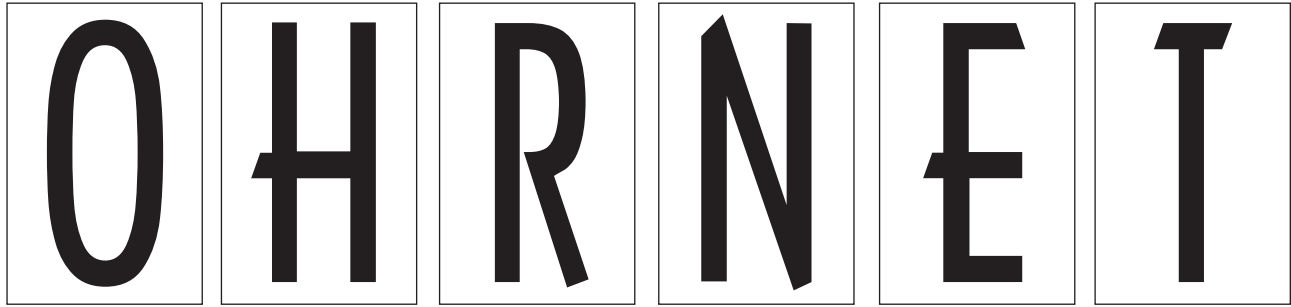


SPECIAL PESACH EDITION

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PARSHIOT VAYIKRA - TZAV - SHEMINI · VOL. 8 NO. 25

INSIDE OUT!

Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

What would your immediate reaction be if I were to tell you that we, the Jewish People, have succeeded in holding on to our traditions so tightly that we have retained our unique identity in the face of the most incredible adversity?

Disbelief? Scorn? Pride?

How about if I told you that we had sunk so low that it looks as if we are going to slip into the abyss of assimilation never to reappear. What would your reaction be then?

Disbelief? Scorn? Pride?

One thing is for sure – both of those statements cannot be applied to the same nation at the same time! Right? Well, only if we are *not* talking about the Jewish Nation. Because that is exactly what we are told. One Midrash relates that during our 210-year “sojourn” in Egypt we did not change our Jewish names, nor our Jewish language, nor our Jewish style of clothing, and we practiced kind deeds (*Gemilut Chasadim*).

Sounds impressive!

After all, compare this to today. Here we all are wearing “modern” clothing, reading an article in our mother tongue — English (or American) — most of us with non-Jewish first names in our passports, learning about a generation that apparently was in much better shape than we are today! In fact, for many the first reaction to that Midrash is to think “I

wish our generation today were so ‘Jewishly’ aware!”

On the other hand, there is another Midrash that points out the discrepancy between the promise that G-d made to Abraham that we would be exiled for 400 years in a strange land and the fact that we only remained in Egypt for 210 years. What happened to the remaining 190 years? The Sages explain that our spiritual level was so precarious that G-d had to take us out of Egypt immediately before we slipped into the fiftieth level of spiritual impurity — a level from which there is no return!

Accordingly, G-d had to “recalculate” the 400 years to begin with the birth of Isaac, who was born — on Pesach — 190 years prior to our descent to Egypt.

How’s that for contradictory messages — on the one hand we look great, on the other we look as if we are on our last legs!

The Maharal of Prague offers a simple answer to the problem. The Maharal writes that when the Midrash states the Jews retained those four things in Egypt (names, language, clothing and kind deeds) — that was *all* they kept! *Nothing else!* Being slaves in a land that was the very center of the world at the time, being exposed to anything and everything that the human mind could possibly imagine, had taken its toll collectively on the Jewish People to such an extent that it was possible to count our mitzvah observance on one hand (without even using all the fingers)!

Incredible! And that answers the

question of how it is possible to have two such seemingly contradictory statements referring to the same nation at the same time.

However, I must confess that for many years I personally found this answer to be a touch perplexing. I found it difficult to juggle the concepts of almost complete spiritual abandonment with the mitzvot that were being kept. Three out of four represent the outward symbols of being Jewish. Despite the tremendous drop in spirituality, we carried on representing ourselves to the rest of the world as...Jews! That seems to defy logic.

After all, for generations the accepted route of assimilation always seems to start with the jettisoning of overt Jewish symbols. Cohen becomes Caine, Yiddish becomes English, a covered head becomes an uncovered head. All in an attempt to project a different facade to the outside world.

So why were things different in Egypt?

Despite being a little unsure of myself, I repeated the Maharal’s explanation at my parents’ Seder one year and it was received with great acclaim. However, after I finished I told my father that I really didn’t understand what I had just said! In my eyes there was still a discrepancy between keeping “so much” and keeping “so little” and I could not see how they could be reconciled.

My father then related an incredible recollection from his childhood that gave me an insight into the Maharal and into human nature as well!

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Pesach Cleaning

By Rabbi Berel Wein

Now that Purim, with all its joys, hangovers and calories, is out of the way, the Jewish world bravely confronts the great holiday of Pesach and its myriad preparatory requirements.

One of the time-honored rituals in Jewish households is the pre-Pesach housecleaning frenzy that overwhelms the family, especially the female part thereof.

The eradication of *chametz* from the house is only the pious front that is put forward to rationalize the otherwise irrational drive to put everything in the house in its proper place, shiny, spotless and dusted. Every useful item that is needed for daily efficiency in the home, and especially in my study, can no longer be found because it has been placed “where it belongs.”

Of course, over the course of time as the year progresses, usually by Shavuot, these items so necessary for comfortable living are no longer “where they belong” but rather “where I can find them.”

But that is for another column that I may write some day.

My task in the ritual of Pesach cleaning is mainly relegated to explaining why the ruthless cleaning going on before my eyes and the movement of my tapes, papers and books to “where they belong” is not really necessary, in strict halachic terms. I know that this a lost cause as far as I am concerned, since Jewish women from time immemorial have not trusted the “leniency” of Halacha when it comes to pre-Pesach housecleaning. But at least I go through the motions

of attempting to mitigate the household whirlwind that always accompanies the advent of the great holiday of freedom and redemption.

However, my real task before Pesach is to dust, spray with a protective spray and place in order — “where they belong” — my books. Since I have acquired a sizable library of books over the years, this is no small task.

I am a procrastinator when it comes to executing household chores. Nevertheless, I have a great sense of anticipation when it comes to the pre-Pesach cleaning of my books and placing them in correct order on my library’s shelves. Books are memories. I remember the circumstances and places where I purchased most of my books. I can identify which are the books of my youth and spring and which are the ones I bought in my later years.

I see the books that I purchased out of my saved coins when I was in the yeshiva (I never smoked because I needed that cigarette money for books), and I am flooded by the serene and joyous memories of those golden years of intensive Torah study and the camaraderie of friends that yeshiva life engendered.

I remember that this is the book that I used when studying with this particular holy teacher and, even though he is now long since gone, he is still alive to me as I again open and look into that book.

I carefully dust the two books that I have from my grandfather’s library and remember the piece of sugar that he put in my mouth when, as a child, I correctly interpreted the words of Rashi for him. That sweetness has never departed from me. It has nurtured me on many a dark and disappointing day in my life.

The world correctly identified the Jewish people as being the “People of the Book.” It is “the book” that has preserved us as a people and revitalized Jewish life in all places and times.

For “the book” — the Bible, the Talmud, the love of learning, the intellectual stimulus and the respect for scholarship and scholars — is the collective memory of the Jewish people. In telling us what was, the book also informs us as to what is now and what will yet be.

One cannot approach Pesach without the gift of memory. For Pesach is all memory. And therefore the household cleaning that precedes it is also part of the necessary process of memory. It may be chided, but never scoffed at. Pesach and its memories are why we are here, and why we have the right to be here.

It is paradoxical that getting rid of the *chametz* allows the memories suppressed by our everyday preoccupations to flood back into our minds and hearts.

So, let us get on cheerfully with our Pesach cleaning. One never knows what one will find while cleaning the house for Pesach.

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The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* — the Laws of the Priests — deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban olah*, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the *Mishkan*'s entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remain-

ing part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part is eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *kohen gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the “questionable guilt” offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burnt on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *kohen gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of

slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shelamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the *Mishkan* and all of its vessels is detailed.

On the eighth day of the dedication of the *Mishkan*, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various *korbanot* (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. Hashem allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the *Mishkan*. Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by Hashem. A fire comes from before Hashem and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must

not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the *Mishkan*. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to be separate and holy — like Hashem.

חג כשר ושמח
The Ohr Somayach Family
wishes you and yours a
Happy and Kosher Pesach

WHY CAN'T I HEAR G-D TALKING TO ME?

"And He called..."(1:1)

The London Symphony Orchestra takes its places on the podium of the Royal Albert Hall. The large double basses mournfully tune up. The piccolos prance from one octave to another. The dull dooming thud of a muted timpani is heard. Two swift taps of the baton on the lectern. The cacophony ceases, replaced by a mighty chord played by eighty instruments. The chord grows longer and louder. The entire audience is enthralled in rapt attention. The entire audience, that is, except a rather eccentric gentleman leaning over the balcony. He seems somewhat distracted. He keeps looking this way and that. His concentration is anywhere except on the music. It's not surprising however, for covering his ears are a large pair of canary yellow plastic sound-excluders. The sort that you see ground crews use when they refuel airplanes.

After a couple of minutes this fellow's

next-door neighbor cannot contain himself any longer. He leans over the balcony and starts gesturing to the fellow, pointing at the sound-excluders and miming "Your ears are blocked! You can't hear anything because your ears are blocked!" The other fellow scrunches up his brow, cocks his head to one side as if to say "What are you saying?" So once again the other points to the sound excluders and mimes even "louder" than before: "YOU CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING BECAUSE YOUR EARS ARE BLOCKED!"

Realizing that the man has something important to say to him, the fellow takes off his ear-muffs and says: "I'm sorry. I didn't hear you — you see, my ears were blocked..."

Look at the world. It's not a pretty picture. I don't want to spoil your Shabbat, but I'm sure it comes as no surprise to you that world-wide poverty is on the increase, that our natural resources are dwindling at an alarming rate and that selfishness, greed and intolerance are as popular as ever.

Where is G-d? Is this a G-dly world?

No. This is not the world that G-d

wants. It's the world that man wants. G-d has created man as the being that chooses. This is man's unique privilege — and his responsibility. There can be no choice without the potential to choose incorrectly. A world where choice has no consequences is, effectively, a world without choice. The world looks like it does because man chooses it to be this way, and most of the time man's choices are dominated by his own selfishness.

The spiritual Masters teach that when G-d spoke to Moshe, He spoke in a voice that was overpoweringly loud, a voice that was vast enough to pulverize mighty trees — and yet only one person heard the voice, our Teacher, Moshe. And when Moshe heard that voice, it sounded to him like a loving and gentle summons "Moshe, Moshe..."

G-d's voice is the loudest thing in this world. If we can't hear it, it is because our ears are plugged with the wax of our own selfishness and egos, the detritus of ignoring the Designer and His design for this world.

Sources:
Rashi; Sifra

HAFTARA

VAYIKRA - YESHAYA 43:21 - 44:23

This prophecy chastises the Jewish People for their sins. The repeated motto being that it is better to adhere to the words of G-d than to sin and offer sacrifices. This is related to Parshat Vayikra, which deals with the laws of the sacrifices. We also find in this *haftara* sarcastic ridicule towards the senseless practice of pagan worship: The prophet tells of a man who sawed a piece of timber in two, half of which he used to cook his meal, while from the other half he created an idol before which he pros-

trates himself, fervently begging for mercy and salvation.

AN HONOR, NOT A BURDEN

"Jacob did not proclaim Me, as you felt wearied by Me, O Israel." (43:22).

A true servant of G-d, one who acts for to sanctify the Name of the Almighty, finds enjoyment and satisfaction in the worship of G-d. He does not consider the strict and numer-

ous prohibitions of the Torah encumbering, nor the many obligations a burden. To him they are a privilege he is proud of, just like a king who isn't bothered by the weight of his heavily jeweled crown.

G-d does not need our service; He is omnipotent and complete. The commandments are solely for our benefit. The prophet proclaims that if one feels encumbered by his duties as a Jew, then he does not understand the concept of the worship of G-d, and therefore is not serving the Almighty truthfully.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

VAYIKRA

"If the anointed kohen sins...he shall offer a bull as a sin offering...And take the bull outside the camp...and burn it..." (Leviticus 4:3,12)

The Torah commands that the *kohen gadol's* sin offering be burned in public, outside the Sanctuary premises, so that no one will be embarrassed to admit his own sin. "Imagine!" a sinner will think, "Even the *kohen gadol* sinned; yet he admitted it and brought an atonement offering. Certainly, I too should admit my sin and bring an atonement."

• Ba'al Haturim

A TITHE IN TIME

A Jew who sells his field in *Eretz Yisrael* to a non-Jew is obligated every year to buy, even at great expense, the produce of that field in order to fulfill the mitzvah of *bikkurim* — the bringing to the *Beit Hamikdash* and giving to the *kohen* a portion of the seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised. Although the *mishna* calls this a decree, the *gemara* explains that in essence one is obligated by Torah law to bring *bikkurim* from the field since the non-Jew's ownership does not exempt its produce from this obligation, as it is incumbent on the original owner.

Rashi elaborates on this point and distinguishes between the mitzvah of tithing and that of *bikkurim*. One is only obligated to tithe his agricultural produce if he is interested in eating or selling what remains after the tithing is done. *Bikkurim*, on the other hand, is a mitzvah which he must fulfill even if he has no benefit at all from the rest of the produce.

This distinction made by Rashi seems to run counter to the position taken by Turei Zahav (*Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 1:17*) that one is obligated to tithe his produce even if he has no intention of eating from the remainder. Although he does not mention the above Rashi, Rabbi Akiva Eiger challenges the Turei Zahav's approach and cites the Magen Avraham (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 8:1*) as support for his opinion that both in regard to tithing baked products (*challah*) and raw grain there is no obligation to do so unless one wishes to eat from these foods.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayot points out that even though one is not obligated to tithe unless he intends to eat, on tithing he encounters two separate *mitzvot*. One is the tithing itself which removes the "tevel" status of the untithed produce and renders it permissible to eat. The other is the mitzvah of giving that tithe to the recipient designated by the Torah, such as *teruma* to the *kohen*. He cites early sources such as Ramban (*Sefer Hamitzvot of Rambam, Shores 12*) and the Tosefot Ryd (*Kiddushin, Perek 11*) who point out the two *mitzvot* involved. This leads to the even more surprising revelation that although by Torah law even separating one kernal for *teruma* is sufficient to remove the status of *tevel* from the produce, one does not properly fulfill the mitzvah of giving *teruma* to the *kohen* unless he separates a substantial amount to present to him in accordance with the Torah's instruction to "give him" his portion. Tosefot (*Gittin 20a "dilma"*) seems to disagree with this distinction. (See also Responsa of Noda B'Yehuda Vol. II Yoreh Deah 201 who elaborates on this distinction.)

• *Gittin 47b*

THE UNDAUNTED SAGE

Guardians appointed by the court to manage the property of orphans must be extremely careful to do only what is in the best interest of their charges. They are there-

fore forbidden to sell fields in order to purchase slaves because they are swapping solid real estate for something of temporal value.

In the vicinity of Rabbi Meir there was a guardian who sold fields to purchase slaves and the sage stopped him from doing so. He subsequently heard a voice in a dream telling him "I intended for him to destroy and you directed him to build!"

"Dreams are meaningless" was Rabbi Meir's reaction and he persisted in preventing the guardian from destroying the estate he was in charge of.

Maharsha explains that the dream might otherwise have been interpreted as a heavenly message that it was the Divine Will that the property of the orphans should indeed be squandered because their father had acquired it in some illegal way such as theft, lying or usury.

Rabbi Meir's refusal to be influenced by dreams when acting according to the halacha is the point of this *gemara*, explains Iyun Yaakov. The same attitude of not swerving from what he considered right because of a dream is related in another incident concerning Rabbi Meir in *Mesechta Horyot (13b)*. But it was not only dreams but any supernatural force which Rabbi Meir ignored when it came to doing his duty as a Jewish leader. This is evident from the incident which the *gemara* recounts immediately after the one about the dream.

There was a couple in Rabbi Meir's neighborhood who quarreled at the beginning of every Shabbat eve. The sage saw this as the work of Satan who wished to destroy their day of rest and he decided to intervene. He managed to restrain them from quarreling for three straight weeks and thus succeeded in restoring matrimonial harmony. The voice of Satan was then heard complaining: "Woe to the one whom Rabbi Meir has ejected from this home!"

Although Rabbi Meir sensed that this was no ordinary marital spat but the work of a destructive supernatural force, this did not deter him from fulfilling the mitzvah of creating peace between a man and his wife.

• *Gittin 52a*

THE HATED SIN OF HATRED

Jerusalem was destroyed because of *Kamtza* and Bar *Kamtza*." Thus begins this section of our *Mesechta* which is traditionally studied and discussed on Tisha B'Av when almost all other Torah study is forbidden. Other study is forbidden on Tisha B'Av because the joy one derives from learning Torah is inconsistent with that day's mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem and the *Beit Hamikdash*.

Someone in Jerusalem made a feast to which he invited his friend *Kamtza*. The servant delivering the invitation mistakenly gave it instead to Bar *Kamtza*, who was an enemy of his master. Bar *Kamtza*, mistakenly assuming that he had been invited for the purpose of reconciliation, came to the affair. When the host saw Bar *Kamtza* he angrily asked him to leave. Bar *Kamtza* begged for the opportunity to stay, even offering to pay

for his meal. His plea was refused even when he finally offered to pay for the entire feast, and he was forcibly ejected.

Bar Kamtza's fury at this humiliation was not directed at the host alone but also to "the rabbis who sat there and did not protest, indicating that they were in compliance with his action." He thereupon decided to avenge himself against the entire nation by perpetrating a blood libel that the Jews were in rebellion against the Romans. Thus began the Roman siege which ended in the tragedy of destruction.

The background for this story, suggests Maharsha, is the statement of the *gemara* (*Mesechta Yoma 9b*) about the sin which was responsible for the destruction of the Second *Beit Hamikdash*. The first *Beit Hamikdash* was destroyed because of the three gravest sins of idol worship, sexual immorality and murder. The Jews during the era of the second *Beit Hamikdash*, however, were pious in regard to Torah study, fulfillment of *mitzvot* and performance of kind deeds. Why then was their *Beit Hamikdash* destroyed as well? Because of the unjustified hatred of one for another. Unjustified hatred, concludes the *gemara*, is as weighty a cause for destruction as all the three gravest sins combined.

This is the sort of unjustified hatred shown by the host towards Bar Kamtza and that of Bar Kamtza towards the leaders he unjustly suspected of sharing that hatred. (Their lack of intervention, explains Maharsha, may have been because circumstances prevented them from doing so rather than an expression of complicity.)

But why is the name of Kamtza mentioned in the headline of this story, as if to suggest that he shared in the guilt of this tragedy? One approach is that the host was doubly angry because, not only did his enemy turn up at his party, but his good friend Kamtza did not. Kamtza's presence might have mitigated the host's anger and prevented him from taking such vindictive action against Bar Kamtza. Kamtza probably heard about the party but refused to come because he had not received an invitation. When a good friend fails to come to a *simcha* because he didn't get an invitation, and does not give the host the benefit of the doubt that some mistake had been made, it is the beginning of the destruction of friendship which leads to unjustified hatred and tragedy.

• *Gittin 55b*

A MESSAGE TO A FOREFATHER

“For Your sake we are slaughtered all the time.” (*Tehillim 44:28*) Rabbi Yehuda explains that this verse refers to the heroism of a mother and her seven sons during the time of Roman persecution.

As these sons were brought before the emperor and ordered to bow to his idol, each one bravely cited a passage from the Torah about monotheism and went to a heroic martyr's death. After six sons had thus sanctified the Name of Hashem, the emperor desperately tried to cajole the youngest, a mere child, into somehow pretending to obey his order.

When even this son boldly rejected any effort to make even a pretense of abandoning his faith the emperor ordered his execution as well. He did accede, however, to the plea of the mother to kiss him farewell. She then whispered the following into his ear:

“Go my sons and tell your forefather Avraham in my name: ‘You built one altar for your son and I built seven.’ ”

What at first seems to be a strange demonstration of pride at surpassing the patriarch is actually a profound lesson in history. Avraham was challenged with ten trials in which he amply proved his spiritual mettle. In the climactic one he was commanded to offer his beloved son Yitzchak as a sacrifice.

But were these indeed intended as tests of Avraham's loyalty? One of the approaches of the commentaries — based on the Midrash that Hashem only tests those *tzadikim* of whom He is certain — offers us a fascinating insight into the purpose of Avraham's ten trials. As the father of his people Avraham had the responsibility of being a spiritual trailblazer for his progeny. The challenges to which he was exposed were microcosms of those which would face his offspring throughout the generations. His success in meeting them — whether they were in the nature of famine, exile, political persecution or the sacrifice of his own life or that of his son — developed a strength in him which would be passed down through the genes of the Jewish People to form their genius of survival.

The message this noble mother sent to Avraham through her martyred children must therefore be understood in this way: “Go, my sons, and tell our father Avraham the secret of how an ordinary woman like myself was capable of encouraging seven sons to die for *Kiddush Hashem*. It is only because he built one altar on which to offer Yitzchak that I was capable of inheriting his strength and courage to offer seven sacrifices.” Not pride was the message but a humble recognition of the source of her strength, the strength of her sons and her people.

• *Gittin 57b*

THE MEANING OF “GET”

What is the significance of the term “get” which is the subject of our entire *mesechta*? Even though we find this term used as a designation for documents in general — as Rabbi Huna explains the meaning of “also in regard to *gittin*” (plural for *get*) as a reference to financial documents — the usual use of the term is in regard to the divorce document. This is why if a man delegates an agent to write a *get* for his wife, the agent can write her a divorce document even though the husband did not use the Torah terminology of “a document of severance” (*Gittin 65a*). It also explains why the *mesechta* repeatedly refers to divorce documents with this term, as pointed out in the very first Tosefot of our *mesechta*.

That Tosefot cites two reasons for the custom of writing a *get* with twelve lines. Rabbeinu Tam's approach is that the

gematria (numerical equivalent of the Hebrew letters) of “get” is 12 (*gimmel*=3, *tet*=9). The Geonim Rabbeinu Hai and Rabbeinu Saadia are quoted as suggesting another explanation. Each one of the five *chumashim* of the Torah is separated from the other in the Torah scroll by four lines. Discounting the separation between Bamidbar and Devarim, because this last *chumash* is considered a review of the previous *chumashim*, we have three separations and a total of 12 lines separating them. Since the Torah refers to the divorce document as a “document of severance,” the amount of lines in it is determined according to the number of lines serving as a separation in the major document — the Torah.

Maharam Shiff cites an early source, Rabbi Avraham of Ostrakaima, who offers a fascinating explanation of the term get used in regard to divorce. The Jerusalem Talmud mentions an isolated island nation by the name of “Gitta” which drives away any neighbors who try to enter it. The name of that island of separation was therefore applied to a document whose purpose is separation.

Although this approach fails to explain why even financial documents are called by this term, we can readily understand that once a document explicitly mentioned in the Torah was given this appellation, it was only natural to extend its use to other documents as well.

• *Gittin 64a*

WISE WHEN HE WISHES

A puzzling praise is given to the sage Rabbi Yehuda by the sage Issi ben Yehuda in his description of the scholarly qualities of a number of the leading sages of his generation. In contrast to Rabbi Meir who is described as “a wise man

and a scribe,” Rabbi Yehuda is characterized as being “a wise man when he wishes to be.”

Rashi’s explanation that Rabbi Yehuda was capable of being wise when he was patient and carefully considered the subject at hand is questioned by Maharsha as hardly constituting a praise. Tosefot, however, saw this description as a comparison between Rabbi Yehuda and his principle disputant in halachic matters, Rabbi Meir. While Rabbi Meir was perhaps more incisive and challenging, it was Rabbi Yehuda’s strength to be more patient and conclusive. Tosefot’s comparison of this distinction to the one made in *Mesechta Horyot (14a)* between the advantages of a sage characterized as “Sinai” and one who “uproots mountains” with his incisiveness is, however, somewhat too difficult to understand. The issue there, according to Rashi’s explanation, was whether encyclopedic knowledge of the Torah (as if it was given at Sinai) better qualifies one for being head of the yeshiva than one who is less knowledgeable but more incisively analytical.

Maharsha refers us to the *Sefer He’Aruch* who sees this praise of Rabbi Yehuda as the special privilege he enjoyed (as a result of a Roman decree — see *Mesechta Shabbat 33b*) of being the head speaker at every assembly (*Mesechta Berachot 63b*). His understanding is that whenever Rabbi Yehuda decided to publicly express his wisdom, he enjoyed priority status.

An entirely different approach is offered by Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayot. Almost everyone, he notes, is subject to situations and moods which prevent him from properly applying himself to the search for Torah wisdom. It was Rabbi Yehuda’s unique power to completely overcome all of these distractions and obstructions and to “be wise” whenever he wished to delve into the depths of Torah.

• *Gittin 67a*

INSIDE OUT...continued from page one

When the Jews came to England during the early 1900s, many gravitated to London and specifically to the East End (London’s equivalent of New York’s Lower East Side). The Jewish community was a close-knit one and for a long time entirely Shabbat observant (outwardly, at least). My father recounted that, as a small child, he remembered the first time that a Jewish store remained open on Shabbat. What a tumult! Complete chaos! Pandemonium! People running all over shouting, crying — all to no avail, as the owner categorically refused to shut the doors to his store! What stuck in my father’s mind was not so much the fact that one store was now open on Shabbat but that three weeks later nearly all the stores were open!

My father explained to me that all it takes is one person with the “courage” to

break away from the norm to destroy a whole, *fragile* edifice. That, explained my father, was the situation in Egypt as well. We *looked and sounded* so Jewish — but it was an external connection. As long as we held on to those symbols, so long as we shared in common our Jewish names, language and clothing, we retained a sense of our national identity. G-d, in His infinite wisdom, understood that to leave us to our own devices in Egypt for another 190 years was a recipe for disaster — because, without a doubt, someone *would be bound* to get up and say “I’m not going to wear these clothes anymore. They’re too old fashioned!”

At that precise moment Jewish identity would be in danger of crashing down and burying us in the fiftieth level of spiritual impurity.

All of a sudden it seems that perhaps

our generation is not in such bad shape as it may seem at first. You see, while it is true that we tend to look and sound like everyone else, *inside* of the Jewish People there is the most incredible explosion taking place. Thousands upon thousands of Jewish people now thirst to experience a reawakening of their Jewish roots. To absorb the majesty and the beauty of an authentic Shabbat. To understand the tremendous depths of what Pesach really means. To delight in the unparalleled thrill of fulfilling the mitzvot. Such feelings begin in the inner chambers of one’s heart and slowly permeate their way through every cell and pore until they exist within the entire person.

It may take a while but the result is something that is so embedded in the individual that it is unshakable — and *that* is the secret of our survival!

HAVE A GREAT SHABBAT!

“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying ‘Command Aharon and his sons saying...’” (6:1-2)

The Shabbat before Pesach is called *Shabbat Hagadol* — the “Great Shabbat.”

There are many reasons for this. One reason is that there is a mystical concept that Shabbat contains the week that follows. The Shabbat before Pesach thus “contains” Pesach within it. It carries the spiritual DNA of Pesach — and Pesach is the birthday of the Jewish People — the genesis of our nationhood.

Here’s another connection between this Shabbat and Pesach: One of the central foci of Shabbat are the three meals which punctuate it. Much of what Shabbat is takes place at the dining room table: The words of Torah, the family closeness and the Shabbat hospitality — the *mitzvah* to bring guests into our homes. One of the central foci of Pesach is the Seder Table — again the dining room table becomes an object of and a center for holiness.

“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying ‘Command Aaron and his sons saying...’”

Our spiritual Masters teach us that in this verse G-d was instructing Moshe that Aharon and the *kohanim* should be both very quick and careful in the service of the *korban olah*

(elevation offering) in the *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple). Not only that, but this zeal was a command for all generations.

The problem is — how can a *kohen* be zealous and meticulous about an offering today, when there is no Temple? How can this command relate to all generations? All the Jewish People have left of our glorious *Beit Hamikdash* and its service is a Western Wall of stones that some claim is really an early Islamic relic.

The answer is that a Jew always has a “Temple.” It’s called his dining room table. When we bring guests to our table, be it on a Shabbat or on a week-day, or when we voice the call of the Haggada: “All who are hungry, let them come and eat! All who are in need, let them come and celebrate the Pesach!” we turn our dining room table into a Temple. For just as the Temple atoned for us, so a Jewish dining-room table, when used in the correct way, atones for us.

And it is this “Temple” which requires the same vigilance and zealousness in its upkeep as the service of the *korban olah*. For it is here that we make “Passover” the whole year. It is at this table that we pass over to our children by our example the truths of Judaism: Its love of kindness, hospitality, *tzedaka*, the Holy words of the Creator that He has given to His people in the world’s ultimate present — the Torah.

Sources:

Talmud Chagigah 27b; Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky

HAFTARA

TZAV SHABBAT-HAGADOL - MALACHI 3:4 - 24

The unique greatness of giving tithes is a main theme of this *haftara* read before Pesach. While it is otherwise forbidden to test G-d, tithing is an exception: “Test me, please, regarding this (giving of tithes),” says Hashem, the G-d of Hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and

pour down for you blessing beyond your capacity.” (3:10)

Appropriate all year, charity gains importance before Pesach when added holiday expenses make charitable gifts all the more needed and appreciated by the poor, allowing them, too, to rejoice in the festival.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

TZAV

“Their portion shall not be baked as *chametz*...” (6:10)

By eating the flour offering, the *kohen* brings atonement to the owner of the offering. Therefore, the *kohen*'s portion requires the same restrictions as the portion brought upon the altar itself; i.e., it may not be *chametz*.

• Abarbanel

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

SHEMINI

“Moshe asked: ‘Why didn’t you eat the sin offering?’ Aharon answered: Were I to have eaten this day’s sin offering, would Hashem approve?’ Moshe heard and he approved.” (10:17-20)

Our Sages explain that the above exchange between Moshe and Aharon was actually a halachic dialogue regarding the question: Was Aharon, while mourning for his yet unburied sons, allowed to eat from the special inaugural offerings?

This is the first place in the Torah text where we find the classic exercise of Torah *Sheba'al Peh*, the Oral Law, in which reasoning is used to ascertain the halacha.

• Rabbi Tzaddok Hakohen

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW...

“Speak to the Children of Israel, saying ‘These are the creatures that you may eat...’ (11:1)”

There aren't a lot of similarities between working in a sound recording studio and re-fueling an aircraft. In a studio you get a chance to meet a lot of very ordinary people whom fame has made the contents of their breakfast cereal the subject of serious and considered media analysis. In an airport you get a chance to meet a lot of large metal airplanes.

However, they do have one thing in common. Eventually they both cause you to lose your hearing acuity. It's usually a slow process but it's also inevitable. The advantage of working at an airfield, however, is that you can wear sound-excluders. In a studio, the band would be most insulted to find their producer and engineer working on their latest masterpiece with large yellow mufflers. (Much as their masterpiece probably deserves mufflers — and the larger the better.)

There's an old adage in the music biz: If you can't play well — play loud.

Eventually, after years sitting in front of giant monitor loudspeakers listening to electric guitars with enough “top” on them to part your hair at six feet, you'll start to lose the sensitivity to those high frequencies. Then others lower down the scale. And so on.... The interesting thing is that you won't notice that you have lost your sensitivity to these frequencies. In a sense that's the saddest kind of loss — a loss that you don't even know about.

It's not true that “what you don't know can't hurt you.” When you lose something and you *know* you have lost it, it provokes feelings of introspection: Why have I lost this thing? It provokes a consideration of what we have lost — and we re-value that which remains ours. But a loss of which we have no consciousness has no positive aspects at all.

“Speak to the Children of Israel, saying ‘These are the creatures that you may eat...’”

Eating *treif* (non-Kosher) food is the spiritual equivalent of losing our hearing. It cuts us off from life's “higher frequencies.” It deadens our spiritual “ears” and denies us the holiness that is the potential of ever Jew.

And the greatest tragedy is that we don't even notice.

HAFTARAH

SHEMINI - SAMUEL II 6:1 - 7:17

Parshat Shemini describes the dedication ceremony of the *Mishkan*. The *haftara* continues this theme by describing the arrival of the Ark in Jerusalem. In the *Parsha*, two of Aharon's sons die on the first day of the *Mishkan's* inauguration. This will be a permanent warning that good intentions can never replace strict obedience in our service of Hashem.

Similarly, in the *haftara*, Uzah died by Hashem's hand when he tried to protect the Ark from falling. In a moment of thoughtlessness he forgot that Hashem Himself transports the Ark, and Hashem would never let it fall.

Although Uzah's intentions were good, he forgot the awe

which is due to the One whose word lay in the Ark.

When King David finally brought the Ark to Jerusalem, he dances in front of it with all his might. From this we see that he was a true servant of the Torah. King David saw kingship as a responsibility rather than a privilege. This is exactly what displeased his wife, Michal. She thought David had debased himself by dancing like a commoner before the Ark.

However, David's dancing was the stamp of a true Jewish King. Because of his loyalty, David was rewarded that the Temple to be built by his son would carry his name.

• Rabbi S.R. Hirsch

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1. Who does the word "eilav" in verse 1:1 exclude?
2. Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week's Parsha.
3. What two types of sin does an olah atone for?
4. Where was the olah slaughtered?
5. What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-kohen perform?
6. Besides the fire the kohanim bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from?
7. At what stage of development are torim (turtledoves) and bnei yona (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
8. What is melika?
9. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
10. Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a "satisfying aroma"?
11. Why is the term "nefesh" used regarding the flour offering?
12. Which part of the free-will mincha offering is burned on the altar?
13. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the mincha. What is meant by "honey"?
14. When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering?
15. Concerning shelamim, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
16. For most offerings the kohen may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the mizbe'ach. For which korban may he apply the blood using only his finger?
17. Who is obligated to bring a chatat?
18. Where were the remains of the bull burnt while in the wilderness? Where were they burnt during the time of the Beit Hamikdash?
19. What two things does a voluntary mincha have that a minchat chatat lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a korban asham?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Vayikra's Questions!

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

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2, 14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (torim), and doves (bnei yona).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the Mishkan Courtyard (azarah).
5. 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, bnei yona are too old and torim are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one's fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal's food is provided by its owner, so its innards are "kosher." Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with "theft."
10. 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, Hashem regards it as if he had offered his nefesh (soul).
12. 2:1 - The kometz (fistful).
13. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
14. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
15. 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the alya (fat tail). The lamb's alya is burned on the altar but the goat's is not.
16. 3:8 - The chatat.
17. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the karet (excision) penalty.
18. 4:12 - a) Outside the three camps. b) Outside Jerusalem.
19. 5:11 - Levona and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two shekalim.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS "QUESTION")

VAYIKRA

"Remove (the bird's) intestines and throw them next to the altar...."

Birds eat food that they scavenge. Therefore, their intestines are tainted with "theft" and unfit to offer upon the altar. Animals, however, eat food provided by their owners. Therefore, their intestines are fit for the altar (1:16 and Rashi).

The above implies that dependence on humans is desirable. How does this fit with the lesson of Noah's dove? Noah's

dove returned to the ark with a bitter olive leaf in its mouth, as if to say: "Bitter food provided by Hashem is better than sweet food provided by humans (Rashi, Bereishet 8:11)."

Answer:

Independent sustenance is good only if it is earned honestly. (The olive leaf in the mouth of Noah's dove was from an ownerless tree, since all humanity had been destroyed and Noah had not yet claimed ownership.) Charity, however, is preferable to dishonest "independence."

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.edu with your questions on any Parsha!

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tzav's Questions!

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

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

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN		8:22	Role of Different <i>Korbanot</i> in <i>Miluim</i>
6:7	<i>Mincha</i> Laws		
6:18	<i>Korbanot</i>		
7:8	Hides of <i>Korbanot</i>		
7:14	Leavening in <i>Korban Todah</i>		
8:1	Chronology of <i>Mishkan</i> Chapters		
8:7	Garments of the <i>Kohanim</i>		
8:11	Solution to Rashi's Source		
		SEFER HACHINUCH	
		132	Hiding the Miracle
		136	The <i>Kohen Gadol's</i> Offering
		143	Dignity and Trust
		144	The Benefits of <i>Kashrut</i>

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Shmini’s Questions!

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

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

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

SHEMINI

Ramban

- 9:17 Relation of *Miluim* and *Shemini Korbanot* to *Tamid*
 10:15 Heaving and Waving

Sefer Hachinuch

- 149 Dignity in the House of Hashem
 150 Respect for the Service

AFIKO, MAN

From: Gale Boyd
<Gale_Boyd@email.msn.com>

Dear Rabbi,

I have a question regarding the "afikoman" in the Passover seder. Is there any indication that it may have existed before the Temple was destroyed?

Dear Gale Boyd,

At the end of the Pesach Seder we eat some *matzah*. This is called the *afikoman*, which means "dessert."

Before the Temple's destruction, the *afikoman* was not a piece of *matzah*; rather, it was the Pascal lamb: On the afternoon before Passover, Jews everywhere came to Jerusalem and brought lambs to the Temple. A tiny part of each lamb was burned on the altar and the rest was eaten at the end of the Seder. (Hence the phrase "Please pass the Pascal!")

Ever since the Romans destroyed our Temple about two millennia ago, we do not offer sacrifices. So we eat *matzah* in place of the Pascal Lamb as a commemoration.

One of the reasons offered as to why it was replaced with *matzah* is that *matzah* represents the food of oppression. In a spiritual sense, until the Jewish People are once more able to offer up sacrifices in the rebuilt Temple we are in a state of oppression. That's the reason why the *afikoman* is broken in half, to teach us that we have yet to become "whole."

This is also one reason that we end the Seder with the phrase "Next year in Jerusalem." Why? Because our Seder is incomplete so long as it is missing those special *mitzvot* such as the Pascal lamb that can only be performed in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Gale Boyd responds:

Dear Rabbi, Thank you ever so much!! This is the first cogent answer I've found in my research. I never expected such a prompt reply, nor such a settling one. I can stop pacing the floor over this now!

WHY DOESN'T G-D DO OPEN MIRACLES NOW?

From: Larry Kahaner in McLean, VA
<larry@kahaner.com>

Dear Rabbi,

I was reading my son Bible stories and he asked a simple, child-like question: "Why doesn't G-d use his power to punish bad people the way he did in the Bible?" He was referring to the stories of Passover, Noah's Ark, the destruction of Sodom and others. Then it turned to the Nazis and why G-d didn't help the Jews by simply destroying the Nazis. I was flustered for an answer as to why we don't see G-d's great powers the way they did in the bible. Any thoughts?

Dear Larry Kahaner,

A very deep question. Why does G-d seem to allow evil, and bad people to do bad things to good people. It boils down to, "why is there evil?"

I think the answer is that G-d doesn't "like" to do open miracles. The word "world" in Hebrew, "*olam*," means "hiding." That is, G-d made the world as a place to hide from us, so that we can get reward (in the next world) for finding Him.

To do this, G-d needs to allow evil to flourish, for a short time. If lightning struck every time someone did a sin, no one would deserve credit for being good, because there would be no other choice.

So, what's wrong with that? As I mentioned before, G-d made this world as a place to hide in. That way, someone who truly wants to be good will be good, and someone who doesn't, won't. Then, G-d will reward the good person for being good, not because he was *forced* into it, but because he *chose* it.

So, although G-d did great miracles, like splitting the sea, and the ten plagues, He only did them for that specific generation. No other generation ever saw so many wonderous miracles. This was sort of a one-time deal, in order to teach that G-d is really there, is the Creator, and is in total control. From then on, though, G-d wanted people to use their free will to believe in G-d and follow the commandments, and not because they were "forced" into it.

ROASTING THE EGG

From: Daniel
<613@axom.com>

Dear Rabbi,

What is the proper way to roast the egg used on the Seder plate?

Dear Daniel,

I definitely recommend boiling the egg first. Otherwise it can get pretty messy. Once boiled, put it in the (kosher for Passover) oven or on top of the gas burners and let it get a bit charred. Chances are if your oven range is electric it will do the job too. And there you go!

THE LAST STRAW

From: Joe Seruya
<seru@email.msn.com>

Dear Rabbi,

In Parashat Bo, Pharaoh reacts more strongly to the locusts than to any other plague, saying to Moses, "just take away this death." How come, of all the plagues, Pharaoh reacted this way only to the locusts, calling them "death" and saying "just take them away?"

continued on next page

Dear Joe Seruya,

Great question. Locust was the eighth of the ten plagues. I think in a very simple sense we can say that the plagues built one upon the other until they finally became too much to bear. We see this as well from Pharaoh's advisors, who finally urged Pharaoh prior to the locust to let the Jews go by saying "don't you realize that Egypt is destroyed?"

And remember that the locust were eating everything that the hail left over, creating a total famine. Even if food were imported, perhaps the locust would eat that too.

That having been said, I'll tell you a beautiful insight of my colleague. He said, citing Rav Tzadok Hakohen, that between the hail and the locust the land began to bud again. As awful

as the hail was, the sign of renewed life gave the Egyptians renewed hope.

We have experienced this phenomenon in our own times: Some Holocaust survivors have reported that during times of desperation, seeing grass and leaves budding gave them renewed hope and courage in their own ability for renewal. The first thing Kovna Jews did after emerging from weeks of hiding in underground cellars was to bend down and feel the grass with amazement.

So, when the locust came and ate every blade of grass, leaf and bud, it totally wiped out the Egyptians' last bit of hope. It was the "last straw."

WHEN EREV PESACH FALLS ON SHABBAT

Rabbi Avraham Zuroff

Pesach begins Saturday night, April 7, 2001 (15th of Nisan, 5761)

In ordinary years, the *mitzvot* of checking for and nullifying *chametz* occur on the day before Pesach. This year, the day before Pesach is Shabbat, when it is forbidden to burn *chametz*. Therefore, the actual inspection of *chametz* will take place on Thursday night (5 April), and burning the *chametz* will be done on Friday (April 6).

The Culinary Dilemma

It is a *mitzvah* to eat three meals with bread on Shabbat. On Erev Pesach (the day before Passover) it is forbidden to eat bread or leavened products after the fourth "halachic hour" from sunrise. After the fifth halachic hour, even owning bread is forbidden. (An halachic hour is one twelfth of the daylight hours.) Since this year Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat, when there is a *mitzvah* to eat three meals with bread, a challenge arises.

Substituting matzah for bread is not a solution. The Talmud forbids eating matzah on Erev Pesach in order to distinguish between ordinary matzah-eating and fulfilling the *mitzvah* of eating matzah at the Seder. So, how can one

fulfill the commandment of eating three meals on Shabbat without eating bread or matzah?

Possible Solutions

Solution #1:

That's the way the cookie crumbles...

Eat a meal with bread Friday night. Pita-bread is recommended, as it produces few crumbs. A bread roll in a plastic sandwich bag is a good runner-up in crumb prevention. Wake-up early on Shabbat morning. Shacharit morning services should begin and end earlier than usual to allow eating at least the morning meal with bread before the fourth halachic hour. The meal can be split into two parts. After the first part, say *birkat hamazon* and take a break (go for a walk, study, take a short nap...). Then return and eat another meal with bread, before the fourth hour. According to some, this fulfills one's "three-meal" obligation.

Solution #2

What about Egg-Matzah?

Maimonides explains that our Sages forbade eating plain flour-and-water matzah on Erev Pesach to demonstrate that our eating matzah at the Seder in the evening is in order to fulfill the *mitzvah*. Since this rabbinic enactment

applies only to plain flour-and-water matzah (the only type which one can use to fulfill the *mitzvah*), it does not include *matzah ashira*, "enriched" matzah. Therefore, it would theoretically seem that egg matzah would be a good choice...but read on!

Some common misconceptions about egg matzah

As stated, the matzah eaten at the seder is made of plain flour and water. (*Weight Watchers* even recommends it for its low-fat content!)

But egg matzos are made from flour mixed with juice and/or eggs, and no water. The Talmud states that such matzah would never become truly leavened. However, if water were to be mixed in along with the egg and fruit juice, then such matzah would become leavened even faster than plain dough.

In accordance, Rabbi Yosef Karo rules in the Shulchan Aruch that matzah made from this enriched flour is not *chametz* and may be eaten on Pesach. Sefardic Jewry generally follows this ruling. However, Rabbi Moshe Isserles rules that we should be concerned with the possibility that some water may have become mixed into the dough causing it to rise.

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Ashkenazi Jewry follows the ruling of Rabbi Isserles not to eat egg matzah on Pesach, with the exception of the sick and elderly who would otherwise not be able to eat matzah. (And even they don't fulfill their obligation at the seder with such matzah.)

Solution #3:

If one can't make it to an early *minyan* and eat two early-morning breakfasts (or lunches, for the record), one should eat a meal of meat or fruits in the afternoon. One should eat only moderately in the afternoon, so as to eat the matzah at the Seder with a hearty appetite!

Sources:

- *Maimonides, Mishna Torah, Hilchot Chametz u'Matza, 5:2, 6:12. see Raavad Hagahot Maimonit, 9, ibid.*
- *Rabbi Shimon Eider, Laws of Pesach*
- *Rabbi Mordechai Moshe Karp, Seder Purim M'shulash U'hilchot Erev Pesach*

WHY IS THIS NIGHT ...

by Simcha Groffman

The Purpose

“*Kinderlach*, tonight I am going to tell you a story about something that happened to me a long time ago.”

“Was it a good thing, Abba?”

“It was a very good thing, Ahuva. However, it didn't always look so good. In the beginning, things looked very bad. *Kinderlach*, at one time I was a very poor man. I did not have good clothes or good food. I had to work very hard without rest.”

“It sounds like you had a difficult job, Abba.”

“Leah, it was much worse than that. I was a slave. I could never do what I wanted. I had a master and I had to do what he wanted.”

“Was he a nice master, Abba?”

“No, he was very cruel, Avi. I suffered terribly. The situation was almost hopeless. I cried out to Hashem to help me. Then, one day, miracles began to happen. One miracle after another, until I was freed from slavery, my master was killed, and I became a rich man.”

“Were you the only one, Abba?”

“No, Chaim. This happened to the entire Jewish people.”

“Wow! Tell us all about it!”

“Okay. Not only am I going to tell you, but also I am going to show you! And guess what? I have a special treat for you. Everyone will get to participate in the telling of the story of what happened to us.”

“Abba, it sounds like we are not just telling the story...we are reliving it!”

“Exactly *kinderlach*. Everything that we do tonight is to relive what happened to the Jewish people. That is why we are dressed up in our best clothes. And the table is set so royally. Because we are free men. Okay, now let's begin.”

Rich or Slaves?

“Ahuva, tonight please bring the washing basin to me here at the table. You are showing that I am a

wealthy free man and that I do not even have to get up from the table to wash my hands.”

“Great! We are washing now! That means that we are going to eat the matzah. Boy am I hungry!”

“No, we're not eating the matzah yet, Avi.”

“What are we eating?”

“*Karpas* — a vegetable.”

“Why are we eating *karpas* before matzah? Don't we always eat the matzah first?”

“Normally we do, but tonight we are rich men. A rich man has all kinds of delicacies to dip into before the meal.”

“But Abba, what are we dipping into?”

“Salt water.”

“That's not a delicacy.”

“I know. It is to remind us of the tears that we shed when we were slaves in Egypt.”

“I don't understand Abba. Are we free tonight or are we slaves?”

“Patience *kinderlach*, let's continue with the Seder.”

Save Some for Later

“Kids, now I am breaking the matzah.”

“Wait Abba! Don't break that matzah! You didn't make the *bracha* of “*hamotzi*” yet. We always make the blessing on a whole matzah before we break it.”

“Excellent observation Leah. I broke the matzah first because that is the way a poor man eats. He does not eat all of his food at one time. He only eats part of his food, and then he puts the rest away for later.”

“Why Abba?”

“Because he does not know if he will have more food later. Poverty is hard.”

“But I thought you said that we were free men tonight?”

“Patience kids, let's continue with the Seder.”

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Poor Man's Bread/Freedom Bread

“Kids, this is poor man's bread.”

“Why do we call it that, Abba?”

“There are three reasons Chaim. The first is time. Did you ever watch or help Imma make challahs?”

“Sure. It takes a long time.”

“Exactly. A poor man does not have a long time to bake bread. He bakes matzah because it is quick. It also uses less oven heat, which costs less. A poor man does not have enough money to heat an oven long enough to make bread.”

“What is the third reason Abba?”

“Matzah is more satisfying than bread. It stays longer in the tummy. A poor man does not have enough to eat, so he needs food that stays a long time in his tummy. You know, kids, in Egypt, they did not give us enough time to bake bread. We would start to bake and our taskmasters would yell at us, ‘*Stop your baking and back to work! Take that bread out of the oven NOW!*’ We only had time for matzah, not bread.”

“But wait, Abba. I thought we eat the matzah because the dough did not have enough time to rise when we went out of Egypt. We left so quickly, that the dough could not rise.”

“Excellent Ahuva! So matzah really is the bread of freedom. It reminds us of how we were freed from slavery in Egypt.”

“Abba, what is it? Poor man's bread or freedom bread?”

“Patience kids, let's continue with the Seder.”

Changes

“Yankie, you read the *Mah Nishtanah* so well! I can tell that you've been practicing.”

“Thank you Abba. I have a question for you. Two of the changes that we make tonight are to show that we are free men — we eat reclining, and we dip the food into delicacies. The other two changes are to show that we are slaves — matzah and maror. What are we tonight? Free or slaves?”

“Okay, kids, I've kept you in suspense long enough. Now I am going to tell you the whole story.”

We Would Still Be There

“We were once slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, until Hashem took us out of there in a miraculous fashion.”

“What was so miraculous?”

“You should know, that Egypt was the world superpower of the time. Can you guess how many slaves escaped from Egypt?”

“One thousand?”

“Fewer.”

“One hundred?”

“Guess again.”

“Ten?”

“Keep going.”

“None?”

“Right. No one ever escaped from Egypt. It was like a maximum-security prison. Locks, gates, sentries, and even witchcraft. If Hashem had not taken the Jewish people out, we would still be slaves to this very day. Since we are not slaves, we must realize that Hashem took us out of Egypt.”

“One who tells the *Sipur Yitziat Mitzraim*, the Story of Leaving Egypt, with great *simcha* (happiness) is assured of happiness in the next world. Nothing makes Hashem as happy as the one who tells the story in great detail. Hashem gathers all of the Heavenly Angels together to listen to the story that we are telling here tonight.”

“Why Abba?”

“If you did a great favor for someone, Avi, would you be happy if they appreciated it?”

“Sure.”

“Hashem did us the greatest favor possible. He took us out of Egypt and did many other things, as we will see in a short while when we say “*dayeinu*.” By telling the story with great happiness we show Hashem how much we appreciate all He did for us.

“Okay kids, let's begin the story now. Imagine that you were all there back in Mitzraim...”

This article is an excerpt from "You Left Mitzraim" — The Kinder Torah Hagaddah Companion available from the author Simcha Groffman <simchag@netvision.net.il>

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

VAYIKRA

RAMBAN

1:9	Reason for <i>Korbanot</i>
1:10	Bulls and Goats
1:14	Birds
2:2	Role of the <i>Kohen</i>
2:11	The Problem of Leaven
2:14	Why “If”

SEFER HACHINUCH

95	Concept of <i>Korbanot</i>
117	Symbolism of Leaven and Honey
119	Salt
123	<i>Korban Oleh V'yored</i>
125	A Sinner's Offering
127	The Sin of Carelessness