

## In My Opinion PESACH 5781

### Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The holiday of Pesach represents many basic values in Jewish life. Foremost naturally is that of liberty and freedom from oppression, slavery, and domination by others. The holiday is described as being the holiday of our freedom. But, there is another basic idea and value that underlies the commemoration of our exodus from Egypt and the beginning of our freedom. That value is the human capacity to believe and keep faith with an ideal that has not yet been realized and that is yet to be exploited. In the retelling of the story of the Exodus, the Bible mentions several times in the narrative of the description of the redemption from Egyptian bondage, the fact that people believed that they would be freed, and that Moshe would be the one that would be able to lead them from bondage to freedom. It was this belief that fueled the entire narrative of freedom and brought about the eventual triumph over Pharaoh and the Egyptian nation. No matter how much lip service we pay to the idea of faith and belief, we always have a tendency to underplay its importance in shaping human events, both individual and communal. But faith, literally, does have the power to move and change the course of human history and personal existence. The Lord may have performed untold miracles in order to extract the Jewish people from under the yoke of Egyptian bondage, but none of this would've been successful had the people not believed it would be successful and that they would achieve their freedom. One of the great ideas in Judaism, especially emphasized in the teachings of the great Chasidic master Rabbi Zadok HaKohein of Lublin is that within events that appear to be negative and tragic, such as the enslavement of the Jewish people in Egypt, there are the seeds of redemption and hope. Even though there are tragedies such as the destruction of millions of Jews in Egypt, at the time of Moses, the inner soul of the Jew had faith that better times would arrive and that the redemption from slavery would actually occur. That path is the definition of faith and belief in Jewish life throughout Jewish history. No matter how difficult and oppressive the situation appeared to be, already hidden within it were the solutions to the problem and the redemption from bondage. An expression of this is to be found in the song attributed to the Jewish partisans in World War II who hid in the forests of Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, from where they continued to harass the Nazi beast. They created a thousand pinpricks that collectively hampered the operations of the German army on the Eastern front. The words to their song in Yiddish, to the effect that, "Do not dare to say that this is our final road." It is this faith that overwrites all obstacles and situations of anguish and despair. The holiday of Pesach always represents a soaring sense of optimism and a deeply abiding faith in the Jewish future and in the redemptive powers of heaven that will be exhibited in the coming of the messianic era. The matzoh that we eat is called, in Jewish tradition, by its Aramaic phrase – the bread of faith. Matzoh is potential bread but it is not yet risen. It appears to be doomed to be flat and crunchy, without much taste or substance. However, we are aware of the potential contained within that matzoh. Jews believe in the power and potential of it to rise and become the fluffy and the most delicious breads and pastry. We celebrate while the matzoh is still in its flattened state. The commandment is to eat it in its raw state so that we can sense the power of its potential, when we will be allowed to eat it after being fully risen and tasty. Our entire fulfillment of the commandment of eating matzoh on Pesach is to reinforce our innate sense of belief and faith in the future and in our ability to realize our individual and national potential. Belief eventually leads to action and action leads to redemption. Chag Sameach Berel Wein

---

### Weekly Parsha TZAV 5781 Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The Torah begins this week's reading with the verbal commandment – Tzav – ordering Moshe to command and demand from his brother Aaron certain fulfillments of ritual and service in the Tabernacle, and later in

the Temple in Jerusalem. The verb that is used is one of strength. Just as in a well-disciplined army, an officer's commands are fulfilled to be able to execute grand strategies, so, too, in Jewish life. The only way that the great strategy of connection with the Creator, living a holy life and being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation can be fulfilled is by obeying and observing commandments.

This is true even if the lowly private does not understand or is not even aware of the grand strategy of the general staff supervising the army. So, too, there are many times in Jewish life when we as individuals may question the validity and necessity of following an order, just as the soldier in the army. But just as simply by joining the Army and becoming a part of it forfeits that soldier's right to disobey orders. The Jewish people at Sinai agreed that they would fulfill God's orders, irrespective of their deeper understanding of those orders themselves. This may sound too authoritarian, even dictatorial, to modern ears and sensitivities. Nevertheless, it was and is the basis for Jewish life throughout the millennia of our existence. There are many things in life that we do simply because we are commanded to do so. If we have belief in the One that commands them despite human questions and doubts, we will always attempt to fulfill our duty and obey the commandment. The text of all blessings, before performing any of the Torah commandments, explicitly states that God has sanctified us by giving us these commandments, and that He commands that we fulfill them to the utmost extent that we can. Over the centuries, there have been many scholarly explanations and reasons given for certain Torah commandments. Times change though, as do societal mores, customs, and social viewpoints. What may have been a perfectly logical and satisfactory explanation for the necessity of a commandment a few centuries ago, may today have no relevance, and be viewed as only hollow words and ideas. But the Torah, which is eternal and given for all times and situations, chose to avoid giving easy explanations as to the reasons for its commandments and demands of the Jewish people. Instead, it relies upon the fact of the binding covenant that the Jewish people entered at Mount Sinai, that has obligated this special people to the Almighty for now and well over three millennia. We certainly wish to understand everything that we can about the competence, direction, and strategy of the Torah. However, we admit that after all is said and done, our ability to understand everything is limited and often fallacious. The bedrock of Jewish life is that we have been commanded and that we are willing to fulfill these decrees fully. Shabbat shalom Chag sameach Rabbi Berel Wein

---

### The Courage of Identity Crises (Tzav 5781)

*Rabbi Sacks z"l had prepared a full year of Covenant & Conversation for 5781, based on his book Lessons in Leadership. The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust will continue to distribute these weekly essays, so that people all around the world can keep on learning and finding inspiration in his Torah.*

Good leaders know their own limits. They do not try to do it all themselves. They build teams. They create space for people who are strong where they are weak. They understand the importance of checks and balances and the separation of powers. They surround themselves with people who are different from them. They understand the danger of concentrating all power in a single individual. But learning your limits, knowing there are things you cannot do – even things you cannot be – can be a painful experience. Sometimes it involves an emotional crisis.

The Torah contains four fascinating accounts of such moments. What links them is not words but music. From quite early on in Jewish history, the Torah was sung, not just read. Moses at the end of his life calls the Torah a song.[1] Different traditions grew up in Israel and Babylon, and from around the tenth century onward the chant began to be systematized in the form of the musical notations known as ta'amei hamikra, cantillation signs, devised by the Tiberian Masoretes (guardians of Judaism's sacred texts). One very rare note, known as a shalsholet

(chain), appears in the Torah four times only. Each time it is a sign of existential crisis. Three instances are in the book of Genesis. The fourth is in our parsha. As we will see, the fourth is about leadership. In a broad sense, the other three are as well.

The first instance occurs in the story of Lot. After Lot separated from his uncle Abraham he settled in Sodom. There he assimilated into the local population. His daughters married local men. He himself sat in the city gate, a sign that he had been made a Judge. Then two visitors come to tell him to leave, for God is about to destroy the city. Yet Lot hesitates, and above the word for “hesitates” – *vayitmamah* – is a *shalshet*. (Gen. 19:16). Lot is torn, conflicted. He senses that the visitors are right. The city is indeed about to be destroyed. But he has invested his whole future in the new identity he has been carving out for himself and his daughters. The angels then forcibly take him out of the city to safety – had they not done so, he would have delayed until it was too late.

The second *shalshet* occurs when Abraham asks his servant – traditionally identified as Eliezer – to find a wife for Isaac his son. The commentators suggest that Eliezer felt a profound ambivalence about his mission. Were Isaac not to marry and have children, Abraham’s estate would eventually pass to Eliezer or his descendants. Abraham had already said so before Isaac was born: “Sovereign Lord, what can You give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” (Gen. 15:2). If Eliezer succeeded in his mission, bringing back a wife for Isaac, and if the couple had children, then his chances of one day acquiring Abraham’s wealth would disappear completely. Two instincts warred within him: loyalty to Abraham and personal ambition. The verse states: “And he said: Lord, the God of my master Abraham, send me...good speed this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham” (Gen. 24:12). Eliezer’s loyalty to Abraham won, but not without a deep struggle. Hence the *shalshet* (Gen. 24:12).

The third *shalshet* brings us to Egypt and the life of Joseph. Sold by his brothers as a slave, he is now working in the house of an eminent Egyptian, Potiphar. Left alone in the house with his master’s wife, he finds himself the object of her desire. He is handsome. She wants him to sleep with her. He refuses. To do such a thing, he says, would be to betray his master, her husband. It would be a sin against God. Yet over “he refused” is a *shalshet*, (Genesis 39:8) indicating – as some rabbinic sources and mediaeval commentaries suggest – that he did so at the cost of considerable effort.[2] He nearly succumbed. This was more than the usual conflict between sin and temptation. It was a conflict of identity. Recall that Joseph was living in a new and strange land. His brothers had rejected him. They had made it clear that they did not want him as part of their family. Why then should he not, in Egypt, do as the Egyptians do? Why not yield to his master’s wife if that is what she wanted? The question for Joseph was not just, “Is this right?” but also, “Am I an Egyptian or a Jew?”

All three episodes are about inner conflict, and all three are about identity. There are times when each of us has to decide, not just “What shall I do?” but “What kind of person shall I be?” That is particularly fateful in the case of a leader, which brings us to episode four, this time with Moses in the central role.

After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses had, at God’s command instructed the Israelites to build a Sanctuary which would be, in effect, a permanent symbolic home for God in the midst of the people. By now the work is complete and all that remains is for Moses to induct his brother Aaron and Aaron’s sons into office. He robes Aaron with the special garments of the High Priest, anoints him with oil, and performs the various sacrifices appropriate to the occasion. Over the word *vayishchat*, “and he slaughtered [the sacrificial ram]” (Lev. 8:23) there is a *shalshet*. By now we know that this means there was an internal struggle in Moses’ mind. But what was it? There is not the slightest sign in the text that suggests that he was undergoing a crisis.

Yet a moment’s thought makes it clear what Moses’ inner turmoil was about. Until now he had led the Jewish people. Aaron had assisted him,

accompanying him on his missions to Pharaoh, acting as his spokesman, aide and second-in-command. Now, however, Aaron was about to undertake a new leadership role in his own right. No longer would he be one step behind Moses. He would do what Moses himself could not. He would preside over the daily offerings in the Tabernacle. He would mediate the *avodah*, the Israelites’ sacred service to God. Once a year on Yom Kippur he would perform the service that would secure atonement for the people from its sins. No longer in Moses’ shadow, Aaron was about to become the one kind of leader Moses was not destined to be: a High Priest.

The Talmud adds a further dimension to the poignancy of the moment. At the Burning Bush, Moses had repeatedly resisted God’s call to lead the people. Eventually God told him that Aaron would go with him, helping him speak (Ex. 4:14-16). The Talmud says that at that moment Moses lost the chance to be a Priest: “Originally [said God] I had intended that you would be the Priest and Aaron your brother would be a Levite. Now he will be the Priest and you will be a Levite.”[3]

That is Moses’ inner struggle, conveyed by the *shalshet*. He is about to induct his brother into an office he himself will never hold. Things might have been otherwise – but life is not lived in the world of “might have been.” He surely feels joy for his brother, but he cannot altogether avoid a sense of loss. Perhaps he already senses what he will later discover, that though he was the Prophet and liberator, Aaron will have a privilege Moses will be denied, namely, seeing his children and their descendants inherit his role. The son of a Priest is a Priest. The son of a Prophet is rarely a Prophet.

What all four stories tell us is that there comes a time for each of us when we must make an ultimate decision as to who we are. It is a moment of existential truth. Lot is a Hebrew, not a citizen of Sodom. Eliezer is Abraham’s servant, not his heir. Joseph is Jacob’s son, not an Egyptian of loose morals. Moses is a Prophet, not a Priest. To say ‘Yes’ to who we are, we have to have the courage to say ‘No’ to who we are not. Pain and struggle is always involved in this type of conflict. That is the meaning of the *shalshet*. But we emerge less conflicted than we were before.

This applies especially to leaders, which is why the case of Moses in our parsha is so important. There were things Moses was not destined to do. He would never become a Priest. That task fell to Aaron. He would never lead the people across the Jordan. That was Joshua’s role. Moses had to accept both facts with good grace if he was to be honest with himself. And great leaders must be honest with themselves if they are to be honest with those they lead.

A leader should never try to be all things to all people. A leader should be content to be who they are. Leaders must have the strength to know what they cannot be if they are to have the courage to be truly their best selves.

---

### **Parshat Tzav-Shabbat Hagadol (Leviticus 6:1 – 8:36) Rabbi Shlomo Riskin**

Efrat, Israel – “Behold, I send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And he [Elijah] will turn [back to God] the hearts of the parents through their children and the hearts of the children through their parents” (Malachi 3:23-2)

The Shabbat before Passover is called Shabbat Hagadol (the Great Sabbath), a phrase deriving from the last verse of the prophetic portion read on that day which declares that God will send Elijah the Prophet on the “great day” of the Lord right before the coming of the redemption.

Let us attempt to link Elijah to our Passover Seder in a way more profound than merely opening the door for him and offering him a sip of wine.

Our analysis begins with another Seder anomaly, the fact that we begin our night of freedom with the distribution of an *hors d’oeuvre* of *karpas* (Greek for vegetation or vegetable, often parsley, dipped in a condiment).

The usual explanation for this is that vegetation emerges in the springtime; Passover is biblically called the Spring Festival, and so we

dip a vegetable in salt water, reminiscent of spring renewal emerging from the tears of Egyptian enslavement. Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, in his late 19th-century Haggada, suggests another interpretation. The Hebrew word “karpas” appears in the opening verses of the Book of Esther, in the description of the “hangings” that were found in the gardens of King Ahasuerus’s palace, where the great feast for all his kingdom was hosted; karpas white cotton joined with turquoise wool. Rashi connects the term “karpas” in the sense of material with the ketonet passim, the striped tunic that Jacob gave to his beloved son, Joseph.

The Jerusalem Talmud additionally suggests that we dip the karpas in haroset (a mixture of wine, nuts and dates), adding that haroset is reminiscent of the blood of the babies murdered in Egypt. In our case, the karpas would become symbolic of Joseph’s tunic, which the brothers dipped into goat’s blood and brought to their father as a sign that his son had been torn apart by wild beasts when in fact they had sold him into Egyptian slavery.

Why begin the Seder this way? The Talmud criticizes Jacob for favoring Joseph over the other brothers and giving him the striped tunic. This gift, a piece of material with little monetary value, engendered vicious jealousy resulting in the sale of Joseph and the eventual enslavement of the Israelites for 210 years.

The point of the Seder is the retelling (“haggada”) of the seminal experience of servitude and freedom from generation to generation. Through this, all parents become teachers. They must inspire their children to continue the Jewish narrative of identification with the underdog and the outcast. They must imbue in their offspring insistence upon freedom for every individual created in God’s image and faith in the ultimate triumph of a world dedicated to peace and security for all.

This places an awesome responsibility on the shoulders of every parent: to convey the ethical monotheism, rooted in our ritual celebrations and teachings, to their children and eventually to all of humanity. Hence, parents must be warned at the outset not to repeat the tragic mistake of Jacob, not to create divisions and jealousies among their children. Instead, we must unite the generations in the common goal of continuing our Jewish narrative.

What has this to do with Elijah the Prophet, who is slated to be the herald of the Messiah, the announcer of the “good tidings of salvation and comfort”? Our redemption is dependent on our repentance and the most necessary component of redemption is “loving our fellow as we love ourselves” – the great rule of the Torah taught by Rabbi Akiva.

Loving humanity must begin with loving our family; first and foremost our nuclear family. We read in the prophetic portion of this Shabbat that Elijah will bring everyone back to God by uniting parents with their children and children with parents. The biblical source of sibling hatred (the Joseph story), which has plagued Jewish history up to and including the present day, will be repaired by Elijah, who will unite the hearts of the children and the parents together in their commitment to God.

Toward the end of the Seder, we open the door for Elijah and welcome him to drink from the cup of redemption poured especially for him. But if Elijah can visit every Seder throughout the world, surely he can get through even the most forbidding kind of door.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, teaches that we open the door not so much to let Elijah in as to let ourselves out. The Seder speaks of four children; But what about the myriad “fifth children” who never came to a Seder? We must go out after them and bring them in – perhaps together with Elijah, whom we will need desperately to unite the entire family of Israel around the Seder table. Shabbat Shalom!

---

*Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parsha Insights For the week ending 27 March 2021 / 14 Adar 5781 Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com Parshat Tzav What's So Bad About Bread? "It will be eaten unleavened" (6:9) I doubt that anyone in the audience watching Grandma's Reading Glass in 1900 realized that they*

were witnessing the birth of a new language. Grandma's Reading Glass is under a minute long and the plot is thin, to say the least. A small child looks through his mother's magnifying glass, at various objects around the room. What makes the movie a landmark is its use of sustained point-of-view shots. Meaning that, instead of just showing the child looking through the looking glass, the audience is seeing what the child is seeing. Prior to this, watching a film was like watching a play. The camera was set up in front of the scene and stayed put. Grandma's Reading Glass was the beginning of the “language” of film. A language that is so familiar to us now, that we do not even recognize that it has syntax like any other language. But the syntax of film has a limitation. In a movie there is no past or future. Everything in a movie takes place in a continuous present. There is no “was” and no “will be” in a film. To change the tense of a movie, the director has to resort to the “flash-back,” an inelegant device whereby the picture starts to blur and the sound becomes echo-y. It all seems like such a long time ago-o-o-o. And when we cut to that past scene, the language of film reverts to the present tense. We can use this anomaly in the language of film to understand one of Judaism's most basic concepts. Intuitively, time seems eternal. It seems that we are born into a world that has always been here, and we leave a world that will always be. This idea is the basis of all atheism. If time was always here, then there was no creation, and if there was no creation, then — G-d forbid — there's no Creator. The very first word in the Torah — Bereishet — contradicts that intuition. Bereishet, “In the beginning...” can be understood to mean “Beh” — standing for Barah Reishit, meaning, “G-d created the beginning.” Time itself is a creation. It had a beginning. And anything that has a beginning must have an end. Not only did G-d create beginning, but He re-creates that beginning every single nanosecond. The monolith called time does not exist. The language of film, its constant present tense, gives us a way to understand this reality. And there's another even more interesting aspect of film that illustrates this constant creation of time. If you take an old movie film and unwind it, it's made up of thousands of individual pictures. The fact that we don't see a series of still images but a continuous flow of movement is due to something called “the persistence of vision,” which says that the brain will form the impression of movement when slightly different images are presented to the eye faster than around 10 frames per second. The same idea holds true for digital movies. There is no such thing as the continuity of time. There are just individual moments, like a child's “flicker book.” Which brings us to the question: “What's so wrong with bread?” The Exodus from Egypt saw the creation of a nation which would proclaim to the world the existence of a single Creator Who created everything — including time. It is time that turns matzah into bread. There's no other difference. On the festival of Pesach, where we once again proclaim to the world that there is a Creator, we renourish our souls with the food that rejects the independence of time — the unleavened bread called matzah. © 2020 Ohr Somayach International

---

***www.ou.org Parsha Tzav: Increasing Gratitude  
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb***

There are certain phrases or expressions that many of us find hard to say. “I love you” is one of them. Another such phrase is “thank you”. Although these words are difficult for us to pronounce, they each reflect powerful emotions and, when finally uttered, have an unbelievable impact upon the person to whom they are addressed. It is wonderful to hear that one is loved, and it is also wonderful to learn that another person is grateful and appreciative of what one has done for him or her. In our tradition, gratitude is a primary value. Bachya ibn Pakuda, in his renowned medieval book Duties of the Heart, stresses the centrality of gratitude in the religious experience. For him, the worship of God begins with a sense of gratitude for being alive, for being healthy, for having one's needs met. It is no wonder, then, that as the book of Leviticus enumerates the many types of sacrificial offerings which comprise the ancient Temple service, the korban todah, or thanksgiving offering, is prominently included. In this week's Torah portion, Tzav, in Leviticus

7:11-18, the sacrifice known as the korban shelamim, or peace offering, is described in detail. Generally speaking, when a person makes a vow to offer such a sacrifice, whether in a time of distress or when remembering God's tender mercies, he must bring an animal offering. He brings it to the Temple, the kohen (priest) performs various ritual procedures, and then most of the meat can be consumed by the individual who donated the offering, as long as he finishes it all during the day he brings it, and the following night and day, providing the individual with much more than 24 hours within which to consume the meat. But the passage which deals with this offering begins with a subtype of the shelamim – the todah. In this instance, besides bringing an animal sacrifice, the donor must also bring four types of bread, and ten breads of each type, totaling forty loaves. The meat and the accompanying loaves of bread must be consumed by daybreak after the night following the preparation of the sacrifice. The late 19th century commentator known as the Netziv suggests that the thanksgiving offering, or todah, must be accompanied by a public celebration with many guests invited. Therefore, unlike the ordinary shelamim, the numerous loaves of bread are prescribed so that all the guests can partake of the meal. The time within which the meat and breads can be consumed is limited to much less than 24 hours, necessitating the invitation of numerous guests to share in the thanksgiving celebration. The Netziv teaches us here that expressions of gratitude should ideally not be kept private. Thankfulness is an emotion to share with others in a public celebration. Not long ago, I came across an article in an academic journal of psychology. The article was entitled Can Prayer Increase Gratitude? The authors quote numerous research studies which correlate gratitude with mental health. They therefore seek ways to promote the feeling of gratitude to foster increased mental health. One way they tried to instill gratitude in their subjects was to encourage them to engage in prayer. How consistent their findings were to the teachings of Judaism! They found that when people engaged in prayer, they became more aware not of what they were lacking, but of the blessings they had to be thankful for. The very act of prayer inculcated an attitude of gratitude. The sacrifices offered in our ancient Temple were forcibly discontinued two millennia ago. Our sages teach us that our prayers, although they are mere words, substitute for the sacrifices of old. Whereas once upon a time a Jew would express his gratitude by bringing a thanksgiving offering, today he recites a prayer instead. The article in the psychology journal teaches us that the relationship between prayer and gratitude is a mutual one. Not only does gratitude lead to thankful prayer, but prayer leads to increased thankfulness. Thus, for those of us who come by our sense of gratitude naturally and with ease, these sacrificial offerings, or these days, the appropriate prayers, can help us express that gratitude. But for those of us whose sense of gratitude is numbed, prayer is one way to free feelings of thankfulness which are otherwise locked up within us. It allows those feelings to well up and to be effectively expressed. We often hear the admonition to "count our blessings". Many of us, either because of our inborn pessimism, or because of the difficulties of life which seem to overshadow our blessings, find it difficult to acknowledge the positives of our life. Without such acknowledgment, gratitude is impossible. In this week's Torah portion, we learn not only that gratitude deserves celebration in the holy Temple, but that temple worship can help us feel grateful for what we do have. And we also learn, following the Netziv, of how worthwhile it is to express gratitude in a circle of family and friends. That gratitude is the most pleasant of human emotions is so well expressed in these lines from the poet Thomas Gray's Ode for Music: Sweet is the breath of vernal shower, The bees collected treasures sweet, Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet The still small voice of gratitude. The sage advice we can derive from this week's Torah portion is: Express gratitude, and not in a "still small voice," but in a resounding and booming voice for others to hear so that they can share in the emotions of the grateful person, and so that the grateful person can feel those emotions in every fiber of his being. to do so..

*rabbibuchwald.njop.org Rabbi Buchwald's Weekly Torah Message - Tzav 5781-2021 "Understanding Shabbat Hagadol" (updated and revised from Tzav 5762-2002) Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald*

This week, we read the second parasha of the book of Leviticus, parashat Tzav. Because it immediately precedes Passover, this Shabbat is known as שַׁבַּת הַגָּדוֹל —Shabbat Hagadol, the great Shabbat. On this Shabbat, a special Haftarah from the prophet Malachi 3:4-24, is read. While there is no universally agreed upon reason for calling the Shabbat that immediately precedes Passover, Shabbat Hagadol, the great Sabbath, there are many traditions explaining this distinguished appellation. Rabbi Abraham Chill in his comprehensive and erudite book, *The Minhagim*, which explains the customs and ceremonies of Judaism, their origins and rationale, offers several reasons for the name, Shabbat Hagadol. One of the reasons for the name recorded by Rabbi Chill is that tradition maintains that the tenth of Nissan of the year of the Exodus was a Shabbat. It was on that day that, as recorded in Exodus 12, that the Al-mighty called upon the Jews to take a sheep to their homes and keep it there until the 14th of Nissan, at which time they were to slaughter it and prepare it for the Pascal sacrifice. This act of taking the sheep on the part of the enslaved Hebrews, was not at all a simple act. It was, in effect, a brazen act of defiance. After all, the Egyptians worshiped sheep as their G-d. The timorous Hebrew slaves, were thus bidden to take the sheep, in defiance of their masters, in defiance of the entire theology of Egypt, and slaughter it before the Egyptians' eyes. Hence, the Sabbath is called Shabbat Hagadol, the great Sabbath, because it was on this Shabbat that the Jews expressed their open defiance and declared their independence. A second reason recorded by Rabbi Chill, is that "Shabbat" day itself is a day of testimony. The Shabbat testifies that G-d created the heavens and the earth and rested on Shabbat, the seventh day. But, this great act of Divine creation, is often perceived as the act of a remote, transcendent and seemingly distant G-d who created the world. On the other hand, Passover represents an imminent and close G-d who cares about his people and who was actively involved in redeeming even the little Jewish children from the slavery of Egypt. On the Shabbat before Passover, both these ideas are emphasized, the power of G-d and the love of G-d, hence the name, Shabbat Hagadol, the great Sabbath. Another reason enumerated by Rabbi Chill is predicated on the prevailing custom (Talmud, Pesachim, 6a), that 30 days before a holiday Jews begin to study and learn about the customs and practices of the holiday. On the Sabbath before Passover, (except on those years like this one when Shabbat Hagadol falls the day before Passover and the Shabbat Hagadol Discourse is offered the Shabbat before), it was the custom, and still is the custom, for community rabbis to offer a major discourse explaining the often complex issues of the laws and rituals of the Passover holiday. Writes Rabbi Chill, "It is a long and tiring day for the congregants and for the rabbi." In effect, the name "The Great Shabbat, Shabbat Hagadol," reflects the long Sabbath. As previously noted, on this Shabbat, the special Haftarah from the prophet Malachi is read. Malachi 3:23 reads: הִנֵּה אֲנִי שֵׁלֵחַ לְכֶם אֶת אֵלֵי הַנְּבִיא, לִפְנֵי בּוֹא יוֹם הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא. Behold I send to you Elijah the Prophet, before the great and awesome day of G-d. There are those who say that the Sabbath is called Shabbat Hagadol because of the word גדול—"gadol"—great in the aforementioned verse in Malachi, as if to represent a prayer that this great Sabbath should lead to the great day of redemption and the coming of the Messiah. Jewish traditions and customs are always replete with meaning, and the tradition of Shabbat Hagadol is no exception. The ancient theme of Shabbat Hagadol may teach contemporary Jews that, despite the redemption which took place over 3300 years ago, today's events require of us to be firm and courageous, just as our ancestors were in the days of yore—defiant of their masters, and affirming that, with G-d's help, they will master their fate and defy their own presumed destinies. For contemporary Jews as well, it is a time to affirm both the power and the love of G-d. We must be certain, that despite the challenges and the great turmoil that we witness in the land of Israel and in Jewish world today, G-d's power and love will be there for us, and will rescue and

redeem us as well. However, our salvation does not come without effort or agony. There is, of course, the long-suffering that is always necessary before the redemption. It is during this difficult period, similar to the "long Sabbath," that we must spend learning and mastering G-d's Torah, learning to appreciate the beauty of the festivals and the observances, sparing no effort to uncover new insights within the Passover ritual, that are there just for our picking. It is a long and tiring process, but a process that results in much reward, and a great sense of pleasure and fulfillment. Finally, Shabbat Hagadol marks our commitment to the belief in the imminent arrival of the Prophet Elijah, who will herald the coming of the Messiah. May we be worthy to merit that Shabbat Hagadol 5781 be a great day for us. May this great day signal that the full redemption is at hand, and that Jews the world over shall soon be reunited, reunited in our land, which will become a land of peace, reunited in love of G-d and marked with personal and collective happiness. הַגַּ פֶּשַׁח וְשִׁמְחָה. We wish all our friends a wonderfully joyous, meaningful and healthy Passover. *Please note: The first two days of the joyous festival of Passover will be observed this year on Saturday night, March 27th and all day Sunday and Monday, March 28th and 29th. The seventh and eighth days of Passover begin on Friday night, April 2nd, and continue through Saturday and Sunday, April 3rd and 4th. May you be blessed.*

---

**chiefrabbi.org Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis Dvar Torah Pesach: THIS is the guarantee for our survival!**

How can we guarantee our Jewish survival? We will give an answer to this question at the seder table. We will raise our cups and declare: "Vehi she'amda la'avoteinu velanu." – "It is this which has stood by our ancestors and us." We recognize that it wasn't only Pharaoh in Egypt who sought to annihilate us but that sadly this has been a recurring theme of our history. "HaKadosh Baruch Hu matzileinu miyadam." – Almighty God has always saved us. But when we say the word 'vehi' – 'it is this' which has stood by us. What is the 'this' that 'vehi' refers to? Many of our commentators answer with reference to the song Echad Mi Yodea (Who Knows One?) at the end of the Haggadah.

So let's have a look at the four letters of 'vehi': ו.ה.י.א – Vav is six and that stands for the Shisha Sidrei Mishnah, the Six Orders of the Mishnah which is the Talmud. ה – Hey is five, representing the Chamisha Chumshei Torah, the Five Books of the Torah. י – Yod is ten and that represents the Asarah Dibraya, the Ten Commandments, and finally, א – Alef of course is one, representing God.

And it's true. This is what has saved us! It's Hashem. It's our obedience to the ten commandments. It's our awareness of everything in the Torah, and it's our study of the Talmud which have guaranteed our Jewish survival. But notice the order of the four. You see, everybody knows that we believe in one true God. Fewer people than that can tell you what the Ten Commandments are. Fewer than that know that there are 613 commandments and are aware of everything in the Torah and even fewer than that have studied Talmudic texts. 'Vehi' teaches us that when it comes to guaranteeing our Jewish survival, Jewish education must be our top priority and we need to deepen our knowledge. We must have an awareness of Talmudic texts, followed by the Torah, an awareness of the Ten Commandments and of course we must believe in Hashem. The deeper and more comprehensive our knowledge, the greater will be our Jewish awareness and the stronger our Jewish identity. So therefore, a great lesson of the Pesach Seder is not just that we should have a lovely and inspirational evening in its own right, but also that it should inspire us to study more throughout the whole year. That's why the passage immediately after "Vehi she'amda" starts with the words, "Tze uleamad" – "Go out and learn". That should be our motto for Pesach: Tze uleamad: let's appreciate that our commitment to Jewish study and to Jewish education must be a feature throughout the entire year, because the greater the quality of our education, the greater our chances of Jewish survival. I wish you all chag kasher v'sameach. *Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.*

---

**torahweb.org Rabbi Hershel Schachter Pesach: A Teachable Moment for Ikarei ha'Emunah**

Rabbi Hirsch Melech Shapiro (known for his sefer B'nai Yissoschor) writes a very fascinating idea in his sefer Derech Pekudecha. The Chumash records that Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe Rabbeinu that He plans to bring about tremendous miracles in Mitzrayim in order that B'nai Yisroel should tell over these stories to their children and grandchildren so that they should know all about Hashem. It would appear in the Chumash that the main purpose of the mitzvah of sippur yetzi'as Mitzrayim on Pesach night is to convey to our children all of the principles of faith (i'karei ha'emunah) which were demonstrated through all of the eser makos. Although Hashem is invisible, after experiencing the eser makos first hand it became obvious and apparent that there is a G-d in the world. The Torah tells us also that Hashem caused all of the avodah zaras in Egypt to fall apart to demonstrate that there is only one G-d. There were always thinkers who philosophized and suggested that it is physically impossible for the Infinite G-d to communicate with finite man; they claim there cannot be such a thing as prophecy. However, the people realized that Moshe Rabbeinu was a navi.

Included in the ikar ha'emunah of nevuah is the concept of tefillah. Just as G-d can, has, and will communicate with man, so too can man communicate with G-d by davening. The Torah says that B'nai Yisroel prayed and Hashem answered their prayers and took them out of Egypt. There were always thinkers who philosophized that although there is a G-d who created the world, because there is no such thing as spontaneous generation so there must have been a G-d who brought life into existence, but clearly after He created the world, He no longer pays attention to petty things that go on in this world and does not really follow with anything that goes on in this earth. On the occasion of yetzi'as Mitzrayim it was clearly demonstrated that this is not so. The one and only G-d that created the world was fully aware of all that was happening. He punished the wicked and spared the righteous. The story of yetzi'as Mitzrayim demonstrated that there was clearly yedey'a (knowledge) of what was happening and also sechar v'onesh.

The entire Jewish nation heard both Moshe and Aharon deliver prophecies, but noticed that there was a stark difference between the two of them. Aharon's prophecies were all regarding horo'as sha'ah while those of Moshe Rabbeinu were sometimes dinim l'doros and sometimes horo'as sha'ah. The korban Pesach that was brought in Mitzrayim was a blend of dinim l'doros and horo'as sha'ah. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to deliver the prophecy about the upcoming geulah, Moshe Rabbeinu says that when the people will ask me "what is His name, what should I answer"? Hashem gives a very cryptic response and reveals to Moshe Rabbeinu another one of His seven names (zayin sheimos sh'einim nimchokim): Eh'k'ye Asher Eh'k'ye. Rashi, quoting from the Midrash, interprets the meaning of this name / statement to be that Hashem will be with the Jewish people until ge'ulas Mitzrayim will be completed, and Hashem promises that He will again be with the Jewish people in the future during the long galus to bring about the ge'ulah ha'asida. Thus the ikar of be'as ha'Moshiach was also revealed right before yetzi'as Mitzrayim. It is for that reason that on Pesach night, at the conclusion of the seder, we all recite Nishmas Kol Chai, asking for that day to come soon when all of mankind will recognize Hakadosh Baruch Hu as the one and only ruler of the world.

However, the Moshiach will only come when all of mankind is willing to accept the malchus of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. There are many hard core atheists and ovdei avodah zarah who refuse to accept His malchus and because of whom the coming of Moshiach is being postponed. It is for that reason that we pray to Hakadosh Baruch Hu right before the conclusion of the Hallel on the seder night, "Shfoch chamoscha...", i.e. it is not fair that this group should hold back the coming of Moshiach. Wipe these people out and the rest of the nations of the world will be ready to accept your malchus. All of these principles of faith of our religion could easily be explained even to young children on Pesach night. According to the simple reading of the pesukim, it would appear that that is the main purpose and should be the main theme of sippur yetzi'as Mitzrayim. *Copyright © 2021 by TorahWeb.org*

*blogs.timesofisrael.com* Tzav: We don't wait on soup Ben-Tzion Spitz

*Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use. - Emily Post*

Once upon a time there was a concept called "etiquette" which one was expected to demonstrate, beyond the politeness of "please" and "thank you," particularly in dining situations. One learned how to sit and how not to sit, how to handle cutlery, how to eat, how to drink, how to excuse oneself, and much more. One of those rules of etiquette was the idea of waiting to eat, even if the food was on the plate in front of you, until the host started eating. An exception to that, however, was if the food being served was soup. By the time everyone would have been served their soup, the first person's soup would be at best lukewarm or cold. Therefore, etiquette dictates that you may have your soup as soon as it is served. The Bechor Shor on the Torah reading of Tzav comes to a similar conclusion regarding the etiquette of the Kohens who partook of the sacrificial meals at the Temple. The descendants of Aaron, the High Priest, were tasked with the eternal responsibility of serving as priests (Kohens) in the Tabernacle, and thereafter in the Temple. Part of that service included the sharing of sacrificial meals. During Temple times the Kohens served in rotations that were apportioned to a roster of Kohanic families. Each Kohanic family would serve together in the Temple, performing the various ritual duties required in the Temple. The Bechor Shor on Exodus 7:10 explains the different etiquette that accompanied different types of sacrificial meals or foods. In particular, he focuses on two types of grain "Mincha" offerings. One was a simple, uncooked, grain and oil mixture. For this offering, the Kohens needed to wait for the entire family to come together and eat it at the same time. However, the baked offerings were eaten primarily by the Kohens who were responsible and present for the preparation and baking of that particular offering, without having to wait for the entire family to assemble. They were allowed to eat it while it was still hot and not miss out on the pleasure of the hot food by waiting for everyone else to show up. May we always be considerate of others, and may we not demand consideration from others when it needlessly harms or detracts from their experiences. *Shabbat Shalom and Chag Kasher Ve'sameach, Dedication - To the Suez Canal. Ben-Tzion Spitz is a former Chief Rabbi of Uruguay. He is the author of three books of Biblical Fiction and over 600 articles and stories dealing with biblical themes.*

**Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz** Passover - Parashat Tzav: The liberation journey continues

*Once a year, we do not suffice with mentioning the Exodus from Egypt, but retell the story of our nation's genesis in detail.*

After Shabbat, we will sit down to celebrate Seder night – that festive night that starts off the seven days of Passover. On this night, we will all sit around the holiday table and fulfill the festival's unique commandments and traditions: eating matzah and bitter herbs, drinking four cups of wine, and telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The Exodus is an event that accompanies the Jewish nation and each individual Jew throughout life. Every day, in the text of the Shema recited in the morning and evening, we add a section remembering the Exodus from Egypt. In the kiddush on Friday evening and holidays, we say "a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt." Once a year, we do not suffice with mentioning the Exodus from Egypt, but retell the story of our nation's genesis in detail. This is a special commandment given in the Torah for this night: telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt. What is the essential part of this story? Of course, the liberation from slavery to freedom. Our ancestors were slaves in Egypt working in hard labor, enslaved to Pharaoh, the Egyptian king. God sent Moses to generate a series of miracles and wonders that ultimately led to the Jewish nation's liberation. This is the structure of the story we tell. First, we describe in detail the difficult hardships suffered during the enslavement in Egypt; then we move on to describe the process of redemption and liberation. Finally, we thank God for the redemption and

recite the chapters of the Hallel. We illustrate the story through the night's special commandments. We eat bitter herbs to remind us of our ancestors' bitter time in Egypt; we eat matzah as a reminder of the speed in which they left Egypt; and we drink four cups of wine and sit leaning comfortably as a symbol of the freedom we were privileged to attain. Seder night was set for the 15th of Nisan since that was when the Exodus from Egypt occurred thousands of years ago. Through the story and the illustrations, we relive that moment and awaken the internal movement from slavery to freedom. Though, thankfully, slavery hardly exists in the Western world, internal enslavement to the gratification of needs and the pursuit of pleasure exists in this imperfect world in which we live, perhaps even more than ever. Economic welfare and accessibility have created a situation in which a person can be busy chasing pleasure, without ever gaining a sense of satisfaction or fulfillment. This internal enslavement makes life devoid of significance and makes happiness further from reach. Netanyahu's savior: Meet the Arab Islamist who can sway the election The exodus from slavery to freedom means that a person is no longer confined by his desires or the lowly needs that attract him. A free person is one who can say to himself, "I have values and they overcome the attraction." A person who can control himself is one who is free. A person who can live in a dynamic of giving, rather than taking and drawing from others, is one who is free. A person who has the courage to leave his comfort zone and search for the meaning and purpose in life is one who is taking his first steps on the path to freedom. The Jewish people was liberated from slavery thousands of years ago. But the journey to freedom continues. If we ask ourselves how to go forward in this journey, our Sages answer: "The only free individual is one who engages in [the study of] Torah" (Avot 6:2). Engaging in Torah enlightens a person and helps him seek the truth. The study guides him in how to actualize the higher aspects of his character rather than being enslaved and addicted to attraction and gratification of needs. On this special night, Seder night, each and every member of the Jewish people is called upon to see himself "as though he himself left Egypt." This is an opportunity, a special time, when one gets Divine assistance to quit slavery and get a taste of true freedom, spiritual freedom, which leads one to a life of happiness and joy. *The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.*

**Shema Yisrael Torah Network** Peninim on the Torah - Parshas

Tzav פרשת צו תשפ"א

זאת תורת העלה היא העלה על מוקדה על המזבח *This is the law of the Olah/Elevation-offering (that stays) on the flame on the Altar. (6:2)*

The *Korban Chatas*, Sin-offering, is brought when one inadvertently commits a transgression for which the punishment is, when intentional, either *kares*, Heavenly excision, or the death penalty [any of the four forms of capital punishment/execution]. A person brings a *Korban Olah* for a sin which he committed with his mind, in which he had improper, sinful thoughts. Interestingly, when one performs a sin with his hand, his punishment is *chatas*, which is partially eaten by the owners and *Kohanim*. In contrast, when one commits a sin with his mind, he must bring a *korban* which is completely burnt. Why is this?

Simply, I would suggest that a sin which one commits with his mind permeates his entire body, tainting everything, because the mind determines what the body does. *Ramban* observes that the same hand that writes a *Sefer Torah* can commit murder. Is the hand to blame? No! It is the mind that determines and defines the actions of the hand. On the other hand, when hands/actions commit a sin, it is only the hands that have committed the sinful act. It does not affect the other organs of the body. Thus, a *Korban Olah* which atones for the sins of the mind is wholly burnt, and a *Korban Chatas* which atones for actions, is partially eaten by both owner and *Kohen*. The *Nesivos Chaim* (cited in *Nifle'osecha Asichah*) explains that the purpose of a *korban* is to teach its donor what it is that Hashem wants/expects of us and in what manner a Jew should carry out his daily endeavor. It is unrealistic to ask a person that all of his activities should be totally untainted of any physical/material prejudices and interests. We are human, and, as such,

we are prone to human tendencies. We cannot expect a person to execute a *mitzvah* and not derive any physical pleasure or purpose thereby. It is what it is. In the realm of thought, however, we may expect that one's mind be completely in sync with his actions. Upon *davening* (for example), one should maintain *kavanah*, proper intention, focus and devotion. One has no excuse for a "wandering" mind. Therefore, the Torah distinguishes between thought and action with regard to its various *korbanos*. In his inimitable manner, *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita* relates an inspiring story which underscores the importance of proper thought, *kavanah*, when one is engaged in a *davar she'b'kedushah*, holy endeavor. *Horav David Segal HaLevi, zl*, authored the *Turei Zahav* commentary to the *Shulchan Aruch*. The *Taz* (as he is reverently known) is one of *Klal Yisrael's* premier *poskim, halachic* arbiters. In the *Pinchas*, notebook, of the *Chevre Kaddisha*, Jewish Sacred/Burial Society, of the city of Lvov, Poland, it is noted that the *Taz* was known to wear an old, torn *Tallis*. It was obvious from the color of the *Tallis* and the pattern of its tatters that he had worn it for quite some time. When it became known that the man who represented the city's spiritual centerpiece, a man known throughout the entire Torah world for his brilliance and erudition, was attired in an old *Tallis*, the women of the community assembled and donated a brand new white *Tallis* made of the finest wool, as befits a Torah scholar of the stature of the *Taz*. They brought the gift to him. He opened up the package and saw the impressive *Tallis* which they had commissioned for him. He remarked, "Thank you. My deepest gratitude to you for the thought. However, I refuse to wear a new *Tallis*. I require my old, torn *Tallis* to serve as a testament on my behalf in Heaven Above that I never had any extraneous thoughts during *Shemoneh Esrai*." His mind was always focused on the words, their meaning and implications. Can we make such a statement? Indeed, *Rav Zilberstein* supplements the story (*Chashukei Chemed Bechoros 37a*) with the following observation: The *Taz* was a saintly angel, an unparalleled *tzaddik*, about whom his *Tallis* could attest such positive testimony. Those of us who are unable to make such a statement, whose *Tallis* cannot (for obvious reasons) vouch to our positive, appropriate focus during *Shemoneh Esrai*, should repair and clean the *Tallis* that we wear, so that we should at least be attired in a clean *Tallis* when *davening* to Hashem. Perhaps this might be a time to mention that this applies to all *devarim she'b'kedushah*, sacred objects: *Tallis*; *Tefillin*; the clothing we wear to *shul*, which indicates the esteem in which we hold the *shul*, the congregation, the *Shabbos*. Certainly, to find the money to purchase an expensive wardrobe, but continuing to wear an old *Tallis* that could use a cleaning, reflects misplaced values and imperiousness that borders on disdain for a *mitzvah*.

**וּפָשַׁט אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים** *And he shall take off his garments, and put on other garments. (6:4)*

In his *Sipurei Chassidim*, *Horav Shlomo Y. Zevin, zl* (cited by *Imrei Shammai*) relates that *Rav David Tzvi Chein*, a *Chabad chassid*, who was *Rav* in Chernigov, was scheduled for his *yechidus* (private interview with the *Rebbe*, during which the *chassid* seeks guidance and inspiration) with *Horav Shmuel, zl*, of Lubavitch. He arrived late, so he decided that he would wait outside the *Rebbe's* study. In that way, when the *Rebbe* would leave, he would quickly ask his question. He was late, and he had to return to Chernigov. As he was waiting, he was joined by the *Rebbe's gabbai*, aide/attendant, who had brought a change of clothes for the *Rebbe*. Apparently, after the *Rebbe* spent a session of *yechidus* with a number of *chassidim*, he perspired heavily and required a new set of clothing. The *gabbai* had a problem with this, "The entire *yechidus* session lasts an hour. Why should the *Rebbe* perspire so much?" *Rav David Tzvi* did not respond (probably because he knew the attendant would not understand). When he did not reply, the attendant asked again, this time even louder, "Why does the *Rebbe* perspire so much?" It was at this point that the *Rebbe's* door opened, and the *Rebbe* stuck out his head to respond to his attendant, "I am dismissing you from your position effective immediately. Please go home, and I will continue to send you your wages each week. By the way, why is it so difficult for you to

understand why I perspire profusely? In the course of one hour, I had *yechidus* with 25 people. If I am to counsel a person properly, I must experience his adversity as he himself experiences it. In order to achieve this reality, I must divest myself of my garments and don his garments. (In our present-day vernacular, "I must step into his shoes.") When the time comes for me to render my advice and guidance, I must remove his clothes and put on my clothes. I can hardly give him my advice while I am still dressed in his clothes. Now, would you not also perspire if you did this 50 times? (25 times removing his clothes and putting on the petitioner's clothes and then doing it over again for the guidance portion of the *yechidus*.) What a powerful story. A Torah leader must empathize – he must sense the pain of each Jew. Veritably, it takes a very special person actually to feel someone else's pain. No two people are the same, thus making it impossible to feel someone else's pain – as he feels it. One can, however, take note, see the pain written all over his face; his eyes; his body language. One can see another in pain and what he sees motivates him to act. When we see someone else in pain, we feel bad, but that is not enough. Our friend will not get better simply because we feel bad for him. We must do something about it, and, if we cannot change his circumstances, then we should at least be supportive. A young couple had exhausted every avenue to achieve parenthood. Every specialist, every procedure – they had been there – they had tried that. Finally, the top specialist in the field of reproduction told them that it was all fruitless. He had no scientific remedy for their problem. The husband did not give up. He planned to petition the *posek hador*, pre-eminent *Halachic* arbiter, of the generation, *Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl*, for his blessing. He proceeded to the home of *Rav Shlomo Zalmen*, who listened and asked for some time to mull over the problem. A short while later, *Rav Shlomo Zalmen* came out and said, "I tried, but was unsuccessful. I am sorry, but I am unable to give you the news that you want to hear." The young man broke down in tears and left. As he was sitting in his apartment a few hours later, the young man heard a faint knocking at his door. He opened the door to greet *Rav Shlomo Zalmen*, who had walked over and climbed the many steps to this man's apartment. *Rav Shlomo Zalmen* looked at him and said, "I could not help you, but there is no reason that I cannot sit and cry together with you." This is the meaning of empathy. Even when one is unable to help solve the problem, he is able to ease some of the pain just by being present and showing that he cares. On the day of the wedding of *Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz's* youngest son, as everyone was preparing to leave for the wedding, the *Rosh Yeshivah* took time off to meet with a *bachur, yeshivah* student, who was having difficulty finding his designated match. *Rav Chaim* spent an entire hour speaking, encouraging, guiding this young man. He continued his conversation with him even as he walked to the *monit*, taxi, that was to drive him to the wedding hall. Did he have nothing else to do today – of all days? *Rav Chaim* told the *bachur*, "Today I am marrying off my youngest son. It is a day of unparalleled joy for me. With whom do I want to share the joy? With you! I am thinking of you today!" Need I say more?

*Horav Mordechai Porgramonsky, zl*, was wont to say: "To feel pain when one's friend confronts adversity is the sign of a *mentch*, decent human being. To feel joy when he experiences joy requires one to be a *malach, angel!*"

**וְזָבַח תּוֹרֵת זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים** *And this is the teaching of the offering of the meal-of-peace. (7:11)*

Previously (Ibid 3:1), the Torah referred to the *Korban Shelamim*, Peace-offering, as *Zevach Shelamim*, meal of peace. The *Korban Shelamim* is the only offering that carries with it the added appellation, *zevach*, meal/feast. In his commentary to *Sefer Bereishis* (46:1), *Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl*, writes that *Yaakov Avinu* was the first Patriarch to offer a *Korban Shelamim*. This was only after he heard that *Yosef HaTzaddik* was physically and spiritually safe. When the Patriarch arrived in Be'er Sheva, he was in his happiest frame of mind, having reached a zenith in his life, enabling him to leave his troubles and struggles behind him. It was now that he felt qualified to offer a *Korban Shelamim*, a *korban* which is a *zevach*, a meal, to be shared with family. The *Korban Olah* expresses complete submission to

Hashem. Thus, it is completely burnt. The *Shelamim* is the only *korban* which the *baalim*, owner, eats. This offering consecrates the “family home,” transforming it into a veritable sanctuary and rendering the family table an altar. A *zevach* denotes the concept that Hashem is a personal G-d. He comes to us. It is understood from that happy consciousness that in a place where the family unit lives in harmony and joy, with fidelity to Hashem, sensing Hashem always in the midst, His Presence suffuses the family circle. A major motif of the *Mishkan* and the *Bais HaMikdash* is that what transpires in the *Mishkan* does not stay in the *Mishkan*, but goes home with us. The hope is that the nucleus of the *Mishkan* will transfuse our home with its sanctity. One who has experienced *Kedushas HaMikdash* should come home spiritually humbled. His learning, *davening*, eating, and social relationships should be elevated. The goal of the *Mikdash* is to invigorate our mundane lives with sanctity, so that we bring *Mikdash* into our homes, *shuls* and offices. Rav Hirsch notes that in the *Mikdash*, the night belongs to the preceding day. A twenty-four-hour cycle begins with the morning and ends with the following morning. In the rest of Jewish life, the day belongs to the preceding night – the night being the beginning of the twenty-four-hour day, which concludes the following night. Furthermore, all *korbanos* are to be eaten in the *Azarah*, *Bais Hamikdash* proper, in contrast to the *Shelamim*, which is eaten anywhere in Yerushalayim. Last, the *zman achilas Korban Shelamim*, time allotted for eating the *Korban Shelamim*, is not two days and two nights like other *korbanos*, but rather, two days and one intervening night. Actually, at nightfall of the second day, the *korban* becomes *nosar*, sacrificial leftovers, but may not be burnt until the next morning, since the burning of *Kodoshim* must always be done *ba’yom*, during the day. Thus, the *Mikdash* day - which begins in the morning and concludes at night - is followed by a morning which was preceded by night. The *Korban Shelamim*, which may be eaten outside of the *Mikdash* environs, fuses the *Mikdash* day with the mundane day outside the *Mikdash*. The night serves a two-fold purpose: it is the end of the *Mikdash* day; and also the beginning of the ordinary mundane day, which has now been infused with the sanctity of the preceding day, via the night that connects them. As Rav Hirsch expresses it so well, the *Korban Shelamim* is inherently, by its very nature, a “Jewish” sacrifice. It marks occasions of family life by expressing the awareness of Hashem’s blessing in our circle of life. Veritably, the concept of being absorbed in G-d and devoted to Him is also found in non-Jewish dogma; it does not, however, penetrate every aspect of mundane life as it does in Jewish theology. The essence of Judaism is best characterized by the notion that our ordinary day-by-day lifestyle can be elevated and consecrated to the point that his table becomes an altar, his home a sanctuary, his children dedicated servants to Hashem, and every aspect of his daily routine a spiritual endeavor. We believe in *Kiddush ha’yeish*, consecrating the mundane, by transforming it into a spiritual activity. A Jew who puts on *Tefillin* in the morning has a different perspective on his day. One who davens in *shul* on *Shabbos* has a different *Shabbos* meal. An evening *shiur* or *chavrusa* alters one’s outlook on his day. Obviously, when one “visits” *shul* and uses it as an opportunity for socializing, he does not develop that much sanctity to take along with him, although he is certainly better off than the one who does not attend. It is all in one’s attitude. A typically mundane act can be transformed into a holy service to Hashem, with just the proper attitude. A cup of coffee can be a caffeine “fix,” or it can be an opportunity to revive oneself, so that he can learn more or better. One day, *Horav Chaim Shmulevitz, zl*, gave a *shiur klali*, general lecture, to the entire Yeshivas Mir. By chance, one of his old friends from pre-World War II Mir and Shanghai was visiting the Holy Land. He, too, attended the *shiur* of his good friend, Rav Chaim Stutchiner (as Rav Chaim was called in the Mir). Following the *shiur*, the *yeshiva davened minchah*, after which everyone went home for dinner/lunch. Rav Chaim invited his guest to join him. As soon as they came home, Rav Chaim called out to his *Rebbetzin* (who was the daughter of *Horav Eliezer Yehudah Finkel, zl*, founder of *Yeshivas Mir Eretz Yisrael* and son of the *Alter, zl, m’Slabodka*), “Chanah Miriam,

*Boruch Hashem*, we have a special guest to join us for dinner.” They sat down to eat, as the *Rebbetzin* brought a hot soup out to the table. Rav Chaim began to eat, and, as was his habit, he ate quickly. Indeed, he had finished his portion before his guest had even made a dent in his bowl of soup. Rav Chaim immediately called out, “*Rebbetzin*, could I please have another soup?” The *Rebbetzin* promptly brought out another bowl of soup. Meanwhile, the guest kept eating his first bowl. It did not take long before Rav Chaim’s second bowl of soup was history. He immediately called the *Rebbetzin* and asked for a third bowl of soup. The guest was amazed at how quickly Rav Chaim devoured his soup, but, more so, at his immediate request for a refill. When Rav Chaim asked for his fourth bowl of soup, his guest finally spoke up, “Rav Chaim, our friendship goes back to our youth, so I am not afraid to bring to your attention that, for a Torah scholar of your distinction, a *gadol b’Yisrael, Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mir, it is below your exalted dignity to ask for one bowl of soup after another. It just does not *pas*, does not suit you.” Rav Chaim replied, “My dear friend, let me explain to you how I view the *Rebbetzin’s* soup. Her soup (to her) is no different than my *shiur klali*. (Rav Chaim spent much time preparing. Indeed, he submerged his entire being into a *shiur*. His *shiur* was a dynamic production of himself fused with the Torah.) After I say my *shiur*, and someone approaches me to compliment the *shiur*, I have incredible joy when someone asks me to repeat it again -- and again. My joy increases, regardless of how many times I repeat it. (Rav Chaim neither looked for, nor needed, a compliment. He enjoyed it if someone responded positively to his *chiddush*, innovative exposition of the topic, such as, ‘Perhaps the *Rosh Yeshiva* can repeat the main point again.’)

“The *Rebbetzin* prepares the soup with much devotion. She understands that the nourishment I receive allows me to learn more and better. She goes out early in the morning to the *makolet* to purchase the necessary ingredients. She then prepares the ingredients, which is a labor of love requiring time and effort. Next, she must hope the gas stove will work. (Apparently, it did not always work.) Now, after all of her effort, do you not think she deserves and even enjoys a compliment? The greatest compliment that one can render is to ask for more soup. This is the reason for my behavior.” Rav Chaim taught his friend how a *gadol b’Yisrael* should act – he must be a *mentch*. Would anyone ever posit that schlepping bags of garbage is a spiritual endeavor? If one would know the “hero” of the story as I did, however, its veracity would be unimpeachable. A young couple (whose parents did not raise them properly) met with *Rav Mordechai Gifter, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Telshe*, to discuss their marital issues. Apparently, the young couple was in serious need of guidance. They had the usual litany of complaints: “He does not listen;” “She is too bossy.” The young man felt that his wife did not respect his stature as a *ben Torah*. (He was a *talmid chacham*, just lacking in common sense.) The wife felt that his refusal to lift a finger to help her bordered on unjustified arrogance. The *Rosh Yeshiva* spent one hour listening to their individual complaints, as they went back and forth, (immaturely) each blaming the other for their marital issues. Finally, came the clincher, the problem concerning which they came to the *Rosh Yeshiva*: the garbage. Apparently, the wife could not carry out the garbage for its weekly pickup, because it was too heavy. The husband patently refused to be seen in the street with a garbage bag: “Imagine, someone of my stature carrying out the garbage!” Rav Gifter asked what day and what time the garbage pickup was. He told them that he needed a few days to mull over their issues. Then, he would get back to them. Wednesday morning was “garbage pickup day” at 7:50 A.M. Promptly at 7:40 A.M. there was a knock at the door of the couple’s apartment. Who would be knocking so early in the morning? The wife answered the door to see the *Rosh Yeshiva* standing there. “Where is your garbage?” he asked. She looked at him incredulously. “I have come to take out your garbage,” he said. The wife called her husband, who was equally shocked to see the *Rosh Yeshiva*. “Quickly, we have only three more minutes before the garbage truck picks up the garbage,” the *Rosh Yeshiva* told them. The young couple remained adamant. They were not letting the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telshe, who was one of the

premier *gedolim* in the world, take out their garbage. *Rav Gifter* walked past them, grabbed the bags, and carried them outside to the street. They got the message. The *Rosh Yeshivah* had taken a purely mundane, menial task and transformed it into a Torah lesson, and he succeeded in saving a marriage!

***Va'ani Tefillah*** ברכנו אבינו כלנו כאחד באור פניך ***Barcheinu Avinu kulanu k'echad b'or Panecha. Bless us, our Father, together as one, with the light of Your Face.*** This is the only prayer in the *Shemoneh Esrai* in which we ask Hashem for something that is contingent upon our being unified as one. When we ask for forgiveness, health, livelihood, we do not ask in the merit of our standing before Him as one. We ask for ourselves, individually, but not collectively as one unit. Now, however, we are asking Hashem to bless us "in the light of His face." *B'or Parenecha* demands a little more from us, since we now must appear before Him as He looks us over prior to granting us the blessing of peace. One does not ask for peace when the "other party" is not even present; rather, the two come together as one, attempting to live in harmony, to ask for the blessing that their efforts achieve success.

Disharmony is the result of focusing on oneself and not

demonstrating any form of empathy for our fellow. When Hashem sees us looking out for our own interests and not showing any concern for our brothers, it is an indication that our petition for peace is spurious. What is there about our presentation that warrants the blessing of peace? If we ask for peace, we should at least show that it means something to us. When we show Hashem that unity has meaning and value to us, only then we can ask for lasting peace.

לזכר נשמת האשה החשובה, מרת פיגא רחל בת ר' משה צבי ע"ה בריגנער פעלדמאן פיה פתחה בחכמה ובאצילות היו הליכותיה יראים ותלמידי חכמים נודעים היו אבותיה גדולים סבלותיה בעת המלחמה ועצמות תלאותיה אשת חיל נוחה לבריות ושלום כל נתיבותיה רצויה לכל יודעיה. ומכרייה חיבבו מידותיה חסדים הרבה עשתה בין בגופה ובין במענותיה למדו מדרכיה יוצאי חלציה וישרים In loving memory of Mrs. Fanny (Brunner) Feldman by her family Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה

לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה  
ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה