

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Shvii Shel Pesach 5776

From Allen Klein for Efraim Goldstein <hamelaket@gmail.com>

Ben-Tzion Spitz

Biblical and Rabbinic Explorations

Pesach: Fear, Discomfort and Growth

What shall we be free of this Pesach? It is the holiday of Freedom, isn't it? Most of us today live in democratic countries, with freedom of movement, of expression, of religion – so what other freedoms can we be seeking? What freedom can we suckle from this age-old celebration, this call-to-freedom, which is so fundamental to the Jewish people? It turns out that Pesach has the capacity to free us, if we wish, from many things that enslave us in our daily lives. Freedom from materialism. Freedom from superficiality. Freedom from the meaningless and the trivial. However, I would like to focus on a specific angle: the freedom to be a better version of ourselves. What's wrong with the current version, you may ask. Plenty. We wouldn't be human otherwise. But the celebration of Pesach is a clarion call to wake up, to discard the fears and habits that hold us back and to improve ourselves. First we start by eliminating all of the Chametz, all of the leavened products, from our homes, our sight, our possession and our lives. Besides for the practical aspects, it is also a dictate to eliminate the extraneous things from our lives. Our lives quickly get cluttered with extra weight. We need to shed that baggage, existentially become lean and focused, leave the hang-ups of the past, for a meaningful present and a rewarding future. Then comes the diet of Matza, simple, humble, clean, nothing added, just the basic ingredients of life, flour and water. We need a diet of simple to get back to our personal basics. What are the things that really matter? What is the direction my life is taking? How is my family life? How is my spiritual life? How is my internal life? Does my life have meaning? Or am I stuck in a certain course, a certain behavior and don't have the strength and the courage to change course? Will I wake up at the end of my life filled with regrets, for those roads I didn't take? Then comes the Marror, the bitter herbs. Sometimes, many times, even most times, we need to bite the bullet. We need to take the hard road. Comfort and security are not always the optimal choices. Sometimes we need to leave our comfort zone to grow. Sometimes we need to overcome our fear, our distaste, our placidity, to truly awaken, to truly reach moments of meaning which in turn hold the hope to leading lives of greater meaning. However, life is not all struggle and discomfort. We have to celebrate! We are the children of Kings and Queens, Prophets and Sages. We have a special relationship with the Creator of the world. And on this day, he took us, our people out of the bondage of Egypt to be his emissaries in this world: To be a light in the darkness; the joy amongst the somber; the serious amongst the frivolous; the revolutionary amongst the complacent; the respectful amongst the unruly; the meaningful amongst the meaningless. We drink. We feast. We dine like kings. We lean on our sides and remember the tribulations of the past and the hopes for the future. We are noble. We cannot forget that either. But often we do. We get stuck in our own personalities. We have an innate fear of changing who we are. We have a practiced cynicism; a quick dismissal of the pure and the noble. We believe that reality demands a certain harshness, both with ourselves as well as with others. Someone good? It can't be. They must have ulterior motives. They must have some benefit we don't see. For us to be so good? We would be branded hypocrites. That is how corrosive and destructive our fear of our better selves has become. We do not allow ourselves or others to reach those heights. That is part of what Pesach is coming to cure. Get back to basics. Don't fear change or leaving your comfort zone. We can be noble and altruistic. We can sustain it, beyond pangs of conscience. We can return to lives filled with beautiful meaning and purpose. We can be that light, that joy, that seriousness, that respect, that revolution. And when we all remember that, when we all act on it, then we shall truly celebrate Pesach together next year in Jerusalem.

Chag Kasher Ve'sameach!

Ben-Tzion

SEVENTH DAY OF PESACH

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER ZT'L

The Song of the Sea is read from the Torah every year when the weekly Perashah is read, and it is read on the seventh day of Pesach, and it is recited daily in our prayers; and so it shall be until forever. The spectacle of the splitting of the Sea of Suf gave an impetus to Israel and causes them to go forward until the end of time. The episode of the splitting of the Sea of Suf afforded one of the most stupendous spectacles in history. The mighty waters *which Israel had feared more than they feared Pharaoh*, now parted and piled up *to shield them* like crystal walls on both sides of the uncovered seabottom; and Israel, protected by the walls of water against the darts and javelins of Egypt, marched across on the dry path. It was a never to be forgotten day of G-d. All of Nature was in turmoil because its Master was marching with his children. The pillar of cloud which preceded them now moved back to intervene between Israel and Egypt. At the end of the night, fire and cloud descended upon the pursuing army which was now in the middle of the sea-road, whereas Israel had gained the opposite shore. The chariot wheels of Egypt burned off. Now they exhorted each other to flee for their lives, for they saw that G-d was fighting against them for Israel; but it was too late. The trap was sprung; G-d bade Moses stretch out his arm to send the mighty walls toppling down upon the pursuers, who sank to the bottom like lead, while Israel stood on the shore electrified by the spectacle. *The sea which had threatened Israel with a worse fate than Pharaoh's wrath, had rescued them from their enemy*; and it now washed up on the shore a huge wealth of booty.

"This is my G-d and I will adorn Him" 15:2

The word "this" denotes *clarity of perception* and True Knowledge, as if they were viewing the Shechinah and pointing to it with the finger, for such was the elevated level of knowledge of Hashem which they gained at that wondrous spectacle of the splitting of the Sea. "This is my G-d." The word for G-d here is the *Alef* and *Lamed (Kel)*, which denotes "strength" (as in Beresheet 31:29). 1) *He* alone is my G-d of strength 2) and *He* is for me alone ("My G-d"). Therefore I pledge my gratitude and love to Him "and I will adorn Him". I will praise and glorify Him in such manner to demonstrate that He alone is beautiful, and beside love of Him nothing else deserves to be loved as beautiful. And only that which has connection with His Torah and with His service is beautiful. The only beautiful men are those who are faithful to His Torah. Therefore I will adorn His Mitzvot; a beautiful Lulav, beautiful Sisit, a beautiful Sefer Torah. We do not adorn Him (i.e. give Him beauty) but we thereby demonstrate that we recognize His beauty, because we constantly consider His ways of kindness and wisdom and we see how beautiful are His attributes.

This is the vow which our nation made at the Sea. And now this vow is being fulfilled by the genuine Jewish nation to this day.

**Quoted from "A NATION IS BORN" & "BEHOLD A PEOPLE"
by Rabbi Miller ZT'L**

WHAT IS SHMURAH MATZAH?

Must all matzah eaten on Pesach be shmurah matzah?

By: Rabbi Yehonassan Sasportas

When setting forth the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* on *Pesach* the *Torah* (*Shemos* 12:17) commands us to guard the *matzos* from leavening. As the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 38 and 40a) explains, the mere knowledge that

the *matzos* have not become *chametz* is not sufficient. Rather, one must actually watch the process whereby the *matzos* are made in order to ascertain that they have not become *chametz*. Furthermore, the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* *ibid.*) states that this guarding must be done with the intention of using the *matzos* for the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* on the night of *Pesach*. Should one intend to use them for another purpose, such as to accompany the offering of a *nazir*, they may not be employed to fulfill one's obligation of eating *matzah* at the *Seder*. This is the source of the term "*shemurah-matzah*", namely, *matzah* that has been guarded from leavening, with the intention of using it on *Pesach*. There is discussion, however, as to which *matzah* falls under this obligation. *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 460:1, based on *Ran*, *Tur* and *Beis Yosef* 453) rules that *shmurah-matzah* is required only when fulfilling the commandment to eat *matzah* at the *Seder*. Whereas *matzah* eaten during the rest of *Pesach* is deemed valid based upon the mere knowledge that it is not *chametz*, although one did not watch the entire process of its making. This view is supported from the fact that the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 40a) rules that, aside from the *matzah* that is eaten at the *Seder*, one is permitted to eat *matzah* baked from dough made even by gentiles, as long as one is certain that it has not become *chametz*. Others (see *Rif* to *Pesachim* 40a, *Rambam*, *Hil. Chametz U'Matzah* 5:9, see *Magid Mishneh*), however, seem to understand that the obligation to watch the process of the making of *matzah* applies to any *matzah* that one consumes during *Pesach*. As such, following the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch*, one is permitted to eat any *matzah* on *Pesach* that he is certain did not become *chametz*. However, when fulfilling the *mitzvah* of consuming *matzah* at the *Seder*, one must employ specifically *Shmurah-matzah*. However, *Mishnah Berurah* (460:2 see also *Biur Halachah*, following the *Gra* and *Kaf HaChaim* 453:63) writes that the custom is to be stringent and to eat *shmurah-matzah* not only at the *Seder*, but throughout the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach*. Although doing so is not strictly obligatory, one who has been stringent regarding this in the past may be bound to continue doing so, until he consults with a competent *Rav* (see *Shaarei Teshuvah* 453:5). Now, the requirement to guard *matzah* from leavening cannot come into effect only when the flour is made into dough. Since *chametz* is by definition not *matzah*, the fact that the dough may not be left to rise is self-understood. Obviously, then, the *Torah's* requirement to guard the *matzah* must apply to a stage prior to the making of the dough (*Pesachim* 40a with *Ramban*). However, the stage of the *matzah* - making process where guarding becomes necessary is the subject of dispute. The *Gemara* states that *Rava* required those who make bundles of grain employed for *matzah* to guard it from leavening with the intention of using it for the *mitzvah* of *matzah*. In light of this, *Rif* (*Pesachim* *ibid.*) and *Rambam* (*ibid.*) rule that grain used for *matzah* must be guarded from leavening from the time it is harvested. Others, however, maintain that *Rava's* ruling was a personal stringency, and that the strict obligation to guard the *matzah* comes into effect only at a later stage. Thus, *Ran* rules that although it is meritorious to watch the grain used for *matzah* at the time of the harvest, nevertheless, one's has fulfilled his obligation even if he guards the grain from leavening only after having acquired it from the marketplace. Similarly, *Rosh* notes that the custom in Germany and France was to guard the grain used for *matzah* only from when it was ground into flour, the first point where there was concern that the grain would come in contact with water. Some go as far as to say that, in cases where no better option is available, one can produce *shmurah-matzah* from flour acquired from the market, which one knows not to be *chametz*. In this case he may fulfill the requirement to guard the *matzah* at the stage when the flour is made into dough, although he did not supervise the harvesting or grinding of the grain. (see *Ran* *ibid.*, *Tur* *ibid.*). *Shulchan Aruch* (453:4) rules that grain used to produce *shmurah-matzah* eaten at the *Seder* should preferably be guarded from the time it is harvested. Otherwise, it should be guarded from the time it is ground into flour. Should this be impossible, one may purchase flour and guard it from leavening until it is baked into *matzah*. This latter option is obviously not applicable, though, where the grain is customarily soaked or washed by the producer before being ground into flour. As mentioned earlier, the custom is to use *shmurah-matzah* not only at the *Seder* but during the entire *Pesach*.

The general custom is to satisfy this stringency by guarding all grain employed for *matzos* to be used on *Pesach* only from the time it is ground into flour (*Mishnah Berurah* 453:25). Many are stringent even in this regard and require that the guarding of all *matzos* used on *Pesach* begin at the time of the harvest (see *Shaarei Teshuvah* 453:8 and *Biur Halachah* 460:1).

The Fifth Son

While the taste of the Afikomen still lingers and the songs and words of Torah still resonate, I decided to take advantage of the moment and the memories to give vent to the thoughts which came to my mind when considering the "Four Sons". It occurred to me that there is a fifth son, who is far far different from his other siblings. The four sons include the clever one, the evil son, the simpleton and the one who is totally ignorant of his Jewish environment. The fifth one, who like the other four exists in every generation, is such an embarrassment that the editors of the Hagada that they excluded him – while he too prefers not to be included. He is the son whose appellation is – the "Traitor". The first four, despite their fundamental differences still constitute a family. The father relates to each one in a manner and language suitable for that son and his spiritual level. The traitorous son turns his back on the family and feels degraded by any association with them. He is the son who abandoned his unique heritage by renouncing the Jewish God. He wants no part of Jews or of our 3500-year history. The most significant mark of today's traitor is his estrangement and disaffection with anything that rings of Medinat Yisrael. The traitor son takes two forms. 1- He can be found in every Reform-Conservative temple led by "rabbis" of both sexes, and certainly among unaffiliated Jews. The unaffiliated and Reform-Conservatives will without a second thought marry out, and are not perturbed by the thought that they and their offspring will be erased from the collective memory of our people. They are ideologically liberal, able and willing to understand and forgive every criminal and terrorist act, but condemn the loyal Jews who are struggling to renew our national life in the land that was given to us by HaShem. The Land that is being squatted on by enemies and strangers who have declared their intention to finish what Hitler began 77 years ago. 2- The second form of traitors include the seemingly observant Chassidic and other sects in the galut who condemn and degrade any mention of our holy Medina. They cringe at any of the many great successes of the Medina. If they would not press the trigger against the Medina, they would not prevent anyone else from doing so. Both segments of the "traitor" son – the assimilationist and the Satmar et al Chareidi groups – would make amazing clients for psychiatrists specializing in the malady of denial. Why does the first segment turn its back on a 3500-year history of their own families who have contributed more to humanity than any other nation? And why does the second segment deny, misinterpret and misrepresent HaShem's mastery over human events as they evolve in the Holy Land on a minute to minute basis, when the hand of HaShem is present right in front of their eyes even as they pray to HaShem daily. Why do they refuse to acknowledge the reality of our redemption? Unless, of course, there is an on-going Godly agenda being implemented from behind the curtain that divides the spiritual and material worlds. It could be that it is not the two segments of the "traitor" son who have initiated their denial, but rather our Father-in-Heaven who has decided to deny these people the merit to participate in the redemption of His holy nation in the Holy Land! The "Four sons" will be with us at sederim well into the future, because even the evil son wishes to remain part of the family. The "traitor" son, by actively harming the Jewish State through word or deed, has declared himself to become one with the enemies of HaShem and the Jewish nation will regurgitate him. However, we believe in the power of Teshuva. A piece of Chametz can never return to a state of Matza, but a Jew who has strayed beyond the red line can return to be a "son" and daughter of the chosen nation. Granted, it is difficult to save the two segments of the fifth "son" through education and musar. Nevertheless, what is beyond the abilities of the normative "Four Son" family to influence their renegade fifth brother, is in the power of the anti-Semite to bring these people to their Jewish senses. Chag Samayah, Nachman Kahana Copyright © 5776/2016

April 28, 2016 Thursday 20 Nisan 5776

The Jerusalem Post

What is freedom? The last day of Passover

By RABBI SHMUEL RABINOWITZ

What is unique about this day is that it is a holiday unto itself.

The last day of Passover in Israel is simply called Shvi'i shel Pesach, the seventh day of Passover.

What is unique about this day is that it is a holiday unto itself. As opposed to the days of Hol Hamoed, the days between the first and last days of the festival, which are a mixture of hol (non-holy) and kodesh (holy), the seventh day of Passover stands on its own as a sacred day that is kept like the first day of Passover.

This year, it falls on Thursday evening and ends as Shabbat begins. On this day, we will hear Shirat Hayam read in the synagogue – that song that Am Yisrael sang, conducted by Moses after the great miracle of the Parting of the Red Sea. This miracle took place on this day, seven days after Am Yisrael was liberated from Egypt.

Just before the sea split into two and made it possible for Am Yisrael to pass through it, we encounter an amazing drama. Am Yisrael was in a terrible state. They had been set free only seven days earlier and now they were standing on the edge of the sea with the tremendous Egyptian army behind them and nowhere to escape to. It seemed the tide was turning and that they would soon be returning to Egypt as demeaned slaves, and perhaps because of the escape, their work load would become even greater.

The reactions to the situation were varied. There were those who responded with anger and despair and preferred to return to Egypt. But there were also those who reacted differently and prayed to God from the depths of their hearts: "... and the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold! the Egyptians were advancing after them.

They were very frightened, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord." (Exodus 14:10) And immediately after this, we read this unusual verse: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the children of Israel and let them travel.'" This verse is difficult to interpret: It did not say previously that Moses cried out to God.

The nation cried out, not Moses. Why then does God say to Moshe, "Why do you cry out to Me?" Furthermore, the verse contains a theological problem: A person of faith who finds himself in a difficult situation turns to God in prayer. This is the most natural thing that the Torah views positively. Why, then, at this moment of despair, does God say to Moses, "Why do you cry out to Me?" The sages of the midrash focused on these two issues and found an original solution.

This is what they wrote: "Rabbi Yehuda bar Shalom said in the name of Rabbi Elazar: Flesh and blood, if a poor person comes to say something to him, he does not listen to his words, but if a rich person comes to say something, he immediately listens and accepts him.

But the Blessed Be He is not like this, all are equal before Him – men and women, slaves, poor and rich... Know that when the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh chased them... and it says, "and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord," Moses began praying as well.

The Blessed Be He said to him: Why are you standing and praying? My children already prayed and I heard their prayer, as it says, "Why do you cry out to Me?" (Midrash Raba for the Book of Exodus, parasha 21) What an amazing solution.

Moses was indeed not praying; he just wanted to pray, but before he even got the chance to open his mouth, God said to him: There is no need for your prayer. The prayers of the nation were already heard.

The difficulties in both commentary and theology are solved at once. Prayer is indeed important and necessary, but it does not have to be the prayer of a leader. Even the prayers of "regular" people – men and women, slaves, rich and poor – are heard.

It is no coincidence that this message is written here, a moment before the ultimate liberation. Am Yisrael, leaving slavery for freedom, was familiar with a different kind of freedom: The Egyptians, the cruel oppressors, were free. No one ruled over them. This familiarity was dangerous because Am Yisrael could have adopted for itself this type of freedom, one that tramples others.

But it was not for this kind of freedom that they left Egypt.

A moment before the ultimate liberation, God reveals the characteristics of the desired freedom. This is freedom bestowed upon any and every person, without discrimination, with man's infinite worth acknowledged.

The prayer of the simplest of people is accepted like the prayer of an admired leader.

The definition of the freedom for which Am Yisrael left Egypt is this: The faith that in God's eyes, all people are valuable, all people are worthy of having their prayers heard, all people are worthy of happiness.

This idea was phrased beautifully in the US Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and holy sites.

Copyright © 2014

Ou

An Eruv Tavshilin Primer

Rabbi Moshe Zywica

This year, the second days of the Pesach holiday afford us the opportunity to perform the rabbinic procedure of eruv tavshilin on Thursday, April 28, before the start of yom tov.

What is eruv tavshilin?

When the second day of a holiday falls on Shabbat, as it does this year, or if Shabbat falls immediately after a holiday, it is rabbinically forbidden to cook or bake on the holiday in preparation for Shabbat. Eruv tavshilin is a ritual that, when performed, permits preparation for Shabbat during a holiday. It is interesting to note that there is no prohibition from the Torah to cook or bake during a holiday for Shabbat, and the two reasons given for the allowance are based on the following possibilities:

Either: (a) Shabbat and holidays are considered to be the same day. Since the holidays are referred to as Sabbaths in the Torah, the permission to cook and bake during the holiday is thereby associated with the preparations necessary for Shabbat during the holiday; or (b) in the event of the arrival of unexpected guests, one would need to prepare extra food for the holiday, and Shabbat, by extension, would benefit from these extra preparations.

Why then, if the Torah permits the preparation of food on the holiday for Shabbat, do we need the eruv tavshilin as dictated by the rabbis? Tractate Beitza offers two explanations for eruv tavshilin. The first is based on the concern of the rabbis of Talmudic times that the needs of Shabbat would be overlooked on occasions when a holiday precedes it, thus they created a unique and tangible preparation for Shabbat that must be attended to before the start of the holiday. The second thought is that rabbis were concerned that by permitting food preparations for Shabbat during a holiday without having a formalized reminder of the exclusivity afforded to Shabbat's preparations, one might come to make preparations for the subsequent weekdays during the holiday as well. The Torah strictly prohibits preparation for secular days during a holiday or on Shabbat.

What does the ritual of eruv tavshilin entail?

On the eve of a holiday two types of food are set aside; one cooked and one baked. In the event both types of food are unavailable, it would be acceptable to use only a cooked item; however, a baked item alone would not suffice. Each item must be of a specific amount to fulfill the requirements of the ritual. The cooked item may not be smaller than a large olive (approximately half the size of a chicken's egg) and the baked item should be at least the size of a chicken's egg. The selected items are held aloft while the blessing and subsequent Aramaic declaration is recited. It is more important to have an understanding of what is being said than to use the traditional Hebrew and Aramaic languages, so if neither language is familiar one is required to recite it in his/her native tongue.

Only one eruv tavshilin is required per household – this covers both the home's residents and any guests.

Eruv tavshilin extends permission to prepare for Shabbat only after candle-lighting on Thursday evening up until candle-lighting time on Friday. Every effort must be made to complete the preparations early enough on Friday afternoon that the food will be edible well before

Shabbat. Nevertheless, if the preparations were left until late Friday afternoon, they may still be done.

The food items used for eruv tavshilin must remain intact as long as preparations are being made for Shabbat. It is therefore advisable to preserve their freshness by placing one or both of the items into the refrigerator as needed.

If matzah is used as the baked item, it is customary to then use it as one of the two matzot at seuda shlishit.

If one is planning to be fully prepared for Shabbat before the start of the holiday, is an eruv tavshilin necessary?

Even when a person is not planning to cook or bake during the holiday in preparation for Shabbat, an eruv tavshilin should be performed as a precaution for any unexpected need. Also, given that an eruv tavshilin allows for other kinds of Shabbat preparations, such as washing dishes and lighting candles, it is important to perform the ritual in any case, without a blessing.

What can be done if an eruv tavshilin was forgotten?

It would be permissible to rely on the personal eruv tavshilin of your local rabbi as it is customary for him to have his community in mind when performing the ritual. This can only be relied upon provided that eruv tavshilin was not forgotten due to negligence.

Another option is to have someone who did make an eruv tavshilin cook for you. It is only necessary for the person who forgot to make an eruv tavshilin to give the raw ingredients to this other person who must be mindful to accept the items as a transfer of ownership. The new owner (the friend or neighbor who did make an eruv tavshilin) may then proceed to cook, even in the home of the person who did not make an eruv tavshilin.

There are a few other alternatives if the eruv tavshilin is overlooked; however, due to their complexity they fall beyond the scope of this article. To learn about these options it is recommended to speak with a local Orthodox rabbi.

Seamless Song / Torah.org

Rabbi Aron Tendler

In the aftermath of the Parting of the Sea, the Jews burst forth in Shira (song). As we have explained in past issues, Shira is a unique form of song, an exclusive type of praise. As Rashi in Bereshit 32:27 referenced from the Talmud in tractate Chulin and the Mechilta regarding the angel of Eisav, “Let me leave because it is my turn to say Shira.” Angels sing Shira while humans merely sing. On the shores of the Yam Suf (Red Sea), led by Moshe and Miriam, the Jewish nation sang Shira!

Shira is a form of song and praise that emanates from the being of a person or entity that is 100% subjugated to Hashem (G-d). It presumes an integration of every element in concert with the will of G-d. It demands a singularity of understanding that existence and purpose are one and the same. To exist means to do as G-d intended. It is a realization that suspends the option of freewill so that for all intents and purposes, a human is catapulted to the level of angel. When and if this should happen the being does not choose to say Shira; instead, Shira erupts spontaneously in response to simply existing.

It is not intended that humans sing Shira. The greatness and uniqueness of humanity is the gift and challenge of freewill. Through freewill, we are the recipients of Torah and through freewill, we have the ability to ascend higher than the angels. As such, Shira is almost impossible for a human to attain, and once attained it is impossible to sustain.

Everyone wonders how the Jews were able to sin after witnessing the spectacles of Exodus, Kriyas Yam Suf (Parting of the Sea), and Matan Torah (Revelation).

We attempt to understand how someone like Bilam, a man gifted and therefore potentially worthy of prophecy akin to that of Moshe, could choose to do evil, could elect to go against G-d's wishes.

The last Parshios explained that the “hardening of Pharaoh's heart” was the means for G-d's greater revelation. That means that if not for G-d interfering with Pharaoh's freewill, the Jews would have been set free after the sixth plague of Shechin – boils. Nevertheless, it took six

plagues and untold physical and economic devastation for Pharaoh to accept the inevitability of G-d's intention to free the Jews.

Freewill is who and what we are. The only way that can change is if we die or if G-d chooses for His own exclusive purposes to interfere with it; otherwise, to be human means to struggle all the time with the demands of freewill. Regardless of who we are and who we become, freewill is our most defining human characteristic. Do we do as we wish or do we subject ourselves to G-d's demands? The Jews in the aftermath of all the miracles of Exodus and beyond still had freewill. Bilam in the aftermath of prophecy still had freewill. Pharaoh up until the sixth plague still had freewill. Therefore, anything could still happen including going against G-d's wishes and intentions. Obviously, each case is different. Each person is the product of his or her own history and challenges and what motivates one person to rebel against the obvious truth of G-d is not what motivates another to do the same; however, they all have in common that without freewill they could not have chosen to rebel.

Angels can sing Shira whenever it is their designated time to do so because they are the pure and absolute reflections of G-d's will. They do not have freewill in the manner that provides for the possibility of not doing as G-d demands. Therefore, they exist on the level of Shira at all times. The only restriction to angels singing Shira is G-d's will, as to when each angel is to sing the Shira of its being. Humans on the other hand are able to experience G-d in a manner that momentarily overwhelms the challenge of freewill with the irrefutable evidence of G-d's absolute existence. (Eg. The Bnai Yisroel (Sons of Israel) at the time of Eliyahu at Mt. Carmel and what we aspire to attain at the end of Yom Kippur.) At such times, Shira in some form or another, is inevitable. However, a moment later the evidence of G-d's absoluteness recedes into the realm of memory and freewill reasserts itself. Sin is once again a possibility and Shira is not.

Starting with the first day of Chol Hamoed Pesach, (intermediary days of Passover), we no longer say the full Hallel (a selection of Psalms called “Praise”); instead, we say ½ Hallel. The reason for doing so is the famous Medresh that describes G-d's reaction to the drowning of the Egyptians. “My creations are drowning in the sea and you wish to sing Shira?” In truth we should answer “Yes! We do wish to sing Shira! The drowning of the Egyptians in the sea once again reaffirms Your greatness of compassion and justice as elemental to the existence of the universe. Even the destruction of Your greatest creation (human) is cause for singing Shira when it so clearly fits into the absolutes of our faith and practice!” However, to sing Shira under such conditions presumes that we are on the level of angels. It presumes that our entire beings are subjugated to G-d's will and integrated with the essence of His Oneness. It assumes that we live within a seamless tapestry of revelation and existence. Unfortunately or fortunately that is not the assumed human condition. Our lot is to always struggle toward absolute subjugation and integration. What was realized a moment ago as truth and certainty is the challenge of here and now; therefore, we cannot say the full Hallel. We must accept the limitations of our humanness and feel the pain of loss and the destruction of potential. We cannot fully sing Shira.

Shira brings to mind the imagery of a symphony. Different instruments, notes, and talents integrated into a seamless orchestrated opus. If any one instrument or note is off, the composition's perfection is compromised. The untrained public ear may not notice the flaw; however, the trained critic and certainly the conductor will note the musical imperfection. Correcting the mistake involves one of two possibilities. 1. Give the musician another chance to do it correctly. 2. Remove the less than perfect musician and hire another to do the job. We would like to hope for the first; however, the conductor may know that the first is not an option, and for the sake of the symphony, go with option #2.

At the end of this week's Parsha, Amalek attacked Am Yisroel. Led by Yehoshua (Joshua – a paradigm of singular subjugation and integration), the Bnai Yisroel were victorious. G-d said to Moshe that Amalek will one day be eradicated because, (17:16) “...For the hand

is on the throne of G-d..." Rashi explains from the Tanchumah that G-d swore that He would destroy Amalek because His Name and throne are not complete so long as Amalek exists. (That is why the word for "throne – Kais" is written without an Aleph.)

Amalek proved to be the one musician and instrument unwilling to follow the Conductor. Instead of being subject to G-d and seeking seamless integration with His wishes and intentions, Amalek decided to rebel. The symphony was flawed and the opus compromised. We are told that in the aftermath of the Exodus, the entire world stood in united awe of G-d. No one doubted that the Jews were G-d's Chosen, and no one dared to challenge His sovereignty – except Amalek. As such, G-d had to choose one of two options. 1. Give Amalek a chance to do Teshuvah and become a willing participant in the divine composition of existence; or 2. Remove Amalek from humanity because G-d knows that Teshuvah is not a possibility. G-d chose the second because He knew that Amalek would not do Teshuvah. G-d knows that Amalek will never willingly choose to be integrated in single devotion and commitment to His wishes with the rest of humanity. (Another way of describing the times of Mashiah and Redemption.) G-d knows that so long as Amalek exists, humanity as a whole will not be able to sing Shira.

Text Copyright © 2006 by Rabbi Aron Tendler and Torah.org

The author is the Rabbi of Shaarey Zedek Congregation, Valley Village, CA, and Assistant Principal of YULA.

Pesach Sheni: Second Chances

Rabbi Osher Chaim Levene

The Mitzvah:

A Jew who, due to extenuating circumstances (outside of Jerusalem or spiritually defiled), was unable to bring the Korbon Pesach, paschal lamb on the 14th Nissan there was a second opportunity. Pesach Sheni, Second Passover was exactly one month later (14th Iyar) whereupon this offering could be brought.

What is striking is how, unlike most other commandments, a second chance was given to sacrifice the Korbon Pesach in Jerusalem. We do not find that someone without an estrog and lulav on Succos can perform this one month later. Nor is the man who missed hearing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah given another opportunity.

So what is so special about the Korbon Pesach that this warrants a second opportunity?

The Exodus experience is central to Jewish belief (see our essay on Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim). This historic event, together with its miracles, confirmed divine providence and the supernatural destiny of the chosen nation whose lives and history revolves around G-d.

This historic event marked the Jewish nation's birth. Indeed, the Exodus is depicted in terms of a newborn baby emerging from the womb to assume its individual identity (Yechezkel 16:4).

It was at that point, when the Jewish people stood on the threshold of their redemption, that they performed two commandments: bris milah, circumcision and Korbon Pesach. Non-performance of these positive precepts is punishable by kares, excision and their exclusion from the community and from G-d.

In line with their national birth, a convert to Judaism is considered like a newborn baby (in the sense of assuming a new identity), who undergoes circumcision prior to his inclusion in the Jewish people. Actually, the Korbon Pesach itself necessitated that the male participator be circumcised.

This was not an ordinary offering or just another mitzvah. Rather, the Korbon Pesach was the individual's association and whole-hearted identification as a proud member of the Jewish nation. It symbolized the initiation sacrifice – commemorated annually – which celebrates joining the ranks of the Jewish people.

This is underscored by the Talmud entertaining the possibility whether a convert to Judaism must automatically offer up a Korbon Pesach (see Exodus 12:48 for their juxtaposition). This offering is, so-to-

speak, inherently Jewish. And it is to be eaten together in a communal setting of fellow Jews.

So important is the Korbon Pesach, like circumcision in the formative days of a Jewish boy's birth, this was slaughtered when the Jewish nation came into being upon their Exodus.

It is for this very reason that a second chance was made available to the individuals that were originally unable to participate because of their distance or impurity on Pesach Sheni. Those that approached Moshe posed the question: "lamah nigorah, why should we be excluded?" (Numbers 9:7). In effect, they were protesting how they should not be excluded or placed outside the circle of their Jewish brethren.

Pesach Sheni provides the second opportunity, one month later, to revisit their national origins. It is here that these individuals are able to stake their claim as proud and worthy members of G-d's chosen nation.

Text Copyright © 2006 by Rabbi Osher Chaim Levene and Torah.org.

Rabbi Yaakov Haber

Sh'vi'i Shel Pesach: The Climax of Ge'ulas Mitzrayim

The last days of Pesach commemorate the miraculous Splitting of the Sea leading to the rescue of the Jewish People from the hands of their Egyptian pursuers and Pharaoh's last stand against his erstwhile slaves ending in ignominious failure, defeat and powerlessness before the Almighty. The k'riat haTorah for the day is appropriately taken from Parshat B'shalach which recounts precisely this story. The halacha indicates that, unlike its counterpart, Shmini Atzeret, the last day of Sukkot, Sh'vi'i Shel Pesach forms an integral part of the Pesach holiday itself. Hence, whereas the former is a "Regel bifnei 'atzmo" -- an independent festival -- regarding several halachot including the number of korbanot brought, the reciting of the shehecheyanu blessing and the recital of the full Hallel, the latter has none of these characteristics, thus blending in with the rest of the Passover festival.

On a simple plain, the reason for this is obvious. The first day commemorates the initial Exodus, the fifteenth day of Nissan being the day when the Jews left Egypt after the last of the Ten Makkot, the Plague of the Firstborn. The last day commemorates the final step of the Exodus when the pursuing Egyptian forces were destroyed. In the words of Moshe Rabbeinu, "ki asher r'isem es Mitzrayim hayom lo sosifun lirosam 'od 'ad 'olam" -- "for that which you see Egypt (or the Egyptians) today, you will no longer see them forever more!" (B'shalach 14:13).

The Slonimer Rebbe, R. Berzovsky zt"l, in his Nesivos Shalom (Shvi'i Shel Pesach, Ma'amar 4) offers a deeper insight into the connection between the two parts of the chag and the respective events which they commemorate. The first step of the eGGGe'ula was an act of utter Divine rachamim (mercy). Lacking the requisite merit to be redeemed and in imminent danger of becoming utterly assimilated in the Egyptian culture, the Jewish people were rushed out by Hashem (hence, the need for chipazon according to many commentaries). In the language of Yechezkel HaNavi (16:7) cited in the Haggada: "v'at eirom v'eryah" -- "you were unclothed as a newborn," utterly dependent on the mercy of our Heavenly Father. However, such a redemption could not last. A y'shua brought about solely by Divine mercy will eventually cease when Hashem's Attribute of Justice demands that the redeemed deserve their redemption. Hence, Hashem, in his mercy, brought about an event that necessitated K'lal Yisrael's earning precisely the necessary merit to retroactively earn their redemption. This was the episode of K'riat Yam Suf. In the famous words of Hashem to Moshe occasioned by his and B'nei Yisrael's heartfelt prayer for salvation from the rapidly approaching Egyptian hordes, "dabeir 'el B'nei Yisrael v'yisa'u!" -- "tell the Jews they should travel [into the Sea]!" (ibid. 14:15). Rashi comments that Hashem was telling Moshe now is not the time for prayer; now they must travel into the sea. The super-commentaries to Rashi raise the obvious question: is not this time of tsara precisely the time for prayer?! R.

neither by the wife when she lights her Yom Tov candles, nor by the husband when he recites the Kiddush.

ERRONEOUSLY RECITING IT

But what happens if he does recite the Shehecheyanu before he drinks the wine – is it a hefsek, an interruption? Does he have to recite Kiddush over? Does he have to recite the HaGafen over again? When does he say Boruch SHaim Kvod Malchuso l'olam vo'ed to make up for the Bracha levatalah?

A standard reading of Shulchan Aruch (OC 271:15) would indicate that it is an interruption and that the HaGafen needs to be recited again, but that the Kiddush does not. This is indicated both in the comments of the Mogain Avrohom and Rabbi Akiva Eiger. However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach is cited in the Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa (Volume II page 113 note 215) that he does not even have to recite the HaGafen again, either.

THE THREE VIEWS IN THE GEMORAH

Rav Shlomo Zalman's rationale is as follows: The Gemorah in Brachos (40a) discusses what constitutes an interruption and what does not and records a three way halachic debate. The underlying issue is whether or not the words in the interruption could possibly be considered – for the purpose of the blessing.

Rav's view is that if person said the words "Take some bread, take some bread" to someone before he had actually tasted of it but after he had recited the Hamotzi – it is considered "for the purpose of the blessing" and thus there is no need to recite the HaMotzi once again. Rav, however, says that if he said "Bring salt, bring relish" – that would be considered an interruption.

Rav Yochanan's view is that even "Bring salt, bring relish" is not considered an interruption, but if someone says, "Knead the bran with water to feed my ox, knead the bran with water to feed my ox" – that would be considered an interruption.

Rav Shaishes' view is that even "Knead the bran with water to feed my ox" is not considered an interruption, since Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav that a person may not eat before he feeds his animal, based upon the verse in Shma, "And I will give grass to your cattle and you will eat and be satisfied." The words are therefore considered necessary for the bracha.

WE RULE LIKE RAV SHAISHES

In Shulchan Aruch (OC 167) we rule in accordance with Rav Shaishes. The Ramah in 167:6 states that it is not that this is permitted, but rather it is not considered an interruption if one had said these things.

THE EXTENSIONS

Rav Shlomo Zalman asks (Minchas Shlomo Vol. I #20) what would be the case if he had actually brought salt but had forgotten that he had done so? Would it still be considered "necessary for the bracha?" Rav Shlomo Zalman answers that it is obvious that it would. What would be the case if he asked them to knead for his ox but had forgotten that he had sold the ox?

The answer is that it would still be considered necessary for the bracha since at the time that he said it, he had thought that he was obligated in feeding the ox.

Rav Shlomo Zalman states that the case of "knead for the ox" where he forgotten that he had sold it would certainly prove that our case, where he had erroneously thought that he must recite the shehecheyanu, would also be considered for the needs of the bracha. Thus Rav Shlomo Zalman rules that one would not have to repeat the HaGafen. Rav Neuwirth z"l, author of the Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasa questions Rav Shlomo Zalman's application, since it is forbidden to eat before the ox, but it is not forbidden to make Kiddush without the shehecheyanu.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

So what should be done l'maaseh? In a case where he forgot that we do not recite the shehecheyanu, does he repeat the hagafen or not? The answer? As in all matters of halacha, one should ask one's own Rav or Posaik. It seems to this author, however, that Rav Shlomo Zalman's logic is pretty clear, and out of Safaik brachos l'hakel it is questionable whether we should recite the HaGafen again.

WHY SALT?

As a parenthetic note, one of Klal Yisroel's leading Gedolim [and a Chevrusah of Rav Chaim Kanievsky Shlita] – Rav Yechiel Michel Stern Shlita (in Birchas Yam Chapter 29) cites a fascinating explanation from the Sifsei Kohain (a descendant of the Ari HaKadosh). The Sifsei Kohain asks why it was that Chazal ordained that we have salt at every meal. He explains that the destruction of Sdom through Sulphur and salt was on account of their lack of Tzedakah and their lack of hachnasas orchim – bringing in guests. Chazal wanted us to bear in mind their destruction so that we would never be lax in either giving charity or in inviting guests at our tables and in our homes.

May we all have a good Shvi'I shel Pesach and remember not to recite the shehecheyanu tonight so we do not have this question. The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com]

In dedication of Mr. Emilio Goldstein ע"ה