



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד"בסח תשפ"ד - 15th April 2024 - Volume 16 - Issue 42

News This Week

Good Yom Tov!

The Rov & Rebbetzen would like to wish the entire Kehilla a **חג כשר ושמח**.

מזל טוב

Mazel tov to Dean and Susan Kaye on the birth of a granddaughter to Oshi and Chaya Kaye

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following for their upcoming Yahrzeit

- 1st day Yom Tov - Sharon Sebbag for her father
- Thurs Chol Hamoed - Joy Berkovitz for her mother
- Fri Chol Hamoed - Michael Brandeis for his father
- Shabbos Chol Hamoed - Laurence Ross for his mother
- Acharon Shel Pesach - Yitzchok Douek for his father
- Acharon Shel Pesach - Miles Levine for his mother
- Thurs, 24th Nissan - Michael and Ann Wilks for their son
- Fri, 25th Nissan - Chizky Salomon for his father
- Fri, 25th Nissan - Suri Treuhaft for her father

Speakers Over Yom Tov

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

Pesach Learning Programme

There will be a learning program over Pesach, learning Sugyos relevant to Pesach. Further details inside.

A Project Like No Other

Dani Epstein

I'm very nervous, approaching him like this. Me, a young girl, offering an idea to the chief architect of the Mishkon? My parents, however, had urged me to do this for several days now. Just this morning the first thing my mother said to me was: "You are such an inventor, you have such a clever head! It's what they need right now. I will go with you, or your father can." To be honest, I did not want to be humiliated in front of my parents, so I picked up the courage to go by myself, and here I am now. Bezalel has built a small industrial town here near the centre of the camp. There are so many skills required to build the Mishkon, with so many artisans working on the project that they and their tents occupy a large area and have actual streets and alleyways. Each group of workers have their own district. The largest one by far is the carpenter's quarter, with their large trestles and sawhorses, sawdust everywhere and all manner of carving, scraping and smoothing tools. One of the smallest is the goldsmith's quarter, which is where I was told Bezalel would be found. He is in fact just ahead of me, wiping his hands on a rag. It looks like a casting has just been completed because his face and clothing is covered in soot and greasy stains, the byproduct of pouring molten metal into oiled moulds. I'm just too shy and embarrassed to go over to him and show him my idea. Bezalel is such a genius, with skills ranging right across the board, there is a good chance he thought of my idea ages ago and rejected it. Everyone knows how he can turn his hand

to almost anything, it seems ridiculous that someone my age has anything to offer this master of all trades. I desperately want to please my parents, but this just seems so silly and improbable.

Oh dear, he's just dropped the rag and is coming over. I feel like I want the ground to swallow me up.

He stands in front of me, still wiping his hands on the shmatte, and beams a wide smile at me.

"Hallo. What do we have here?"

I am so tongue tied that I simply hold up the small bag I am clutching and stammer out an incoherent sentence; I am in such awe of this man that my brain has probably shut down. I'm not sure if I am breathing.

He obviously sees my predicament and gently takes the bag from my hand and peers inside.

"Why don't you take this out and show it to me?" He says, handing it back.

With shaking hands, I pull out the collection of sticks and threads I had assembled, although right now it looked like a jumble of really poor knitting.

"Here, put it on this table," says Bezalel, waving his hands to where I should place it.

I calm down a little as I arrange the sticks and threads into some semblance of order, and hesitantly begin to explain.

"If you use several sticks together like this while threading with this stick here, you can get this sort of pattern into cloth," I say as I demonstrate my concept, feeling rather overwhelmed.

"I only have these sticks, but with something better you can make the cloth that has this box-like shape; I'm sorry, my parents thought this might be useful, I really don't want to waste your time." The words just rush out one after another like a mountain stream, I'm not sure I can even remember what I just said.

Bezalel bends over the table to get a better look.

"Hmm. Now that is quite interesting." He pokes around a little, moving the sticks and threads to get a better idea of what I'm trying to describe.

"Weave a little more for me."

My hands shake as I show him the technique. I try to pull the threads tighter together, but the crude setup I created out of scraped twigs and my shaking hands don't seem to help that much.

"Ah! I get it!" Bezalel exclaims. "This is some kind of box weave. Oh, that is clever. Very, very clever."

With that remark he sweeps my sticks and threads back into the bag and says: "Come with me. There is someone who is going to want to see this."

For a moment I was frozen to the spot. Bezalel – the genius Bezalel – thinks I have a clever idea. Even Moshe himself isn't as skilled and brilliant a craftsman as Bezalel, and he complimented my idea!

I scurry after him and soon we arrive in the weaver's quarter. There are looms everywhere, but nothing that I had ever seen before. My mother has a weaving loom, as do many women, but not quite like these. The wood they are made of is so straight and smooth, polished and I presume oiled. The craftsmanship of these machines is breathtaking in and of itself, but the rich colours and designs that are taking shape on them are incredible. I have never

seen purple or scarlet up close, because they are so expensive and rare, whereas here it seems these threads feature everywhere. There must be more purple and scarlet in this one area than the rest of the world has combined.

Following closely behind the master himself, we approach a woman who is setting up a huge loom. She is standing on a small ladder to reach the top cross beam. When she hears us approach, she climbs down and walks over to us.

Before she gets a chance to say anything, Betzalel says: "Look at what this young lady has brought!" I smile as I hear him call me a "young lady". I'm just fourteen.

Betzalel opens the bag and places my weaving arrangement on a nearby table.

"Have you ever seen a box-weave like this before? Look how the depth is accentuated by the overlapped edges. What is your name?" He asks as he turns to me.

"Chana," I reply.

"Ah, Hashem's wisdom has rested on you." He chuckles at his own joke, and the woman laughs as well.

"My name is Yehudis, why don't you show me what you have." Betzalel is not really able to reassemble the shamble my concept had become, so I rearrange everything as neatly as I can manage.

Yehudis glances over my work, then frowns, and moves a few things around a little. Then she smiles broadly and turns to me.

"Have you learned how to weave yet?"

"Well, yes, but we have a simple loom at home. I was thinking whilst I was weaving that by adding these crossbars here and here, and pulling up and over as the next line is threaded through, then the cloth begins to get some depth and makes this box-like pattern. I'm sorry this is such a mess, but I..."

Before I got a chance to finish, Betzalel cuts in.

"You need proper tools, this is useless. In fact, you need a loom built specially to do this work."

"Chana needs a loom we simply do not have," says Yehudis. She points a finger at Betzalel. "You are going to build one for her. I've never seen anything like this before, so you are going to have to do some pretty creative thinking."

"Then build one we shall. Chana, you sit here and wait a bit. I need to get some more people here. Have some refreshments or something."

To my utter embarrassment he comes back a few minutes later with some cakes and a pitcher of wine on a tray, sets it down on the table and hurries off.

Yehudis smiles at me.

"You, young lady, are about to have your life changed. It has been a while since I have seen the master so excited by a new idea. Oh, by the way – do not address him as 'Master'; it annoys him. He says everyone here is a master of their trade, blessed by Hashem. Simply call him Betzalel."

I was not surprised; from the moment Betzalel shot into fame as the architect of the Mishkon the stories of his humility and good nature spread like wildfire. Even my father who is not one for fireside stories was recounting the latest shmooze he had heard in the market about Betzalel, his extraordinary gifts and how patient, kind and friendly he was.

Whilst I waited for Betzalel to return, my eyes roamed over the spread of fabulously expensive materials that were so casually lying around. Yehudis caught me looking longingly at the richly woven cloths and laughed.

"Do you want to handle them?"

"Oh please, yes, I've never seen anything like this before."

"Well, this is purple," she said, handing me a bolt of cloth that could probably buy a palace.

"It's so incredibly soft and thin," I whisper, in utter awe of the material. The thread count must be in the upper hundreds if not thousands, and the cloth is so fine it is translucent. I hold it up to the sun to peer through the weave, it's almost transparent.

"What on earth is this? Surely it can't be wool," I ask in wonder.

"Actually, that is exactly what it is, but not sheep's wool," replies Yehudis. "This is antelope hair and almost impossible to get hold of. It is the finest of all animal wools. That bolt of cloth you are holding required almost a hundred and fifty animals. It is so fine it absorbs very little dye, so even though it is dyed purple, the dye is far less costly than the cloth."

Her eyes twinkled as she continued.

"If you had this cloth as your dowry, you could pick any young man you wanted as a husband."

I laughed, and carefully set the cloth back down whilst holding my breath.

"Have you ever seen this before?" Yehudis asks me, as she hands me another bolt of cloth. Whilst it is very fine, it is not quite as soft and translucent as the antelope wool, but it has a sparkle and shimmer I had never seen before. It is almost magical.

"This is called silk, and it is made from a caterpillar, of all things." She saw the confused look on my face and smiled.

"Not the insect itself, but the thread it produces. We don't make the thread ourselves; we just weave it. The thread comes from far away in the East, we bought it from some Phoenician traders. It's the second most expensive cloth we have, after the antelope cloth."

A group of men have just turned up, accompanied by Betzalel.

"These lovely fellows," he says as gestures towards them. "They are going to build a loom for you. You just have to tell them what you require".

"I'm not really sure what I need. I have never done anything like this before," I replied.

"Oh, you certainly do. You have a rare talent, and Hashem will fill in whatever gaps you have. Just focus on your idea, and it will come to you. It's happened to everyone here, so it will happen to you too."

If this was supposed to somehow boost my confidence, it failed miserably. I'm so nervous about working with these great people, me – just a young girl! How is Hashem going to speak to me? I'm absolutely terrified.

I'm just going to have to do my best. I take a deep breath and walk everyone over to the table where my makeshift idea is resting.

"OK. So, we need some way to support these two shafts here and here, so the shuttle can pass between them at an angle like this." I wave my hands around a little.

All of a sudden, an idea just pops into my head.

"In fact, if we can have pedals that allow the beams to move up and down, and tie them together with some rope over here, then we can change the tension on the fly in the warp..."

I'm not even sure if I understand half of what I'm saying, but my brain is on fire. The words just tumble out of my mouth almost as if I have no control. The carpenters are all frowning in concentration as they listen to the torrent of my ideas and explanations. My nervousness simply evaporates.

Out of the corner of my eye I see Yehudis smiling broadly.

It has been some time now, and I finally come to a stop. I cannot believe how seriously they are all taking me. They make some suggestions, discuss the fabrication between themselves and then one of them turns to me.

"Give us a few days, and we will have this ready for you to try out. We will work out the problems as we go along. Is there any particular wood you want us to use, or should we select some ourselves?"

"I need hardwood for the frames and bracings, preferably Acacia, but the shuttle and rollers can be a softwood or a white Cedar, as long as they are very smooth," I reply – and then almost jump back in shock. Where did that come from? Since when do I know anything about wood, other than for cooking fuel?

The others see the confusion on my face and chuckle.

"Like I said, Hashem will give you what you need" Betzalel laughs.

"It looks like I'm a spare wheel, so I'm off. I have some more casting to deal with. Lads, it's all yours." With a casual wave he saunters off,

and the carpenters leave as well. It's all rather informal, but there is a certain tension in the air, a serious note; everyone knows that the work they are doing here is so incredibly important and holy, and that Betzalel is no simple craftsman. Even our Teacher Moshe backed down when Betzalel argued with him.

Yehudis comes over to me and places her arm around my shoulders.

"Now do you understand? Hashem is filling you with knowledge that only you will have; you will end up teaching the rest of us, because you were chosen as His weaver for this task."

She took me over to the table filled with the bolts of cloth.

"You have to learn the nature of each of the cloths and threads, which I cannot help you with. Just be careful with everything. The cloth on this table is worth more than the table would be worth if it was made out of solid gold."

My eyes almost popped out of my head. I later learned that she was not exaggerating. The techeiles dye of which have used so much comes from far away, and is almost impossible to get hold of in small quantities. One bolt of cloth uses a cup full of dye, which is worth many gold shekolim. The antelope wool is shorn from the underbelly of the animal, and carded using a secret technique. A shekel's weight of thread costs roughly twelve gold shekolim.

It's a few days later, and I have been spending my time hanging around the weavers quarter, asking a million and one questions. Almost everyone has been looking at me a strange way, and I know it's not because I forgot to brush my teeth or anything.

I can hear Yehudis calling me. I scurry round some tents down an alleyway and come to Yehudis's workshop. Standing in the middle of the floor is a shiny new loom. A very complicated looking shiny new loom. All the wood has been scraped and sanded smooth, then lovingly oiled to a shiny finish. The beams and frame are made of very hard Acacia, Lebanese Oak for the shuttle, pedals and rollers. How do I even know this?! It is a sculpture, a work of art, not a machine. Even the stone back-weights have been polished and carved.

Yehudis sweeps her arm grandly in the direction of this incredible machine.

"It's all yours, my dear. Here is some fine wool thread for you to start experimenting with...oh."

Something has compelled me to grab a cone of linen thread, so fine that a drawn thread is almost invisible. I start threading the loom as if possessed. Yehudis just stands there watching as I furiously throw the thread around, looping it up and down and in and out of slots, holes and across rollers and pins as if I have been doing this all my life.

It's taking me some time, but finally I have all the thread where I want it, and start fiddling with the pedals, hooks and shuttle. Within a few passes I begin to feel the loom and all its moving parts with my fingers and feet. I'm working like a machine, and before me I see the cloth starting to appear, with this incredible pattern of box-like indentations. I don't know how much time has passed before I feel a hand on my shoulder. I turn to see Yehudis.

"I think you need to stop for a moment. Have a break, a short rest, then continue." At the entrance of the tent, there are people staring in as if there is a mythical creature trapped in a cage or something.

I turn back to look at Yehudis.

"Um, did I do something wrong?" I ask nervously.

She throws back her head and laughs.

"My dear, you have been filled with wisdom by Hashem. You are the only person who has any idea how to do this weave. Other than scaring me by taking several dozen gold shekolim's worth of Mesopotamian linen, no, you have done nothing wrong."

Yehudis turns to the weavers in the doorway.

"Come in, look at this."

They crowd around the loom, and carefully examine the cloth I just wove, feeling and stretching it slightly. Their eyes are wide open in wonder.

"How does this even work?" One of them asks. "How do you weave this? How is this loom operated?" They ask me many questions which I struggle to answer. I know how to use the loom, I just don't know how to explain it.

I'm confused and shy all at the same time. I actually have no idea how the loom works because it does not resemble anything I showed Betzalel or the carpenters, who had added numerous tweaks and features to my initial concept. I don't know how I got it to work – it just somehow all fell into place.

All of a sudden the room quietens, because the master himself has returned. Every time I have seen him, his eyes are twinkling and he's in a good mood, quick to grin at anything or nothing. Despite the camaraderie, everyone is in awe of him.

"So, what do we have here?" Betzalel asks, as he surveys the loom. His eyes widen as he sees the first few tefachim of cloth I have woven. He turns to look at me.

"You wove this? How? You just received the loom!"

"I, I – don't know." I'm stammering because I'm just as confused as everyone, and really nervous having discovered just how much my little "experiment" cost.

"Well, that settles it. I'm going to bring Moshe in." He points at me.

"You, wait here." And with that, he marches off.

Yehudis comes over to me. No doubt she saw my face pale at the thought of meeting Moshe, our holy Novi of Hashem. My knees weaken and I almost fall to the floor.

"Why don't you sit down here," says Yehudis, as she pulls over a stool. "Our Teacher Moshe has been here many times. Don't be nervous."

That's easy for her to say, but I feel like I'm going to faint.

It's not long before a hubbub approaches the tent, and the tent flap opens. I jump to my feet.

Our Teacher Moshe is a very tall, striking and powerful-looking man. His eyes are piercing, his visage noble, and despite this he does not look stern and forbidding, somehow.

"I hear we have something quite special here," he says. I'm doing my best not to faint, and Yehudis is propping me up by holding onto one of my arms.

"Rebi, please look at this cloth," says Betzalel, as they both walk over to the loom – my loom!

"Hmm, this is exactly what we need for Aharon's tunic," says Moshe. He turns to me.

"You, young lady, are going to weave some of my brother's Bigdei Kehuna. I was struggling to explain to Betzalel what Hashem showed me, and this is exactly what I saw."

This time it was my eyes that widened in amazement. Here I have gone from being a slightly annoying little sister to weaving some of the most important cloth of this tremendous project the whole nation has gotten involved in!

Moshe then proceeded to give me some instructions as to the basic requirements of the tunic and the other clothing such as the ephod I would be working on. I struggle to overcome my fear and awe, and ask him a couple of technical questions.

"My dear," replied Moshe. "I am not going to tell you what to do. Hashem has selected you to do this work, and He will fill your heart with the perfect knowledge how to undertake this work. All the decisions are yours to make, and yours only. Otherwise people might complain that I am trying to elevate my brother over everyone else."

I cannot help myself, I am incurably curious, so I ask.

"Would people really suspect you of being so crass?"

To my amazement, Moshe – our holy master and teacher – threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"You would be amazed at what people accuse me of. It's part and parcel of being a leader of such a vast group of particularly intelligent people. That, young lady, is why I cook my own dinners. Now, I'm not going to hold you up any longer."

He was about to leave, but then turned back to me with a twinkle in his eyes.

"I think you might want to run back to your parents first, though, and let them know what you are doing. In fact, bring them over and let them see for themselves. They deserve the nachas after all."

With that he swept out of the room with his small entourage of close talmidim following him. I was truly stunned. Our Master Moshe is the most powerful man alive. He conquered Mitzrayim and split the sea with the powers Hashem gave him, he brought the luchos down from Har Sinai, and here is worried about my parents! Every single person is important to him, despite the camp having a population of millions. They say this is because he once was a devoted shepherd, taking care of each individual sheep. I find it hard to believe that this great man was once a shepherd, but there you have it.

My heart almost burst with joy. What a day this has been!

It's a new day, and Betzalel has brought me Aharon the Kohen Gadol's measurements, so I set to work. On a fresh cloth laid out on a table near my loom is the finest gossamer-like linen thread, dyed with techeiles; it almost glows. Yehudis tells me that this linen thread is only made in a small village somewhere I have never heard of, and they only make a very small amount each year since it takes so long to produce, and they guard their secrets jealously. It seems that traders from all over the world are coming to our vast encampment with some of the rarest and most exotic materials that can be obtained.

Money does not seem to be an issue. People have donated generously, and the treasure we took from Egypt as well as the loot we found by the sea has come into good use. Apparently people were going overboard and messengers had to be sent around to beg everyone to stop donating.

It's taking me hours to set up the loom, so I will start again tomorrow. I woke up early this morning, excited to finally start weaving. As soon as I sit down by the loom, my mind somehow explodes with ideas. The entire tunic has to be woven in one piece, which makes it really difficult to weave, since the neck opening cannot be cut and sewn. Despite this, an image forms in my mind, and soon I am lost in the clacking of the loom, the whooshing of the shuttle, pressing the pedals and pulling on ropes and levers.

It's only when the tent starts to darken do I realise that I have spent the entire day working non-stop. Almost half the tunic has been completed, and the cloth shimmers blue on the loom. Yehudis comes into the tent and stares in awe for a few minutes, then recovers herself and shoos me out home. She's not the only one who is amazed. I feel like I have been doing this forever, and yet this is my first day on the job.

A new day has dawned, and after several hours the tunic is complete. The pressure is on to start on the next item – the ephod, but before that happens a rather prosaic matter has to be dealt with. Betzalel inspects my work closely as I cut off a few stray threads with a sharp knife, then we both spin around when we hear someone coughing to get our attention.

Once again, I almost faint. It is Aharon himself! Moshe's brother! He has come to fit the tunic.

I leave the tent so that he can try it on, and when Betzalel calls me, I go inside.

"Well, young lady," says Aharon. "This is a very skilled piece of work indeed. It fits like a glove. You are truly inspired by Hashem." And indeed, he looked resplendent in the pure techeiles linen tunic that falls to his ankles, the box weave making the cloth shimmer in the sunlight pouring through the tent's open doorway.

On the table are golden bells, which will be attached at some point by a skilled seamstress.

Before I can start on the ephod, Yehudis and Betzalel show me thread it is going to be woven from.

"You will have to be very careful with this thread," says Betzalel, as he holds a skein of multi-coloured wool. Like the tunic, it is incredibly fine, but there are strands of scarlet, purple and – goodness – is that actual gold?

"It took us ages to figure out how to make the gold wire so thin, and

then spin this all together. You will also have to figure out how to make pomegranates for the ephod with this. Do be careful – there are thousands of hours invested in that thread."

When he sees my jaw drop, he chuckles.

"Don't worry. We can always make some more, now that we know how to make it. Use as much as you need. You will have to experiment a little with this as well, so just use whatever it takes."

The next few days are a blur, and after the fifth day at the loom, Yehudis stops me outside my tent looking rather concerned.

"Young lady, you are working from sunup to sundown. You need a break. Take the day off for today, and tomorrow you can continue."

She has a stern look on her face, so I don't argue, and a little disappointed I wander off into another of the artisan's quarters in the hope of finding something of interest to me.

Without realising it, I was back in the goldsmiths quarter where I had originally wandered into to show my idea. Everyone I speak to is very friendly and polite to me, so I watch them closely and ask many questions.

There is a panel of wood on a pair of trestles, with a couple of artisans hammering a sheet of gold onto it. They notice me watching them, and wave me over.

"Why are you beating the gold on wood?" I ask.

"We're shaping it on pitch. Look, there is a layer of pitch between the wood and the gold, which is hard enough to resist the hammering to a degree, but soft enough we can shape the metal using these tools."

There are cutoffs of gold in boxes everywhere. Snips of sheet, vast quantities of wire in different sizes, even very heavy gold tubing and rods.

"Just how much gold is here?" I ask in wonder. "What happens with all these scraps?"

"Oh, I'm not certain how much gold we have here, but probably more than 10,000 shekolim," answers one of the men. "We have scrapped a lot of material, as well as this lot. It's gets refined again and then cast into ingots. Go down the street, there is a workshop there you can see them melting the stuff."

In less than a hundred amos I arrive at one of the foundries. There are pits in the ground lined with bricks, with large ceramic pots in them and flames shooting out of the sides. The pots have very thick walls, and inside each one is swirling and glowing molten metal.

"What is this going to be made into?" I ask.

"Watch now," says one of the artisans. "This is a mould to make a jug that will be used for nesochim." He points at a wooden box filled with oily-looking sand. Another man comes over with a huge pair of tongs and carefully lifts out the pot and pours the molten metal into the mould. This involves a lot of smoke and flames, which I find quite surprising.

I wait a while whilst the metal starts to cool and harden, and watch as they carefully pour water all over the speed the process up; clouds of steam pour off furiously. Finally, the break the mould open and inside is a rather ugly and lumpy-looking jug, and I observe that out loud.

The artisans laugh. "This is what every casting looks like. This is only the beginning; the heat makes the surface of the metal ugly, and the sand leaves the esrog-peel finish on the surface."

They tell me to go over to one of the tents there to see them shaping the final product. The freshly cast jug is placed on a block of wood, as it is quite heavy. Then they take wooden strips, dip them in a muddy sandy mixture and start rubbing it over the surface. Slowly, the dull ugly surface starts to disappear, and a rough gold surface is exposed.

"How does it become shiny, if it looks like this now?" I ask.

"Watch closely," one of the men answers, as he picks up a small iron hammer. Very carefully, with light taps, he starts working the surface. His skill is evident, since the surface is not being dented, but compressed into tiny indentations, which in turn smooths the surface. As he works his way around the jug in carefully measured

loops, I can see the shine starting to appear. The hammerwork is creating a polished and scintillating surface.

"Have you been into the Beis Hamedrash?" He asks.

"Of course," I say. "Many times."

"Did you learn about makeh b'patish?"

"Sure. It's a finishing process; forbidden on Shabbos."

"Well, what you are watching now is exactly that. This is what our Teacher Moshe was talking about when he spoke of makeh b'patish. This finely hammered surface is the process of makeh b'patish, since it's the last stage of making these jugs by hammering the surface into a shiny finish."

I'm officially blown away; it all clicks now. Everything we are doing here defines the melochos of Shabbos. Even my weaving!

"Ah, there you are," says Yehudis, who has suddenly appeared. "I was looking for you and guessed you would be drawn to the gold. I need your help."

I am elated by this. Here I am, a little girl, and one of our master weavers needs my help, and all of this is for our greatest project, the Mishkon. It looks like I will be busy for a while, so I'm going to end here. We might meet again, who knows?

On That Day

Rabbi J Rubinstein

The Dubna Maggid used to illustrate a very important explanation of the Vilna Gaon, with the following parable. Two kings were about to go to war over disputed territory, when they decided that rather than expend all their resources on a prolonged war, they would settle the dispute by a different method. Each king would chose his strongest warrior, and they would have a wrestling match, with each one trying to throw the other in to a pit. Whichever king's warrior won, that would decide that his king would gain the territory. The contest began with the two kings and their populaces watching with bated breath. After some time it appeared that one of the contestants was about to throw his adversary in to the pit. But at the very last moment, the apparent loser did a complicated wrestling trick and threw his opponent in to the pit. The winner's king received the disputed territory. The victorious king thanked his warrior profusely, but he also had a serious complaint. "Since you are such a skilful warrior why did you give me a fright, and make me think up to the very last moment that I had lost? That fright was very harmful to me!

With this tale the Maggid explained the answer of the Vilna Gaon to a famous question. In the Chumash (Shmos Chap. 11 Verse 2) it says Hashem told Moshe "Please speak in the ears of the Jewish people and (when they go out) they should ask each man from his (Egyptian) friend and each woman from her friend silver vessels and golden vessels" Rashi comments, Hashem emphasised this request with the use of the word please, so that Abraham would not complain, Hashem fulfilled his promise, "They will enslave them and afflict them", (Braishies 15,13) but the conclusion of the promise, "And after that they will go out with great wealth" he did not fulfil. The problem is obvious, if Hashem made a promise, he will certainly keep it entirely, irrespective of whether or not Abraham would complain? The Vilna Gaon solves this difficulty by stating, the real salvation of the Jewish people only took place seven days after they left Egypt, with the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. At that time, the Jewish people immediately received the riches which the Egyptians had taken with them, which far exceeded the wealth the Jews had asked from them when they left Egypt. The only problem was, in the meantime Abraham would think the salvation had taken place, but the divine promise had not been totally fulfilled. This would cause a sharp though temporary complaint from Abraham (presumably because of his concern for the Jewish people). Hence the analogy in the parable of the Dubno Maggid to the temporary pain of the victorious King. It was in order to avoid this happening, that Hashem said, "please speak in the ears of the Jewish people so that Abraham etc."

The Ibn Ezra actually says this concisely, he comments, as long as the Egyptians were alive, the Jewish people were still afraid the powerful Egyptians would come chasing after them, to take them

back as slaves. That is why it says about the splitting of the Red Sea, ויִשַׁע ה' בְּיוֹם הַהוּא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם - "And Hashem saved **on that day**, Israel from the hands of the Egyptians" The events of the Red Sea were necessary, for the salvation of the Jewish people to be really complete, and it was only then the people were inspired to sing the Shiroh. This is what we celebrate on the Yomtov of the seventh day of Pesach.

The Marshmallows of the Future Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And it will come to pass if your son asks you tomorrow, saying, "What is this?" you shall say to him, "With a mighty hand did HASHEM our G-d take us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (Shemos 13:14)

if your son asks you in the future: The Hebrew word "machar" sometimes means "now" and sometimes means in the future. – Rashi

If your son asks you tomorrow, saying, "What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances, which HASHEM our G-d has commanded you?" (Devarim 6:20)

If your son asks you tomorrow: There is a "machar"- "tomorrow" that means in the future –Rashi

Here we have the source for two of the four sons spoken about at the Pesach Seder. It's the simple one who asks, "What is this?" and the wise one that asks "What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances, which the HASHEM our G-d has commanded you?" From a subtle verbal cue, the father has to determine which medicine to administer to which son. Curiously both are introduced in the Torah with a phrase, "If or when your child asks you tomorrow...". In each situation Rashi tells us something different about that word "tomorrow". In one place, by the simple son, he says that tomorrow can sometimes mean literally tomorrow, immediately after today and sometimes it means in the far future. By the wise son Rashi just offers the second meaning of tomorrow that it refers to the distant future. Why does Rashi give two differing definitions for the very same word?

The Talmud tells us that one of the key-identifying signs of a wise person is their ability to see and anticipate the future. The Sefer Cheshbon HaNefesh writes that the nature of the animal aspect of the human soul is to be absorbed only in the present. He sees what he wants and forgets about everything and everybody else. On the other hand, the G-dly soul is transcendent and can factor in to his decisions the past and the future beyond his lifetime.

There was a famous psychological experiment that was done many decades ago that revealed dramatic and telling results. It was famously titled the "Marshmallow Experiment". The basic gist was that children were offered the option of having a marshmallow now or more later. All of the children made one of those two choices and were written into the category of either the "marshmallow now" or "marshmallows later" group. The children were followed throughout their lifetimes until adulthood and those who were able to defer gratification and preferred the "marshmallows later" achieved disproportionately more than the other group. As a principal, whenever I would interview children for entry into school, I would always ask the child if they would like a candy now or two later when we are done. I never used it as the basis of acceptance but their answer told me something about their nature.

When talking to young people I would often employ the following powerful rhetorical device because it opens up a different part of their mind. I would say something like this, "I am not speaking to you now as you are sitting here today. Rather I am speaking to you twenty and forty years from now when you will be sitting around the Pesach Seder with your wife and your children and grandchildren. Then you will know how your parents and grandparents feel about you and you will begin to understand how much HASHEM loves us. You may remember that an old man with a white beard told you it would be so and how right he was."

History meets destiny at the Pesach Seder. The past intersects and dances with the future. The farther one can see into the past, the farther they can see into the future. The wise son wants to

know about all the types of laws that were gifted through his father and to the Jewish People at Mt. Sinai. He is asking about the past. His tomorrow is a tomorrow of the future. The simple son is asking about the present, "What is this", in front of him. He may miss the grand sweep of history and drown in the cultural currents of the present. His tomorrow may only be about what he is doing the next day. We need to help him to focus on the marshmallows of the future.

On All Other Nights We Eat Chametz and Matzah

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

The first of the four Mah Nishtana questions is "...on all other nights we eat chametz or matzah, tonight only matzah". Most of us have been saying this since we were five years old. Maybe when we were five, we did not pause to notice the following very glaring inference:

The traditional way to translate "she'bechol haleilos anu ochloim chametz u'matzah" is that on all other nights we can eat either Chametz or Matzah. In truth, that is not what the questions says. Literally, the question states that every night of the year, we eat chametz and matzah. Now in fact, rarely, at any given meal, do we eat both chametz and matzah together. So, it seems that it would have been more appropriate to phrase this question differently. In fact, it is not necessary to go very far to come up with a more apt way of expressing this "either/or" dichotomy between chametz and matzah. The fourth question states "...on all other nights we are seated bein yoshvin u'bein mesubin (whether sitting or reclining) tonight we are all reclining." If the author of the Hagaddah is smart enough to figure out how to contrast two alternative scenarios with the expression "bein yoshvin u'bein mesubin" why did he not utilize a similar formula and say "shebechol haleilos anu ochlim bein chametz u'bein matzah," which would mean "either/or"?

The Binyon Ariel was the Rav in Amsterdam. He says that the first question is indeed precisely articulated as stated that "on all other occasions we eat chametz and matzah together". How so? The Binyon Ariel explains something unique about the Korban Todah (Thanksgiving Offering), which is in our parsha. The Korban Todah is a very unique offering. Not only do you bring an animal offering on the Mizbayach (Altar), but together with the Korban Todah, the person needs to bring "Lachmei Todah" (breads of the Thanksgiving Offering). Lachmei Todah are very peculiar because they include both leavened and unleavened loaves!

The Binyon Ariel explains that the first question in the Hagaddah (based on the Mishna in Arvei Pesachim) is referring to the fact that normally when we bring a Korban Todah, we do so with chametz and with matzah together. This question is not referring to what we eat on Seder night in our time. This question is referring to the Korban Pesach, which is very similar to a Korban Todah. Unlike the normal Korban Shlamim which may be eaten for two days and one night, the Korban Todah is only eaten for one day and the following night (i.e. – it must be consumed by the following morning). A Korban Pesach is like that as well. Furthermore, just like a Korban Todah needs to be accompanied with bread, so too a Korban Pesach needs to be accompanied by bread ("It shall be eaten upon matzah and marror" (Shemos 12:8).

The author of the Hagaddah is asking why on this night are we bringing this unique kind of Thanksgiving Offering that is eaten only with unleavened bread and not also with leavened bread? This is how the Binyon Ariel interprets the first question of the Mah Nishtana.

Rabbi Buchspan from Miami Florida wanted to explain the symbolism of the fact that the regular Korban Todah includes both chametz and matzah and the Korban Pesach only includes matzah.

Rabbi Buchspan quotes an interesting insight from Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch in Sefer VaYikra on the parsha of Korban Todah. Rav Hirsch writes that matzah represents nature in its crudest

form, before human involvement and innovation. What is matzah? Flour and water. It does not get more basic than that. There is very little human innovation. You put the flour in the water, you bake it, v'nomar amen.

On the other hand, chametz is an example of man's manipulation of the natural elements, where human ingenuity yields a far more advanced and sophisticated product than the original ingredients. When you take flour and water and you add yeast and other ingredients, then instead of getting a thin little matzah that sometimes tastes not much better than cardboard, you get a geshmak challah that is a symbol of human involvement and the human ability to make something so much superior to a basic nature-based product.

Rabbi Buchspan writes that when the four individuals who are required to offer a Korban Todah (those who travel across a desert, those who travel across the sea, the seriously ill who are healed, and those who are freed from imprisonment – Brochos 54b) bring their Thanksgiving Offering, they acknowledge that there were two elements that saved them. Number one, the Hand of G-d saved them, with minimal if any human involvement. That is symbolized by the matzah. But whenever a person is saved in any one of these situations, there is also human involvement. When a person is sick and he needs an operation, it is not the doctor or the surgeon that heals, it is the Ribono shel Olam that heals. But on the other hand, healing requires hishtadlus (human effort). You need to find the right doctor. You need to go to the doctor. You need to make decisions regarding your care and follow the recommended medical protocol. A person's healing certainly requires personal involvement as well as that of the Almighty. We are not Christian Scientists who claim "The Almighty made me sick. He will make me well." We do great hishtadlus in seeking competent medical treatment, which is a very legitimate thing to do.

Likewise, if a person is crossing a desert or travelling on the high seas, he needs to make effort on his own to return to civilization. He cannot just rely on the Ribono shel Olam to miraculously pluck him from his dangerous situation. If a person is on a sinking ship, he needs to get into the life boat. He cannot say "If G-d wants to save me, He will save me miraculously." So the four individuals who need to offer thanks must all offer a dual acknowledgement – an acknowledgement of the Yad Hashem, symbolized by the matzah (which is lacking in human involvement) and an acknowledgement of his own successful effort to return safely home or to regain his health, symbolized by the chametz (which requires human involvement).

However, the Korban Pesach is different. This is the miracle of the Ribono shel Olam acting on His Own. "You shall not leave the door of your house until morning" (Shemos 12:22). The Angel of Death was roaming the streets of Mitzrayim. What were the Jews supposed to do? They were commanded to do nothing, to act with total passivity. Everything will be taken care of by the Ribono shel Olam. That is why the Korban Pesach—which is a form of the Korban Todah, which normally involves human participation—was brought with only matzah, symbolizing the lack of human involvement in the deliverance from Mitzrayim.

Chagim U Zemanim

Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari (Torah.org)

'It was necessary to instruct them to take the Pascal Lamb 4 days before slaughtering it because Bnei Yisrael in Egypt were without mitzvot- even as it is written (Yechezkiel, 17:7) 'but you were naked and bare' -so

Hashem gave them 2 mitzvot to busy themselves with, the blood of korban pesach and the blood of milah' (Rashi quoting the Mechilta). Why was it necessary to mention milah that was only performed on that night? Why was it necessary for them to busy themselves with the care of the lamb for 4 days and insufficient for them only to visit it as is the case in Pesach dorot? Why was the commandment to take the lamb on the 10th given to Moshe on Rosh Chodesh, whereas the actual work and care connected with it only started

on the 10th?; [This would be correct according to Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel who taught that we should study the laws of Pesach 2 Shabbatot before Pesach but not according to the Chachamim who say that one asks and teaches the laws from a month before]. Understanding the essence of the two mitzvot, mila and korban pesach and their relationship to the redemption from Egypt will help to clarify our problem as well as how busying themselves specifically with those 2 would help them merit redemption as the Mechilta teaches.

The Zohar teaches us that when Israel said they remembered the food that they ate free of charge in Egypt, they were referring to free of mitzvot. Now we know that we were slaves to Pharaoh and one cannot serve 2 masters simultaneously so they were free of the yoke of Heaven; that is fear of Hashem like the fear of a king. Pharaoh's oppression of us weaned us from recognizing the Lordship of Hashem and that led us to idolatry, the serving of others in stead of Him. However, we were subject to a hard king, Pharaoh, who ruled over a hard people, Egypt, and they were immoral, led by their animal instincts and given over to unbridled lusts, so they brought about the subjection of Israel to desires and lust, in addition to the idolatry.

When Hashem wanted to redeem Israel He gave them the 2 mitzvot to busy themselves as counter-weights to both idolatry and immorality.

The korban Pesach that corresponds to worship through fear, since in bringing the korban a person is required to see himself as a servant of Hashem and take upon himself the yoke of Heaven. The Avnei Nezer taught that when we eat the Pesach, that is from on High we are showing that we are like the eved whose whole sustenance is dependent on his master (Yoreh Deah, Section 474, subsection 12). That mitzvah was the antidote to the substitution of idols for the Kingship of Hashem and rejection of the yoke of Heaven that they had been brought to by Pharaoh. The lamb was the god of Egypt and for them to eat its flesh was an abomination to the Egyptians. When they took the lambs on the 10th of Nissan, kept them tied to the legs of their beds and busied themselves with looking after them, the noise caused by those lambs and the public attention to their act, was an open rebellion against the kingship of Pharaoh.. Once having made that declaration of rebellion and the contrary acceptance of Hashem's rule during the 4 days, they warranted eating the korban Pesach.

Shem Mi Shmuel, Haggadah Shhel Pesach, Pekudei- Hachodesh 5675.

Milah was the antidote to the immorality and hedonism that they had gained from the Egyptians. Milah is essential for one to be allowed to eat of the Korban Pesach. This is because the Pesach is Avodah MeiYirah and that is incomplete teshuva; the removal of the orlah demonstrates that we are accepting His Yoke with simcha and love.

The 10 days that they waited between the taking of the lamb and its slaughter correspond to the 10 days of teshuvah between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. During those days, each day we intensify our self- examination, increase our dedication to repentance and accept His yoke as King, thereby being worthy of atonement. So, Israel in Egypt, too, had 10 days to intensify and to strengthen both their yirah and their ahavah and so to merit being redeemed.

The Theme of Shir HaShirim

Rabbi J Rubinstein

The Dubno Magid used to tell the tale of the employee who was sent to the market, to buy pots and pans and other kitchen implements, with strict instructions not to buy any which had holes in them. He came back having bought everything needed for the kitchen, except a sieve. When asked why he did not obtain a sieve, he replied he could not find one without holes in it! Of course, the difference between a sieve and other implements is, that the others have their shape and function, but occasionally have holes in them, however in the case of a sieve, the holes are an essential part of their shape and function. The Magid explained (approximately), that similarly other Seforim in Tanach have their

יום טוב חבורה
1st & 2nd Days 7.15pm
Shabbos Chol HaMoed 7.25pm
7th Day 7.25pm
8th Day 7.05pm
Mare Mekomos and refreshments provided
For more details or If you need a chavrusa
contact Roy Dinowitz

obvious meaning, and sometime are also meant to be a מטל-parable which serves as a metaphor, for a deeper lesson. However Shir Hashirim is different, because it is entirely a metaphor for a deeper message. The parable is the love between a man and a woman, but the real meaning is for it to serve as a metaphor for the love between Hashem and the Jewish people.

One place where part of the real meaning is expressed clearly, is Chapter 8 Verse 7. There it says; מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה - "Many waters will not be able to extinguish the love, and rivers will not sweep it away, if a man will offer all the wealth of his house (for them to discard this love), they will mock him".

The Brisker Rov said, the phrase "Many waters" refers to individual people who try to extinguish the love of Hashem which burns in the heart of the Jew. The phrase "And many rivers" refers to governments who try, by their laws and through force, to compel Jewish people to abandon their love of Hashem. But they all fail.

Accordingly, this verse matches the three forms of love of Hashem, which we commanded to fulfil, in Shema. The command, בכל לבבך - "With all your heart" is the reason no individuals can prevail on us to quench the love of Hashem which is in the Jewish heart. The command, בכל נפשך - "With all your soul", is the reason governments cannot force us to abandon the love of Hashem, even when they threaten us with death itself! The command, ובכל מאדך - "And with all your strength" (which means with all your possessions) is the reason for the last part of the Verse in Shir Hashirim, "If a man will offer all the wealth of his house, they will mock him.

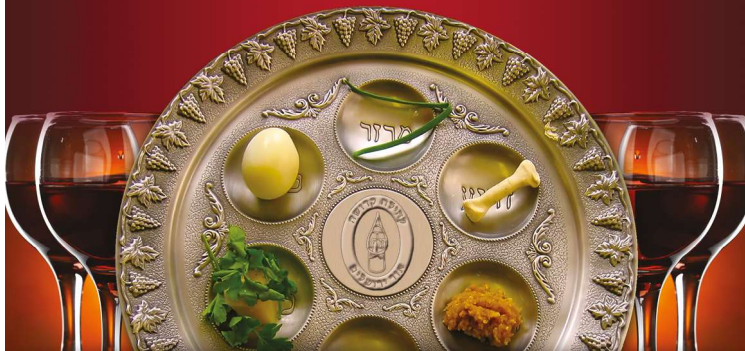
Nowadays after nearly three thousand years since King Solomon wrote Shir Hashirim; years which have been filled with attempts to allure us, or force us, to forsake our love of Hashem, our continued observance of Pesach and the whole Torah, is the most eloquent testimony possible, to the truth of this verse in Shir Hashirim, and indeed the whole theme of Shir Hashirim.

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R' Yechiel Michel Rappoport

Guest Speakers

Davening Times

ערב פסח

Shacharis followed by Siyum	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Each Chometz until	10.00am
Burn Chometz until	11.34am

ליל א' פסח

Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov	8.08pm
Candle Lighting	8.08pm
Nacht – צאת הכוכבים	9.12pm

יום א' פסח

Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha followed by a Shiur by R' Yossi Moore	8.15pm

ליל ב' פסח

Maariv	9.21pm
Candle Lighting	No earlier than 9.21pm

יום ב' פסח

Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha followed by a Shiur by R' Danny Kirsch	8.15pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	9.23pm

חול המועד

Thurs / Fri / Sun	7.00am / 8.30am / 9.30am 3rd in Back Beis HaMedrash
Mincha & Maariv	7.15pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

שבת חול המועד

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.25pm
Candle Lighting	7.33pm - 7.40pm
Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha (2nd Followed by a Shiur By R' Yossi Chazan)	6.00pm / 8.26pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	9.30pm

ליל ז' פסח

Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.36pm - 7.40pm

יום ז' פסח

Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha followed by Shiur by R' Yechiel Michel Rappoport	8.25pm

ליל ח' פסח

Maariv	9.34pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 9.34pm

אחרון של פסח

Shacharis	9.15am
Mincha followed by נעילת החג	8.05pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	9.36pm

Wed אסרו חג	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm