברוך - RECITE BIRKAS HAMAZONE

**The third cup is poured.** After completing the Afikoman, the third cup is poured (ע”י שם). If required, the cup should be rinsed beforehand (ע”י שם).

**The master of the house is the מזמן** If there is a מזמן (three males 13 years old or above) the minhag at the Seder is for the master of the house to be the מזמן, that is, to lead Birkas Hamazone-even if there are guests (ע”י שם), although this is not required (ע”י שם). If there is a מזמן, only the מזמן is required to hold the cup in his hand. In the absence of a מזמן, all should lift their cups (ע”י שם).

**Birkas Hamazone is recited** Birkas Hamazone is recited (ע”י שם) including הנסים. If the Seder occurs on Shabbos, רצה is also added. If רצה was omitted-even if he did not complete Birkas Hamazone but started the fourth brocho-the entire Birkas Hamazone must be repeated with (ע”י שם) רצה.

**The brocho is recited and all drink the third cup.** After Birkas Hamazone the brocho בורא פרי הגפן is recited and all participants drink the third cup while reclining (ע”י שם). If one drank the cup without reclining he does not drink it again (ע”י שם).

**Drinking after the third cup** One may not drink wine or חמר מדינה (see Chapter II B) between the third and fourth cups (ע”י שם). Other beverages which one may drink after Afikoman (see L) are permissible (ע”י שם).

**Open the door for אליהו הנביא** Some fill the fourth cup right after Birkas Hamazone. Others wait until after שפוך חמתך before beginning Hallel. In any case, the minhag is to fill one extra cup at this point. This cup is called “כוס של אליהו” (the cup of Elijah the prophet) (ע”י שם). The door is opened to demonstrate that tonight is ליל שמורים, a night of protective watching. In the merit of our Emunah in Hashem we will become deserving of His sending us the Mashiach. שפוך חמתך is said and the door is closed.

#### N. הלל - RECITE THE HALLEL

**Fill the fourth cup and say Hallel.** Those who did not fill the fourth cup right after Birkas Hamazone (see M) fill it before Hallel (ע”י שם). The cup need not be rinsed (ע”י שם). The Hallel is said over the fourth cup (ע”י שם).

**No brocho is said.** Although saying Hallel at the Seder is a mitzvah דרבנן (see Chapter I A), no brocho is said (ע”י שם). At the Seder Hallel is said while seated (ע”י שם).

**Saying Hallel with a מזמן** If there are three or more people present at the Seder it is preferable to say the portions of “הודו” and “אנא ה’” in the same manner as they are said in Shul (ע”י שם).

**Various minhagim for concluding Hallel.** There are various minhagim for concluding Hallel. According to Nusach Ashkenaz, “יהללך” is said after Hallel, then “הלל הגדול” (the great Hallel, with 26 lines concluding “כי לעולם חסדו”) followed by “מלך מהולל בתשבוחות” or “מלך מהולל בתשבוחות” and “נשמת”. According to this minhag if one erred, he should conclude without a brocho (ע”י שם).

According to Nusach Sefard, “יהללך” is said as a conclusion for “נשמת”. If in error he concluded with its brocho, “יהללך” should be said without a concluding brocho (ע”י שם).

**Drink the fourth cup.** After Hallel the brocho בורא פרי הגפן is recited and one drinks the fourth cup while reclining (ע”י שם). For the fourth cup one should be certain to drink a רביעייה because the concluding brocho “על הגפן” is to be recited here. If one drank the cup without reclining, he is not required to drink it again (ע”י שם).

#### O. נרצה - THE SEDER IS ACCEPTED

**Occupy himself with the halachos of Pesach,** and to relate the story of the Exodus describing the miracles and wonders which הקב”ה performed for the Jewish people-until he is overcome by sleep (ע”י שם). Some say שיר השירים after the Seder (ע”י שם). **קריאת שמע שעל המטה** The minhag is not to say the complete שמע, which is usually said before retiring. The first parsha (שמע) and the brocho המפיל are all that are said (ע”י שם).

The reason is that the night of Pesach is ליל שמורים, one of divine protection. In the same manner that הקב”ה guarded us on the night of the Exodus so will he protect us and lead us to the Redemption.

חסל סדר פסה כהלכתו

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**PARSHAT TZAV**  
**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TZAV AND VAYIKRA**

Is Parshat Tzav simply a repeat of Parshat Vayikra?

In the following shiur, as we undertake a 'tedious' study that will explain how and why they are very different - we will also arrive at several conclusions that will help us appreciate why we eat 'kosher' meat.

**INTRODUCTION**

In both Parshiot Vayikra and Tzav we find an organized set of laws concerning each of the five basic categories of korbanot: OLAH, MINCHA, CHATAT, ASHAM and SHLAMIM. However, in each Parsha, the order and detail of their presentation are quite different.

A priori, it would have been more logical for the Torah to combine all these laws into **one** unit. To understand why they are presented separately, the following shiur analyzes Parshat Tzav in an attempt to understand its internal structure, and then compares it to Parshat Vayikra.

**A KEY PHRASE**

The 'key' towards understanding Parshat Tzav is the phrase "v'zot torat ha'...". To verify the centrality of this phrase, briefly review the seven "parshiot" that comprise chapters 6 & 7, noting how just about each "parshia" begins with this same phrase: "zot torat..." - as it introduces each new category.

For example, in 6:2 we find "zot torat ha'olah", in 6:7 - "zot torat ha'mincha", in 6:18 - "zot torat ha'chatat", etc. [See also 7:1 (asham), and 7:11 (shlamim).]

Then, study the last two psukim of this unit (i.e. 7:37-38), noting once again how this phrase forms a very fitting summary for each of these introductory phrases:

"zot ha'torah - la'OLAH la'MINCHA, v'la'CHATAT..." (7:37).

Furthermore, recall that we didn't find this phrase (or anything similar) in Parshat Vayikra. Hence, to understand what Parshat Tzav is all about, we must first understand the meaning of the word "torah" in this context.

Today, the word "torah" is commonly used to describe the entire Torah [i.e. Chumash], and hence the most general category encompassing all of the mitzvot. However, in Sefer Vayikra the word "torah" carries a more specific meaning, as "torah" is only one of the various categories of laws, distinct from "chukim" and "mishpatim". [See for example 18:1-5.]

Another example of the use of the word "torah" in a more specific context is in regard to God's comment to Yitzchak concerning Avraham Avinu:

"ekev asher shama Avraham b'koli - v'yishmor mishmarti mitzvoti chukotei, v'TORAHei" - (see Breishit 26:5)

Here, the word "torah" clearly implies a specific category (and not a general one); and so claim Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Ramban, and Seforno (even though each gives a different explanation of what that category is).

To understand the specific meaning of the word "torah", let's consider its "shoresh" [root] - the verb "l'horot" - to instruct. Hence, we should expect the word "torah" in Sefer Vayikra to refer to an instructional (or procedural) law, i.e. a series of actions necessary for the completion of a given process.

[The same is true in Sefer Bamidbar, as we shall see in our discussion of Parshat Parah.]

**HOW OR WHAT**

Based on this context, the pasuk in Parshat Tzav "zot torat ha'mincha..." (see 6:7-10) should be translated as, "This is the

PROCEDURE for offering the "korban mincha", as this pasuk introduces the details regarding HOW the priest must offer the korban mincha. More specifically, this would include:

- a) taking it to the mizbayach;
- b) offering a handful ("kometz") from its flour and oil;
- c) eating the leftovers as "matza" in the courtyard, etc.

In this manner, Parshat Tzav details the procedures for HOW to offer all the other types of korbanot. Herein lies the basic difference between Parshat Tzav and Parshat Vayikra. Whereas Parshat Tzav deals primarily with the procedures for **HOW** to offer the various korbanot, Parshat Vayikra focuses on **WHAT** korban (or which korban) is to be offered. Let's explain.

Parshat Vayikra discusses which offerings the individual **can** bring should he wish to offer a korban ["n'dava"], as well as which offering he **must** bring should he transgress ["chova"]. In contrast, Parshat Tzav explains **how** the "kohanim" offer these korbanot, i.e. the procedures for the "kohanim" to follow once the owner presents them with the "korban".

This distinction explains why the opening pasuk of each Parsha directs itself to a different audience.

\* Parshat Vayikra begins with:

"...Speak to BNEI YISRAEL and tell them, if an INDIVIDUAL among you WISHES TO OFFER a korban..." (1:1-2)

\* Parshat Tzav begins with:

"Command AHARON & HIS SONS saying, this is the procedure for bringing the OLAH..." (6:1-2)

Parshat Tzav is addressed specifically to the KOHANIM for it explains HOW they must offer the korbanot, while Parshat Vayikra directs itself towards Bnei Yisrael, since everyone must know WHICH specific korban he CAN or MUST bring in any given situation.

In other words, Parshat VAYIKRA serves as a 'halachik catalogue' - guiding the individual as to WHICH korban to bring, while Parshat TZAV serves as an 'instruction manual' - teaching the kohen HOW to offer each type of korban.

Chumash presents each 'manual' independently because each serves a different purpose. This can explain why the Torah divides these details into two separate sections.

[This distinction also explains why certain details are found in both Parshiot, i.e. those laws that must be known to BOTH the kohanim and to the individual.

Furthermore, certain procedures that only the kohen can perform are also included in Vayikra because the kohen serves in this capacity as the emissary of the individual offering the korban. Ideally the owner should offer the korban, but since only kohanim are permitted to come near the MIZBAYACH, the kohen must perform the "avodah" on his behalf. Additionally, the owner must also be aware of what he is permitted to do and which rituals are restricted to the kohanim. For example, the owner is permitted to do "shchita," but may not perform other "avodot."]

**THE 'NEW ORDER'**

This background also explains the difference in the ORDER of the presentation of the korbanot in each Parsha.

As we explained in last week's shiur, Parshat Vayikra discusses the categories of "korban yachid," beginning with the voluntary N'DAVA korbanot - OLAH & SHLAMIM - and then continuing with the obligatory CHOVA korbanot - CHATAT & ASHAM.

In contrast, Parshat Tzav makes no distinction between N'DAVA and CHOVA. Once the korban comes to the Mikdash, the kohen doesn't need to know why it was offered. Instead, he only needs to know its category. Hence, the order in Tzav follows the level of "kedusha" of the various korbanot: OLAH - MINCHA - CHATAT - ASHAM - SHLAMIM.

[The SHLAMIM is now last instead of second, since it has the lowest level of "kedusha" ("kodshim kalim").]

## THE ORDER IN PARSHAT TZAV

One could also explain that the internal order of Tzav follows according to how much of the korban is consumed on the MIZBAYACH (in Chazal, known as "achilat mizbayach"):

The OLAH is first as it is totally consumed on the mizbayach. The MINCHA follows, as it is either totally consumed, in the case of a MINCHA brought by a kohen (see 6:16); or at least the "kometz" is consumed, while the leftover flour ["noteret"] can be eaten only by the KOHANIM.

Next we find the CHATAT and ASHAM, as their "chaylev" [fat] and "dam" [blood] is offered on the mizbayach; while the meat can be eaten only by the KOHANIM.

[All of the above korbanot are known as "kodshei kodashim", as the meat either is consumed on the mizbayach or eaten by the kohanim, but must remain within the courtyard of the Mishkan. The Gemara explains that this meat eaten by the kohanim is considered a 'gift' to the kohanim from God (and not from the owner) - "m'shulchan gavohah k'zachu leh".]

The SHLAMIM comes last as some of its meat can be eaten by the owners (after the "chaylev" and "dam" are offered on the mizbayach). As this meat can be eaten anywhere in the camp (and not only within the courtyard of the Mishkan), this category is known as "kodshim kalim."

## AN OUTLINE OF PARSHAT TZAV

The following table summarizes the overall structure of Parshat Tzav based on the principles discussed above. As you study it, note that not every 'parshia' begins with a "zot torat ha'--". Instead, we find several 'digressions' into 'parshiot' of related topics (noted by a \*\*\*\*). We will discuss these digressions at the conclusion of the outline.

### TORAT ha'OLAH - 6:1-6

- 1) bringing the daily "olat tamid";
- 2) "trumat ha'deshen" - daily removal of ashes from mizbayach;
- 3) preparing the wood and fire on the mizbayach;
- 4) mitzvot "aish tamid" - to ensure a continuous fire.

### TORAT ha'MINCHA - 6:7-11

- 1) the "kometz" (handful) of flour placed on the mizbayach;
- 2) the "noteret" (leftover portion), eaten by the kohen;

#### \*\* RELATED LAWS: (6:12-16)

- 3) the "minchat chinuch" - the special inaugural meal offering brought by a kohen the first time he performs AVODA.
- 4) the "minchat chavitin" - offered daily by the Kohen Gadol.

### TORAT ha'CHATAT - 6:17-23

- 1) the procedure how to offer the korban;
- 2) the portion eaten by the kohen;
- 3) where it can be eaten (in the "azara");

Related laws:

- 4) special laws concerning a case where the blood of a chatat touches a garment or vessel.

### TORAT ha'ASHAM - 7:1-7

- 1) the procedure how to offer the korban;
- 2) the portion eaten by the kohen;
- 3) where it can be eaten;

[As "asham" forms the conclusion of the Kodshei Kodshim section, several laws concerning the reward of the kohen are added, such as the kohen's rights to the animal hides of the OLAH and the issue of who receives the "noteret" of the various types of korban mincha (see 7:8-10).]

### TORAT ha'SHLAMIM - 7:11-34

- 1) the laws regarding the Korban Todah (thanksgiving);
- 2) the laws regarding a Korban Shlamim (freewill);

#### \*\*RELATED LAWS:

- 3) laws concerning meat that becomes "tamey" (defiled);
- 4) the general prohibition of eating "chaylev" and "dam" (blood)
- 5) the kohen's rights to the "chazeh" (breast) and "shok" (thigh), a 'gift' to the kohen from the owner of the korban.

## SUMMARY - 7:35-38 (this concludes the unit)

35-36: "This is the 'reward' of the kohanim from the korbanot. ["mashchat" = reward, but see m'forshim!]

37: ZOT HA'TORAH: I'OLAH, I'MINCHA, I'CHATAT v'I'ASHAM... u'I'ZEVACH HA'SHLAMIM".

## THE DIGRESSIONS

Even though most of outline follows according to the structure set by the phrase "zot torat..." (and hence its laws are directed specifically to the kohanim) we do find several digressions.

The first such digression is the 'parshia' of 6:12-16, and follows the laws of how to bring a "korban mincha". It describes both the:

- \* "minchat chinuch" - the inauguration flour-offering that the kohen brings on the day he begins his service; and the .
- \* "minchat chavitim" - an identical korban offered daily by the Kohen Gadol.

This digression is quite logical, as this law relates to both the korban mincha and to the kohanim.

Within the laws of the korban SHLAMIM we find two additional digressions. The first (7:22-27) discusses the prohibition to eat "chaylev v'dam" from any animal, even if was not offered as a korban SHLAMIM. The second (7:28-31) explains that the owner of the korban SHLAMIM must give the "chazeh" and "shok" to the kohen. Note how both of these digressions are directed to the entire congregation (and not just to the kohanim/ see 7:22&28) for everyone is required to know these related laws.

## PRIESTLY REWARD

With these digressions in mind, and after reviewing the outline we may additionally conclude that one of the primary considerations of Parshat Tzav is the compensation that the kohen receives for offering the korban. In contrast to Parshat Vayikra, which does not at all raise this issue, Parshat Tzav tells us that the kohen receives the hides of the Olah offering, the leftovers of the Mincha offering, most of the meat of the "chatat" and "asham" and the "chazeh" & "shok" of the "shlamim".

The summary pasuk in 7:35-36 reinforces the significance of this point in the eyes of Parshat Tzav, as does the introduction in 6:1-2, which directs these laws specifically to Aharon and his sons.

## KORBANOT THEN / KASHRUT TODAY

As we mentioned above, in the middle of the SHLAMIM section in Parshat Tzav we find a special "dibur" to Bnei Yisrael prohibiting them from eating the "chaylev" & "dam" (fat and blood) of any animal, even if that animal is not being offered as a "korban".

This law, and its presentation at this location, suggests that the 'kashrut laws' of "chaylev v'dam" can be viewed as an EXTENSION of the laws of korbanot. In other words, Chumash purposely includes the laws of "chaylev" and "dam" in Parshat Tzav to teach us that they are forbidden specifically because these parts of the animal, had it been a korban, belong on the mizbayach!

Ideally, as Sefer Devarim establishes (see 12:20-22), one should eat meat only within the framework of a korban shlamim. Eating "chulin" (meat which is not a korban) is allowed only when bringing a korban shlamim is unfeasible. [In Sefer Devarim this meat is referred to as "basar ta'ava" ("meat of 'desire').]

Nevertheless, even in the realistic, non-ideal condition, when one does eat "chulin," he still may not eat the "chaylev v'dam." Therefore, whenever a Jew does eat meat, he must remind himself that this animal could (or should) have been a "korban shlamim".

One could suggest that man's desire for meat may reflect an animalistic tendency latent in human behavior. By offering a korban shlamim, man can channel this desire in a more positive direction - towards the enhancement of his relationship with God.

[Recall from our shiur on Vayikra that the korban shlamim is the ideal "korban N'DAVA" in that it reenacts the covenantal ceremony between God and Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai.]

Even today (without a Mikdash), by refraining from eating "chaylev" and "dam", we can elevate our physical world with "kedusha" and retain a certain level of "kedusha" - even while eating meat.

shabbat shalom  
menachem

=====

## FOR FURTHER IYUN

### A. WHAT'S A MISHPAT?

What do you think is the difference between a "chok" and a "mishpat"? Consider the linguistic relationship between the words "mishpat" and "shofet" (= shoshet sh.p.t.), and recall Parshat Mishpatim (Shmot chapter 21) and its 'key' word (pun intended).

### B. SOME MORE 'TORAH'

Note the similar use of the word "torah" - "procedure" - in Tazria-Metzora - see Vayikra 12:7, 13:59, 14:2,32,54.  
See also Bamidbar 5:29-30, 6:21.  
Note also Breishit 26:5 - see m'forshim!  
Note how the word "torah" takes on a more general meaning in Sefer Devarim - see 1:5 & 4:44! Can you explain why?

See Shmot 24:12, And note the words TORAH & MITZVAH.  
If "mitzvah" refers to TZIVUI HA'MISHKAN, i.e. Shmot 25->31, then to what does TORAH refer? Based on 7:37-38, could this be referring (at least partially) to Parshat Tzav?  
Could it include other parshiot of mitzvot found in Sefer Vayikra and Sefer Bamidbar? If so, can you explain why?  
Relate to your answers to C & D above.

### C. THE PROBLEMATIC FINALE

See 7:37, which accurately summarizes the entire Parsha, except for one 'small' detail:  
"zot ha'torah la'OLAH la'MINCHA, v'la'CHATAT v'la'ASHAM  
\*v'la'MILUIM\* u'l'ZEVACH HA'SHLAMIM..."

What is "v'la'miluim" doing in this pasuk?  
1. Scan the Parsha to make sure you understand the question.  
2. Note the two directions taken by the commentators in dealing with this problem. [See Rashi & Ibn Ezra.]  
3. Relate these answers to 6:12-16 and the next perek (8:1-36).  
4. Now relate this issue to Shmot perek 29.

Note that from 7:38 it appears that the mitzvot of Parshat Tzav were given on HAR SINAI, and NOT from the Ohel Moed as were the mitzvot in Parshat Vayikra [see Ramban].

How does this help answer the question concerning the word "miluim"?

5. Why are the laws concerning the 'miluim' recorded in Shmot (perek 29) while all the other "torot" appear in Vayikra?  
6. How does all this relate to Shmot 24:12 and Parshiot Terumah - Tezaveh? To what does the word "torah" refer in that pasuk?  
[ly"n, next week's shiur will deal with this topic.]

### D. THE SEVEN DAYS OF MILUIM

At the end of Parshat Tzav (8:1-36), we find the narrative describing the seven-day "miluim" dedication ceremony. Prove from the style of this parsha that it belongs in Pkudei. (Look for the repetition of the key phrase.) Where in Parshat Pkudei does this parsha belong? Why do you think it is placed here?

How does this parsha relate to Parshat Shmini?  
Why do you think this narrative is included in Sefer Vayikra rather than Sefer Shmot?

Note as well that the fulfillment of all the commandments concerning how to build the Mishkan in Parshiot Terumah Tezaveh were repeated in Vayakhel Pekudei, EXCEPT the commandment concerning the seven day miluim ceremony.

### E. DAM HA'NEFESH

In the related parsha of "basar ta'ava" in Sefer Devarim (12:20-28), we find what appears to be a different reason for the prohibition against eating blood:

"Be sure not to eat the BLOOD, for the blood is the 'nefesh' (life/soul), and you must not consume the 'nefesh' with the 'basar' (meat)." (12:23)

In truth, however, this reason involves the very same principle we discussed. The sprinkling of the korban's blood on the mizbayach represents the 'nefesh' of the person offering the korban - "ki ha'dam hu ha'nefesh" (12:23). This is the reason why the blood was chosen to be sprinkled on the mizbayach, and this is the reason why we are not permitted to eat the blood.

How does offering a korban or refraining from eating certain animal parts bring anyone closer to God?

Man's relationship with God stems from his understanding that he was created for a purpose. Towards that purpose, God created man "b'tzelem Elokim" (Br. 1:27), i.e. with a creative mind (see first chapter of Moreh Nvuchim of the Rambam!). It is this trait of "tzelem Elokim" that differentiates man from animal. Upon seeing the blood of an animal, man should ask himself, how am I different from that animal? The animal's shape may be a bit different, but the blood is the same blood as the human being's, just as the inner organs and limbs are the same as his.

One could suggest that the experience of offering a korban stimulates this process of introspection; it may help man recognize that despite these similarities, he is different, insofar as he was created "b'tzelem Elokim" - for a purpose. The search for that purpose sets man on the proper path. As we say in Tehilim:

"Adam bi'kar" - a man [lives] with wealth and honor - "v'lo yavin" - but does not contemplate his way in life - "nimshal k'bhay'mot nidmu" - he is like the animals that perish. (Tehilim 49:21)

### F. ANOTHER "DIBUR" OUT OF PLACE?

Imbedded within the parsha's discussion of shlamim we find yet another "dibur" to Bnei Yisrael (7:28-34). Again, why do we find a "dibur" to Bnei Yisrael in the Parsha intended for kohanim? Shouldn't these laws appear in Parshat Vayikra?

This "dibur" details the laws requiring the owner of the shlamim to give the "chazeh v'shok" to the kohen. These laws are in Parshat Tzav because they deal with the portion of the animal reserved for the kohanim. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that this portion is a gift to the kohen from the owner of the korban. As such, it requires a special "dibur" to Bnei Yisrael.

### G. KORBAN TODAH & KORBAN PESACH

One could suggest that the korban Pesach is simply a 'special type' of korban Todah. The following questions (in lieu of a shiur) will help you understand their connection. (Read Vayikra 7:11-15 & Shmot 12:3-12.)

1. What is the time frame in which these korbanot can be eaten?
2. What type of bread must be eaten with each korban?  
Do any other korbanot come with bread or matza?
3. Would you say these laws 'force' someone to invite people to join him in eating his Korban Todah?  
Must one invite others to join him when eating the Korban Pesach?
4. What is supposed to happen during this "Todah" seudah?  
Relate to Tehilim 107, especially pasuk 22!  
How is this similar to "leil ha'seder"?
5. How does the recitation of "Hallel" apply to both korbanot?  
Relate to Tehilim 100("mizmor l'Todah").
6. According to this comparison, why do we eat matza with the Korban Pesach?  
Does it have anything to do with the matza that Bnei Yisrael baked after leaving Egypt (see Shmot 12:39)?  
ly"n, we'll have a shiur on this topic before Pesach.

## Parshat Tzav: A Sin Offering But No Sins?

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

Sefer VaYikra (Leviticus) opens with the "korbanot manual," seven perakim (chapters) of instructions about sacrifices: what different types of sacrifices there are, under what conditions we are to bring each sacrifice to Hashem, and all of the details about the actual process of sacrifice and its aftermath (e.g., when and by whom various korbanot are to be eaten). To many of us nowadays, this manual is not only technical and unfamiliar, but can seem like a closed book. Our goal, then, is to unpack some of the ideas behind the korbanot: when we bring each of the various different types of korban, what are we trying to accomplish? How do the details of the process of bringing each type of korban effectively accomplish what we want/need to do? (As usual, we draw on a variety of sources. Almost none of these ideas are my own.)

Our first step is to get our bearings. Why is this manual placed here at the opening of Sefer VaYikra, between the completion of the construction of the Mishkan (portable Temple) in Sefer Shemot (Exodus) and the Mishkan's inauguration in VaYikra? The most accessible answer seems to be that since the inauguration's centerpiece is its korbanot, we need to know what the different types are, how they are brought, and what is the purpose of each, otherwise the inauguration won't mean much to us.

### LAST WEEK: THE "SHELAMIM":

Last week we looked at one of those types of korbanot -- the shelamim -- and discussed some of its details and their significance:

- 1) Possible meanings of the name "shelamim."
- 2) Under what circumstances I would bring a shelamim.
- 3) We focused especially on the parts of the shelamim offered to Hashem on the mizbe'ah (altar): the helev (certain parts of the animal's fat), a symbol of the best, richest part, given to Hashem, and the blood, the symbol of life, placed on the mizbe'ah before Hashem to show respect for life and recognition that Hashem is the master of life -- a crucial lesson in context of the shelamim, since we are given permission to take life for food. This is also why the Torah stresses the prohibition of eating blood particularly in the shelamim context: we have to be reminded that life must be respected even when we are given permission to take it. Eating the symbol of life would obviously show disrespect for the sacredness of life.

### A "SIN-OFFERING?"

This week we will look at a different type of korban: the korban hattat, the so-called "sin-offering."

First of all, what does "hattat" mean? Usually, translators translate the korban hattat as "sin-offering." This is no shock, since "hattat" means "sin." When I commit a sin inadvertently, I must bring a korban hattat to Hashem to atone for the sin: in order to be forgiven for particularly serious averot, I need to do teshuva and also bring a korban hattat. The problem with this translation of "hattat" is that according to the Torah, I must bring a korban hattat not just when I sin, but also on many other occasions which seem to have nothing at all to do with sin. Here are some examples:

- 1) Yoledet: a woman who gives birth becomes tamei (ritually impure), and when she reaches the end of the period of impurity, she must bring a korban hattat. Surely there is no sin in giving birth! If anything, the parturient (yoledet) deserves a parade, not penance! What is the hattat for, then? (Some talmudic authorities, such as R. Shimon b. Yohai, propose that the yoledet, overcome by pain, swears "I'll never do this again!" and then usually violates the oath by having another baby. But see Shevuot 8a, this appears not to be the mainstream position; if so, why does she bring a "sin-offering"?)
- 2) Zav: a man who experiences a gonorrheal genital several times becomes tamei. When the discharge stops and he goes through a period of seven clean days, he can then purify himself -- and he must also bring a hattat (in most cases). But since there is no sin here, why is there a "sin-offering"?
- 3) Zava: a woman who experiences a menstrual blood flow at an unexpected time, and which continues for three days, becomes tamei. When the blood stops and she marks a period of seven clean days, she can then purify herself -- and she must also bring a hattat. But since there is no sin here, why is there a "sin-offering"?

4) Metzora: someone who has the skin condition called tzara'at (formerly translated "leprosy," now often translated "scale disease") becomes tamei. When the metzora recovers, he or she must bring a hattat. But once again, there is no apparent sin, so why is there a need for a hattat? (Note that even according to those talmudic authorities, such as R. Shmuel b. Nahmeini, who hold that tzara'at is triggered by sin, hold that the hattat itself does not atone for the sin; instead, the suffering brought on by the disease itself atones, and the hattat serves a different function; see Shevuot 8a.)

5) The Para Aduma: people who come into contact (halakhically defined) with dead human bodies become tamei. A reddish cow (para aduma) is slaughtered and its ashes (together with other ingredients) are poured over the tamei people; this is a necessary element in purifying the people. Now, the para aduma is referred to by the Torah as a "hattat." But since there is no sin in contracting ritual impurity by touching a dead body (unless you are a kohen or a nazir), why is the para aduma called a hattat? There is no sin for which to atone!

6) The nazir: the nazir voluntarily takes on a set of prohibitions, usually for a set period of time: he or she swears off wine, lets his or her hair grow long, and must avoid all contact with dead bodies. When he or she completes the period of nezirut, or when it is cut short by his becoming tamei, he must bring a hattat. But why?

### **ANY OTHER POSSIBILITIES?**

It looks like it will be hard to explain how all of these cases are connected in some way to sin. If so, then it is difficult to translate "korban hattat" as "sin-offering," since the hattat is offered in many cases where there seems to be no sin.

One other problem -- and here we are on the verge of a solution -- is that the word "hattat" does not grammatically come from the word "het," meaning "sin," but instead from the word "hattei," which means to "cleanse," "purify," or "decontaminate." Where is "hattat" used in the Torah to mean "cleanse" or "purify" or "decontaminate"? Some examples:

1) Shemot 29:36 -- in the instructions given to Moshe for how the Mishkan inauguration ceremony is to be done, Hashem commands: "Make a bull as a hattat each day [of the inauguration] besides the purifications, and purify ["ve-hitteta"] the altar . . . ."

2) VaYikra 8:15 -- During the actual inauguration process, as part of one of the korbanot: "It was slaughtered; then Moshe took the blood and placed some on the corners of the altar all around with his finger; he purified ["va-ye-hattei"] the altar . . . ."

3) VaYikra 14:52 -- in the context of tzara'at ha-bayit, a fungus-like growth which can appear on the walls of a house and causes tum'ah (impurity): "He should purify [ve-hittei"] the house with the blood of the bird . . . ."

4) BeMidbar (Numbers) 8:7 -- when the Leviyim (Levites) are appointed as caretakers and transporters of the Mishkan, they are to undergo a special purification ceremony: "So shall you do to them to purify them: sprinkle upon them waters of purification ["mei hattat"] . . . and they will be purified."

If the "hattat" in "korban hattat" means "purifying"/ "cleansing" -- and not "sin" -- then the korban hattat is not a "sin-offering," it is a "cleansing offering" or a "purification offering." This makes sense not only grammatically, but also helps explain why there is a korban hattat in so many cases where there is no sin at all, but there is instead impurity: yoledet, zav, zava, metzora, nazir, para aduma (the para aduma is referred to by the Torah as a "hattat"). Since the hattat is a purification offering, it makes sense that it is brought in case of impurity.

### **SIN AND PURIFICATION:**

It makes sense that a ritually impure person offers a korban hattat to attain full purity, but why does a person need to bring a korban hattat when he or she commits a sin? What does sinning have to do with being purified?

This brings us to a crucial element of the Torah's perspective on sin: according to the Torah, committing a sin is not just a rebellion against Hashem (of course, committing an avera on purpose is more of a rebellion than doing so unintentionally) and a rejection of His command, it also has a spiritual effect on us and the environment. It produces tum'ah in us and in the environment around us. Not only has a person done something morally wrong when he does an avera, he actually affects himself and his environment when he does so.

## JUST HAVING A PUFF?

When you smoke, you're not smoking just for now -- it's not an activity in which you engage just for now and which is then over and leaves no trace. Every time you take a puff, you inhale little pieces of sticky filth which are distributed through your lungs. If you have a serious smoking habit, you eventually accumulate so much dirt in your lungs that you make it hard for yourself to breathe. And not only does smoking affect you, it also affects everyone around you -- today we call this "second-hand smoke," and medical studies show that exposure to second-hand smoke can be harmful as well.

The same is true of averot (sins): they are not just actions in which we engage and which then disappear forever (and for which Hashem may punish us) -- they have a concrete effect on our "spiritual lungs" and on our spiritual environment. According to the Torah, they make us tamei, impure. It is no surprise, then, that a person who does an avera needs to purify himself of the tum'ah caused by the avera: he must do teshuva (repent) and he must bring a korban hattat -- a cleansing offering -- to clean up the mess he has made through the avera. Note, though, that there are two completely different kinds of tum'ah in the Torah: "moral tum'ah," tum'ah produced by doing an avera (and which cannot be transmitted to others), and "ritual tum'ah," tum'ah produced by certain ritual situations, such as coming into contact with a dead body, giving birth, menstruating, becoming a metzora, etc.; there is of course nothing sinful about this latter type of tum'ah. What is common to both types of tum'ah -- moral and ritual -- is that both must be mopped up, and the "mop" for both is the korban hattat.

Getting back to "moral tum'ah": what does the korban hattat actually clean? Where is this spiritual dirt? The first place where this impurity is found is in the sinner himself. But the solution for this kind of impurity is not to go to the mikvah, it is to do teshuva. The Rambam addresses this requirement in the last section of his code on the laws of ritual purity. He begins by observing that we all know that tum'ah is not dirt which is washed away by the mikveh; it is a status invented by the Torah for a particular purpose (what exactly this purpose might be, the Rambam addresses in his Guide to the Perplexed). But in order for the mikveh to properly "work," the person who is dunking himself in it must be aware of what he is doing and intend thereby to become pure (unlike taking a shower to clean away dirt; the shower works just as well even if you are sleeping). The Rambam says that the same thing applies to "moral tum'ah":

"Just as one who sets his intent on purifying himself [from ritual tum'ah], once he has immersed in the mikveh, he is tahor [pure] even though nothing at all has changed in him physically, so it is with one who sets his intent on purifying his soul from impurities of the soul [something like what I have called "moral tum'ah" -- EM], which are evil thoughts and evil character traits; once he has decided in his heart to abandon those behaviors and has immersed his soul in the waters of knowledge, he is immediately purified . . . . May Hashem in His great mercy purify us from all of our sins, transgressions, and iniquities, Amen."

Purify? From sin? What does impurity have to do with sin? Clearly, the Rambam is making the connection the Torah makes in many places between sin and moral tum'ah. Sin is not just a decision to disobey, it makes a mark in a concrete way.

Besides doing teshuva, in order to be forgiven (i.e., in order for the stain on his spirit to be cleaned) the sinner must also supply powerful "detergent," and this is provided by the Torah in the form of the korban hattat. The blood of the hattat, which is placed on the mizbe'ah, is a symbol of life. As we will see as we go further in Sefer VaYikra, life is always connected with purity, so when the blood is placed on the mizbe'ah, the person who brought it is making a statement: instead of producing death and impurity through sins, he is committing himself to producing purity and life.

## SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY: CLEANING UP THE ENVIRONMENT:

The second dimension of the hattat is that the offerer must also clean up the environment: he has to find every person who has inhaled the smoke from his cigarettes and make sure that their lungs are cleaned. In terms of the korban hattat, that means that when we make the environment impure by doing an avera, we have to clean up our mess. We have to counteract the impurity with blood, which represents life and purity.

Let's look at some examples of how this works out in Sefer VaYikra:

Example 1: VaYikra 18:24-30 -- After delivering a long list of sexual crimes (incest of various sorts, male homosexual sex, bestiality, sex with a menstruating woman, etc.), Hashem warns us not to commit sexual averot so that they do not make us and Eretz Yisrael impure. This would be a strange equation (sin=impurity) unless we had made this connection earlier:

"Do not impurify yourselves through all of these [actions], for through all of these were impurified the nations whom I am sending away from before you [i.e., throwing them out of Eretz Yisrael -- EM]. The land became tamei, and I recalled its sin upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. You shall keep my laws and commandments -- do not do these abominations, neither citizens nor strangers among you, for the nations who lived in the land before you did all these abominations, and the land became tamei -- so that the land should not vomit you out when you impurify it, just as it vomited out the nation before you."

The word "tamei" appears here about seven times in as many pesukim; one gets the idea that this is a concept the Torah wants to drive home very clearly. Our actions affect not only our individual fates and spiritual stature, but affect the entire community and its relationship with its holy surroundings, Eretz Yisrael. As an antidote to the impurity produced by our averot, we must clean up the mess we have made of both ourselves and our environment.

## **FALL CLEANING:**

Example 2: VaYikra 16:15-20, 30-34. Nowadays, we think of Yom Kippur as a day of teshuva and prayer. But when we had a Beit haMikdash (Temple), Yom Kippur was not just a time for teshuva, it was also time to let loose the heavy guns of purification in the Mikdash, to release the most powerful "hattat-detergents" of the entire year:

16:15-20 -- "He [the Kohen Gadol, High Priest] should slaughter the hattat-goat which belongs to the people [the whole nation] and bring its blood inside the curtain [=into the Holy of Holies] . . . and sprinkle it on the Ark-covering and before the Ark-covering. He should purify the holy place from the impurities of Bnei Yisrael, from their transgressions with all their sins; he shall do the same with the Ohel Mo'ed [the rest of the Mishkan], which resides among them in their impurity. . . . He should leave [the Mishkan] and go out to the altar which is before Hashem and purify it: he shall take from the blood of the bull and the goat and put it on the corners of the altar all around."

What is clear from this command to purify the Mishkan from our sins is that the Mishkan is made impure by a year of the people's sins. Their sins produce tum'ah not only in themselves, but also in the Mishkan itself! Every time a person commits an avera, he not only blackens his own "lungs," he also dumps a bucket of filth into the Mikdash, so to speak.

But why is the Mishkan connected with our averot? Why is it made impure by our averot? The Mishkan is the focal point of purity and holiness in Am Yisrael. It is our spiritual lungs, so to speak, where we inhale Hashem's presence, the place where the Shekhina rests in purity and holiness, the central source of our contact with Hashem and His holiness. It is only natural that the Mishkan is blackened by averot we commit; a little bit of the Mishkan's purity is pushed out by a little bit of the impurity we produce. The same thing also happens to us as individuals, so once a year, Hashem commands us to bring on the heavy cleaning artillery and scour ourselves and the Mishkan from all the dirt with which he have filled it during the year.

16:30-34 -- Here the Torah summarizes by telling us what Yom Kippur is all about: "For on this day, you will be atoned for so that you will be purified ["le-taher"] from all of your sins; before Hashem will you be purified . . . [The kohen] shall purify the Holy of Holies, the Ohel Mo'ed, the altar, the kohanim, and the people . . . to purify the Bnei Yisrael from all of their sins once a year . . . ."

Again, the Torah makes it clear that both the Mikdash and the people are made tamei by the people's sins, and must be cleansed on Yom Kippur. The reason this is such a serious business is the same reason smoking is such a serious business. A few puffs may not really hurt us much, but it starts to accumulate quickly -- and sin, like smoking, becomes a habit. Eventually, the lungs become blocked to the degree that it is a real exertion to climb a few flights of stairs. Then the smoker develops a cough that won't go away, or a frightening case of asthma. Covered with dirt, the lungs can no longer do their job. This is not just a technicality, it can become life-threatening; sometimes, when the lungs have had enough of the dirt we keep throwing down, they rebel and the smoker develops lung cancer.

The same is true of our own personal spiritual lungs and our communal spiritual lungs. When we ignore what Hashem wants, we begin to close off our spiritual connection with Him. It becomes a little harder to "breathe," and we find that Hashem seems a lot more distant than He was before. And as we fill the Mishkan, His house, with filth, He begins to withdraw. Who would live in a house where people come to dump their garbage? Hashem is the essence of purity and holiness, and when we make the Mishkan impure, we make it inhospitable for His Presence. Inevitably, He moves out and withdraws from us. This is communal spiritual lung cancer -- that is what it means when Hashem abandons the Mikdash and withdraws His protection and Presence from us. It is only a matter of time until another nation is sent to destroy the

physical shell of the Mikdash, which we ourselves have already destroyed in a spiritual sense. And it is only a matter of time until the Land spits us out, no longer willing to tolerate our incessant dumping of filth everywhere, and we are forced to find our way in foreign countries.

Note that it is also natural that the more serious the avera, the more deeply the impurity penetrates into the Mikdash and the more powerful a detergent is necessary: when a member of the people commits an avera and must bring a hattat, the blood is placed on the mizbe'ah -- the altar in the courtyard just outside the Mishkan building proper. But when a Kohen Gadol or the High Court sins, the tum'ah penetrates further, so when they bring their hattat, the blood is placed on the inner mizbe'ah, the incense altar which is actually inside the Mishkan. And when people sin purposely, the tum'ah is powerful enough to penetrate into the Kodesh ha-Kodashim itself, where the Ark is. Of course, a korban hattat cannot be offered by an individual for an intentional sin, but that does not mean the Ark remains tamei forever -- as the Torah tells us, it is purified with the blood of the communal hattat on Yom Kippur, when the Kohen Gadol enters the holiest space on Earth and atones not only for inadvertent sins, but also for wanton sins: "pesha'im."

#### **BROADER IMPLICATIONS:**

One of the most crucial implications of this system is that the entire community is together responsible, each individual for every other individual. Since everyone's action affects the Mikdash, every individual is responsible to the community to clean up his mess so that the tum'ah does not accumulate in the Mikdash and begin to force Hashem away from the entire nation as a whole. In this way, the spiritual status of every individual in the nation is linked to everyone else's -- we all suffer the consequences of the sins of each individual, unless each individual is responsible and cleans up. In closing, I can only echo the words of the Rambam: "May Hashem in His great mercy purify us from all of our sins, transgressions, and iniquities, Amen."

Shabbat Shalom