



Ohr Yerushalayim News

פסח תשע"ח – 30th March 2018 - Volume 10 - Issue 36

News This Week

Speakers Over Yom Tov

We are delighted to host a variety of Shiurim over Yom Tov. Details on the back page.

ערוב תבשילין

A reminder to make an Eruv Tavshilin for last days of Yom Tov.

Neilas HaChag

Once again we are pleased to host a Neilas HaChag on last day of Yom Tov (there will be Matza for those who wish to wash and make it their Seuda Shelishis) kindly sponsored by Yitzchok Douek in honour of the Yahrtzeit of his late father - Chaim Aruchim.

Siyum Mishnayos

Once again we will have a Siyum Mishnayos the Shabbos after Shavuot. This year we will be learning Sedorim Taharos and Zeroim. Members are encouraged to learn Mishnayos individually or Bechavrusa, the list will be on the notice wall in the foyer.

A Speck of Chometz

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

For whoever eats chometz, that soul shall be cut off from the Jewish people. (Shemos 12:15)

IF A PIECE of treif meat becomes accidentally mixed together with two identical pieces of kosher meat, making it impossible to know which is which, the entire mixture is kosher. The rabbis tell us to not eat at least one of three, but the Torah permits it.

Likewise, if you were stirring your hot fleishig cholent on Erev Shabbos with one hand while drinking milchig coffee at the same time with the other hand, and someone bumped into you causing some of your coffee to jump into the cholent, you may not have to panic. If the milk disappears into the cholent and you know that it was only one-sixtieth or less in proportion, everything is still kosher. You can eat that cholent on Shabbos with a clear conscience.

"Bittul," the halachic nullification of a forbidden substance is a remarkable concept and rather counter-intuitive. Who cares if there is more kosher meat than treif meat? When the person eats the third piece of meat, he will DEFINITELY have eaten the treif one! So out of doubt, it makes more sense not to eat ANY of the three pieces of meat, and indeed, some have that opinion.

Not because they disagree with the Torah, G-d forbid, but because they know how people think. Why is the Torah is telling us that in such a situation of bittul the treif becomes kosher? How? Only G-d knows, and maybe a few Kabbalists a well. But since the average person cannot get their head around that, they will THINK that the Torah has allowed them to eat a piece of treif meat, which is wrong, COMPLETELY wrong.

Therefore, one opinion tells us to throw away at least one piece, so the person can't know he is CERTAINLY eating what was once a treif piece of meat. Some say throw away two, and some say three. They don't want people thinking that they can go against the Torah with the Torah's permission. If any of this happens to a person, they should consult their local Orthodox rabbi for a decision.

An exception to this rule is chometz. From the time Pesach comes

לעלוי נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

Shaliach Tzibur - Make a Gap!

Although it is essential for everyone to enunciate each and every word clearly and accurately when saying any part of our Tephilla, nevertheless for the Shaliach Tzibur who is leading the Tzibur it is doubly important. Especially when one word begins with the same letter as the previous one, and when a word ends with a strong consonant and then following begins with a soft letter. Everyone must be careful to ensure that the first letter of the second word is not 'swallowed up' completely.

Example One: שמה | יתגדל יתקדש | שמה | יתגדל יתקדש | שמה | יתגדל יתקדש
Example Two: אותם | וקשרתם | אותם | וקשרתם | אותם | וקשרתם

in to when it goes out seven days (eight in the Diaspora) later, any chometz mixture is forbidden. It could be 10 million portions of kosher l'Pesach food to one portion of chometz, and the mixture is still forbidden. There is no bittul of actual chometz during Pesach. It is in the halachic vernacular, "assur b'mashahu," forbidden even in the tiniest of quantities.

Why is that? Why are we super-stringent about chometz as opposed to other issurim? Because chometz on Pesach is an "Issur Kares" (a person is cut off from the Jewish people)? There are other "Issurei Kares" that can be nullified in the right amount. Is there even a halachic basis for such a stringency, other than the fact that the rabbis insist on it?

If they insist on it, there is a reason. And though it may not have to do with the halachic parameters of bittul, it does have to do with the reality of chometz itself, which is something quite Kabbalistic. After all, Kabbalists describe the rectification of Creation being, the result of G-d breaking the letter Ches of "chometz" (spelled, Ches-Mem-Tzaddi) into the letter Heh of "matzah" (spelled, Mem-Tzaddi-Heh). That has to mean something important.

This alone tells you that chometz, as delicious and seminal a thing it is to life, represents "tohu," the null that preceded Creation. If the word was transformed into "matzah" to make Creation, then chometz, or the spiritual basis of chometz, has to be associated with the null and void that came before "Tikun Ma'aseh Bereishis," the "Rectification of the Act of Creation."

On and even simpler level, we know that chometz represents the yetzer hara, man's evil inclination. It's not only about food. It's about anything that satiates the body, be it something we take in through our mouths or through our experiences in life. If it's materialistic in any way, it is "chometzdik," at least in the conceptual sense. The only question would be, then why is it permissible the rest of the year, and even in generous quantities?

The answer of course is back in time, when the Jewish people were still in Egypt. Something happened back then that WE take for granted, but "others" do not. DANGEROUS others and, it turns out, chometz makes us vulnerable to them.

There is a rule in Creation. It says that when a person acts morally, they are protected from evil spiritual forces. The "mitzvos" they perform not only guard them against the Klipos, the Kabbalistic name for the source of evil in Creation, but the mitzvos even weaken the Klipos. Theoretically, enough mitzvos performed can even ELIMINATE them

altogether, but so far that has only been wishful thinking.

Sins do the opposite. They draw the Klipos to a person, and strengthen the Klipos in the process. If a person does not do teshuvah and take care against the Klipos, then the Klipos have permission from G-d to spiritually attack the person, as they have done on so many occasions.

Unfortunately, such attacks aren't easy to recognize or defend against. On the contrary, the person under attack may merely feel "free" of religion. They FEEL as if they're MORE in charge of their lives, when in fact they are really more enslaved, bound to do the bidding of the Klipos. It is something that tragically only becomes clear to a person once it is too late to fix the situation, like moments before their departure from this world.

This only explains why chometz should be a problem ALL year round. Why is it only an issue during Pesach?

Because a great injustice was done against the Klipos during this time of year. The Jewish people had been holding on the 49th level of spiritual impurity until the Ten Plagues started. By all rights, they should have fallen completely into the hands of the Klipos—for good. The Jewish people should not have been saved.

Instead, because of the promise made to Avraham Avinu that the eighth generation would go free, G-d bent the rules. He sent Moshe Rabbeinu down to Egypt to not only free the Jewish people, but to increase their merit. He artificially sensitized them to the reality of G-d, by performing increasingly more spectacular miracles. With each passing plague, the Divine light only became more intense until the Jewish people had to quickly leave Egypt to save the Klipos, not themselves.

If you think the Klipos forgot about this "injustice," think again. Quite the contrary, every year at this time they are reminded of what should have been, and what was instead. It makes them vengeful, and they look to take back now some of what they lost back then.

As a long a Jew remains COMPLETELY chometz free during Pesach, the Klipos cannot get to them. The light of Pesach once again keeps them away, allowing the person to live instead, enveloped by the liberating light of G-d. The Klipos can do nothing but helplessly watch from afar.

But if a person has even a speck of chometz on Pesach, it's like whistling and yelling, "Hey Klipos! I'm over here!" It's like putting a tracking device on yourself that attracts the Klipos right to you. The person becomes a "Korban Pesach" for the Klipos instead. Not a very appealing option, and certainly good incentive to make sure the house is well cleaned and properly checked in advance of the "Holiday of Freedom."

Why On This Night Do We Dip Twice?

Rabbi Moshe Peretz Gilden (Torah.org)

The Pesach (Passover) experience is not simply an annual opportunity to relive our national redemption of 3317 years ago; it is the occasion of reawakening our yearning for the final redemption – the arrival of Mashiach (the Messiah), the ingathering of the exiles and the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Many Pesachs have come and gone and still the redemption has not taken place. The Sages note that the first night of Pesach, the Seder night, always coincides with the day of the week of the Ninth of Av, the day of tragedy throughout Jewish history, including the destruction of both of the prior Jewish Temples. What is the point of this observation? Are our Sages trying to dampen our joyous holiday spirit and fill us with despair as we try to look to the future with hope, or is there some deeper insight into what we are missing that will assist in the accomplishment of this most elusive national aspiration?

In his classic work of the laws of derogatory speech, the Chofetz Chaim discusses the well known truth that the destruction of the Second Temple was due to derogatory speech and the resultant baseless hatred against one another. Because this is the sin that brought about our exile, this sin must be reversed to bring our redemption. Therefore, we need to strengthen ourselves, refrain from

gossip and create a state of peace within our nation. It is not enough to hope and yearn for the redemption; it is essential we correct the sins that created the exile.

On the Seder night there are two "dippings": the carpas vegetable into salt water and the bitter herbs of marror into the sweet charoses. The Ben Ish Chai explains that we dip twice because the exile into Egypt took seed with a dipping – Joseph's coat into goat's blood to make it appear as though he had been killed – and the freedom from Egypt began with a dipping – a bundle of hyssop branches into the blood of the Pesach offering, to apply it to the lintel and the two doorposts as a sign to G-d to pass over that home and spare the life of its first born. The two dippings remind us that the exile began as a result of Joseph's derogatory reports against his brothers and the responsive hatred his brothers felt toward him, and that their redemption mandated they take this bundle of hyssop, an allusion to our unity as a nation, and practice humility. Only this would save them from the trap of derogatory speech and baseless hatred.

Thus, concludes Rabbi Matisyahu Salomon, our Sages linked Pesach and the Ninth of Av. The redemption for which we yearn and strive on Pesach is directly dependent upon correcting the sins that brought about the destruction of the Temple on the Ninth of Av. Therefore, our Sages established within the Seder night various customs that remind us of this. As we dip the vegetable into salt water and, later, the marror into sweet charoses, we need to remember what brought us into our bitter exile in the first place, and what we must do to sweeten our plight and bring us out of this exile. Our yearning for the redemption must be complimented with the commitment to correct the sins that brought the destruction of our Temple and our current exile.

In the merit of our yearning and commitment, may we be redeemed with the coming of the Mashiach speedily in our day.

Another Link in the Chain

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we celebrate the holiday of Pesach. We've mentioned a number of times that our holidays are not mere commemorations of events which transpired long ago. Rather, they serve as the tools which enable us to access that very same spiritual potential which was maximized then and is available, once again, now.

It's interesting to note that even amongst those whose level of commitment to other mitzvos and holidays might not be so strong, the commitment to some degree of a Pesach celebration has remained very firm.

Pesach, the Exodus from Egypt, marked our beginning as a nation. Not just a nation like the myriad others, but a nation whose course and destiny would be guided by Hashem to bring this world to its ultimate purpose. That connection to Hashem which Avrohom Avinu {Abraham the Patriarch} began on a personal, individual level, which was continued by Yitzchok and then by Yaakov and his twelve sons, the tribes of Israel, became the fortune and destiny of the nation at large at the time of the exodus. As Hashem revealed Himself to us at Sinai and revealed to us His holy will in the form of the Torah, it is the majestic responsibility of Bnei Yisroel {the children of Israel} to reveal His existence and involvement in this world to the rest of the nations.

As I was reviewing the Haggadah with some boys from my shiur {class} we came to the following passage. The Haggadah states that the Torah, in commanding us to relate the exodus to our children, speaks of four sons: echod chacham {one, wise}; echod rasha {one, evil}; echod tom {one, simple}; v'echod she'aino yodaiah lish'ol {and one, that doesn't know how to ask}.

One of the boys asked why it was necessary to write the word 'one' before each of these types of sons. We offered a possible explanation that the Haggadah is teaching us that every person is an individual with his gifts and abilities (sometimes still latent) and must be respected as such. Additionally, as the Haggadah then delineates, each must be treated and answered in an appropriate manner in order for the answers to hit home. There must be different approaches for different people—there is no 'one' method or answer

Ohr Yerushalayim Matza Baking



which will be universally effective.

The rasha asks: What is this service that you do? He is clearly excluding himself from the whole business. Why do you bother with all of this outdated, silly ritual? The answer he is given is cutting and to the point. This is why Hashem took me out of Mitzrayim {Egypt}. Me. Had you been there with such an attitude, you would not have been redeemed.

This is why Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim. We, through the observance of the Torah and its commandments, bring the presence of Hashem into this world. Taking that presence which is hidden and allowing it to be revealed. A process, a chain stretching from the time of the exodus throughout the generations, throughout thousands of years until the time of the moshiach {messiah}. Ultimately reaching to the point in time when the whole world will recognize and accept Hashem as the Master of the universe.

Imagine the dedication, love and gratitude that those who left Mitzrayim felt toward Hashem. Imagine their resolve to follow each and every iota of ritual that the Creator commanded, knowing that it's an integral piece of the puzzle, building the world toward that state. "In each and every generation a person is obligated to view himself as if he himself left Mitzrayim.[Haggadah]" Only then does a person feel a true obligation to continue the chain that was started then.

Imagine a chain that is painstakingly being formed, link by link, stretching across a great canyon. The other side has almost been reached. The work of thousands is on the verge of completion. Then, with only two or three links remaining, the people entrusted with those links get careless! They just don't bother to make sure they are attached. As others look on in horror, they see that chain slip from their grip, falling back, back across the great divide, until it's hanging limply from its starting point. All of the effort and work, sweat and tears, erased in a moment of indifference...

Every generation, every person, another link in the chain. We are the final links of the chain that stretches from the exodus to the moshiach, from the beginning of our nationhood to the end of time. Incredible pain and determination have been endured to produce this chain. I doubt there's a single Jew alive today who doesn't have ancestors who gave up their life for their Judaism, who sacrificed all that they had to guarantee that they would continue that chain. (Every convert is considered a direct descendant of Avrohom Avinu himself, the one who was willing to sacrifice that which was most dear to him.) How can we be careless and indifferent? How can we, the final, critical links of this chain, break that which was built from the blood of our great grandparents?

Perhaps that is one of the feelings which come around and is 'felt in the air' every year at this time. It is absorbed even by those who might not be as observant other times of the year. The feeling and realization that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves and that we have responsibilities to others who came long before us. As we, during this z'man geulasainu {time of our redemption} attempt to feel as if we ourselves left Mitzrayim, let that be followed by our running to greet the moshiach, heralding the final and ultimate redemption, proudly presenting ourselves as those final, strong links in the chain of our nation.

Everyone is Invited!

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

One of the most wondrous features that surfaces during our pre Pesach preparations is the manner in which we assume responsibility for one another, ensuring that everybody's needs are met before the Pesach festival. The first Mishna in Pesachim instructs us not to lean at the Seder table until everybody has been provided with their Seder necessities.

Earlier this week, a scene unfolded here in Monsey at the Tomche Shabbos headquarters, replicated in Jewish communities across the globe, that put the magnificent solidarity of the Jewish people on display in faithful adherence to this teaching.

Scores of volunteers assembled to pack the Pesach food that was donated to hundreds of families in our community. Over ten trucks

lined up in front of the Tomche Shabbos warehouse and eager volunteers from every religious stream gathered in unity, sorting, loading and delivering what seemed like an endless stream of boxes onto the waiting trucks. Grape juice, potatoes, chickens, groceries, staples and the like were piled high in the warehouse. It was truly an inspirational and heart warming scene to see Jews so joyously fulfilling the mitzvah of providing Kimcha d'Pischa to those in need.

Why do we emphasize this particular mitzvah before Pesach? Why do we feel such an urgent sense of responsibility to one another leading up to this particular festival? True, the needs associated with Pesach are greater than at any other time of the year. The festival provisions tally up to an enormous expense and for many, securing the bare necessities for the family is daunting. Yet the awesome sense of responsibility we see displayed for fellow Jews in our midst goes above and beyond what one would expect. What brings to the surface at this particular time the tremendous compassion and desire to reach out to our brothers and sisters?

Perhaps the answer is that over three thousand years ago, when we accepted the Torah, we Jews accepted upon ourselves the bond and covenant of areivus, responsibility to one another. We recognize that all six hundred thousand of us are one unit, one organic entity; we are inseparably intertwined. This remarkable unity, undeterred by barriers of time and geography, is unique to the Jewish people.

Consider the human body's amazing capacity to address its needs. If a germ invades a particular area of the body, the entire human organism springs into action. Nutrients and blood cells stream to the affected area from all over the body to repel any substance that endangers its health. The hand, the toe, the head, any organ-it makes no difference. Every cell is interconnected and stands ready at any given moment to assist the body and restore it to health. This the unique trait characteristic of the Jewish people!

It is well known that during the Mendel Beilis trial that was held in Moscow at the turn of the century, the prosecutor accused Jews of harboring contempt for non-Jews. He quoted a piece from the Talmud to demonstrate how superior Jews feel to Gentiles and how they loathe those who are not of their faith. "Atem keruim Adam, you [the Jewish people] are called a man, which is not true of the Gentiles," says the Talmud. The legal defense team of Mendel Bailis was in a quandary as to how to respond to this devastating attack on the Jewish faith. They consulted with the Rav of Moscow who sent a telegram to Rabbi Meir Shapiro for advice. He instructed them to tell the judge that this segment of the Talmud reflects the essential character trait of the Jewish people and is not intended as an insult to the other peoples of the world.

"This essential Jewish characteristic is on display during this very trial in a courtroom in Moscow," he said. "The entire Jewish world is up in arms. Jews across the globe are using all the resources at their disposal to intercede on the behalf of the accused, Mendel Beilis. We are one Adam, one man, one organic whole. We feel the pain of one another and are willing to sacrifice for each other in a way that no other people has ever demonstrated."

This profound trait surfaced at the moment of our formation as a people and is the force that renders us distinct and unique. On Pesach, at the moment of our annual rebirth, we sit at the Seder to celebrate our exodus from Egypt and our creation as a nation. Our joy at this momentous occasion and our cohesion as a nation is expressed in a heartfelt reaching out to our Jewish brothers and sisters: "Let all who are hungry come and partake, let all who need come and join us!"

Next Year In Jerusalem!

Hagaddah Insights We Are What We Do

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

One of the perennial topics that come up at the Seder is the nature of the dialog between the Wise Son and his father in the Hagaddah narrative. The Wise Son asks his father "What are the testimonies, decrees, and ordinances that Hashem our G-d has commanded

you?” The answer given to him is “Therefore explain to him the laws of the Pesach offering: that one may not eat dessert after the final taste of the Pesach offering.”

Why is this terse answer an appropriate response to his all-encompassing question? The simple and perhaps the correct answer is that this statement “Ayn maftirin achar haPessach Afikoman” is the last Mishna in Perek Arvei Pessachim, which discusses the laws of Seder night. In fact, we tell him everything – from A to Z – from that Talmudic chapter. The law that one cannot eat anything after the Afikoman is “Z” – the last item in that catalog of laws found in the Talmudic Tractate dealing with Passover.

However, if we wish to engage in homiletics (which is very common on Seder night) one could interpret as follows: The Wise Son is asking a very fundamental question. We all realize how basic and fundamental the Exodus story is to our religion and to our historical experience. Still, the Wise Son is asking – why do we need this abundance of mitzvos that have to do with the Exodus? Would it not suffice with just one or two symbolic commandments to recall the event? Moreover, aside from all the many mitzvos associated with Pessach in general and the Seder night in particular, there are another several dozen mitzvos that the Torah identifies as being “zecher l'Yitzias Mitzraim” [commemorating the Exodus from Egypt]. For example, the mitzvah of Tefillin and the mitzvah of redeeming the First Born are classified as being “zecher l'Yitzias Mitzraim”. Why so many mitzvos? Why all these testimonies, decrees, and ordinances?

The truth of the matter is that the question the Wise Son asks is really the question the Sefer HaChinuch addresses to his son. In Mitzvah 16 (regarding the prohibition of breaking a bone from the Paschal offering), the author explains the reason for this mitzvah: On Seder night we need to feel like wealthy people, kings and princes. Kings and princes do not break bones when they eat their meat. Such behavior typifies one who rarely eats meat and wants to suck out the last bit of juice from the broken bone. The Chinuch writes that in order to feel and demonstrate that we are free and wealthy men (the experience of “Cheirus”), the Torah commands us to emulate such practices and not break the bones on Seder night.

Then, in a fundamental teaching, the author writes (to his son), “Do not think the number of commandments relating to the Exodus is excessive and that one or two rituals would suffice for our children and grandchildren to not forget the historical events of the Exodus from Egypt. Such an idea (which is basically the question of the Wise son) is mistaken. My dear son, listen to this and it will give you a basic understanding into the reason for much of Torah and many of the mitzvos: MAN IS INFLUENCED BY HIS ACTIONS (Adam nif'al k'fi peulosov).”

The world says, “You are what you eat”. The Chinuch says, “You are what you do” and “The way you act is the way you become.”

The Chinuch gives a famous parable about a person who was a righteous individual – kind, compassionate, and kind-hearted. For whatever reason, he ended up in a profession where he needed to be cruel. In contemporary terms, we can picture someone who got in trouble with the mafia. They drafted him into their service and they told him that he was going to be their enforcer. “You are going to start breaking people’s knees or we will break your knees!”

This person started out as a wonderful compassionate individual. But, as fate would have it, for years and years and years he needed to make his living by being an enforcer for the mafia, using all kinds of violent techniques to collect funds for his employers. The Chinuch writes that such a person will inevitably eventually develop a nature that is cruel and hard-hearted. You become what you practice. You are what you do.

On the other hand, he writes, a person who is mean and cruel but is forced into a profession in which he must be kind and giving will eventually become a compassionate person. This, he says, is what mitzvos are all about. It is not merely enough for us to do one or two things. The more you do the more you become. The fundamental

idea of doing mitzvos is to change us for the better! The Torah wants there to be a lasting impression on our souls. By the performance of mitzvos we should CHANGE. There should be an impression. This lasting impression on our souls comes about by doing Divinely mandated actions over and over again.

Therefore, if we drink the wine, lean, emulate free wealthy men, do not break the bones and act the part, we will become like wealthy people, kings and princes. This is why we do not eat dessert after the Afikoman. We want the taste (of the Matza/Paschal offering) to remain in our mouths. We want to create a lasting impression to the mitzvos we do. This is what we tell the Wise Son. The desire to have a lasting impression is symbolic of what mitzvos are about in general. The goal of mitzvos is that we should become different, better, people. We achieve that goal by doing. The more we do, the better we become. This is the reason for the testimonies, decrees, and ordinances which Hashem our G-d has commanded.

Not Only One Has Risen Up Against Us

“And it is this that has stood by our fathers and us. For not only one has risen against us to annihilate us, but in every generation they rise against us, to annihilate us. But the Holy One, Blessed is He rescues us from their hand.”

This is not a novel statement. It was obvious when the text of the Hagaddah was composed, and it is certainly obvious by now that there have been many many people who have risen up to attempt to destroy us. It is a vast understatement to say that “not only one has risen up” against us! What then is the author of the Hagaddah telling us?

Furthermore, how does the narrative continue? “Go and learn what Lavan the Aramean attempted to do to our father Yaakov! For Pharaoh decreed only against the males, Lavan attempted to uproot everything...” Why is this the proof to the statement “Not only one has risen against us?”

I saw an interesting observation. The expression “For not only one has risen against us to annihilate us” means something different. If we look at the world and at all the ideologies that have come across the world stage, so many ideologies began with one person who developed a following. From one person an idea took hold. For instance, Martin Luther started a movement (Lutheranism). Karl Marx had an idea (Marxism). Millions and even billions of people followed the idea of one man. A person comes up with an idea; people take to the idea; they propagate the idea, and the idea becomes widespread among people – but it originated from one man with one idea.

There is an exception to this rule and that is anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is a movement by which various people throughout the ages have had various reasons why they hate Jews. The reasons, however, are rarely the same reason. “For not one person alone rose up against us to destroy us.” There is something different about anti-Semitism: It was not merely one person’s idea. Person A had one idea why he was anti-Semitic; Person B had another idea why he was anti-Semitic, and so on down the line. One person said it was racist; another person said because they do not like our noses; some people said because they do not like the way we act. They converge at the same point of hatred, but they begin with a variety of often contradictory reasons and ideas for their hatred.

What does that say? Not only one stood up against us. Anti-Semitism in its various forms has been promoted by so many people. However, everybody has a new complaint, finds a new flaw, comes up with a new idea why to hate us. The bottom line, however, is the same – they all hate us.

Come and hear – because Pharaoh followed Lavan. If he was merely following in Lavan’s footsteps, he would need to uproot everything – get rid of all the Jews – exactly as Lavan tried to do. But, no! Pharaoh had a new form of anti-Semitism: Only kill the males. This was something new.

This is the way it has been throughout the generations. The “miracle” of anti-Semitism is one of the greatest proofs of the existence of

the Almighty. Most “isms” come and go, whether it is humanism, socialism, or communism. But there is one “ism” that has been with us since time immemorial – anti-Semitism.

It started with Lavan, thousands of years ago. It continued with Pharaoh and then with other enemies. It continued with Nevuchadrezzar, the Greeks, and the Romans. It continued with the Moslems and the Spanish and the Catholics. It continued with Chelminiski and the Ukrainians and with the Nazis. This has been going on for thousands and thousands of years.

What does that tell you? It tells you that it is not our noses and it is not our faces and it is not this and not that. It is not because we control the world or because we do not control the world or we are too poor or too rich. It is because our enemies understand on some level that we are the nation designated by G-d and put here in this world to spread His Word. That fact is what they cannot take. That is why they hate us.

It comes in different forms. It comes for different reasons. “Not for one reason alone have they risen up against us.” The miracle is that in each instance and in each generation “G-d saves us from their hands.” Here we are where so many millions of people thought that “if we have a State” that will cure anti-Semitism. They thought, “if we act like everybody else” that will cure anti-Semitism. We want to be normal like everybody else.

Three hundred thousand people are massacred in Darfur without much of an international reaction but the United Nations goes ballistic when an Israeli bulldozer runs over one woman by accident. What is that saying?

Not only one has risen up against us to destroy us. G-d alone, nothing else, saves us from their hands. Not the State, not normalization, not assimilation. Only G-d saves us from their hands, in each and every generation.

In Lamb

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

The Baal Haggadah cites the prophet Yechezkel to describe Bnei Yisroel’s state of spiritual bankruptcy in Egypt as “eirom ve’erya” – “naked and bare”. What is being emphasized by stating that Bnei Yisroel were both naked and bare, an apparent redundancy? According to most texts, the Baal Haggadah continues to quote Yechezkel, saying that when Hashem found Bnei Yisroel in such a downtrodden state, He said to them “You shall live through your blood, live through your blood.” The Midrash explains that the two mentions of blood refer to the blood of circumcision and the blood of the Korban Pesach. These two mitzvos gave Bnei Yisroel the merit necessary to depart from Egypt. How are circumcision and Korban Pesach the antidote for “naked and bare”?

“Eirom” – “naked” refers to a level of nakedness in which the person feels the embarrassment and humiliation of being naked. When Adam and Chava ate from the Tree of Knowledge, they became aware of their nakedness and hid. Hashem asked Adam “Who told you ‘that you are naked’” – “ki eirom atah?”. Hashem was asking Adam who told him that his nakedness should cause him embarrassment. “Erya” is derived from the word “erva” which alludes to licentiousness and immorality. This is a level at which a person loses his G-dly image and no longer senses shame or humiliation when he is naked. This type of person is no different than an animal. The desensitization of a human being’s basic sense of shame comes about through consistent involvement in immoral behavior. In a similar fashion, man can desist from following Hashem’s directives, yet still sense the shame in not fulfilling the word of G-d. However, if man becomes completely comfortable with his actions and desensitized to this shame, he can lose touch with what is required of him as a human being.

Prior to the Exodus, Bnei Yisroel had fallen to the forty-ninth gate of impurity. The Navi Yechezkel is teaching us that they did not even feel the shame of being “naked”, devoid of any spirituality, for their servitude to Pharaoh coupled with their involvement in idol worship had so dehumanized them that they were unable to feel the shame of their condition.

The Talmud teaches that idol worship is the medium a person uses to indulge in licentiousness. As long as a person feels the shame and embarrassment of immoral behavior he cannot fully enjoy the licentiousness. Therefore, such a person has to divest himself of his Divine image and his responsibility to his Creator. Idol worship is the manner by which he accomplishes both.

A slave is the prototype of a person who has no responsibility for himself – “eved behefkeira nicha lei”, and as such is also involved in licentious behavior. These two mitzvos were given to undo the process which led from idol worship to licentiousness. The Rambam explains that circumcision is a symbol of morality and is specifically performed on the organ for procreation to teach us to sublimate our desires and energies for the service of our Creator. This counteracts the animal-like behavior which caused Bnei Yisroel to lose touch with their spirituality.

The sacrificing of the Pascal lamb is explained by the Ramban as being the ultimate rejection of idol worship. The lamb was an Egyptian deity and therefore, slaughtering the lamb signified Bnei Yisroel’s proclamation of their loyalty to Hashem. Consequently, these two mitzvos are designed to counteract the process which landed Bnei Yisroel at the forty-ninth level of impurity.

Showing Your True Colors

Rashi explains that the word “Pesach” is derived from the verse which describes the way Hashem “passed over” the Jewish homes with doorposts stained by blood from the Pascal lamb; the verb “pasach” is interpreted as “passed over” or “had mercy upon”. The implication of the requirement to place the blood of the Pascal lamb on the doorposts is that if a Jewish house did not bear this sign of protection, the firstborn residing within would be susceptible to the vengeance of Hashem which was wrought upon the Egyptians.

When the Torah lists the casualties of the tenth plague, it records everyone from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the alien captive who was in an Egyptian jail. Rashi is perturbed as to why a foreigner in an Egyptian jail would be affected by a plague directed at the Egyptians. He suggests that if the foreign prisoners had remained unaffected by the plague, they would have credited their G-ds with the punishment brought upon the Egyptians. Therefore, they had to be punished as well. However, this creates the following difficulty: According to Rashi’s explanation, a foreigner was affected by the plague only because he would have attributed it to his G-ds if he were not. Why, then, would the Jews require a sign to protect themselves from the punishment? If the punishment was directed only at the Egyptians, the Jews should have been automatically precluded since they could not attribute the plague to other G-ds.

When Alexander Macedonia conquered the Middle East, he formed a tribunal that adjudicated claims brought by the different nations for injustices perpetrated against them by other nations. One such claim was made by Egypt against Bnei Yisroel. They demanded that the money and valuables Bnei Yisroel left Egypt with be returned to them. A Rabbi by the name of Gaviha ben Pessisa spearheaded the defense for Bnei Yisroel. He counterclaimed, mathematically computing the work hours that the Jews had toiled when they were in Egypt, that the Egyptians still owed Bnei Yisroel money; the Egyptian claim was dropped. It is difficult to understand Gaviha ben Pessisa’s position. Since when does a slave have a right to demand compensation from a master?

The Rambam teaches us that a king has the authority to enlist any of his subjects for his personal service. However, the king has an obligation to compensate that individual. Therefore, Gaviha ben Pessisa was making the argument that the Jews were Egyptian subjects that had been enlisted into Pharaoh’s service, and as such, had the right to demand compensation. What emerges is that prior to the Exodus, Bnei Yisroel were not foreign nationals subjected to slavery, rather Egyptian subjects enlisted by their king. This notion is driven home by the fact that only twenty percent of Bnei Yisroel left Egypt. The remaining eighty percent refused to leave their homeland and

died during the plague of darkness to prevent the Egyptians from witnessing their death.

The Korban Pesach was the manner by which the identity of the Jewish people was forged. Consequently, the placing of the blood on the doorpost signified that those who lived within the dwelling identified themselves as Jews, not Egyptians. The sign not being found was a statement that those living within the dwelling defined themselves as Egyptian citizens and were subject to the death of the firstborn.

Korban Pesach

Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari (Torah.org)

We read in the Mechilta that Rabbi Matia ben Charash taught that when the time came for the G-d to fulfil His promise to Avraham Avinu, Israel had no mitzvot to justify their redemption, G-d then gave them the mitzvot of the Brit Milah and the Korban Pesach. How then are we to understand the words of Rabbi Elazar Hakappar, that it was in the merit of the four mitzvot that they had, that they were redeemed? After all, they had four mitzvot on which the World stood. There was no suspicion that they were guilty of sexual immorality and of lashon harah, and they did not change their names and their language. We could say that these four are negative mitzvot and there is not a reward for negative mitzvot as the Maharal teaches. That would explain Rabbi Matai's statement.

However, in Kiddushin (39a) we learnt that there is reward for one who was able to overcome the temptation to do an averah. Therefore, Israel in Egypt where they were constantly faced with the possibility to sin but did not, surely didn't need the extra two mitzvot?

The four negative mitzvot that they already observed by being able to withstand them, were concerned with sexual immorality, murder, idolatry and needless hatred. Since the First Temple was destroyed because of the first three and the Second Temple because of lashon hara and needless hatred, we see that lashon harah is equal to the other three combined. However, they are all 3 punishable by karet or by the death penalty of the bet din, while needless hatred is not; it is only a transgression of the negative mitzvah of, 'thou shall not hate thy brother in thy heart' (Vayikrah, 19:17). How then can it be considered equal to the other three? Its equality lies in the fact that needless hatred, in all its various forms, is actually the cause of the other three, while not actually being part of them. A person can, through his efforts prevent this happening and do teshuvah for the lashon harah and needless hatred before committing the other sins. That is why there is no karet or mitat bet din. Israel in Egypt was able to overcome all the powers that tried to bring them to commit these four sins.

Furthermore, the four negatives which they avoided correspond to the perversion of body, mind and nefesh, with that of lashon harah and sinat chinam to the Tzelem Elokim which should bind the other three together. Since lashon harah causes the disintegration of society and of social ties, it weakens the unifying power of the Tzelem Elokim. Sexual immorality perverts the body; that they did not change their names prevented the perversion of their minds; since the name of something is its essence and the essence of man is his mind. That they did not change their language prevented the perversion of the nefesh; the Targum translates 'And man became a living nefesh' as a speaking spirit. By keeping apart from these four things, Israel preserved the purity of body, mind, and nefesh integrated by the Tzelem Elokim.

However keeping away from these sins was not sufficient, as there still remained the choice of actually sinning, as we see in the saying of the Avnei Nezer with regard to the Metzora. After the signs of the Metzora had departed, a sacrifice was still necessary in order for the tsuvah to be complete. So what was required of Israel in Egypt was, in addition, the complete eradication of the sin. For that they required the Milah and the Korban Pesach.

The Brit Milah has three mitzvot: the actual milah, the priah, and hatafat dam. The actual milah brings completion to the body, like the Midrash says 'When a fig ripens, the only waste is the little stem connecting it to the tree, in the same way that the wound of the brit is

all that remains.' The priah brings about the completion of the mind, as the word mean 'to uncover': in the same way as the mind uncovers the unknown. The hatafat dam is the completion of the nefesh, 'For the blood is the nefesh'.

The Korban Pesach, as the Tzelem Elokim, unites nefesh, body, and mind. That is why the mitzvah of Pesach is fulfilled by taking a lamb for each family, and it is as though the whole of Israel fulfilled it with one lamb. All the commentators saw in the fact that the lamb had to be whole- head, body and feet intact- a sign of the unity of all Israel.

Together, with their avoidance of sin, as shown by the four merits which Israel had, they now two mitzvot, to complete their rejection of the sins.

He urged them very much, so they turned toward him and came to his house; he made a feast for them and he baked Matzos and they ate. (Breishis 19:3)

Its Day in the Sun

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

He baked Matzos: It was Pesach. (Rashi)

Why was Lot serving Matzos to his guests four hundred and one years before the event of the exodus from Egypt? What significance could Matzah have before then?

We say at the Pesach Seder that Matzah reminds us that we left Egypt in such a hurry that the dough that baked on our backs didn't have a chance to rise, yet four centuries earlier, before the commandment and the historical circumstances, Lot was compelled to make matzos for some perhaps mysterious reason we shall explore.

Almost 24 years ago, when the world was engulfed in the "Gulf War" and Israel was being fired upon by Iraq with scud missiles, many important safety issues were being debated. Gas masks were widely distributed but their effectiveness, it was found, would be compromised by facial hair.

Questions were directed to a certain awesome Talmud scholar (Reb Chaim) who was sitting in Bnei Brak, in the epicenter of the cyclone where the rockets red glare: "Do we shave off our beards to fit the masks?" I heard from my teachers that he gave the same seemingly cavalier answer to all that asked, "On Purim you'll wear your masks!"

The response registered as odd. Matters of life and death push away even Shabbos observance. Having a beard is not nearly as weighty as the holy Shabbos. Obviously the danger was not as significant or as imminent as was commonly perceived.

As things turned out, after months of bombing by the allied forces, a four-day ground war started as many as the days before Purim. The announcement was made of the Iraqi concession on the Fast of Esther, the day immediately preceding Purim. That day people began to dismantle their sealed rooms.

That night was Purim and Jews filled the streets to celebrate after the reading of the Megilla, which talks about the amazing salvation of the Jewish people through the avenue of hidden miracles. People did not have a chance nor were their minds focused upon buying handsome new costumes or masks for the festive day.

By default, the costume of choice that was most on display and that was worn with a sense of joyous relief was none other than the ubiquitous gas mask. Those words of the Tzadik now had the ring of profound truth and deep insight, "On Purim you'll wear your masks!" Imagine for a moment please, that in order to preserve the memory of that great day of salvation a new Jewish holiday would have been declared commemorating the end of the war. To honor the occasion it is decided that we are to put on gas masks and dance in the streets as had occurred, and this becomes a new custom of Jewish celebration.

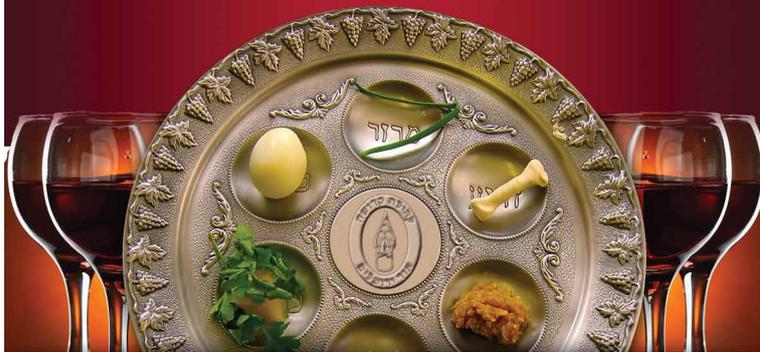
After the fact a few scholars who have had their finger on the pulse of Jewish History do a little anthropological survey and discover that for thousands of years Jews have had the custom to wear costumes and masks on this day in particular. How odd that the theme of the mask would intersect the same day for apparently independent reasons or

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Moshe Simon

פסח שיצוינים



The Week Ahead

ערב פסח

Shacharis (Followed by Siyum)	6.45am / 8.00am
Eat Chometz until	10.29am
Burn Chometz until	11.51am
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos & Y.T.	7.25pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.25pm
Nacht	8.24pm
Chatzos	1.13am

יום א פסח

Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha followed by a Shiur by Rabbi Daniel Rowe	7.25pm

ליל ב פסח

Maariv	8.33pm
Candle Lighting	No Earlier than 8.33pm

יום ב פסח

Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha followed by a Shiur by Rabbi Mordechai Steinberg	7.25pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	8.35pm

חול המועד

1st Shacharis	7.00am
2nd Shacharis	8.30am
3rd Shacharis (Shiur Room)	9.30am
Mincha & Maariv	7.35pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

ליל ז פסח

Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov	6.50pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 7.00pm

עירוב תבשילין

יום ז פסח

Shacharis	9.00am
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ליל ח פסח

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos & Y.T.	6.50pm
Candle Lighting	Between 7.01pm-7.05pm

יום ח פסח

Shacharis	9.00am
Mincha followed by Neilas HaChag (Seuda Shlishis)	7.25pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	8.47pm

אסרו חג

Shacharis	7.10am / 8.15am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

is there perhaps some deeper hidden meaning?

In much the same way, Matzah has significance on Pesach long before and long after the great event of the exodus. The readiness to move on with little and little notice when the signal is given, implied by that plain Matzah, retains a, not just symbolic, meaning each year. With that posture and attitude and menu we position ourselves every year since and it proved to be an exit visa for Lot and his daughters on that very same day centuries before.

There's something real about the stuff that comes alive with meaning on the Seder night. The Almighty baked into history and manipulates the universe so that the Mitzvah of Matzah can enter the big play and in its quiet yet crunchy way have its day in the sun.