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PARSHIOT TAZRIA-METZORA-ACHREI-KEDOSHIM-EMOR

PARSHA INSIGHTS

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

TAZRIA

Clarity and Connection

“And upon the completion of her days of purity” (12:6)

The greatest political blunder of the Feminist movement was its failure to allow men to have babies. Nothing sorts out the ladies from the men more than nine months of gut-churning (literally) physicality.

Nothing is as physical in this world as the gestation and delivery of another life; from morning-sickness to afternoon sickness to plain-ol' sickness; from the repulsion to all green vegetables and the craving for waffles drowning in maple syrup to the wholesale hijacking of the human body into a Mothership ferrying a precious cargo to a safe touch-down. Nothing compares with childbirth.

Take it from me. I've never done it.

In the Torah, the concept of *tumah* (spiritual impurity) is most often connected with death. The greatest source of *tumah* in the world is a cadaver and contact with it. Why then does a woman become *tameh* (spiritually impure) when she gives birth? Isn't birth the polar antithesis of the granddaddy of all *tumah* — i.e., death?

Another question: Why does death frighten us so much? A Jew knows that this life is but a brief candle, and, when it is snuffed out, G-d reveals a great palace of eternal light beyond it.

But it sure doesn't look that way when we are con-

fronted by a lifeless corpse. It looks like “THE END”.

The reason that death is the greatest source of *tumah* in the world is that a dead body shakes to the core our belief in the resurrection of the dead.

In Hebrew, the word *tumah* is connected to the word meaning sealed — *satum* (sealed). The elevation of the soul to its place on High is sealed from us. All we are left with is the frightening physical reality. The opposite of *tumah* is *taharah*. *Taharah* is connected to the word *Zohar* — shining transparency. The ability to see through the barrier to a life beyond. The most exposed part of the Holy Altar was called the *Tohoro Hamizbe'ach*. The brightest part of the day is called *Tzohora'im*. Everything is clear.

Giving birth is almost as physical as dying. Maybe even more so.

Just as contact with death can cause a great disconnect with the spiritual reality of our elevation to another world, so too can nine months of total involvement with the body, hormones, fluids, tests, scans and all the other physical features of childbirth, lead to a very large disconnect with the spiritual reality of G-d's bringing another soul to the world.

It is for this reason that the *tumah* of disconnection requires a mother to bring a *korban* — an atonement offering — as part of the process of returning to the world of *taharah* — of clarity and connection.

Sources: based on the Sferno;
thanks to Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

continued on page three

METZORA

Thermometer of the Soul

“This is the law of the Metzora...” (14:2)

My son made up a joke which had me in stitches. I’m not so sure I’ll be able to put it across in words, but let’s have a go.

You need two props for this: an empty cigarette box and one match. You put the two on the table and you say, “Imagine you’re locked in a darkened cellar full of mice and all you have is an empty cigarette box and a match. How do you get rid of the mice?” After your audience has scratched its collective head for a suitably frustrating amount of time, you pick up the match and stick it between one of the glued folds of paper in the cigarette box lid so that it’s protruding a little like an aerial. Then you pick up the box and bring it close to your mouth and make a ‘squelch’ sound of a walkie-talkie. “Chhhhhh! All mice please leave! All mice please leave!” (It sounds better in the original Hebrew: “*Kol Ha’achbarim l’tzet! Kol Ha-achbarim l’tzet!*”)

I probably haven’t succeeded in splitting your sides with this little anecdote, but I was so beside myself with laughter that I came close to transgressing the prohibition not to ‘fill our mouths with laughter’ until the coming of Mashiach (the Messiah). It got me thinking about words and how powerful they are. The right words in the right order at the right time can bring you to heaving with uncontrollable laughter. The wrong words can permanently scar a life.

In this week’s Torah portion, we learn of the purification process for the *Metzora*. The world *Metzora* is usually mistranslated as “leprosy.” Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch gives many reasons why *Metzora* cannot mean the disease that we call “leprosy.” Rather, *Metzora* was a malady of the soul which manifested itself as lesions on the skin. *Metzora* can be understood as an acronym for *motzi shem rah* — literally, “bringing out a bad name.” *Metzora* afflicted someone who spreads damaging gossip. The power of words can be physical. Anyone who has cracked up at a joke knows that. Even though our bodies still react to our physical, mental and emotional health, our bodies are no longer sensitive to our spiritual health. We have lost *Metzora* — the thermometer of the soul.

ACHAREI

Google Shadchan

“...after the death” (16:1)

Gone are the days when checking a *shidduch* (marriage match) was carried out through discreet personal enquiries: a call to the in-laws, to the neighbors, school friends, rebbes or teachers. Nowadays, due diligence demands another line of enquiry — Google. One of my in-laws told me that before he allowed a *shidduch* to proceed, he googled me and found a *shiur* (lecture) that I had given on a certain platform. Apparently he didn’t dislike the *shiur* sufficiently to cancel the *shidduch*.

It is said that in 1927 when the Chafetz Chaim was told of the existence of a transatlantic telephone service, he exclaimed that he now understood how a person would speak and it could be heard on the other side of the world. This world is full of physical counterparts to spiritual realities: This world is a *mashal* (parable) for us, and the Torah is the *nimshal* (moral).

I wonder what the Chafetz Chaim would have made of Google, apart from its obvious dangers and abuses. Perhaps he would have seen, “Know what is above you: an Eye that Sees, an Ear that Hears, and all your actions are written in a book.” (Avot 2:1)

“G-d spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon’s two sons when they approached before G-d and they died.”

Why did the Torah connect the death of Nadav and Avihu with the commandment restricting Aharon’s entry into the Holy of Holies? Rashi says that Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria compares this to sick person being cautioned not to eat cold food or sleep in a damp place. One doctor merely gives a caution, whereas a second doctor adds to the instructions, “so that you don’t die like so-and-so.” Clearly the second doctor’s warning is stronger than the first.

This world is full of signs if we only have the eyes and ears to recognize them.

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EDITOR’S NOTE:

This issue of Ohrnet Magazine is intended to span a period of six weeks. The Torah portion for each week will not be identical in Israel and outside of Israel beginning with the end of Pesach. Pesach ends on Friday (Apr. 26) in Israel and on Shabbat (Apr. 27) outside of Israel. On that Shabbat the Torah reading will be Acharei Mot in Israel, while a special Pesach Torah reading takes place outside of Israel. Subsequently, on the following Shabbat the Torah reading in Israel will be Kedoshim, whereas it is Acharei Mot outside of Israel. (Please see the article “The Parsha Dual Dichotomy” by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz in this special issue of Ohrnet Magazine for a comprehensive explanation.) Pesach kasher v’somayach!

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Chulin 120

A Matzah Smoothie?

“The Torah said ‘The bread of affliction,’ and this (liquid matzah) is not considered ‘bread.’”

This is the reason stated in our *gemara* for a person’s not fulfilling the mitzvah of eating matzah on Pesach if he “eats” it in a liquid form, such as blending matzah with water and drinking it.

However, if one drinks liquid chametz or liquid *cheilev* (forbidden fat) he receives the punishment of *karet* (extirpation). Although the Torah bans “eating” these items, we learn from the word *nefesh*, which is written regarding these two prohibitions, that drinking chametz and *cheilev* is included in the prohibitions against eating chametz and *cheilev*.

Tosefot asks: Why is there a need to include the prohibition against drinking *cheilev* (or chametz) from the “extra” word *nefesh*, since there is a Torah principle that “drinking is included in eating”?

An answer to this question that is offered by one of the *Achronim* is the following: The measurement of what is considered “eating” is a *k’zayit* (the halachic size of an olive). However, the measurement of what is considered “drinking” is larger than a *k’zayit* — it is a *revi’it* (which we know as the required size for a Kiddush cup). Therefore, if we would learn the prohibition of drinking liquid *cheilev* or chametz from the rule of “drinking is included in eating,” we would have thought that only if one drinks a *revi’it* of these items would there be a punishment of *karet*.

For this reason the *gemara* teaches that drinking these items is banned due to the word *nefesh* — “For anyone who eats *cheilev*... the *nefesh* who eats it shall be cut off from its people.” (Vayikra 7:25) Learning the prohibition from the word *nefesh* leads to the conclusion that the drinker is obligated *karet* even for drinking the measurement of a *k’zayit*, even though he did not drink the larger measure of a *revi’it*. (Maharitz Chiyut)

Regarding the mitzvah to eat matzah, but not drink it, Tosefot makes an intriguing statement: “The *gemara* could have said that we learn this from the fact that it is written to “eat” matzah. This would seem to imply that one does not fulfill the mitzvah by drinking matzah. It’s important to note, however, that this is not a mere observation by Tosefot. It is, in fact, a question: Why did the *gemara* say that the reason for not fulfilling the mitzvah of eating matzah is that one needs to eat *lechem*, which implies a solid “bread”, when it could just as well have said the reason to rule out drinking matzah is from the wording of the mitzvah to “eat” matzah, implying not to drink it?

Tosefot asks this question and does not offer any answer. However, according to the novel idea of the Maharitz Chiyut, I humbly suggest the following approach to answer this question of Tosefot. Had we ruled out liquid matzah from the wording in the Torah to “eat” matzah, we might have thought that if one eats solid matzah he fulfills the mitzvah with the measure of a *k’zayit* — but if he drinks liquid matzah he would also fulfill the mitzvah of matzah, but would need to drink a *revi’it* of the liquid. The *gemara* wants to make it clear that this is not the case, and that no amount of matzah drinking fulfills the mitzvah of eating matzah on Pesach. Since the mitzvah is to eat matzah, which is called *lechem* in the Torah, one must eat matzah which is “*lechem*” — meaning that it must be a solid and not a liquid.

(A note to preserve intellectual honesty: this suggested answer to Tosefot’s second question, about matzah, could only be possible if one accepts the answer of the Maharitz Chiyut to the first question of Tosefot. However, Tosefot gives an answer that differs from this suggestion of the Maharitz Chiyut, and therefore remains without writing any answer to his second question.)

• *Chullin 120a*

חג כשר ושמח
Best wishes for a happy and healthy Pesach!

PARSHA Q&A?

TAZRIA

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*?

METZORA

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 of having *tzara'at*, what is its status prior to the inspection by a *kohen*?
-

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tazria and Metzora's questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

TAZRIA

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.

METZORA

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*.
-

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PARSHA Q&A?

ACHREI

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshat Acharei Mot* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beit Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *kohen gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *kohen gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *azazel*. What is *azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *kohen gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *karet*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

KEDOSHIM

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. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. 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"?
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not wrong your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Achrei-Kedoshim's questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

ACHREI

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's life is shortened and his offspring die.
8. 17:13 - Non-domestic kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.
9. 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 G-d's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during his wife's lifetime.

KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because it contains the fundamental teachings of the Torah.
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. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemot* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting them.
9. 20:3 - "*Karet*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - "*Chenek*" (strangulation).

PARSHA Q&A?

EMOR

1. Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
2. Does a *kohen* have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
3. How does one honor a *kohen*?
4. How does the Torah restrict the *kohen gadol* with regard to mourning?
5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who “approaches holy objects” while in a state of *tumah* (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by “approaches”?
6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit *tumah*?
7. Who in the household of a *kohen* may eat *terumah*?
8. If the daughter of a *kohen* marries a “zar” she may no longer eat *terumah*. What is a *zar*?
9. What is the difference between a *neder* and a *nedavah*?
10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?
11. How does the Torah define “profaning” the Name of G-d?
12. Apart from Shabbat, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden?
13. How big is an *omer*?
14. On what day do we begin to “count the *omer*”?
15. Why do we begin counting the *omer* at night?
16. How does the *omer* differ from other *minchah* offerings?
17. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is called a “*zichron teruah*” (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder?
18. What is unusual about the wood of the *etrog* tree?
19. Who was the father of the blasphemer?
20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one’s parent?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Emor’s questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 21:1 - *Challalim* — those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a *kohen*.
2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a *kohen* reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals.
4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession.
5. 22:3 - Eats.
6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive.
7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters and his non-Jewish slaves.
8. 22:12 - A non-*kohen*.
9. 22:18 - A *neder* is an obligation upon a person; a *nedavah* is an obligation placed upon an object.
10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day.
11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments.
12. 23:7-36 - Seven.
13. 23:10 - One tenth of an *eipha*.
14. 23:15 - On the 16th of Nissan.
15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete, because according to the Torah a day starts at nightfall.
16. 23:16 - It was made from barley.
17. 23:24 - The *akeidat* (binding of) Yitzchak.
18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit.
19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (*Shemot* 2:12).
20. 24:21 - Death.

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 conclusion of his isolation. 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 it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

ACHAREI

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 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. Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrut*, thus maintaining our unique and separate status.

EMOR

The *kohanim* are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The *kohen gadol* (High Priest) may not attend the funeral of even his closest relatives. Certain mar-

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LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

Pesach and the Grain of Knowledge

In the debate among the Talmudic Sages (*Sanhedrin* 70b) as to what exactly was the food of the Tree of Knowledge from which Adam ate, it is the position of Rabbi Yehuda that it was wheat. This is a sharp departure from the positions of his colleagues who identify that tree as one which bore grapes or figs.

The basis of Rabbi Yehuda's compulsion to identify this sinful food as wheat, despite the obvious difficulty of connecting wheat with a tree, is the fact that this tree is described by the Torah as one whose food imparts knowledge. A baby, he points



out, does not have the understanding to say the words "father" and "mother" until it eats wheat. It is logical, therefore, to assume that only food which imparts such understanding in a child could be considered the food which gave man the knowledge to distinguish good from evil.

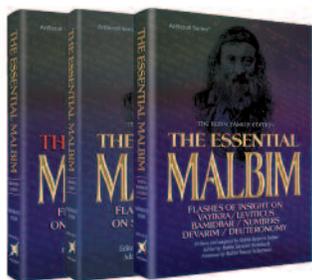
Wheat was the principal ingredient of the flour offerings in the Beit Hamikdash. It, and its subspecies spelt, are mentioned (*Pesachim* 35a) as ingredients which qualify for use in the matzah we eat on Pesach to fulfill our mitzvah.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

continued from page eight

ital restrictions are placed on the *kohanim*. The nation is required to honor the *kohanim*. The physical irregularities that invalidate a *kohen* from serving in the Temple are listed. *Terumah*, a produce tithe given to the *kohanim*, may be eaten only by *kohanim* and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old and is free from any physical defects. The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of G-d by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender

their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays. New grain may not be eaten until the *omer* of barley is offered in the Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the *lechem hapanim* in the Temple. A man blasphemes G-d and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.



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ADAPTED BY RABBI REUVEN SUBAR

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Structure of the Haggadah

At first glance the Haggadah seems like a book with random bits of information about the Exodus, put together to form one piece of work. It is hard to see the order within the Haggadah, and, as a result, many people think there is no order. Given the fact that the Haggadah is the vehicle through which we fulfill the mitzvah of the retelling of the Exodus from Egypt, it is incumbent upon us to study the structure of this precious book.

The Malbim asks many questions on the order of the Haggadah and answers all of them by explaining that the layout of the Haggadah is based on one verse from the Torah: “*V’higadita l’vincha ba’yom ha’hu leimor, ba’avur zeh asah Hashem li b’tzeiti m’Mitzrayim* — And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: It is because of this that Hashem acted for me when I came forth out of Egypt.” (Shemot 13:8) This verse is the source of our obligation to have a Seder. In fact, the name Haggadah is derived from the first word of this verse, “*v’higadita*.” The Malbim explains that the *maggid* part of the Haggadah can be split up into five parts, followed by Hallel, totaling six parts. These six parts perfectly parallel the six parts of the verse that is the source for telling over the story of the Exodus. The following is a summary of the words of the Malbim.

The first part of the Haggadah, starting from “*avadim hayinu*” (we were slaves) until the end of the section of the four sons, relates to the first of the verse, “*V’higadita l’vincha* — and you shall relate to your child”. These introductory paragraphs describe why we tell over the story, how important the mitzvah is and to whom it applies. This part concludes with the section about the four sons, which directly relates to the beginning of the verse “and you shall relate to your child.” The section of the four sons tells us exactly how to do that and what to answer to each son.

The second part of the Haggadah relates to the second part of the verse, “*bayom hahu* — on that day.” This part corresponds to the part of the Haggadah from “*yachol merosh* — one may think from the beginning,” and ends at “*munachim lefanecha* — are placed in front of you.” This one paragraph discusses exactly when “on

that day” is.

The third part of the Haggadah relates to the third part of the verse, “*leimor* — to say.” This is the story of the Exodus from “*mitchila ovdei avodah zarah* — at first we were idol worshippers” until the end of “*dayeinu* — it would have been sufficient for us.” This is the bulk of the Haggadah because the word “*leimor*” relates to our obligation to say over the story of the Exodus.

The fourth part of the Haggadah parallels the fourth part of the verse, “*ba’avur zeh* — because of this.” This part starts from “*Rabban Gamliel haya omer* — Rabban Gamliel used to say” until “*befarech* — back-breaking labor.” This part of the Haggadah speaks about Pesach, matzah and *marror*. The reason why it parallels “*ba’avur zeh* — because of this” is because as we speak about the matzah and *marror* we raise them and say *matza zo* — *this matzah*, and *marror zo* — *this marror* (we just, however, look at the shankbone without pointing to it because we do not want to imply that we sanctified it as a *korban* — see Mishnah Berurah 473:72). These parallel the language of the verse that says “because of *this*.” Because of *this* we eat *this* matzah, *this* *marror*, and when the Beit Hamikdash will be rebuilt — *the korban Pesach*.

The fifth part of the Haggadah parallels the fifth part of the verse, “*asah Hashem li* — Hashem did for me.” This parallels the part of the Haggadah that starts with “*bekol dor vador* — in every generation” and ends with “*nishba la’avoteinu* — was sworn to our fathers.” It discusses each individual’s obligation to regard *himself* as if he himself left Egypt. This clearly relates to the fifth part of the verse because in the verse it says Hashem did for *me*, even though the story took place over 3,300 years ago.

The sixth and final part of the part of the Haggadah, which starts with “*lefichach anachnu chayavim* — therefore we are obligated,” and ends with *Hallel*, parallels the sixth part of the verse, “*betzeiti mi’Mitzrayim* — when I came from Egypt”. This part includes the part of *Hallel* starting with “*betzeit Yisrael*,” paralleling the words of the verse “*betzeiti mi’Mitzrayim*.”

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Pesach, Matzah and Maror: A Summary of Our Faith

From: Helen in the U.K.

Dear Rabbi,

What is the significance of the statement of Rabban Gamliel in the Haggadah that one who has not said “Pesach, Matzah and Maror” has not fulfilled his obligation? If this is referring to the requirement to tell the Passover story to one’s children, how does the mention of these few words do the job? If it’s referring to the fulfillment of the actual mitzvot themselves: for one, Rabban Gamliel requires we say, not do; and secondly, the Pesach sacrifice is currently not performed. Please inform.

Dear Helen,

Certain commentators in fact explain that this is a reference to performing the *mitzvot*. You say: Rabban Gamliel tells us we are to make verbal reference to these *mitzvot*. He’s not telling us to do them, and we can’t fulfill all of them nowadays anyway. They explain that Rabban Gamliel means not that we should merely say these three words, but actually explain them (which the Haggadah goes on to do).

And this is because, while the performance of other *mitzvot* usually does not require one to have special intentions, these are among the few *mitzvot* where one is required to have their meaning in mind when fulfilling them. Why? Because G-d included the meaning in the command itself. So Rabban Gamliel is saying that one must have in mind, and preferably verbalize, the reason G-d gives for doing the mitzvah. This applies to those of these *mitzvot* we perform nowadays, and also to the Pesach offering which we hope to perform soon.

Still other commentators explain that Rabban Gamliel’s teaching is referring to the mitzvah of telling the Passover story (Haggadah). You ask how the mention of these three things does the job. These commentators explain that this section of the Haggadah completes the answering the four questions. As such, it is a repetition and summary of the entire “*Maggid*” section. Here’s how some of the authorities explain it:

Rabbi Yosef Albo explains that since the events of the Passover story and telling them over on Pesach play a major role in forging the Jewish People’s belief in G-d, these three things summarize our faith in G-d. The Pesach lamb, which in effect slaughtered the Egyptian god, involves the rejection of idol worship and thereby symbolizes our faith in G-d’s existence. Matzah, which involves obedience to the Divine prohibition of chametz, thereby expresses our acceptance of the Torah as G-d’s Law. Maror, with its emphasis and relation to suffering, reflects our belief in reward and punishment.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto sees in these three commandments the steps by which the Jews rose from pagan ways to the pure worship of G-d and the receiving of the Torah. First they withdrew from idolatry (in which many were enmeshed in Egypt) as shown by their sacrifice of the lamb, the Egyptian god. Then they drew on sustenance from the manna, which was completely free of human imperfection, corresponding to Matzah which is devoid of chametz that stands for the evil inclination. Last, during the period between the Exodus and Sinai, they had to painstakingly purify themselves through the levels of impurity to purity in preparation to receive the Torah, corresponding to Maror.

The Sfat Emet explains that Maror recalls the wickedness of the Egyptians and the suffering of the Jews, which led to ultimate punishment and redemption respectively. Matzah reminds us of the redemption of the Jews by recalling that they had to leave in haste before their dough could rise. Pesach recalls the arbitrary revelation of G-d when He passed over the Jewish homes, sparing the Jewish firstborns. Similarly, we should not attribute our redemption to our own actions (symbolized by the making of the matzah), nor to the wickedness of Pharaoh and the Egyptians (reflected in the maror), but to the mercy of G-d alone (as revealed in Pesach, G-d’s passing over the Jewish homes).

Interestingly, while the first two explanations follow the order stated by Rabban Gamliel, namely Pesach, Matzah and Maror, the last explanation, which most closely relates to the historical aspects of the events [specifically: Jewish suffering, the Paschal lamb on the night of Passover and finally, hastily baked *matzot* shortly before departure] would seem to indicate that Rabban Gamliel’s order is not chronologically correct – it should be Maror, Pesach and Matzah. Why does he move Maror to the end, after Pesach and Matzah?

One possible explanation is that Rabban Gamliel mentioned Maror last in order to refer to later exiles that followed the redemption from Egypt. Rabbi Bunim of P’shischa explains that the depth of the bitterness and suffering, and thereby the greatness of the salvation, cannot be fully appreciated until after one has been redeemed from it. The author of Vayagidu L’Mordechai suggests that Rabban Gamliel intended to include in his teaching the idea that even after deliverance it is important recall one’s former suffering in order not to forget the miracles of G-d and to be forever thankful.

Sources:

The Artscroll Haggadah based on
Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic sources, pp. 140-3

The Parsha Dual Dichotomy in 2019

Which Week is Which?

PART I

This time of year is an interesting one. For the next three months or so, starting right after Pesach, and lasting all the way almost up until Tisha B'Av, the Jewish world will not be aligned. No, I am not referring to constellations, but rather to the weekly *parshah*. A simple innocuous question of “What’s this week’s *parshah*?” will elicit a different response depending on where in the world the question is being asked. This is because the *parshah* will not be the same regularly scheduled one in *Chutz La’aretz* as it is in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Truthfully, this type of dichotomy actually happens not so infrequently, as it essentially occurs whenever the last day of a *Yom Tov* falls on Shabbos. In *Chutz La’aretz* where *Yom Tov Sheini* is *halachically* mandated, a *Yom Tov Krias HaTorah* is publicly *leined*, yet, in *Eretz Yisrael* (unless by specific *Chutznik minyanim*) the *Krias HaTorah* of the next scheduled *parsha* is read. This puts *Eretz Yisrael* a *parsha* ahead until the rest of the world soon ‘catches up’, by an upcoming potential double-*parsha*, which each would be read separately in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The reason for this current interesting phenomenon is that this year 5779 / 2019, the eighth day of *Pesach*, observed only outside *Eretz Yisrael*, fell out on a Shabbos. On this Shabbos / *Yom Tov* the communities of the Diaspora will be *leining* the *Yom Tov* reading of ‘*Asser Te’asser*’ (*Devarim*, *Parshat Re’eh*, Ch. 14: 22), whereas in *Eretz Yisrael* communities read *Parshat Acharei Mot*, the next *parshah* in the cycle, as *Pesach* will have already ended.

This odd alignment, with *Eretz Yisrael* being a week ahead of the rest of the world, continues for quite a while, as this year the world will only be realigned by *Matos / Masei* - around *Rosh Chodesh Av* - a divergence of over three months (!) with *Eretz Yisrael* out of sync with the rest of the world, all the while passing over several potential double-*parshah* catch-up points. In *Eretz Yisrael*, *Matos* and *Masei* will be read separately on consecutive weeks, while in *Chutz La’aretz* they will be

combined and read on a single Shabbos. The last time a split of this magnitude occurred was in 5776 / 2016, and before that, twenty-one years prior in 5755 / 1995.

This causes all sorts of *halachic* issues for travelers to and from Israel during this time period – which *parsha* should they be reading? If / how can they catch up? Although technically-speaking since the Torah reading is a *chovat hatzibur*, a communal obligation, one is not actually mandated to ‘catch-up’, but is rather *yotzai* with whichever *parsha* is publicly correctly being read. Nevertheless, commonly, special *minyanim* are set up expressly for this purpose. In fact, a number of *shuls* in *Eretz Yisrael*, such as the renowned Zichron Moshe ‘*Minyan Factory*,’ offer a solution by hosting weekly “catch-up *minyanim*” featuring the Torah reading of each previous week’s Israeli *parsha*, which is the *Chutznik*’s current one, until the calendars remerge.

The explanation of this uncanny occurrence is as follows: It is well known that the *Torah* is divided into 54 *parshiyos*, ensuring there are enough *parshiyos* for every *Shabbos* of the yearly cycle, which begins and ends on *Simchas Torah*. Since most (non-leap) years require less than 54 *parshiyos*, we combine certain *parshiyos*. This means that two consecutive *parshiyot* are read on one *Shabbat* as if they are one long *parsha*, to make sure that we complete the Torah reading for the year on *Simchat Torah*.

As detailed by the *Abudraham*, there are seven potential occurrences when we read “double *parshiyot*”. These seven are:

- *Vayakhel/Pekudei*, the last two *parshiyot* of *Sefer Shemot*.
- *Tazria/Metzora*, in *Sefer Vayikra*.
- *Acharei Mot/Kedoshim*, in *Sefer Vayikra*.
- *Behar/Bechukotai*, in *Sefer Vayikra*.
- *Chukat/Balak*, in *Sefer Bamidbar*.
- *Matot/Masei*, the last two *parshiyot* of *Sefer Bamidbar*.
- *Netzavim/Vayelech*, towards the end of *Sefer Devarim*.

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WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Telling the Story

Haggadah — giving contemporary relevance to a historical narrative

The cornerstone of the Passover Seder is the fulfillment of the Torah's commandment, "And you shall tell your sons... 'G-d performed for me, when I came out of Egypt.'" (Ex. 13:8) The verb used for "tell" is *vehigadeta*. The Passover Haggadah is thus aptly named, as is *Maggid*, the section of the Haggadah which deals with the story of the Exodus, for both words share a root with *vehigadeta*. One would expect Rabbinic literature to call this commandment *vehigadeta*, or *haggadah*; yet, the rabbis tend to refer to this commandment as *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* (literally, "the telling of the Exodus [from] Egypt").

What is the difference between the verbs *lesaper* (from which *sippur* is derived), and *maggid/lehagid* (from which *haggadah* is derived)? Nachmanides (to Deut. 26:3) seems to equate these two verbs, thus assuming that they are perfect synonyms. However, as we shall see, most commentators understand differently. In this first part we will focus on the term *haggadah* and its implications. In the next part we turn our focus to *sippur*.

When G-d told Moshe to prepare the Jewish People to receive the Torah, He told him, "So shall you say to the House of Yaakov, and tell (*tageid*) to the Sons of Israel." (Ex. 19:3) Rashi explains that Moshe was supposed to present the topic forcefully and "tell" (*tageid*) the Jewish men about the Torah's detailed expectations, and the punishments for those who fail to meet them. Rashi explains that the word *tageid* (a cognate of *haggadah*) is related to the word *gid* ("sinew") and denotes something strong and durable, not soft and fluffy. From this we see that *haggadah* refers to presenting an idea in a strong, assertive way.

There is another aspect of *haggadah/maggid* that we can derive from its usage in the Bible. We find throughout the Bible that cognates of *haggadah* are used specifically when discussing information which was not known before it was revealed. For example, when Adam expressed his embarrassment at being naked, G-d asked him, "Who told (*higid*) you that you are naked?" (Gen. 3:11) Similarly, when Esther refused to divulge her origins and family, the word used is *magedet*. (Esther 2:20) The act of giving testimony is also described as *haggadah* (Lev. 5:1),

because the witnesses present the court with *new* information. In accordance with these sources, Ibn Ezra (to Ex. 19:9) writes that *haggadah* refers specifically to saying something new which has not yet been told.

Interestingly, Radak in *Sefer HaShorashim* also writes that *haggadah/maggid* refers specifically to telling something new, and explains that the root of the word is *NUN-GIMMEL-DALET* (*neged*), meaning "opposite." Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814), Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), and Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) all explain that when one tells his friend something new he presents it "opposite" (i.e. in front of) him. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Edel (1760-1828) similarly explains that one brings new information to light to "oppose" what the listener already knows.

Alternatively, Menachem ibn Saruk (920-970) argues that the root of the word *haggadah* is *GIMMEL-DALET*, which Rabbi Pappenheim understands is an expression of "connection." He explains that telling somebody new information allows him to "connect" to it. Although Menachem explains that *haggadah* has a different root (implying "connection" rather than "opposition"), this approach also links *haggadah* with new information.

From what we know so far, the term *haggadah* carries two implications. It can emphasize the forcefulness and authority with which an idea is told, and it can also stress the novelty of the information being relayed.

Both of these ideas are alluded to in the *Haggadah Shel Pesach*. As mentioned above, Ex. 13:8 commands us to tell (*vehigadata*) our children about the Exodus. The Haggadah discusses the Four Sons, each one of whom must be taught using a different approach; yet the Haggadah applies Ex. 13:8 to both the wicked son and the son who does not know how to ask. In light of the above, this makes sense: One speaks strongly and harshly to the wicked son, so *vehigadata* is appropriate. And anything one tells the son who does not know how to ask is a new idea, so again the term *vehigadata* is fitting.

There is also another aspect to the word *haggadah*. Rabbi Eliyahu HaBachur (1469-1549) in *Sefer HaTishbi* writes that the word *aggadah*, "story" (related to *haggadah*), is an expression of "pulling" or "drawing," because recounting Aggadic explanations draws in the heart of the audience. He adduces this view from Targum to Gen. 37:28, which uses the word *negidu* to denote Yosef

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PESACH Q&A?

Q

1. What is the holiday of Pesach called in the Torah?
2. Why did our ancestors carry dough when they left Egypt?
3. Where is there a hint in the Torah to the four cups of wine we drink at the Seder?
4. What do we do on Pesach Eve to remember the Korban Pesach?
5. What do these numbers represent – 10, 50 / 40, 200 / 50, 250?
6. How many mornings on Pesach do we say the entire Hallel?
7. How do we refer to Pesach in our *kiddush* and in our *tefillot*?
8. What are the three prohibitions regarding *chametz*?
9. When is the eating of matza obligatory according to the Torah?
10. What was the date of the crossing of Yam Suf?
11. How many days of Chol Hamo'ed are there in Eretz Israel and elsewhere?
12. Is there any limit to what may be done during Chol Hamo'ed?
13. How many times do we wash our hands during the Seder?
14. What cannot be done after eating the *afikomen*?
15. Why do we recline when drinking wine and eating matza?
16. What unusual thing do we do to stimulate children to ask questions?
17. What is the meaning of *datzach*, *adash*, *beachav*?
18. Who are the four sons alluded to in the Torah as requiring us to inform them regarding Pesach?
19. What is the meaning of *Dayenu* that we sing?
20. What is the Torah term on which the word Haggadah is based?

A

1. *Chag Hamatzot* (The Festival of *Matzot*).
2. They left in such a hurry that there was no time for the dough to rise.
3. The four expressions of redemption found in *Shemot* / Exodus 6:6-7.
4. Place a shankbone or other piece of meat on the Seder plate.
5. The number of plagues with which the Egyptians were smitten in Egypt and at the Sea according to three different Sages.
6. One morning in Eretz Israel and two everywhere else.
7. *Zman Cheiruteinu* (The Season of Our Freedom).
8. To eat, to benefit from and to possess.
9. On the first night of the holiday at the Seder.
10. The seventh day of Pesach – the 21st day of the month of Nisan.
11. In Eretz Israel 5 days and elsewhere only 4.
12. Definitely! Study the laws or consult a rabbi.
13. Twice - once before dipping *karpas* into salt water and once before eating matza. (A third time is *mayim achronim* before saying *birkat hamazon* – Grace after meals.)
14. We cannot eat nor drink wine.
15. In order to express our sense of nobility as free men.
16. We dip a vegetable in salt water before saying the Haggadah.
17. These are acronyms formed by the first letters of the ten plagues.
18. The wise son, the wicked one, the simple one and the one who does not know how to ask.
19. “It would have sufficed for us” – a reference to all the stages of benevolence which G-d granted us.
20. “*Vehegadeta levincha* – And you shall relate to your child” (*Shemot* 13:8).



BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Rambam's Top Ten

According to the Rambam (Maimonides), a doorway must meet the following ten conditions in order to require a mezuzah.

These conditions are useful as a checklist but can provide only general guidance. Although in practical halacha not all of Rambam's definitions are followed unreservedly, they are all taken into consideration, and, when they are not met, may create a doubtful obligation. Though we are careful to perform the mitzvah of mezuzah even in situations of doubtful obligation, in regard to the recital of a *beracha*, which entails the uttering of the Divine Name, we may bless only when we are sure that the *beracha* is necessary. Therefore, in doubtful placements one should affix the mezuzah without making the *beracha*. Ideally, competent rabbinic guidance should be consulted in this matter as there are several exceptions to this general rule.

Alternatively, one may affix a mezuzah on a clearly obligated doorway with a *beracha* and have the doubtful placement in mind.

1. Minimum Area

The Torah instructs that we must put mezuzahs on the doorposts of our "*bayit*." Although in Modern Hebrew, *bayit* is generally translated as "house," the Talmud writes that a *bayit* can even refer to a single room with a minimum area of four square *amot*.

Practical halacha deals with the mezuzah obligation of rooms whose area is formed by different combinations of width and length (e.g. two *amot* by four *amot*).

2. Doorposts

The Rambam rules that a doorway only requires a mezuzah if it is framed by posts on both sides. In practice we follow the authorities who require a mezuzah even when a solitary post stands on the right side of a doorway.

The halacha deals with the dimensions and shape of these posts. In addition, it defines the exact placement of a mezuzah in archways and other unusual circumstances.

3. Lintel

A lintel (*mashkof* in Hebrew) is the horizontal bar framing the top of the doorway. The Rambam rules that without this very basic structural element, a doorway is incomplete and therefore exempt from a mezuzah.

Practical halacha deals with lintels of unusual shape, position or purpose, as well as doorways whose ceiling can be seen as a lintel.

4. Ceiling

The Rambam rules that a room without a ceiling is deficient, even if its doorways are otherwise complete. Practical halacha follows those authorities who obligate the gates and doorways of uncovered courtyards, patios, and porches in their own right, based on their opinion that the absence of a ceiling is integral to their design and their purpose.

According to the Rambam, these spaces are obligated only when they open onto or lead towards a covered room.

5. Doors

The Rambam rules that a doorway without a door is deficient and requires no mezuzah.

Practical halacha follows those authorities who require a mezuzah on such openings, in most cases.

6. Height and Width of Doorway

The Rambam rules that a doorway must be of a minimal height of ten *tefachim*. Although the Rambam does not mention a minimal width, the halacha follows those opinions who rule that it must be at least four *tefachim* wide.

The halacha deals with the correct placement of mezuzahs on doorways of unusual height. The special halachic issues presented by curved archways are also explored.

7. Beit Haknesset & Beit Hamidrash

The Rambam exempts these places precisely because they are dedicated to holy activities and not to normal dwelling. Indeed, the Talmud records that none of the gates and chambers of the Beit Hamikdash had mezuzahs, except for those that served as living chambers.

Nowadays, the custom is to affix mezuzahs on a Beit Hamidrash and even on a Beit Haknesset where people spend the day there learning, as this is deemed as "dwelling."

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Letter & Spirit

Insights based on the writings of Rav S. R. Hirsch

BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

SPECIAL PESACH FEATURE

Israel's Magna Charta

If we were to point to one act as the moment of the birth of our nation, it would be the *korban Pesach*, undertaken by our ancestors more than three thousand years ago. The words conveying this instruction is, in Rav Hirsch's words, the Magna Charta of Israel, setting forth the foundational elements of Jewish service. Below we present some of those fundamental teachings.

The instruction specifies that *every individual* must participate. Judaism is not a "representative religion". The nation is built on the personal awareness and practice of every individual member.

Yet, all members participated in the same service at the same time, creating a unified nation with a singular mission.

The lamb — the most docile and pliant of the domesticated animals — was the object of the offering. The lamb, because of its joyful submission to the guidance of its shepherd, served as a symbol of what the Jew was to become vis-à-vis G-d. As sheep of His pasture, each individual and the nation as a whole stood in devoted obedience before His guidance.

Each *home* was to have a lamb. But the instruction, as written, alludes both to a parent's home (*seh labeit avot*) and to an individual's own future home (*seh labayit*). A Jewish home is built on the foundations of the parents'

home, where the ethical guidance and moral mission of man is taught. Even more than houses of study, we are instructed: *Create homes!* Human affairs — from the most sublime to the most ordinary — are entrusted to the clean hands, pure minds and unsullied spirit of the loving Jewish home. No bastion of education or cultural establishment can ever take the place of the Jewish home.

But if the house is *too small* to consume an entire lamb, then he is to go to his neighbor and divide up the lamb in accordance with the number of individuals. Family comes first — he takes care of his own household first, from the blessings which G-d has bestowed. But if that blessing is too large for the size of his family, the Torah teaches to join with one's neighbor. It is not need, but overabundance; not destitution, but longing for love; not sympathy but duty which unites the homes of the Jewish people! It is not the *poor* man that seeks out the rich, but the *rich* man who seeks out the poor to apply the surplus blessing granted to him.

Our national birth was realized when we assumed the role of the sheep, adopting the fundamentals of nationhood. With these commitments, we become the loyal flock, led by the Shepherd, over high and low pastures, through centuries and millennia, up to the eternal goal.

• Source: *Collected Writings I*, p. 103-111

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

"Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon."

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

Michael Ish Shalom

**Born: Miami, Florida — Raised: Jerusalem, Israel and Milwaukee, Wisconsin
University of Wisconsin – BSEE (Electrical Engineering) 2017 - Center Program 2018**

Michael's mother spent a very eventful year as a nurse at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem after graduating from Nursing School in Milwaukee, her hometown. Aside from the practical experience of working as a nurse in a top hospital, she met her future husband – an Israeli soldier. The couple got married and moved to Miami where Michael, the first of five sons, was born. At the age of two, his parents returned to Israel, to the Pisgat Ze'ev neighborhood of Jerusalem. After living in Israel for a few years, the family moved to Milwaukee, where they live today.

Because his mother always spoke to him in English and also taught him how to read and write, he had no difficulty in adjusting to the Milwaukee Jewish Day School — a non-denominational day school. In the eighth grade, Michael switched to a public school, eventually graduating from high school and continuing his studies at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, from which he received an engineering degree in 2017.

Milwaukee is a hotbed of *kiruv*. When Rabbi Akiva Freilich of the Milwaukee Kollel decided to move out of the *frum* neighborhood where the Kollel was located, to one of the secular suburbs where Michael's family lived and start a *kiruv* shul there, Michael, his brothers and father, were among its first attendees. Michael was 13 at the time. Rabbi Freilich had a major effect on the family.

Throughout his college years, Michael started taking his *Yiddishkeit* more seriously. He met Rabbi Daniel Meister, the campus rabbi, and started learning with him. His at-

tachment to Rabbis Meister and Freilich continued to grow. Michael also spent many Shabbatot in the community of Rabbi Michel Twerski, which was a major catalyst for his spiritual growth. Reflecting back on his time in the *kehillah*, Michael says, "The Twerski community is small and tight-knit, and exemplifies real *Ahavat Yisrael* — extending invitations to each other's homes, sharing in *simchas*, and even something as simple as lending a listening ear. Rabbi Twerski energizes the *kehillah* with his zeal and piety. I once asked the Rav what the source of his energy is. He answered me very simply: 'If you were offered to make investments right now that were guaranteed to pay you back in millions, wouldn't you also be elated?'"

Michael's enthusiasm prompted him to attend a Summer JLE program at Ohr Somayach Monsey. After graduating, he came to learn at the Center Program where he is today. Of his experience in the Yeshiva, Michael says: "Ohr Somayach is to be commended for changing the face of *Klal Yisrael*. The care and guidance offered to each and every *talmid* by the Rebbeim is something very special. *Chazal* say that every person is an *olom maleh* — a complete world. Ohr Somayach aims to make a person aware of the larger-scale ramifications of his decisions, be it for his own progeny, for the Jewish People, or for the world at large. Each of us has the potential to create an entire world. Such a creation needs to be planned with tremendous care. The tools necessary for planning are all in the Torah, and Ohr Somayach gives us the ability to unlock all these tools."



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BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

Seder Highlights: *Urchatz* Everyday?

Have you ever wondered why, at the annual Pesach Seder at *Karpas* when we dip vegetables in saltwater to symbolize our ancestor's tears while enslaved at the hands of the cruel Egyptians, we precede it by washing our hands? Isn't hand washing reserved exclusively for prior to 'breaking bread'? And furthermore, why is this only performed at the Seder? Is there a specific message this action is meant to convey?

The answer to this question might depend on a difference of understanding. The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (114b) asks why at the Pesach Seder we perform two dippings (i.e. *karpas* into saltwater and later the *maror* into *charoset*). The *Gemara* succinctly answers 'Ki he-ichi d'lehavai hekeira l'tinokot — in order that there should a distinction for children'.

Rabbi Yaakov Reischer (1661-1733), in his *Chok Yaakov*, and Rabbi Avraham Danzig (1747-1820), in his *Chayei Adam*, understand from the *Gemara* that the point of hand washing, *Urchatz*, prior to the dipping of *karpas*, is essentially a "hekker", meaning a device that highlights that something different than the norm is occurring, to enable children to ask what is different on Seder night.

Rabbi Mordechai Jaffe (1530-1612), in his comprehensive *Levush*, understands *Urchatz* somewhat differently. He explains that the dipping of *karpas* at the Pesach Seder is a "Chovat HaRegel," a Holiday obligation. Ergo, the hand washing is specifically performed at the Seder, as due to its inherent holiness 'we go the extra mile' to strive for an increase in purity.

Conversely, Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai (1724-1806), better known as the famed *Chida*, and Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1762-1839), the renowned *Chasam Sofer*, offer an alternate, albeit fascinating, view.

But in order to properly understand their explanation, we must first digress to a different *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (115a). Rabbi Elazer states in the name of Rav Oshia, "Any food item that is dipped in a liquid (referred to as a "davar hateebulo b'mashkeh") requires hand washing before eating". On this statement, Rashi and Tosefot (among others) differ on the correct understanding of its intent. Rashi maintains that this ruling is still applicable nowadays, as it is similar to the require-

ment to wash before eating bread; while Tosefot is of the opinion that this law is only relevant during the times of the Beit Hamikdash, as it is conditional to a ritual purity that in this day and age is non-applicable.

Although there are opinions that one may rely on the lenient view, it should be noted that many halachic authorities are of the opinion that even nowadays one should do his utmost to be vigilant with this and wash hands before eating a food item dipped in liquid.

The lenient opinion is taken into account, however, and that is the reason why this washing is done without the prerequisite blessing, as opposed to the washing before eating bread. This is due to the halachic dictum of "safek berachot lehakel," meaning that in a case of doubt regarding the topic of *berachot* we follow the lenient approach and do not make the blessing, to avoid the possibility of making a blessing in vain.

This all ties in to our Seder. The *Chida*, in his *Simchas HaRegel* commentary on the Haggadah, explains that this is the background, as well as the reason, for the added 'vav' by *Urchatz* at the Pesach Seder. We find a parallel by the *beracha* that our patriarch Yitzchak bestowed on his son Yaakov (Toldot 27:28), 'V'Yitein Echa' — 'And G-d should give you'. According to *Chazal* and cited by Rashi (1040-1105), the extra conjunctive 'vav' means *yitein yachzor v'yitein* — that G-d should *continually and constantly* give.

Likewise, the *Chida* explains the extra 'vav' in *Urchatz*. The *Baal Haggadah* is transmitting a message to us. Just as during the Seder washing is performed prior to dipping a vegetable in salt water, that extra 'vav' is telling us "*rachatz yachzor v'rachatz*" — that we should *continue* to wash our hands anytime we want to eat a food dipped in liquid, all year round.

The *Chasam Sofer* and his son-in-law, the *Chasan Sofer*, write similarly in their Haggadah that *Urchatz* is meant to be a rebuke and yearly reminder to those who are lackadaisical with the observance of this halacha, in order to remind everyone that this applies year round as well.

Interestingly, Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank, the former Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, opines that the dispute among *Rishonim* as to whether only the head of the

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Letter & Spirit

Insights based on the writings of Rav S. R. Hirsch

BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

TAZRIA

Purity in Freedom

The Torah outlines the purification for a woman after birth: for any birth, there is an initial seven day period of impurity. If the baby is a boy, on the eighth day the child is circumcised. After this eighth day, the mother waits a period 33 days — a purification cycle — until she brings her *korban* in the Beit Hamikdash. If she gives birth to a daughter, the purification period is twice as long — 66 days. The obvious question, is, why the disparity?

Before we can answer this question, we turn to a general understanding of the sources of impurity, which include a dead animal (which has not been halachically slaughtered), creepy crawlers, certain bodily emissions, leprosy, and certain elements of the Temple service (e.g. leading the he-goat to the wilderness on Yom Kippur, and involvement with the ashes of the red heifer).

Man is destined to live in moral freedom. Yet, whenever a living organism succumbs to compelling physical forces, this is liable to give rise to the notion that man lacks freedom. Impurity — *tumah* — results from encounters which threaten our awareness of the moral freedom of man. There is nothing that fosters this notion more than a dead body, and it is for this reason that one who touches a dead body is rendered impure. Indeed, this resultant impurity is of the highest order and has many stringencies associated with it. The purification process symbolically reaffirms moral freedom, unfettered by any external constraint.

Why would childbirth induce a state of *tumah*? The mother's effort and labor in producing a child is merely a physical process — from the "planting" phase (*tazria*) to the birth. Man is formed, takes shape and grows like a plant, in a process that has the most minimal human imprint. Although surely a woman experiences discomfort and effort in carrying and birthing a child, the process, once in motion, is markedly independent of any human choice or input. The entire physical process by which man comes into being — similar to the physical process which ends his life — threatens the awareness of man's moral freedom. Therefore, precisely here, where man is brought into being, we are reminded that man need not succumb to the forces of nature. The mother — under the fresh impression of her passive and painful submission to the physical forces of nature which formed this child and led to the child's birth — must renew her con-

sciousness of her moral stature.

This accounts for a single cycle of purification of 33 days — the process restores awareness of moral freedom and moral imperative. Why is it doubled in the case of a daughter?

On the day of circumcision, the father fulfills the first of the duties incumbent upon a father concerning his son. At this time the father resolves to prepare his son for the life that lies ahead: he is to train him to walk before G-d, in complete adherence to Torah, and through his own conduct serve as a role model for his son to emulate on his future path.

Following the birth of a daughter, the purity cycle is doubled — 66 days. This is meant to impress on the mother the full magnitude of her task — to be an example and role model of the Jewish woman of the future. Indeed, the mother's influence on the moral standards of her daughters is twice as great as her influence on the moral development of her sons. A crucial part of her sons' education comes from the father, as he becomes the male role model for them. With daughters, however, the mother is both a role model and a molder of character. Hence, after the birth of each daughter she must doubly prepare herself — for her own sake and for her daughter's sake — to fully embrace the moral freedom granted her, and ascend the path of purity.

• Sources: Commentary, Vayikra 7:19-21, 12:2, 4-5

METZORA

Not a Free Bird

The purification procedures which brought the *metzora* back to the camp of Israel included the taking of two pure, identical birds, a piece of cedar wood, scarlet wool and hyssop. The Kohen would slaughter one bird in an earthenware vessel over water. The second bird would be dipped, along with the cedar wood, scarlet wool and hyssop, into the blood of the slaughtered bird, and then the blood would be sprinkled from the bird upon the *metzora* seven times. The bird would then fly away into an open field.

Rav Hirsch explains the symbolism of many aspects of this procedure, some of which we include below. The slaughtered bird represents the unbridled animal nature that vies to control human behavior. This nature must be subordinated to the control of human will, such that intellect and will govern action.

The remaining bird is joined together with the cedar,

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family is supposed to wash *Urchatz* (a notable minority *minhag*, performed mainly by many of Germanic/Dutch origin, as well as Sanz, Lelov, and Satmar *Chassidim*), or if everyone at the Seder does as well (the most common custom), might be dependent on this debate of why the hand washing at the Seder was instituted.

According to the majority opinion that *Urchatz* was enacted due to the halacha of *davar hateebulo b'mashkeh*, then everyone should be mandated to wash. However, according to the opinions that this hand washing is performed exclusively on Pesach at the Seder, it is possible that only the head of the household needs to wash *Urchatz*, as that should be deemed sufficient enough to arouse the interest and subsequent questions of the children.

It is quite remarkable that this modern divergence of *minhagim* might actually depend on how *poskim* understood the brief statement of the *Gemara* regarding childrens' questions.

The *Chida* continues that, although many are aware

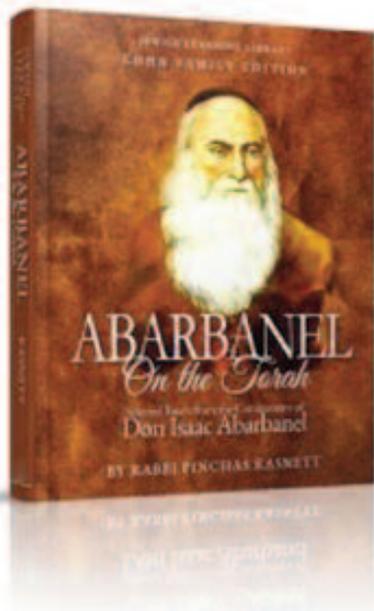
of this halacha, they do not realize that it applies even to something as ubiquitous as dipping cake into coffee! One might contend that the connection between vegetables in saltwater to tea biscuits in coffee seems tenuous, but from a halachic perspective they are remarkably similar.

So the next time you get that dunkin' urge, do the conscientious thing by following the Haggadah's hidden exhortation, and head to the sink before diving into your cup-of-joe.

Thanks are due to my 12th-grade Rebbe in Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Mordechai of Greater Detroit, Rav Yitzchok Kahan, for first enlightening me to this passage of the Chida.

This article was written l'iluy Nishmas Yisrael Eliezer ben Zev and l'zechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad!

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being “drawn” from the pit. (By the way, Modern Hebrew unfairly redefined *aggadah* to mean a “fairytale” or “fictional legend”.)

In this vein, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (1816-1893) writes that the term *haggadah* applies specifically to one who reveals something by explaining it at great length. Thus, we find that the word *haggadah* does not refer to simply stating an idea or occurrence briefly, but rather to a purposely “drawn out” narrative.

Alternatively, Rabbi Dovid Abudraham (a 14th century commentator to the Siddur) writes that the word *haggadah* is an expression of “admission” or “thanks.” Rabbi Mecklenburg expresses a similar sentiment. He notes that *haggadah*’s two-letter root, *GIMMEL-DALET* (*gad*), refers to “success” and “fortune.” Accordingly, he explains that *lehagid* refers to praising G-d in the context of recognizing His role in one’s success and fortune.

What does any of this have to do with the literal meaning of *haggadah* — “the telling”?

Rabbi Dr. Ari Bergmann (a student of Rabbi Moshe Shapiro) teaches that *haggadah* relates an event that happened in the past, and “draws” it into the present by demonstrating its relevance. In other words, *haggadah* gives a historical narrative contemporary relevance (see also Alshich to Gen. 24:23). Rabbi Bergmann compares this to the concept of *hagadat eidut*, whereby witnesses who take the stand share testimony about a past event, and show its relevance for the court’s deliberations in the present. In his estimation, the commandment of *vehigadata* does not simply require us to recount the story of the Exodus, but to show how that story remains relevant to us.

The idea of drawing the historical narrative into the realm of the practical also comes up in a halachic context. Rabbi Aryeh Pomeranchik (1908-1942) writes that he heard from the Brisker Rav (1886-1959) in Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik’s name (1853-1918) an explanation as to how the commandment of *vehigadata* on Passover night differs from the daily requirement to mention the Exodus. The former entails explaining the connection between the Exodus narrative and the Passover commandments of matzah and maror, while the latter simply calls on “mentioning” the Exodus without regard to the commandments that stem from that narrative. This idea may be derived from the word *vehigadata* itself, which, as we explained above, denotes “drawing out” the story and showing how it applies to us (in this case, the practical commandments to be performed on Passover night).

To summarize, the word *haggadah* implies the transmission of new, novel information. Its roots convey both challenge/opposition and connection. The *haggadah* confronts the participant with new, challenging information.

It speaks forcefully and rubs the participants’ noses in questions. The participant is forced to engage with the material presented, and to ultimately connect to it. The term *haggadah* also implies a drawn out narrative, rather than a brief statement of facts, because the *Haggadah Shel Pesach* is supposed to spark dialog rather than monologue. At its core, *haggadah* is the act of giving contemporary relevance to a historical narrative. This can be accomplished by thanking G-d for the benefit that one receives from those events and the “success” that they bring us, or tying the narrative to commandments currently in effect.

Now that we understand the Haggadah better, we see that this ancient text is quite sophisticated in its multi-sensory, dynamic approach, designed to create active participants, and lead them on an extended process of discovering the Exodus’ personal relevance. In the next section we will explain the implications of the term *sippur* and how that affects our understanding of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim*.

Sippur — joining multiple details to form a singular, holistic “story”

We have explored several different aspects of the word *haggadah/maggid*, and showed how that word stresses certain elements of storytelling. With those ideas in mind, we painted a more vivid picture of the Torah’s commandment for one to “tell over” the story of the Exodus on Passover Night. As we mentioned in that section, another term used for the requirement of relating the Exodus story is *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* (literally, “the telling of the Exodus [from] Egypt”). In this section we will sharpen our understanding of the word *sippur/misaper* and how it differs from *haggadah/maggid*. In doing so, we will also shed light on some more arcane aspects of the commandment to “tell” the Exodus story.

We have seen that *haggadah/maggid* referred to specific modes of storytelling. In contrast, the term *sippur* is a more general term for telling over a story. For example, while Radak in his *Sefer HaShorashim* writes that *haggadah* specifically denotes “telling” something new, he explains that *sippur* and its cognates refer to “telling” information about something that had already happened, or had already been told over. Others explain that *sippur* can refer both to something which was already known and to something which is being revealed for the first time. Either way, the point is that *sippur* does not refer specifically to relaying *new* information.

Similarly, Rabbi Ari Bergmann explained that while *haggadah* denotes showing how a past event is still relevant nowadays, *sippur* simply denotes relating an event that happened in the past. In that spirit, the Malbim ex-

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KEDOSHIM

Let's Do Lunch

"...you shall be holy, for holy am I, the L-rd, your G-d"
(13:17)

To paraphrase Lewis Carroll, the world gets "curiouser and curiouser." A few weeks ago I was sitting with my wife waiting for a train to Manchester. We broke off our conversation because despite the waiting room being fairly crowded, no one else was talking and we didn't want to continue in whispers. We looked around the room and most of the people there were either in two's or three's but not one of them was talking. Why? They were completely engrossed in their mobile devices. Virtuality is on the threshold of replacing reality. Time spent with real people has shrunk drastically.

"Let's do lunch!" "Please have your people speak to my people." We're all so busy rushing — but to where? I well remember going with my wife to Rav Dov Schwartzman *zatzal* many years ago to ask for advice. The manner in which he greeted us, sat us down, enquired after our parents, our children and ourselves with such genuine interest impressed me greatly. Big people always seem to have time for you, even though they measure their minutes with the exactitude of a diamond merchant.

Shortly after his marriage, Rav Moshe Aharon Stern, together with a friend, was asked to escort the Chazon Ish to a wedding in Bnei Brak. They arrived at the Chazon Ish's home to find him deep in what seemed to them a very superficial conversation with an elderly couple. They were talking about paper clips and hooks, window shades, etc. — which would sell well and which wouldn't. Without saying it, they thought it a *chutzpa* to waste the time of the *Gadol Hador* with such *narishkeit* (childish foolishness). After nearly an hour, the Chazon Ish slowly escorted the couple to the door as though he had all the time in the world. After the couple left, seeing the expressions on the faces of the young men, the Chazon Ish said, "This couple was two Holocaust survivors. They lost their entire families, everyone and everything. They are trying to rebuild their lives. They plan to open a home goods store here in Bnei Brak. So we reviewed every item and discussed whether or not to stock them."

Few people sanctified their time as the Chazon Ish or Rav Dov Schwartzman, and yet they prioritized *chessed*, kindness, even over their learning.

"You shall be holy, for holy am I, the L-rd, your G-d."

Just as G-d has 'time' for the humblest human on the planet, so too must we look up from our machines — and sanctify the minutes of our lives.

EMOR

Giving Thanks

"...you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them..."
(23:22)

What a fascinating instrument is the telescope! You can bring something far away and see it clearly, or by turning it around the wrong way you can make what's close at hand seem remote.

It all depends on which way around you hold the telescope.

"Seeing" G-d in this material world is not something that just happens. It takes work. However, G-d has given us a spiritual telescope that lets us bring Him much closer.

It's easy to divide religion into two categories: our relationship with G-d and our relationship with one another. In fact, if you look at the Ten Commandments, you'll notice that the first Tablet deals with our relationship with G-d: *I am the L-rd, your G-d; Don't have any other gods before me; Don't take G-d's Name in vain, etc.*, while on the second Tablet are mitzvahs between us and our fellow: *Don't kill; don't commit adultery; don't steal; don't give false testimony about others; don't covet, etc.*

However, on another level, the two Tablets are one unified statement. Rashi explains the verse just before the giving of the Ten Commandments — "And G-d said *all* these words, saying" — to mean that G-d said all the Ten Commandments as one indivisible utterance before He enumerated each of them separately.

Our Sages teach that "*someone who is ungrateful to his fellow will eventually be ungrateful to G-d.*" Being ungrateful to G-d means that I don't really believe that everything that I have is a gift from Him. If I don't see my life as a gift, then why should I relate to the Giver?

That's the beginning of atheism.

But what does our gratitude to our *fellow* have to do with belief in G-d?

Just as ingratitude to man leads to ingratitude to G-d, so too is the reverse. Being grateful to our fellow, recognizing the good that people do for us leads us to being grateful to G-d, and therefore to recognizing Him in the world.

"...you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them..." (23:22)

In this week's *parsha* the Torah lists the various festivals. Inserted within this list, however, are laws of harvesting, apportioning various parts of the harvest to the poor.

Why is a connection made between the festivals and laws of charity? To teach us that someone who gives charity properly is considered to have built the Holy Temple and brought offerings there.

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hyssop, and scarlet wool. The cedar and hyssop represent the highest and lowest manifestation of plant life — the entire range of flora. The scarlet wool is wool (shorn from a sheep) dyed with worm blood — sheep and worm. Mammal and creepy-crawler represent the entire range of fauna. All three — cedar, hyssop and scarlet wool — bound together with the red thread into one unit, represent the complete range of organic life in the field where the *metzora* is forced to dwell. The living bird — representing again unbridled animal instinct — is then set free to an open field.

Communal life calls upon its members to live a life of moral control over instinct. The *metzora* has been removed from communal life as a result of his sin. The seven sprinklings of blood signify that he who was expelled from the community must bridge the gap between unbridled animal instinct to moral freedom, by exerting all his strength, seven times over. Only when he regains the control which he previously lost is he pronounced pure and ready to rejoin the community of man.

These sprinklings are performed either on the *metzora's* forehead or the back of his hand — the most human parts of the body. The hand represents action and the forehead represents thought. The process serves as a reminder that communal life of man depends on action and thought being the product of conscious free-willed choice, reminding man of his lofty calling.

• Sources: Commentary, Vayikra 14:8

ACHAREI MOT

Yom Kippur's Twin Attainments

In this week's *parsha* we read a description of the holiest day of the Jewish year — the day of forgiveness, Yom Kippur. Two objectives are achieved on this day — *kappara* (atonement) and *tahara* (purification). *Kappara* signifies a covering up — it is a day on which we are “covered” and protected against the consequences of past sin. The effect of this is *tahara* — purity, the restoration of moral freedom which was compromised by sin.

Were it not for the miracle of G-d's grace, the world would operate on the basis of strict justice and truth. Every sin would bring about the destruction of the sinner, and every first sin would dull the soul and make it prone to additional sin. These natural spiritual laws are represented in the name *Elokim*.

But just as the immutable laws of nature can be changed by G-d, so too can these immutable spiritual laws be changed. The miracle of G-d's grace is that He is ready at all times to unfold a new future for man's life, regardless of the seeds a person has sown in the past. Man is

not bound to his yesterday. This Will of the Almighty — to open new doors and allow a person to reshape his own future, despite the spiritual quagmire he has laid for himself — is represented in the four-letter name of G-d. Hence the momentous statement about the process on Yom Kippur: *Before HASHEM will you become pure*. Whatever your sins of the past may have been, before Hashem — Who creates the future — will you rise to a new and pure future.

The two aspects of Yom Kippur — *kappara* and *tahara* — relate to the external and internal effects of sin. *Kappara* protects against destruction of the sinner, and *tahara* restores life to the soul. There are two corresponding prohibitions on Yom Kippur: we refrain from creative activity (just as we do on the Sabbath), and we refrain from eating and drinking. The prohibition against creative work signifies that once we have sinned we no longer have any right to master the world around us. And the prohibition against eating and drinking signifies that by having abused our sensual nature we have compromised our right as creatures to sustain ourselves physically with food and drink.

The prohibition against creative work parallels *kappara* and the external dimension: we have sinned against the world and brought some destruction to society. We express our contrition by displaying our loss of creative capacity — control and influence — in the world on this day. We cannot effectively redress the negative impact. We are limited to the natural and spiritual order. Only *kappara* from G-d can restore us to our former position.

The prohibition against eating and drinking parallels *tahara* and the internal dimension: we have dulled our souls by surrendering to sensuality. In response we refrain from physical pleasure and recognize that *tahara* can be accomplished only, as the verse states, *before HASHEM*. (Vayikra 17:30) Freedom from the bonds of sensuality can be attained only with recognition of G-d as the Source of all freedom. If he planted within us those sensual drives and at the same time commanded us to control them, we know these are fetters that are meant to be broken. As a consequence, our moral freedom is renewed and enables us to rise again to purity.

• Sources: Commentary, Vayikra 17:30

KEDOSHIM

Hair-Raising Spirituality

One of the many *mitzvot* appearing in *parshat Kedoshim* is the prohibition for men against shaving the corners of the hair beyond the temples (*pe'ot*) and the corners of the beard.

These two prohibitions express ideas fundamental to man's mission. The hair covering the temples is the ex-

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ternally visible division between the front and the back of the head, and this division coincides with the division between the cerebrum and the cerebellum. The hair at the temples is a natural veiling that hides the view of the back of the head. This division separates the cerebrum — the seat of cognition, representing the human element — from the cerebellum — the center of motor activity, representing the animal element. The division is to remain prominent and we are prohibited from removing it.

Here again we meet the great Torah principle concerning the holiness of life, where the higher dignity of the spiritual element is pronounced. Hair at the temples is found in every human being — in both genders and at all ages. Even the countenance of a newborn is inscribed with this emblem of its moral human mission.

The upper jaw and lower jaw also represent the dichotomy of animal forces and human forces within us. The upper jaw is fixed to the skull and upper part of the face, including the eyes, ears and nose. It relates more to the intellectual activity of the senses and plays only a passive part in the act of eating. The lower jaw, by contrast, with teeth and tongue, are actively involved in eating.

Because the male is more inclined to succumb to sensuality, at the age of maturity, when those sensual faculties are developing, he grows a beard. The beard covers those parts of the face whose primary activity is sensual, and leaves only the spiritual parts of his face — chiefly his eyes and forehead — in full view. This is intended to remind him that in all of his endeavors and activities he is to show his spiritual face and not his animalistic one. The sensual elements of his nature are to be subordinated, hidden. Man is therefore warned not to remove this veil of hair that serves as an ever-present reminder of where his true worth lies.

Women, by contrast, do not grow hair on their face. Because they are less prone to forfeiting their human dignity to the snare of sensuality, they do not need the same reminder. Instead, the men bear the national mark of the human mission on their heads.

• Sources: *Commentary, Vayikra 19:27*

EMOR

Bound by Time

The Torah sets forth the laws of the festivals in three separate places, and the Midrash explains the significance of each: In Vayikra (here), they are set forth to teach of their order, in Bamidbar to teach about their offerings, and in Devarim to teach about the duty to teach Torah to the community on the festivals.

Rav Hirsch notes the anomaly of the *mussaf* offerings

being taught in Bamidbar, when we would assume that Vayikra would be their proper place, among the teachings regarding all other offerings. He suggests that to appreciate the full significance of the festival offerings, the nation must first learn about itself and its own mission. This self-knowledge will be attained only through its experiences while wandering through the wilderness.

The cycle, or order, of the festivals — called *mo'adim* — is taught here. In fact, the *order* of the festivals is intrinsically related to the main teaching of Vayikra — the Temple service. They share a common concept of *mo'ed*, meeting place. The inner portion of the Tabernacle was known as the *ohel mo'ed*, or tent of meeting. The entire Temple was a place for the Jew to meet his Creator.

What the Sanctuary represents in space, the festivals represent in time. They are called *mo'ed* because they are meeting times with G-d. The purpose of both is Israel's union with G-d. The Sanctuary is the eternal center of our spatial world, and the festivals are the designated connections with G-d in our temporal world. Their message is: these were the days on which G-d was near to you in the past. Each year, when they recur, G-d awaits you, to renew that union.

This understanding gives meaning to the juxtaposition of the mention of these festivals and the laws immediately preceding them. We read of three laws: 1) an animal may not be offered as a *korban* within the first seven days of its life; instead it must be permitted to rest under its mother; 2) it is forbidden to offer an animal on the same day that its young or its mother was slaughtered — on that day the animal is said to be 'lacking a time requirement.' 3) the permissible parts of a thanksgiving animal offering may be eaten only on that same day; none of it may be left for the next morning.

All of these laws instruct us to give consideration to *temporal* relationships within the Sanctuary. The time frames considered by these laws are one or seven days: a mother's love for her young must be afforded for a period of seven days. The young or the mother of an offering must wait one more day until it may be offered. The permissible time to eat a (thanksgiving) *korban* is limited to one day. The festivals too, contemplate a period of one or seven days.

A person's freedom is marked by his right to use his time as he chooses. By observing laws that invoke time, and by observing the festivals at the times G-d set for them, we express His sovereignty over us. That we place our time at His disposal is the sign of our becoming servants of G-d.

• Sources: *Commentary, Vayikra 23:1*

What's In a Word...continued from page twenty-one

plains that *haggadah* connotes telling over something that is relevant to the listener, while *misaper* refers to saying over a story which is not necessarily directly related to the listener.

Alternatively, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) explains that the difference between *haggadah* and *sippur* lies in how the speaker knows whatever he is saying over. The word *haggadah* implies relaying information which the speaker directly experienced (something he heard or saw himself). On the other hand, the word *sippur* is a general term for relating any story, or even a dream, which he did not physically perceive.

In short, *haggadah* implies that the content is personally known to the speaker, directly relevant to the listener (as we explained previously, *GIMMEL-DALET* denotes a form of “connection”), or new. *Sippur/misaper* is a more general term which does not carry any of these connotations. Nonetheless, there are still some important lessons which we can derive from the use of *sippur/misaper*.

Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (1935-2017) explains that all words derived from the *SAMECH-PEH-REISH* root are interrelated. He explains that *sippur* denotes joining together multiple details to form a singular, holistic unit—the “story”. This resembles a *sefer* (book), which includes all the details and contents recorded therein, and binds them together into one entity. Similarly, a *sfar* (border) confines everything within its boundary and makes them into one unit — whether it is the border of a country or the city limits. Finally, *mispar* (number) and *sofer* (counting) refer to the system of counting numbers that are all bound together in an organized and logical way.

Interestingly, Hebrew is not the only language in which

the words for “telling” and “counting” are related. The same phenomenon is found in German/Yiddish. In fact, the English words “tell” and “tale” are derived from the German word *zahlen*, which also means to “count”. Another English word, *recount* (“to narrate a story”), is obviously related to *count*. Some etymologists even claim that the English phrase “to tell time” uses the word *tell* in the sense of “counting” — not “storytelling”.

This idea can help us better understand the requirement to “tell over” the story of the Exodus on Passover night. Rabbi Aryeh Pomeranchik (1908-1942) writes that he heard from the Brisker Rav (1886-1959) in the name of Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik (1853-1918) that this special commandment on Passover night differs in two ways from the daily requirement to mention the Exodus. Firstly, the fulfillment of this commandment must assume a question and answer format, while the daily commandment of mentioning the Exodus simply entails “mentioning” the story. Secondly, the commandment on Passover night requires telling over the *entire* story of the Exodus — beginning with the Jews’ enslavement, the ensuing miracles leading up to and following the Exodus, the miraculous exit, and the praise of G-d for performing these miracles — while the commandment of “mentioning” the Exodus does not require all these details.

These two components of the commandment of Passover night are evident in the term *sippur* and the requirement to be *misaper*. *Sippur/misaper* denotes a structured storytelling, made up of several components joined together in a logical and coherent way. The different parts of the story must flow from each other in one smooth progression, like numbers that flow from each other when counted. This refers both to the question-and-answer for-

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Ostensibly there is no connection between giving charity and bringing offerings. Charity is a mitzvah between us and our fellow, while offerings are between us and G-d.

The answer is that the two are inseparable. Giving charity brings the same closeness to G-d as does an offering.

Our ego is like a darkened room. When we open up the

window of that room to see the person who is standing outside our door we will also see beyond to the sky; we will connect to the Heavens.

It all depends on which way we look through the telescope.

• Sources: Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

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mat of the Passover night storytelling, and to the fact that the story follows one chronological/logical narrative.

Peirush HaRokeach explains that while *haggadah* refers to telling something new, *sippur* refers to “the first time and more.” Perhaps he means to explain that *sippur* refers to a story which is intended to be told over multiple times. When one is *misaper*, this is but one instance within a series of instances, like a number which is but one point on the infinite number line. This fits neatly with *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim*, which is told and retold every year.

Haggadah and Sippur — the ultimate purpose of telling the story

That said, we can now begin to understand why the Torah refers to the commandment of telling the story of the Exodus with a *haggadah*-related verb, while the Rabbis tend to use a *sippur*-related word. From the Torah’s perspective the commandment of telling over the story of the Exodus requires one to say over something “new,” because when that directive was first issued, the story had never been told yet — it was still unfolding. For this reason the Torah uses the word *vehigadata*. But from the Rabbis’ perspective, the story had already been repeated for generations, so the commandment calls for one to continue transmitting that story from generation to generation. Accordingly, they use the word *misaper*.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein (1906-2003), a son-in-law of the Brisker Rav, finds Biblical precedent for referring to the commandment of *vehigadata* as *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim*. He notes that although the term *sippur* does not appear in the Bible concerning the commandment in question, it does appear in a related context. The Torah says that the reason for G-d’s hardening Pharaoh’s heart and performing all sorts of miracles leading up to the Exodus was so that the Jewish People will “tell” their descendants about this and they will know G-d. (Ex. 10:2) In that context, the Torah uses the word *tisaper* (a cognate of *sippur*). Because that is the ultimate purpose of

the miracles, the Rabbis focused on that word, referring to the commandment as *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim*. Rabbi Feinstein asserts that the Torah uses the word *vehigadata* only to teach *how* the story should be presented, but not concerning what the ultimate *purpose* in relating the story is — that we will know G-d and recognize His power.

A similar explanation is offered by Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865). He writes that another hallmark of *sippur/misaper* is “explaining something in a clear way”. He argues that these words are related to the word *sapir* — a type of blue gemstone. Moreover, Rabbi Mecklenburg likens G-d’s administration of the world to the clear blue sky. The sky’s clarity is sometimes blocked by clouds, just as the wicked sometimes obfuscate His role in the universe. By clearly spelling out how G-d runs all of creation and puts the wicked in their place, one essentially “clears up” any misconceptions about His role in the universe. He clears away the clouds, with only the blue sky remaining. According to this, the term *sippur* applies to our narrating the story of the Exodus, because by presenting the entire story as a whole, we show how G-d oversees the entirety of creation.

Two Separate Commandments?

After a lengthy discussion of the two terms used for the commandment in question, Rabbi Nosson Gestetner (1932-2010) concludes that there are actually two separate commandments that one performs at the Passover Seder. One commandment is *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim*, which obligates one to verbalize the story and sequence of events that happened at the Exodus. This commandment even applies to somebody celebrating the Passover Seder alone, and even if he already knows the story he is still supposed to say it over to himself. In addition to this there is another commandment, which is the commandment of *vehigadata*. This second commandment requires revealing/teaching one’s children ideas or details about the Exodus that they did not previously know.

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Season - Then & Now...continued from page ten

With the Malbim's outlook we have a better understanding of the Haggadah. It is orderly and it addresses every part of the source verse for our obligation to have a Seder. We also see from the above that the main retelling of the story of the Exodus begins in the third part of the Haggadah. One common mistake that people make is that they spend much of the time during Seder night addressing and explaining the introductory parts of the Haggadah. Hours are spent analyzing the story of Rabbi Eliezer, the four sons, etc., leaving little or no time

for expounding the verses that speak about the actual Exodus. As a result, many rush through these verses so they may eat the *afikoman* in time. While every part of the Haggadah has much depth behind it, on Seder night it is best to spend most of the time on the verses that discuss the Exodus, starting with "*Arami oved avi*" (see Siftey Chaim, Moadim vol. 2 p. 355). May we all merit fulfilling the *mitzvot* of Pesach properly, and thereby merit seeing the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days.

The Parsha Duel Dichotomy 2019...continued from page twelve

However, there are several possible instances in which certain *parshiyot* are combined in *Chutz La'aretz*, yet are read on separate weeks in *Eretz Yisrael*. One such time is for the next three month or so, as described above, making it one of the times where Jews living in *Eretz Yisrael* end up reading a different *parsha* on *Shabbat* than the Jews living in *Chutz La'aretz*.

One common question is why the calendars don't re-sync much earlier. Many ask, why not catch up right away by *Acharei Mot/Kedoshim* or *Behar/Bechukotai*? Or even *Chuka/Balak*? Why should three separate double *parshiyot* be passed over, with the world amalgamating only on the fourth possibility, months later? In layman's terms, why should we wait so long for the whole world to be realigned?

Although some cite alternate *minhagim*, nevertheless, it is important to note that nowadays this long *parsha* split is indeed *Minhag Yisrael*, as codified by the

Knesses Hagedolah, Magen Avraham, and Mishnah Berurah. We should also realize that back then travel to and from *Eretz Yisrael* was far less of an issue, as, since undertaking the trip would take several months, missing one *parsha* would be the least of one's worries.

Either way, as this is the *Minhag*, one looking to travel to or from *Eretz Yisrael* should at least be aware of this fascinating situation, preferably prior to trying to figure out why the *tzibbur* is *leining* what seems to be the 'wrong *parsha*'.

An interesting time of year, indeed.

In Part II we will explore the reasons for this remarkable dichotomy.

This article was written l'iluy Nishmas Yisrael Eliezer ben Zev and l'zechus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzecha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad!

Mezuzah Maven...continued from page fifteen

8. Human Habitation

The Rambam exempts storage rooms and barns from mezuzah. However, Shulchan Aruch rules that since humans use these structures, they are considered human habitats, unless other factors render them unfit.

9. Dignified Purpose

This is the source of the well-known halacha that a bathroom or a mikveh does not require a mezuzah.

10. Permanent Dwelling

Hotels, rentals, succahs, trailers, ships and private jets are just a few of the many structures that do not qualify as permanent dwellings.

• Sources: Rambam, Hilchos Sefer Torah 6; Agur B'ohalecha 2:75; Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 286-287 with commentaries.

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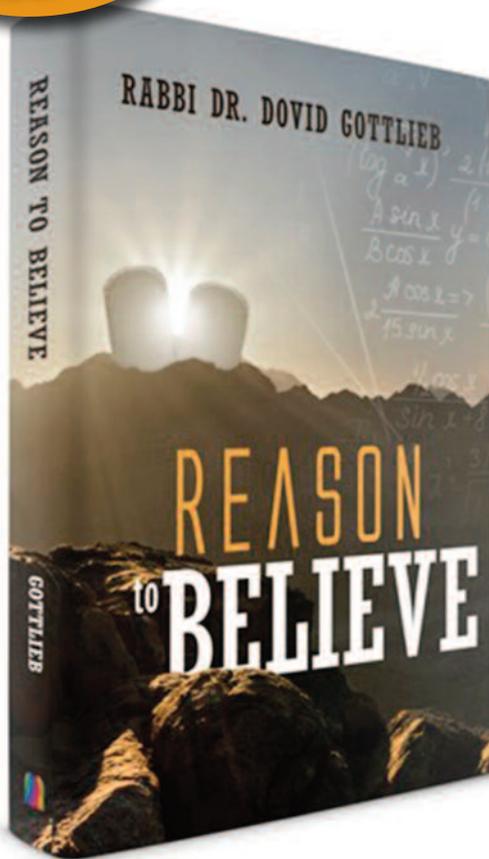
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