

OHRNET

PARSHAT VAYIKRA - NISSAN 7 - APRIL 5, 2025
PARSHAT TZAV EREV PESACH - NISSAN 14 - APRIL 12, 2025
7TH DAY OF PESACH - NISSAN 21 - APRIL 19, 2025
PARSHAT SHMINI - NISSAN 28 – APRIL 26, 2025
PARSHAT TAZRIA / METZORA – IYAR 5 – MAY 3, 2025
PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT / KEDOSHIM – IYAR 12 – MAY 10, 2025
• VOL 32 NO. 21

PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

JUST A REGULAR JOE?

“It’s easier to take the Jew out of Egypt, than Egypt out of the Jew.”

Every year with the Seder, we experience the liberation from the slavery of Egypt. Egyptian society was celebrated immorality. You don’t have to look far to see the parallels in our day and age. And yet our generation has the power to bring the final redemption: “the last as the first.” What is that power? And how do we unlock it?

When Rabbi Nosson Wachtfogel (1910–1998) was the Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood, one of the students told him the following dream: “I was walking through the dormitory of the Yeshiva and someone came up and told me that Moshiach is sleeping in a room in the dormitory. We went in and I saw Rabbi Akiva Eiger pushing the Moshiach. He’s pushing and pushing him, trying to wake him up, but the Moshiach wouldn’t wake up.

“And then the Chasam Sofer comes in and he also starts to push and shake the Moshiach, and he still won’t wake up. One Gadol after another comes into the room, and despite all their pushing and shaking, the Moshiach won’t wake up.

“Finally, Rabbi Aharon Kotler comes in the room, and he pushes and pushes the Moshiach but he won’t wake up. The Moshiach sleeps soundly through the whole thing.

“Then, in the next scene in the dream, I’m playing basketball during a recess with some friends. One of them is holding his gemara and he says, “Okay, we have to finish up now and go learn.” As we walk through the dormitory, we go into the room where Moshiach is sleeping, and I give him a gentle shake, and he wakes up and smiles.”

Rabbi Wachtfogel told the student that his dream had a deep meaning. The Moshiach didn’t come to the generations of the Tanaim. He didn’t come to the Amoraim. He didn’t come to the Geonim and to the Rabonei Sevoraim, to the Rishonim or the Acharonim. But he will have to come to us, and if not to us, then to a generation of even a lesser spiritual stature than ours.

Why is that? How is it that they did not merit the Moshiach but we can?

Rabbi Wachtfogel said that we don't understand how great is the power of dominating our evil inclination." When an American boy brought up with everything revealed around him turns around and says 'No!', this creates a power that even the previous holy generations could not generate. We look at our illustrious and holy forebears - we see how great was their Torah and good deeds - but they still couldn't bring Moshiach. The Vilna Gaon in Aderet Elyahu says about the Gemara at the end of Uktzin, "In the World to Come, Hashem will give each Tzadik 310 worlds – this is learned from the verse in Mishlei, "to bequeath to the ones who love Me 'Yesh'." *Yesh* means 'existence,' but its numerical value is 310. Says the Gaon, of those 310 worlds, only ten are for positive mitzvos, and 300 are for controlling yourself and not doing what your evil inclination wants you to do. Thirty times as many worlds when you turn away, when you control yourself.

You may think I'm just a regular Joe. You're not a Joe, you're a Yosef – with the incredible power to finally wake up Moshiach from his millennia of slumber.

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Maccot 9-15

Importance of Learning Together

Rabbi Yossi the son of Rabbi Chanina said, "What is meant by the verse: 'A sword is on the *badim*'? This means that 'a sword is on the necks of the 'haters of the Torah scholars' (a euphemistic way of saying 'a sword in on the necks of the Torah scholars, in order not to say 'on the necks of the Torah scholars') who learn Torah individually and not with others. And not only this, but they become 'stupid;' and not only this, but they sin."

Rabbi Yossi the son of Rabbi Chanina teaches on our *daf*: These quite serious and harsh warnings to those who study the Torah by themselves. He derives this from a verse in the Prophet Yirmiyahu 50:36.

We see from here the importance of being involved in Torah study together with a *chevruta* (study partner), a Yeshiva with many students, and with a Rabbi to guide each person's Torah study. A person who studies Torah without others is in *danger* of incorrect

and improper study, which can lead to thoughts, speech, and actions which are not in accordance with the true way of the Torah.

This *gemara* reminds me of a true story that I heard in my youth. A businessman in Jerusalem worked for many years, and then decided one day to retire and devote himself entirely to Torah study. So he closed up his store to customers, and began to study Torah all day — day after day — by himself in his closed-up store. After many years he died. But he left an unusual written request: “I insist that when I die that all of the notebooks of my Torah writings from my Torah study during my retirement should be buried along with me.”

Word of his request quickly reached the leading Rabbis of Jerusalem at the time. They felt quite conflicted and uncomfortable about burying and “losing” all of this man’s many Torah “novel ideas” that he had written. The Rabbis decided on a course of action. They sent a group of young, leading Torah scholars (*avreichim*), led by a then-young Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932), who later became a very great leading Rabbi of Jerusalem and for the Jewish People.

When this group of scholars quickly went and found the notebooks, they opened the first one and saw a question and answer the man had written regarding Yaakov’s dream. The verse states, “And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to Heaven; and behold, angels of G-d were ascending and descending upon it.” (Gen. 28:12)

“There is a difficulty in this verse,” wrote the man. “Everyone knows that angels have wings. Why, therefore, did they need a ladder to go up and down on?”

The answer he wrote was, “The verse in the Torah is speaking about baby angels.”

I don’t know whether the young Rabbis who saw this laughed or cried, but they realized that their investigation was concluded and that the man was correct in requesting that his writings be buried along with him...

▪ *Maccot 10a*

Pesach

Pesachim 114-121

Two Psalms

“Mizmor l’David” (a song to David) – this teaches that he (David) first said a ‘shira’ (song) and then the Divine Presence rested upon him; this teaches you that the Divine Presence does not rest upon a person when he is sad, frivolous or wasting time, but only when he is in a state of happiness of a mitzvah.”

This *beraita* is taught on our *daf* to inform us of the essential connection between achieving a joyous condition from performing a mitzvah and thus becoming a vessel fit to receive the Divine Presence. Rashi explains that the *Tana* derives this concept from the order of the first two words of the first verse of the Psalm – Mizmor and David. First comes the *mizmor*, the song of mitzvah that brings about happiness, and then the Divine Presence dwells in that person who is in the appropriate spiritual state.

- *Pesachim 117a*

“What is meant by the verse (that we say in Hallel), ‘Let all the nations praise Hashem, for His loving-kindness to us is so great’ (Tehillim 117:1-2) – is the fact that Hashem does merciful acts for Klal Yisrael a reason for the other nations of the world to praise Him?”

Rebbe asked the ailing Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yossi to share the teachings that he had learned from his father Rabbi Yossi. One of these teachings is the above question and the answer that his father supplied. “The nations of the world praise Hashem for the acts of might and wonder He does throughout the world, and therefore all the more so should we – His Jewish People – praise Hashem for the even greater kindness and mercy He has shown us.” (*Gemara* according to the Rashbam)

PARSHA OVERVIEW

VAYIKRA

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 a *korban olah*, a burnt-offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the person 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 remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace-offering, part of which is burned on the Altar and part eaten, can be 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.

TZAV

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 a *korban olah*, a burnt-offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the person 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 remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace-offering, part of which is burned on the Altar and part eaten, can be 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.

SHMINI

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, consuming them and stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* regarding 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. The Jewish People are commanded to be separate and holy — like Hashem.

TAZRIA

The Torah commands a woman to bring a *korban* after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of *tzara'at* (often mistranslated as leprosy) — a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A *kohen* must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is *tzara'at* or not. The *kohen* isolates the sufferer for a week. If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the *kohen* decides the person's status. The Torah describes the different forms of *tzara'at*. One whose *tzara'at* is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of *tzara'at* on clothing is described in detail.

METZORA

The Torah describes the procedure for a *metzora* (a person afflicted with *tzara'at*) upon the conclusion of his isolation period. This process extends for a week and involves *korbanot* and immersions in the mikveh. Then, a *kohen* must pronounce the *metzora* pure. A *metzora* of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals. Before a *kohen* diagnoses that a house has *tzara'at*, household possessions are removed to prevent

them from also being declared ritually impure. The *tzara'at* is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house. If the *tzara'at* signs reappear, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details which bodily secretions render a person spiritually impure, and thereby prevent his contact with holy items. And the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

ACHREI-MOT

G-d instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the Mishkan. On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol is to approach the holiest part of the Mishkan after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is "for G-d" and is offered in the Temple, while the other is "for Azazel" in the desert. The Torah states the individual's obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must "afflict" oneself. We are to abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing and marital relations.

Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman's monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

KEDOSHIM

The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught:

Prohibitions: Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone's property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one's parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; tattooing.

Positive: Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree's fourth year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf.

Q & A

VAYIKRA

Questions

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 burned while in the wilderness? Where were they burned 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?

Answers

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, G-d 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.

TZAV

Questions

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?

ANSWERS

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 oman (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 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 aduma (red heifer).
20. Olah (6:2); mincha (6:7); chatat (6:18); asham (7:1); shelamim (7:11)

SHEMINI

Questions

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

Answers

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).
-

TAZRIA

Questions

1. When does a woman who has given birth to a son go to the *mikveh*?
2. After a woman gives birth, she is required to offer two types of offerings. Which are they?
3. What animal does the woman offer as a *chatat*?
4. Which of these offerings makes her *tahor* (ritual purity)?
5. Which of the sacrifices does the woman offer first, the *olah* or the *chatat*?
6. Who determines whether a person is a *metzora tamei* (person with ritually impure *tzara'at*) or is *tahor*?
7. If the *kohen* sees that the *tzara'at* has spread after one week, how does he rule?
8. What disqualifies a *kohen* from being able to give a ruling in a case of *tzara'at*?
9. Why is the appearance of *tzara'at* on the tip of one of the 24 "limbs" that project from the body usually unable to be examined?
10. On which days is a *kohen* not permitted to give a ruling on *tzara'at*?
11. In areas of the body where collections of hair grow (e.g., the head or beard), what color hair is indicative of ritual impurity?
12. In areas of the body where collections of hair grow, what color hair is indicative of purity?
13. If the *kohen* intentionally or unintentionally pronounces a *tamei* person "*tahor*," what is that person's status?
14. What signs of mourning must a *metzora* display?
15. Why must a *metzora* call out, "*Tamei! Tamei!*"?
16. Where must a *metzora* dwell?
17. Why is a *metzora* commanded to dwell in isolation?
18. What sign denotes *tzara'at* in a garment?
19. What must be done to a garment that has *tzara'at*?
20. If after washing a garment the signs of *tzara'at* disappear entirely, how is the garment purified?

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

Answers

1. 12:2 - At the end of seven days.
2. 12:6 - An *olah* and a *chatat*.
3. 12:6 - A *tor* (turtle dove) or a *ben yona* (young pigeon).
4. 12:7 - The *chatat*.
5. 12:8 - The *chatat*.
6. 13:2 - A *kohen*.
7. 13:5 - The person is *tamei*.
8. 13:12 - Poor vision.
9. 13:14 - The *tzara'at* as a whole must be seen at one time. Since these parts are angular, they cannot be seen at one time.
10. 13:14 - During the festivals; and ruling on a groom during the seven days of feasting after the marriage.
11. 13:29 - Golden.
12. 13:37 - Any color other than golden.
13. 13:37 - He remains *tamei*.
14. 13:45 - He must tear his garments, let his hair grow wild, and cover his lips with his garment.
15. 13:45 - So people will know to keep away from him.
16. 13:46 - Outside the camp in isolation.
17. 13:46 - Since *tzara'at* is a punishment for *lashon hara* (evil speech), which creates a rift between people, the Torah punishes measure for measure by placing a division between him and others.
18. 13:49 - A dark green or dark red discoloration.
19. 13:52 - It must be burned
20. 13:58 - Through immersion in a *mikveh*.

METZORA

Questions

1. When may a *metzora* not be pronounced *tahor*?
2. In the *midbar*, where did a *metzora* dwell while he was *tamei*?
3. Why does the *metzora* require birds in the purification process?
4. In the purification process of a *metzora*, what does the cedar wood symbolize?
5. During the purification process, the *metzora* is required to shave his hair. Which hair must he shave?
6. What is unique about the *chatat* and the *asham* offered by the *metzora*?
7. In the *Beit Hamikdash*, when the *metzora* was presented "before G-d" (14:11), where did he stand?
8. Where was the *asham* of the *metzora* slaughtered?
9. How was having *tzara'at* in one's house sometimes advantageous?
10. When a house is suspected as having *tzara'at*, what is its status prior to the inspection by a *kohen*?
11. What happens to the vessels that are in a house found to have *tzara'at*?
12. Which type of vessels cannot be made *tahor* after they become *tamei*?
13. Where were stones afflicted with *tzara'at* discarded?
14. When a house is suspected of having *tzara'at*, a *kohen* commands that the affected stones be replaced and the house plastered. What is the law if the *tzara'at*:
 - a. returns and spreads;
 - b. does not return;
 - c. returns, but does not spread?
15. When a person enters a house that has *tzara'at*, when do his clothes become *tamei*?
16. What is the status of a man who is *zav* (sees a flow):
 - a. two times or two consecutive days;
 - b. three times or three consecutive days?
17. A *zav* sat or slept on the following:
 - a). a bed; b) a plank; c) a chair; d) a rock.If a *tahor* person touches these things what is his status?
18. What does the Torah mean when it refers to a *zav* who "has not washed his hands"?
19. When may a *zav* immerse in a *mikveh* to purify himself?
20. What is the status of someone who experiences a one-time flow?

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

Answers

1. 14:2 - At night.
2. 14:3 - Outside the three camps.
3. 14:4 - *Tzara'at* comes as a punishment for *lashon hara*. Therefore, the Torah requires the *metzora* to offer birds, who chatter constantly, to atone for his sin of chattering.
4. 14:4 - The cedar is a lofty tree. It alludes to the fact that *tzara'at* comes as a punishment for haughtiness.
5. 14:9 - Any visible collection of hair on the body.
6. 14:10 - They require *n'sachim* (drink offerings).
7. 14:11 - At the gate of Nikanor.
8. 14:13 - On the northern side of the *mizbe'ach*.
9. 14:34 - The Amorites concealed treasures in the walls of their houses. After the conquest of the Land, *tzara'at* would afflict these houses. The Jewish owner would tear down the house and find the treasures.
10. 14:36 - It is *tahor*.
11. 14:36 - They become *tamei*.
12. 14:36 - Earthenware vessels.
13. 14:40 - In places where *tahor* objects were not handled
14.
 - a. 14:44-45 - It is called "*tzara'at mam'eret*," and the house must be demolished;
 - b. 14:48 - the house is pronounced *tahor*;
 - c. 14:44 - The house must be demolished.
15. 14:46 - When he remains in the house long enough to eat a small meal.
16. 15:2 -
 - a. He is *tamei*;
 - b. he is *tamei* and is also required to bring a *korban*.
17. 15:4-5 - Only a type of object that one usually lies or sits upon becomes a transmitter of *tumah* when a *zav* sits or lies on it. A *tahor* person who subsequently touches the object becomes *tamei* and the clothes he is wearing are also *tamei'im*. Therefore:
 - a. *tamei*;
 - b. *tahor*;
 - c. *tamei*;
 - d. *tahor*.
18. 15:11 - One who has not immersed in a *mikveh*.
19. 15:13 - After seven consecutive days without a flow.
20. 15:32 - He is *tamei* until evening.

ACHAREI MOT

Questions

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshas Acharei Mos* was taught after the death of Aaron's sons?
2. What is the punishment for a *Kohen Gadol* who inappropriately enters the *Kodesh Kodashim*?
3. How long did the first *Beis Hamikdash* exist?
4. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear when he entered the *Kodesh Kodashim*?
5. How many times did the *Kohen Gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
6. How many times did he wash his hands and feet from the *Kiyor* (copper laver)?
7. The *Kohen Gadol* offered a bull *Chatat* to atone for himself and his household. Who paid for it?
8. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *Azazel*. What is *Azazel*?
9. Who is included in the "household" of the *Kohen Gadol*?
10. For what sin does the goat *Chatat* atone?
11. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*?
12. Where were the fats of the *Chatat* burned?
13. Who is solely responsible for attaining atonement for the Jewish People on Yom Kippur?
14. From one point in history, installation of the *Kohen Gadol* through anointing was no longer used but was conducted by donning the special garments of that office. From when and why?
15. What is the penalty of *karet*?
16. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
17. When a person eats a kosher bird that was improperly slaughtered (a *neveilah*), at what point does he contract *tumah*?
18. The Torah commands the Jewish People not to follow the "*chukim*" of the Canaanites. What are the forbidden "*chukim*"?
19. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
20. May a man marry his wife's sister?

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

Answers

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the *Kodesh Kodashim* except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:2 - Death.
3. 16:3 - 410 years.
4. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *Kohen*.
5. 16:4 - Five times.
6. 16:4 - Ten times.
7. 16:6 - The *Kohen Gadol*.
8. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
9. 16:11 - All the *Kohanim*.
10. 16:16 - For unknowingly entering the *Beit Hamikdash* in the state of *tumah*.
11. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
12. 16:25 - On the outer *Mizbe'ach*.
13. 16:32 - The *Kohen Gadol*.
14. 16:32 - Anointing ceased during the kingship of Yoshiahu. At that time, the oil of anointing was hidden away.
15. 17:9 - One's offspring die and one's own life is shortened.
16. 17:13 - Non domesticated kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.
17. 17:15 - When the food enters the esophagus.
18. 18:3 - Their social customs.
19. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as a decree from Hashem.
20. 18:18 - Yes, but not during the lifetime of his wife.

KEDOSHIM

Questions

1. Why was *Parshat Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish People?
2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbat?
4. Why does Shabbat observance supersede honoring parents?
5. What is "*leket*"?
6. In *Shemot* 20:13, the Torah commands "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11 "Do not steal"?
7. "Do not do wrong to your neighbor" (*19:13*). To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
8. By when must you pay someone who worked for you during the day?
9. How does Rashi explain the prohibition "Don't put a stumbling block before a sightless person"?
10. In a monetary case involving a poor person and a rich person, a judge is likely to wrongly favor the poor person. What rationale does Rashi give for this?
11. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
12. It's forbidden to bear a grudge. What example does Rashi give of this?
13. The Torah forbids tattooing. How is a tattoo made?
14. How does one fulfill the mitzvah of "*hadarta p'nei zaken*"?
15. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
16. What penalty does the Torah state for cursing one's parents?
17. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which penalty is it referring?
18. What will result if the Jewish People ignore the laws of forbidden relationships?
19. Which of the forbidden relationships listed in this week's Parsha were practiced by the Canaanites?
20. Is it proper for a Jew to say "I would enjoy eating ham"?

Answers

1. 19:2 - Because the fundamental teachings of the Torah are contained in this Parsha.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:3 - Because the parents are also commanded by Hashem to observe Shabbat. Parents deserve great honor, but not at the "expense" of Hashem's honor.
5. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain accidentally dropped while harvesting. They are left for the poor.
6. 19:11 - The Torah in Vayikra prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemot* it prohibits kidnapping.
7. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
8. 19:13 - Before the following dawn.
9. 19:13 - Don't give improper advice to a person who is unaware in a matter. For example, don't advise someone to sell his field, when in reality you yourself wish to buy it.
10. 19:15 - The judge might think: "This rich person is obligated to give charity to this poor person regardless of the outcome of this court case. Therefore, I'll rule in favor of the poor person. That way, he'll receive the financial support he needs without feeling shame."
11. 19:17 - Causing public embarrassment.
12. 19:18 - Person A asks person B: "Can I borrow your shovel?" Person B says: "No." The next day, B says to A: "Can I borrow your scythe?" A replies: "Sure, I'm not stingy like you are."
13. 19:28 - Ink is injected into the skin with a needle.
14. 19:32 - By not sitting in the seat of elderly people, and by not contradicting their statements.
15. 20:3 - "*Karet*" -- being spiritually "cut off."
16. 20:9 - Death by stoning.
17. 20:10 - *Chenek* (strangulation).
18. 20:22 - The land of Israel will "spit them out."
19. 20:23 - All of them.
20. 20:26 - Yes.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

SEDER NIGHT – BRACHOT GALORE!

ONE SEDER NIGHT THE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF RABBI ZALMAN BRIZEL, ONE OF THE TZADDIKIM OF YERUSHALAYIM, CAME TO HIS HOME TO WISH HIM GOOD YOM TOV. ONE OF THE GRANDCHILDREN KNOCKED OVER THE MATZAH BOX, AND ALL THE MATZOT BROKE. INSTEAD OF BECOMING ANGRY, RABBI ZALMAN RAISED HIS HANDS AND WITH MUCH HEARTFELT EMOTION HE SAID:
“BARUCH HASHEM, I HAVE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN!”

Seder Night is a night unlike any other night in the year. Aside from the excitement and the tremendous anticipation that Seder Night brings with it, it is also a night of blessings. There will be twenty(!) blessings recited this year at the Seder alone.

- Two for Kiddush
- Two for Havdalah
- *Shehechyanu*
- *Karpas*
- The blessing over the redemption
- The second cup of wine
- Washing hands before eating the matzah
- *Hamotzi* over the matzah
- *Al Achilat Matzah* – the special blessing made over eating the matzah
- *Al Achilat Maror* – the special blessing made over eating the bitter herbs
- Four blessings in *Birkat Hamazon*
- The third cup of wine
- *Yishtabach*
- The fourth cup of wine
- *Al Hagefen* the blessing recited after drinking wine

Two of the blessings are unique to Seder Night and are not recited at any other time in the year: the blessing over the matzah, “*al achilat matzah*,” and the blessing over the bitter herbs, “*al achilat maror*.” With your permission, I would like to focus on the special blessing that is recited over the matzah. After reciting the standard blessing “*Hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz*,” which is said whenever we eat bread, we add another blessing before we eat the matzah, “*Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech haolam asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al achilat matzah* – Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to eat matzah.”

It is truly one of the most enchanting moments in the Jewish year, as we recite these magical words that will not be said again until next Seder Night!

In truth, making such a unique blessing and eating the matzah on Seder Night is such an elevated experience that one would think it should warrant the *Shehechyanu* blessing to be recited over it. The Avudraham points out that we do not recite *Shehechyanu* over eating the matzah because *Shehechyanu* was already said at the beginning of the Seder and it covers all the new mitzvot performed during the Seder. However, the Avudraham adds another reason for not reciting the *Shehechyanu* blessing a second time. He explains that at the conclusion of the “*Maggid*” section (which is the main part of the Seder, describing the exodus from Egypt, beginning with “*Ha Lachmanyah*” and lasting until we drink the second cup of wine), we thank Hashem for having given us the opportunity to eat matzah and bitter herbs on this exalted night. The sentiments expressed in the blessing are the same as those of *Shehechyanu*, and therefore there is no necessity to recite it again.

There is something extraordinary about matzah. The Chatam Sofer powerfully describes how matzah is a completely spiritual food. Matzah is so special that he compares it to the manna that Hashem fed us during our forty-year journey in the desert. In its essence, matzah is so spiritual that our eating it elevates us and draws us closer to Hashem. “If so,” asks the Chatam Sofer, “why are we not commanded to eat matzah all year round to remain in the spiritual state of ecstasy that eating the matzah on Seder Night has the potential to bring us to?” Because, he answers, we are human beings and we are composed of two disparate parts. We are the only element in Hashem’s world that was created with both a spiritual and a physical dimension. Our task in this world is to live our lives in a state of absolute balance so that the spiritual and the physical can exist within us in harmony. On Pesach, and particularly on Seder Night, we eat only matzah because Pesach symbolizes the beginning of our Nationhood. We have been designated by Hashem to be His spiritual ambassadors in this world. In effect, eating matzah on Pesach gives us the spiritual balance to be able to eat bread, that symbolizes the more physical dimensions of the world, during the rest of the year without its physicality overwhelming us.

It is now clear why we need to recite an extra blessing before we eat the matzah for the first time. The blessing “*al achilat matzah*” conveys our feelings of passion and excitement at being able to fulfill the remarkable mitzvah of eating matzah on Seder Night! As the Maharal explains, that is why the custom is not to dip the matzah in salt on Seder Night as we do when we make *Hamotzi* throughout the year. Because our love for the mitzvah is so overwhelming that we do not want to take away – even by an iota – from the taste and the purity of the matzot.

May it be the Will of our Father in Heaven that the entire Jewish Nation be blessed with an uplifting and inspiring Seder Night this year. And that we all merit to internalize the beauty and the holiness of the uniquely precious mitzvah of “*achilat matzah*”!

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Pesach

Seeing Red (Part 3)

*Two weeks ago, we inaugurated our three-part series that explores Hebrew and Aramaic words associated with the color “red.” Part I of that exploration focused on the Hebrew word *adom*, while Part II delved into other Hebrew terms for “red.” In this final installment we will finish off this topic with a special focus on Aramaic words related to the color “red.”*

Our first Aramaic word related to “red” actually occurs in Biblical Hebrew. In one particular passage, the Psalmist refers to wine with the adjective *chamar* (Ps. 75:9). Now, the Aramaic word for “wine” is actually *chamar/chamra* (as we discussed in an earlier essay called “[Words for Wine Part 2/2](#),” March 2022), but in this context, it does not make sense to interpret the Hebrew word *chamar* as “wine” because that word is supposed to be an adjective that *describes* some property of wine, and does not serve as a synonym for wine itself. In other words, it is something of a tautology to say “winey wine,” so the word *chamar* in this case must mean something other than just “wine.” Enter Rabbi Yonah Ibn Janach and Radak in their respective *Sefer HaShorashim* (and Radak to Ps. 75:9), who explain that *chamar* here actually means “red.” They understand the word as primarily referring to the specific color characteristic of wine, and thus explain that it refers specifically to wine’s redness. Hence, *chamar* in Biblical Hebrew becomes another word for “red.”

By the way, Hebrew is not the only Semitic language in which this word means “red.” In Arabic as well, the word *'ahmar (achmar)* means “red.” This term is actually the origin of the Spanish place name Alhambra (in Granada, Spain), which was originally called *al hamra* (“the red [palace]”) in Arabic.

Rabbi Ernest Klein writes that the Hebrew word *chemar* (“asphalt,” “bitumen”) is called so in allusion to its reddish-brown color. Likewise, he explains the term *chomer* (“matter/material”) as originally referring primarily to “clay,” which, of course, has a reddish hue (a similar point is made by Ibn Ezra in his “Long Commentary” to Ex. 2:3). He further suggests that the Hebrew words *chamor* (“donkey”) and *yachmur* (“roebuck”) also derive from this word for “red” in the sense that they refer to a “red animal.” As a parallel to this semantic development, Klein adduces the case of the Spanish word *burro* (“donkey”), which he asserts ultimately derives from the Late Latin *burrus* (“red”), which is itself a corruption of the Greek *purros* (“yellowish red” or “flame-colored”). [Interestingly, when discussing the English word *roe* (as in *roebuck*) in his etymological dictionary of English, Rabbi Klein does not link that word

with the Indo-European root for “red” (see below), but rather sees it as derived from the Indo-European root *rei-* or *reoi-*, which mean “streaky” or “spotted.”]

To me, it is interesting to note that a grandson of Seir the Horite (whose family settled in Mount Seir before that area was conquered by Esau and became the homeland of the Edomites) was named Chamran (I Chron. 1:41). This is another example of given names associated with the color “red” that appear in the context of the Edomites, as we’ve already seen several times in this series. In the Torah, Seir’s grandson has an alternate name, Chemdan (Gen. 36:26), which can be viewed as equivalent to Chamran (based on the interchangeability of the orthographically-similar letters REISH and DALET).

There is another word in Hebrew that can be explained as meaning “red” in light of Aramaic. The second commandment of the Decalogue states that one should not serve idolatry because Hashem is a “jealous god” (Ex. 20:4) and will therefore not tolerate such abominations. The term used to describe Him being “jealous/zealous” is a *kana*. Shadal (to Ex. 20:5) notes that the Peshitta (a translation of the Bible into an Aramaic dialect known as Syriac) twice uses an obscure Aramaic word for “red” that is spelled with the letters KUF-NUN-ALEPH, just like *kana*. This term is used once for rendering the Hebrew word *chachlilei* (Prov. 23:29) and once for rendering the word *nichmaru* (Lam. 5:10). We discussed the word *chachlilei* in Part II of this essay, and needless to say it means “red.” Based on this rare Syriac word, Shadal proposes that the core meaning of the Biblical Hebrew word *kana* is actually “red.” Indeed, *qani* is used in Classical Arabic to describe a “deep crimson” or “dark red color,” often in poetic or literary contexts.

According to this, the Hebrew adjective *kana* refers to the physiological effects of jealousy, whereby one’s heart starts “heating up,” which causes a person’s face to become ruddy out of the indignation that somebody else has taken what is due to them. Obviously, because Hashem has no physical body, applying the word *kana* to Him is merely a linguistic borrowing and should not be taken literally as any statement of anthropomorphism. But Shadal’s point is that when Hashem is described as “jealous” when Jews worship other gods, the more accurate way of understanding it is that He is “angry” over such aberrations. To say it in a more colorful way, Hashem is not visited by the “green-eyed monster” (jealousy in Shakespearean idiom), but is rather “seeing red” (angry).

Turning to Aramaic proper, it should be noted that Rabbi Eliyahu HaBachur in *Meturgaman* offers a whole list of cases in which the Targumim render the Hebrew words for “red” — *adom* (discussed in Part I) and *chachlilei* (discussed in Part II) — as *sumak*. That word is the standard term in Talmudic Aramaic for the color “red.” A famous example of such usage is when the Talmud states that one may not save one’s life by killing somebody else because “what makes you see that your blood is redder (*sumak*)? Maybe that man’s blood is redder (*sumak*)?” (*Pesachim* 25b, *Yoma* 82b, *Sanhedrin* 74a). Likewise, when stating that the sun is red-colored at sunrise and sunset, the Talmud (*Bava Batra* 84a) writes that it is *samka*. Interestingly, Dr. Alexander Kohut in *HaAruch HaShaleim* points out that there seem to be several personal names in rabbinic sources that are derived from this Aramaic word for “red” — Sheila bar Sumki (*Gittin* 69a), Rabbi Abba Samuka (Jerusalemic Talmud *Brachot* 9:1), and Rabbi Chelbo ben Chalifei bar Simkay (*Bereishit Rabbah* §51:2).

When it comes to some of the other Hebrew terms for “red,” the Targumim actually prefer a different Aramaic term. That is, when rendering the Hebrew words *shani* (Gen. 38:30, Josh. 2:18) and *tola* (Isa. 1:18, Lam. 4:5) which refer to “red” (as discussed in Part II of this essay), Targum uses the word *zehorit*. This term also appears in the Mishnah, for example when discussing the red-colored string (*leshon shel zehorit*) that was tied to the head of the scapegoat used in the Yom Kippur services (*Shabbat* 9:3, *Shekalim* 4:2, *Yoma* 4:2; 6:6).

Now, the root of that Aramaic term *zehorit*, ZAYIN-HEY-REISH variously refers to “shining,” “illuminating,” and even the “moon.” But its specific connection to the color red is somewhat tenuous. Rabbi Tanchum HaYerushalmi (in his dictionary of Rabbinic Hebrew) partially alleviates this issue by writing that *zehorit* refers to a sort of “red” that is especially “shiny,” or at least more so than other colors.

Another word related to our discussion is *gichor*. This word first appears in the Mishnah (*Bechorot* 7:6), when stating that *gichor* is a blemish that disqualifies a Kohen from serving in the Temple, but does not disqualify an animal from being brought as a sacrifice. Similarly, the Tosefta (*Brachot* 7:3) rules that if one encounters a *gichor*, one should recite the blessing *baruch mishaneh habriyot*. Likewise, when Elkanah’s wife Hannah prayed for Hashem to grant her a son (who later turned out to be the prophet Samuel), she asked that her son not be “too tall or too short, too skinny or too fat, too white or too reddish [*gichor*], too intelligent or too senseless” (*Brachot* 31b). In all of these contexts, Rashi (to *Brachot* 31b, 58b, *Bechorot* 45b, Rashi to *Brachot* 59b) explains that *gichor* means “very red” (or perhaps “deep red”). Yet, the etymology of the Mishnaic Hebrew *gichor* is quite obscure, as it does not seem to be an actual Aramaic or Hebrew word. Dr. Alexander Kohut in *Ha’Aruch HaShaleim* sees it as being of Indo-Iranian origin, connecting this word with the Bactrian word *cukhra* and the Old Persian word *cuhar*, both of which apparently mean “red.” Rabbi Ernest Klein simply states that *gichor* is “of unknown origin.” As an aside, the name of one of the family heads to return to the Holy Land in the time of Zerubbabel was Gachar (*Ezra* 2:47, *Neh.* 7:49). We can only speculate as to whether this means that Mr. Gachar was of reddish complexion.

Our final word for “red” relates to a word discussed at greater length in a previous essay. In the essay entitled “The Color Purple” (Feb. 2022), we discussed the Biblical Hebrew word *argaman/argavan*, and noted that there is good reason to think that that word refers to the color “red.” Shadal (to Ex. 25:4) writes that the word *argavan* is a form of the word *al-gavan*, based on the interchangeability of the letters REISH and LAMMED. The term *al-gavan* means “the color” (with *al* serving as the definite article “the,” as it does in Arabic). The way he explains it, this is because the color red sticks out more than other colors, thus making it the *superlative* color.

Perhaps it is because of the ostentatious, attention-grabbing nature of the color red that the Rema (*Yoreh Deah* §178:1) rules that a Jew should not wear red clothes. Indeed, the Talmud (*Brachot* 20a) records the story of a rabbi who risked his life to make sure that a woman whom he thought was Jewish should not wear a red article of clothing called a *karbalta*, which literally means “rooster’s crest” (as explained by *Sefer HaAruch* and Rabbeinu Chananel to *Brachot* 20a printed in the Wagschall edition).

Interestingly, various Yemenite exegetes (like *Midrash Chefetz* and *Meor Ha'Afeilah* to Ex. 25:4) follow the approach that *argaman* refers to a shade of red, and then feel the need to explain how *argaman* differs visually from *tolaat shani* which is also red. The way they explain it, *argaman* refers to yellowish-red (perhaps closer to what we might call orange), while *tola'at shani* is a stronger/deeper red (as we saw in the previous installment, *cremine* or *crimson*).

Before we conclude this three-part series, there is one more thing I want to discuss: In discussing various words for “red,” Rashi uses the Old French word *russ* as a translation of the Hebrew *adom* (Gen. 25:25, Lev. 13:39), *gichor* (*Brachot* 31b, 58b, 59b, *Bechorot* 45b), *shachum* (Gen. 30:32, *Avodah Zarah* 33b), *sumka* (*Bechorot* 45b), and *tola'at shani* (*Gittin* 69b). That Romance word derives from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root *reudh-* means “red,” which happens to be the ancestor of a whole bevy of English words: *red*, *rose*, *rouge*, *rosy*, and *rust*. In Latin, the PIE *dh*-sound turns into a *b*-sound to give us the word *ruby* (meaning “red,” used in English to refer to a certain type of red gemstone). Similarly, the Rubicon is a red river in Italy, so named because it is red due to natural iron deposits in its riverbank. The English word *robust* derives from *ruby*, as it originally referred to a special type of oak that a “reddish” heartwood. Other related English words include *rubor*, *rubicund*, *rubric*, *rubigo*, *rubus*, *rubescens*, *rubella*, *bilirubin*.

There is also a whole slew of proper names whose onomastic meanings relate to the color “red” and are etymologically derived from these words: Reid, Rudolph/Rudolf, Randolph, Rudy, Royde, Roth, Rufus, Rufina, Rossi, Ross, Russel, Rusty, Rowan, Roux, Rousseau, and Barbarossa/Rothbard (which both literally mean “red beard”). I used to think that the feminine given name Roxanne is also related to the color “red.” But after looking into more, I see that this is not the case. Rather, the name of the historical Roxana (wife of Alexander the Great) was a Latinization of her actual Persian name, Roshanak. That Persian feminine name literally means “shiny” or “light.” The *roshan-* element appears in many different Persian surnames, including Roshanpour, Roshanzadeh, Roshanfar, and Roshangar. In light of the connection between “red” and “shiny,” perhaps Roxanne really is connected to “red” after all.

Ohrnet Magazine is a weekly Torah magazine published by Ohr Somayach Institutions,
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel · Tel +972-2-581-0315 · Email. info@ohr.edu

Contributing authors, editors and production team: Rabbi Nota Schiller – Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz - Rav of Kehillos Ohr Somayach, Avi Kaufman, Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Yaakov Meyers, Mrs. Rosalie Moriah, Rabbi Moshe Newman, Rabbi Shlomo Simon, Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair, Rabbi Yehuda Spitz, Mrs. Helena Stern.

©1992-2025 Ohr Somayach Institutions – All rights reserved – This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Editor’s disclaimer – Ohrnet Magazine is not intended to be a source for halachic rulings. In any real and specific case one should consult a qualified halachic authority for ruling.

INSIGHTS INTO HALACHA

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

PESACH

5785 – The Rarest Year of Them All

Part 10 – *Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos* (Part 2)

As detailed in previous installments in our series, our current year, 5785, is not only a rare one, but calendarically speaking, actually the hands-down **rarest** of them all. 5785 is classified as a *HaSh"A* year in our calendars. This abbreviation is referring to Rosh Hashana falling out on Thursday (*hei*), both months of Cheshvan and Kislev being *shalem* (*shin* - 30 day months instead of possibly 29; these are the only months that can switch off in our set calendar), and Pesach falling out on Sunday (*aleph*).

A *HaSh"A* year is the rarest of years, and out of the 14 possibilities in *Tur's* 247-year calendar cycle, this year type occurs on average only once in about 30.19 years (approximately 3.3 percent of the time). Indeed, at times there are 71 years (!) in between *HaSh"A* years. The last time this year type occurred was 31 years ago in 5754 / 1994. The next time will be 20 years hence in 5805 / 2044. The next several times after that are slated to be 27 years further, in 5832 / 2071 and then a 51 year gap in 5883 / 2122.

The reasons and rules governing the whys and whens this transpires are too complicated for this discussion; suffice to say that when the *Mishnah Berurah* discusses these issues he writes “*ain kan makom l'ha'arich*,” that this is not the place to expound in detail, which is certainly good enough for this author.

Obviously, such a rare calendar year will contain many rare occurrences. This series sets out to detail many of them. As we get nearer to the actual events, we will perhaps discuss them in greater detail. Let's continue on our journey through our unique year.

Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos

Our previous installment discussed some the inherent issues related to Pesach preparations this year with our rare *Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos*. In this feature we will discuss the most complicated one. As mentioned previously, it is forbidden to eat Matzah on Erev Pesach. But this year, Erev Pesach is Shabbos, thus creating a real dilemma: What are we to do about our Shabbos *Seudos*? How are we to have our Shabbos *seudos* on this special day if both *chometz* and Matzah are forbidden for most of Shabbos day?

There are several options available; however, each comes with their own set of complications. It is important to note that on this unique day, there is no possible way to fulfill every requirement *lechatchilla*. It is incumbent upon us to do the best we can based on our own circumstances.

Matzah?

As mentioned previously, the Yerushalmi, and codified as *halacha*, forbids eating Matzah on Erev Pesach. *Tosafos* explains that this is referring to any Matzah with which one may potentially fulfill his *Leil Seder* Matzah obligation, as eating such Matzah a day early is akin to jumping the gun. This is aside from the common *minhag*, which seems to follow those who are *machmir* not to eat Matzah already from Rosh Chodesh Nissan. So it seems that eating Matzah is not the way to go on *Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos*.

Chometz Seudos

One potential solution is to only leave over a small amount of (hopefully not crumbly) *chometz* for the *Seudos* (such as using pita for *Lechem Mishneh*), *daven* earlier than usual, perhaps *K'Vasikin* (*HaNeitz*) and immediately start the Shabbos *Seudah* afterwards. This is because according to all, the *chometz* has to be finished before *Sof Zman Achilles Chometz* on Shabbos, which is not very late in the day.

It is worthwhile to note that even when going this *chometz* route, it is recommended to actually have the entire *Seudah Pesachdik*, using only a small amount of *chometz*, eaten separately on/with disposables – so it can be easily disposed of and cleaned up. Some prefer that the *chometz* portion of the *Seudah* be eaten on an adjacent porch or stairwell. This should ensure that there will be no issues or mix-ups with the *chometz* and Pesach dishes or foods.

Split Seudos

Optimally, if at all possible, many *Poskim* maintain that one should try to split the *seudos* in order to fulfill eating *Seudah Shlishis* as well, with a real *Hamotzi*. This entails very close timing as well as a sufficient break (and perhaps a walk) between the two *seudos*, and making sure to finish all *chometz* before *Sof Zman Achilles Chometz*.

Either way, afterwards, one must get rid of the rest of the *chometz*, brush off and clean up any *chometz* crumbs, rinsing and cleaning off hands and mouths, and reciting '*Kol Chamira*' – all before *Sof Zman Sereifas Chometz*. One can continue his *seudah* afterwards with *Pesachdik* foods. Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin advised that however one decides to have *chometzdik seudos*, this Shabbos it should be served on disposables, thus enabling a much faster and easier cleaning up process.

Egg Matzah

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that on Erev Pesach *Shechal B'Shabbos*, an ideal method for the Shabbos *Seudos* is by utilizing *Matzah Ashira*, “enriched Matzah,” a.k.a. Egg Matzah. This is referring to Matzah that has been produced utilizing a fruit juice instead of water in its manufacture. (“Egg Matzah” is indeed somewhat of a misnomer, as although it contains egg, the fruit juice inside is usually apple cider/juice or grape juice/wine.)

He adds that one has until the tenth hour to eat it (a half hour before *Mincha Ketana*), as the Mishnah (*Pesachim* 99b) explains that one may only eat a “bread” type *seudah* up until this time on Erev Pesach. In the *Shulchan Aruch's* opinion, one can fulfill his *Seudah* obligations *lechatchilla* in this manner. This is because only Matzah with which one may potentially fulfill his *Leil Seder* Matzah obligation is prohibited on Erev Pesach. Thus, *Matzah Ashira*, manufactured with fruit juice instead of water should be fine. Indeed, *Tosafos* and the *Rosh* both cite that Rabbeinu Tam ate *Seudah Shlishis* with *Matzah Ashira* on Erev Pesach *Shechal B'Shabbos*, and this allowance is cited by the *Tur* and *Rivash* as well.

This is fine and dandy for Sefardim, who follow the rulings of the *Shulchan Aruch* and allow *Matzah Ashira* the whole Pesach as well. However, this *shittah* is not so simple for Ashkenazim, for a various reasons:

- The great codifier of Ashkenazic *halachic* practice, Rav Moshe Isserlis, a.k.a. the *Rema*, argues that “in our countries” we do not use *Matzah Ashira*, referencing *Siman* 462. In that location, the *Rema* states a general Ashkenazic aversion to *Matzah Ashira's* consumption on Pesach (with a dispensation exclusively for the elderly, sick, or young children) due to several concerns, including that perhaps water may have gotten mixed in the dough and hence it may rise (*chashash chimutz*), and that it may get mixed up with regular Matzah.
- Several authorities understand the *Rema* to be ruling that the same way *Matzah Ashira* is prohibited on Pesach, it is also proscribed on Erev Pesach. The Vilna Gaon ruled this way as well. Accordingly, this would not prove a proper solution for *Seudos* on Erev Pesach *Shechal B'Shabbos*.
- On the other hand, others cite the fact that the *Rema* does not seem to argue on the *Shulchan Aruch* the next time he presents his opinion, as his intrinsic allowance of *Matzah Ashira* for Erev Pesach. In fact, the *Aruch Hashulchan* maintains that the *Rema* simply meant it is not worth it to produce as we do not eat *Matza Ashira* the whole Pesach except in extenuating circumstances, for a sick or elderly person, who would go through the trouble of making only several *Matzos Ashira* just for Erev Pesach?
- Many understood the *Rema* as allowing *Matzah Ashira* on Erev Pesach, but since he was concerned about the possibility of it rising, he meant to qualify its usage akin to actual *chometz*. Some understanding as permitting Egg Matzah consumption up until *Chatzos* (*halachic* noon) as that is the Biblical cut-off point for *chometz* on Erev Pesach, and *Matzah Ashira* cannot be more than a Rabbinic prohibition.

- However, most understood the *Rema* to be ruling that as it is similar to *chometz*, one only has until *Sof Zman Achillas Chometz* to eat it, and otherwise treat it in the same manner as *chometz*.

Hence, time-wise, it does not practically help Ashkenazim too much to use Egg Matzah for their Shabbos *Seudos* instead of actual *chometz*, as the Egg Matzah must also be finished by *Sof Zman Achillas Chometz*.

An additional concern is that it is not clear what *bracha* one would make on Egg Matzah in this instance. Generally speaking, Egg Matzah is considered “*Pas Haba’ah B’Kisnin*,” whose *bracha* is *Mezonos* – unless one eats a large amount and is *Koveya Seudah* on it – when its *bracha* becomes *Hamotzi*. There is large debate whether using it for the Shabbos *Seudah* is sufficient for changing its *bracha* from *Mezonos* to *Hamotzi*, or if one has to eat a copious amount - *shiur* of four *K’Beitzim* specifically of the Egg Matzah for this purpose.

According to Rav Yisroel Pinchas Bodner’s *Sefer K’Zayis Hashaleim*, a *K’Zayis* of standard Machine Matzah (roughly 15 grams) equals 4/10^{ths} of a Matzah. This would mean that if one would follow the *shittah* that mandates a *shiur* of four *K’Beitzim* specifically of the Egg Matzah, then one would need to eat almost 3-and-a-half full Egg Matzos at each *Seudah* to ensure that it is properly *Hamotzi*.

However, it seems that in this specific case most agree with the *Magen Avraham*’s opinion, that all of the food consumed as part of this Shabbos meal is included in the count of *Keviyus Seudah*. In the words of Rav Moshe Feinstein, “there is no greater *Keviyus Seudah* than a Shabbos *Seudah*.” Even so, it is recommended to at least eat one *K’Beitzah* - approximately one full Egg Matzah – since according to several *Poskim*, the *brachah* of *Al Netillas Yadayim* should only be recited over a *shiur K’Beitzah* or more.

However, as pointed out by Rav Ovadiah Yosef, this may not hold true for *Seudah Shlishis*, as *Hamotzi* is not technically mandated as it is regarding the other *Seudos*, and if so, Egg Matzah’s *brachah* may revert to *Mezonos* for this *seudah*.

Come what may, both Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Mordechai Gifter recommended using Egg Matzah for the Shabbos Erev Pesach *Seudos*. In the words of Rav Doniel Neustadt, noted author of the *Halachah Discussion* series, Egg Matzah “is the preferred method for homes with small children who may scatter *chometz* crumbs around the house. This is also recommended for hotels, for large gatherings where Shabbos meals are being served, or for anyone who feels more secure with having no actual *chometz* in the house on Shabbos.”

On the other hand, the Egg Matzah solution is noticeably absent from the works of most *Poskim* in Eretz Yisrael, and even the Israeli Erev Pesach guides. In fact, it is difficult to even find Egg Matzah commercially sold in Israel, since the *Rema* essentially ruled it is off limits for Ashkenazim for all of Pesach. Hence, the Israeli preference for the *chometz* option served in small quantities on disposables, along with a *Pesachdik Seudah*.

Seudah Shlishis Sheilos

This leads us to our next question. How can we fulfill *Seudah Shlishis*? Sefardim, following the *psak* of the *Shulchan Aruch*, can and should *daven Mincha Gedolah* (early *Mincha*) and can have an Egg Matzah based *Seudah Shlishis* soon after – until the 10th hour of the day. But what are Ashkenazim to do? If they cannot eat *Matzah Ashira* at that time (as it already past *Sof Zman Achillas Chometz*, as well as *Chatzos*), is there a way to fulfill *Seudah Shlishis* in its (at least semi-) proper time?

The *Rema* writes that we should fulfill our afternoon *Seudah Shlishis* requirement with consuming other foods, such as fruit, or meat and fish - *shehakol* items, instead. As there is no way to be fulfill every *inyan lechatchilla* in this situation, including the optimal *Hamotzi Seudah Shlishis* after *davening* *Mincha*, many later *Poskim* advise eating Matzah balls (*Kneidlach*) Shabbos afternoon after an early *Mincha*, for at least a *Mezonos Seudah Shlishis* (more germane for those who are not *makpid* on *Sheruya/Gebrochts*).

This solution is due to the fact that one may not fulfill his Matzah obligation on *Leil HaSeder* with cooked Matzah. Hence *Kneidlach*, although made with Matzah Meal, are nonetheless permitted to be eaten on Erev Pesach up until the 10th hour, even for Ashkenazim. On this Shabbos Erev Pesach afternoon, when neither *chometz* nor Matzah can be eaten, this can become an optimal manner to fulfill the *Seudah Shlishis* obligation, even after *Mincha Gedolah*, according to many authorities.

No *Seudah Shlishis*?

There is an alternate view, that of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, that he would be *Oseik B'Torah* (learn Torah) in lieu of *Seudah Shlishis* on Erev Pesach *Shechal B'Shabbos*. The Vilna Gaon writes that this shows that the Rashbi held that on this special day, as there is no full proper solution to fulfill *Seudah Shlishis* after *Zman Mincha* with bread, there is no proper solution for this dilemma. Noted Kabbalist and ancestor of the Chida, Rav Avraham Azulai writes that this is the optimal manner to have this “*Seudah Shlishis*” in this situation, to have this “*seudah*” with *Divrei Torah* instead.

The *Aruch Hashulchan* maintains that this proves that on this special Shabbos Erev Pesach there is no actual obligation to have a *Seudah Shlishis*. Just as when Yom Kippur occurs on Shabbos it pushes off all of the Mitzvos of Shabbos, and when Rosh Hashana, Sukkos, or Purim fall out on Shabbos (like this year), the respective Mitzvos of Shofar, Lulav, and Megillah get pushed off, so too when Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbos, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was *Oseik B'Torah* instead, as the Mitzvah of *Seudah Shlishis* got pushed off as well.

No Pesach Prep on Shabbos

An important reminder for this marathon Shabbos: as it is Shabbos that is immediately preceding Pesach, one may not perform any preparations on Shabbos for Yom Tov, and all Seder preparations may only begin from *Tzeis Hakochavim* (nightfall), after reciting “*HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L’Kodesh*,” either by itself or as part of “*Vatode’ainu*” in the Yom Tov Maariv Shemoneh Esrei at the time that Shabbos “is going away.”

Hence, after an early Mincha and an unusual *Seudah Shlishis*, there is not much else to do in the afternoon, except take a well-deserved nap.

After all this we’ll certainly need a breather. Not to worry, after this year, *Erev Pesach Shechal B’Shabbos* is not slated to occur for another twenty years – in 5805 / 2045, so we should have plenty of time to unwind after this one.

Wishing all of our readers a *Chag Kasher V’Samayach!*

Our fascinating journey detailing the many remarkable facets of our rare year will IY”H be continued...

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch famously wrote that “the Jew’s catechism is his calendar.” It is this author’s wish that by showcasing the uniqueness of our calendar year and its rare *minhagim*, this series will help raise appreciation of them and our fascinating calendrical customs.

**This author wishes to thank R’ Yosef Yehuda Weber, author of ‘Understanding the Jewish Calendar,’ for being a fount of calendrical knowledge and for his assistance with this series.*

TAAMEI HAMITZVOS – Reasons behind the Mitzvos

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

“Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance.” (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)

BITTERSWEET MAROR

As the Haggadah explains, eating the bitter *maror* recalls how the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors through extreme slavery. We dip the *maror* in *charoses*, which resembles the straw and cement that our ancestors had to produce into bricks. *Sforno* notes that the slavery only started once our ancestors assimilated with the Egyptians and adopted their idolatrous beliefs. Thus, the eating of *maror* and *charoses* inspires us to thank Hashem for redeeming us from bitter slavery, and also reminds us to avoid sin so that we will not have to endure further bitterness (see also *Torah Temimah* to *Eichah* 3:15).

There is another view among the Sages that dipping the *maror* into *charoses* is only a practical measure to weaken its potentially dangerous sharpness (see *Pesachim* 116a). Based on this, we may suggest that dipping the *maror* in *charoses* symbolizes three ways Hashem lessened the bitterness of our slavery. Firstly, the Sages teach that we were meant to remain in Egypt for another 190 years, but were released early because of the difficulty of the slavery. He “raised the gears” just before the Exodus by causing Pharaoh to decree that the Jewish people would also have to gather the raw materials of the bricks. Secondly, the *charoses* contains almonds (*shaked*) to symbolize how Hashem hurried (*shakad*; see *Yirmiyah* 1:12) to redeem the Jewish people before the designated time (*Rabbeinu Eliyahu* to *Pesachim* 116a). Had we remained in Egypt any longer, we would have descended to the fiftieth level of impurity from which there would be no return. Thirdly, the *charoses* contains apples, which symbolize the apple trees under which our ancestresses gave birth in Egypt (*Pesachim* *ibid.*). This, too, alludes to the hastening of the Exodus, because we had to remain in Egypt until we numbered 600,000 so that we would be worthy of the Divine Presence resting upon us, and we reached this number before the designated time in the merit that our ancestors bore many children (*Sifsei Kohen*). Thus, dipping the *maror* into the *charoses* may be interpreted as an allusion to various ways Hashem hastened the redemption and made it possible for us to survive the slavery.

Abarbanel writes that the *Pesach* offering symbolizes our entering into the service of Hashem, which would require controlling our inner desires for His sake and struggling against *yetzer hara*. We are therefore commanded to eat the *Pesach* offering with *maror* to symbolize that our acceptance of Hashem’s kingship includes this bitter aspect. We should nevertheless accept Hashem’s kingship with love; after all, “there is no suffering without sin” (*Shabbos* 55a), and any bitterness we endure serves to atone for us and to bring out the best in us (see

Kli Yakar to *Shemos* 13:14). We should remind ourselves that since we lived a dimly bitter life under Egyptian rulership, it is only right that we faithfully serve Hashem, Who redeemed us from there, despite any hardship this may sometimes involve. No amount of hardship compares with what we endured every day in Egypt. What is the extent of our loving dedication to Hashem? To death. This may explain why the numerical value of *maror* is the same as *maves*, death.

On the esoteric level, Hashem — so to speak — shared in the bitter suffering of His people in Egypt, and *maror* symbolizes that bitterness as well (*Recaniti* and *Rabbeinu Bechaye*). Hashem would keep by His Throne of Glory a brick in which the Egyptians stuffed a Jewish baby when his parents failed to meet the daily quota, as a symbolic reminder of the suffering of His people in which He shared (see *Targum Yonasan* and *Rashi* to *Shemos* 24:10). According to this interpretation, *maror* reminds us that Hashem always loves us and cares for us, even when this is not apparent.

**The Ohr Somayach Family wishes all
our students alumni, friends and the
entire Jewish People a**

“Chag kasher v’somyach.”

**May you all enjoy a festive, meaningful,
peaceful and kosher Passover and see
the release of all the hostages**